

# THE ROLE OF MEDICINAL TOURISM IN INDIA: CURRENT SITUATION, FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS

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**Abstract:** - India is among the top 3 preferred destinations in Asia for medicinal tourism. Before the covid-19 pandemic which affected the business of every single sector, the country was actually stepping up as one of the top destinations as far as medicinal tourism is considered. 16,800 medicinal visas were issued by India out of which 50% were medicinal patients. This study highlights the character of medicinal tourism in India keeping in mind the current covid-19 condition. A constructive conceptual Framework for the industry has been drawn with the influence of coronavirus on healthcare/ medicinal tourism, defining the aspects inducing the preference of patients to take treatment from any place. The traditional health practices opted by the therapeutic industry of India were always been a principal attraction of medicinal tourism in India. But now some other factors like world class facilities, experienced medicinal practitioners, savings on treatment, utilization of alternative systems and challenge free procedures are adding value in the advancement of medicinal tourism. While finally concluding, the study has also described some prospects and progresses for the forthcoming growth of medicinal tourism sector in India.

**Index Terms** – Health care practices, medicinal tourism, technology, infrastructure

## Introduction

When people travel across various countries for receiving medicinal, dental, or surgical help, they also plan for traveling, vacationing, and visiting the attraction of places nearby, this is denoted as medicinal tourism. The foremost concern for people traveling to different countries is primarily to get medicinal helps since the visiting country has better and enhanced facilities in comparison to their native country. The cost of treatment also influences their decision of travel in a big way. Hence co- effective collaboration between medicinal care offering treatment and the tourism industry offering hospitality is called medicinal tourism. Even globalization also gets endorsed as the hospitals as well as nursing homes handling overseas patients are characteristic of worldwide marketing. In the current scenario, the tourism business is gaining massive profits monetarily. Because service sector is not only limited to restaurants, hotels, and the ancient site scenes but they are also expanded to the health care services provided globally presented in terms of medicinal tourism. it is a rapidly growing industry worldwide which is a combination of two major economic activities, that represent the blend of two industries like tourism and medicine. While in recent periods the worldwide medicinal tourism and its requirements of quality Health services at an affordable cost has attracted various foreign tourist towards the developing countries like India. The adequate expertise of doctors, resources, staff, and recognized clinics to fulfill the needs of foreign tourists is a topmost choice for treatment. Foreign tourists are preferring to travel to India for their knee transplantation, surgery, beauty surgery, dental problems, hip replacement, and various other treatments. The patients traveling to other countries with a drive of medicinal treatment have a variety of reasons. The elite for developing countries seeks treatment which is not accessible in their own countries. Even the private hospitals in India are observing an influx of patients from Middle East and Bangladesh. It is testified that medical treatment seekers from the USA States seek medical services almost causing 5 to 10 folds in their own nation and as the extensively funded health attention is incompetent to cope up with the rising difficulties of a progressively aging population, the patient from various countries like the Canada and developed countries of Europe travel to India to beat the use waiting period for many routine procedures.

Since the year 1991, it is found that private sector been promoted by the government as a source of medicinal care, the conditions for rapid growth have been supported and created by the liberal strategies of government. Even the expenditures on the community health sector in India has floated around 0.9 % of gross domestic product. And it is ahead of only five countries in the whole world like Burundi, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sudan, and Cambodia. While we were looked at the public sector in the health implications, we can easily observe an entirety of different

pictures. The government is quite certain that the revenues and by the sector will help in strengthening the health care department in the country. While this cannot be seen in any instrumentation by which this can happen. While the commercial hospitals have continually dishonored the terms and conditions for receiving any government subsidies as they refuse to treat poor patients free of cost and they have managed to skip without any punishment. The country has shown the fastest adoption of medicinal Technology with being the largest English-speaking nation in recent years. while the medicinal travel industry has already come a long way, but a decade ago the people used to travel across the border just for affordable healthcare. But patients are not using the destination which can offer the complete package of quality treatment, travel, ease of communication, and competitive pricing. Indian doctors are only known for their excellence all over the world and some studies revealed that over 10% of the doctors practicing in the UK and even in the US are only Indians. The availability of advanced medicinal technology and the presence of modern hospitals with most of the medical service providers and hospitals are staffed by trained and experienced medical staff who are very capable in the latest medicinal treatment methods. the people traveling to India for the purpose of healthcare can save up to 50% of the cost they might spend if they travel to any developed western country for availing the same treatment with the same excellence. The treatment in India is approximately 40% less as compared to the developed western countries without compromising on the quality of the care provided. the medicinal visa norms in the country have been already simplified to make sure a total hassle-free journey, treatment, and stay for sick patients and the attendants. Multiple entry and long offers are provided by the medicinal visa. e- Medicinal visa to further is a process that has also been introduced by the government of India. Ayurveda is around a 5,000-year-old system of natural healing, originated from the Vedic culture of India, and has been implemented as a key area in both its native land as well as throughout the country. But, now the influence of this whole coronavirus pandemic has triggered the financial markets. Historically the medical service providing division has been immune from the reservations as the people get sick during both the good as well as the bad times so the demand for medicinal care is relatively constant across the business cycle. However, the recession caused due to the pandemic is shaping up to some different situations. The insurance that privately insured the patients have less generous in the present time than it was during the past recession.

