4.1 Health

The English word "health" comes from the Old English word hale, meaning "wholeness, being whole, sound or well,". Hale comes from the Proto-Indo-European root kailo, meaning "whole, uninjured, of good omen". Kailo comes from the Proto-Germanic root khalbas, meaning "something divided".

Health can be defined as:

1. Negatively, as the absence of illness.
2. Functionally, as the ability to cope with everyday activities.
3. Positively, as fitness and well-being.

"Health includes relief from stress, fun in sun, and rest in health resort. It also include medical tourism both curative and preventive medicines"

"A resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities."

4.1.1 Aspects of Health

Most people accept that health can be divided into two broad aspects - physical and mental health.

4.1.1.1 Physical Health

For humans, physical health means a good body health, which is healthy because of regular physical activity (exercise), good nutrition, and adequate rest. As a country's or region's people experience improved nutrition, health care, standards of living and quality of life, their height and weight generally increase. Physical health relates to anything concerning our bodies as physical entities. Physical health has been
the basis for active living campaigns and the many nutrition drives that have swept the industrialized world. People are exposed to so much "physical health" data these days that it is hard to decide what is relevant and what is not. Another term for physical health is physical wellbeing. Physical wellbeing is defined as something a person can achieve by developing all health-related components of lifestyle. Fitness reflects a person's cardio respiratory endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition. Other contributors to physical wellbeing may include proper nutrition, bodyweight management, abstaining from drug abuse, avoiding alcohol abuse, responsible sexual behavior (sexual health), hygiene, and getting the right amount of sleep. Some people divide physical health into two separate sections:

**Structural health** - this refers to sound bones, muscles, organs etc. That the structures in the body are performing the functions they were made for properly. Structural health is associated with a person's height/weight ratio, their BMI (body mass index), their resting pulse rate (heart rate), and recovery time after doing exercise.

**Chemical Health** - good chemical health means that the chemicals in the person's body are correct, that tissues contain the right balance of nutrients, etc., and there are no toxic chemicals. We may inhale or swallow natural and synthetic chemicals; they can also get into our body through skin. In most cases, the body can break these chemicals down or excrete them, so that there is no risk of toxic overload. Some chemicals can harm or destroy cells and tissues, while others may affect genetic material directly, which can increase the risk of developing cancer.

### 4.1.1.2 Mental Health

Mental health refers to people's cognitive and emotional well-being. A person who enjoys good mental health does not have a mental disorder. According to WHO, mental health is "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". No matter how many definitions people try to come up with regarding mental health, its assessment is still a subjective one. People have always found it easier to explain what mental illness is, rather than mental health. Most people agree that mental health refers to the
"absence of mental illness". For some, this definition is not enough. They argue that if you pick 100 people who do not suffer from any mental disorder or illness that could be diagnosed by a psychiatrist, some people within those 100 will be mentally healthier than others. Most people also agree that mental health includes the ability to enjoy life, the ability to bounce back from adversity, the ability to achieve balance (moderation), the ability to be flexible and adapt, the ability to feel safe and secure, and self-actualization (making the best of what you have).

4.2 History of Health Tourism

The concept of health tourism is not a new one. The first recorded instance of health tourism dates back thousands of years to when Greek pilgrims traveled from all over the Mediterranean to the small territory in the Saronic Gulf called Epidauria. This territory was the sanctuary of the healing god Asklepios. Epidauria became the original travel destination for medical tourism. Spa towns and sanitariums may be considered an early form of health tourism.

Health tourism for knee or hip replacements has emerged as one of the more widely accepted procedures because of the lower cost and minimal difficulties associated with the traveling to or from the surgery. Colombia provides a knee replacement for about $5,000 USD, including all associated fees, such as FDA-approved prosthetics and hospital stay-over expenses. However, many clinics quote prices that are not all inclusive and include only the surgeon fees associated with the procedure.

According to an article by the University of Delaware publication; Popular medical travel worldwide destinations include: Argentina, Brunei, Cuba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and recently, Saudi Arabia, UAE, South Korea, Tunisia and New Zealand. A specialized subset of health tourism is reproductive tourism and reproductive outsourcing, which is the practice of traveling abroad to undergo in-vitro fertilization, surrogate pregnancy and other assisted reproductive technology treatments including freezing embryos for retro-production. However, perceptions of health tourism are not always positive. In places like the US, which has high standards of quality, health tourism is viewed as risky.
In some parts of the world, wider political issues can influence where health tourists will choose to seek out health care. Health tourism providers have developed as intermediaries to unite potential medical tourists with provider hospitals and other organizations. Companies are beginning to offer global health care options that will enable North American and European patients to access world health care at a fraction of the cost of domestic care. Companies that focus on medical value travel typically provide managers to assist patients with pre- and post-travel medical issues. They also help to provide resources for follow-up care upon the patient's return.

Today’s health tourism is an emerging concept; it has its origin and roots in history of tourism and travel. The impressive achievements of Ancient Rome which enabled traveling on roads and visiting spas impacted not only tourism but health tourism as well. The popular spa destination at that time was the town of Bath in Britain. Spa tourism then continued to expand during the middle Ages serving the wealthy with several spa resorts around Europe with thermal and mineral water. Later on, sea bathing also became a healthy form of recreation. Even though health tourism was first designed as a commercial activity in 1973, these travels aimed at well-being and leisure as a means for escaping from everyday work and stress.

![Chart 4.2: Health and tourism Destinations](image-url)

Chapter 4

Hall defines health tourism as “a commercial phenomena of industrial society which involves a person travelling overnight away from the normal home environment for the express benefit of maintaining or improving health, and the supply and promotion of facilities and destinations which seek to provide such benefits”.

A study done by the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) in 2004 showed that India is more cost-competitive as compared to other leading health tourism destination in the world. Thailand has a cost advantage over India in only two categories: plastic surgery and breast augmentation. India is cheaper than Thailand across a whole range of other—and more serious — surgery categories as the following chart indicates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surgery</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bone Marrow Transplant</td>
<td>US$ 62500</td>
<td>US$ 30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver Transplant</td>
<td>US$ 75000</td>
<td>US$ 40000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Heart Surgery (CABG)</td>
<td>US$ 14250</td>
<td>US$ 4400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip Replacement</td>
<td>US$ 6900</td>
<td>US$ 4500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knee Surgery</td>
<td>US$ 7000</td>
<td>US$ 4500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hysterectomy</td>
<td>US$ 2012</td>
<td>US$ 511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gall Bladder removal</td>
<td>US$ 1755</td>
<td>US$ 555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IBEF Research

The health services in India have the additional advantage of providing a good mix of allopathic and alternative systems of medicine. For instance, while New Delhi has emerged as a prime destination for cardiac care; Chennai has established a niche for quality eye care; Kerala and Karnataka have emerged as hubs for state-of-the-art ayurvedic healing.

4.3 Health Tourism Definitions

“The practice of travelling abroad in order to receive medical treatment”

“The practice of traveling to a tourist destination with the main purpose of
receiving some therapeutic treatment\textsuperscript{vi}.

“Health tourism is traveling expressly for the purpose of engaging in some sort of health procedure”\textsuperscript{vii}

4.4 Challenges and Threats of the Expansion of Health Tourism in India

The present growth in health tourism in India has been encouraging but to sustain this growth and to achieve its full potential, certain challenges have to be addressed. It is also important to understand the impact of the growth in this sector on the public healthcare delivery so that necessary corrective measures can be undertaken.

4.4.1 Create Inequitable Health Systems

“Health for all” remains an unattainable goal in India. In sync with the fundamental principle of primary health care, the government has developed an extensive network of health facilities but regrettably, the system has failed to deliver. The nemesis of the public healthcare in India has been compounded by low government expenditure on health as well as by factors such as poor management of resources, acute shortage of skilled workforce, large-scaled absenteeism, corruption and conflicting job roles. These factors along with several policies of the government have helped in the unabated growth of the private sector.

