

## **A Study of Medical Tourism Prospects, Difficulties & Problems In The Indian Region**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Medical tourists from neighboring states and countries, most notably Myanmar, have flocked to India in recent years. India's top medical professionals and institutions are vying for out-of-country patients as part of the Indian government's Act East Policy. International medical tourism is not a new concept, but its recent meteoric rise in popularity certainly is. People from poorer countries used to have to travel to more developed countries in order to get advanced medical treatment. Healthcare consumers in the developed world are increasingly traveling to poor countries for treatment because they perceive medical care to be of greater quality and lower cost there. India's expanding status as a top destination for medical tourists is having a positive impact on the country's economy, society, and culture. New employment, increased tourism revenue, and enhanced local quality of life brought about by better infrastructure and education all fall under this category. Current medical facilities in India are cutting edge, and their staffs of physicians and nurses are among the best in the world.

**KEYWORDS:** - medical tourism, Medical Tourist Management, Medical Care, Quality Policy, Medical Travel Value

### **INTRODUCTION**

What we now refer to as "Medical Tourism" is the phenomenon of international travelers seeking medical treatment. Wellness, in contrast to medical tourism, is focused on prevention, whereas medicine is always defined in terms of treatment. Even within the realm of medical tourism, the therapeutic motives span the gamut from elective operations like teeth cleanings and fillings to major surgeries like heart transplants and artificial joints. According to a recent analysis by Grand View Research, Inc., the worldwide medical tourism market size is projected to reach USD 179.6 billion by 2026, growing at a CAGR of 21.9% from 2018 to 2026. Income from medical tourists is taxed like ordinary income, yet their presence is beneficial to the economy as a whole because of the money it brings in. It also serves as a source of commerce and employment for locals. In addition, it promotes the development of ancillary industries including the pharmaceutical and medical device sectors and the travel and tourist industry. As a crucial market driver, government support for medical tourism helps keep the host country's image and government stable. With a CAGR of 17%, the worldwide medical tourism business is expected to be worth \$40 billion by 2020. Countries like India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Mexico, etc., all play important roles in the development of this market potential. The key element driving demand for medical tourism abroad is the availability of cheaper treatment choices with superior quality care. Travelers may expect to save anywhere from 30 to 80 percent off the cost of care in these locations. Benefits such as improved healthcare, cutting-edge technology, new pharmaceuticals, cutting-edge medical equipment, enhanced hospitality, and individualized medical care are also propelling the industry.

Medical tourism is a relatively young phenomenon that has seen explosive growth in recent years. The word "medical tourism" refers to the practice of going abroad for one's health care needs, especially those of a surgical or dental kind. According to Goodrich & Goodrich (1987), medical tourism is the practice of actively marketing one's health-care services and facilities to out-of-town visitors in addition to the typical tourist attractions.

A kind of recreational travel, medical tourism is described by Laws (1996) as leaving one's usual environment in order to seek treatment in a foreign country. Traveling for the purpose of receiving medical care, whether conventional or alternative, is included in this definition. Patients seeking medical, dental, or surgical care often go abroad for treatment, and while there, they often take advantage of the chance to sightsee in addition to receiving medical care (as defined by Connell, 2006). Medical tourism, as described by Carrera and Bridges (2006), consists of prearranged trips taken to improve or maintain one's physical and mental health.