### **Objective**

- The main objective of the research is to condition the medicinal tourism industry in India.
- To point out the promoters and mechanisms of the entire medicinal tourism industry.
- To check the outlook and progress area of the whole industry of medicinal tourism by evaluating the state-wise data.
- To define the changes and challenges faced or occurred because of the whole covid-19 pandemic situation.
- To examine the tasks of the key drivers of medicinal tourism in India.

### **Conceptual framework of the globalization of medicinal tourism**

- Process of globalization: The global concerns and structural adjustment, its policies, global politics and technology are further divided.
- Institutional: The structure of governance, liberalization of trade, policy change, and de-regulations comes under the sector.
- Social and economic: global competition, outsourcing, availability of resources, privatization, social, and food security comes under this sector.
- Technological: Global communication, information technology, interaction, mobility, and capital.
- Health outcomes: The disparities of health, access to care, infrastructure development, attainment of cost in the health, quality, and safety of care.
- Medicinal tourism: This comprises all other features like the soq of global health, restructuring the whole system of healthcare, efficiency, quality standards, and private sector investment with customer choice.

## Literature Review

The purpose behind people to acquire medicinal treatment in the overseas country by traveling exclusively of emigrants seeking care in their own country, wellness tourist, patients traveling to the bordering countries which are closest accessible to their countries and disaster tourist.

Few current studies, state that the whole perspective of the healthcare industry has been facing some challenges as well as the development that the pharmaceutical and software businesses have revealed in the earlier years. So, the industry of healthcare is emerging as the largest sector as it is depicting the trade of approx. 4 trillion US dollars and 750 million US dollars in shared by the developing countries in comparison to the developed countries.

The overall status of the healthcare industry of India is drastically snowballing day by day. It is clearly believed that the medicinal expertise of India is the best on this planet and the job of medicine practitioners in India is also acknowledged in the entire world as equated to any other existing country. All these gradual developments are only because of the status of the medical service sector of India which is recognized worldwide. The US contains 35000 expert Indian Doctors of. Indian nurses are chosen over nurses of the other countries because of the fact that they provide motherly treatment to their patients. Indian healthcare business has begun to come out as the media destination to various other nations of the world because the knowledge, skills, and development of expertise are fasting better way with very advanced medicinal practices as well as its expertise in terms of price and eminence in the medicinal tourists of India.

India is the father of Yoga and healthy life practices, which came into existence almost 5000 years ago. So, India is being approached by various groups of healthcare departments and medicinal student travellers for the drive of yoga and various other forms of Ayurvedic and natural remedies. Around 2,500 years ago, when Buddhism came into India, achieved a prior standing as the core of therapeutic progress, eastern artistic skill and divine. So, because of natural and Ayurvedic medicinal practitioners, India is one of the most famous as well as considered to be the best terminus for patients from all across the world. Especially Western clinical medicine is more popular and credible as compared to other parts around the globe. The whole medicinal value travel has been recognized by the government of India as the major sector that will on valuably exchange from foreign patients to the country and has also been taken as a service export initiative by the stakeholders. There have been numerous discussions from the past few years between the governmental ministries, healthcare facilitators, private hospital providers, accreditation agencies like NABH for arriving at a long-term strategy with help from FICCI. But on the other hand, the present conditions have to lead to a complete suspension of numerous facilities offered by the MVT operating hospitals, while this has adversely affected the supported businesses according to the ripple effect like lodging and boarding facility impeded by the hospitals, taxi services for international patients, hotel or home health care delivery services (physiotherapy), language translation services, medicinal supplies to foreign patients and so on. All of these factors were largely depending upon patients who come to India using MVT facilitators' service. But due to this whole disturbance in the international travel at the present moment arising because of the covid-19 pandemic, the FICCI MVT task force in collaboration with the government of India and multiple other stakeholders have evolved and brought up some easy set of guidelines and protocols for addressing the key aspects:

- The protocol for granting visa and issuing of tickets
- SOP for flight travel
- Clear protocols on the selection of patients who are likely considered to be fit to travel for further care in India.
- Testing of RTPCR covid-19 in home countries or otherwise.
- Screening of passengers while arriving at the airport.
- Transportation of the passenger directly from the airport to the hotel where they would be quarantined in accordance to the prevailing protocols issued by the union government.

