



# “PROSPECTS OF MEDICAL TOURISM – A STUDY OF THE PROMINENT PARTICIPANTS IN HOSPITAL AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN BANGALORE AND CHENNAI”

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## Abstract

*Medical Tourism” is comparatively new in the vast ocean of travel & tourism industry. When we describe Medical Tourism in simple terms, it is a provision of ‘cost effective’ private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical and other forms of specialized treatment. This process is being facilitated by the corporate sector involved in medical care as well as the tourism industry - both private and public. Unlike other countries, India is a safe place and people are known for their hospitality. It’s the most touted healthcare destinations for .Medical or Health tourism has become a common form of vacationing, and covers a broad spectrum of medical services. It mixes leisure, fun and relaxation together with wellness and healthcare.*

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*Medical tourism, a rapidly growing sector in the Indian market, which is now being actively, developed by both public and private sector tourism and healthcare organizations. Medical Tourism" diversifies different paradigms, which derive at a common perception - a specialized field of healthcare tourism in general. The technical concoction defines medical tourism as, "Travel from a normal place of residence to a destination at which medical or surgical treatment is provided or performed, and which involves more than one night away from the country of residence". Within this broad field, there are a growing number of specialized sectors of medical tourism, including surgical tourism, wellness and spa tourism, dental tourism and reproductive or fertility tourism. Medical Tourism in simple terms, it is a provision of 'cost effective' private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical and other forms of specialized treatment. This process is being facilitated by the corporate sector involved in medical care as well as the tourism industry - both private and public. Medical tourism is gaining international significance, as more and more patients prefer their treatments abroad. In the developed countries the cost of the treatment and the surgery are far higher than those in the developing countries. So getting medical treatment abroad is economical for the patients without any compromise in the quality of treatment is one of the major concerns. Western patients are increasingly travelling to developing countries for health care and developing countries are increasingly offering their skills and facilities to paying foreign customers. This international trade in medical services has huge economic potential for developing countries and serious implications for health care across the globe.*

Globalization has promoted a consumerist culture leading to the mushrooming of corporate healthcare setting seized with the necessity to maximize profits and expand their coverage. India is unique as it offers holistic healthcare addressing the mind, body and spirit, with yoga, meditation, ayurveda and other Indian systems of medicine. India offers a vast array of services combined with the cultural warmth that is difficult to match by other countries.

The potential is explored in the study through analysis of the market for medical tourism in south India and identification of its link to economic growth. Medical tourism is not a universally feasible growth strategy. Instead, it is successful only in countries with economic and political advantages that enable them to navigate around international and domestic obstacles to trade in medical services. A successful medical tourism industry, when coupled with cooperation between the private and public sectors, may lead to public health improvements in developing countries.

A study conducted by the Confederation of Indian industry (CII) and McKinsey consultants says that in 2005 around 150,000 foreigners visited India for medical treatment and number is rising by 15 percent every year. CII says that India has the potential to attract one million medical tourists per annum and this could contribute around us \$ 5 billion to the economy. In many developing countries it is being actively promoted by the government's official policy. India's National Health Policy 2002, for example, says: "to capitalize on the comparative cost advantage enjoyed by domestic health facilities in the secondary and tertiary sector, the policy will encourage the supply of services to patients of foreign origin on payment. The rendering of such services on payment in foreign exchange will be treated as 'deemed exports' and will be made eligible for all fiscal incentives extended to export earnings".

