

# Role of Hotels and Resorts to Promote Ancient Ayurveda Through Health Tourism: A Special Reference to Kerala

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**Abstract:** Health Tourism is one of the emerging segments of travel and has gained remarkable fame to India for attracting tourists to cater their health as well as relaxation needs. Even though a new phenomenon; it is almost surely to be a major source of income for the country. Ayurveda has been the USP of health tourism to offer a complete package of travel experiences with psychological, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Presently alternative therapy and herbal treatment is widely popular globally and makes India a major tourist attraction. Hopefully, within few years India will be the most preferred destination for best of the health services with holistic healing therapies. Thus, endorsing Ayurveda through health tourism provides a new dimension to the hospitality and tourism in India itself. The main purpose of the paper is to focus on recent developmental trends in health tourism in India for promoting holistic therapy- Ayurveda in global context. The study highlights the implementation of ancient therapies in various hotels and resorts of Kerala as an ancillary service to provide the guest utmost satisfaction. The scope of the study only focuses on promoting Ayurvedic remedies as a significant element of health tourism in hotels and resorts of Kerala. In the concluding section, limitations of the study have been discussed and recommendations provided for undertaking more detailed investigations in the area.

**Key words:** Ayurveda-Based Health Tourism, Wellness Retreats, Holistic Healing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in India is popular in global context not just for the architectural heritage and natural bounty but also for the spiritual diversity, cultural values and indigenous ancient healthcare system. In present scenario India is emerging as a great destination for health tourism for outstanding therapeutic remedy at low cost, easy accessibility and tremendous travel experience. There are many holistic resorts of India providing alternative therapy packages including slimming programmes, paralysis, weight loss, anti-

ageing, yoga, meditation detoxification and rejuvenation. Since Vedic era Indians have been utilising the essence and miraculous benefits of herbs and other natural ingredients for curing miscellaneous mental and physical ailments. It is worldwide proved that Vedic science and its by-products, Ayurveda has marvellously upgraded the quality of human life and wellbeing throughout the ages. Predominantly Ayurvedic treatment not only focuses on treatment but also on prevention of diseases through naturopathy, diet and lifestyle practices. Hence as a significant part of health tourism sector many hotels and resorts are focusing on promotion of these age-old remedies of the country in global forum through their service packages. There are many Ayurvedic therapy centres & Spa's opened up at many hotels and resorts which facilitate total patient care and a complete holidaying experience. Furthermore, different form of therapies and pancha karma relaxes and soothes the physiological system of the body.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To Analyze the Contribution of Hotels and Resorts in Ayurveda-Based Health Tourism – Examining how hotels and resorts in Kerala integrate Ayurvedic treatments and wellness programs to attract tourists.
- To Assess the Impact of Ayurveda on the Growth of Health Tourism in Kerala – Evaluating the role of Ayurveda in positioning Kerala as a leading global destination for health and wellness tourism.
- To Identify Challenges and Opportunities in Promoting Ayurveda Through Hospitality Services – Exploring the obstacles faced by hotels and resorts in providing authentic Ayurvedic experiences and potential strategies for sustainable growth.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research is a conceptual study based on application of secondary data analysis. The data has been collected from the published statistics, reports, journals, previous studies and websites. Then it makes an assessment of the extent of social awareness, innovativeness and responsiveness of tourism sector for marketing Ayurveda.

**Renaissance of Ancient Ayurveda through Health Tourism:** It has been observed that the present ferocious competitive scenario and the techno-centric lifestyle gradually affecting the psychosocial wellbeing of the gennex globatarian. The increasing level of stress and anxiety, imbalance diet and wrong food habits, and dissolution of societal and traditional value system have resulted disequilibrium in the social-ecosystem (Fontanari and Kern, 2003). For this reason, people are always in search for a place away from the hustle-bustle of life to relax in a place of peace and serenity. In consequence, to fight with the above problems and to provide the wellbeing needs of the customer health tourism sector plays a pivotal role. Moreover, the synergistic combination of health, vacation and leisure helps the tourism and hospitality sector to cultivate global competitiveness and sustain growth.

