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PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA

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**Prof (Dr) Khatib Noaman Umer: Prospects and Challenges of Medical Tourism in India --
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ABSTRACT

Tourism is when people move from one place to another place either for pleasure or recreation. Medical tourism mostly includes health care services and a component of medical services along with its counterpart tourism services. People from other parts of India visit for pleasure, relaxation and medical needs. The most famous treatment is cosmetic surgery and dental services by Indian hospitals. India currently is at par with Europe, USA and UK when it comes to medical services in terms of infrastructure and advanced technology and the major catch is **price**. Indian climate is also suitable to non- Indians. India is now becoming more popular when it comes in hospitalisation and the way services offered touch the human heart. India is one of the most popular places of tourism which attracts people from other part of country, here medication when combined with tourism has become the most effective player. India is also rated amongst the top ten “must see destination” by Conde Naste Traveller, an international magazine with lot of reputation. India today stands as one of the best services provider to sell tourism services to each corner of the world.

INTRODUCTION

Medical tourism is becoming highly recognized term. citizens of highly developed nations bypass services offered in their own communities and travel to less developed areas of the world for medical care. The medical tourism marketplace consists of a growing number of countries competing for patients by offering a wide variety of medical, surgical and dental services which further includes cosmetic surgery, dental procedures, bariatric surgery, assisted reproductive technology, ophthalmologic care, orthopedic surgery, cardiac surgery, organ and cellular transplantation, gender reassignment procedures, and even executive health. Indian healthcare facilities are in no way inferior to the foreign competitors like Thailand, Philippines, Singapore and so on. It has also been successful in arousing the interests of Indian government with its promise to bring in more revenue by luring people over the world to travel and cure themselves at the same time.

India - the magnetic destination

There are a number of reasons that has led to the promotion of medical tourism in India

Patients from abroad are wooed not only by the low cost factor but also by the exceptional hospitality offered by the Indian healthcare centers. In short, 'cure with care' motto of Indian MT industry. 75% of healthcare services and investments are now provided by the private sector. The major service providers in Indian medical tourism are: the Apollo Hospitals, Escorts Hospital, Fortis Hospitals, Breach Candy, Hinduja, Mumbai's Asian Heart Institute, Arvind Eye Hospitals, Manipal Hospitals, Mallya Hospital, Shankara Nethralaya etc. AIIMs, a public -sector hospital is also in the fray. The major reasons behind the emergence of India as magnetic destinations for MT are analyzed below:

“First World treatment” at “Third World prices”

There is no doubt that the Indian medical industry's main appeal is low cost treatment. Most estimates claim treatment costs in India start around a tenth, sometimes even a sixteenth of the price of comparable treatment in leading countries of the world. For instance a heart bypass procedure costs roughly \$140,000 without any insurance in the US. The same procedure, however, costs only around \$7,000 or Rs 3 lakh at one of India's leading surgery centers, a knee surgery (on both knees) costs 350,000 rupees (\$7,700) in India; in Britain this costs £10,000 (\$16,950), more than twice as much, a tummy tuck can amount to 6,500 pounds in Britain but only 1,500 pounds abroad with a vacation package included.

OBJECTIVES

1. The reason behind emergence of India as a magnetic destination for healthcare tourism
2. The cost effectiveness of Medical Tourism in India
3. Opportunities, challenges and future outlook of medical tourism.
4. The role of government in promoting medical tourism

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is partly descriptive, partly exploratory and casual. For this study data and information has been collected from secondary data with the help of Books, Newspapers, Research Journals, E-Journals, Report of Ministry of Tourism and the websites.

HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Health care industry is considered as one of the professional industry which includes people's exercise of skill, their judgment or providing of a service which are related to the preservation or improvement of the health of individuals who are injured, sick or disabled. The delivery of modern health care depends on an expanding group of trained professionals coming together as an interdisciplinary team.

WHY PEOPLE SELECT INDIA

India, South Africa, Jordan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore are few of those countries where medical tourism is increasing and India has recently entered into medical tourism. As per the study by McKinsey and the Confederation of Indian Industry, medical tourism in India had crossed US \$1 billion business in 2013. The Indian government predicts that India's health-care industry could grow approximately by 8 % each year.

