tourists due the growing popularity of traditional alternative therapies, such as ayurveda, therapeutic massage, yoga, and meditation among the tourists. Moreover, improvements in the medical infrastructure with a growing pool of qualified specialists, is attracting medical tourists from all across the globe.

Research Analysis & Highlights:

The report, “Booming Medical Tourism in India”, by RNCOS, provides an in-depth research and rational analysis of the medical tourism market in India. It provides forecasts for the medical tourism market along with the medical tourist arrivals in the country till 2015. Additionally, it provides a brief comparison of top Asian medical tourism market to show India’s position in the region. An insight on cost comparison of various medical procedures with other major countries has also been given in the report. It also covers various government initiatives and major trends of the market to generate an overall understanding of the industry. Further, the report included the prominent industry players covering their business overview, key financials and industry activities. Some of the report’s key highlights include:

- The medical tourism market in India is growing at a commendable pace.
- Alternative medical therapies are becoming popular among the medical tourists.
- Government is increasingly focusing on developing the medical tourism industry.
- Cosmetic surgery is one of the most sought after treatments by the medical tourists.

END NOTES

CHAPTER - II

MEDICAL TOURISM THROUGH THE AGES

Introduction
From the olden days people around the world stepped onto abroad to seek various medical/cosmetic treatment with affordable and best medical services. The concept of medical travel is as old as medicine itself. History of medical tourism dates back to ancient times. The extracts of this history says that to take care of the health, people use to travel considering the quality, range of success of the treatment, accessibility, etc.,

**Medical Tourism - Ancient Times**

**Healthcare Initiative for by Sumerians:**

It is understood from the studies of ancient cultures, that there was a strong link between religion and healthcare. The sacred temple baths and the therapeutic effects of mineral thermal springs had been noted in ancient studies. The following are some of the earliest civilizations. Health complexes were built around hot springs during the period of circa 4000 BC by Sumerians. Majestic elevated temples with flowing pools were present in those complexes. The health benefits of drinking and bathing in iron-rich mineral springs were recognized by hill tribes of Bronze Age (circa 2000 BC). This was happened in the hill, presently known as St. Moritz of Switzerland. The same bronze drinking cups that they used were found in thermal springs in France and Germany, which could signify health pilgrimages within these cultures.

**Healthcare practice of Greeks:**

Foundation for a comprehensive medical tourism network was first laid down by the Ancient Greeks. In honour of their god of medicine, Asclepius, the Greeks erected the Asclepia Temples, which became some of the world’s first health centers. People from all over, traveled to these temples to seek cures for their ailments. Therapeutic temples were flourished under the Greek domain during 300 BC.

Epidaurus was the example for that which included gymnasium, a snake farm, a dream temple, and thermal baths. The Sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia and the Temple of Delphi included spas. Several hot-water baths and springs called thermae became popular and have been used for commercial purpose. Thermae resembled modern-day spas. In due
course they became the social networking centers for the rich and the elite.

THERMAE

Source: www.crystalinks.com/romebaths

**Medicare Practices in India**

In India, the traditional healing methods like yoga and Ayurvedic medicine were the encouraging factors for medical tourism. Buddhist pilgrimages, Yoga retreats, Ayurvedic meditation centers are just some examples of India's healing arts that attract an inordinate amount of health care tourists into the country. Ever since Ayurveda's birth thousands of years ago, India has enjoyed a constant influx of medical travelers and spiritual students that came in hopes of mastering this most revered branch of alternative medicine. With the birth of Buddhism about 2,500 years later, India has experienced renewed interest in its progress as the cultural, spiritual, and medicinal center of the East. There was a constant inflow of medical travelers and spiritual students to India for research regarding the benefits of these alternative-healing methods.

**Medical Tourism during the Middle Ages**

During the middle age there was a downfall of Roman Civilization. Most of the temples in Asia gave way to hospitals that provide clinical services to medical tourists.

Thus Asian Medicare services started to lead the medical tourism industry. In Medieval Japan, hot mineral springs called Onsen became popular throughout the nation due to their healing properties. The warrior clans soon took notice of these springs and began using them to alleviate pain, heal wounds, and recuperate from their battles. Many
early Islamic cultures established health care systems that also catered for foreigners, regardless of race or religion. Mansuri Hospital was built in Cairo and became the largest and most advanced hospital in the world during 1248 AD\textsuperscript{cxii}. This hospital was having the capacity to treat around 8,000 people at that time.

