



AYURVEDIC HEALTH TOURISM IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Medical tourism which is the subject matter of health tourism is a futuristic and growing segment in India. The major motives for the ever-increasing development are cost effectiveness, high quality health care, specialized treatment options, efficient management of foreign and domestic tourists; time bound services and offering of good holidays. In India the state of Kerala with enormous prospective is emerging as a leading health tourism pivot for its Ayurvedic packages. Long lasting ritual of ancient Kerala Ayurveda creates a centre of attention for a good number of foreign and domestic tourists to call on the state for Ayurvedic medical tourism. Foreign tourists arrivals in Kerala shows an increase of 0.42 percent and domestic tourists arrivals shows an increase of 6.35 percent in 2018 than the previous year. This study focuses on the factors which attracts the tourists (domestic and foreign) in to Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram districts for Ayurvedic Health tourism. 100 tourists (domestic and foreign) availing ayurvedic treatment in Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram districts are selected for the study and appropriate statistical tools are used for analysis.

KEYWORDS - Ayurveda, Ayurvedic healthcare tourism, tourists' satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Medical tourism, a subject of health tourism, is a novel and growing sector in India. As explained in the abstract the main reasons for the increasing trend is cost effectiveness, high quality health care, specialized treatment options, efficient management of languages, no waiting queue and offering of good holidays. In India the state Kerala with huge potential is emerging as a prime health tourism hub for its Ayurvedic packages.

Ayurveda is not only about good body structure but it is a healing that assures worldwide robustness. The ayurvedic plants and oils which are used for the treatments are of boundless medicinal worth which is mentioned in the vedic works on Ayurveda. The antiquity of Ayurveda which belongs to Vedic period obviously states the guidelines to conserve the wellbeing of the people and the devices for curing the diseases by using different remedial measures like massages, medicines from plants, yoga, meditation, diet control and workouts.

The most popular objective of this Ayurvedic healing is the removal of noxious features from the physique and thus the human structure acquires better immunity. This process will rejuvenate the mind, body and soul.

Kerala is perfectly appropriate for medical tourism given that Kerala's ideal weather condition during the year, superior hospitals by means of outstanding amenities, well known doctors dedicated in foremost discipline, well qualified paramedical workforce and technicians and global association. Kerala is appreciated for elevated grade of sanitation prolonged by the well-established resorts and hotels that are providing the health care services in Kerala. The age old folklore of classical Indian ayurveda catapults Kerala into worldwide tourism objective. There are 924 Ayurvedic health tourism centres in Kerala and several Ayurvedic healings are accessible in these centres which are extended to the 14 districts of Kerala.

TOURIST'S ARRIVAL TO KERALA

Table 1: Foreign Tourists

Year	No of foreign Tourists	% Variation over P.Y	Foreign Exchange Earnings(Crores)	% Variation over P.Y
2017	1091870		8764.46	
2018	1096407	0.42%	8392.11	4.44%

Source: Kerala Tourism Statistics.2018



Table 2: Domestic Tourists Arrivals

Year	No of Domestic Tourists	% Variation over P.Y	Total Revenue(Crores)	% Variation over P.Y
2017	14673520		33383.68	
2018	15604661	6.35%	36258.01	8.61%

Source: Kerala Tourism Statistics.2018

It is understood from the Kerala tourism statistics that there is an increase in the arrival of the tourists both foreign and domestic in 2019 even if there were some unexpected and uncontrollable natural calamities like flood. An enormous number of tourists reached India, being aware of the Ayurvedic therapies of Kerala for treatment purposes together with rejuvenation. Total number of tourists visited Kerala in 2019 are 18384233(domestic) and 1189771(foreigners) and there is a growth rate of 17.81percent (domestic) and 8.52percent (foreign) respectively.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Life When we are analysing Health tourism exclusively ayurvedic health tourism the real world can examine the first-class potentials provided to all tourists by the various health tourism centres in Kerala. Life long relief to the entire body, no side effects, availability of different strategies for freedom from infection, provide relief from tension and make younger the body are the major benefits of Kerala ayurvedic health tourism. The global tourists have recognized these benefits of travelling to Kerala for ayurvedic medical tourism and thus Kerala has achieved international recognition in this field, also fetching as a well-known medical tourism destination. In these circumstances identifying the level of satisfaction among tourists visiting Kerala for ayurvedic treatment is relevant.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Padmasani and Remya (2015) studied the factors which influence the tourists in Ayurvedic health care centres. The most effective factors in the field of destination are quality of services, opportunities, attractiveness, benefits and promotion. Generally the result of the study revealed that as Ayurvedic fitness service destination Kerala has to establish its own standing in the international market.