As rightly mentioned that price is the catchiest part of Indian tourism industry. The slogan for Indian medical treatment cost is "today's treatment at yesterday's price".

Table No.1 The Comparative rates of surgeries

SURGERIES	USA \$	UK GBK	INDIA \$
Open Heart Surgery (CABG)	21400	100000	7,500
Total Knee Replacement	48000	25700	6300
Hip Resurfacing	55000	24100	7000
LA Hysterectomy	22000	11800	4000
Lap Cholecystectomy	18000	9600	3000
Spinal Decompression Fusion	60000	32100	5500
Obesity Surgery (Gastric Bypass)	65000	34800	9500

Sources: Travel India Company

As per survey Dental, eye and cosmetic surgery in advance countries cost almost 4 times more compared to India.

MEDICAL TOURISM AS AN INDUSTRY

Medical tourism can be defined as provision of 'cost effective' private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients who are in need of surgical and other forms of special cure. This process is being facilitated by the corporate sector involved in medical care as well as the tourism industry - both at the private and public level.

ADVANTAGES OF MEDICAL TOURISM

Tangible Advantages

- Foreign exchange earnings which help for the economic development of the nation
 - Improve information sharing amongst different parts of world
 - Improvement in hospital supply and chain efficiency
 - Up gradation and sharing of Information and Technology
 - Generation of employment opportunities in the same industry and related industries
 - Optimum utilization of Infrastructure and skilled manpower
 - Better logistics performance both in internal and external areas
 - Opportunity for development in Infrastructure in Health, Tourism and Travel.
 - Cost Advantage when it comes to Tariff over the Developed countries world wide
- #### **Intangible advantages**
- Acceptance by other country as a global healthcare provider
 - Social and cross cultural experience
 - Customer relations at international level
 - Healthy Competitive advantage
 - Satisfaction of patients

THE CURRENT SCENARIO OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA

In India, after Information Technology, Medical Tourism is considered as the next success story. As per the study conducted by Mckinsey-CII, the earning potential was calculates at Rs.5000-10000 Crores in the year 2012..

Globally healthcare is considered to be a \$3-trillion industry, and India is now in a very good position to tap the top-end segment by highlighting its facilities and

services, and exploiting the brand equity of leading Indian healthcare professionals across the globe by 2020

HEALTH TOURISM IN INDIA – ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Since the last decade we may see the inflow of health tourists from the West, especially the UK, US and some of the European countries has been on the upside. The differences in price of the treatment, combined with quality of doctors are the main reasons for the growing western business. The Indian hospitals services have improved a lot and can be now matched with the best in any part of the world. Currently India has more than 110 healthcare institutions, which are of international standard. Many hospitals in India today have the infrastructure and equipment that match with the best in the globe.

The **SWOC** analysis of Indian medical tourism business is:

Table No.2

STRENGTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service quality • Best location • Best climate • Alternative medical cures like homeopathy, Ayurveda and yoga 	WEEKNESSESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor infrastructure • Poor pricing policy • Lack of trained staff in Govt. hospitals •
OPPORTUNITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of forex Reserve • Growth in GDP • Rise in medical and tourism industry 	CHALLENGES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry of foreign player • Lack of foreign accreditation

PRICE

The price range offered by the Indian medical industry is few times unbeatable because India offers the best prices. India is not only cheaper but the waiting time is tolerable. This is due to the outburst of the private sector which comprises of hospitals and clinics with the latest technology and best practitioners.