Latest study of CII, medical tourism in India could become a \$1 billion business by 2012. The Indian government predicts that India's \$17-billion-a-year health care industry could grow by 13% in each of the next six years, boosted by medical tourism. In India, the Apollo group alone has so far treated 95,000 international patients, many of whom are of Indian origin. Apollo has been a forerunner in medical tourism in India and attracts patients from Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The group has tied up with hospitals in Mauritius, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Yemen besides running a hospital in Sri Lanka. Another corporate group running a chain of hospitals, Escorts, claims it has doubled its number of overseas patients- from 675 in 2002 to nearly 1200 this year. Reports also show that foreigners account for 10-12% of all patients in top Mumbai hospitals despite absence of uniform quality standards. However some claim that the industry would flourish even without Western medical tourists. Afro-Asian people spend as much as \$20 billion a year on health care outside their countries- Nigerians alone spend an estimated a \$1 billion a year. Most of this money is spent in Europe and America, but it is hoped that this would be directed to developing countries with advanced facilities. The government recently announced that a total investment of \$6.5 billion is in the pipeline for medical tourism industry in the country and the amount will also be used for setting up affordable hospitals and budget hotels for patients' relatives in the country. This announcement highlights the increasing number of Indian private hospitals that are finding themselves mentioned in travel itineraries and are sought out by more and more foreigners.

Analyzing the past trends of medical travelers from the late 1980s and early 1990s, most medical travelers coming to India were from the Arab countries, Africa and south-east Asia. But today, medical travelers to India can be divided into three distinct geographical categories that travel for distinctly different reasons. The first category is made up of the Americans and Europeans. The prime factors driving the Americans to travel abroad was their lifestyle surgeries and recurring costs. The natures of treatments were because of age like; facelifts, dental treatment, botox

treatments, tummy tucks etc and since, cosmetic surgery is not covered by medical insurance. Many Americans prefer to travel abroad. The British were being forced to seek medical treatment in other countries by the sheer waiting lists caused by the National Health Service (NHS). The second big group of medical travelers comes from the Middle East. These are citizens of oil rich nations flying India to seek medical facilities that are either unavailable or in short supply in their own countries. A research in Saudi Arabia estimated that every year more than 500,000 people from the Middle East travel seeking medical treatment for everything from open-heart surgery to infertility treatments. By some estimates, India itself attracted 70000 plus medical travelers from the Middle East in 2009. Finally, the last group of medical travelers forms an assorted lot. They are from the least developed countries and countries with generally poor infrastructure, who seek treatment for facilities at some neighboring country with better infrastructure. In 2009, it was estimated that at least 50000 people from Bangladesh, Burma and Nepal came for medical treatment to India.

India is a big player in the medical tourism industry. In fact, it has been ranked the most popular medical tourism destination by many. India is now moving into a new area of "medical outsourcing," where subcontractors provide services to the overburdened medical care systems in western countries. The health care sector in India has witnessed an enormous growth in infrastructure in the private and voluntary sector. Apart from the contribution of government and hospitals in improving the health care service in India, what truly give that edge to India over other medical tourism destinations are the innumerable rejuvenation options it offers and the easiness of stay in India. There is no compromise on the quality of medical services provided in this country and thus India can confidently compete with that of even the most developed nations. Hospitals of India are well equipped with the latest technology and houses highly qualified and experienced staff that can provide timely and quality medical treatment to patients. As a move in promoting medical tourism, many hospitals are deemed as "corporate hospitals" that specially cater to the needs of medical tourists in India. Apart from offering world class treatments, they offer various services that make medical tourists' stay in India hassle free. Many hospitals in India have international accreditations that certify the quality of health care service. In a shot-in-the-arm for healthcare tourism, the tourism ministry is planning to extend its Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme to cover Joint Commission International (JCI) and National Accreditation Board (NABH) certified hospitals. The MDA scheme offsets overseas marketing costs for travel companies earning foreign exchange. By opening up the MDA, hospital groups will be made eligible for financial assistance, including publicity through printed material, travel and stay expenses for sales-cum-study tours and participation fees for trade fairs and exhibitions, subject to an upper ceiling. There are about 60

accredited hospitals in India, of which the big groups have independently facilitated tie-ups with US-based insurance companies such as Bluecross Blueshield and Anthem Wellpoint but smaller players have relied on agents due to high costs.

