

## PANCHKARMA AS AN EMERGING TOOL IN MEDICAL TOURISM

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### ABSTRACT

Medical tourism is the practice of travelling abroad in order to receive medical treatment. In general it is the travel of people to another country for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment in that country. Panchkarma in medical tourism is a part of wellness tourism. As we know health according to Ayurveda is equilibrium of tridoshas, proper functioning of agni, balanced state of dhatus, proper evacuation of trimalas and balanced state of mind. Thus Ayurveda provides holistic approach for health. Panchkarma is a method which cleanses the body by removing all the toxins from it. Now a days people are suffering mostly from life style disorder due to competitive environment and hectic life schedule. They are in need for such a therapy which can reduce stress, improves relaxation and boost immunity. We know that

in the past few years India has become hub for Yoga tourism. Though Yoga is the birthplace of India, its popularity has been increased worldwide since 2014 when UN declared June 21 as world Yoga day. In the As far as role of Panchkarma in medical tourism is concerned, it is very important source for earning foreign exchange. It helps in boosting employment in both medical centers as well as in other sectors. Panchkarma is evolving as an essential tool in medical tourism. So government should take active participation in promotion of Panchkrma tourism. In this article we will discuss about overview of Panchkarma tourism, its benefits, fall out, initiatives taken to overcome this problem.

**KEYWORD:** Medical tourism, Panchkarma, tridosha, agni.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Goodrich, medical tourism is the attempt to attract tourist by deliberately promoting its health care services and facilities, in addition to its regular tourist amenities.

According to Gates (General agreement on trade and services), medical tourism is the second mode of trade in health services. In this mode, customers leave their home country to obtain health care services with high quality and affordable prices. However in the past, this usually referred to those who travelled from less developed country to major medical centers in highly developed countries for treatment unavailable at home.<sup>[1]</sup>

Panchkarma is mainly a purificatory process through which vitiated dosha (humours) in our body are eliminated through various process. It includes Vaman (therapeutic emesis), Virechana (therapeutic purgation), Basti (medicated enema), Nasya (errhine) and Raktamokshana (blood letting) and are included in classical Panchkarma. Before administering these major processes some pre procedure should be performed i.e. Pachana(Digestive), Snehana(Oleation) and Swedana(Sudation). Purpose of doing this pre procedure is to bring vitiated dosha from shakha (periphery of body) to Koshtha (GIT). Once doshas come in koshtha, they removed out of the body through nearest route with the help of these purificatory process. Other than this classical panchkarma there is one more category of Panchkarma called Kerliya panchkarma. It is unique treatment method in which more emphasis is given to external procedures. Navarakizhi (pinda sweda), Elakizhi (snigdha patra sweda), Narangakizhi (jambeera pinda sweda), Podikizhi (churna pinda sweda), Pizhichil (sarvanga dhara), Talapothichil (taladhara), Chavuti thirumal (padaghat) etc. are example of Keraliya Panchkarma. Panchkarma is not only good for alleviating the disease but is also a useful modality of treatment in preserving and promoting the perfect health.<sup>[2]</sup>

Ayurveda is natural heritage of India and Panchkarma being a part of its major therapeutics growing day by day. In today's world due to hectic life schedule, competitive environment, suppression of natural urges more people are falling victim to the adverse effect of stress and anxiety, which is leading to disease like improper digestion, lack of sleep, allergies, heart diseases, diabetes, chronic fatigue, cancer, osteoporosis etc. Panchkarma eliminates these metabolic toxins from the body, allowing permanent healing of tissues and channels. People are searching for natural, effective and radicle cure for these type of life style disorder. As allopathic system of medicine has various side effect and habit forming on long term use also

they give only palliative effect. Due to above said reason global acceptance of Panchkarma therapy is increasing day by day.

### **Objectives**

1. To understand the importance of Panchkarma in the field of tourism
2. Find the factors that boost the panchkarma tourism in India
3. Make Appropriate suggestions for improvement of Panchkarma in the tourism sector.

### **History of medical tourism**

Medical tourism dates back thousands of years to when Greek pilgrims travelled from all over the mediterranean to the small territory in the sardonic gulf called Epidauria. Epidauria become the original travel destination for medical tourism. Spa town and sanitarium were the form of early medical tourism. People travels to these destination for medical benefits. India is also historical medical tourism destination. The Yoga and Ayurveda gained popularity 5000 years ago.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **National tourism policy**

In 2002, Government of India launched an international marketing campaign named as "**Incredible India**" to promote tourism in India to global audience. In 2009, the Ministry of tourism launched a campaign titled, "**Athiti Devo Bhava**" targeting the local population to educate them regarding good behaviour and etiquette while dealing with foreign tourist. This campaign aimed at creating awareness about effect of tourism and sensitizing indians about preservation of Indian heritage, culture, cleanliness and hospitality.

### **Why people should access to panchkarma tourism**

When people travel abroad for business or for pleasure, instead of getting unwind they may suffer from after travel effect i.e. jet lag, missing sleep, disrupted exercise routine etc. Now there is growing movement to change travel to include healthy activities and options: **Panchkarma tourism**. It is a one stop destination which will provide medical as well as wellness facilities along with travel. People get world class facilities with low cost medical care, no wait list, high quality treatment and high savings.

Medical tourism or health care tourism is fast growing multibillion- dollar industry around the world. It is an economic activity that entrails trade in services and represents the mixing of two of the largest world industries: Tourism and Medicine.