Jaiswal and Williams, Yoginiet (2017) opined Ayurveda, most popular way of treatment from ancient India is persisted and succeeded from past to present. Here the authors try to enrich the history of Ayurveda which include the role of Ayurveda in different periods. We get knowledge about vedas, Pancha Mahabhootas, tridoshas, Pancha Karma and other related activities.

Varghese and Zacharias (2020) found out that vital strategy for attracting the patients from abroad is on line communication and the clients also rely on the information received from on line transactions.

Louis (2018) there were substantial connotation amongst the satisfaction level and the essentials connected to it and Kerala has ample resources for attracting the world as it is the brand ambassador of Ayurvedic sector.

Bulsara and Yadav (2018) Users are nowadays practical oriented and they understand that Ayurveda the traditional medicine treat the body as a whole rather than quick relief but rarely people use modern medicine in critical situations

Oatochet al (2017) studied the significance of AYUSH system in the development of Ayurveda. People accept a solid trust in AYUSH and persuaded or induced by its value and it has to make the people aware. It is needed to educate the people about the ancient wisdom ayurveda and makes it easily available. The requirements to come across the universal standards are multi-disciplinary research, standardization, quality assurance, authentication of the ayurvedic medication etc. The governments have to establish the rules and guidelines to brandish Ayurveda in both India and foreign nations.

Acharyya (2020) explained that Ayurveda has enough opportunities as a precautionary measure for fighting against COVID 19 pandemic. In order to practise ayurveda as restorative and deterrent facet scientific studies associated with it and its principles are desirable. WHO also recommended these types of activities at the time of epidemic diseases.

Yoshida et al (2016) studied the awareness of the natural remedy Ayurveda, among the natives of Dhaka. As regards youths there exists uncertainty about the use of Ayurvedic medicines than the seniors. But they are further satisfied with the ayurvedic medicines than the elders. To upsurge the use of ayurvedic medicines in Dhaka scientific information regarding it should be properly collected and disseminated among them in order to elude the misunderstanding about the usage among the citizen.

Katoch et al (2017) focus on different prospects of government rules and ingenuities for the growth and expansion of traditional Ayurveda. Indian System of Medicine which is of late known as AYUSH was established by the government of India for the protection and promotion of Ayurveda and other traditional methods of treatments. Different



regulatory authorities and development agencies are established under AYUSH for the advancement of ayurveda.

Pani and Das (2014) emphasis on the measures taken by the tourism department for the progress and expansion activities of Ayurveda. An attempt is made to establish an effective co- relation between traditional ayurvedic therapy and new schemes and the study lead the public towards the prominence of ayurveda.

Louis (2018) tried to find out the satisfaction of the tourists who visited Kerala and the study arrange for proper understandings concerning the importance of Ayurveda for improving the activities of tourism. There were substantial connotations among the satisfaction level and the essentials connected to it and Kerala has ample resources for attracting the world as it is the brand ambassador of ayurvedic sector.

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In Kerala, Ernakulum and Thiruvananthapuram districts have distinguishing position in ayurvedic medical tourism in contrast to other districts of tourists visiting Kerala for ayurvedic treatment. Hundred percent literacy rate, better transportation facilities, native culture along with hospitality, real authentic Ayurveda attracts tourists both foreign and domestic. NRIs also attracted to these two districts to heal their body as a whole for Ayurvedic medical treatments. The study is mainly concentrated on Ayurvedic Health Tourism in Kerala in Ernakulum and Thiruvananthapuram districts as

total earnings from Ernakulum is the highest followed by Thiruvananthapuram.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In view of the above introductory remarks, the following have been laid down as the specific objectives of the study.

- To identify the level of satisfaction of tourists visiting Kerala for ayurvedic treatment.
- To identify the profile of tourists who availed Ayurvedic treatment from Ernakulum and Thiruvananthapuram districts.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data required for the study have to be collected by administering structured interview schedule among patients in the Ayurvedic hospitals in Ernakulum and Thiruvananthapuram districts. Secondary data will be collected from books, reports, journals and periodicals, inflienet, Internet sites like Wikipedia, investopedia etc. The questionnaire was supplied to 120 respondents subject to their convenience at various Ayurvedic hospitals in Ernakulum and Thiruvananthapuram districts. Out of 120 respondents only 100 of them responded properly. Data is analysed by using percentages, mean and standard deviation. IBM SPSS software is used for analysis.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT DISCUSSION

a. General Profile of respondents

Table 3: Gender Wise Details of Tourists

	Frequency	Percent
Male	49	49.0
Female	51	51.0
Total	100	100.0

Gender wise details of tourist considered for the study is given in table 3. It is clear from the table that out of the total respondents interviewed, 49percent

belong to the male community and 51percent are female tourists.