## Medicinal products

There are some of the merchandises which are drastically selling under the steamer of the medicinal industry which could be divided for into three parts.

The wellness sector includes:

- Resorts
- Ecotourism
- Spas
- Community tourism
- Complementary healing
- Healthy lifestyle vacation
- Herbal tourism and treatments

Treatment includes:

- Surgery of eye
- Elective surgery
- Joint replacement
- Cancer treatment
- Cardiothoracic services
- Reproductive treatment

Diagnostic services:

- The rehabilitation sector includes
- Counselling services
- Programs of addiction
- Dialysis
- Elderly care programs

## Impact of Coronavirus on the healthcare sector of India

As many public policy procedures have been executed to contain the spread of covid-19, those practices have already resulted in significant operational disruption for various industries including those in the Indian healthcare industry. Supply chain failure sudden reduction in demand of customers and staff warranty have caused a very serious issue or complications for the companies. Apart from the current crisis faced in healthcare issues, the oral health care private system in the country continues to reel under a very negative impact of covid-19. There has been a very significant drop in for both outpatient as well as inpatient footfall for the change of private hospitals: it could be single-specialty territory care hospitals or even multispecialty including the diagnostic businesses during the lockdown. The inability of numerous clinics and new centres to generate cash, debt repayment obligation, decrease in the level of medicinal tourism, and increase in the scheme of revenues which represents the credit revenues are some of the key influencers affecting the cash flow of the overall medicinal healthcare sector. The hospitals have even begun to measure or reduce the cost to reserve the cash in hand. With respect to the supplier, consumable consolidation for better rates and the renegotiation of the credit periods for consumables and pharmacy are some of the measures instituted by the hospital to conserve their cash flow. Even the changes are being made to doctor engagement models by moving the doctors to fully variable models based on the method revenue they generate. As there is no sign of the pandemic regressing, the situation can even become tenser. Big or small, the hospitals across segments have limited reserves and they require support from the government directly. Through the faster payments for the treatment under the government schemes, speedy processing and settlement of TP claim, reduction in the rate of GST on Corona related supplies such as drugs texting kids and consumable; faster refund of GST to manufactures on the accumulated tax credit due to inverted duty structure; cheaper facilities of credit for larger hospitals and standardization of pandemic spread all over the country. The

whole health care sector is considered to be as the epicentre of the uncertain global pandemic challenge, Any, private sector has risen to the occasion just by offering to the government all the support it needs like testing support preparing the isolation beds for the treatment of coronavirus positive patients or even deploying the types of equipment and staff in identified nodal hospitals. Where the private healthcare sector is totally prepared for every eventuality, but unlike other sectors, the sector is facing a twin burden:

- It is facing a sharp drop in the footfall of OP, international patients, and elective surgeries.
- While investing additional manpower consumables and pieces of equipment with other resources to ensure 100% prepare for the safety in the hospitals and safety of patients with eventual treatment if needed.
- Loss of business has been witnessed by the private sector of health care and this trend is predicted to endure for at least the next six to seven months because we predominantly cost of the sector is around 80% fixed and it is expected that there will be losses and severe are impact on the flow of cash.

### **Impact on the medicinal device industry of India**

Consumable disposable and other capital equipment including orthopaedic implants, syringes, bandages, magnetic resonance imaging devices, and computed tomography from China are imported by the country. But due to the current crisis in the medicinal device manufacturers: China, the medicinal devices across India are finding it difficult to source important raw materials and electronic components from Chinese factories.

Even though some factories and China have already restored their operation, but a shortage of some critical electronic parts with existed raw materials has severely being affected by this pandemic. The profitability and margins of Indian companies importing the medicinal devices and small components to the manufacturer of finished products are impacted. Which has also put upward pressure on the prices of medicinal devices in the very short term.

