


# Chapter 1

## Medical Tourism: History, Global Scenario, and Indian Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

*India has been coming up as a growing destination in terms of medical tourism. Medical tourism in India at present is valued around \$7-8 billion dollars. High quality services in medical context at an affordable cost have made India one of the prominent destinations of medical tourism. Medical tourism in India is exponentially growing at a rate of 30% every year. Chennai is termed as the “Health Capital of India” being the region with highest footfall in terms of medical tourists with highest number of hospitals with multi- and super-specialty services offering highest quality healthcare treatment at the lowest cost. Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are working collaboratively to promote India as a premier medical tourism destination. To facilitate the easy movement of patients for medical tourism, m-visa (medical visa) has been launched and is being promoted, which gives the patients an opportunity to stay in India for the period of their treatment.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is the activity of travelers to see the different tourism attractions and observe the different culture for the purpose of leisure, business, medical treatment and others. During their travel if they stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year to fulfill their purposes. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization, more than 1400 million people travelled internationally in the year 2018 and generated one in ten jobs and contributed 10 percent of the GDP. According to Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the total number of foreign tourists arrived in 2018 was 10.56 million and also it foreign exchange of 1.94 lakh crore. WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) predicts that the travel sector creates 300 million jobs and contributes 9.6 percent to GDP by 2020.

According to the objectives and purpose of the visits, the types of tourism are classified as Pilgrim tourism, leisure tourism, adventure tourism, fairs and festival tourism, rural tourism, eco-tourism, medical tourism etc. Among the various type of tourism, medical tourism is gaining importance at global level. Medical tourism is defined as the act of travelling nationally and internationally for the purpose of taking medical treatment as well as visiting tourist attractions. According to World Tourism Organization (2014), medical tourism is termed as tourist services which take medical care, sickness and health, health and recreation as main themes. It is also termed as the patients crossing their borders to get quality medical treatment at affordable prices. Balaban & Marano (2010) Medical tourism is the provision of cost effective medical treatment in collaboration with tourism industry as well as health care hospitals. It is a travel to destinations to undergo medical treatment like surgery and other specialist interventions. Medical tourism is a travel that seeks to enhance personal health and well-being, including through authentic and location-based therapies. The process of providing quality medical treatment for international patients is now becoming an emerging business at global level. Before 1990, the international patients from developing and under developed countries cross the border to take quality treatment in developed countries due to lack of facilities at their home country. After 1995, the health facilities have improved in developing economies, a reverse flow takes place due to high treatment cost.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this research paper are to analyze the historical background of medical tourism and to find out the global scenario of medical tourism. Finally to assess the issues and challenges faced by Indian medical tourism industry.

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