**Medical Tourism - The Renaissance Period**

14th to 17th century, called as the Renaissance Period, was the period of boom for medical tourism. In 1326, iron-rich hot springs were discovered in a village known as Ville d’Eaux or Town of Waters and it became famous throughout Europe. The word “spa”, derived from the Roman term “salute per aqua” or health through waters, was first used here. Bath or Aquae Sulis became the center of fashionable wellness and became a playground for the rich and famous. It enjoyed royal patronage and was popular throughout the known world. During the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the rich and the elite of Europe rediscovered Roman baths and flocked to tourist towns with spas like St. Mortiz, Ville d’Eaux, Baden Baden, Aachen and Bath in England\textsuperscript{cxiii}. Well-known visitors like Peter the Great and Victor Hugo visited and witnessed these wellness resorts.

**Medical Tourism - The Post-Renaissance Period**

During the end of the Renaissance period, the Baths were crowded by aristocrats for healing and therapeutic cleansing. In 1720, a covered sewage system was followed first time in England at Bath city. Due to the increased importance of medical tourism in this city, the total infrastructure of the city has got elevated. The city also received technological, financial, and social benefits. Roads were paved, streets had lights, hotels, and restaurants were beautified. Michel Eyquem de Montaigne\textsuperscript{cxiv} was the most noteworthy traveler and was believed to be the father of luxury travel in the history of Medical Tourism. During the 1600s, English and Dutch colonists started building log cabins near mineral springs rich with medicinal properties. During this time, it was noted that the Native Americans in the New World were adept in the healing arts. Knowledge in herbal medicine was exceptional and rivaled
those in Europe, Asia or Africa. During the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, several Europeans and Americans continued to travel to remote areas with spas and health retreats hoping to cure various ailments like tuberculosis.

**Medical Tourism during 20\textsuperscript{th} century**

During 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the USA and Europe were the center of the healthcare world. Rich people went to those countries to receive high-end medical services. In 1933, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) was established and became the umbrella organization for the medical specialist boards in the United States. The ABMS established educational and professional policies, which became the blueprint of standards around the world.

In 1958, the European Union of Medical Specialties (UEMS) was formed. The UEMS is made up of different National Medical Associations from member nations of the European Union\textsuperscript{cxv}. During 1960s, India became a destination of choice for pilgrims when the New Age movement began in the USA. India developed into a fully-fledged medical tourism industry, with yoga and Ayurvedic medicine rediscovered. Due to the rising cost of healthcare in the 1980s and 1990s, American patients started considering offshore options, like dental services in Central America and Ayurvedic treatment in India. Whilst US doctors were appalled at the idea of seeking healthcare in foreign hospitals during these periods, Cuba started programs luring foreigners for eye surgeries, heart and cosmetic procedures.

**Medical Tourism from 1997 to 2001**

There was an economic crisis in Asia in 1997. Also there was a downfall of Asian currencies. Government of Asian countries took efforts to concentrate in healthcare marketing.

Thailand quickly became the hub for plastic surgery, with fees charged at a fraction of what Western countries could offer. In 1997 the Joint Commission International was formed to check and investigate international healthcare facilities for conformance to international standards due to the emergence of health providers around the world.
Medical Tourism from 2001 to 2006

During 2006, nearly 150,000 US Citizens traveled to Asia and Latin America for dentistry and cosmetic surgery\textsuperscript{cxvi}. In this situation JCI accreditation has gained importance. Thailand, Singapore and India became legitimate medical destinations due to JCI accreditation. Seeking JCI accreditation and partnership with prominent US-based health providers, the Southeast Asian and Latin American countries are emerging as healthcare destinations. The number of American medical tourists increased to 300,000 in 2007, the largest ever in medical tourism history\textsuperscript{cxvii}. Many of them preferred offshore procedures such as: face-lifts, bypass surgery or fertility treatments. In 2008, several healthcare and insurance companies in the United States considered medical outsourcing. These offered their members the possibility to get non-emergency procedures and surgeries in other countries. Many are also considering foreign medical procedures as part of health plan coverage.