### **Determinants of medicinal tourism**

Many models were developed on destination attractiveness by different researchers, where they discussed the major features that change the choice of any patient or consumer about the treatment in international borders. Technology is being excluded and quality is being accepted as the major deciding factor for this model. Some major keys determinants need to be followed:

Cultural front includes religion, language, practices, cuisine, and customs. Where the patients are basically influenced by cultural similarity and familiarity.

The decision of the patient basically depends on the geographical friend for how much time will be taken to reach the destination as well as the traveling and barriers suffered by the patient. So, in-direct flights are usually avoided by the patients are places having some complicated visa procedures.

The climate conditions, weather, the attraction of tourist, and facilities are some of the key factors that decide and creates the place more attractive to a patient.

The records of goods of the medicinal services of any specific country, outcomes of treatment against the potential risk, safety measures, and the current treatment are some of the other risks and return determinants.

Patience calculates the value of treatment which includes the expenses they have to bear while treatment, traveling, accommodation, and multiple other insurance expenses. So the cheaper the treatment is the more it is preferred.

### **Preferences of patients where they want to be treated**

- The patients feel more relaxed and at ease if the language, habit, religion, history, and place are recognizable with their own culture and whether they are capable to converse in a common language.
- Traveling abroad by patient is preferred the only because these services are unavailable in their own countries or ore contains long waiting lists for the expenses are way too high.
- Usually, the quality provided by any specific place is the key influencer that the patients look for before perceiving any treatment while comparing to their own country.
- The patients look for a treatment that is against the law or not provided in their home country so they go abroad for the treatment.

### **Slow hospital response times obstruct the growth of the Indian industry**

In accordance to the report conducted by the Medicinal Tourism Association, the worldwide market of medicinal tourism is drastically moved by the poor outcomes of quality, slow responses and poor times experience by some of the medicinal tourists. Around 44.9 % of the tourist seeking medical services, reported slow response time in the hospital. So, this whole system is exacerbated by some poor communication and infrastructures of transport including multiple other barriers post by language in the developing countries where the situation is making it worse.

### **Dynamic Competition**

The competition between the key players for capitalizing on the existing opportunities in this rapidly advancing global market of medicinal tourism has grown exponentially from the past few years. The private companies are also funding the development and Research activities for maintaining their edge in the market competitively. For example, in India, the southern state of Kerala is promoting the medicinal and health tourism activities as an integral part of the tourism industry for attracting foreign tourists. Such type of examples proves that competition in the market of medicinal tourism is taking an immense part, not just between the private players but also within the public sector.

### **Preference of Third-world**

India at no. 1 and Thailand at no. 2 are the greatest popular medicinal destinations among the medicinal travel patients according to the report issued by the US-based national centre for policy analysis. While talking about India, the key motive for great tourist attraction is its low cost of medicinal services, easily available medications, the information of price is already discussed, and due to a largely speaking English population. On the other hand, Thailand is also equally popular while sometimes it is even preferred more than India because of better infrastructure despite the prices are being not as low as India.

### **The major players in the global medicinal tourist market tourism include:**

- Fortis healthcare limited
- Apollo hospitals enterprise limited
- KPJ healthcare limited
- Bumrungrad international hospital
- Mount Elizabeth hospital
- Asian heart institute