**Ayurvedic Therapy at Health Resorts:** There are a huge number of hotels and resorts facilitating Ayurvedic remedies to pamper the guests with a divine experience. Though there are ranges of resorts providing these treatments exclusively; increasing demand compels the hotel sector to include Ayurvedic therapies in form of spa centers in the hotel premises. Many premium segment hotels in India are incorporating wellness segment with experts and therapists to serve the guests according to their requirement and body types. Furthermore the therapy helps to revive the vigor and vitality of the body and enhances the immunity power through the anti-oxidant & prophylactic properties. The services also include beauty and weight management programmes as wellness packages. Different therapies provided the guest as supplementary services to restore their physical, psychological and spiritual harmony and well being.

**Range of Services:** There are few common Ayurvedic therapies provide at every resort throughout the country. The treatment includes the most effective panchakarma therapy that includes five types of healing procedures done through internally and externally for rejuvenation of body,

mind and soul. Additionally other therapeutic methods are abhayanga massage, shirodhara, sharvangadhara, shirovasti, kativasti, nasyam and steam bath. Along with that therapists also suggest to go for application various types of masks on the face and body as per the condition and requirements.

**Role of Hotels and Resorts in Kerala to endorse Ayurveda:** Although Kerala tourism has a huge potential for growth in this sector. Kerala is considered as one of the best tourist destinations in India and famous for its warm hospitality. To discover the cultural diversity and ethnicity huge numbers of travelers visit kerala throughout the year from all over the world. Hence, hospitality sector plays a pivotal role to offer them superlative accommodation facility. As a result there are many hotels and resorts available throughout the state to provide utmost service quality according to the budget of the travelers. These hotels and resorts equipped with classic as well as modern amenities along with supplementary services to provide the guest an enthralling experience.

**Ayurveda at Hotels and Resorts:** As reported by Statistical survey, 2013-14; at present there are around 1500 number of hotels including low, medium and high segment category are operating at different places in Kerala. Hotel industry is emerging at a skyrocketing pace with increasing demand of different category of travelers for accommodation as well as relaxation. Thus, to provide the utmost satisfaction to the guests many hotels in spite of the classification and rating have included Ayurvedic massage and associated services among the list of amenities.

Discussed below are few of the selected hotels and resorts promoting Ayurveda through their service delivery mechanism. So many star category hotels provides ayurveda treatment including,

- Taj Group
- Kadavu resort
- Rajha healthy acres
- Carnosite Yurveda and wellness resort
- Kairali ayurvedic healing village
- Athreya ayurvedic centre
- Soma manaltheeram Ayurveda beach village etc

There are also many beach resorts in Kovalam plays the role of ambassador to endorse tourism in the global arena. Hence, in this way major hotels and resorts encourage the promotion of Ayurvedic remedies. However, it is highly essential that the therapy should be offered under the supervision and

consultation of registered professionals and experts only.

#### IV. SCOPE AND CHALLENGES

According to Forbes India report, 2014; medical or health tourism is the crown-jewel to shape the future of economic growth and health care. And the report further says that is a booming sector which expects to grow to \$5 billion by 2016. Health tourism in India even though a new phenomenon is almost surely to be a major source of income for the country. Hopefully, within few years India will be the preferred destination for best of the health services. Ayurveda and associated healing therapies have always enticed and impressed foreign tourist. Many tourists from different countries come in India for purification, nourishment and rejuvenation through the healing touch promised by yoga and Ayurveda. For this reason Ayurveda as a significant component of tourism and hospitality helps the country in achieving global competitiveness and growth sustainability. Moreover, medicines prepared strictly according to the instructions provided by the authentic scriptures; have tremendous curative powers. Though this therapy works at its own pace in comparison to Allopathic medicine, the perception of limited side effects is its advantage (Rath et al., 2012). Ayurveda treatment system plays a key role field of public health scenario since long time. The main reason for its popularity is their availability, cheapness and efficacy. Various doctrines of Ayurveda are really thought provoking and amazing. Even smaller doses create wonders in curing terminal illness.

