CHAPTER – VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN

The summary of findings, suggestions and conclusions of the study entitled “A study on Inbound International Medical Tourism with reference to South India” are presented in this chapter. The objectives of the study are to study the growth and development of inbound international medical tourism in South India, to analyse the profile of the medical tourists, to examine the medical tourism facilities and services in South India, to assess the cost competitive advantages to south Indian medical tourism and to evaluate the inbound international medical tourists’ satisfaction.

The study is descriptive research work specifically based on the survey method. The study involves a survey of samples of the inbound international medical tourists who visited South India and a sample survey of hospital authorities. The Primary data has been collected directly from foreign medical tourists and hospital authorities with the aid of two different questionnaires. Secondary data has been collected from books; articles, research papers, websites and the like. The collected data have been tabulated and statistically analysed using the percentage and diagrammatic methods.

7.2. PROFILE OF THE MEDICAL TOURISTS

- Demographic variables which are road maps for an ideal tourism planning in order to make medical tourism marketing decision effective.
- Sex plays an important role in the behavior of inbound international medical tourists. Majority of the (77.5 per cent) international patients are male. Male tourists outnumbered female as they move and travel freely and females are either biologically strong or they are not coming forward to undergo medical treatment abroad.

- Medical tourists in the age group of 51-60 years (50.8%) have dominated the arrivals during the survey period. It is natural that in the early age there is a meager chance of facing the health problems. Hence arrival of medical tourist is very minimum up to the age of 40 years.

- The study exposes that the majority of the (47.8%) medical tourists are coming from Asian countries. It is noteworthy that 35.2 per cent of patients come from highly developed countries like USA, UK & Europe.

- The majority (63.3 per cent) of the medical tourists are Graduates. It appears that educated persons take better care of health issues.

- The majority (61.4 per cent) of the medical tourists are professionals or private concern employees.

- The majority of the (88.3%) medical tourists visited to India have monthly income up to US $ 10000 and the arrival of higher income group (more than $15,000) is very meager.

- The majority of the medical tourists are accompanied by their family members and spouse. It is also observed that spouse and family members are more helpful and attentive to the patients.
• The majority (91.66 per cent) of the inbound international medical tourists come for medical treatment only.

• The majority (87.5 per cent) of the medical tourists have visited India for the first time and that too exclusively for the medical treatment.

• The ports of Chennai and Bangalore are more convenient for the international medical tourists than other ports.

• 100 per cent of the medical tourists have used Air transport to reach India because it is convenient for them. Air Transport plays a vital role in the promotion and development of tourism, particularly, inbound tourism.

• The majority (54.2 per cent) of the medical tourists have stayed for less than 10 days. Period of stay varies depending upon the nature of treatment. The quality of treatment and speedy recovery may also be the reasons for lesser number of days of stay.

• The majority of the medical tourists are taking treatments like Orthopedics and Cardio related surgeries.

**7.3 MEDICAL TOURISM FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

• The majority (61.8 per cent) of the hospitals are aged more than ten years. As the age and experience of hospitals is also one of the factors for the selection of a hospital by the medical tourists, most of the hospitals stand to gain.

• The majority (61.8 per cent) of the hospitals are offering multi-specialty and super specialty treatments to their patients.
• The majority of the hospitals are offering Ortho (70.6 per cent) and Cardio (79.4 per cent) related treatments.

• The majority of the (79.4 per cent) of the hospitals are having more than 200 beds.

• The majority (85.3 per cent) of the hospitals are having non a/c rooms.

• All the hospitals are having a/c rooms and majority of them (73.5%) are having more than 100 A/C beds.

• All the hospitals are having Executive rooms, and most of them (73.6%) are having less than 25 executive beds.

• The majority (61.8 per cent) of the hospitals are having general wards comprising more than 100 beds.

