

**IMPACT OF AYURVEDA TOURISM****Prof. Vandana R. Benke**

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**ABSTRACT :**

India has always been famous for its rich heritage & ancient culture. India's rich heritage is amply reflected in the various temples, palaces, monuments, forts, fairs & festivals, Indian people & their religion, languages, music, dance ,Arts & crafts, sculpture, idols, medicines, Ayurveda & many more things that can be found everywhere in the country.

Stress torn population of the modern world is turning towards naturopathy healing of Ayurveda for soothing relief & comfort. Ayurveda is composed of two Sanskrit Terms- 'Ayu' means **Life** & 'Veda' means **Knowledge**. Therefore, Ayurveda means **Knowledge of Life**. Sprouted in the pristine land of India some 5000 years ago, Ayurveda, "Science of life & longevity" is the oldest health care system in the world. Many rejuvenation therapies & treatments are practiced in Kerala to refresh oneself by eliminating all toxic imbalances from the body & thus gain good health. Aggressive Marketing Campaign Corporation- the Govt., agency that oversee tourism prospects of the state laid the foundation for the growth of the tourism industry. The tag of Kerala- **God's own country** was adopted in its tourism promotions & became a global superbrand. Ayurveda tourism has overall impact on the income, employment, foreign exchange earning, infrastructure development & promoting peace as well stability.

**INTRODUCTION :**

India has always been famous for its rich heritage & ancient culture. So on the onset of heritage tourism in India was long anticipated. India's glorious past & cultural diversity make a potent blend which attracts millions of tourists each year to its heritage tourist attraction.

India's rich heritage is amply reflected in the various temples, palaces, monuments, forts, fairs & festivals, Indian people & their religion, languages, music, dance ,Arts & crafts, sculpture, idols, medicines, Ayurveda & many more things that can be found everywhere in the country.

**Types of Tourism:** Tourism in India could be broadly classified in following categories :

Leisure tourism      Business tourism      Ecological tourism

Pilgrimage tourism      Historical tourism      Adventure tourism

Sports tourism      Wildlife tourism      Medical &amp; Ayurveda tourism

**OBJECTIVES :**

- To explore the potential of Ayurveda Tourism in India
- To study the effectiveness of Ayurveda Treatment in India
- To examine the role of Government in promoting Ayurveda Tourism in India.

**METHODOLOGY :**

This paper is solely drafted with the help of secondary data, extracted from various sources namely internet, annual reports & some online published conferences.

**LIMITATIONS :**

1. Paper is confined to the state of Kerala.
2. Paper is confined to the Ayurveda Tourism amongst many tourism sectors.

**HISTORY :**

Medical Tourism in India is growing tremendously in the recent years as the cost of treatment is low compared to other countries like US & UK. So many people from western countries visit India for solving their health issues. It is not limited to only surgeries or other medical procedures but also rejuvenating the body & soul using techniques like Yoga. So the resorts & Spas using Ayurvedic medicines are getting popular which does not create side effect & solves the problem permanently.

Stress torn population of the modern world is turning towards naturopathy healing of Ayurveda for soothing relief & comfort. Massaging with the help of essential oils which is one of the effective procedures of Ayurveda in order to relieve an individual from tension & anxiety is also employed as part of the treatment in the health centers. While massaging can be also done individually, but specialized way of massaging employed at health centers not only makes relief but also enlightens the soul.

Ayurveda is composed of two Sanskrit Terms- 'Ayu' means **Life** & 'Veda' means **Knowledge**. Therefore, Ayurveda means **Knowledge of Life**.

Sprouted in the pristine land of India some 5000 years ago, Ayurveda, "Science of life & longevity" is the oldest health care system in the world & it combines the profound thoughts of medicine & philosophy. Since then Ayurveda has stood for the wholesome physical, mental & spiritual growth of humanity around the world. Today, it's a unique indispensable branch of medicine, a complete naturalistic system that depends on the diagnosis of your body's humours- Vata, Pitta & Kapha- to achieve the right balance. Thus Ayurveda, the ancient medical wisdom is one of the proud contributions of India to the world. Thus, Ayurveda is the ancient medical system of India & is a great philosophy of relief & rejuvenation for body treatments.

