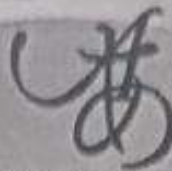




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CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - II

S. No.	Title & Author	Page No.
22	Rural Entrepreneurship through Khadi and Village Industries Shobha Supekar Dr. S. K. Dhage	135-142
23	An Analytical Study of Impact of Foreign Institutional Investment on Indian Stock Market with Reference to BSE Sensex and Nifty Index Dr. Vijay Narayan Gaikwad Prof. Shreya V. Vaidya	143-149
24	Foreign Direct Investment in India -A Case Study of Gujarat State Dr. Indrakanti Sekhar Ms. Boora Sneha	150-154
25	Privatisation of Banks and its Impact on Indian Economy Bushra Alam Dr. Mahesh Chandra Prasad	155-160
26	Medical Tourism in India Joshi Teena Devraj	161-165

26. Medical Tourism in India

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Abstract

This paper tries to bring up the threats and opportunities with possible steps for the growth of medical tourism in our country. Indian economy is in its dynamic phase. Among numerous service sectors, medical tourism is possessing potential importance. Many other payers has already framed their strategies and started reaping its benefits. India with its minute share at global level has a lot of scope to develop and contribute the growth of economy. World class service in low cost is the key to success for this sector.

Key words: - Medical tourism, wellness, healthcare, global business, potential market.

Introduction

Indian geographical features and its ecological variations have boasted India with innumerable tourist attractions. India has witnessed consistent growth in the tourist. It indicates the fruitful coordination among various players like effective government policy making, its prompt implementation by advanced hospitality industry, skilled manpower catering the needs of foreign tourists etc. Advancement in information and technology has paved scope to flourish many business possibilities in tourism industry in our country. The major tourism themes are as follows in India

- I. The Great Himalayan Range
- II. Coastal Tourism
- III. The back water of Kerala
- IV. Architectural Tourism
- V. The deserts
- VI. Iceland attractions
- VII. Pilgrimage Centers
- VIII. Northeastern Centers
- IX. Amusement Parks

Now a day the above mentioned list is incomplete without one type of tourism i.e. Medical tourism. India has endless possibilities to attract worldwide tourist. Along with other tourist attractions our country is slowly transform into a prime medical tourism hub in the world. Medical tourism is also known as offshore medical or Health care tourism or Wellness tourism.

Definition of Medical Tourism

"Medical tourism is the attempt on the part of the tourist facility or destination to attract tourist by deliberately promoting the health care service and facilities in addition to its regular tourist amenities"-Goldrich and Goldrich

In simple words medical tourism is a service offered by specialized doctor and medically skilled personal to foreigners at comparatively cheaper rates. Growth in urban areas has made favorable impact on medical tourism in India. Advancement in metro cities has groomed these business possibilities in multiples. Luxurious hotels with required accommodation facilities have added the results. Hotels, tour operators and hospitals providing medical treatment are the three important components in this business. India offers world class health care service in low cost as compared to developed countries.

Table:-1

Year	2016	2017	2018
Provisional FTA(In Millions)	6.65	6.85	7.46
Growth Rate (%)	5.4	4.1	7.1
Final FTAs (In Millions)	6.58	6.97	7.68
Growth Rate (%)	4.3	5.9	10.2

Objectives

1. To study the scope for improvement in Medical Tourism.
2. To study present scenario of medical tourism in India
4. To discuss the hurdles in the growth of Medical tourism

Research Methodology and Data Collection

Historical research method is used for this research paper and secondary data was collected through various sources like relevant research papers, articles published in news papers, Magazines, internet sources etc.

Sr. No.	Year	FEE from Tourism in India (2008 to June 2018) In Million
1	2008	8634
2	2009	10729

3	2010	11832
4	2011	11136
5	2012	14193
6	2013	16564
7	2014	17737
8	2015	18445
9	2016	20236
10	2017	21071
11	2018	10865

Source:- Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2018

Origin of Medical Tourism and its Reasons

Studies of ancient culture strongly depict a firm link between religion and healthcare tourism. One can state that the concept of medical tourism is as old as medicine. Most of the civilization recognized the importance of bath in mineral thermal spring and sacred temple bath. The growth of this concept has emerged due to some other reasons too. Some of them can be described as follows.