The ministry is prompting all players to form a government-industry partnership on the lines of Nasscom to strengthen the Indian healthcare brand overseas. Efforts will be made to launch uniform pricing bands and to combine medical packages with travel products. The potential for forex earnings through this route is huge. On an average, a medical traveller spends about \$7,000 as opposed to a holiday traveler who spends \$3000. Indian Government has acknowledged the growth of medical tourism in India and is now offering Medical Visas. South India has become one of the preferred medical tourism and health holiday destination with some of the best hospitals providing services at the cheapest rates found in the city.

Cost effectiveness is the main USP for the developing countries like India along with its clinical expertise. India has world's best centers, besides having internationally qualified and experienced specialists. Price advantage is a major selling point. The slogan, thus is, "first world treatment at third world prices". The cost differential across the board is huge. India offers a vast array of services combined with the cultural warmth that is difficult to match by other countries.

Unlike the prospects of medical tourism, the vulnerable business environment has its own downsides. The challenges faced are:

- Restraint on follow-up care, the patient usually is in hospital for only a few days, and then goes on the vacation portion of the trip or returns home. Complications, side-effects and post-operative care are then the responsibility of the medical care system in the patients' home country.
- Government and basic medical insurance, and sometimes extended medical insurance, often does not pay for the medical procedure, sometimes the patient has to pay of his own.
- Most of the countries that offer medical tourism have weak malpractice laws, so the patient has little recourse to local courts or medical boards if something goes wrong.
- There are growing accusations that profitable; private-sector medical tourism is drawing medical resources and personnel away from the local population, although some medical organizations that market to outside tourists are taking steps to improve local service.

Experts have identified a number of challenges before Indian medical tourism on its global competency. Problems with medical tourism are to be dealt with care as it can reinforce the nation's economic condition.

- Without strong support or initiative taken by government no country can promote any niche segment as medical tourism. India spends 1.2% of its GDP on health, but takes care of foreign patients - the country ranks second in medical tourism. In 2007, Indian hospitals treated 4.5 lakh patients from other countries against topper Thailand's 12 lakh.
- Poor coordination between the various players in the industry- hospitals, air line operators and hotels can tamper the potentials of medical tourism. A joint venture can prove high ratio of efficiency and can boost private public partnership.
- It's obligatory to reorient the customer perception from being an unhygienic country to be equipped with high quality assuring system which will accelerate penetration of quality healthcare services in India.
- Lack of proper regulatory system for hospitals. The hospitality sector was first to introduce grading system which was indicator of quality of hotels and the different parameters of service delivery, along with this with growing consumer awareness and consumer protection initiatives by government and realized the need of importance of service delivery system in healthcare quality accreditation system and compliance to the same came into practice.
- India has strong competition from countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, but Indian clinical and paramedical talent is globally appreciated and with JCI accreditation of some hospitals, the international standard is proven. Third party intervention through health insurance has also given it a boost. Moreover these far east Asian countries which revolutionized medical tourism, is more into cosmetic surgery; where as India focuses on cardiac, neurological or orthopedic problems.
- Many recognized Indian healthcare units still lack international accreditation. If the governing body takes interest in inviting the accrediting bodies to assess the quality system it can boost medical tourism.
- It could be a bane with overseas medical care not covered by many insurance players.
- Limited role of government involvement in healthcare infrastructure is a barrier to diversify the total stream of development in medical tourism. There is an opportunity in medical tourism because Indian healthcare institutions is in a

position to offer quality medical services at one-tenth the cost compared to that in many countries in the west.

The biggest challenge is to position India as a favorable healthcare destination by setting high health standards and work in association with the government and the medical council to see to it that all hospitals keep up to those standards. At present the Indian healthcare federation is working along with different industry chambers to promote medical tourism in the country. The road map ahead has to be focused. The strategy to get global visibility can be through gathering more information from potential outlets. Secondly, Indian healthcare industry should work more closely with the industry chambers and various government departments to spread the awareness and remove hurdles. Finally, we have to work towards getting accreditation for various hospitals to build up perception of quality among foreign tourists.