Medical Tourism – A Global scenario

Medical tourism is growing and expanding on a global scale. It is a direct result of globalization of health care. This health care sector is emerging up in vigorous speed.

In recent times, medical tourism has emerged in many countries as a new form of trade item or value-added tourist product. This augmentation of medical tourism is due to a broad range of motivators and increasingly, developing countries are seeking to capitalize on these flows and are linking medical care with actual tourist activities. This
commercial association between healthcare and tourism is a rapidly developing and profitable industry that is attracting growing interest amongst health researchers. In 2002, the value of trade in the sector was estimated at $US 30 billion for the health component and at $US 6 billion for the tourism component with more recent estimates of value up to $60 billion dollars with an annual growth rate of 20%.\textsuperscript{cxix}

Medical Tourism Association\textsuperscript{cxx}, Lagace\textsuperscript{cxxi}, Arellano\textsuperscript{cxxii} and The & Chu\textsuperscript{cxxiii} have stated in their article that people from developed countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom are travelling to developing countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and India to seek affordable and accessible healthcare. Many corporate hospitals in lower-income countries such as India are obtaining international medical accreditation. It helps to relieve medical travelers those who are concerns about the quality of health services available in the developing world\textsuperscript{cxxiv}.

Hermesse, Lewalle, & Palm\textsuperscript{cxxv} and Healy\textsuperscript{cxxvi} mentioned about the European Union Commission Directive which has been introduced to address cross-border medical travel by clarifying the rights of patients obtaining healthcare in EU countries other than their country of residence. Additionally, the number of countries that are developing their own medical tourism industries has increased, and so the provision of health services to foreigners for profit is becoming a highly competitive market. The estimation through research by Deloitte (2008a)\textsuperscript{cxxvii} that the volume of medical tourists could reach 4 million per annum by 2012. Medical tourism has become a major force for the growth of service exports worldwide, while concentrating on a selective number of recipient countries – with India and Thailand as major markets.

Medical tourism is acting as a financial valve for the rising burden of health care costs in mature markets like the USA. In addition, it provides an alternative for the almost 50 million uninsured adults of the USA in receiving affordable and accessible medical services\textsuperscript{cxxviii}. During the year 2008 the number of foreigners seeking medical treatment across
an international border was estimated\textsuperscript{cxix} to be 60,000 to 80,000. In contrast to this, the Deloitte Centre for Health Solutions estimated 750,000 Americans\textsuperscript{cxxx} travelled abroad for medical care in 2007 and predicted that this would increase to 1.6 million by 2012 with a sustainable annual\textsuperscript{cxxi} growth rate of 35%. Dr.Prem has identified thirty Five (35) countries in total as medical tourism destinations. They were (in alphabetical order): Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Caribbean, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, UK and USA\textsuperscript{cxxxii}.

India, Thailand and Singapore were ranked first, second and third as the most popular medical tourism destinations respectively. The United States was placed at number four.

**World’s Best Medical Tourism Hospitals**\textsuperscript{cxxxiii}

It is time to reveal who made the World’s Best Medical Tourism Hospitals Top Ten List according to the Medical Travel Quality Alliance. Straight from their website after stringent criteria requirements and thorough review, here is the Top Ten:

1. **Fortis Hospital, Bangalore, India:** Fort is Hospital offers the best surgery options in case of orthopedic procedures including hip resurfacing and replacement. They provide exemplary follow up care
and services to monitor American medical travelers once they return home.

2. **Gleneagles Hospital, Singapore**: The Parkway Hospital Group may well be the standard bearer for private hospital care in Singapore, and Gleneagles Hospital is its flagship. Singapore is the top medical destination, and Gleneagles Hospital is a top hospital in Singapore.

3. **Shouldice Hospital, Thornhill, Canada**: The specialty of Shouldice Hospital is that it distinguishes itself into its fifth decade of managing hernia surgeries. More Americans should know about and take advantage of this Toronto-area private hospital in the land of government-sponsored health care so close to home. It is popular with both Canadians and medical travelers.

4. **Wooridul Spine Hospital, Seoul, Korea**: This unique hospital is a world leader in medical treatment of the spine. Wooridul’s influence and prestige has spread worldwide through its doctors and its joint ventures with hospitals in Asia and Europe.