• The majority of the (52.9 per cent) hospitals are providing hospitality care like city guide and shopping guide, internet services (58.8 per cent), international television (47.1 per cent), and entertainments (52.9 per cent). Visa processing, Air travel, Ambulance, Vaccination, Hotel booking, Translators, Liaison with government authorities and Laundry services are also provided by all the hospitals.

• The majority (52.9 per cent) of the hospitals are providing personal patient care assistant. The services like pre admission care, Daily meeting, Coordination with doctors, nurses and hospital staff, post surgery care and follow up with doctors are provided by all the hospitals.
• The majority (73.5 per cent) of the hospitals have got the standard accreditation with National level agencies.

• The majority (73.5 per cent) of the hospitals are not showing interest in getting themselves accredited with international agencies.

• Only (26.5 per cent) of the hospitals are accredited with international agencies.

• The majority (67.6 per cent) of the hospitals are having Tie-ups or MOUs with Foreign hospitals. Many of them are having Tie-ups or MOU with more than one organization.

• The majority (67.7 per cent) of the hospitals are having general doctors more than 100 numbers.

• The majority (55.9 per cent) of the hospitals are having specialist doctors more than 25 numbers.

• The majority (55.9 per cent) of the hospitals are having visiting doctors more than 25 numbers.

• The majority (52.9 per cent) of the hospitals are having less than 11 foreign doctors.

• The majority (64.8 per cent) of the hospitals are having more than 150 qualified nurses.

• The majority (70.7 per cent) of the hospitals are having more than 150 supporting staff.
• The majority (70.6 per cent) of the hospitals are having more than 50 administrative staff members.

• The medical tourism departments in most of the hospitals (64.7 per cent) are involved in promotional programs and facilitating patients during, pre and post operative cares. However, they are not taking interest in arranging tours for their patients/ companions.

7.4. COST COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:

• The majority (74.1 per cent) of the hospitals are providing CABG treatment for less than US $ 7500. The average cost of the above treatment is US $ 7290.

• The majority (63 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Bypass valve replacement (single) treatment for US $ 9251-9750. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 9440.

• The majority (74.1 per cent) of the hospitals are providing pace maker (single chamber) treatment for US $ 5251-5750. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 5394.

• The majority (55.6 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Angioplasty treatment for US $ 7251-7500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 7422.

• The majority (66.7 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Angiogram treatment for US $ 476-525. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 491.

• The majority (62.4 per cent) of the hospitals are providing treatment for US $ 7751-8250. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 8011.
• The majority (66.7 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Total hip replacement treatment for US $ 7251-7750. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 7553.

• The majority (66.7 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Ankle joint treatment for US $ 5251-5750. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 5542.

• The majority (58.4 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Total knee replacement treatment for US $ 6500-7000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 6948.

• The majority (54.1 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Total shoulder replacement treatment for US $ 6751-7000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 6969.

• The majority (66.6 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Porcelain crown treatment for US $ 250-300. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 295.

• The majority (55.5 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Tooth extraction treatment for US $ 1001-1100. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 1039.

• The majority (61.1 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Dental implants treatment for US $ 875-925. The average cost of the above treatment is US $ 923.

• The majority (55.5 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Porcelain inlays and outlays treatment for US $ 851-900. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 903.
• The majority (66.7 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Porcelain veneers treatment for US $ 300-350. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 389.

• The majority (54.5 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Breast augmentation treatment for US $ 4001-4500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 4114.

• The majority (54.6 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Breast lift and reduction treatment for US $ 3000-4000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 3978.

• The majority (73 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Face lift treatment for US $ 5001-5250. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 5080.

• The majority (54.6 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Lipo suction treatment for US $ 2251-2500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 2421.

• The majority (54.6 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Tummy tuck treatment for US $ 3751-4000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 3921.

• The majority (56.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing LASIK per eye treatment for US $ 676-700. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 691.

• The majority (56.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Glaucoma treatment for US $ 876-900. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 896.

• The majority (56.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing squint correction treatment for US $ 901-950. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 910.
• The majority (53.9 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Spinal tumors treatment for US $ 5251-5500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 5356.