Healthcare sector on the other hand has direct correlation with the external influences drawn from business environment. However, healthcare has not been totally immune to the global financial crisis. The economic situation has hit demand “because elective surgery is being delayed”, says Paul Keckley, executive director of the Deloitte Centre for Health Solutions.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organized the 3<sup>rd</sup> Medical Technology Conference 2010: “*Innovations in Medical Technology-Enabling India to ‘Leapfrog’ to the next level Healthcare*” at New Delhi. The existing healthcare infrastructure and skills in India alone cannot solve India’s huge unmet needs in Healthcare. It needs to be supported by Technology which has the potential to increase accessibility, significantly reduce the burden of disease & the load of Healthcare delivery services through early diagnosis, better clinical outcomes, less invasive procedures and shorter recovery times.

India foresees innovative approaches in medical tourism which is being patient centric and balancing the internal medical travel in India. India may not only see advanced technology within medical equipment, but also an opening up of the possibility of large indigenous manufacturing to serve Indian masses. This possibility is also taking shape as various development centers of multinational companies have started development and customization of their high end products such as digital x-ray as per Indian requirements, re-affirming the need for certain “Made in India, Made for India” products.

There are wider issues to be addressed considering new array of subjects like: Innovate for access, cost and convenience, collaboration from all stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem, impediments & solutions to growth of this industry, need for an unambiguous and supportive regulatory environment & enabling India to

become a manufacturing base for medical technology industry. This innovative approach will enable latest medical technologies reoriented not limited to the upper crust of society alone. However it is important to look into the challenges faced by medical technology companies in India - awareness, regulations, lack of proper health infrastructure, affordability hindering access, insurance and return on investment, which if nurtured and addressed appropriately, will accelerate penetration of quality healthcare services in India. This will enhance connotation of a Quality System. There was a time when quality was a much heard term in product industry. But over a period of time the consumers became more demanding even in the service sector and with the achievement of next levels of service delivery practices, the term "Quality" started to gain significance in service industries.

## Trends in Medical Tourism in India

Healthcare sector has enormous business potential but public expenditure on healthcare remains a priority issue to be addressed. India needs to increase its public expenditure on healthcare and improve the legislative framework for medical tourism. Technopak estimates that around \$20 billion will be invested in healthcare facilities in Tier II and III cities during the next five years.

**Medical Tourism World Launches Versatile Portal on Medical Tourism in India** - Medical Treatments & Tourism India (MTTI) is one of the first ISO 9001 : 2000 Certified Company in this field in India. It is a well thought, supported & well promoted endeavor of an established International Trading Organisation. The portal is a "One Stop - Treatment Shop" offering World Class and affordable Medical Treatments & Services to people from around the globe in India. It offers World class Medical Care & Treatment Solutions connecting people from around the globe to a vast network of major associated hospitals, clinics & doctors. Co has a transparent, clear and well explained step by step procedures & medical packages and provides customized medical packages as per the specific need & situation. Company's USP is personalised care & support right from Query, to registration, to receiving the patient, till completion of the medical treatment & procedure and departure, backed by a professionally managed team.

**Cosmetic surgery packages at Goa and Kerala in India at low cost for international medical tourists** - Medical tourists and international aspirants can now get cosmetic surgery packages at Goa and Kerala in India at low cost. Cosmetic surgery packages at Goa and Kerala in India not only offers you beauty enhancement procedures but also provides you health recovery physically and mentally by providing you extensive holiday tours and holiday vacations.



Indian medical tourism has brought the economical but international quality healthcare facilities available at the cosmetic surgery clinics of Delhi, Mumbai, Goa and Chennai into lime light creating curiosity among abroad natives from U.S, Canada, Europe and Africa who are very adventurous and exploring in nature. Cosmetic surgery packages in India are now also being financed by some top rated finance institutions of Canada and U.S with less or zero payment options. The clinical care and cosmetic surgery technology being provided in India at cities of Mumbai, Chennai, Goa, Hyderabad and Delhi are comparable to that being provided in countries of Europe and America only the difference is concerned to cost. The cost of cosmetic surgery in India is 1/10th of the amount charged at other places. Plus medical visa, travel and hospitality arrangements by Indian medical tourism services and affiliated cosmetic surgery hospitals in India are very convenient to persons coming from abroad. Holiday tours at Indian wild life sanctuaries and holiday vacations at Indian tourism destinations are added attractions that are being offered under exclusive cosmetic surgery packages in India.