#### **KERALA – LAND OF AYURVEDA:**

Kerala, a state situated on the Tropical Malabar Coast of south western India, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. Named as one of the ten paradises of the world by National Geographic Traveler, Kerala is famous for its Beaches, Backwaters, Hill stations, Forest & Wild life, Waterfalls, Lighthouses, Festivals, Cultural dance like Kathakali, its Food, Music & Ayurveda.

Kerala possesses an unbroken tradition of Ayurveda that has surpassed the many invasions & intrusions both foreign & native. For hundreds of years, the Ayurveda vaidyas (traditional practitioners of Ayurveda) were almost the only access for people seeking healing from every kind of disease in Kerala. The legendary eight families of vaidyas (Ashta vaidyas) & their successors treated the entire state for centuries. Unlike other Indian states, the status of Ayurveda in Kerala is the only state in India which practices this system of medicine with absolute dedication.

Being the only resort of treatment for the people, the vaidyas of Kerala were challenged to interpret the theories of Ayurveda & adapt them actively into effective healing systems in every day life. Thus almost all the contemporary procedures & protocols of Ayurveda have evolved in & around Kerala.

#### **THE BOONS OF NATURE:**

Its equable climate, natural abundance of forests & the cool monsoon season are best suited for Ayurveda's curative & restorative packages. Kerala is perhaps one of the few places on earth where a temperature of 24-28 degree is maintained during a period of continuous rain. This prevalence of moisture in the air & on the surface of the skin makes it the ideal place for natural medicines to work at their highest level of potency. The land is also blessed with innumerable medicinal plants & provides the continuity & consistency of Ayurveda medicines needed

for effective treatment procedures. The same herbs with the same potency are available year after year across every season. The alkaloid content of soil enhances the intensity & potency of many Ayurvedic medicines when compared to the places with different soil constitution.

According to Ayurveda specialists, the monsoon season is the best time for treatment as the atmosphere remains dust free & cool, which opens the pores of the body to the maximum. This makes the body more receptive to herbal oils & other Ayurveda medicines. Ayurveda is considered as a natural way to refresh oneself by eliminating all toxic imbalances from the body & thus gain good health.

#### **ADVANTAGES OF AYURVEDA IN KERALA :**

Ashtanahridayam, the practical user friendly interpretation of Ayurveda compiled by the great Vagbata is seldom used anywhere in the world as it is extensively done in Kerala. The vaidyas of Kerala are proficient in this most contemporary treatment of Ayurveda which many scholars consider an advancement over the earlier samhitas of Charaka & Sushruta, the pioneers of Ayurveda. It is in Kerala that Kashaya Chikitsa (treatment with concoction) has become a standardized protocol involving hundreds of Kashayams that were scientifically classified & organized according to various treatment needs. The largest number of Ayurveda colleges & the largest number of practitioners in comparison to any place in the world has led to a tradition of Ayurveda research in a scientific manner in Kerala.

#### **REJUVENATION THERAPY OF AYURVEDA IN KERALA :**

##### **1. Rasayana Chikitsa :**

Rasayana Chikitsa tones up the skin & rejuvenates & strengthens all the tissues so as to achieve ideal health & longevity. It increases 'Ojas' (primary vitality) & improves 'Sattva' (mental clarity) & thereby increases the resistance of the body. It includes head & face massage with medicated oils & creams, body massage with herbal oil or powder by hand & foot, internal rejuvenative medicines & medicated steam bath including herbal bath.

##### **2. Body Immunization & Longevity Treatment ( Kayakalpa Chikitsa ) :**

It is a prime treatment for retarding the ageing process, arresting the degeneration of body cells & immunization of the system. This includes intake of Rasayana (special Ayurvedic medicines & diet) & comprehensive body care programmes. The treatment is most effective if undertaken before the age of 50.

##### **3. Body Sudation ( Sweda Karma ) :**

Medicated steam bath eliminates impurities from the body, improves the tone & complexion of the skin, reduces fat & is recommended for certain rheumatic diseases particularly for pain, precious

herbs & herbal leaves are boiled & the steam is passed over the entire body for 10-20 minutes daily. Hand massage with herbal oil or herbal powder improves blood circulation & tones up the muscles.