• The majority (61.6 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Spinal fusion treatment for US $ 11000 – 11500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 11490.

• The majority (53.9 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Cervical discectomy treatment for US $ 5251-5500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 5510.

• The majority (69.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing LM + spinal decompression treatment for US $ 5000-5500. The average cost of the above treatment is US $ 5433.

• The majority (53.8 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Artificial disc replacement treatment for US $ 7501-7750. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 7606.

• The majority (54.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Gall bladder surgery treatment for US $ 1751-2000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 1927.

• The majority (54.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing cancer surgery treatment for US $ 13000-14000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 14188.
• The majority (54.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing Liver transplant treatment for US $ 67000-69000. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 69084.

• The majority (58.4 per cent) of the hospitals are providing renal transplant treatment for US $ 20001-20500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 20250.

• The majority (54.2 per cent) of the hospitals are providing renal dialysis treatment for US $ 2251-2500. The average cost of this treatment is US $ 2459.

• The treatments like CABG surgery that would cost US $ 7390 in India, cost US $ 54115 in USA, cost US $ 61530 in UK and cost US $ 88778 in Canada. By comparing the cost of CABG treatment in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 86.3 %, 88% and 91.7% respectively.

• The percentage of savings for the Bypass valve replacement (single), in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 86.2%, 80.3% and 87.5% respectively.

• The cost of treatment for pace maker (single chamber) in India is US $ 5394 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $40752, $37810, $51923 respectively. By comparing the cost of Pace maker (single chamber) treatment in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 86.8%, 85.7% and 89.6% respectively.
- Angioplasty treatment costs US $7422 in India, cost US $57250 in USA, Cost US $47925 in UK and US $51421 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Angioplasty treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 87%, 84.5% and 85.6% respectively.

- Angiogram cost US $491 in India, costs US $9000 in USA, Cost US $6320 in UK and US $8517 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Angiogram in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 94.5%, 92.2% and 94.2% respectively.

- The procedures like Birmingham hip replacement surgery cost US $8011 in India, cost US $49830 in USA, US $40655 in UK and US $52465 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Birmingham hip replacement surgery in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 83.9%, 80.2% and 84.7% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for total hip replacement surgery in India is US $7553 and that of in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand is $45000, $38173, $36576 respectively. By comparing the cost of total hip replacement surgery in USA, UK and Canada and with that of in India, international patient can save 83.2%, 80.2% and 79.3% respectively.

- Ankle joint replacement treatment cost US $5542 in India, cost US $30000 in USA, Cost US $18107 in UK and US $18859 in Canada. The percentage
of savings for the Ankle joint replacement treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 81.5%, 69.4% and 70.6% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for total knee replacement surgery in India is US $ 6948 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $40000, $21940, $48668 respectively. By comparing the cost of total knee replacement surgery in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 82.6%, 68.3% and 85.7% respectively.

- Total shoulder replacement treatment costs US $ 6969 in India, cost US $ 41500 in USA, and Cost US $ 30354 in UK and US $ 42585 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Total shoulder replacement treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 83.2%, 77% and 83.6% respectively.

- The procedures like Dental crowns cost US $295 in India, cost US $ 2800 in USA, US $ 1202 in UK, US $ 973 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Dental crown in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 89.5%, 75.5% and 69.7% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Extractions per tooth in India is US $ 20 and that of in USA, UK, and Canada is $260, $107, $331 respectively. By comparing the cost of Extraction per tooth in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 92.3%, 81.3% and 94% respectively.

- Dental implant treatment cost US $ 256 in India, cost US $ 2800 in USA, and Cost US $ 4217 in UK and US $ 2920 in Canada. The percentage of
savings for the Dental implant treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 90.8%, 93.9% and 91.2% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Inlays and Outlays per tooth in India is US $ 125 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $1220, $1055, $511 respectively. By comparing the cost of Inlays and Outlays per tooth in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 89.8%, 88.2% and 75.5% respectively.

