

Medical tourism in south india

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MEDICAL TOURISM IN SOUTH INDIA – A SWOT PERSPECTIVE OF INDIAN MEDICINE SYSTEM J. Swaminathan AVCCEHealthis wealth! (Ayurveda To Yoga) **ABSTRACT** The Indian Systems of Medicine include Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy is ancient and has the roots in traditional system of medical treatments in tune with the Mother Nature. Medical Tourism is the emerging industry next to the IT boom and India is the second best destination as of now. Especially the Indian Systems of Medicine, in South India can become the leader in medical Tourism Industry.

This paper tries to appraise the facts and future possibilities based on a SWOT perspective. **Introduction** Without sound health we cannot achieve anything in our life, nor enjoy what ever we have. In service sector the concept of Medical Tourism is catching up at lightning speed across the world. The act of traveling to other countries for medical, surgical and other forms of healthcare along with recreation is called Medical Tourism. People from advanced countries, including the United States and Europe, see a benefit in traveling to developing third world countries, like India, Thailand, Philippines, South Africa, and etc. hile combining medical treatments with inexpensive vacation. According to a study conducted by the Confederation of Indian Industry and Mc Kinsey consultants (2004), 1, 50, 000 foreigners visited India for treatment, with the number rising by 15 percent a year. The number has increased to 2, 72, 000 in 2007 and has crossed the 3 lakhs mark in 2008. ASSOCHAM has predicted that this will grow by 22 to 25% in the coming years. **Scope** The main demand for medical tourism is generated

from millions of Indians who live abroad, though a growing number of foreigners are also keen on speedy and in expensive treatment.

They are influenced by two important facts: India now has many world-class private hospitals and the alternative medicines are available in abundance. Foreigners are visiting India for serious medical help as well as rejuvenation therapies and other specific purposes. Medical Tourism has been a popular concept in countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Costa Rica, Hungary, India, Israel, Jordan, and Lithuania. South Africa specializes in medical Safaris-visit the country for a safari, with a stock over for plastic surgery.

Due to liberalization of our economy and internalization of health care profession, India has entered the industry in only recent times. India's corporate hospitals are fully equipped with up market and efficiency. The Indian Systems of Medicine also has become a valid reason for them especially in preventive cure and alternative medicines. Medical Tourism is poised to be the next Indian success story after InformationTechnology. According to recent study of ASSOCHAM, in 2008 the size of industry was estimated Rs 1500 crore and it would grow into Rs. 9500 crores by 2015 with an annual growth rate of 30 %.

The Indian government has predicted that India's \$ 17 billion -a-year health care industry would grow by 13% in next four years. Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM) The Indian Systems of Medicine include Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy together characterized under the department of AYUSH in the union health andfamilywelfare ministry. During the ninth plan, with an expenditure of more than Rs. 1, 000 crore, a

quantum jump in outlays on schemes for development and promotion of AYUSH system of medicine has been achieved during Tenth and Eleventh Plan.

Indians are known for their hospitality and warmth. India has an incomparably rich heritage in ancient systems of medicine that make up a veritable treasure house of knowledge for both preventive and curative health care. Around 1000 BC when Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM) were fully documented in Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. Thus, ISM is considered to be one of the oldest organized systems of medicine for positive health and cure of human sickness. The most important and massive ancient compilation of the school of medicine is known as Charaka Samhita.

It contains several chapters dealing at length with internal medicine. About six hundred drugs of plant, animal and mineral origin are described in it. But traditional medicine was ignored when western medical knowledge and procedures were introduced into the country. Once again the same has regained its limelight. Ayurveda : Ayurveda means the “ science of life” in Sanskrit. It is one of oldest and the best documented among the ancient systems of medicine. From the Charaka Samhita (600 B. C) and the Susruta samhita. Yoga & Naturopathy : Yoga is not really a system of medicine.

Its objectives are self- realization and spiritual union with all –pervasive divine cosmic power. But certain intermediary practices and yogic attitudes have proved beneficial for reducing stress, preventing many lifestyle-related diseases, and promoting general health and well being. Naturopathy is based on the fundamental principles of airbed. The basic tenet of Naturopathy is to

live according to the laws of nature: disease occurs due to the accumulation of toxins in the body, and to cure the ailment, the body is purified with the use of natural methods, dietary regulations and exercise.

Unani : The Unani system originated in the fourth and fifth century BC in Greece under the patronage of Hippocrates (460BC-377) and Galen. The system is based on the humoral theory that good health depends on the balance of the four humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile.

Siddha : Siddha means a “ master” thus the name denoted the mastery of such practices. The most famous of the siddha was Nagarjuna, whose rasatantra forms the basis of this system. The distinctive features of siddha are its reliance on minerals and metallic compounds, and its emphasis on rejuvenation therapies.

Homeopathy : The term homeopathy comes from the Greek word ‘ homios’ means like and ‘ pathos’ means suffering. Homeopathy works by looking at the symptoms, will take into account the individual’s mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health before deciding the treatment. Homeopathy is based on the principles that ‘ like cures like’. Current State of Affairs The American Medical Association (AMA) has conducted a cost comparison study of health care in different countries.

The surgical procedures and the dental treatment procedures have a cost advantage - approximately 1/6th of the cost in USA. Also the waiting period for even a simple surgery is minimum 6 months and specialty treatments are 9-12 months in USA / UK which is almost instant in India. AMA has proved though there are many countries less expensive than USA, India is the least

expensive compared to European and Asian countries. Table 1: Summary of Medical care, Medical Manpower facilities available under Indian Systems of Medicine Facilities | Ayurveda | Unani | Siddha | Yoga | Naturopathy | Homeopathy | | | | | | | | Total | | Hospitals | 2398 | 268 | 231 | 8 | 18 | 230 | 3203 | | Beds | 42963 | 4489 | 2401 | 135 | 722 | 10851 | 61561 | | Dispensaries | 13914 | 1010 | 464 | 71 | 56 | 5836 | 21351 | | Registered | 453661 | 46558 | 6381 | 0 | 888 | 217850 | 725338 | | Practitioners | | | | | | | |

Source: Department of Ayush, ---- Health & Family welfare, Government of India. The Indian Systems of Medicine is given more importance in southern India.

