

Emerging History and trends of Medical Tourism in India

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Introduction

Tourism is travel for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes or for the provision of services to support this leisure travel. Tourism has emerged during second world war. After second war, non-employment crisis has emerged. Tourism used as a tool to improve poverty and non-employment crisis.

Hunziker and Krapf in 1941 defined tourism as ‘the sum of phenomena and relationships arising from travel and stay of non-residents in; so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity.’

But later this phase of tourism has undergone several changes. In today’s era we have know people to back up their lives and just travel across borders for years together. People travel across countries to attend just singular events, some to taste delicate red ant chutney from a corner of the Meghalaya forests, some travel across countries just for ayurvedic massages (Kerala) or travel across the world for thermal baths (Budapest). Well of course this is coupled with interesting conversations, learning about the other regions’ culture, lifestyle and food amongst several other things.

Tourism was not always looked at from the perspective of leisure, but had great signification in various regions or geographies through the ages. If we deep dive into history, we will notice that geography and the geographical positioning of regions plays an important aspect in the evolution of that area's tourism. For e.g. the tourism in Europe was faster advanced and tourist friendly compared to that of South Africa. These compel us to study the evolution of these geographies through history; which brings us to an interesting aspect of tourism - Historical Geography.

Historical Geography

Historical geography is a new term of the 20th century that deals with the geography of internal and external boundaries of the locations. It is the branch of geography that studies the ways in which geographical have changed over time. It is a synthesizing discipline which shares both topical and methodological similarities with history, anthropology, ecology, geology, environmental studies, literary studies, and other fields. 'Historical Geography' is the 'geography behind history' as revealed by the changing frontiers and borders of states and empires; and the history of geographical exploration and discovery.

Historical research on regional landscape change, received a powerful stimulus after the First World War. It was then that the national boundaries of nations in Europe and the Middle East were redrawn. It allowed them the opportunity to re-focused their attention on regional landscapes, which as products of long-term economic, social and

political evolution which were then objectively analyzed by the scientific interrogation of historical and archaeological evidences, in the form of travel. Several different kinds of historical inquiry emerged within geography as a consequence of this period of uncertainty.

Types of Tourism

Historical Geography and new discoveries of routes and locations developed different types of tourism. Tourism is today's world's largest and fastest expanding industry whose main purpose is the recreational or leisure of mind. It relates to basic human behavior that seeks to make life full of experiences by engaging all human senses. It is the bi product of human curiosity, to explore new places, enjoy new culinary dishes, to meet new people and experience their cultures.

1. Culture Tourism

A nation's heritage is its cultural identity, without which it would be a nameless, and perhaps faceless. Bio-culturally rich landscape of India makes her a unique tourist destination in Asia.

Cultural tourism is complex, which not only includes knowledge, resources, rural tourism but also, folk culture, religious belief, art, architecture, ornaments, morals, law, custom, fairs, festivals, historical and Archaeological heritage. The development of sustainable form of cultural tourism means enrichment of culture itself; its resources and its entire setting; includes protection of urban centers, preservation of pilgrimages, upkeep of museums, restoration of lost traditions and revitalization of dwindling crafts for the simple reason and heritage conversation.

2. Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism has grown in recent decades, as tourists seek out-of-the-ordinary types of vacations.

Adventure Tourism may be defined as a leisure activity that takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote, or wilderness destination and tends to be associated with high levels of involvement and activity by the participants, most of it outdoors. Adventure travelers are explorers of both an outer world, especially the unspoiled, exotic parts of our planet and an inner world of personal challenge, self perception and self mastery.

Adventure tourism is currently one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry in British Columbia. Historically, individuals drawn to work within the various adventure travel activities have done so because of a primary interest in an outdoor, travel-oriented lifestyle. Increasingly, these individuals are confronting the need for skills such as good marketing and business practices to stay employed and competitive within the field.

Guides are the backbone of the adventure tourism industry. Employers need competent, qualified guides who can provide adequate care and safety for their clients. Many growing companies in the adventure tourism industry are looking for employees who are qualified in adventure sport activities and who possess

effective interpersonal, hospitality, and organizational and business skills. The reality is that such guides are still hard to find!

Most of the past and present adventure tourism businesses have been started by these "lifestyle" operators, and we are just now seeing tourism development investors beginning to actively seek out viable operations within adventure travel tourism. This trend will in turn create new issues to address in the integration of operator and investor.

Thompson Rivers University defines Adventure tourism is “explorers of both an outer world, especially the unspoiled, exotic parts of our planet and an inner world of personal challenge, self perception and self mastery.” Adventure tourists may be motivated to achieve mental states characterized as rush or flow, resulting from stepping outside of their comfort zone. This may be from experiencing culture shock or through the performance of acts, that require significant effort and involve some degree of risk (real or perceived) and/or physical danger (See extreme sports). This may include activities such as mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, canoeing, scuba diving, rafting, kayaking, zip-lining, paragliding, hiking, exploring, sandboarding, caving and rock climbing. Some obscure forms of adventure travel include disaster and ghetto tourism. Other rising forms of adventure travel include jungle tourism.