#### 4. **Body Slimming :**

Medicated herbal powder & medicated herbal oil massages as well Ayurvedic diet of herbal juices etc. are the part of the programme.

#### 5. **Beauty Care :**

Herbal face pack, herbal oil massage, intake of herbal tea etc. improves complexion & beautifies the body.

#### 6. **Mental & physical wellbeing ( Meditation & Yoga ) :**

Mental & physical exercises meant to isolate ego from the body & mind designed to hone your concentration, improves health & help attain peace of mind through eight stages of training :

- i. Disciplined behaviour (Yama )
- ii. Self purification (Niyama )
- iii. Bodily postures such as the lotus position (Asana)
- iv. Control of breathing ( Pranayam )
- v. Control of senses ( Pratyahara )
- vi. Fixing of the mind on a chosen object ( Dharana )
- vii. Meditation ( Dhyana)
- viii. Samadhi- a state of being where you experience absolute tranquility & well being

#### 7. **Overall Fitness ( Panchakarma Treatments) :**

A five fold treatment for mental & physical well being which tunes the body, organs, mind, brain, nerves & purifies the blood.

#### **AYURVEDA TREATMENTS :**

##### 1. **Abhyanga Snana :**

Abhyanga Snana or medicated oil massage belongs to the purvakarma or the preparatory measures for panchakarma treatment in Ayurveda. It is an ancient oleation therapy, traditionally given by two masseurs , who work in tandem synchronizing their strokes & massage according to the circulatory & marma points for sixty minutes.

##### 2. **Akshitarpana ( Netravasti) :**

Akshitarpana or Netravsti is traditional treatment for eyes in Ayurveda. This treatment is effective for glaucoma, night blindness & other eye related problems.

##### 3. **Snehapana :**

Snehapana is one of the purvakarma therapies in Ayurveda, a system of medicine in India. Sneha means oil, Thiktha Ghrutha or ghee infused with

herbs is orally administered to the patient for specific period.

##### 4. **Kativasti :**

Kativasti is an Ayurvedic therapy to cure the ailments of this area like lower back ache or stiffness or pain felt down the back. The waist area of the body is called kati.

##### 5. **Sarvangadhara with milk :**

Sarvangadhara, a treatment method with medicated milk is poured all over the body while massaging. This treatment is one of the preparatory procedures in panchkarma, the rejuvenation & revitalization therapy in Ayurveda.

##### 6. **Udvarthanam :**

Udvarthanam is stimulation & exfoliating therapy using a specially prepared herbal powder in Ayurveda,. This powder is rubbed all over the body to slough off dead skin cells & help to reduce subcutaneous fats. Udvarthanam means to elevate or to promote. This therapy effectively reduces the fat collected around the abdomen & in the inner thighs of women due to nutritional disorders.

##### 7. **Shirodhara with oil :**

Shirodhara with oil is a treatment to cure ailments like headache, fatigue, insomnia, nervousness & stress with herbal oil. It is performed as part of the poorvakarma practice prior to the panchakarma treatment in Ayurveda.

##### 8. **Takradhara with buttermilk :**

Takradhara is a sudation therapy with medicated buttermilk in Ayurveda. It can be done either Shirodhara or dhara over the entire body. This treatment is also effective in insomnia, chronic headache like migraine, ear nose diseases, neuropathy & spondylitis, memory loss etc.

##### 9. **Lepana :**

Lepana is the external application of medicated paste on any part of the body where pain associated with inflammatory condition persist. The ingredients of the paste vary according to the nature of the ailment. It is a treatment method in traditional Ayurveda.

##### 10. **Sirovasti :**

Treatment for dryness of nostrils, mouth & throat, severe headache, facial paralysis & burning sensation in the head. Under this treatment lukewarm herbal oil are poured into a leather cap fitted on the head for specific duration as per physician's recommendations.

