

**Review Article**

**Booming Ayurvedic Tourism**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Earliest form of health tourism dates back to Greeks, ancient Romans, Persians, Arabs, Europeans and Indians. Impact of globalization and the culture of consumerism have resulted in people travelling across the world to make use of wide variety of alternatives that bring satisfaction to healthy living. National as well as International acceptance of Ayurvedic healing has enlarged the bounds and prospects of **Ayurveda tourism**.

Medical tourism is understood to be a travelling phenomenon on account of health related factors and its recovery. Ayurveda – a five thousand year old science with its roots in the tradition bound horizon of India revolves around a holistic approach of cure on the principles of physiological balance and detoxification.

Currently, health tourism destinations are trending up to showcase their healthcare and tourism resources thereby adding up to overall economic and social development. Ayurveda tourism is a combination of both holistic treatments and tourist destinations–Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Uttarakhand, and Maharashtra to name a few.

Indian government's Make in India report indicates that the wellness industry in India is worth INR 490 billion, and wellness services alone comprise 40% of the market. The AYUSH sector (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) has an annual turnover of around INR 120 billion. India is emerging as a leader in medical tourism industry because of its ability to provide high quality treatment at low cost.

The present work aims to unearth the role of Ayurveda in medical tourism thus unleash its multi-factorial benefits and also expand the scope of Ayurveda tourism which has an overall impact on the income, employment, foreign exchange earnings, infrastructure development & promoting peace as well stability in the country.

**KEY WORDS:** Globalization, Consumerism, Ayurveda tourism, AYUSH sector.

**INTRODUCTION:**

India has always been famous for its diverse culture & heritage. So on the onset of heritage tourism in India was long anticipated. Types of Tourism: Tourism in India could be broadly classified in following categories: 1) Leisure tourism 2) Business tourism 3) Ecological tourism 4) Pilgrimage tourism 5) Historical tourism 6) Adventure tourism 7) Sports tourism 8) Wildlife tourism 9) Medical & Ayurveda tourism. The goal of Ayurveda is prevention as well as promotion of

the body's own capacity for maintenance and balance of health. Medical tourism is found to be a new form of niche tourism as health care costs sparingly high. Patients in the developed world are looking overseas for medical treatment and India serves to be the best place which offers it at a cheap rate and with a high quality. India has emerged to be a big spot for health tourism and marketing Ayurveda as a part of it has brought a new definition to vacationing in India itself.

The reasons for India being an important hub for ayurvedic tourism is that it involves low medical cost compared with other countries, the use of non-toxic, harmless herbs resources, the waiting time for treatment in India is much lower compared to other countries.

#### AIM & OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore about Ayurveda tourism in India.
2. SWOT analysis of Ayurveda tourism in India.

#### METHODOLOGY:

This paper is solely drafted with the help of secondary data, extracted from various sources namely Internet, annual reports & some online published conferences.

#### LIMITATIONS:

1. Paper is confined to the Ayurveda Tourism amongst many tourism sectors.

#### AYURVEDA TOURISM IN INDIA:

Ayurveda has secured a lot of global attention. And many Ayurvedic centers are on an upsurge today. India is unfolding as a great destination for medical tourism because it has several alluring factors like excellent medical treatment at low cost, easy accessibility, picturesque locations for relaxing holiday, etc. Marketing Ayurveda as part of the 'health tourism' has brought a new definition to vacationing in India itself. India has lot of tourists from other countries coming for the rejuvenation promised by yoga and Ayurveda. In addition a nice coalition of top-class medical expertise at attractive prices which is helping more and more Indian health centers to attract foreign patients, including patients from the UK and the US making the nation the most preferred destination for health tourism. As the inflow of more patients from well of nations with high medical costs look for effective options, are increasing, health care tourism in India is on the cards for most of them. Not just in terms of money or the high-end facilities, but also the waiting time is much lower for any treatment in India than in any other country. Whereas one has to wait for several months for treatment abroad, whereas in India it can be arranged within a week. Various tourist destinations providing Ayurvedic treatment in India are: Ananda in the Himalayas, Kumarakom Lake Resort in Kerala, Wildflower hall in Shimla, KalariKovilakom in Kerala, Vivanta by Taj Bekal in Kerala, Isola di coco in Kerala, Oberoi Amarvilas in Agra, Hilton Shillim in Maharashtra, The

Leela in Udaipur, Somatheeram Ayurveda resort in Kerala, Devaaya – The Ayurvedic & nature cure center in Goa, The Zuri Kumarakom resort & spa in Kerala, Kairali Ayurvedic health village in Kerala, Oberoi Rajvilas in Jaipur, Khyber resort & spa – Gulmarg Kashmir, Ayurveda Gram in Bengaluru.