- Veneers porcelain treatment costs US $ 200 in India, cost US $ 1850 in USA, and Cost US $ 1055 in UK and US $ 973 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Veneers porcelain treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 89.2%, 81% and 79.4% respectively.

- The procedures like Breast Augmentation cost US $4114 in India, cost US $ 8000 in USA, US $ 9250 in UK, US $ 9500 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Breast Augmentation in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 48.6%, 55.5% and 56.7% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Breast lift/reduction in India is US $ 3978 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $7500, $10702, $7300 respectively. By comparing the cost of Breast lift/reduction in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 46.7%, 62.8% and 45.5% respectively.

- Face lift treatment cost US $ 5080 in India, cost US $ 9000 in USA, and Cost US $ 14235 in UK and US $ 13384 in Canada. The percentage of savings
for the Face lift treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 43.6%, 64.3% and 62% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Liposuction in India is US $ 2421 and that of in USA, UK, and Canada is $4200, $5272, $7500 respectively. By comparing the cost of Liposuction in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 42.3%, 54% and 67.7% respectively.

- Tummy tuck treatment cost US $ 3921 in India, costs US $ 8750 in USA, and Cost US $ 10143 in UK and US $ 10646 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Tummy tuck treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 55.1%, 61.3% and 63.1% respectively.

- The procedures like Lasik per eye cost US $691 in India, cost US $ 2400 in USA, US $ 3174 in UK, US $ 2920 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Lasik per eye in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 71.2%, 78.2% and 76.3% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Glaucoma per eye in India is US $ 896 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $5500, $5823, $6692 respectively. By comparing the cost of Glaucoma per eye in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 83.7%, 84.6% and 86.6% respectively.

- The Cataract removal surgery cost US $ 966 in India, cost US $ 4920 in USA, and cost US $ 6020 in UK and US $ 5800 in Canada. The percentage of
savings for the Cataract removal surgery in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 80.3%, 83.9% and 83.3% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Squint correction per eye in India is US $910 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $4635, $5985, $6450 respectively. By comparing the cost of Squint correction per eye in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 80.3%, 84.8% and 85.9% respectively.

- Comparison cost on Neurological treatment, the procedures like Spinal fusion cost US $11490 in India, costs US $89726 in USA, US $84508 in UK, US $75435 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Spinal fusion in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 87.2%, 86.4% and 84.8% respectively.

- The cost of treatment for Cervical Directory in India is US $5510 and that of in USA, UK, and Canada is $42500, $45500, $37900 respectively. By comparing the cost of Cervical Discectomy in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 87%, 87.9% and 85.5% respectively.

- Spinal decompression surgery cost US $10130 in India, cost US $94000 in USA, Cost US $85600 in UK and US $87000 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Spinal decompression surgery in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 89.2%, 88.2% and 88.4% respectively.
• The cost of treatment for Artificial Disc Replacement in India is US $ 7606 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $68742, $64000, $67500 respectively. By comparing the cost of Artificial Disc Replacement in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 88.9%, 88.1% and 88.7% respectively.

• The treatments like Gall Bladder surgery that would cost US $ 1927 in India, cost US $ 10350 in USA, cost US $ 9024 in UK and cost US $ 6532 in Canada. By comparing the cost of Gall Bladder surgery in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 81.4 %, 78.6% and 70.4% respectively.

• The cost of treatment for cancer – Bone marrow transplant in India is US $ 43416 and that of in USA, UK and Canada is $578880, $266272, $304175 respectively. By comparing the cost of Pace maker single chamber treatment in USA, UK and Canada with that of in India, international patient can save 92.5%, 83.7% and 85.6% respectively.

• Liver transplant treatment costs US $ 69084 in India, cost US $ 340092 in USA, Cost US $ 159763 in UK and US $ 285925 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Liver transplant treatment in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 79.7 56.8% and 75.867.6% respectively.