The private sector has gained a dominant presence and today it accounts for 82% of outpatient visits, 58% of inpatient expenditure, and 40% of births in institutions. A study conducted by global accounting and consulting firm Ernst and Young and the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce (FICCI), shows that the private hospitals in India earned Rs. 62,000 crore in fiscal year 2006 and revenues from the sector are expected to rise up to Rs. 130,000 crore in 2012, which represents an annual revenue growth rate of about 19% a year. In comparison to this, the public health care system in India has been seriously underperforming.

As per NSSO estimates between 1995–96 and 2004, the utilization of government sources of treatment increased from 19% to 22% in rural India and
declined from 20% to 19% in urban India. For hospitalized treatment, the decline in utilization of government sources was from 43.8% to 41.7% in rural areas and from 43% to 38.2% in urban areas. The inadequacies in the public health sector has also stunted its growth and tarnished its potential of being a product that could be offered on an international market.

The underutilization of the public health system coupled with the growth in the private sector will increase the disparities and poses as a major threat of health tourism in the Indian context. The real challenge to expanding health tourism as a strategy for economic growth and development will be to identify and implement mechanisms that prevent the development of a dual and inequitable health system with enclaves of high quality health facilities catering to foreign visitors; and foster mutually beneficial linkages between the private and public health sectors, and between state-of the art health services and community health.

4.4.2 Intensify Shortages of Skilled Health Professionals

An important reason for poor service delivery in the public sector is the shortage of trained and skilled health personnel. According to the recently released Planning Commission report, India is short of a phenomenal 600,000 doctors, 1 million nurses and 200,000 dental surgeons. With positions of 300,000 dental surgeons, only 73,000 are currently full. Meanwhile 1.1 million nurses are filling up vacancies for 2.1 million, a shortfall of nearly 50%. To aggravate matters, there is also a huge paucity of paramedical staff including radiographers, X-Ray technicians, physiotherapists, laboratory technicians, orthopedists and opticians. The report also highlights the highly skewed distribution of the available manpower towards the urban areas.

The availability of medical specialist in local Community Health Centers, compared to the sanctioned posts, is also disquieting. The existing CHCs have a high shortfall of specialist manpower, such as obstetricians and gynecologists (56%), pediatricians (67%), surgeons (56%) and medical specialists (59%), with no provision of anesthetists. Such acute shortages of medical professionals in India is ironic as the country has approximately 229 medical colleges with an annual admission capacity of
over 25,600 students. There are several factors that could explain the shortage of doctors in the public system. These include bottlenecks in the recruitment process, poor financial incentives, absence of a conducive work environment and the prevalence of corruption in the public health sector.

While the public sector is encumbered with staff and resource shortages, it has been estimated that over 75% of the human resources and advanced medical technology, 68% of the estimated 15,097 hospitals and 37% of 623,819 total beds in the country are in the private sector. These figures suggest that the private sector is the prime employer of health personnel predominantly trained in public health institutes. This also sounds an alarm that further growth of the private sector could aggravate the manpower crunch in the public sector.

An important expectation of increased trade in health services is that through the increased opportunities locally and regionally, it would encourage and facilitate a greater retention of skills in the region. However, considering that at present the growth is restricted to the private, it may not be a viable solution to the manpower crunch in the public sector.

### 4.4.3 Raise Quality of Care and Accreditation Issues

Variation in the quality of care provided and the asymmetry of information between providers and consumers regarding quality is a concern in the health service sector. A major reason for the underutilization of the public health services in India is the lack of prescribed standards of quality. Still it remains a neglected area within the realms of government policies.

The quality of services is also one of the main arguments against health tourism. In response to this, the Government and CII have taken the lead in the process of national accreditation and licensing for the private sector. The WHO supported Joint Commission International (JCI) has accredited 10 institutions in India, all of them being in the private sector. The process is underway to encourage other private health care facilities, including laboratories, diagnostic centers, outpatient clinics, and day surgery centers in the country, to attain JCI to accreditation.

Thus initiatives are being undertaken to standardize the quality of services in the
private sector but they have completely bypassed the public sector facilities. This is disconcerting and is suggestive of the lack of government initiative to improve services in the public sector.

### 4.4.4 Promote Unregulated Growth of the Private Sector

There are several concerns that arise from the growth of the private sector and the government is supposed to play an important role in regulating this sector. However, in India State interventions have been minimal, leaving the sector to grow laissez-faire.

In India, there is no policy framework to have a common set of regulations for the private health care sector. The implementation and enforcement of the existing regulation has been weak and many of these regulations have not been updated and hence have lost their relevance. The State does not consider concerns related to private sector growth as a high priority on the policy agenda. There are no institutional mechanisms within the government to address the private sector issues. Moreover, there has been considerable resistance from various constituents of the private health care sector to accept in principle the applicability of certain regulations to their profession.

This lack of regulation has allowed the private sector in India to grow unabated and has resulted in mounting dissatisfaction with the services offered by this sector along with an increase in cases of medical negligence. A major challenge in the promotion of the health tourism in India will be to institutionalize and harmonize regulations within the private sector in the country. This is essential as if the present conditions persist there will be no quality control over the services provided. Besides, the present circumstances will promote mushrooming of super-specialty institutes providing health services to health tourist and wealthy Indians, and monopolize the available human and material resource in health.

### 4.4.5 Increase cost of Medical Treatment

As per NSSO 60th Round, during 2004, 24% of the episodes of ailments among the poor were untreated in rural areas and 22% in urban areas. Lack of finances was cited as a reason by 28% of persons with untreated episodes in rural areas and
The health insurance market in India is very limited covering about 10% of the total population. Out-of-pocket payment by individual household is the main source of health care financing and accounts for 72% of all health expenditures. Around 24% of all people hospitalized in India in a single year fall below the poverty line due to hospitalization.

Lack of insurance cover has also worked as a major disincentive for the growth of health tourism. However, there have been recent developments that could help address this constraint. Insurance providers are currently expanding their network to include physician around the globe, and it is anticipated that within a decade a majority of large employers’ health plan will include offshore medical centers. The option of health insurance is set to boost the growth of health tourism in countries like India.

A trade-off of the increase in health tourists will be the rise in the overall cost of health care in the country. Several studies have indicated the rising nature of the medical costs in recent years. According to their estimates, between 1995–96 to 2004, there was an increase of 55.67 and 77.28%, respectively, for government and private sources in rural India. In urban India, the corresponding increase has been, respectively, 76.6 and 116.2%. Such increases in cost will make medical treatment unaffordable and will further increase the percentage of untreated individuals.

4.4.6 Raise Medical Liability Issues

The provision of medical services is fraught with uncertainty of health outcomes and informational asymmetries. Difficulties by patients to ascertain provider qualifications and to know the appropriate level, type, and cost of care required will be a challenge to the expansion of health tourism. It would be necessary to establish a system that could deal with any legal liabilities associated with treating international patients. The issue of medical liability is equally pertinent for the public sector. An important challenge will be to develop a system to address medical liabilities, which also includes the services provided in the public health sector.
4.5 Need of Health Tourism

Health tourism can be broadly defined as provision of 'cost effective' private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical and other forms of specialized treatment. This process is being facilitated by the corporate sector involved in medical care as well as the tourism industry - both private and public. Health tourism has become a common form of vacationing, and covers a broad spectrum of medical services. It mixes leisure, fun and relaxation together with wellness and healthcare. Things are going to change drastically in favor of India, especially in view of the high quality expertise of medical professionals, backed by the fast improving equipment and nursing facilities, and above all, the cost-effectiveness of the package. As Indian corporate hospitals are on par, if not better than the best hospitals in Thailand, Singapore, etc there is scope for improvement, and the country may become a preferred medical destination. In addition to the increasingly top class medical care, a big draw for foreign patients is also the very minimal or hardly any waitlist as is common in European or American hospitals. In fact, priority treatment is provided today in Indian hospitals. The Apollo Group, Escorts Hospitals in New Delhi and Jaslok Hospitals in Mumbai are to name a few which are established names even abroad. A list of corporate hospitals such as Global Hospitals, CARE and Dr L.V. Prasad Eye Hospitals in Hyderabad, The Hindujas and NM Excellence in Mumbai, also have built capabilities and are handling a steadily increasing flow of foreign patients. India has much more expertise than Thailand or Malaysia. The infrastructure in some of India's hospital is also very good. What is more significant is that the costs are much less, almost one-third of those in other Asian countries.