The diagnosis procedure in Ayurvedic system is typical and astounding. An Ayurvedic practitioner determines the causes and symptoms in a scientific and accurate procedure through examining the pulses (nadi-pariksha), eyes and face of the patient; and accordingly suggests the remedy. The remedial measures helps in balancing the harmony of the 'tridoshas' through rasayana treatment through proper management of Rasas in correct proportions and combinations inside the body. Another list of few of the powerful ayurvedic therapy consists of infusions—Asavas, decoctions—Aristhas, oils—Tailas, powders—Churnas, tablets—Gutika and ointment —lepa, medicated ghee—Ghritam, Metals —Bhashmas, etc. However, the expertise is restricted to limited specialists only. Due to lack of standardization and patent of the drugs Ayurveda is not able to keep pace

with the contemporary medical system. Modern consumer mostly prefers allopathic medicines for its instant effect and still ignorant about the incredible worth of the ancient therapies.

To keep the traditional system of healing alive century after century there is the necessary requirement of a positive encouragement and awareness. The appropriate approaches to propel Ayurveda in global context are standardization of quality, proper management, innovative methods for manufacturing and the degree of potency. In recent years, India's health tourism sector has witnessed significant growth, with Ayurveda playing a pivotal role in attracting international tourists. The Ministry of Tourism's 2022 report highlights that medical tourism is a key driver of economic growth, with the sector projected to expand substantially in the coming years. Kerala, renowned for its authentic Ayurvedic treatments, continues to be a prime destination for health tourists seeking holistic wellness experiences. The state's integration of traditional therapies with modern hospitality has enhanced its appeal to global visitors.

However, the Ayurvedic health tourism industry faces challenges, including the need for standardization of treatments, quality control, and intellectual property rights for traditional formulations. Addressing these issues is crucial for maintaining credibility and ensuring sustainable growth in the sector. To preserve and promote this ancient healing system, there is a pressing need for increased awareness, standardized practices, and innovative approaches. Recent initiatives by the government and private sectors aim to revitalize Ayurveda through health and wellness tourism, tapping into India's rich herbal heritage and positioning the country as a global hub for holistic health care.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Ayurveda defines and refines the way of qualitative leaving with the blend of spirituality and holistic therapies. In the emerging scenario of stressful competitive era; Ayurveda provides a plethora of opportunities to enhance the quality of life. Though it is originated from India; it has always enticed people from abroad for its magnificent spiritual healing therapy. It will be an augmented experience for tourists if they can experience these services offered by hotels and resorts in Kerala similar to other parts of the country. this extraordinary medical

science which is one of the most ancient and finest practice of preventive medicine, that has been practiced in India over many centuries by the expert Vaidyas, should now receive the immediate attention in the best interest of contemporary India. Moreover, it's an imperative requirement to focus primarily on promoting and branding Ayurveda through channelization of different hotels and resorts.

The Kerala Government, Ayurvedic Physician's Association, and Department of Tourism and Hotels association further need to work in a collaborative creative manner to encourage the promotion of Ayurvedic wellness package in global context. PPP management modelling also acts as a catalyst to develop Ayurvedic oriented resorts at famous tourist destinations. Ministry of Tourism should also take appropriate and immediate steps to promote Kerala as an important destination for spiritual healing. Government authority can establish specific outlet in those accommodation units to promote Ayurveda tourism. Strategizing Ayurveda in the product line rendered by hoteliers and resort enterprises could definitely build up a strong customer relationships and market value. Consequently, health tourism and hospitality can work through a synergistic approach to promote Ayurveda, altruistic service delivery, and enrich India through offering blissful healthiness to the society.

This research is an attempt to establish meaningful co-relation among the ancient therapeutic approach and modern business strategy. More explicitly the expected results of the study could guide the research community towards the significance of Ayurveda and health tourism services in India.

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