



MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA

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Abstract

The paper brilliantly brings out fundamental aspects of medical tourism, role, preference, features, foreign tourist arrival and importance of JCI accreditation. Medical tourism is one who traveling out of home country to take medical treatment with affordable cost. It is mandatory that every nation has got wellness of the health service on its own. Medical tourism is one of the developmental sectors in the present scenario.

It has gained momentum not only for economic growth, but also for employment generation to the un-organized sector. The purpose of medical tourism has certain dimensions like cost benefit aspects, quality of health care, best accommodation, accessing and utilizing medical care with meticulous manner. This paper presents some ideas pertaining to medical tourism which ultimately highlight slow and steady progress in the economy.

A separate study by ASSOCHAM reported that in the year 2011 about 850000 (NRI) medical tourists came to India and projected that by the year 2015 this number would rise to 3200000.

Key words: Preference, Access, Momentum, Wellness & Progress.

INTRODUCTION

“Travelling is not just an activity, it is the art of broadening your vision though the priceless experience”. – Wayne Chirisa.

Medical tourism means one who travelling out of home country to take medical treatment with cheap and best way. Medical tourism is one of the significant areas; it invariably links with ever so many countries to clearly know about cultural beliefs, climate, accommodation and socio economic condition. The purpose of medical tourism has certain dimensions like cost benefit aspects, quality of health care, best accommodation, accessing and utilizing medical care with meticulous manner. This paper would highlight fundamental aspects in medical tourism, role, preference, salient features, cost condition, foreign tourist arrival, JCI importance and growth pattern.

FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF MEDICAL TOURISM

Medical tourism is mainly deals with one who prefer a hospital to take medical treatment out of their country. The basic inputs of medical tourism are perfect infrastructure, affordable cost, transportation, best accommodation, and safety. These are the major elements can only to decide and make the health tourism worthwhile.

ROLE OF MEDICAL TOURISM

Most popular countries like Malaysia, Thailand, China, Japan, Singapore, Mexico, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal have chosen India is medical hub by which best possible medical treatment could takes place. As for medical tourism as concerned, it has played a significant role to improve the economic development of the country. India is a medical hub for all NRI by which the affordable as well as accessing easily healthcare services provided for them. The main role has outlined below:

1. Good environment
2. Transport



3. Hotel industry
4. Information Service
5. Convertibility of currency.
6. Reasonable cost condition.
7. Cheap and availability of modern healthcare.

PREFERENCE

India is now facing the problems of water scarcity and lack of agricultural production. But we have got very much popularity in the case of tourism sector especially medical tourism. Therefore, most of the foreigner can prefer India is a safety as well as well cultured nation which would offer quality environment with health care. Moreover, many countries have been attracting in all sphere through medical tourism.

There is a valid reason of affordable cost which would induce the host country (NRI) may enter into our country to take medical treatment. Preference of medical tourism in India during 2011-2012 can be outlined with the help of the following table:

Table-I

Name of the Country	Total No. of Tourists	Medical Treatment Obtained in Number	Medical Treatment in %
Afghanistan	95231	15713	16.5
Maldives	50428	29904	59.3
Nepal	125375	1128	0.9
Pakistan	59846	1317	2.2
Bangladesh	487397	37530	7.7
Srilanka	296983	4752	1.6
Bhutan	15266	748	4.9

Source: Medical Tourism Association (2011)

The above table clearly shows that neighboring and other countries have got health care service from India. It highlighted that 1/3rd of total tourist comes from medical facilities expected tourist.

SALIENT FEATURES OF MEDICAL TOURISM

The foreigners have attracted to India for medical tourism, due to some features, they are:

1. Appropriate Locality
2. Quality Segment
3. Cost benefit analysis
4. Well-equipped specialist
5. Economic gains
6. JCI accreditation
7. Foreign tourist arrival
8. Employment generation
9. Accessibility and utilization
10. Growth potential

1. Appropriate Locality

Most of the foreigners have expected to choose the hotel accommodation more expensive. The locality is one of the parameter which would satisfy the patient those come from abroad. When the hotel and other amenities have attained absolute target and fullest satisfaction by the tourist, then locality impressed in the well and good atmosphere.



2. Quality Segment

Quality does not mean by offering latest technology in medical field and good treatment to the patient. But it includes best health care service, hi-tech environment, less waiting time, taking personal care about patient, reasonable cost levied to the patient, well trained Doctors, Nurses and other supportive staff at any time services.

3. Cost Benefit Analysis

Many foreigners have chosen India as a medical hub mainly because of affordable treatment charge levied. Moreover, multi-speciality status hospitals have concentrated not only for cancer treatment, but cosmetic surgery, dentistry, cardiovascular, orthopedics, weight-loss, reproductive segment etc.

4. Well-equipped Specialist

India is a powerful country with great medical scientists to cure variety of diseases in the current scenario. Most of the NRI can prefer India as a specialized area where multi-speciality health care service provided for them. In addition to, the entire medical practitioner are well as trained and experienced hands to deal with medical treatment.

5. Economic Gains

When the home country can get more patients from abroad, it will gain more foreign exchange earnings. India has gained much on foreign exchange earnings through foreign tourist arrival especially medical tourism. This would improve our economic development.

6. JCI Accreditation

Joint Commission International is a accreditation agency which has the right to issue quality health care standard (Gold Seal Approval) certificate to the quality hospital. In this connection, India has secured a lot of hospital in JCI accreditation. JCI is an US based agency can maintain survey and collect opinion from the In and outpatient about the hospital of which the gold seal approval to be granted.

7. Foreign Tourist Arrival

India is a well cultured nation with plenty of resources. Most of the foreigner can visit to India for many purposes like tour, education, job etc. Hence, the FTA has grown gradually, it leads to the economy will achieve more gain.