5. **Asklepios Klinik Barmbek, Hamburg, Germany**: Asklepios Group is the largest private hospital operator in Europe. It has more than 20 years experience in medicine, nursing and rehabilitation and unparalleled treatment options in over 100 facilities. The hospital in Barmbek is very popular for medical tourism. It partners with innovative medical technology companies from Germany to test the most modern medical equipment before it is released worldwide.

6. **Bumrungrad International, Bangkok, Thailand**: The most well-known hospital for medical tourists, Bumrungrad has been taking foreign patients for 20 years. It has invested heavily in integration of medical records, pharmacy, labs and other hospital departments into a state-of-the-art electronic environment. It is a model for other international hospitals in focus on technology and its American style of management carry over to the Bumrungrad website. The hospital operates a network of exclusive representatives.

7. **Barcelona Medical Centre, Barcelona, Spain**: Barcelona Centre Medic offers the most comprehensive medical care in Southern Europe. It is unique in providing a high quality service in integrated
medical care. It has twenty, most reputable and prestigious health centres in Barcelona. Among them 8 are general hospitals, 8 are specialised centres and 4 are diagnostic centres. It may be a medical traveler’s one-stop-shop in Europe.

8. **Bangkok Hospital Medical Center, Bangkok, Thailand**: Bangkok Hospital Medical Center is the flagship of the largest private hospital chain in Thailand. It meets several of the MTQUA (Medical Travel and Health Tourism Quality Alliance) criteria that make it one of the World’s Best Hospitals for Medical Tourists. Individual hospitals of the medical center in Bangkok include the distinguished Bangkok Heart Hospital, Bangkok International Hospital, and Wattanosoph Cancer Hospital. The hospital lists qualified medical travel companies on its website and operates a network of representatives.

9. **Clemenceau Medical Center, Beirut, Lebanon**: Clemenceau has ties with Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and stands out as a leading hospital in the Middle East. For value, treatment and patient care, it doesn’t get much better than this, though some Americans may be uncomfortable traveling to the region for care.

10. **Anadolu Medical Center, Istanbul, Turkey**: Istanbul is home to many excellent hospitals. Anadolu offers a very high standard of treatment and care, and seems to understand the needs of the medical traveler. It has an international focus, with multilingual doctors and nurses, and a keen awareness of the services and support systems a medical traveler should have.

**Medical tourism in Europe**

Countries in Europe that have active medical tourism sectors include Turkey, Romania, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Bulgaria and Ukraine.

**Bulgaria**: Since 2007 Bulgaria is a member country of European Union. This is one reason for reduced travel cost. Expenditure for health care services are less in Bulgaria due to the less cost of standard
of living when compare to other developing European countries. However, this fact is significant for its lower prices for providing health care services. Added to that, Bulgarian physicians are highly qualified and have specialized in renowned Bulgarian and international universities. The Bulgarian hospitals, clinics and medical centers are highly equipped.

So they are able to provide excellent combination of high value and state of the art medical care at competitive pricing. The biggest private hospital in Bulgaria Tokuda Hospital Sofia, which is a member of Tokushukai Medical Corporation and Cambridge University Hospitals affiliated, have served over 8,000 international patients from USA, Canada, EU, Russia and the former republics, and the Middle East for the past five years.

The unique combination of highly qualified medical care at competitive price and the numerous places of interest in Bulgaria give the opportunity to combine travel for health reason with recreational, historical, religious, pilgrim, adventurous tourism and many others. Spa tourism in Bulgaria is very well developed, thanks to the great number of mineral and thermal springs and the modern facility infrastructure of Bulgarian tourism.

**Czech Republic:** The medical tourism of the Czech Republic has been built on spas and medical care centers. It is very popular for its well known for its high quality medical treatment and affordability. Ostrava University Hospital is a well known hospital. The most of Czech doctors studied at Charles University in Prague which was founded in 1348. Back in the 14th century it was the first university in Central Europe region and currently it is one of the oldest universities in Europe. The study demands enormous attention to practical training in combination with a broad theoretical knowledge. As a result the medical education in Prague is honored abroad as one of the top in the world.

**Cyprus:** Cyprus is actively developing its medical tourism industry. Currently very few hospitals have independent accreditation.
Estonia: In 2004 Estonia has joined with the EU. Estonia is popular among Scandinavians for medical tourism. The medical tourism industry of Estonia achieves world standards and is complying with EU regulation. Estonia is known for its good medical care and scored particularly high in the Health Consumer Powerhouse report, produced on behalf of the European Union[cxxxvi].