#### AYURVEDA TREATMENTS:

**1. Abhyanga:** Abhyanga Snana or medicated oil massage belongs to the purvakarma or the preparatory measures for Panchakarma treatment in Ayurveda. It is an ancient oleation therapy, traditionally given by two masseurs, who work in tandem synchronizing their strokes & massage according to the circulatory & marma points for sixty minutes.

**2. Akshitarpana (Netravasti):** Akshitarpana or Netravsti is traditional treatment for eyes in Ayurveda. This treatment is effective for glaucoma, night blindness & other eye related problems.

**3. Karnapoorana:** Treatment for ear ailments, under this medicated oils are applied to the ear for 5-10 minutes daily to clean as well as treat specific ailments.

**4. Kativasti:** Kativasti is an Ayurvedic therapy to cure the ailments of this area like lower back ache for stiffness or pain felt down the back. The waist area of the body is called kati.

**5. Lepana:** Lepana is the external application of medicated paste on any part of the body where pain associated with inflammatory condition persists. The ingredients of the paste vary according to the nature of the ailment. It is a treatment method in traditional Ayurveda.

**6. MarmaChikitsa:** Treatment for musculoskeletal ailments due to accidents. This treatment works on the extremely sensitive vital points of body (107 marmas)

**7. Nasya:** Treatment for nasal ailments, under this, there is inhalation of medicated herbal preparations, decoction oils, ghee etc. to eliminate the morbid factors from the head & neck area.

**8. Panchakarma:** A five fold treatment (Panchakarma) for physical & mental wellbeing which tunes the body organs, brain, nerves & purifies the blood.

**9. Pizhichil:** Treatment for spondylosis, rheumatic diseases like arthritis, paralysis, hemiplegia, nervous

weaknesses & nervous disorders. Under this treatment lukewarm herbal oil is applied with fresh linen all over the body by trained masseurs in a rhythmic manner for a period of 1-1.5 hours daily for 7 – 21 days.

**10. Sarvangadhara with milk:** Sarvangadhara, a treatment method with medicated milk is poured all over the body while massaging. This treatment is one of the preparatory procedures in Panchakarma, the rejuvenation & revitalization therapy in Ayurveda.

**11. Shirodhara with oil:** Shirodhara with oil is a treatment to cure ailments like headache, fatigue, insomnia, nervousness & stress with herbal oil. It is performed as part of the poorvakarma practice prior to the panchakarma treatment in Ayurveda.

**12. Sirovasti:** Treatment for dryness of nostrils, mouth & throat, severe headache, facial paralysis & burning sensation in the head. Under this treatment lukewarm herbal oil are poured into a leather cap fitted on the head for specific duration as per physician’s recommendations.

**13. Snehapana:** Snehapana is one of the purvakarma therapies in Ayurveda, a system of medicine in India. Sneha means oil, Thiktha Ghrutha or ghee infused with herbs is orally administered to the patient for specific period.

**14. Takradhara with buttermilk:** Takradhara is a sudation therapy with medicated buttermilk in Ayurveda. It can be done either as Shirodhara or dhara over the entire body. This treatment is also effective in insomnia, chronic headache like migraine, ear - nose diseases, neuropathy & spondylitis, memory loss etc.

**15. Tharpanam:** Treatment for preventing cataract & strengthening vision. This is effective in preventing cataract & strengthening the optic nerve.

**16. Udvarthanam:** Udvarthanam is stimulation & exfoliating therapy using a specially prepared herbal powder in Ayurveda. This powder is rubbed all over the body to slough off dead skin cells & help to reduce subcutaneous fats. This therapy effectively reduces the fat collected around the abdomen & in the inner thighs of women due to nutritional disorders.