4.6 Health Tourism Products

In order to appeal to customers whether they are consumers, health insurance plans, employers, or some other type of end user, hospital or medical group needs to address five different product levels. The most basic level is the core benefit that the
customer is really seeking. For example, a patient with knee pain visiting the hospital or physician simply wants to get rid of the pain and also to make sure that whatever intervention they elect is going to mitigate further pain, debilitation, and perhaps joint degradation. The core benefit sought is pain relief. As the hospital markets its services, it needs to see itself as a benefit provider. Working from the bottom up, the second level is where the provider must convert the core benefit into a basic product. For example, the core benefit of pain relief is translated into the basic product of a therapeutic, analgesic injection or surgery.

The next level up is where the facility or medical group develops unexpected product, such as a set of attributes or conditions that buyers normally expect when they purchase your product. Health tourism program developers think through the entire episode of care, in order to sell their expected product and anticipate a high level of patient satisfaction, and if the hospital is expecting significant volume from different parts of the world, they should ensure that the hospital staff on the floor where the patients are treated have adequate English language fluency, signage, and other amenities to meet and or exceed those expectations. In order to do this, the hospital might commission some research to be carried out, to find out exactly what those expectations might be, before marketing the product to the purchasers and referring facilitators.

Continuing along this chain, the facility might also offer an augmented product, one that exceeds customer expectations with perhaps additional amenities such as a VIP suite, an extended menu from the dietary department, concierge service level, and other amenities available at an upgraded price. For hospital in developed nations, these amenities are often included in the basic service level at which the hospital competes. In other nations the competition occurs mainly at the expected product level.
Health products and facilities as shown in table below.

**Table 4.2: Concept of Health products**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Tourism</th>
<th>Wellness</th>
<th>Medical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>Leisure and Recreation</td>
<td>Medical Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Beauty Treatment</td>
<td>Therapeutic Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga and Meditation</td>
<td>Sport and Fitness</td>
<td>Lifestyle related Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Age</td>
<td>Pampering</td>
<td>Occupational Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Health Tourism Facilities</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
<td>Spas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashram</td>
<td>Hotels and Resorts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals</td>
<td>Leisure Centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Smith and Puczko (2009:7)*

### 4.7 Factors Influencing Health Tourism Products

Various factors influencing health tourism are:

1) **Change of weather**: A very common trend among all of us is to travel for a change of weather. Mostly, after some illness or mental trauma, physicians prescribe a change of weather, a change of scene. For a very long time this practice of travelling to a pleasant place to regain health and to rebuild strength has existed. A weather or climate change from hot to cold or warm and vice versa or wet to dry and vice versa is seen as a way of regaining health. For example, after a bout of asthma one advised to travel to a dry, preferable pollution and pollen free region. All of us have either taken such a break or at least know someone, who has. Maybe someone among family, friends or relative has taken such a trip after much consultation among family members, travel agent and also physician.

2) **Availing a specialized Service**: Many health destinations have come up over the years. But 1990s have seen a real boom in health tourism, especially in India. Destination specializing in one service such as hot spring spas or sulphur geysers or
ayurvedic centers or yoga centers has come up. The destinations are now popular as specialized health destination. A lot many sites can be found on the internet highlighting services of such centers, like the health spas around Dead Sea.

3) **Packaging a treatment destination**: The latest trend in health tourism is to package a destination ideal for medical attention and treatment. Mostly a particular city or a region as a whole is promoted as a place for conventional medical treatment methods. The attraction here is the low price for the same or better medical facilities than at home, along with sightseeing and travelling during the recuperation period. Practically, the more serious patients are notable in such travel but the people or family members with them are also able to travel and at times act like tourists. Leading among such treatment travel, especially for the tourists. India is also packaging itself in similar terms. Ayurvedic treatment and yoga are two upcoming products in this regard in the international tourism market. ix

4) **Special Need Tourism**: This is basically a very new trend. We cannot actually term it as health tourism since the tourists in this case do not actually come for any medical treatment or health related issues. But in this case the tourists are tilted towards those destinations which can cater to the guest’s special medical needs. We can club this tourist segment with health tourism, since health related factors and reasons lead the tourist to decide on a tourist destination. Hospital treatment is not only costly in Europe but even for operations in small ailments like cataract, etc tour operators have come up with medical treatment-cum-luxury packages and these are becoming increasingly popular even in the domestic tourism markets.

4.8 **Health Tourism in India**

India is one of the cheapest healthcare tourism hubs in the world especially for advanced life saving surgeries. The cost factor, the medical costs incurred in India is one tenth of the costs incurred in western countries. India is capitalizing on its low costs and highly trained doctors to appeal to these medical tourists.

- India offers the best treatments in conventional medicine: Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Naturopathy and Yoga and modern medicine such as cardiology, orthopedic surgery, eye care, gynecology, cosmetic surgery and dental surgery.
Health tourists are people from the industrialized and developed nations such as USA, Europe, Australia and The Middle East. These nations have either provide free medical treatment for their citizens or the citizens are covered under medical insurance. In case of free medical treatment in Great Britain, Canada and many Middle East countries, waiting period for the desired treatment is so long that many patients do not survive the date their turn comes. In other places, like USA, where people are covered under medical insurance, the cost of treatment is so high that the Insurance Companies charge a high premium from the beneficiary.

Foreign patients can get package deals including flights, transfers, hotels, treatment and postoperative vacation for their medical visits to India.

Many foreign patients prefer to combine their leisure and relaxation visits to India with healthcare.

The Government of India is encouraging medical tourism in the country by offering tax breaks and export incentives to participating hospitals. In addition, the Government has cleared medical visas without delay and hassle free.

India’s private hospitals have gained international recognition for their state-of-the-art facilities and diagnostic centers besides unsurpassed skills. Their technology and procedures are on par with hospitals in developed nations.

India has some great hospitals, doctors, nurses and other medical services that have made India one of the leading countries in the field of medical tourism.

4.9 Health Tourism in Kerala

Health tourism has been one of the strongest growth sectors over the past few years for Kerala, which has attracted attention as the home of Ayurvedic medicine - an ancient Indian science of natural medicinal herbs used for curative and relaxation purposes. Kerala is extremely rich in terms of culture and heritage- the traditional classical and folk arts in the state dates back over a thousand years. Kerala is usually marketed as a health destination for its Allopathic, Ayurveda, Dental packages. Health tourism is marketed along with allopathy, ayurveda, dental and other health packages.
Health tourism is like any leisure product where apart from travel package, one gets medical treatment at the best hospitals. The medical treatment for various ailments is packaged with leisure packages at luxurious tourist resorts. Kerala is famous for its alternative medical therapies such as Ayurveda, which help to rejuvenate and revitalize the body. What many tourists have now discovered is that Kerala has a pool of trained doctors and nurses and an excellent network of hospitals that offer international standard treatments at very affordable prices.