France: France is a popular tourist destination but also ranked the world’s leading health care system. This ranking reflects the expertise offered by doctors and surgeons to patients cared for in France. British patients have been offered treatment in France[cxxxvii] to reduce waiting lists for hip, knee and cataract surgery since 2002. The clinics and hospitals can get the accreditation only when they possess the high-level quality requirements for health as issues by the French National Authority for Health (HAS)[cxxxviii].

Germany: In Germany a patient can get an advanced medical technology, high standards, safety, and quick treatment[cxxxix]. All German citizens have health coverage[cxl], resulting in a high hospital density, with twice as many hospitals per capita as the United States[cxli]. Due to high hospital density there is a shorter waitlists for treatment. The treatment costs for health care compete well with other developed European countries and are commonly 50% of those in the USA[cxlii]. Germany has become an ideal place for patients from Middle East, because traveling to the USA has become more difficult for them since September 11 attacks. US citizens sometimes travel to Germany to seek treatments such as artificial cervical disc replacement that is not US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved.

Hungary: Geographical location of Hungary is a great advantage for getting good quality and quantity thermal water over 80% of Hungary’s territory. Approximately 1,500 thermal springs can be found in Hungary. There are approximately 450 public baths in Hungary.

The Romans heralded the first age of spa in Hungary, the remains of their bath complexes are still to be seen in Óbuda, to this day. The spa
culture was revived during the Turkish Invasion who used the thermal springs of Buda for the construction of a number of bathhouses, some of which are still functioning (Király Baths, Rudas Baths). In the 19th century the advancement in deep drilling and medical science provided the springboard for a further leap in bathing culture. Grand spas such as Gellért Baths, Lukács Baths, Margaret Island, and Széchenyi Medicinal Bath are a reflection of this resurgence in popularity.

**Lithuania:** Lithuania is one of several countries actively promoting medical tourism. Treatments involve cosmetic surgery, eye surgery, and other services.

**Poland:** In 2004, Poland joined the European Union and it has become another locale for people seeking cheaper medical treatments. The quality of care in Poland must comply with EU standards.

**Romania:** Romania is a member state of the European Union. Romania offers a wide range of Medical tourism services. The quality of services is implemented by both national and EU bodies of accreditation. Medical tourism in Romania is quality driven as outlined in the Medical Tourism Magazine. The private healthcare system in Romania is amongst the most dynamic in the country in terms of investments and growth. Market reports state that growth can still be expected in the private system in the years to come. There are facilitators in Romania helping traveling patient access services, both medical and touristic services.

**Turkey:** Turkey attracts medical tourists from Europe and the Balkans, the United States, Eurasia and the Middle East, hosting about 40,000 annually. The Turkish private healthcare system is striving to become a strategic global health service provider manufacturing center. Web site www.healthinturkey.org has been established by the DEİK-Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey Healthcare Committee and the Accredited Hospitals Association of Turkey. The site contains information on prices and hospital statistics, information about the healthcare, pharmaceutical and insurance environments as well as an international patient guide. Over 34 hospitals and medical institutions have achieved
Joint Commission International accreditation\textsuperscript{cxlix}. In Turkey, all Medical Tourism activities have been distributed among various government and private organizations.

They are the Ministry of Health that participate in promotional activities overseas and within the country, the culture and tourism directorates in provinces that comes under the control of Culture and Tourism Ministry and the Medical Tourism Association and OHSAD (Private Hospitals and Medical Institutions Association) in abroad and in the country, the representatives of TUMSIAD\textsuperscript{cl} in United Kingdom, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Austria, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia, with a view to promote the Turkish health services. Also Turkey Medical Tourism Guide and its internet portal written in English and Turkish are made with support of the Ministry of Health, Culture and Tourism Ministry, Turkey Medical Tourism Association and a few civil institutions.

Turkish JCI accredited hospitals are popular for some US patients on the other hand UK and EU Citizens are looking for medical facilities with affordable prices with included by expert surgeons and doctors when they considered to have bariatric surgery for weight loss, an elective procedure that is not covered by insurers. Most popular ivf, bariatric, cosmetic surgery and dentistry procedures have been performed by Turkish accredited healthcare providers. www.healthlifeinturkey.com have this specialized providers details and serving to the medical tourists as free of charge.