**Difference between Spa & Ayurveda:**

AYURVEDA	SPA
Follows science.	Simply artistic.
Treats serious health conditions.	Meant for relaxation.
Complete form of treatment including medicines taken orally.	Only based on application of fluids, massages etc.
Span of treatment from days to months or years.	Not the same.
Not very costly.	Very costly.

**Swot Analysis of Ayurvedic Tourism:**

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional sector being practised over ages</li> <li>• Strong manufacturing base</li> <li>• India is recognised world over as alternate medicine source</li> <li>• Strong support system- 484 educational institutions and 25,861 hospitals/ dispensaries</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low scale of operations</li> <li>• Low on Technology</li> <li>• Lack of globally accepted standards</li> <li>• Formulations don’t qualify for certifications</li> <li>• Not fully integrated with mainstream markets</li> <li>• No efforts for new market access and branding</li> <li>• Low level of entrepreneurial aggressiveness</li> <li>• Irregular supply of inputs/ raw material</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast- paced lifestyle increases demand for wellness tourism and alternative cures.</li> <li>• Increased demand for healthcare services from countries with aging population (USA, UK)</li> <li>• Demand from countries with underdeveloped healthcare facilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand recognition of alternate medicinal systems like Chinese, Latin &amp; South American, African etc. rising.</li> <li>• Non-documentation of traditional skills might lead to dissipation of knowledge.</li> <li>• Sector might become irrelevant to the issues of health care for want of innovation / R&amp;D</li> <li>• Lack of quality control measures is another crucial factor that keeps away the West from recognizing our medicinal product.</li> <li>• Another major issue is the non-availability of certain raw drugs.</li> </ul>

**Overall Impact of Tourism Sector on the Country:****1. Generating Income & Employment:**

Ayurveda tourism has emerged as an instrument of income & employment generation, poverty alleviation & sustainable human development. It contributes 6.23 % to the national GDP & 8.78% of the total employment in India. The travel & tourism sector supported 25 million jobs in 2012 directly related to the tourism sector & it will estimated to rise to 31 million by 2023. These numbers indicates direct employment supported by the tourism sector reflecting employment by hotels, travel agents, passenger transport services, restaurant etc. This has multiplier impact on the economy resulting in greater employment generation.

**2. Source of Foreign Exchange Earning:** Tourism is an important source of foreign exchange earning in India. This sector has favorable impact on the balance of payment of the country.

**3. Developing Infrastructure:** Tourism tends to encourage the development of multiple-use infrastructure that benefits the host community including various means of transports, health care facilities, sports centers, in addition to the hotels & restaurants that cater to foreign visitors. The development of infrastructure in turn induced the development of other directly productive activities.

**4. Promoting Peace & Stability:** Tourism can also help to promote peace & stability in the developing country like India by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment & promoting cross culture.

**BOOMING GROWTH RATE IN AYURVEDIC TOURISM:**

As a matter of fact Gods own country Kerala provides the more authentic & traditional Ayurvedic treatment in comparison to other destinations in the country. Kerala Tourism department considers uptick in Ayurvedic tourism eyeing 7.5 percent growth rate. In 2016 January-September the state received 9,24,125 domestic tourists & 7,38,515 foreign tourists which is 6.01 percent and 5.61 percent growth rate respectively over the same period of 2015. Overall in the financial year 2016-17 looking at the trend the state is expecting 7.5percent growth in foreign tourists arrival while 6.5 percent in domestic tourists. The Department also expects a rise of 7 percent overseas and 6percent domestic tourists in financial year

2018. Though the percentage might look small but is a significant one.

**CONCLUSION:**

Consumers of Ayurveda tourism are diverse and the international tourists coming to India is also increasing year by year. Ayurveda tourism stands for, on the one hand, consumerism, homogenization and limited vision and on the other for re-inventing one's lost multiple traditions. The sudden revival of Ayurveda in the form of "Ayurveda tourism" has led to mushrooming of Ayurvedic health resorts. The development of Ayurveda tourism reveals complex and multiple interconnectedness between notions of modernity and tradition.

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