**Different facets of panchkarma**

There are various procedure in panchkarma which are planned according to disease and condition of patient. Besides Vamana Virechana, Anuvasan, Niruha

1. **Shirodhara** -For chronic headache, insomnia, mental tension, hysteria, hallucination and insanity.
2. **Shirobasti**- Treatment for dryness of nostril, mouth and throat, severe headache, facial paralysis and burning sensation in head.
3. **Pizhichil**- For spondylosis, rheumatic disease, paralysis, hemiplegia, nervous disorder.
4. **Navarakizhi**- In wasting of muscle, rheumatism, sports injuries, certain kind of skin disease
5. **Udvaartana** - In hemiplegia, paralysis, obesity etc.
6. **Snehapana** - As a pre preparatory procedure before shodhana (purification) chikitsa like vamana and virechana and as a shamana (pacification) chikitsa in diseases like OA, BPH etc.
7. **Swedan**- For body sudation as a poorva karma before shodhana
8. **Nasyam** - Treatment for nasal ailment
9. **Karnapoorana** - Treatment for ear ailment

**Popular panchkarma centre for medical tourism in india<sup>[4]</sup>**

- Somatheeram Ayurveda Resort, Kovalam Kerala
- Ananda Spa in the Himalayas, Narendra Nagar, Uttarakhand
- Devaaya Ayurveda and Nature Cure Centre, Tiswadi, Goa
- Sreekrishna Ayurveda Panchakarma Centre, Alappuzha, Kerala
- Hemadri Ayurveda Centre, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
- AVN Arogya Ayurvedic Retreat, Madurai, Tamil Nadu
- Kairali Ayurvedic Health Village, Palakkad, Kerala
- The Leela, Udaipur, Rajasthan
- Chingoli Ayurveda Hospital and Research Centre, Alappuzha, Kerala
- Jiva Ayurveda Clinic & Panchakarma, Faridabad, Haryana
- Elephant Pass Ayurveda & Yoga Retreat, Kodanad, Kerala
- Vana Malsi Estate, Dehradun, Uttarakhand
- Shinshiva Ayurvedic Resort, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
- Ayurvaid Kalmatia, Almora, Uttarakhand

### Essentials for international patient for panchkarma tourism in india

First of all contact the Panchkarma centre and share medical history and all tests/report with the doctor. Then for post consultation, fix an appointment for visit. Be ready with all the necessary documents (passport, visa, photo ID etc.)

### As a multidimensional scope

**Aatmanirbhar bharat**, which translates to 'self-reliant India' and is popularised by Prime minister of India Narendra modi since 2014. In this context, the term is used as an umbrella concept in relation to making India "a bigger and more important part of the global economy". Owing to this if we implement and flourish Panchkarma in medical tourism we can make the dream of 'self reliant India' come true in a way.<sup>[5]</sup> Another way of making our ancient system of medicine as a world recognition is to promote it globally. Our PM has already spoken about **Vocal for Local India** which means to not only buy local products but be vocal about promoting them proudly<sup>5</sup>. Medical tourism can boost tourism receipt and employment in both medical centres as well as in other sectors of 5%. Revenue generation, foreign exchange and employments are major benefit of medical tourism.

### DISCUSSION

Though India is growing day by day in the field of wellness tourism but there are few shortcomings which should be taken into consideration. Such as -

1. Lack of infrastructure facilities- like poor electricity and water supply, lack of connectivity and coordination.
2. In most indian hospital there is lack of awareness about maintenance of hygiene in medical attendants, unhygienic food handling and lack of proper hospitality service. It will vilify India's image in front of people belonging to overseas.
3. The present problem in the market of Panchkarma tourism is the overcrowding of unqualified people conducting massage parlours in the name of Ayurveda. The tourist who come in search of genuine Ayurveda treatment will get cheated and carry back a wrong message about Ayurveda. So immediate measures should be taken to control such fake set ups.

We should emphasized on improving physical and social environment. Physical environment includes the improvement in basic infrastructure, standards of cleanliness etc. Basic amenities should be ecofriendly and well maintained. Social environment includes the improvement in human culture and behaviour i.e. people should behave friendly to the guest.

People should also understand that Panchkarma is not just a wellness centre, it also has both rejuvenating and therapeutic effect. Diseases of musculoskeletal, Nervous system, Skin problem and autoimmune diseases have better cure in Aurveda through Panchkarma. Government of India should promote Panchkarma in the field of tourism by formulating several guidelines and policies. Such as arranging several health campaign related to panchkarma, advertising its importance through social media, promotion through awards by giving best tourist place for availing panchkarma treatment. Tie up of Panchkarma centre with various hotels and resorts. Government should work on PPP models for collaborative approach. Government of India should also hire Brand ambassador at international level to promote Panchkarma tourism globally. Inclusion of all Panchkarma resort with its therapeutic effect in tourism diaries so that people will be aware of the place.

## CONCLUSION

India is in an advantageous position to tap the global opportunities in the medical tourism sector. The government role is crucial to the development of medical tourism specially in the field of Panchkarma. India can provide medical and health heed next to intercontinental centres as an integral part. Most of the foreign tourist at the moment impending to India only.<sup>[6]</sup> If we talk about contribution of Panchkarma in health tourism, only Kerala plays major role than any other state of India. It is a holistic treatment that has no side effects and hence it is very popular among health care travellers. Not only health tourists but also tourists coming with some other specific purposes are also interested in Panchkarma. Consumers of Ayurveda tourism specially for Panchkarma are diverse and international tourist coming to India is also increasing day by day.<sup>[7]</sup> Hence government should take initiative for development of Panchkarma in very state of India. A simplified system of getting medical visas should be developed so that travelling to India will become easy. To create Panchkarma as an apex body in the field of medical tourism there should be standardization of procedure and promotion of inter sectoral coordination.

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