Kerala, the "God's own country" is ornamental with emerald backwaters, serene beaches and lush green coconut groves. Each year 1000's of travelers from around the world visit here to explore the tranquil beauty of Kerala. Recently Kerala, has attained a pride of place in the field of medicine. For many years Kerala has been offering ayurvedic treatments and now a day’s Health tourism is added as another facet of Kerala's tourism industry. Kerala state tourism department, in collaboration with the various tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers and with the people who are in the medical field is trying to develop Kerala as a world class destination for Health tourism. Presently, Kerala tourism is marketing several Ayurveda & health packages and has got tremendous potential to boom in the medical tourism arena. Kerala is famous across the globe for its alternative medical therapies such as Ayurveda. In all the 14 districts of Kerala one can find quality ayurveda centers. Ayurveda is an ancient form of treatment which enables the patient to rejuvenate and revitalize the mind, body and soul and it has abundant of well trained people who deals in this special form of treatment. Besides Ayurveda, Kerala has got experienced allopathic medical professionals and well equipped hospitals that offer treatments of western standards at an affordable price. Recent years has witnessed that patients of western countries has started choosing Kerala as a destination for treatment of various diseases due to high quality services and lower treatment costs.

4.9.1 Kerala’s Model for Success

The following are the reasons for the success for Kerala model for health tourism

- Strong Brand positioning
- Thinking out side of the box
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- Product differentiation
- Model public or private partnership
- Tremendous political support
- Public acceptance

4.10 Health Tourism Products in Kerala

Kerala has established itself as a prominent Destination of world leisure tourism for its natural beauty and cultural assets. The growth of Tourism in Kerala has been induced by the buyer driven factors. The collective marketing effort through the tourism department has been limited. The scenario of health Tourism is also not much different from leisure tourism. Health tourism in Kerala grew without much willful collective effort. It was recognized as an opportunity by some sectors, particularly the Ayurveda sector who took some collective effort to convert Kerala as source for Ayurveda treatment. A combination of many factors has led to the increase in popularity of health tourism in Kerala.x

- Traditional systems of medicine: like Ayurveda and Siddha are widely popular in the state, and draws increasing numbers of tourists.
- High costs of healthcare in industrialized nations.
- Ease and affordability of international travel.
- Improving technology and standards of care.

The major specialties of Health Tourism products in Kerala are the following:

- Cardiac Care
- Orthopedic
- ENT
- General Surgery
- Cosmetic Treatment
- Urology
- Ophthalmology
- Fertility Treatment
Yoga and meditation
- Ayurveda
- Naturopathy

4.10.1 Cardiac Care

Heart failure is a very common condition. Both children and adults can have heart failure, although the symptoms and treatments differ. Heart failure is a condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the needs of body. In some cases, the heart cannot fill with enough blood. In other cases, the heart cannot pump blood to the rest of the body with enough force. Some people have both problems. The term "Heart Failure" does not mean that heart has stopped or is about to stop working. However, heart failure is a serious condition that requires medical care. Cardiac Care in Kerala is a branch of medicine that attracts many patients from around the world. Patients from the Gulf countries, Sri Lanka and from many other countries are coming to Kerala to experience the excellence of Cardiac care. With specialty hospitals, extremely well-trained doctors and nursing staff, and the quick scheduling of surgery, cardiac care in Kerala has proved to be an attractive health tourism option for many patients. Some of the hospitals that offer world-class cardiac care in Kerala are the Trichur Heart Hospital, and the Sree Sudhindra Medical Mission Hospital in Cochin.
The Sri Chitra Thirunal Institute in Thiruvananthapuram is another renowned research and treatment facility.

4.10.2 Orthopedic Treatment

There are three distinct reasons that make Kerala the most favored and preferred destination for Orthopedic surgery operative treatment procedures, Kerala’s medical expertise, state-of-the-art technology at par with the best in the world, and the incredible cost-effective health care. As health care costs are increasing, the patients in the countries like U.S.A., Europe, Middle East, Canada, Japan, Europe, UK and Australia etc. are looking overseas for bone and joints medical or surgical operation treatments and with Kerala’s top-end, state-of-the-art healthcare facilities providing world-class healthcare for orthopedic procedures at just a small fraction of the cost elsewhere, Kerala is emerging as being the most economical health Medicare destination with enormous medical healthcare cost savings on bone and joints treatments and orthopedic surgery procedures like hip joint replacement, total knee joint replacement (TKR), hip resurfacing, joint revision replacement procedures, Arthroplasty, arthroscopic procedures, shaving of cartilage, ligament reconstruction, ACL- Anterior circulate ligament, limb lengthening, fusion procedures etc. The total
price of overseas medical healthcare travel tour package for orthopedic- joint replacement surgery procedures inclusive of orthopedic procedure cost, orthopedic doctors or surgeons fee, all consultations, surgery treatment fees, medicines- drugs and procedure consumables, medical tests- X-ray, MRI investigations, pre and post procedure accommodations at luxury Hotel, personal assistance services- escort, comfortable recuperation, Private car transfers, travel and sight-seeing tours costs can be 60% - 90% cheaper than the procedure alone costs one may find in the above-mentioned countries. Thus international patients pay less for world-class healthcare services on joint replacements- orthopedic surgery procedures, visit India and at the same time can manage a big saving on health care costs by paying only a small fraction of private medical health care cost of surgery treatment in comparison to same bone and joints care procedures in their home countries. Common Orthopedic Treatments are

4.10.2.1 The Joint Replacement Program at Providence - The physical pain and the psychological stress of arthritis and joint trauma don't have to compromise quality of life. At Providence, comprehensive total joint replacement procedures are performed by a collaborative team. Patient care begins with thorough evaluation and education and continues through post-surgical therapy and follow-up.

4.10.2.2 Arthrodesis - Arthrodesis involves fusing together the two bones that form a joint. When the bones are joined together in this way, they lose their flexibility. But fused joints can bear weight better, are more stable and are no longer painful.

4.10.2.3 Arthroscopy - Arthroscopy gives doctors a way to diagnose and treat a variety of joint problems without the need for a large incision or a long recovery.

4.10.2.4 Osteotomy - Osteotomy involves cutting and reshaping or repositioning bones to improve their alignment. Often used on knee joints, this surgery can help shift weight-bearing stress from a damaged section of the joint to a healthier section.

4.10.2.5 Synovectomy - Synovectomy involves removing the diseased lining of the joint—the synovium—to help relieve pain and swelling. Depending on the size of the
joint, the surgery can be done either through a standard incision (open surgery) or through one or more smaller incisions with tiny instruments

4.10.3 ENT

Picture 4.5: ENT

Source: www.google.com/images

ENT care and treatments are provided on a massive scale. Ear, Nose and Throat care and treatments are provided by our team of well experienced doctors. The services are provided at multi specialty hospitals equipped with the latest equipments for specialized ENT care and treatment.
4.10.4 General Surgery

**Picture 4.6: General Surgery**

Source: www.google.com/images

General surgery is a surgical specialty that focuses on abdominal contents including esophagus, stomach, small bowel, colon, liver, pancreas, gallbladder and bile ducts, and often the thyroid gland. They also deal with diseases involving the skin, breast, soft tissue, and hernias.

4.10.5 Cosmetic Treatment

Deciding to change the way one look through cosmetic surgery or Plastic surgery takes courage and a lot of consideration. Human body so naturally want to place it in the safe hands of someone who is highly respected in the field of Plastic surgery and Cosmetic Surgery. The following are the different types of cosmetic treatments.

4.10.5.1 Eyebrows Botox brow lift - This literally 'lifts' the skin tissues above and around the eyebrows so that the natural eyebrow arch is a few millimeters higher. Permanent make-up is a great option to tackle this issue.

4.10.5.2 Forehead treatment - The aging process is known to create volume loss in the face. The empty space on either side of the eyes and are called temporal hollows.
Your facial expression can be enhanced by filling these by means of an easy aesthetic procedure of injecting the site with dermal fillers.