## Medicinal tourism and CoVID-19

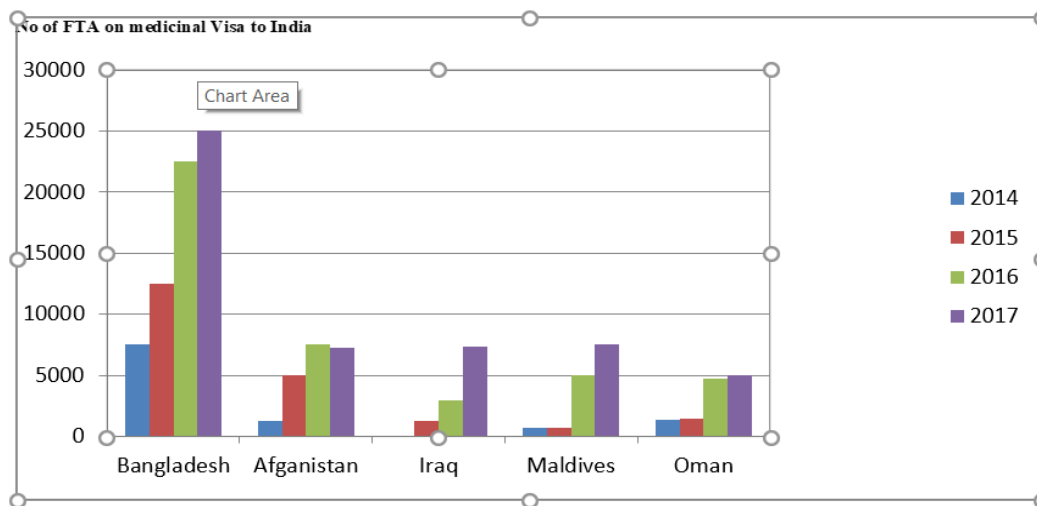
- According to the data delivered by the Ministry of Home affairs: In 2015 the arrival of foreign tourists increased for medicinal purposes in India up to 2, 33,918. In 2016: the number raised to 4, 27,014. While in 2017: keep on increasing up to 4, 90,056.
- The sector of medicinal tourism in India is displaying huge growth retrieval amongst the coronavirus pandemic just after it was smashed by the covid-19 as well as the following lockdown.
- A footfall of 6.97 lakh was witnessed by India about foreign patients on a medicinal visa in 2019. This whole figure accounts for 6.9 % of the total foreign tourist arrival.
- But later in September, the healthcare Major hospital Apollo enterprises mentioned that the medicinal tourism sector requires backing from the government of the country to stand on its feet and in its shape after being rigorously wedged by the covid-19 disease.
- It was not India who got affected but, many countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and including Asian countries were also suffering who have a thriving medicinal tourism sector.
- Although the foreign tourist arrival data in India for 2020 is yet to be revealed but it can be anticipated that the covid-19 virus has already affected a huge number of the likelihood of the people. While according to the report of IE, the patients from various abroad countries have gradually started to already visit India for their treatment.

### Role of government & SOPs

- The Union of India has highlighted timely on medicinal tourism and realizing the potential for its development, the government has started to stimulate wellness and clinical service as a base for tourism as a position product. Guidelines are been formulated by the ministry of tourism for the restarting of medicinal tourism. The strategies highlight that support will be provided to eligible interested parties likes stakeholders, informed by the minister of state for culture and tourism: Prahalad Singh Patel to Rajya Sabha.
- No sightseeing or shopping, no taxi sharing. Everything was close in lockdown. And according to the medicinal tourism industry of India, various other recommendations are needed to resume functioning (proposed to the central government) as it's a multi-billion-dollar sector.
- So, the industries have come up with our total comprehensive list of various standard operating procedures (SOPs), which was submitted to the ministry of industry and commerce, ministry of health and family welfare, ministry of tourism, ministry of civil aviation for approval.
- SOPs have been prepared by the medicinal value travel while collaborating with the federation of the Indian chamber of commerce and industry including the chains of top hospitals.
- In the last few months only, these actions has result in a loss of at least \$1 billion.
- Where according to the ministry of tourism, the discussions on SOP is are already in their advanced stage. Because it is a very complicated matter which starts with the resumption of international flights as well as it requires detailing of all the procedures on testing and quarantine. Where the country is already making some advanced negotiation for establishing the air travel bubble with multiple other countries like Germany, France, and the US-based on their Covid safe travel zones for restarting the scheduled international passenger flights. It is been assumed that such actions will post the cost of treatment up by at least 30%.