In order to get high-quality medical, dental, and surgical care, many people are now venturing to other nations for their treatments. The rising expense of medical treatment in industrialized nations, the convenience and low cost of foreign travel, and the rising quality of medical facilities in many parts of the globe have all contributed to this trend. There is no universally accepted definition of "medical tourism." Medical tourism is defined as the practice of going outside of one's country to get medical care. Any non-resident who needs medical attention is considered a medical tourism patient, with the exception of permanent residents who would prefer to get treatment in their country of residence. Many nations, including India, Thailand, and a number of countries in South America, now rely heavily on revenue generated by medical tourists. As an additional factor, nations like Malaysia and Singapore are seeing an increase in the number of people traveling there to get medical treatment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**DR. BINDI VARGHESE (2012)** Now is a great time for India to catch up to the rest of the developed world and create its own high-quality health care system. This article discusses the potential for individuals in need of specialist treatment, such as surgery, to use private medical care provided by hospitals and clinics in conjunction with the tourist business, known as "Medical Tourism." Corporate interests in healthcare delivery and travel are driving this development. It is also worth noting that for-profit hospitals are actively working to expand medical tourism's reach and effectiveness. Quality assurance and standardization requirements for hospital management are, in reality, an urgent need. The healthcare industry urgently needs a whole quality management strategy due to inefficient administrative procedures. Healthcare facilities in Southern India must not neglect the implementation of quality control measures. It would provide a new path for the South to follow in terms of guaranteeing high-quality service and increasing the level of satisfaction among its clientele. Accordingly, this research seeks to comprehend the efficient management techniques in South India.

**Kumar, G et.al. (2015)** India has evolved as a renowned location for delivering Global levels of health care at low pricing, making it a hotspot for medical tourists. Recently, however, there has been a change in the location of medical tourism, with an increasing number of people from developed nations heading to Asia for treatment. Medical tourism refers to the practice of going abroad for healthcare purposes, such as for dental or surgical procedures. As reported by (Connell) (2006) Patients seeking medical, dental, or surgical care often go abroad for treatment, and while there, they often take advantage of the chance to sightsee and experience the local culture. The research team behind this project hopes to learn more about how medical tourism

is helping the Indian hospitality sector expand. A condition of complementarity exists when the expansion of one industry aids the development of another. Based on research by (Hirschman, A.O.1958) 2. Medical tourism is on the rise in India, with a 30 percent increase predicted for 2015. There has been a substantial improvement in the quality of medical care and hospital facilities supplied to patients in India, with 21 hospitals in India already recognized by JCI. When it comes to medical tourism, India is second only to Thailand. Medical tourism is on the rise thanks to globalization, and this trend has been proven to support the expansion of India's thriving hospitality and tourist sector. The analysis relied on previously collected information and published papers.

**Malhotra, N., (2022)** India has grown into a major destination for medical tourists, but the country's stakeholders face a delicate balancing act between the benefits and threats presented by the ever-changing regional and global scene. The medical tourism sector has been challenged by the 2019 emergence of the Corona virus pandemic. The purpose of this research is to examine the variables that have contributed to the growth of India's medical tourism business, as well as the challenges that the country's stakeholders must overcome to develop a successful approach. The study used a qualitative approach, and information was gathered via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with medical professionals and high-ranking hospital administrators. The research used a constant-comparison analysis strategy based on abduction logic. The potential for Indian businesses in the medical tourism sector is evaluated in the research.

**Parwaiz Ahmad Najar (2022)** The research in this article is based on a systematic literature search for articles on health insurance for international patients traveling to India for medical procedures. This research was conducted using both content analysis and a Systematic Mapping Study. The purpose of this research is to analyze the rise of medical tourism and health insurance as marketing tools for India. According to a review of relevant literature, when traditional health insurance models are replaced with more progressive ones, an increase in medical tourism is connected with expansion of health insurance (Mittal, 2017). The research found that medical tourists' views of India as a safe and affordable medical tourism destination had shifted favorably as a consequence of the growing health insurance industry in the country. In a similar vein, India's popularity has increased because to its superior healthcare facilities and plenty of cutting-edge infrastructure that can be accessed for a very little outlay of cash. The goal of this research is to identify the worldwide health insurance models that are using the most cutting-edge strategies to promote medical tourism in India.