4.10.5.3 Nefertiti neck - The Nefertiti Neck Lift results in an upward movement of the skin to minimise sagging jowls and leaves a more defined bone structure, neck and facial contour. Injections into the vertical bands of the neck further reduces the downward pull on the jowl area and side of the face and produces a much smoother appearance to the neck.

4.10.5.4 Sweat free underarm and palms - Small quantities of botox injected into the underarm area or in the palms, can prevent sweat production. Effects last for up to 10 months.

4.10.5.5 Hairless smooth skin - The diode hair removal laser works extremely well on any area of the body — unkempt pair of eyebrows, dark sideburns, greenish hair growth in the underarm area or hair growth on the upper back. This laser causes the permanent destruction of most hair follicle and treats hundreds of follicle at a time.

4.10.5.6 Younger looking hands - Hands give your age away rather easily. Fillers with a combination of a skin tightening laser can work wonders. Superficial and deep peels done once a month are also a great option.

4.10.5.7 Crow's feet - Crow's feet are fine lines and wrinkles radiating from the eyes. Usually caused by sun exposure, smoking can make them worse. Botox relaxes these lines by working on the right muscles.

4.10.5.8 Nasolabial and mentolabial - Furrows in the nasolabial folds called 'parentheses', as well as deep 'marionette lines' give a person a sad appearance. These can be one of the first signs of facial aging. Treatment with volumising dermal fillers can replenish youthful volume and stimulate collagen production in these areas, minimising the appearance of these wrinkles.

4.10.5.9 Tear trough - Sunken eyes and dark circles and under-eye bags can make even a healthy and otherwise young individual look tired, sickly and unhealthy. Due to volume and moisture loss, the area between the eyes and the nose called the tear trough, looks sunken and hollow and this makes the face look tired. With the help of a
soft filler, the area can be filled up and made to look plumper and you can look younger.

4.10.5.10 **Apples of the cheek** - The ageing process is most obvious in this area. Reinstating volume into this area can make you look younger than almost any other cosmetic procedure can. Without the pain of cheek implants, you can still manage to have a perfectly rounded pair of cheeks by using a higher density filler material. As the skin on the cheeks gets lifted due to the filler material, it also lifts up the laugh lines and makes them appear less severe.

4.10.5.11 **Non-surgical rhinoplasty** - Anyone with a mild to moderate nasal hump, irregularity or deviation who does not desire a change in the size of their nose is a candidate for Injection rhinoplasty. It also is a great option for patients who have a flattened nasal bridge and/or a broad, poorly defined nasal tip and dorsum.

4.10.5.12 **Smile correction** - A few simple botox injections placed in strategic locations will prevent the upper lip from raising excessively high when you smile and thus exposing the gum.

4.10.5.13 **Lips** - The lips can be plumped at any age. Apart from enhancing your natural lips, fillers can correct thin, crinkled or inverted lips. Fillers for the lips are minimally invasive and they aim at restoring lost volume naturally without giving them a 'trout pout' look, lifting the angles of the mouth and minimising the crinkles by plumping them. In unhappy with the results, it can be undone quite easily.

4.10.5.14 **Chin augmentation** - With age, chin lengthens and sags. Fillers can rectify the problem of a long chin or of a short one. Marionette lines that run from the sides of the lips to the chin can be corrected with fillers. Dimples can also be filled up.

4.10.5.15 **Chiselled jaw line** - Thinning of a 'heavy jaw' or a 'square face' where the angle of the face is big can be achieved with a simple, almost painless technique of injecting botox into the strong chewing muscle. Botox relaxes these muscles resulting in an oval-shaped face — a definite sign of beauty.
4.10.6 Urology

Urology is the surgical specialty that focuses on the urinary tracts of males and females, and on the reproductive system of males. Medical professionals specializing in the field of urology are called urologists and are trained to diagnose, treat, and manage patients with urological disorders. The organs covered by urology include the kidneys, urinary bladder, urethra, and the male reproductive. Both Urologists and General Surgeons operate on the adrenal glands.

In men, the urinary system overlaps with the reproductive system, and in women the urinary tract opens into the vulva. In both sexes, the urinary and reproductive tracts are close together, and disorders of one often affect the other. Urology combines management of medical problems such as urinary tract infections and benign prostatic hyperplasia, as well as surgical problems such as the surgical management of cancers, the correction of congenital abnormalities and correcting stress incontinence.\textsuperscript{x}\textsuperscript{i}

4.10.7 Ophthalmology
Ophthalmology is the branch of medicine that deals with the anatomy, physiology and diseases of the eye. An ophthalmologist is a specialist in medical and surgical eye problems

4.10.8 Fertility Treatment

Assisted reproductive technology (ART) is a general term referring to methods used to achieve pregnancy by artificial or partially artificial means. It is a reproductive technology used primarily in infertility treatments, otherwise known as 'fertility treatments'. Some forms of ART are also used in fertile couples for genetic reasons. ART is also used in couples who are discordant for certain communicable diseases, e.g. AIDS, to reduce the risk of infection when a pregnancy is desired. Examples of ART include in vitro fertilization, intra cytoplasm sperm injection (ICSI), cryopreservation, and intrauterine insemination (IUI). There is yet no strict definition of the term. Usage of the ART mainly belongs in the field of reproductive endocrinology and infertility.
4.10.9 Yoga and Meditation

Many wonder why it is necessary to meditate after practicing Yoga asana or postures. One of the many benefits of practicing yoga asana or postures is the fact that it allows us to slip into meditation effortlessly. Meditation being one of the main aspects of Yoga, it's essential that sit for meditation after practicing Yoga asana and pranayama; else it is like preparing our dinner but not eating it. In meditation one delves deep into the self. There are many kinds of meditations though they might seem different most of them are, in essence, the same.

4.10.10 Ayurveda

Rejuvenative Treatments

Source: www.google.com/images
Ayurvedic medicine is a system of traditional medicine native to the Indian subcontinent and a form of alternative medicine. The oldest known ayurvedic texts are the Suśruta Saṃhitā and the Charaka Saṃhitā. These classical Sanskrit encyclopedias of medicine are among the foundational and formally compiled works of ayurveda.

**4.10.11 Naturopathy**

*Picture 4.12: Naturopathy*

Naturopathy, or naturopathic medicine, is a form of alternative medicine based on a belief in vitalize, which posits that a special energy called vital energy or vital force guides bodily processes such as metabolism, reproduction, growth, and adaptation. Naturopathy favors a holistic approach with non-invasive treatment and, similar to conventional medicine, encourages minimal use of surgery and drugs.

**4.11 Relevance of Health Tourism in Kerala**

Kerala is an established tourist destination. Ayurveda is already popular and Kerala is recognized as the number one source for Wellness solution. The alternative medicine sector led by Ayurveda has been showing vibrant growth in recent years. There is also tremendous scope for Modern medicine including dentistry in the state.

**4.12 The Advantages of Kerala in health Tourism**

The following are the advantages of Kerala health tourism

1. Nobody can beat Kerala cost-wise.
2. Doctors and nurses are accepted all over the world.
3. Professionals are known as compassionate people.
4. Kerala Hospitals give many consultancies under one roof.
5. Offer eco friendly environment.
6. NRIs all over the world function as ambassadors for Kerala.
7. Some US NRIs function as Entrepreneurs facilitating Health Tourism to Kerala.
8. Travel Agents operate in health tourism arranging to and fro travel, treatments and sightseeing.

4.12.1 Reasons for Travel of Foreign Patients to Kerala:

- UK NHS—National Health Service for poor citizens is heavily burdened and the system almost collapsed. Kerala costs being only 1/6 of UK attract the lower and middle income groups to Kerala.
- In the U.S. the cost of medical treatment is so high that only 10% can afford the costs in US, while Kerala’s costs are only 1/10.
- In Kerala: huge infrastructure facilities are available, but the expertise is low.