8. Employment Generation

Tourism is an excellent one which can promote dual side like growth and employment opportunity. When much more foreigner can visit to India in terms of medical, study or other purposes, it leads to un-organized group will steadily improve.

9. Accessibility and Utilization

NRI can access and utilize medical services through India are the major component of medical tourism. NRI can reach the hospital and utilizing benefits are great importance to the developing economy. Health care delivery system in India is purely a service oriented. Medical tourism in India has got great response gradually.

10. Growth Potential

Tourism is one of the most powerful as well as remarkable sector which would provide much benefit to the country. For instance, for the past three decade, there has been unstable growth rate attained by our nation through tourism. Growth consists of economic and non-economic aspects.

COST CONDITION AND MEDICAL TOURISM

India is a country can give lot of medical facilities all over the world. The low cost service is a factor which influences the medical tourism. Besides, some diseases and its cost condition summarized below:



Table - II

Nature of Morbidity	USA	Colombia	India
Heart by-pass surgery	144000	14802	5200
Angioplasty	57000	4500	3300
Heart Valve R	170000	18000	5500
Hip-replacement	50000	6500	7000
Hip-resurfacing	50000	10500	7000
Knee replacement	50000	6500	6200
Spinal infusion	100000	N.A	6500
Dental implant	2800	1750	1000
Face lift	15000	5000	4000
Breast implant	10000	2500	3500

Source: Medical Tourism Association, 2011 (www.dailymail.co.uk)

The above table clearly expressed that the cheap and availability of cost condition obtained by foreigners through our nation.

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVAL

There are innumerable number of foreigners have been arriving in India every day for various reasons. For the benefit of NRI arrival in India, Department of Tourism had Tourist Information Offices in major cities which would function in the form of Regional Tourist Officers as well as information officers at various stages. The information officers have to perform while FTA in India and they should enquire information about tourist visit and provide sufficient guidance. Information is a source of NRI who come to India and offer valuable assistance regarding travel, accommodation and concession etc.

This paper has highlighted the entire information about the medical tourist and not foreign tourist arrival. Due to paucity of data pertaining to medical tourism, the following table would focus Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) in India in the post reform period:

Table - III

Year	FTA	Annual Growth Rate
1991	1677508	-1.7
1992	1867651	11.3
1993	1764830	-5.5
1994	1886433	6.9
1995	2123683	12.6
1996	2287860	7.7
1997	2374094	3.8
1998	2358629	-0.7
1999	2481928	5.2
2000	2649378	6.7
2001	2537282	-4.2
2002	2384362	-6.0
2003	2726214	14.3
2004	3457477	26.8
2005	3818610	13.3
2006	4447167	13.5
2007	5081504	14.3
2008	5282603	4.0
2009	5167699	-2.2
2010	5775692	11.8

Source: GOI, India Tourism Statistics, 2012



From the above table indicates that there have been ups and down movement in Foreign Tourist Arrival would be taken place. The annual growth rates have also been fluctuations and after 2003 there was a great response received from the foreign tourist arrival. This would estimate that the country surely earn more foreign exchange.

GROWTH PATTERN OF MEDICAL TOURISM

India is a biggest magnificent atmosphere for attracting foreign patients to take medical treatment. Growth can be assessed in the form of foreign exchange earnings through foreigner's arrival and other purposes. The volume of medical tourist world-wide could reach up to 5 million by 2016 attracting visitors to the country.

The Indian health care industry is estimated to double in value to 6 billion dollar by 2018 but it reached 1.1 billion dollar in 2012. Due to the paucity of data relating to medical tourism, so that the estimated valued could be expressed in this area.

The Indian health care industry valued at US dollar 79 billion in 2012 and it would be estimated to reach US dollar 160 billion by 2017.

A brief report on health care and medical tourism in India outlined below:

Table- IV

Sector	Estimated Size (In Rs In Billion)	Growth Rate
Hospital and Nursing Home	540	20
Medical Equipments	90	15
Clinical Lab Diagnostics	90	30
Imaging Diagnostics	45	30
Education & Training	90	40
Aesthetics & Weight loss &		
Retail Pharmacy	346.50	30
Health Insurance	95	30
Medical Tourism	95	40

Source: Medical Tourism Association (2011)

The above table showed that the growth rates of medical tourism and estimated size have been moderate and it implies that the country improved slowly and steadily in the tourism sector. The sector wise and estimated valued exhibited that the retail and hospital got more amount of money that met to provide quality of health care service to the public especially foreign country people.

IMPORTANCE OF JCI

Joint Commission International is a US based non-profit organization serves to improve patient's safety and quality of health care in the international community by providing education, publication, advisory services, certification and international accreditation.

The top most JCI accreditation received countries are India, Thailand, Singapore, Turkey, and Malaysia. Joint Commission International is a accreditation agency which has the right to issue quality health care standard (Gold Seal Approval) certificate to the quality hospital. In this connection, India has secured a lot of hospital in JCI accreditation. JCI is an US based agency can maintain survey and collect opinion from the in and outpatient about the hospital of which the gold seal approval to be granted.

Meanwhile, getting JCI accreditation does not mean by permanent quality assurance of a hospital. It is a continuous performance improvement journey by which the hospital can grow slowly and steadily in all segments.



India has secured about 21 JCI accreditation hospitals which would highlight quality proved by the patients from abroad.

CONCLUSION

Medical tourism is an upcoming as well as charming NRI of which much more benefits the country could be reached. This paper clearly exhibits the rudimentary ideas about medical tourism which would travel in the past three decades and gained a lot. In future, the government should take some active steps to strengthen the safety measures to the foreigners and offer best services in which the country can attain more economic gains and foreign exchange earnings.

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