**Dr. Shreya Bhargav (2018)** A state or nation may benefit enormously from tourism, which acts as an economic windfall. This sector's growth rate is contingent on several factors, from transportation to lodging. First, there are transportation services; second, lodging; third, food and drink; fourth, leisure activities; fifth, guidance and information; and sixth, mementos. India has quickly become a popular medical tourism destination due to its ability to provide world-class medical treatment at reasonable prices. Combining elements of wellness and health care with recreational activities. Medical tourists go to India, Thailand, and Singapore because of the region's affordable prices, advanced medical facilities, and plenty of board-certified physicians. Recently, there has been a movement in the location of medical tourism, particularly from developed economies to Asian nations. In terms of both income and employment, the health care industry in India is now among the biggest in the whole tourist industry. In the next four years, the number of international patients visiting India for medical care is projected to double, resulting in a \$6 billion market for medical tourism in India by 2018.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions and accomplish the study's goals, the authors will use both quantitative and qualitative methods. The many research goals and topics may be probed in depth by using an array of research strategies. As a first step, we will compile information on medical tourism in India from secondary sources like studies and papers as well as primary sources like government agencies. Extensive analysis will be performed on the acquired data to provide insight into a number of research issues. The second step is to administer surveys in specific areas and conduct in-depth interviews with relevant organizations, tour operators, medical tourists, and other public and private stakeholders. PP Partners will assist us in carrying out questions. A research approach might be descriptive, exploratory, or haphazard. Books, magazines, newspapers, research articles, journals, electronic journals, the United Nations World Tourism Organization report, the Ministry of Tourism report, the World Travel and Tourism Council report, and the website [www.health-tourism-india.com](http://www.health-tourism-india.com) were all used to compile data and information for this study.

## DATA ANALYSIS

For international patients in need of specialist treatment and surgery, "Medical Tourist" may be described as "the provision of cost-effective medical care with proper consideration of quality in partnership with the tourism sector." Statistical evidence confirms that in 2008-09, over 126 million Indians traveled inside the nation for medical care, spending a total of 23,000 crore rupees due to the lack of economic opportunities and inadequate health facilities in their native town. Local and state governments, as well as the federal government, may put a stop to this wasteful spending by taking the necessary steps. Domestic migration in India is a consequence of inadequate health infrastructure, which is why foreign tourists are drawn to the country in search of lower healthcare costs and better job prospects. at home in the country or a tiny town.

The cost of medical care in India is 40% cheaper than in any other industrialized country, and this is the primary reason for the country's rising prominence as a medical tourism destination. In comparison to the US (\$40,000-60,000), S\$30,000 (Singapore), and THB12,000-15,000 (Thailand), a cardiac patient may have the same care in India for around US\$3,000-6,000. Blood tests, ECGs, chest X-rays, pulmonary function tests, and other diagnostic procedures may cost up to £350 in London, but just \$84. When compared to New York, where an MRI scan may cost upwards of \$700, Escorts Hospital in Delhi offers far lower prices, at only \$60.

In terms of medical care, India is far more cost-effective than Thailand. Evidently, given what follows

**Table -1**

<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Cost In India (In US\$)</b>	<b>Cost In Thailand (In US\$)</b>
<b>Bone Marrow Transplant</b>	US\$ 30000	US\$ 62500
<b>Liver Transplant</b>	US\$ 40000	US\$ 75000
<b>Open Heart Surgery (CABG)</b>	US\$ 4400	US\$ 14250

<b>Hip Replacement</b>	US\$ 4500	US\$ 6900
<b>Knee Surgery</b>	US\$ 4500	US\$ 7000
<b>Hysterectomy</b>	US\$ 511	US\$ 2012
<b>Gall Bladder removal</b>	US\$ 555	US\$ 1755

Super-specialty hospitals like Apollo, Medinova, CDR, medicate in Hyderabad; Hinduja's and Wockhardt in Mumbai; Max, Escorts, and Apollo in Delhi, etc., have been established in India as a result of the growing importance of medical tourism, which has attracted investments from numerous multinational corporations. These medical facilities can meet the demands of both the wealthy and the middle class, since they are outfitted with the cutting-edge tools and equipment needed by doctors to treat the most severe illnesses.

Medical tourists are defined as those who travel for the purpose of receiving medical treatment or care, rather than for pleasure. This includes those who come to practice yoga and meditation, visit spas to relax and revitalize, or seek out cosmetic surgery to keep their appearance in check. They may be considered a medical tourist even if they don't really get any medical care while they're here. Before people would go all the way to Kerala for an ayurvedic treatment for the whole body, they would do things like travel to China to receive acupuncture and acupressure for back pain.