4.13 Marketing of Health tourism Products in Kerala

Development health tourism and hospital's general marketing plan need to design an offering that meets target customers’ needs or wants. Customers will judge offering by looking at four basic elements:\textsuperscript{xii}

- Features of the package price.
- The quality of service as the patient perceives it.
- The services mix that offer.
- Price charge.

Marketing health tourism and other health care services is somewhat different than offering retail products that are often considered tangible goods. In the most general sense, a product is anything that can be offered to the market to satisfy a patient's need or want. As such, this can include physical goods, such as walkers, wheelchairs, canes, crutches, braces, stem cells, organ transplants, pharmaceutical
drugs and supplies. It can also include services, such as a surgery, executive check-up, golf swing analysis, diagnostic test, or even a consultation.

For a health tourism facilitator, a product could be defined as a wellness check-up combined with a cruise, winery tour, amusement park, a cooking class, or any other combination experience that can be paired with a medical service such as a massage or spa visit. In health tourism, product differentiation takes place mainly at the level of product augmentation and leads facilities to look at the patient's total consumption system - the way that the patient performs tasks of getting and using products and related services. This means that the hospital needs to research who is buying their medical tourism services, by what means they are locating the provider, and by what benchmarks they evaluate the providers perceived quality, value, and price. The research alone adds cost to the augmentation level, as does each of the amenities. If the amenity is not communicated clearly to the purchaser, it may not be considered in the value proposition. Hospitals outside of the United States that are not used to presenting marketing and promotional copy in their hospital brochures and other marketing materials without appropriate idiomatic translation for an American, British, or other reader, may clearly include all of the amenities but fail to bring them to the top of the mind. This could lead to the provider being passed over in favour of a facility or medical provider of lesser technical quality that simply does a better job of telling the story of their benefits.

Another concern that facilities and physicians need to be mindful of, is that as these amenities soon become expected and necessary competitive points-of-parity, providers will have to continue to add to those amenities in order to remain competitive. Since adding amenities adds to the cost structure, at what point do the amenities become excessive? Further, how much value will the patient place on certain amenities over other amenities? And what happens to the provider who selects the wrong amenities to offer, or places the wrong emphasis on an amenity that the patient neither expects nor values? What happens if the purchaser fails to learn about the values which align with the core benefit sought but didn't notice due to space, promotional copy and message limitations or idiomatic translation errors? Finally medical tourism providers need to be mindful of the fact that as they raise their price
for the amenity-based package, their competitor will likely offer a stripped-down version of the core service at a lower price to attract the price conscious purchaser.

The highest level of the product, the potential product, encompasses all of the possible augmentations and transformations of the product or offering that it might undergo in the future. For example, at the basic level, a provider may offer an executive physical that is appealing to accounting, architectural, law firms and other high net worth individuals. The potential product might also include a spa relaxation massage, and for those executives who make real business deals on the golf course, a golf swing analysis designed to identify swing anomalies caused by pain, muscle contracture, weakness, or some other reason such as vision anomalies, inability to concentrate, or poor training and lack of practice. At this level, the provider seeks a different way to distinguish their offering to medical traveller.

A health tourism hospital in Kerala might offer a cancer service line consisting of diagnostic imaging and lab services, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, patient and family counselling, and a variety of therapeutic interventions that might include organ transplant, excision resection, or grafting procedures. The product mix that that hospital offers to patients might include a variety of service lines and other independent standalone services.

In healthcare administration we learn that hospitals use product line management to offer a comprehensive range of clinical services. These providers set their priorities to feature specific clinical specialties. As I tour most medical tourism hospitals, it seems they always include the "big three": Cancer care, orthopaedics, cardiac services and often a fourth, bariatric. Many times these are labelled as the hospitals' "Centres of Excellence". In the United States the term centre of excellence has specific meaning, determined by quality outcomes, and adherence to other evidence-based medicine guidelines. In other nations, the term "centre of excellence" is more loosely defined by the user who simply states it is so.

The length of the product mix refers to the total number of items in the mix. Health services product mix length assessments are complex as there can be many hundreds of items with many overlaps per item. For example, the children's' services
product line may be drawn from a mixture of all of the services offered by the Department of Paediatrics, its clinical programs if it is a teaching hospital, surgical services, neonatal intensive care services, primary paediatric care, and satellite specialty clinics within the community or extended as outreach in other nearby communities.

The depth of a product mix refers to how many variants of each product in the line are offered for example cancer care could be subdivided into three layers of depth if the cancer care can be distinctly managed for adult’s children. The consistency of the product mix refers to how closely related the variety of services are in such features as how the patient uses them, how the service line is developed, or how it might be sold or promoted to medical tourism patients.

The way in which a health tourism hospital organizes its product mix allows the hospital or ambulatory surgery centre to expand its medical tourism business in four different ways: first, it can add new product lines and widen the product mix. Second they can extend the length of each product line to include many items that overlap in their service offerings. Third they can add more varieties to each product or pursue more consistency, such as adding additional services that are easy for medical tourism facilitators to sell.

**Chart 4.13: Health Tourism Products**

![Chart 4.13: Health Tourism Products](http://www.imtj.com/articles/2010/medical-tourism-products-30038/)
In order to appeal to customers whether they are consumers, health insurance plans, employers, or some other type of end user, your hospital or medical group needs to address five different product levels. The most basic level is the core benefit that the customer is really seeking. For example, a patient with knee pain visiting the hospital or physician simply wants to get rid of the pain and also to make sure that whatever intervention they elect is going to mitigate further pain, debilitation, and perhaps joint degradation. The core benefit sought is pain relief. As the hospital market its services, it needs to see itself as a benefit provider.

Working from the bottom up, the second level is where the provider must convert the core benefit into a basic product. For example, the core benefit of pain relief is translated into the basic product of a therapeutic or analgesic injection, or surgery. The next level up is where the facility or medical group develops unexpected product, such as a set of attributes or conditions that buyers normally expect when they purchase your product. If health tourism program developers think through the entire episode of care, in order to sell their expected product and anticipate a high level of patient satisfaction, and if the hospital is expecting significant volume from patients from the United States, they should ensure that the hospital staff on the floor where the patients are treated have adequate English language fluency, signage, and other amenities to meet and or exceed those expectations. In order to do this, the hospital might commission some research to be carried out, to find out exactly what those expectations might be, before marketing the product to the purchasers and referring facilitators. Continuing along this chain, the facility might also offer an augmented product, one that exceeds customer expectations with perhaps additional amenities such as a VIP suite, an extended menu from the dietary department, concierge service level, and other amenities available at an upgraded price. For hospital in developed nations, these amenities are often included in the basic service level at which the hospital competes. In other nations the competition occurs mainly at the expected product level.
4.14 Risk in Health Tourism

Health tourism carries some risks that locally-provided medical care does not. Some countries, such as India, Malaysia, or Thailand have very different infectious disease-related epidemiology to Europe and North America. Exposure to diseases without having built up natural immunity can be a hazard for weakened individuals, specifically with respect to gastrointestinal diseases which could weaken progress, mosquito-transmitted diseases, influenza, and tuberculosis.

However, because in poor tropical nation’s diseases run the gamut, doctors seem to be more open to the possibility of considering any infectious disease, including HIV, TB, and typhoid, while there are cases in the West where patients were consistently misdiagnosed for years because such diseases are perceived to be "rare" in the West. The quality of post-operative care can also vary dramatically, depending on the hospital and country, and may be different from US or European standards. However, JCI and Trent fulfill the role of accreditation by assessing the standards in the healthcare in the countries like India, China and Thailand.

Traveling long distances soon after surgery can increase the risk of complications. Long flights and decreased mobility in a cramped airline cabin are a known risk factor for developing blood clots in the legs such as venous thrombosis or pulmonary embolus economy class syndrome. Other vacation activities can be problematic as well — for example, scars may become darker and more noticeable if they sunburn while healing. To minimize these problems, health tourism patients often combine their medical trips with vacation time set aside for rest and recovery in the destination country.