• Renal transplant costs US $ 20250 in India, cost US $ 250000 in USA, Cost US $ 175000 in UK and US $ 225000 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Renal transplant in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 91.9%, 88.4% and 91% respectively.
Renal dialysis cost US $ 2459 in India, cost US $ 32600 in USA, cost US $ 34500 in UK and US $ 31000 in Canada. The percentage of savings for the Renal dialysis in India compared to cost of treatment in USA, UK and Canada is 92.5%, 92.8% and 92.1% respectively.

The majority (51.3 per cent) of the medical tourists expressed the cost of treatment in India is low, in spite medical specialists availability and reputation.

7.5. MEDICAL TOURISTS’ SATISFACTION

The survey reveals that the major reason for choosing India for medical treatment is competitive cost of the treatment and quality of health care. Only very few patients are attracted by the new experience and cultural aspects of India. The considerable reduction in waiting time is also yet another factor for selection.

The majority (94.7 per cent) of the medical tourists referred hospital websites as a source of consultation for choosing India for medical treatment followed by friends and relatives and Medical Tourism operator. It is found that most of the patients consult multiple sources of reference before taking a final decision.

Majority (88.9 per cent) of the medical tourists have evaluated the information collected about the hospitals.

More than 50 per cent of the respondents have evaluated three and more than three hospitals. It implies that patients take serious steps to study the hospitals, facilities therein, etc. before choosing a particular hospital.

The majority (96.7 per cent) of the international patients have referred hospital websites for evaluating the hospitals. This is followed by the friends and
relatives, Medical tourism operators and Doctors in home their country as a source of information for evaluating the hospitals. Advertisement and Medical tourism guides are referred to by only one fifth of the patients.

- Most of the respondents have chosen ‘cost’ (99.4 per cent), ‘safety’ (88.6 per cent) and ‘quality’ (81.1 per cent) as the criteria for evaluating the hospitals, followed by ‘advanced medical facilities’ and other facilities in the hospitals. Only few medical tourists have given importance to ‘culture and nearness’ for evaluating the hospitals.

- The majority (77.2 per cent) medical tourists are taking decisions regarding selection of hospital by considering the influences other persons, Institutions and Media.

- The majority (84.9 per cent) of the medical tourists are influenced by their friends and relatives, while selecting a hospital.

- The majority (51.1 per cent) of the medical tourists has been influenced by the hospitals in their home country and remaining has been influenced by the medical tourism operators.

- The majority (77.3 per cent) of the medical tourists are influenced by the advertisement in the internet, while taking decisions regarding choice of a hospital. Advertisement in the internet plays a major role in influencing the patients’ decisions.
• The majority of the medical tourists expressed that the cost of treatment and quality of health care are the prime factors for choosing a hospital. Other factors are not prioritized in selecting hospitals.

• The medical tourists have ranked the services provided by the organizers. The service “match with appropriate clinic and physician” scored the first rank with the highest points (581), followed by “arrange and confirm appointments” (577 points), “help manage post treatment procedures”(573 points), “transfer of medical information” (565 points), “lodging and accommodation” (558 points), “in country transportation” (555 points),”air travel booking” (551 points), “help with recovery and recuperation”(549 points) and “obtain visa” (533 points).

• The medical tourists have also ranked the pre treatment services provided by the hospitals. The service “reception” scored highest points (645) followed by “fixing appointments” (630 points), “diagnostic services” (622 points) and “accommodation” (618 points)

• The medical tourists have ranked the facilities and services relating to treatments. The facility “operation theatre scored highest points (879) followed by “doctors exposure” (663 points), “technology used”(646 points), “medicines” (627 points), “equipments” (602 points) and “counseling” (551 points).