**Indian aura plans to set up three spas in Gujarat** - Indian aura, a Non Resident Indian (NRI) venture is planning to come up with three spas in Gujarat state for capturing major share of Rs 3,300 crores medical tourism industry in the state. I J Patel chairman, said these spas will come up by 2011 in Vadodara, Ahmedabad and one more city which is yet to be selected. These spas will provide the Mediterranean, Indian, oriental system of medicine, naturopaty, allopathy and aurveda treatment.

Indian aura is taking lead in the state with a plan of three spas which requires an investment of Rs 11 crores. The aim is to promote "Gujarat as Asia's number one health destination." The Gujarat government had promoted the concept of medical tourism industry during 'Gujarat Vibrant' meet in 2003; however it did not succeed completely, due to many lapses.

**IFC to invest Rs 55 crore in Rockland hospitals** - World Bank group member International Finance Corporation will invest Rs 55 crore (14 million dollars) in Delhi-based Rockland Hospitals to support its expansion plans. Rockland Hospitals plans to expand its facility in the national capital and set up a 250-bed hospital in Manesar, Haryana.

The project will help broaden access to high-quality health care and good administrative and patient care to common people. The project demonstrates IFC's commitment to social sector development. It also aligns with the strategy to invest in health care, one of India's largest service industries where the private sector's involvement is most critical. IFC, a member of the World Bank Group fosters

sustainable economic growth in developing countries by financing private sector investments.

**Government plans medical tech park in Chennai** - The government is setting up a medical technology park in Chennai soon to help cut costs of healthcare equipment and research for new vaccines. The park would include medical device manufacturing units, healthcare infrastructure and vaccine technology facilities. The medical park will help manufacture cost-effective medical equipment for the country. The vaccine park will research on developing new vaccines.

The work for setting up the vaccine park has already started, the ministry of health and family welfare will shortly invite private players to set up facilities in the park. The state government has already given 300 acres for the vaccine technology park at a concessional price. The park is expected to be in place within four years. State-owned Hindustan Latex will set up its facility in the vaccine centre. According to industry estimates, 90% of the medical equipment used in India are imported. The medical technology park is likely to help tackle this situation as manufacturing products in India for domestic use would reduce the cost of equipment by 40%. The medical equipment market in India is estimated to be around a billion dollars. The government plans to keep the park open to both national and international companies.

**Maldives explores medical tourism, health education tie-up with city hospital in Chennai** – The Republic of Maldives is exploring the possibility of a tie-up with K.G. Hospital for medical tourism and health education. The hospital has said in a press release that Maldives Minister for Education Mustafa Lutfi and his deputy Ahmed Ali Manik visited it recently as part of their tour of India to explore collaboration in medical tourism, healthcare education and information technology (IT). The Government of Maldives had also invited Dr. Bakhavathsalam and the hospital's team to that country to identify appropriate areas where the hospital's expertise could be used effectively. Dr. Bakhavathsalam said a high-level team of the hospital would visit the Maldives to enter into a memorandum of understanding with its Government in the area of healthcare.

**Narayana Hrudayalaya, the Bangalore-based heart hospital, embarked upon building a "health city".**

Narayana Hrudayalaya, the Bangalore-based heart hospital, has embarked upon building a "health city" with a capacity of 2,000 beds in another one and half years. Today a 250 bed institute of neurosciences, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, would be set up with an investment of Rs 250 crores, in the first phase. The hospital has already acquired 20 acres, adjacent to the cardiac super speciality

hospital, to develop the health city. By this ambitious venture, it proposed to turn Bangalore city into the healthcare hub of the world. The health city project would cater to orthopedics and eye care treatment, besides an additional 500 bed hospital for neurology and neurosurgical care. Statistics have shown that there are 25 lakh patients in need of heart operations, but every year only 60,000 operations are performed by hospitals across the country.