1. Incredible saving in medical cost.
2. Excellent qualities
3. Use of advanced technology.
4. Comfortable long stay
5. Prompt service or low waiting time
6. World class facilities
7. Personalized service
8. Travel opportunities

Indian Scenario

Though at global level India's market share in this field is very low we have a wide possibilities and scope of improvements. The countries like Indonesia, China, South Africa have established their major share in the global business of medical tourism. India need to review the strategic coordination in its all relevant aspect to grab potential market share and escalate the economy.

Indian traditional healing services including Yoga and meditation are widely adopted by throughout the world as they are non surgical treatments but yield lost lasting results. Either it

may be a mud therapy or world famous Kereli massage. Holistic living in Goa or Spa from Rajasthan has built their world class image or Brand in commercial language.

Scope for Medical Tourism Improvements in India

Most of the tourist came for medical service found difficult to communicate with non medical staff. Documentation and improper boarding facilities also added their problems. Medical and paramedical staff also needs to play its role in this exercise. Amicable settlement of bill, delivering clear instructions and post treatment monitoring is of apex importance. Manageable visa rules and regulations are some of the peak issues which need to deal on urgent level or we will lose our golden chance to grab this global business.

Industrial Role

After liberalization phase, Indian hospitals have constantly engage themselves to upgrade their medical and patient handling skills. Hospitals are always trying to adopt updated technology. They have established special wards for international patients. Special help desks are formed with skilled official to assist in translation, travel requirements and other needs.

Some hospitals have established international collaborations with developed and developing countries. Such collaboration sought cross border assistance from other countries government authorities, hospitals, insurance companies and other health care associassion. It facilitates continuous flow of medical tourist from other countries. To retain the confidence about qualitative service Indian hospitals are now going for international accreditations of hospitals and their laboratories. Indian Health care Federation (IHCF) has supported many improvements to achieve world class medical services in the country.

Government Contribution

The minister of Health and Family welfare has favorably encouraged Indian medical sector. Central government has setup National Accreditation Board for Hospitals. Steps taken by other countries are also taken into account during hospital accreditation process. Govt. of India has relaxed stagnant visa rules in case of emergency and introduced new form of visa named Medical Visa to cover required formalities. Government started active participation in health care tourism expos to acquaint about recent medical advancement at global level.

In Karnataka Bangalore International Health City Corporations offers a range of health care treatments and products. Kerala tourism Development Corporation has started collaborative activities with various governments and private Ayurveda centers to provide qualitative medical

treatment to foreigners. In Maharashtra, The Infrastructure Development and Support Act (MIDAS) have boasted Maharashtra Tourism Council (MTDC) to avail land for tourism estate. The State government of Maharashtra also set up Medical Tourism Council of Maharashtra in association with industrial counterparts.

Conclusion

Coordinated efforts among respective governments' authorities, tour operators, hospitals and skilled work force can collectively bring fruitful results to generate India's image as world's affordable healthcare destination. Time to time Indian governments have taken requires steps to fetch the benefits of this market but purposeful and concentrated efforts are required urgently to build 'Brand India' in the field of medical tourism. Though India has very less share at global level in medical tourism market, our nature and ecological condition reveals its endless possibilities in this regard. Urbanization and free market operations have positive impact for the development of this market.

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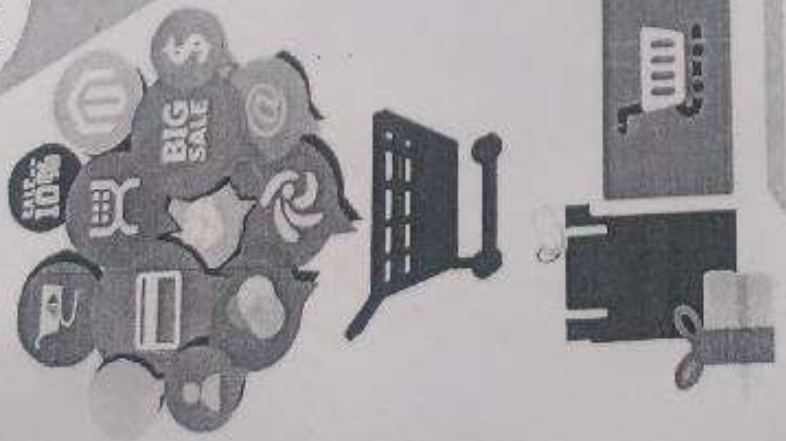
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