**United Kingdom:** The United Kingdom\textsuperscript{clii}, especially London\textsuperscript{clii} is the noteworthy destination for medical tourism. Currently very few private hospitals of UK have gone through independent international accreditation but not as yet measured themselves against the best clinics and hospitals elsewhere in the world.

**Ukraine:** Ukraine is very popular for its great geographical, historical and architectural landmarks. It’s one of the oldest and largest countries
in Europe. **Ukraine** is the medical tourism destination of choice for many who are in need of dental work, eye **surgery**, cosmetic surgery, reconstructive surgery and relief from a host of illnesses. Along with world class medical facilities, it offers ideal surroundings to aid a rapid recovery. Medical facilities and amenities in Ukraine, meet the international standards and still are very cost effective comparing to their international counterparts. An integrated world-class healthcare system leveraging best medical practices backed by cutting-edge technology, specialized clinics, comprehensive services, internationally renowned private hospitals offering utmost level of integrated healthcare to international patients. Ukraine is where old meets new, high-tech rules and medical tourism offers only the best.

**MEDICAL TOURISM IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

**Israel:** The upcoming medical tourism destination in the Middle East countries. In 2006, 15,000 foreigners travelled to the country for medical procedures, bringing in $40 million of revenue. Israel has been chosen by medical tourists particularly for medical procedures which are not available in their country. Along with medical treatment, tourists those come to Israel interested in visiting the Dead Sea, a world-famous therapeutic resort.

**Iran:** Iran is also among the 12 countries with biological medicines technology and can serve as a health tourism center. 30,000 people come to Iran each year to receive medical treatment.

**Jordan:** Jordan is an emerging medical tourism destination, with related revenues exceeding one billion dollars in 2007. More than 250,000 patients from other countries sought treatment in Jordan that year. This included an estimated 45,000 Iraqis and approximately 25,000 patients each from Palestine and Sudan. An estimated 1,800 US citizens, 1,200 UK citizens, and 400 Canadians also sought treatment in Jordan that year. Treatment costs can be as low as 25 percent of costs in the US.

The kingdom was rated as number one in the region and fifth in the world as a medical tourism hub in a study by the World Bank.
**United Arab Emirates:** Hospitals of Dubai and other emirates are also willing to develop in medical tourism\(^{clvi}\). They are trying to get international healthcare accreditation from organizations of Western countries, like American, UK, and Canada. Some of them are trying for accreditation from Australia.

**South Africa:** South Africa is the first country in Africa to emerge as a medical tourism destination\(^{clix}\). It offers world-class medical facilities and affordable medical and dental care\(^{clx}\).

**MEDICAL TOURISM IN AMERICA**

**The Americas:** Countries in the Americas that are treating foreign patients include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay

**Medical tourism in North America**

**Canada:** The cost of healthcare in Canada is lesser than that of US. Considering this as advantage Canada has entered the medical tourism field. In comparison to US health costs, medical tourism patients can save 30 to 60 percent on health costs in Canada\(^{clxi}\).

**Costa Rica:** The role of Costa Rica in the medical tourism industry has been growing steadily over the years. Currently there are 3 Joint Commission International accredited (JCI) Hospitals all of which are currently located in San Jose, Costa Rica. Recently announced by JCI accredited Clinica Biblica, is a $40 million dollar hospital in Guanacaste which has been accredited by JCI. The design of this hospital has been aimed to target the arrival of medical tourist at Liberia International airport every year. This will make for a total of over six major private hospitals and 22 public hospitals. When the World Health Organization (WHO) ranked the world’s health systems in the year 2000, Costa Rica was ranked as no. 36, which was higher than the U.S., and together with Dominica it dominated the list amongst the Central American countries\(^{clxii}\). The health care levels of Costa Rica are ranging from Intermediate Life Saving capabilities, Complex Life Saving Treatment
Capabilities, Advanced Life Savings Treatment Capabilities, and Life Style Treatment Services (Full range of dental work and cosmetic surgery). Proximity of Costa Rica to the U.S. helps attract over 20,000 U.S. patients a year. The Deloitte Center for Health Solutions, in their 2009 report "Medical Tourism Consumers in Search of Value" reported cost savings average of between 30-70% of US prices.

