

Medical Tourism

The objective is to promote India as a quality Healthcare destination for persons across the globe, so as to gainfully utilize the health care expertise and infrastructure available in the country.

Scope of Health Tourism and present status in India

Health Tourism holds immense hope. The Indian systems of medicines, i.e. Ayurveda, Yoga, Panchakarma, Rejuvenation Therapy, etc. are among the most ancient systems of medical treatment, of the world. India can provide Medical and Health care at international standard at comparatively low cost. Southern States of India, especially Kerala, has developed Health Tourism as one of the products for the promotion of tourism in Kerala. Health Tourism has also been promoted as one of the USP's of the State. Most of the hotels/resorts are coming up with the Ayurveda Centres as an integral part. Most of the foreign tourists are now coming to India only for Ayurveda. The leading tour operators have included Ayurveda in their brochures.

Promoting Health Tourism worldwide

The growth of Medical and Health Tourism in India can be much higher if adequate focus is given to Health and Medical Tourism. Some of the main advantages that India has are as under:

- It has world-class doctors and hospitals
- The cost of the treatment is a fraction of cost in the source markets

- There is no waiting period for various medical processes
- Increasing popularity of India as a tourist destination in the west
- Eastern Healthcare Wisdom along with the expertise of Western Medicine

Steps taken by Ministry of Tourism to promote Medical Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism has taken several steps to promote India as a Medical and Health Tourism Destination, which are as follows:

- Indian Healthcare Federation, a Non-Governmental organisation affiliated to the Confederation of Indian Industry, on advice by Government, has prepared a guide on select Indian hospitals of the country for health tourism 'purposes. It has been placed on the Website of the Ministry of Tourism i.e. www.incredibleindia.org for wider publicity.

- Brochure, CDs and other publicity materials to promote Medical and Health tourism have been produced by the Ministry of Tourism and have been widely circulated for publicity in target markets.

- Medical and health tourism has been specifically promoted at various international platforms such as World Travel Mart, London, ITP Berlin.

- A new category of 'Medical Visa' has been introduced, which can be given for

specific purpose to foreign tourist coming to India for medical treatment

- Guidelines for accreditation of Ayurvedic and Panchkarma Centres have been circulated to all State Governments for implementation. These have been placed on the website of Ministry of Tourism i.e. www.incredibleindia.org for wider publicity.
- Yoga/Ayurveda/Wellness has been promoted over the last two years in the print, electronic, internet and outdoor medium under the Ministry of Tourism's "Incredible India Campaign",
- Brochures & CDs on Body, Mind and Soul covering the traditional system of medicine have been produced and circulated extensively by the Ministry of Tourism.

Other agency besides Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tourism involved in the development of health tourism in the country.

Indian Healthcare Federation is an independent non-statutory body comprising of non-government hospitals, diagnostic centers, medical equipment manufacturers and pharmaceutical industries. The main objective of the Federation is to promote and encourage healthcare industry in the country, it seeks to function as a liaisoning medium between Government, health providers, medical equipment manufacturers and other medical institutions. It is affiliated to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CH) and works closely with the CH National Committee on Healthcare.

Special provision made for the foreigners coming to India for their treatment

A new category of visa "Medical Visa" has been introduced by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, which can be given for specific purpose to foreign tourists coming to India for medical treatment.

Market Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme in the Sector

The Ministry of Tourism has included the promotion of Medical Tourism as new initiatives. The Marketing Development Assistance Scheme (MDA), administered by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, provides financial support to approved tourism service providers.

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