Health facilities treating health tourists may lack an adequate complaints policy to deal appropriately and fairly with complaints made by dissatisfied patients. Differences in healthcare provider standards around the world have been recognized by the World Health Organization, and in 2004 it launched the World Alliance for Patient Safety. This body assists hospitals and government around the world in setting patient safety policy and practices that can become particularly relevant when providing health tourism services.
4.14.1 Legal Issues

Receiving health care abroad may subject health tourists to unfamiliar legal issues. The limited nature of litigation in various countries is one reason for the lower cost of care overseas. While some countries currently presenting themselves as attractive health tourism destinations provide some form of legal remedies for medical malpractice, these legal avenues may be unappealing to the medical tourist.

Should problems arise, patients might not be covered by adequate personal insurance or might be unable to seek compensation via malpractice lawsuits. Hospitals and/or doctors in some countries may be unable to pay the financial damages awarded by a court to a patient who has sued them, owing to the hospital and/or the doctor not possessing appropriate insurance cover and/or medical indemnity.

4.14.2 Ethical Issues

There can be major ethical issues around health tourism in Kerala prior to 2007. Health tourism may raise broader ethical issues for the countries in which it is promoted. Some argue that a "policy of 'health tourism for the classes and health missions for the masses' will lead to a deepening of the inequities" already embedded in the health care system.

Health tourism centered on new technologies, such as stem cell treatments, is often criticized on grounds of fraud, blatant lack of scientific rationale and patient safety. However, when pioneering advanced technologies, such as providing 'unproven' therapies to patients outside of regular clinical trials, it is often challenging to differentiate between acceptable medical innovation and unacceptable patient exploitation\textsuperscript{xiii}.

4.15 Scanning Marketing Environment for Health Tourism

In health tourism marketing environment, marketers face brand, industry, form, and generic competition. To succeed, marketers must pay close attention to the trends and developments in these environments and make timely adjustments to their marketing strategies. Within these environments, marketers apply the marketing mix—the set of marketing tools used to pursue marketing objectives in the target
market. Competition represents only one force in the environment in which all marketers operate. The overall marketing environment consists of the task environment and the broad environment, also known as micro and macro environments.

### 4.16 Micro Environment of Health Tourism

Michael Porter’s 5 forces analysis is a framework for industry analysis and business strategy development. It uses concepts developed in Industrial Organization economics to derive 5 forces that determine the competitive intensity and therefore attractiveness of a sector or market. Attractiveness in this context refers to the overall sector profitability. An “unattractive” industry is one where the combination of forces acts to drive down overall profitability. A very unattractive industry would be one approaching “pure competition”. Porter referred to these forces as the micro environment, to contrast it with the more general term macro environment. For the health tourism sector in India, the following would be important:

- **New entrants:** New avenues of health tourism such as development of new health tourism sites and resorts
- **Threat of substitutes:** Creation of other sources of relaxation within the native city of the traveler.
- **Buyers:** The consumer i.e. the health tourist who is the source of income for the health tourism industry.
- **Suppliers:** The various states/countries promoting their health tourism destinations.
- **Rivalry between existing competitors:** Competition to attract health tourists by established health tourist places

### 4.17 Health Tourism Macro-Environment -PEST Analysis

For scanning the health tourism market environment in India, we will do the PEST analysis. PEST analysis stands for “Political, Economic, Social, and Technological analysis” and describes a framework of macro environmental factors used in the environmental scanning component of strategic management. It is very
important that we understand the environment of health tourism sector in India before beginning the marketing process. In fact, environmental analysis should be continuous and feed all aspects of planning.

- **Political**: Political stability, law and order situation and absence of terrorist activities in the place where health tourism needs to be promoted.

- **Economic**: Purchasing power of the health tourist, also taking into account the foreign exchange rate.

- **Social**: Availability of facilities such as proper medical facilities, open culture, education of people etc.

- **Technological**: E-connectivity of the tourist place, presence of good mobile network.

### 4.18 Positioning – the New Approach in Health Tourism Marketing

The rapid growth of communication methods has given us a new disease: Information Overload Syndrome. In today’s over communicated society, to be successful must touch base with reality. And the only reality that counts is what's already in the prospect's mind. In the communication jungle out there, there are just too many products, too many companies, and too much marketing noise. The mind, as a defense against the huge volume of today's communications, screens and rejects much of the information it offered. The only hope to score big is to be selective, to concentrate on narrow targets, to practice segmentation. In a word, "positioning".

The basic approach of positioning is not to create something new and different, but to manipulate what's already up in prospect's mind, to retie the connection that already exist. The advertising people spend their time and research money looking for positions, or holes, in the marketplace. Positioning a health tourism provider is a difficult task. While advertising is a creative task, health tourism provider’s positioning must be developed from careful research about their brand. There must find out:

- How the marketplace sees their health tourism provider.
- Customers and their health tourism provider and what they value.
• To know about health tourism provider and the customer value it creates.

Positioning should be a foundation for action to design, manage and defend a brand. It should inform everything they do: what customer value they create, what they value, what's their sustainable competitive advantage, how they conduct their business, how they communicate and interact with customers.\textsuperscript{xiv}

The 10 Commandments of Power positioning in health tourism marketing are

1. Don't Copy Others; that means Differentiation Strategies.
2. A leader in health tourism.
3. Make the service ordinary and extraordinary.
4. Narrow focus on marketing.
5. Dividing service into multiple, smaller components.
6. Take it step by step and use the multi-step marketing approach.
7. Speak softly, but carry a big stick – target qualified prospects, advertise in specialized publication, and maintain a presence through web-site.
8. Become a celebrity; get publicity and goal.
9. Speak out and spread out – try to be in as many locations that logically relate to firm or service.
10. Make wide network.

4.19 The Marketing Mix in Health Tourism

The marketing mix health tourism is the combination of elements that go to frame the marketing strategy for a company in relation to products and services to help them to achieve their marketing objectives. Traditionally, the marketing mix has focused on four elements:

• Product
• Price
• Promotion
• Place
However, this has been extended in recent years as certain features in relation to the marketing of services have become recognized as being important. There are an additional 3 Ps that now make up what has been referred to as the 7 Ps.

- Process
- Physical Environment
- People

**Chart 4.14: Ps in health tourism marketing mix**

Each of these elements will be important in its own way but for some products the emphasis on one or more may be stronger. This will depend in part on the nature of the product or service and the objectives of the business concerned. The aim of this activity is to encourage using knowledge of the 7 Ps to apply this to a selection of products and services and consider the relative importance of each element in the mix to those products. The Service Marketing Mix involves Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical Evidence. Firms marketing a service need to get each of these elements correct. The marketing mix for a service has additional elements because the characteristics of a service are different to the characteristics of a product.

**4.20 Health Tourism Product Life Span**

There are numerous definitions for marketing and what constitutes a marketing strategy. Often marketing is thought of only as the promotion of products, especially advertising and branding. However, marketing has a wider meaning which recognizes that it is customer centered. A marketing strategy is the business’ approach to promote
its products and services expressed in broad terms. A marketing strategy, in turn, forms the basis of the marketing plan. The marketing plan contains the set of specific activities required to successfully implement a marketing strategy. The three stages of an effective marketing plan applicable for tourism services are reviewed:

1. The first stage is a thorough analysis of the market, including resources, competitors, and the business environment. The second stage is to decide on the strategic choices of how to segment markets, to determine the sectors to be targeted, and to plan an appropriate product positioning and the last stage is to determine the marketing mix, which in its most basic sense means how the product will be offered to consumers, the price that will be charged, how the product will be communicated, and how it will be placed or distributed.