b. Nationality

Table 4: Nationality

	Frequency	Percent
Indian	51	51.0
Foreigner	49	49.0
Total	100	100

Nationality of tourists considered for the study is given in table 4. It is clear from the table that

51percent of the respondents are Indians and the rest 49 percent are foreigners.



c. Marital Status

Table 5: Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Married	75	75.0
Unmarried	18	18.0
Divorced	3	3.0
Widow/widower	2	2.0
Physically Separated	2	2.0
Total	100	100

Marital Status of the respondents shows in Table 5. The table shows that 75 percent of them are married, 18 percent are unmarried, 3 percent are divorced,

2 percent are widower/widow and 2 percent are physically separated.

d. Educational Qualification

Table 6: Educational Qualification

	Frequency	Percent
Below Secondary	3	3.0
Secondary	2	2.0
Higher Secondary	23	23.0
Graduate	58	58.0
Post Graduate	14	14.0
Total	100	100

Educational Qualification of the respondents shows in table 6. The table shows that majority of the respondents are Graduates (58 percent), 23 percent of the respondents qualified Higher Secondary, 14

percent are graduates and rest of them belongs to higher secondary (23 percent) and Below Secondary (3 percent) level.

e. Occupation

Table 7: Occupation

	Frequency	Percent
Business	7	7.0
Professional	12	12.0
Government Officials	6	6.0
Private Employee	40	40.0
Student	1	1.0
House Wife	34	34.0
Total	100	100

Occupation of the respondents shows in table 7. The table shows that 40 percent of the respondents belong to Private Employee, 34 percent of them Housewives, 12 percent of them professionals, 7

percent of them business men, 6 percent of them belong to government officials and one percent gone for studies.

f. Person Accompanied with tourists

Table 8: Person Accompanied With Tourists

	Frequency	Percent
Single	55	55.0
Spouse	32	32.0
Family Members	11	11.0
Friends and Relatives	2	2.0
Total	100	100



Table 8 shows the person accompanied with tourists. 55 percent of the respondents came alone. 32 percent came with spouse, 11 percent accompanied by family

members and 2 percent accompanied by friends and relatives.

g. Purpose of Visit

Table 9: Purpose of Visit

	Frequency	Percent
Medical Treatment Only	86	86.0
Medical treatment and Business	3	3.0
Medical treatment and Site Seeing	5	5.0
Ayurvedic Medicare	4	4.0
Pleasure/Relaxation	2	2.0
Total	100	100

Table 9 shows the purpose for which the tourist visited Kerala. Majority of them came for medical Treatment itself (86 percent). 5 percent of the

respondents came for medical treatment and site seeing, 4 percent came for ayurvedic Medicare and rest came for pleasure and relaxation. (2 percent).

h. Mode of Transportation

Table 10: Mode of Transportation

	Frequency	Percent
Air	77	77.0
Land	22	22.0
Air and Land	1	1.0
Total	100	100

Table 10 shows the Mode of Transportation used by the respondents. Majority of them used Air line for transportation (77 percent). Least of them used both

air and land mode of transportation (1 percent) and 22 percent used land way for transportation

i. Treatment undergone by the tourists

Table 11: Treatment Undergone By the Tourists

Type of Treatment	Availed		Not availed	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Panchakarma	47	47.0	53	53.0
Pizhichil	44	44.0	56	56.0
Thalam	21	21.0	79	70.0
Kizhi	36	36.0	64	64.0
Nasyam	15	15.0	85	85.0
Dhara	29	29.0	71	71.0
Vasti	44	44.0	56	56.0
Massage	65	65.0	35	35.0

Table 11 shows different types of treatments undergone by the tourists. Among the total tourists interviewed 65 percent have undergone for massage, 47 percent have undergone for panchakarma, 44 percent have undergone for both

pizhichil and vasti, 36 percent have undergone for kizhi, 29 percent have undergone for dhara, 21 percent have undergone for thalam and 15 percent have undergone for nasyam.



j. Sources consulted for selecting Kerala for medical treatment

Table 12: Sources Consulted for Selecting Kerala for Medical Treatment

Variables	Source		Not a Source	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Medical tourism guide	75	75.0	25	25.0
Medical tourism operator	66	66.0	34	34.0
Hospital websites	52	52.0	48	48.0
Friends and relatives	44	44.0	56	56.0
Doctors	49	49.0	51	51.0
Advertisements	39	39.0	61	61.0
Word of Mouth	70	70.0	30	30.0

Table 12 shows the Sources consulted by the tourists for selecting Kerala for medical treatment. The main source the tourists consulted for medical treatment is medical tourist guide since all the respondents agreed that the main source they consulted is medical tourist guide. Word of Mouth (70 percent) is the second source the tourist consulted for availing treatment in Kerala followed by Medical tourism operator (66 percent), Hospital websites (52 percent), doctors (49 percent) and Friends and relatives (44 percent). Advertisement is considered as the least source of consultation for ayurvedic treatment by the tourists (39 percent).