Access to inexpensive consumer technology, with respect to Global Positioning Systems, flash packing, social networking and photography, have increased the worldwide interest in adventure travel. The interest in independent adventure travel has also increased as more specialist travel websites emerge offering previously niche locations and sports.

Adventure tourism has very vast scope; it covers Accessible Tourism, Cultural tourism, Disaster tourism, Eco, ethno, Jungle, ghetto, overland tourism and urban explorations.

3. Ethno Tourism

Ethno tourism refers to visiting a foreign location for the sake of observing the indigenous members of its society for the sake of non-scientific gain. Some extreme forms of this include attempting to make first contact with tribes that are protected from outside visitors.

Two controversial issues associated with ethno tourism include bringing natives into contact with diseases they do not have immunities for, and the possible degradation or destruction of a unique culture and/or language.

4. Ghetto tourism

Ghetto tourism includes all forms of entertainment — "gangsta rap," video games, movies, TV, and other forms that allow consumers to traffic in the inner city without leaving home. It focuses Information technology in tourism.

5. Health Tourism

Excessive stress at the work place and mechanics of life in big and crowded cities make people run to unknown places and unwind themselves. Health tourism was always existed but it was not until the eighteenth century that it became important. Ancient Indian medical texts were translated and this knowledge transposed to China, Greek and Europe.

People often visited spas to unwind and relax. Some of them were orthodox like the natural reservoirs in India proved as rich sources of the sulphur where people used to visit and treated their skin diseases.

The spas of the southern states of the USA in the 19th century served a rural market, whilst spas in the north were largely urban in characters. Leisure habits for the German bourgeoisie in the mid-1800s were often highly localized and this contributed to the lack of resort development on the north German coast until the early years of 20th century. In contrast, Italian's indulged in local town, country spas and seaside resorts and limited international tourism and rarely extended beyond Switzerland and the South Tyrol.

The period of spa growth in England (c. 1550-1820) was marked by a multitude of spa births and deaths, not a smooth projection of rise and decline. And, it is also too simplistic to see these English spas operating in isolation from a much wider urban leisure system.

Medical tourism has served as a gateway for patients to receive affordable and quality medical care by crossing borders. The net worth of the health tourism industry is believed to be \$40 billion. Savings from medical tourism can be 15 to 85 percent in some cases. Leading medical tourism hubs around the world include Brazil, Costa Rica, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey. Estimates show that over 7 million global citizens cross borders every year to appreciate the effects of medical tourism.

Growth of medical tourism in India has been very rapid in the last 10 years and according to Confederation of Indian Industry over 1, 50, 000 patients travelled to India to seek health care services in 2005. And according to Ministry of Tourism, India, medical tourism growth in India is expected to see an exceptional growth rate of 30% by 2015 and set is to become a 2billion USD industry.

Indigenous and Natural Health Tourism

India has an ancient healing system called Ayurveda – knowledge of life – This system combines naturopathy with various natural therapies which include invigorating Yoga lessons added in these therapies. These have no side effects but very much rejuvenating. All around the World there is now a greater interest in this Indian Traditional Medicine System. Tourism Marketing teams have included Rejuvenation packages for travel to Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc., states which have developed quite a number of resorts with the aim of providing Ayurvedic therapies. These are now receiving worldwide attention.

Treatments are provided for Allergy, Chest & Pulmonary, Cardiothoracic / Cardiovascular Surgeries, Vascular Surgery, Cosmetic Surgery, Pediatrics & Pediatric Surgery, Infertility / Reproductive Medicine and Obstetrics & Gynecology and so on.

6. Globalization and Fertility Tourism

With the onset of globalization, there has been a decline in fertility levels. This has led to what is known as 'reproductive tourism'. Of the many options, surrogacy has caught the public-eye and so much so that visa regulations have been changed in line with the growing practice. With no legal regulation and easy availability of surrogate mothers at one-third the global cost, the practice proliferates in an unfettered manner in India. The rapid growth of the industry also poses various challenges to various familial notions and makes settled concepts like 'motherhood' look rather hazy.

In the advanced technological era, there are many alternatives available for the couple who crave to have a child. Despite the fact that adoption and other options of the like nature exist to counteract the issue of childlessness, there is noted a great desire among couples to have a child of their own. That is to say that the infertile couples want a child genetically related to them. It is this yearning and aspiration of the infertile couples for a genetically related child that has fuelled the growth of assisted reproductive techniques, and more particularly, surrogacy.

India's booming commercial surrogacy tourism businesses face a bleak outlook. Official figures suggest 2,000 children are born to surrogate mothers in India each year, and unofficial figures for the value of the industry range from \$400 million to \$2.3 billion. EY, a consultancy, published research in July 2015 suggesting that the market could grow by 20% a year.