**Cuba:** For the past 40 years Cuba has been a famous medical tourism destination in North America. Fine reputation of Cuban doctors, the low prices and nearby beaches on which to recuperate attracts thousands of patients from Latin America and Europe, for medical tourism in Cuba. In 2006, Cuba attracted nearly 20,000 medical tourists. Medical treatments included joint replacement, cancer treatment, eye surgery, cosmetic surgery and addictions rehabilitation. Costs are about 60 to 80 percent less than US costs. Cuba has hospitals for Cuban residents and others that focus on serving foreigners and diplomats. A recent Miami Herald story focused on the high quality of health care that Canadian and American medical tourism patients receive in Cuba. Residents of Canada, the UK and most other countries can travel to Cuba without any difficulty, just by possessing a tourist visa. For Americans, however, because of the US trade policy towards Cuba, travelers must either obtain US government approval, or, more frequently, travel to Cuba from Canada, Mexico, the Bahamas, Jamaica or the Dominican Republic.

**Mexico:** It is easy accessible and affordable for Americans, those living near the Mexican border, to go to Mexico for medical care. They prefer to get dentistry and plastic surgery in Mexico. Mexican dentists often charge one-fifth to one-fourth of US prices, while other procedures typically cost a third what they would in the US. Some U.S. dentists migrated to Mexico to take advantage of lower costs. The strategic geographic location of Tijuana made it a convenient center for medical tourism.

Patients from California and much of the west coast have turned to Tijuana for elective procedures as well as for others such as
chemotherapy, among others. According to the San Diego Union Tribune, about 1 million Californians go to Mexico for healthcare, and most of these patients go to Tijuana. Many of these patients seek weight loss, and plastic surgery, in addition to alternative cancer treatments. Along with dental and plastic surgery, Mexican hospitals are popular for bariatric surgery for weight loss, considered an elective procedure that is not covered by some US insurers.

**Panama:** There is a fast growth of medical tourism in Panama. Use of the American dollar as the official currency, tourists’ attractions, and position as a hub for international travel are some of the basic factors for this rapid growth. Many of the doctors in Panama are bilingual, board certified, and adapted to work with the same medical equipment and technology used in the United States and Europe. On most procedures, Panama offers savings of more than 50% compared to the US and Europe.

**United States:** A McKinsey and Company report from 2008 found that an estimated 60,000 to 85,000 medical tourists were traveling to the United States for the purpose of receiving in-patient medical care. The same McKinsey study estimated that 750,000 American medical tourists traveled from the United States to other countries in 2007 (up from 500,000 in 2006). On one side, advanced medical technology and trained physicians are cited as driving motivators for growth of medical tourism in U.S., on the other side the low costs for hospital stays and major/complex procedures at Western-accredited medical facilities abroad are cited as major motivators for American travelers. Several major medical centers and teaching hospitals offer international patient centers that cater to patients from foreign countries who seek medical treatment in the United States. Many of these organizations offer service coordinators to assist international patients with arrangements for medical care, accommodations, finances and transportation including air ambulance services.

**MEDICAL TOURISM IN SOUTH AMERICA**
Brazil: Brazil is very famous destination for cosmetic surgery. It also entered the global market for non-cosmetic procedures. Albert Einstein Jewish Hospital in São Paulo was the first JCI-accredited facility outside of the US\textsuperscript{clxxxi}. Approximately, a dozen Brazilian medical facilities have since been similarly accredited\textsuperscript{clxxxii}. Brazil requires visas for US citizens based on a reciprocal arrangement since Brazilians are required to obtain a visa to visit the US. Unlike in the U.S and other countries where medical procedures are simply done in an office, Plastic surgery in Brazil\textsuperscript{clxxxiii} is done in specific plastic surgery only hospitals\textsuperscript{clxxxiv}.