### **Specific Tour Packages for Medical Tourist in India**

A seasoned tourist might find a variety of experiences in India. Medical tourism is a growing industry for several reasons nowadays. India's healthcare system combines a holistic, inward focus on healing with a high level of care, concern, and knowledge, earning it the moniker "First World Healthcare at Third World Prices."

India has a rich history of medicine and surgery dating back to the beginning of time. Indian culture has always prioritized things like care, quality, and service to the community. The modern Indian healthcare system continues this tradition of offering world-class medical care with a personal touch, and its practitioners share this belief.

Indian Medicare is comprehensive and of international quality, covering a wide variety of specialties including cardiology, joint replacement, orthopedic surgery, gastroenterology, ophthalmology, organ transplants, endocrinology, Nephrology, plastic surgery, and urology. In addition to this, dental treatment is another popular reason people go to India.

### **Services offered by Tour Planner to their patient include:**

It's true that medical tourism is on the rise, but it's difficult for a single person to make it work in a foreign country. While lower costs, better care, and more specialized treatments may all play a role, a medical tourist's view of a certain place for treatment may also be influenced by the vacation and its associated difficulties. Because of this, you should consider using a travel agency. Medical tourism organizations now rely heavily on the services of travel companies. Travel agencies have seemingly sprung out of nowhere to accommodate medical tourists by arranging excursions and vacations before, during, and after their medical procedures. The expansion of medical tourism may be attributed in large part to the efforts of these organizations, which coordinate medical care with the patients' religious, cultural, and social values.

## Contribution of Medical Tourism in the Indian Economy

The cost of medical care in India is 40-50% cheaper than in any European country, and yet many Indian hospitals have received international accreditation and deliver first-rate care to patients. With the government's recognition of medical tourism's importance, India is attempting to entice foreign visitors by providing medical visas. A medical visa will typically be valid for the shorter of one year or the length of time required to complete treatment. If a specialist doctor or hospital is involved, the medical visa may be extended for an additional year with the approval of the state government or FRROs. Medical tourists visiting India may also find a variety of restorative services, including yoga, meditation, herbal therapies, and skin care treatments, all of which have the potential to improve mental and physical well-being. This has resulted in a surge of worldwide visitors to India, all seeking to experience the country's famed rejuvenating effects. Around 180,000 international visitors came to India for medical tourism in 2009. It is predicted to increase at a CAGR of about 19%, reaching up to 1.3 million by 2013. One of India's fastest-growing economic sectors, the tourism industry accounts for more than 9.24% of all jobs in India and contributes 5.92% to the national GDP. Foreign investors are being enticed to engage in India's tourist industry via tax breaks and other incentives. The Indian government has included a tax incentive program for the construction of new hotels, particularly those in the 2-star level, in its Union-Budget for 2010-2011. The growth of the medical tourism industry in India has had a significant impact on the country's economy and standard of living. McKinsey & Company and the Confederation of Indian Industry predict that medical tourism would bring in \$1 billion to India by 2012. This is less than one percent of the global income produced by medical tourism. In 2004, medical tourism brought in \$50 billion, and by 2006, that number had climbed to \$70 billion throughout the globe. McKinsey & Company predicts that by the end of 2012, it will have grown to \$200 billion in revenue.

