ABSTRACT

This study entitled “A Study On Co – branding Of Medical Tourism With Traditional Indian Therapies” has been undertaken in the context of growth of medical tourism in the state of Karnataka. This study is an attempt made at identifying the facors attracting foreign medical tourists to various healthcare organizations in Karnataka. Two types of healthcare organizations which are into medical tourism in the state are identified. They are, super speciality hospitals providing modern curative treatments and spas providing traditional Indian therapies. The international marketing strategies practiced by these organizations and the scope for co – branding among them as an innovative marketing strategy is analysed.

After a detailed literature survey, seven objectives were formulated. They include a study of the factors determining success of medical tourism in Karnataka, review of international marketing practices of healthcare organizations in relation to medical tourism, analyzing the need for co-branding of medical tourism with ayurveda and other traditional Indian therapies, studying the feasibility of extending medical tourism as a venture in Malnad and coastal regions and an analysis of effectiveness of the advertising strategies adopted by these healthcare organizations. This study is based on survey and analytical method. Thirty top healthcare organizations which are attracting maximum number of medical tourists from abroad were selected as samples. Survey was carried on with two sets of structured questionnaires. With part A, responses from Business Development Heads and with part B, responses from four hundred foreign medical tourists in Karnataka was collected. The study covers a period of five years from 2004-2005 to 2008–2009.

The findings of the study reveal that the medical tourism industry in Karnataka is growing at fifteen percent per annum. The motivators for foreign medical tourists are, the availability of world class tourism & medical infrastructure, increasing availability of quality healthcare services at low healthcare costs, long waiting time in the home country, exquisite tourist locations in Karnataka, high success rate in special surgeries, post operative vacation, customized services, moderate climate, availability of high-end clinical talent. These factors are determining the success of medical tourism.

The study reveals that there is scope for co – branding of medical tourism with traditional Indian therapies in order to attract more foreign medical tourists to Karnataka.
Finally, study leads to conclude that medical tourism in Karnataka is at its nascent stage. There is a need for aggressive international marketing strategy. Co-branding of medical tourism with traditional Indian therapies can be the unique selling proposition for medical tourism in Karnataka. Therefore, there is a need for coordinated efforts from all the linkages in medical tourism like, modern hospitals, spas providing traditional Indian therapies, state tourism board, hotels, banks and insurance companies in order to become a successful medical tourism destination.