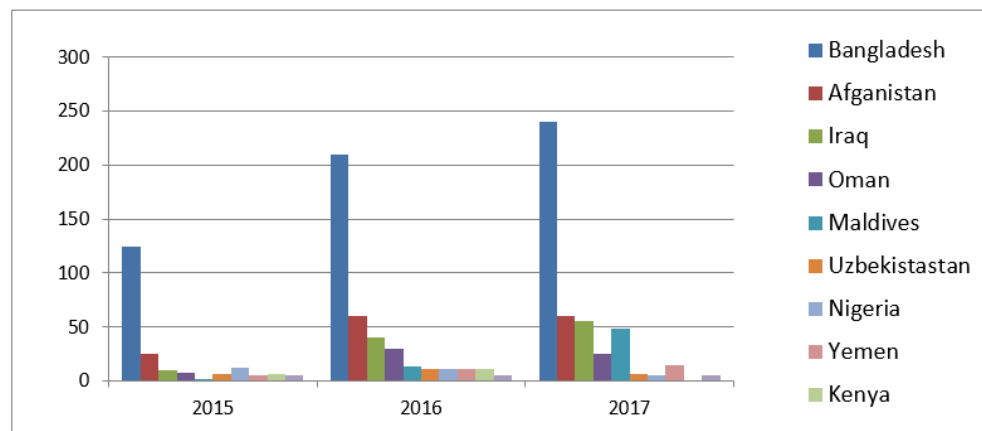
### Major destinations in India

The preferred destination cities for medicinal tourists arriving in India are Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai. Around 27% of India's medicinal tourists head to Maharashtra where 80% go to Mumbai. Kerala handles around 5% to 7% while Chennai attracts 15% of the incoming foreign patients of India. 5 Lakh medicinal value travellers are hosted by India annually from different nations of the world. Southeast Asian countries, SAARC nations, Africa, the Middle East and so on are the main markets. Although 50% of medicinal travellers coming to India from Bangladesh.



### Top 10 Medicinal Tourists coming in India

No. of visitors per 1000



### No. of visitors per 1000

### Traveling for traditional health practices

There are numerous traditional Indian health practices, which are the key puller of tourists internationally. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, yoga, and homeopathy are few of them to promote tourist seeking medical services. Ayurveda is a traditional Hindu system of medicine which is established on the notions of steadiness. This technique is also used as herbal treatment as well as yogic breathing. While on the other hand, Unani and Siddha are alike in their holistic approach to finding the harmony concerning the body and the mind. The origin of Siddha started from the southern state of Tamil Nadu and Unani from the time of ancient Greece. The whole agency of Siddha and Unani which was created in 2014 to improve access and awareness of traditional methods. The worth of around \$2.4 billion in 2014- 15 is estimated by India's AYUSH industry. The whole traditional knowledge of the health care having Western approaches and multiple different modern exposures is fuelling the growth of the medicinal tourism of India by maintaining its reputation globally.



### Reason for seeking treatment in India

- As the treatment are affordable so it is the key factor which puts India higher on the list of destination choices among the medicinal tourist globally. While comparing to the treatment as well as medicinal care in western countries, people can easily save up to 50% of their overall bill. Telugu for a foreign patient who is seeking to take treatment in India, the daily cost of travel would come up to around \$31 which is \$223 in the US.
- There are around 38 leading hospitals in India, providing global Health care services.
- NABHH has accredited around 619 hospitals in India. While the postoperative rate of mortality in India is around 1.4 % which is less than countries like the US where the rate is 1.9 %.
- Apart from leave treatment facilities, there are a variety of tourist attractions or incentivizing travel for medicinal care. It offers a package that contains the quality services of healthcare, coupled with various other options to explore the tourist spots situated across the country.

### How much an individual can save on various procedures during treatment?

If any patient is seeking treatment in India, then he or she can easily save a considerable amount while opting for the same medicinal procedures or treatment in developed countries. The cost of medicinal procedures is available at a very low price. While on the other hand Malaysia, Turkey, Thailand offers slightly competitive prices. So here is the list of prices of medicinal procedures across the major destination countries in USD:

Medical procedure	India	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	Turkey	S. Korea
Heart Bypass	7900	15000	12100	17200	13900	26000
Angioplasty	5700	4200	8000	13400	4800	17700
Heart Valve Replacement	9500	17200	13500	16900	17200	39900
Hip Replacement	7200	17000	8000	13900	13900	21000
Hip Resurfacing	9700	13500	12500	16350	10100	19500
Knee Replacement	6600	14000	7700	16000	10400	17500
Spinal Fusion	10300	9500	6000	12800	16800	16900
Dental Implant	900	1720	1500	2700	1100	1350
Lap Band	7300	11500	8150	9200	8600	10200
Gastric Sleeve	6000	9900	8400	11500	12900	9950
Gastric Bypass	7000	16800	9900	13700	13800	10900
Hysterectomy	3200	3650	4200	10400	7000	10400
Breast Implants	3000	3500	3800	8400	4500	3800
Rhinoplasty	2400	3300	2200	2200	3100	3980
Rhytidectomy	3500	3950	3550	440	6700	6000
Liposuction	2800	2500	2500	2900	3000	2900
Abdominoplasty	3500	5300	3900	4650	4000	5000
Lasik (both eyes)	1000	2310	3450	3800	1700	1700
IVF Treatment	2500	4100	6900	14900	5200	7900