DATA ANALYSIS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is studied by asking statements in five point Likerts scale. Values were assigned based on five point likert scale as 1 for very poor, 2 for poor, 3 for moderate, 4 for good and 5 for very good. Mean is calculated for quantifying the Likerts scale. This score was classified into one of the four groups as 'not satisfied' if the mean is less than 2, 'less satisfied' if the mean is between 2 and 3, 'Satisfied' if the mean lies in the interval 3 to 4 and 'highly satisfied' if the mean above 4.

k. Opinion of the tourists on various services

Table 13: Opinion of the Tourists on Various Services

	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Satisfaction
Match you with appropriate clinic and Physician	4.78	0.866	Highly satisfied
Arrange and confirm appointments	4.92	.280	Highly satisfied
Obtain Visa	4.83	.447	Highly satisfied
Transportation facility	3.26	.345	Satisfied

Table 13 shows Tourist's opinion on different services provided by the hospitals. They were highly satisfied with clinic and physician, arrangement and confirmation of appointments and obtaining visa. In

the case of arrangement of transportation facility they are satisfied.

1. Opinion about services related to treatment

Table 14: Opinion about Services Related to Treatment

	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Satisfaction
Quality in treatment	4.94	.232	Highly satisfied
Technology used	2.8	.229	Less Satisfied
Doctors experience	4.21	.123	Highly satisfied
Medicines	4.23	.182	Highly satisfied
Equipments	3.2	.211	Satisfied

Table 14 shows Tourist's opinion on services related to treatment. They are highly satisfied with the quality in treatment, doctor's experience & medicines

used. The tourists are satisfied with the equipment used by the hospitals for treatment. In the case of technology used they are less satisfied.



m. Opinion about post treatment services provided

Table 15: Opinion about Post Treatment Services Provided

	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Satisfaction
Nursing care	4.92	.553	Highly satisfied
Doctors follow up	4.12	.513	Highly satisfied
Dietary	4.23	.218	Highly satisfied
Pharmacy	4.11	.277	Highly satisfied

Table 15 shows Tourist's opinion about post treatment services provided by the hospitals. All the post treatment services are highly satisfactory to the tourists.

n. Opinion about different facilities

Table 16: Opinion about Different Facilities

	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Satisfaction
Sanitation	3.21	.277	Satisfied
Drinking Water	4.95	.229	Highly satisfied
Security Services	4.86	.419	Highly satisfied
Laundry	3.21	.232	Satisfied
Entertainment	2.13	.277	Less Satisfaction
Transportation	3.22	.164	Satisfied
Personalized care	4.97	.167	Highly satisfied

Table 16 shows the opinion about different facilities provided by the ayurvedic health care hospitals. The respondents are highly satisfied with drinking water, security services & personalized care, satisfied with sanitation laundry and transportation, less satisfaction with entertainment.

o. Opinion on cost of medical treatment

Table 17: Opinion on Cost of Medical Treatment

	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Satisfaction
Accommodation	4.23	.212	Highly satisfied
Food	4.12	.289	Highly satisfied
Consultation Fee	4.95	.232	Highly satisfied
Medicine	4.95	.112	Highly satisfied
Counselling & follow up	4.95	.114	Highly satisfied

Table 17 shows the opinion of the respondents on cost of medical treatment offered by the ayurvedic health care hospitals. All the facilities accommodation, food, consultation fee, medicine, counselling and follow up cost imposed by the hospitals affordable to the respondents.

government of India it is suggested that all the divisions of both the government (state and central) and all other private segments and all other interested people have to come to be effective participants in the attempt to achieve appropriate growth in tourism industry especially the Ayurvedic tourism which will be a golden chance to India to be a most attractive universal medical tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

From There are enormous opportunities for engendering chances and gain huge amount of foreign exchange and thus there is a boost in the other sectors like economic and social expansion. Much has been achieved but much more remains to be achieved. Even though there are a number of incentives and plans for the promotion of medical tourism in the annual report of ministry of Tourism,

In the present study an effort has been taken to know the level of satisfaction of tourists visiting Kerala for ayurvedic treatment. The entire result of the study showed that there is plenty of opportunities for Kerala intended as ayurvedic health tourism destination.



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