The state like Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and other states in India plays a key role in medical tourism. Kerala-The Pioneer State Kerala has pioneered health tourism in India. Kerala has strongly focused on Ayurveda and its wide array of treatments and medications, good facilities are also available in other traditional forms of medicine as well as in modern medical treatment. Kerala is Capitalizing on its Rich Cultural Heritage and alternate Medical Therapies. Karnataka's Foray The government of Karnataka has ambitious plans to make Karnataka the top health tourism destination not only in India but internationally. In fact, the government is setting up a Bangalore International Health City

Corporation for provision of a wide variety health care products and treatments. Tamil Nadu Tamil Nadu has multi speciality hospitals that offer the best medical treatment at surprisingly low rates. In the state various other forms of medicine, viz, Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani, Nature Therapy and Yoga are also practiced, which the foreigners are inclined to patronize. The <https://assignbuster.com/medical-tourism-in-south-india/>

Tourism Department is taking steps to promote the “ illness to wellness” concept by developing tourism with health care. Andhra Pradesh The famous Nizamia General Hospital is the one of its kind probably in the whole world to use Unani system of medicine, since 1938 and treating almost 1500 outpatients every day.

The state made rejuvenation therapy , alternative medicine, yoga and traditional healing systems as its main tourist attraction. Maharashtra’s Unlimited Potential This state, as a gateway to India, offers tremendous potential to develop medical tourism. The latest addition in Mumbai is the Asian Heart Institute at Bandra-Kurla complex, which offers state-of-the art facilities for all types of heart complications and even preventive cardiological treatment to avoid heart alignments and keep under control a host of heart problems. This institute in collaborating with the Cleveland Institute, U. S. A offers ‘ Five Star’ services at reasonable prices. Medical Infrastructure

In India, it is estimated that there are 15, 000 hospitals, 8, 75, 000 hospital beds, 5, 00, 000 doctors, 7, 37, 000 Nurses, 170 medical colleges, 3, 50, 000 retail chemist outlets. Around 18, 000 new doctors are added every year. Almost 80, 000 additional beds are still required. Given below is a SWOT Analysis of the Indian Systems of Medicine and Medical Tourism Industry in its current state: | STRENGTHS | WEAKNESS | | Quality Service at Affordable Cost | No strong government support / initiative to promote medical | | Vast supply of qualified doctors | tourism | | International Reputation of ospitals and Doctors | Low Coordination between the various players in the industry- | | Diversity of tourism destinations and Experiences | airline operators,
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hotels and hospitals | | Traditional and Ancient systems of Medicine |
 Customer Perception as an unhygienic country | | | No proper accreditation
 and regulation system for hospitals | | | Lack of uniform pricing policies
 across Hospitals | | OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS | | Fast-paced life style
 increases demand for wellness tourism and | • Strong competition from
 countries like Thailand, Malaysia and | | alternative cures. | Singapore. |
 Increased demand and Shortage of supply in National Health | • Lack of
 international accreditation – a major inhibitor. | | Systems in countries like
 UK, Canada. | • Overseas medical care not covered by insurance providers. | |
 Demand from countries with underdeveloped healthcare facilities. | • Under –
 investment in health infrastructure. | | Demand for retirement homes for
 elderly people especially | • Identifying a real and ideal practitioner is a major
 problem in | | Japanese. | India. | | Personal touch by the doctors in India. | •
 Exploitation of tourists | | Traffic system is well developed and easy to go
 from one country | | | to another country. | | Medicines and labour cost is low
 as compared to developed | | | countries. | | Role of Government The role of
 Indian Government for success in medical tourism in Indian Systems of
 Medicines are • To Regulate functioning of hospitals to build consumers’
 trust. • To encourage private investment and FDI in medical infrastructure
 and policymaking for improving medical tourism. • To provide conducive
 fiscal policies - providing low interest rate loans, reducing import/excise duty
 for medical equipment. To Facilitate hassle free visa process and institute
 visa-on-arrival for patients. The government should 1. Build the ISM Brand
 Abroad based on – high quality service, value formoneyand destination
 diversity. 2. Promote Inter-Sectoral Coordination like aligning the activities of
 various players – Tourism Department, Transport Operators, Hotel

Associations, Escorts personnel etc. 3. Information Dissemination using Technology about ISMI and enabling online transactions. 4. Standardization of Services like pricing, hygiene and quality standards. Role of Private Sector

1. Increased participation in building infrastructure
2. Integrate Horizontally by providing end-to-end healthcare solutions to consumers.
- 3.

Joint Ventures / Alliances: Tie ups with foreign institutions MEDICITIES – A self-sustained healthcare hub with super specialty hospitals of international standards, ancillary facilities, research institutions, health resort, rehabilitation centers and residential apartments may be floated through a public-private partnership. Conclusion : India's growing economy and the world's high cost medical treatments are the bright opportunities for promoting Medical Tourism. To gain an competitive advantage over other countries the government may use our unique, ancient and traditional Indian Systems of Medicine as a USP and can participate in developing the needed infrastructure facilities, creating network and connectivity with health, tourism and other related industries, tie-ups with other countries. The sky is open for ISM Medical Tourism.