Low price
Moderate price
High price

*The source of the report is: Medicinal Tourism Association, 2019*

### Advantages of medicinal tourism in India

It is one of the largest and quickest growing industries in the world. And as the number of insured individuals, as well as those having deductibles, are continuing to rise, many of them prefer to be treated outside their native land or country where they can manage to pay for the treatments they need in a very timely fashion. Low-cost medicinal treatment with no waiting list lo effectiveness and accessibility of skilled and experienced doctor are some of the major factors which attract tourists in India so medicinal tourist around the globe is flocking like never before. Even the growth is expected to continue at a rapid rate of speed by offering medicinal treatments to the tourist at a just fraction of the cost they can get it at home for. India is also considered as one of the top

international medicinal tourism destinations because the patients can get excellent health care services in the country. The foreign nationals usually worry about the quality of facilities and care they will receive outside of their countries but there are various well-qualified doctors and the existence of hospitals in India. The medicinal procedures usually caused even half or less in India as compared to the United States. Even if the cost of traveling and staying at hotels makes some people have procedures done out of the motherland then to have them done at home. But the low cost of treatment does not indicate lower healthcare standards so a wider range of exceptional medicinal treatment packages is also offered in India at a very reasonable price. Advanced medicinal technologies and facilities of healthcare are offered by all the hospitals in India at a very substantially lower price. The doctors are also trained multi-lingual in the country having quite a lot of them undergoing some professional training in the US. Southern India is a popular region because of Ayurveda being practiced there which is a form of alternative treatment having the use of natural herbs as medicines.

### **Challenges faced by the Medicinal tourism sector of India**

- The industry of medicinal tourism is not at all a very new field in today's era. But still, this sector has the potential to nurture and flourish. With some growing abilities, the sector also contains various challenges that need to be taken in mind. The medicinal tourism is not only observing the immense growth in India, but it also involves seeing extensive growth. Even in various other developing nations like Singapore, Thailand, Brazil, Belgium, Cuba, Costa Rica, Hungary, Malaysia, and Jordan. With the help of some high capacity and best advertising, the Nations are promoting and attracting the bulk of patients who come from very organized countries of the globe. This especially includes Europe, the Middle East, the UK, the US, Canada, and Japan. The patients from these countries are attracted because the services are very luxurious and expensive in nature and patients have to wait for months for treatment. Even the expectations of the foreign customers and patients are also increasing and they want some personalized services at a very affordable cost.
- The medicinal tourism facing the biggest barrier is from the language and cultural front. There are many doctors, nurses, and patients who are not able to understand the language of each other. The reason being even the specialized doctor and extremely refined system of medicine has many staff were not able to communicate properly in their language which makes the whole system of medicinal tourism weak and the difficulties arise from both sides.
- If the customer or the patient is coming from another country for the purpose of treatment, so keeping any follow-up plan becomes very difficult for the patient special in the case of surgery if any complexity or cause after the treatment or operation and the patient has finally departed to his own place, so in such situations, the following becomes too tough for the patient and also very expensive in its nature.
- As our country is full of some professional experts but the main problem is to retain them because the country is not offering good salaries to the experts which have become one of the biggest challenges. So, in various other countries, skilled and personalized professionals are very less, so doctors from India are hired by the people and they are offered a higher salary.
- Before finally selecting any country the customers also focus on the infrastructure, but this factor affects India most. The improper connectivity of flight all over the country, bad roads water availability, and electricity problem are some of the major drawbacks which are making India lack behind in the race of medicinal tourism.
- The main issue for patients while considering any industry with respect to medicinal tourism as a substitute treatment is quality. A protected and elevated immense is needed by the medical service seeker from the clinical or medicinal care department.
- So the focus of the patients is not only on the price of the treatment but they also consider the quality and safety provided by the department. Hands while considering the countries and hospitals, nationalized as well as worldwide accreditation by the quality monitoring bodies like healthcare providers. (Indian accreditation body), National accreditation board for hospital and healthcare providers, and international board like joint commission international joint commission on accreditation of healthcare organization. But it is very disappointing to mention that still many hospitals in India do not have this accreditation.