**Table-2 Revenue Generated Through Medical Tourism World-Wide**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Revenue (In Billion US \$)</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>200</b>

Patients from other countries, as well as those from other countries who want urgent care at a reasonable cost, often choose to go to India for medical care. Modern Indian hospitals offer excellent facilities and staff that are well trained and able to communicate effectively in English. When compared to their counterparts in the West, Indian physicians see twice as many patients per year. When compared to other nations, medical care in India is seen as relatively risk-free. Medical travel to India has reached an all-time high. Medical tourism has advanced to the point where any patient may quickly and easily get any available service. Private enterprises and pharmaceutical firms are vying for a piece of the health tourism pie. The number of international visitors seeking medical treatment in India is expected to reach one million by the end of 2012,

up from 500,000 in 2007. This represents a CAGR of 28.09 percent. An individual seeking to save money on medical procedures can do so by traveling to India. The data in the following table makes this very clear: -

### Challenges before Medical Tourism Industry

Exorbitant service taxes are another factor. The sales tax on travel-related services is double that of any other industrialized nation, meaning that tourists will have to part with a hefty sum to enjoy themselves. The following table makes this very clear: -

Procedures	United States	Thailand	Singapore	AHMT-India
Coronary artery bypass surgery	\$70,000-133,000	\$22,000	\$16,300	\$7,500
Bypass surgery with heart valve replacement	\$75,000-140,000	\$25,000	\$22,000	\$6500 – 7000
Hip replacement	\$33,000-57,000	\$12,700	\$12,000	\$6,200
Knee replacement	\$30,000-53,000	\$11,500	\$9,600	\$6,000
Prostate surgery	\$10,000-16,000	\$4,400	\$5,300	\$3,600
Kidney Transplant	\$40000-45000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$12000-15000

Source: -<http://www.docstoc.com>

### Table-3 India's Cost comparison with other countries in case of different surgeries in the year 2012

In India, tourism is booming, becoming a recognized sector of the economy; it generates substantial cash; and it helps alleviate the country's chronic unemployment crisis. Industry has been recognized in several Indian states, including Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, and the Union Territories of Daman and Diu. State governments are making plans to include tourism in Schedule-I, of the Industries Development Act 1951 to grant it the status of an industry and to promote the accommodation sector, so that all parts of the tourism industry, including hotels across the country, can take advantage of various benefits under the Industrial Policy of the respective state governments, such as land banks for low-cost hotels, exemptions from duty on stamp paper, VAT and sales tax, and a single-window clearance system.

### Table-4 Comparative tax rates between India and the neighboring Countries

Countries	Room %	Food %	Liquor %
India	16	16	23
Hong Kong	0	0	0

<b>Maldives</b>	3.5	3.5	3.5
<b>China</b>	5	5	5
<b>Japan</b>	5	5	5
<b>Malaysia</b>	6	6	6
<b>Thailand</b>	7	7	7
<b>Singapore</b>	.7	.7	.7

The aforementioned chart accurately demonstrates how the prevalence of taxes in India significantly raises the price of incoming tourism while simultaneously encouraging outbound travel. The government of India has raised the service tax on flights as part of its federal budget for 2011-2012. Similarly, in a nation where temperatures may reach 48°C to 50°C, a 10% tax surcharge is levied on air-conditioned eateries. A crucial part insurance companies may play in encouraging medical tourism is preventing insurance fraud. They need to make sure the victim is adequately compensated by their insurance policy.

## CONCLUSION

In just five short years, India has risen to prominence as a top health tourism destination for people from all over the globe. India is a great destination for anyone in need of medical care because of the country's abundance of qualified doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals, as well as its wide range of treatment options (including those based on herbal, natural, allopathic, and alternative medicine). Private, international-accredited, and super-specialty hospitals in India are raking in millions of dollars thanks to the medical tourism industry. One estimate predicts that by the end of 2012, India would have hosted one million health tourists, representing a CAGR (rate of increase) of 28.09 percent from 2007. An individual seeking to save money on medical procedures might do so by traveling to India. Because of its location, India may easily take advantage of the global medical tourism market. The government plays an essential part in the growth of the medical tourism industry. The federal government should take action both as a regulator and a facilitator of private investment in healthcare. Foreign travelers visiting for medical reasons should be able to contact the Immigration Department at any port of entry to be processed quickly. This requires the development of new mechanisms to expedite the granting of visas. Medical tourism may be encouraged by the introduction of measures such as tax breaks for service providers, reduced import duties on medical equipment, and the establishment of advisory panels. For tourism in India to thrive, ancillary services like improved transportation are essential.

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