Quality healthcare should be affordable and accessible to all because even developed countries like the UK and the US are struggling to meet their people's healthcare needs. Governments should be a health-insurance provider rather than only a healthcare provider. Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental right and not a privilege, and in achieving this objective, Narayana Health City has been a model to the world." Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, whose cancer hospital is also housed in the health city, said: "The world is challenged with the burden of diseases. Forty million people in the US don't have access to healthcare; in India, only 20% do, and 80% of non-insured people in India have to pay from their pockets. Even US President Barack Obama is trying hard to bring healthcare reforms. And models like Narayana Health City in India can address these healthcare problems". Similar health cities with 5,000-bed capacity will be set up in Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata and Ahmedabad. In Karnataka, apart from Bangalore, a 2,000-bed facility on 14 acres of land has been sanctioned with the vision to treat 10,000 out-patients and 5,000 in-patients every day. Through tele-medicine 53,000 cardiac patients have been reached and they are still reaching out to patients in 53 countries in Africa. 20% of patients in health city are from abroad, from around 65 countries. With the increase in surgeries, cost of treatment will reduce and every year, our objective is to reduce treatment costs by at least by 5%.

According to an official from the Karnataka Tourism Department, healthcare in Bangalore came into the limelight when Noor Fatima from Pakistan came to Narayana Hrudayalaya in July 2003, and was operated on by Dr Devi Shetty. After that, there was no looking back for the city. Her surgery was a landmark because not only did it help in thawing the hostility between the two neighboring countries, but also drastically reversed the table in the medical scenario of the city for the better. Hospitals and corporate establishments in the city have realised the potential of this niche market and have accordingly channelised their needs and facilities. Travel agents and hotels are structuring their packages and holiday schemes in accordance with the inflow of foreign patients coming into the city.

The Karnataka Government is taking a slew of initiatives in promoting medical tourism in the state. Most experts from the industry have acknowledged the fact that the State Government is supportive and enthusiastic in promoting medical tourism in the city in particular and the State as a whole. The Karnataka government right

now is working in a meticulous manner. They first conduct research to study key players in the field, which include not just the top hospitals but travel agents and consulates in the city. Their performance over the year is reviewed and simultaneously suggestions are taken. Consulates and travel agents have their networks abroad. So, it is easier for us to have international conferences and contacts. The Government also holds health tourism expos. A recent one was held at Bahrain. Such meets are a platform for the Government to meet international experts from the medical fraternity and brief them about the competence of Indian healthcare industry.

Travel agents and hotels are cashing in on the situation and are coming up with schemes and packages to attract foreign patients to the city. They are gradually realising that immense benefits can be reaped. The Leela Palaces and Resorts, Bangalore, which purely caters to the corporate class, have now decided to spread its wings according to the change in times and trends. The five-star hotel group has decided to tie up with Manipal Hospital. The five-star hotel has also joined hands with Globe Health Tours.

## Alternative Forms of Health Care in South India

**AYURVEDA** - An oldest surviving complete medical system in the world. It is a 5000 year old Science of health care and herbal treatment, highly effective in common and complicated ailments, assures long term relief and has no side effects. Ayurveda is now backed by modern scientific research and technologies and provides its gentle healing touch to millions around the world. Ayurveda deals elaborately with measures of healthful living during the entire span of life and its various phases. Besides dealing with principles for maintenance of health, it has also developed a wide range of therapeutic measures to combat illness.

**PRANIC HEALING** - highly developed and tested system of energy medicine that utilizes prana to balance, harmonize and transform the body's energy processes. "Prana" is a Sanskrit word that means life-force. This invisible bio-energy or vital energy keeps the body alive and maintains a state of good health and has a positive effect on any ailment. To put it simply, Pranic Healing removes the negative energy and feeds fresh energy into the body.