4.20.1 New Product Development in Health Tourism Marketing

To stay ahead of the competition, proactive tourism companies must constantly look for new product innovations. The traditional product life cycle theory indicates that typically a product will have an s-curve with stages of growth, maturity, saturation and decline in sales and profits. This theoretical model seems to hold true also for tourist products, which means that the question of product development and new-product innovations is important in health tourism providers. It is sometimes difficult to define what is meant by a new product. Improvements to an existing product can render that product so new as to make it seen by prospective use as a genuinely new product, and if an existing product is launched to a new market or to other purposes, that product is also new for the customer.

4.20.2 Product Life Cycle of Health Tourism Products

One needs to consider all the growth aspects of the health tourism product. Just developing a product is not the beginning and end of the product development rather product should be developed in such a manner that it sustains the tourist interest for a long way to come.
1. The introduction stage may refer to a totally new product or the start of concerted efforts to promote a health tourism destination.

2. During the growth stage sales or bookings accelerate and marketing costs tend to be lower because the reputation of the health product is strong.

3. As consumers turn to other 'fresher' products which are more in line with changing consumer expectations and trends, the mature stage is reached.

4. If significant action is not taken, the health product goes into decline.

It is possible to extend the product life cycle, by prolonging the growth or mature stages. This can be achieved by: changing promotional activities, perhaps to appeal to a health products and altering the product in some way, by bringing it more in line with competitors' products. Marketing is fundamentally about providing the correct bundle of benefits to the end user, hence the saying ‘marketing is not about providing products or services it is essentially about providing changing benefits to the changing needs and demands of the customer’

4.2.1 Service Quality in Health Tourism

The measurement of subjective aspects of customer service in health tourism depend on the conformity of the expected benefit with the perceived result. This in turns depends upon the customer's expectation in terms of service, they might receive and the service provider's ability and talent to present this expected service. Successful Companies add benefits to their offering that not only satisfy the customers but also
surprise and delight them. Delighting customers is a matter of exceeding their expectations.

Pre-defined objective criteria may be unattainable in practice, in which, the best possible achievable result becomes the ideal. The objective ideal may still be poor, in subjective terms. Service quality can be related to service potential service process and service result.

A customer's expectation of health tourism service is determined by factors such as recommendations, personal needs and past experiences. The expected service and the perceived service sometimes may not be equal, thus leaving a gap.

Ten determinants that may influence the appearance of a gap were:

- **Competence** is the possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service.

- **Courtesy** is the consideration for the customer's property and a clean and neat appearance of contact personnel, manifesting as politeness, respect, and friendliness.
Credibility is the factor such as trustworthiness, belief and honesty. It involves having the customer's best interests at prime position. It may be influenced by company name, company reputation and the personal characteristics of the contact personnel.

Security is the customer feeling free from danger, risk or doubt including physical safety, financial security and confidentiality.

Access is approachability and ease of contact.

Communication means both informing customers in a language they are able to understand and also listening to customers. A company may need to adjust its language for the varying needs of its customers.

Knowing the customer means making an effort to understand the customer's individual needs, providing individualized attention, recognizing the customer when they arrive and so on. This in turn helps in delighting the customers i.e. rising above the expectations of the customer.

Tangibles are the physical evidence of the health tourism service, for instance, the appearance of the physical facilities, tools and equipment used to provide the service; the appearance of personnel and communication materials and the presence of other customers in the service facility.

Reliability is the ability to perform the promised health tourism service in a dependable and accurate manner. The service is performed correctly on the first occasion, the accounting is correct, records are up to date and schedules are kept.

Responsiveness is to the readiness and willingness of employees to help customers in providing prompt timely health tourism services, for example, mailing a transaction slip immediately or setting up appointments quickly.

Later, the determinants were reduced to Five: tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; service assurance and empathy.
4.21.1 Measuring Service Quality

Measuring service quality may involve both subjective and objective processes. In both cases, it is often some aspect of customer satisfaction which is being assessed. However, customer satisfaction is an indirect measure of service quality.

4.21.2 Measuring Subjective Elements of Service Quality

The most important and most used method with which to measure subjective elements of service quality is the Servqual method.

4.21.3 Measuring Objective Elements of Service Quality

Objective processes may be subdivided into primary processes and secondary processes. During primary processes, silent customers create test episodes of service or the service episodes of normal customers are observed. In secondary processes, quantifiable factors such as numbers of customer complaints or numbers of returned goods are analyzed in order to make inferences about service quality.

Faced with the choice of many medical institutions in diverse countries, health tourists may find it very difficult to identify well-known & reputed physicians and modern hospitals that consistently provide high-quality care. Health tourism provider may be a helpful resource for patients in making appropriate choices. Concerns have been voiced regarding the risk of complications resulting from travel and vacation activities in the postoperative period. The management of postoperative complications that occur after a patient returns from an offshore medical facility and the consequent costs of this care, are difficult issues that remain unresolved.

4.22 States Promoting Health Tourism in India

The Indian Ministry of Tourism has announced a number of incentives to give a fillip to the sector. It has identified 31 villages across the country to be developed as tourism hubs. The states in which these villages have been identified include Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Assam, Sikkim, Rajasthan and West Bengal.
4.22.1 West Bengal

West Bengal, from where a large number of patients go to the southern states for specialized healthcare, is itself likely to become the hub of health tourism in India soon. Three large super specialty hospitals with world-class facilities would come up in the state. West Bengal has produced many reputed doctors who are working in different parts of the world and they have been invited to work at these hospitals.

4.22.2 Kerala

The state Kerala have made a concerted effort to promote health tourism in a big way, which has resulted in a substantial increase of visitor arrivals into the state. Kerala and Ayurveda have virtually become synonymous with each other. However, though Kerala has strongly focused on Ayurveda and its wide array of treatments and medications, good facilities are also available in the other traditional forms of medicine as well as in modern medical treatment. The bias towards health tourism in Kerala is so strong that Kerala Ayurveda Centers have been established at multiple locations in various metro cities. The health tourism focuses on Kerala’s participation in various trade shows and expos wherein the advantages of this traditional form of medicine are showcased. Kerala, has one of the best qualified professionals in each and every field, Allopathy, Dental, Ayurveda etc and this fact has now been realized the world over. Regarding Medical facilities Kerala has the most competent doctors and world class medical facilities.

4.22.3 Gujarat

Some of the major hospital groups such as Apollo already have a presence in Gujarat & others are looking for strategic cooperation. Gujarat based healthcare providers are open to strategic alliances with hospitals, insurance & traveler, tour operators abroad that may refer patients from their countries of origin. It felt that many of the Gujarat based operators would have to align with national or international operators, possibly through a strategic stake to take full advantage of the medical tourism possibility.
4.22.4 Karnataka

Karnataka and especially Bangalore is now an acknowledged global medical destination. This is because of referral quality health services supported by qualified and experienced medical professionals, reputed medical research institutions, well connected for travel, conducive climate and cost of treatment being just one tenth that of global hospitals. Between 2005 end and 2006 August, the state has also witnessed a funding of 445 core from leading corporate hospitals as a part of the brown field and green field projects. These include a Rs. 200 core from the Manipal Health Systems, Rs. 140 core from Wockhardt Group of Hospitals, Rs. 100 core from One World Hospital and Healing Centre promoted by Maureen Berlin and Rs. 5 core by HealthCare Global Enterprises Limited (HCG), a leader in oncology care in the private sector in India.

4.22.5 Maharashtra

Maharashtra has a thriving tourism industry, and is now set to have a new kind of tourism - Medical Tourism. The FICCI - Medical Tourism Council of Maharashtra - is a dynamic initiative jointly undertaken by the Government of Maharashtra, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the tourism industry and private as well as public health tourism providers - Medical Tourism Council of Maharashtra has been founded with a clear mission in mind:xv
Chapter 4

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