The government is planning legislation to ban most foreigners from hiring Indian surrogates. In October 2015, Indian embassies stopped issuing medical visas allowing foreigners to enter the country for the purposes of hiring a surrogate mother. The Indian Council of Medical Research has also banned clinics from offering such services to foreigners.

What was a \$2.3 billion industry will collapse. The government says that the lack of a legal framework has allowed surrogates to be underpaid and exploited by clinics, which charge between \$25,000 and \$50,000 for the safe delivery of a baby. Surrogates get between \$4,000 and \$6,500 from foreign couples and between \$3,000 and \$5,000 from Indian couples.

The new law aims to safeguard the rights of surrogate mothers, as surrogates are sometimes surreptitiously implanted with more than one embryo to improve the success rate, resulting in multiple births that could be difficult for the mothers.

Because the business is largely unregulated, there is little recourse if something goes wrong.

Commercial surrogacy is allowed in a number of other countries, including Malaysia, Russia and Ukraine, and in some U.S. states. Most developed countries allow altruistic surrogacy, in which no payment changes hands, but ban commercial surrogacy. The industry was banned in Thailand in August 2015, and legislation is under discussion in Malaysia.

Advantages of Medical Tourism in India

The biggest advantage of medical travel in India is the low cost health care service, Technological advancements and highly educated doctors, Availability of latest medical instruments, High health care standards offered, No language barrier as English is widely spoken across India. Moreover many hospitals in India hire native translators for patients from African countries so that they can communicate effectively, Relaxed visa rules, Visa on India arrival for patients from specific countries (Just announced by P. M. Mr. Modiji in the SAARC, 2016), availability of low cost generic medicines.

Disadvantages of Health Travel in India

Medical practice has known as a noble profession but it changes its nature and became commercial. There are few disadvantages of medical travel in India. Medical malpractice has emerged most danger disadvantage. Misdiagnosis during the treatment can result in unforeseen damages even though hospitals provide malpractice insurance. And since travellers are not aware of the legal rules in India, this can cause further troubles.

Second, Indian Insurance policies are very clumsy and hidden. Insurance coverage varies on the type of medical treatment. So before seeking any treatment it is important to understand all the facts to avoid any unnecessary expenses during your stay abroad. And since medical travellers are unaware of legal issues, it may cause problems to them since in countries like US & UK legal procedures are very transparent. Third is an expense raised in Post Operation Therapy and health check up. Issues arise when the recovery time of procedure is longer and in such cases medical tourists in India have to arrange stays outside the hospital on their own. Legal paperwork and permits are tedious and/ or serve as a hindrance to patients in medical tourism destinations. In foreign countries, it may be possible to unaware the legalities of medical care travel. and Last is Travel Cost is always recommended for medical tourists to accompany someone while travelling abroad for medical treatment. But this spurts the travel, accommodation and other bills.

Health Care Cost – India Vs USA

Here's the summary of important heart surgical procedure in India compared to US. (Source: American Medical Association).

Surgery	US (USD)	India (USD)
Bypass Surgery	130,000	10,000
Heart Valve Replacement	160,000	9,000
Angioplasty	57,000	11,000
Hip Replacement	43,000	9,000
Hysterectomy	20,000	3,000
Knee Replacement	40,000	8,500
Spinal Fusion	62,000	5,500

This table compares medical costs in India to those in Western countries. Second, many private hospitals launched numerous programmes and attracted foreign patients for such treatment. Third, patients were able to get appointments quickly, and once they did, hospital staff and management took care of all basic needs for patients. Some hospitals in India have given new patients, particularly those from outside India, early appointments. In a nutshell, tourism and commercial medical business go hand in hand.

Economy

Economics gains have been a major driving force the growth of tourism in developing countries. The World Travel and Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated \$121 billion or 6.4% of the nation's GDP in 2011. It was responsible for 39.3 million jobs, 7.9% of its total employment. The GDP of the tourism sector has expanded 229% between 1990 and 2011. The sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 7.7% in the next decade. In a 2011 forecast the World Travel and Tourism Council predicted the annual growth to be 8.8% between 2011 and 2021.

India is ranked fifth among countries with the fastest growing tourism industry. India has a large medical tourism sector which is expected to grow at an estimated rate of 30% annually to reach about 9,500 crore by 2015.

Conclusion

Tourism is the effective tools for building prosperous community economically, socially and culturally. The Ministry of Tourism designs national policies for the development and promotion of tourism. In the process, the Ministry consults and collaborates with other stakeholders in the sector including various Central Ministries/agencies, state governments, Union Territories and the representatives of the private sector.

This sector must be environmentally sound and followed the regulations of Carrying capacity. Carrying capacity is a central principle in environmental protection and sustainable tourism development. Carrying capacity includes several elements Physical, Ecological, Cultural, and Tourist social, Host social Carrying capacity. Carrying capacity denotes how much tourism is sufficient to yield positive returns and avoid its blights. As a result, people conclude that, despite claims that the medical profession is noble, it has devolved into a commercial enterprise.

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