Table no.3 Cost Comparisons on some major procedure between India and US

Procedure	US (\$) approx.	India (\$) approx.
Bone Marrow Transplant	\$2,50,000	\$69,200
Liver Transplant	\$3,00,000	\$69,350
Heart Surgery	\$30,000	\$8,700
Orthopedic Surgery	\$20,000	\$6,300
Cataract Surgery	\$2,000	\$1,350
Smile Designing	\$8,000	\$1,100
Metal Free Bridge	\$5,500	\$600
Dental Implants	\$3,500	\$900
Porcelain Metal Bridge	\$3,000	\$600
Porcelain Metal Crown	\$1,000	\$100
Tooth Impactions	\$2,000	\$125

Root Canal Treatment	\$1,000	\$110
Tooth Whitening	\$800	\$125
Tooth Colored Composite	\$500	\$30
Fillings / Tooth Cleaning	\$300	\$90
Breast:		
Mastopexy	\$7,500	\$2,800
Reduction Mammoplasty	\$8,000	\$3,300
Mammoplasty Augmentation	\$8,000	\$2,750
Replacement Of Implants	\$6,500	\$3,000
Face:		
Blepharoplasty (Upper & Lower)	\$6,000	\$2,000
Facelift	\$6,500	\$2,800
Dermabrasion Total face)	\$5,500	\$2,150
Canthopexy w/Orbicularis suspension	\$6,000	\$2,200
Hair Transplant	\$50 Per graft	\$3 Per graft
Endoscopic Brow lift	\$5,800	\$2,300
Neck lift	\$6,100	\$2,400
Otoplasty (For prominent Ears)	\$4,700	\$1,500
Nose:		
Primary Rhinoplasty	\$7,300	\$2,900
Tip Rhynoplasty	\$6,300	\$1,300
Body Contouring:		
Abdominoplasty	\$7,700	\$3,200
Thigh Lift (Bilateral)	\$7,200	\$3,150
Total Lower Body Lift(Belt Lipectomy)	\$9,500	\$6,000
Liposuction (One Region)	\$6,100	\$1,750
Non – Surgical Procedures:		
Laser Hair Removal	\$550	\$225
Laser Resurfacing/ Wrinkle Reduction	\$550	\$225
Laser Acne Treatment	\$575	\$230
Laser Scar Treatment	\$500	\$210
Botox	\$70 Per Unit	\$8 Per Unit

Sources: Travel India Company

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MEDICAL TOURISM

- Tie ups with Embassies.
- Advertisement campaigns worldwide
- Nodal centres in other countries.
- Reduction of Excise duty from 17% to 8% on all goods produced in the pharmaceutical sector as per the Budget .
- Continuous medical education for doctors

- Patient Education Progress
- Free health Check up camps at both rural and urban areas
- Tie ups with various hospitals and insurance companies overseas.
- Participation in Health Expo's abroad.

THE STAKEHOLDERS

1. The Indian government including ministry of health, ministry of external affairs, and ministry of tourism and state governments of different states.
2. The corporate run health institutions.
3. The financial institutions like tourism finance corporation of India, IDCI, and IDBI etc.
4. The medical council of India (MCI).
5. The Indian healthcare federation and different industry chambers. Indian Medical Tourism

KEY CHALLENGES BEFORE INDIAN MEDICAL TOURISM

- 1) Lack of Government support to promote medical tourism in India
- 2) Lack Of medical Infrastructure provided
- 3) Lack of international accreditation
- 4) Perception among the foreign tourist as an unhygienic country
- 5) Tough competition from Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore

CONCLUSION

Medical Tourism in India is booming and can be witnessed by the huge number of International tourist visiting India. India is one of the world's most popular region of the world in the case of medical tourism due to the low cost of treatment, zero waiting time, approachability, tourists spots in India like Gate way Of India, Kolkata Port, Tajmahal, Vishwanath Temple, Mughal Gardens and other value added services. As the Indian economy of growing so world's best hospitals are coming to India to Ancash the opportunity.

The medical industry has successfully attracted the interest and attention of not only the Indian government, but also the common man. The top Indian hospitals such as All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Batra Hospital and Medical Research Centre ,Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, Bombay Hospital, P.D. Hinduja Hospital & Medical Research Centre, Breach Candy Hospital, Lilavati Hospital, Apollo etc, are investing immense time, effort, manpower and money in their Research &Development . As a matter of fact, several new innovative products have been launched in the Indian market and have been patented.

The Indian consumer has ready focused to new creation in the field of health and medicine. The companies are constantly upgrading latest technology either through partnerships or developing them indigenously. The government is fully supporting the cause of state of the art infrastructure by providing support in setting up new hospitals and financing them.

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