Colombia: Colombia has not been considered as a medical tourism destination and later on after so much of efforts the track of success has been started. Struggling with security and drug-related issues more than 15 years ago, Colombia is today one of the most thriving economies in South America and safe for tourists\textsuperscript{clxxxv}. Colombia’s major cities like Bogota, Medellin, Cali and Cartagena are already receiving more than 1.45 million tourists each year and the numbers are increasing\textsuperscript{clxxxvi}. For economic growth of Colombia, Global Healthcare has been identified as one of the main driver. Colombia has been recognized by patients from the Caribbean as a first class destination for medical procedures and cosmetic treatments. An independent platform to compare the quality and prices of medical and cosmetic services is being supported by the government’s export agency and regional initiatives\textsuperscript{clxxxvii}. Colombia is overcoming its stigma and becoming a major player in Global Healthcare, serving needs of patients all over the Americas.

Uruguay: Uruguay recently entered the medical tourism market. Uruhealth\textsuperscript{clxxxviii} is a private medical tourism initiative, supported by the Ministries of Tourism\textsuperscript{clxxxix} and Public Health\textsuperscript{cxc}. The initiative involves the infrastructure, human resources and experience of two healthcare companies: MP Personalized Medicine (Montevideo)\textsuperscript{cxci} and SEMM-Mautone Hospital (Punta Del Este)\textsuperscript{cxcii}.

AUSTRALIA / OCEANIA
New Zealand: New Zealand is a successful medical tourism destination especially for North American based patients with all the hallmarks. It has a sophisticated and comprehensive medical system. It is first and foremost English speaking with a rich heritage of producing world class doctors and medical research. The advantages that New Zealand has as a medical tourism destination lie in the fact that most physicians in New Zealand have received their training in New Zealand, the US and the UK, all of which have English as their first language. Many of its private hospitals are internationally accredited, state of the art and offer an integrated package of care.

The cost of the surgical care in New Zealand is significantly cheaper. Added to this the personalized level of medical care, the world renown natural beauty and tranquility, the fact that New Zealand is one of the safest places in the world and only 12 hours direct flight from the west coast of North America, then New Zealand as a medical travel destination looks set to develop. Deloitte (2010) found that the current industry is very small with a limited number of existing facilities specialising in medical tourism. It further stated that clear benefits for the economy were predicted — for every $NZ 1 injected into the health system, medical tourism would contribute $NZ 0.58 to the tourism sector and $NZ 2.40 into the wider economy.

The average medical tourism patient was estimated to inject $NZ 141,152 per procedure into the economy from inputs related to the medical procedure itself and from the tourism benefits such as flights, accommodation and companion travel. The same report Deloitte (2010) has added that though the costs for medical procedures in New Zealand are greater than for procedures in Singapore, Thailand or India, they are significantly less than that in the US. For example, procedures such as heart bypass surgery and valve replacements are less than 25% of the cost of the procedure in the US. In addition, many private hospitals in New Zealand are accredited by Quality Health New Zealand which like JCI, is a member of the ISQua. Companies such as Medtral New Zealand are already marketing a wide range of New Zealand’s medical
services such as orthopaedic, cardiac, abdominal, gynaecological, urological and plastic reconstructive surgery and in vitro fertilisation (IVF) to potential customers in the US. Medtral offers quotations on packages including the procedure and associated expected hospital costs, air flights, accommodation pre and post surgery, boasting savings of up to 50% for customers from the US. Medtral automatically covers all patients with insurance, with coverage against unexpected prolonged hospitalisation, a follow-up operation in New Zealand and transport home via a private medical evacuation plane\textsuperscript{cxvii}.

The Deloitte (2010)\textsuperscript{cxvii} report points out that New Zealand has a strong public health system with essential healthcare provided free of charge which will provide an important fallback option for the domestic population in the context of rising prices for medical care. The report states that the current inflow of medical tourists is low hence there are no current capacity limitations in the health system.

\section*{END NOTES}

\section*{CHAPTER - III}

\textbf{MEDICAL TOURISM IN ASIAN SCENARIO}

It may be stated that many Asia-Pacific countries are medical tourism destinations. The most important countries which offer Medical Tourism facilities are discussed in detail in the following pages.

\textbf{China}

In Asian continent, China is one among the fast emerging medical tourism destination for individuals seeking medical care in a wide range of medical specialties, including cardiology, neurology, orthopedics and others. Many private and government hospitals in major cities are serving the international patients. Like India, China is also having its own traditional medical practices and medicine. Many leading hospitals provide treatments integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine with Western medical technology and technique\textsuperscript{cxviii}. China is home to leading stem cell research. Stem cell treatment is offered by some of the Chinese