**REIKI** - a holistic therapy which brings about healing on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels. The belief is that the energy will flow through the practitioner's hands whenever the hands are placed on, or held near a potential recipient. Some teachings stress the importance of the practitioner's intention or presence in this process, while others claim that the energy is drawn by the recipient's injury to activate or enhance the natural healing processes.

YOGA - a traditional physical and mental disciplines. It is a combination of breathing exercises, physical postures and meditation that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. Yoga is believed to calm the nervous system and balance the body, mind and spirit. It is thought by its practitioners to prevent specific diseases and maladies by keeping the energy meridians open and life energy (Prana) flowing. Yoga has been used to lower blood pressure, reduce stress, and improve coordination, flexibility, concentration, sleep, and digestion. It has also been used as supplementary therapy for such diverse conditions as cancer, diabetes, asthma, AIDS. Yoga also has the potential to buffer against the harmful effects of bodily self-objectification as well as to promote embodiment and well-being.

**NATUROPATHY** –an eclectic alternative medical system that focuses on natural remedies and the body’s vital ability to heal and maintain itself. Naturopathic philosophy favors a holistic approach and minimal use of surgery and drugs. It comprises many different treatment modalities of varying degrees of acceptance by the medical community; diet and lifestyle advice may be substantially similar to that offered by non-naturopaths. The focus of Naturopathy is on its philosophy of natural self-healing rather than specific methods, and practitioners use a wide variety of treatment modalities. Some methods rely on immaterial “vital energy fields,” the existence of which has not been proven as yet.

The survey conducted on “Medical Tourism in Chennai and Bangalore”, helped in making a few observations. They are:

- The survey revealed that awareness of hospitals and medical tourism in Chennai and Bangalore was mainly obtained from the Internet as well as by Word of Mouth. Magazines/Newspapers played only a small role.
- All the respondents were aware of Medical Tourism in Chennai and Bangalore and said that India came to their mind first when they spoke of Medical Tourism, followed by Thailand.
- A large number of people said the facilities provided were very good and could be compared to international standards.
- The survey revealed that majority people could not go around visiting the tourist sites while they came for their treatment.
- Majority of the respondents had not faced any trouble at the destination; however problems faced by few people were communication problems and lack of adequate post medical treatment.

- Most of the respondents were aware of the various kinds of treatments available in India.
- Majority of patients were seen coming in for cardiac surgeries, followed by dental and then other treatments such as oncology etc
- The survey revealed that the reason people opted for Chennai and Bangalore was because of the affordable rates and the ease in communication.
- The survey showed that most of the respondents were satisfied with their overall stay .

## Suggestions

The survey conducted on "Medical Tourism in Chennai and Bangalore", helped in making a few observations. And thus a few of my suggestions for the further development of this form of tourism:

- The survey revealed that Chennai and Bangalore should improve its infrastructure facilities.
- A small number of people were not satisfied with the treatment provided to them. Thus hospitals should ensure that everyone is benefited from the services provided to them, by ensuring that feedback is obtained from the patient and the needs of dissatisfied patients addressed immediately.
- Corporate hospitals should ensure that foreign patients are given a translator from the time they enter the hospital till they leave the hospital.
- Chennai and Bangalore also have various alternative forms of medicine which needs to be promoted to a greater extent.
- Hospitals should ensure that patients are given adequate post- medical treatment.

## Conclusion

The research brought to light the potential south Indian cities has to grow as the healthcare destination; however what is required today is standardization of existing healthcare institutions. The Karnataka and Tamilnadu government is working in a meticulous manner. Travel agents and hotels are cashing in on the situation and are coming up with schemes and packages to attract foreign patients to the city.

They are gradually realizing that immense benefits can be reaped. However we cannot afford to compromise on quality which is important today. Destinations covered are some of the top medical tourism destinations of India, with professional experts, technological sophistication and health care services that easily match the best in the world. Its reputation as the global technology hub and cosmopolitan city has made it a prominent health care destination for foreigners from developed as well as developing countries.

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