## Future developments and prospects

As the medicinal tourism companies have been discussing various things to the FICCI to find solutions with the ministry of finance, tourism, commerce, and surviving these unpredicted times. As a major blow has been faced by the medicinal tourism industry due to the ban on an international level so the whole sector depends on verticals: namely medicinal tourism companies (Responsible for facilitating the international patients traveling to India) and the hospitals that treat patients. No hospitals are accepting the patients having other elements which are equipped with the mechanism to treat covid-19. But the hospital is equipped with treating seems to have no business coming in. 50,000 people are directly or indirectly employed by the medicinal tourism industry. Such people have been earning foreign exchange for the government as well as paying their taxes which are left with no revenue capacity of earning. So it is recommended for officials to come to their rescue, as no bailout packages have been offered to the medicinal tourism companies. Even a rupees 300 crore package of the bailout has been requested by the community to help the associations involved in medicinal tourism to pay the basic salaries of the employees and for dealing with unavoidable expenses. Even the process of tax refunds should be accelerated for the companies as there has been no instruction made for the banks to relax the process of providing loans to the companies. In addition to this, relax on the medicinal travel visa fees and the policies for telemedicine should also be offered by providing loans without collaterals the Indian healthcare federation is also working with various different industry chambers in order to promote medicinal tourism in the country. but we need to work towards getting accreditation for various hospitals in order to build up a perception of quality among the foreign tourist. since the recent past number of couples are opting for fertility treatments outside their native countries mainly because of steep treatment costs in their own countries and due to the lack of appropriate monetary aid provided to them by their respective governments like the research involving human embryos. India has already gained a popular status as a tourist destination because of magnificent places, hill towns, beaches, and so on. The Indian doctors are known across the world in the area of cosmetic surgery dental care coronary bypass heart bypass surgery and traditional alternative care such as Ayurveda. the most common surgical procedures followed among the international tourism in India is renal transportation or the liver transplantation. medicinal travel assistance high quality affordable medicinal treatments with international quality standards having the latest advanced technologies and estimated prices from top hospitals are being provided by the Medi connect India.

## Recommendation

- In order to attract medicinal tourists in India, there is a various factor affecting this. The cost involved and hosting any international patient totally depends on multiple factors like the medicinal intervention needed, physician selected, and hospital facilities during the stay of an individual. So as medicinal tourism is a very competitive sector, certain factors need to be addressed in order to attract the medicinal tourist to India:
- By investing in technology, the medicinal tourist also gets attracted to the world-class facilities provided by healthcare departments. People need to invest wisely in providing the best practices as well as the facilities. The cost for the technology totally depends on the type of facility being provided and for increasing the accessibility, healthcare providers can also create an app for their hospital or clinic which will only cost approximately 5 lacs.
- Having a very strong online presence or online marketing can help in medicinal tourism. People need to maintain a very easy to understand or user-friendly website and blog. Saudi cost for maintaining any website will be approximately 15000 rupees and the blog page will only cost 500 rupees per year just for the name of domain and hosting. So by answering the queries doing live chat which will be accessible to everyone all time will help in providing greater reach across the globe.
- By collaborating with different hospitality partners and the representative of international health offices help in creating a greater impact on the foreign tourist.
- The quotation is the prior more concern for every medicinal tourist. So the physician should make an approximate quotation depending on the intervention and hospital stay required during the course of treatment.
- For applying medicinal visa for India only an invitation letter is required. So just by receiving the required details like visa invitation letter passport number and so on should be issued for the prospective foreign patients.
- The staff hired for the international patients should be very fluent in speaking English and if there is no availability of English-speaking patients, a translator should be hired.

## Conclusion

The (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) FICCI MVT task force has also engaged with various state governments for encouraging different states to proactively initiate state-specific measures to convert their states into specific hotspots for MVT. The covid-19 pandemic has entirely transformed the landscape of health care delivery capacity as well as the manufacturing in India. It has even strengthened the Indian private healthcare system enormously by providing the citizens the requisite experience for handling complex situations. This will serve many dividends as the covid-19 pandemic eases and finally dies off. The rising backing from state and central governments and various companies can help fight against this highly contagious disease. In the current pandemic scenario, it is been found that some business sectors are thriving while some are still struggling. To promote, develop and to create impact on tourism based on medicinal services, healthcare providers have to put in a lot of effort in a very active social media profile by maintaining website and blogging. Collaborating with various different travel agencies, 5-star hotels, and other hospitality service providers will help in ensuring comfort to every other international tourist and various aspects by taking care of their end-to-end requirements. The investment in security technology and translators is and very important task to ensure, which can make the Indian healthcare world-class. The demographics of the nation are causing a significant increase in the demand of the health care department. In Japan United States of America and many other European Nations, the proportion of the population which is older than 60 years concerning the total population is also increasing rapidly. While life expectancy is steadily increasing over the past few years in most countries and the combined result is a substantial stress on the national healthcare system. The inability of many healthcare systems deals with the elevation in demands, leads to even compromise the standard of service and decrease in access through long waiting time and high cost. This may drive many individuals to even seek an alternative to domestic clinical services for the drive of healthcare tourism.

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