• The medical tourists ranked the post treatment services as “nursing care scored highest points (791) followed by “follow up” (721 points) “pharmacy” (592 points) and “dietary” (433 points).
• Medical tourists have ranked the services provided by the organizers. The service “communication gadgets” includes Land line telephone service with ISD (International Standard Dialing) facilities and a cell phone with international connection scored highest points (791), followed by “personalized care” (735 points), “companionship care” (654 points), “accessible to Doctor” (641 points), “forex facilities” (558 points), “transportation” (540 points), “sanitation” (491 points), “translators” (482 points), “security service” (470 points), “drinking water” (450 points), “entertainment” (439 points) and “laundry” (438 points).

• From the opinion of the medical tourists, the services “surgery” scored highest points (1202) followed by “counseling” (1201 points), “medicine” (1181 points), “consultation” (1171 points), “food” (1093 points) and “accommodation” (1066 points).

7.6. SUGGESTIONS

1. Government should extend its support and initiative to promote medical tourism by forming exclusive department for Inbound Medical Tourism under the Ministry of Tourism.

2. Co-ordination between the major players in medical tourism like airline, hotels and hospitals should be improved by forming Government and non-governmental nodal agencies.
3. Most of the inland tourists perceived that India is an unhygienic country. This perception should be changed by the government and other private players by improving hygienic conditions in public places.

4. In India, very minimum numbers of hospitals are having international accreditation. All the hospital providing treatment for medical tourists should take necessary steps for getting international accreditation, since it is an important pull factor.

5. Discrimination in the cost of treatment across hospitals in South India should be removed by practicing uniform pricing policy to have standardized cost of treatment.

6. South Indian hospitals need to formulate competitive strategies to meet out the strong competition from countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

7. Private hospitals in South India should establish coordination centres in various prospective international destinations for the registrations of patients and promotion of medical services.

8. Indian hospitals should improve their tie-ups and MOUs with international hospitals, international tourism agencies, medical tourism association and foreign governments.

9. The medical tourism department functioning in the hospitals should improve their activities to attract more number of inbound medical tourists.
10. The Government of India should join hands with private hospitals in creating awareness on “cost competitive quality medical treatment in India” in prospective destinations.

11. The quality, methods and means used in advertisements and promotions by the Indian hospitals should be improved.

12. The official websites of the hospitals are the important source of information to the foreign tourists. Hence, they should be updated periodically with latest information.

13. The new medical visa introduced by the Indian government is more cumbersome than regular tourist visa. The government should simplify the procedure on medical tourism visa and formulate very simple regulations for the medical visa.

14. The Indian hospitals should have tie-ups with foreign insurance companies in order to attract more number of foreign patients.

15. The Government of India in collaboration with private hospitals should create a data base containing details on facilities offered, number of patients treated, home country, the reason for choosing India, their satisfaction etc. These data would help devising specific promotional strategies for medical tourism.

16. The government should recognize medical tourism as a infrastructure sector and extend the following benefits to the medical tourism industry.
a. Tax exemption under Section 80-IA of the Income Tax Act including tax holidays for five years and concessional taxation for subsequent five years.

b. Promotion of foreign direct investment in health care sector.

c. Providing loans at low interest rate.

d. Reduced import-excise duty for medical equipments.

e. Facilitating clearances and certification like medical registration number and anti-pollution certificate etc.

17. The government should take necessary steps for the formation of apex body for health tourism in the name “National Association of Health Tourism (NAHT)” which should be entrusted with the task of promoting inter-sectoral co-ordination and standardization of services.

18. The government should take care of the development of ‘medicities’ concept which will offer significant competitive advantage for India.

7.8. CONCLUSION

The importance of medical tourism in income generation, in GDP growth, creating harmony and understanding, growth in employment is now well accepted. The growth of medical tourism world wide as an industry has been phenomenal. Medical tourism industry offers high potential for India primarily because of its inherent advantages in terms of cost, quality and zero wait time. By strengthening the coordination between major players like airline, hotel, hospitals,
improvement in hygienic conditions in public places, practicing uniform pricing policy, formulating competitive strategy, establishment of medicities will help India building a significant advantage and leadership position in the industry.