##### 11. **Pizhichil :**

Treatment for spondilosis, rheumatic diseases like arthritis, paralysis, hemiplegia, nervous weaknesses & nervous disorders. Under this treatment lukewarm herbal oil is applied with fresh linen all over the body by trained masseurs in a rhythmic manner for a period of 1-1.5 hours daily for 7 – 21 days.

#### 12. Marma Chikitsa :

Treatment for musculoskeletal ailments due to accidents. This treatment works on the extremely sensitive vital points of body ( 107 marmas)

#### 13. Nasyam :

Treatment for nasal ailments, under this, there is inhalation of medicated herbal preparations decoction oils, ghee etc. to eliminate the morbid factors from the head & neck area.

#### 14. Karnapooranam :

Treatment for ear ailments, under this medicated oils are applied to the ear for 5-10 minutes daily to clean as well as treat specific ailments.

#### 15. Tharpanam :

Treatment for preventing cataract & strengthening vision. This is effective in preventing cataract & strengthening the optic nerve.

#### SUPPORTIVE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Until, the early 1980s Kerala was a relatively unknown destination. Aggressive Marketing Campaign Corporation- the Govt., agency that oversee tourism prospects of the state laid the foundation for the growth of the tourism industry. In the following decades, Kerala tourism was able to transform itself into one niche holiday destination in India. The tag of Kerala- **God's own country** was adopted in its tourism promotions & became a global superbrand. Thus Kerala is regarded as one of the destination with the highest brand recall.

The government of India & the Ministry of Tourism & Culture encourage heritage tourism in India by offering several benefits to the Indian states that are particularly famous for attracting tourists. Kerala is paving new ways to enter the tourism market for countries such Russia, Europe & East Asia with Ayurveda tourism.

Kerala initiated tourism development programmes by establishing an International Beach Resort at Kovalam in 1976 with the patronage of the Central Govt. Realizing the economic potential, Govt. of Kerala declared tourism as an industry in 1986. Within a short span of two & half decades, Kerala succeeded in establishing its tourism brand in the international market. The first tourism policy of the state was announced in 1995.

The deputy director of Kerala Tourism, Nanda Kumar said that, “ Foreign visitors are often looking a

relaxation place so we are planning to mix Ayurvedic treatment along with sight seeing in such a way that the experience is truly a stress buster for them”

According to him, the main target audience though are the retired foreign visitors, “ They have earned their money in their youth & are looking for a place to relax & that is how we are marketing Kerala in many places. Even in Russia, where there is not much sun through the year, Kerala climate is welcome experience. Hence we are trying to capitalize on the natural beauty & the immense culture of Ayurveda in the state. “

#### IMPACT OF TOURISM SECTOR ON THE ECONOMY

Year	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist	Foreign Exchange Earning (Crores)	Revenue generated Total (crores)
2005	59,46,423	3,46,499	1552.31	7738.00
2006	62,71,724	4,28,534	1988.40	9126.00
2007	66,42,941	5,15,808	2640.94	11433.00
2008	75,91,250	5,98,929	3066.52	13130.00
2009	79,13,537	5,57,258	2853.16	13231.00
2010	85,95,075	6,59,265	3797.37	17348.00
2011	93,81,455	7,32,985	4221.99	19037.00
2012	100,76,854	7,93,696	4571.69	20430.00
2013	108,57,811	8,58,143	5560.77	22926.55
2014	116,95,411	9,23,366	6398.93	24885.44
2015	124,65,571	9,77,479	6949.88	26689.63

#### 1. Generating Income & Employment :

Ayurveda tourism has emerged as an instrument of income & employment generation, poverty alleviation & sustainable human development. It contributes 6.23 % to the national GDP & 8.78% of the total employment in India.

The travel & tourism sector supported 25 million jobs in 2012 directly related to the tourism sector & it will estimated to rise to 31 million by 2023. These numbers indicates direct employment supported by

the tourism sector reflecting employment by hotels, travel agents, passenger transport services, restaurant etc. This has multiplier impact on the economy resulting in greater employment generation.

#### 2. Source of Foreign Exchange Earning :

Tourism is an imp. Source of foreign exchange earning in India. This sector has favourable impact on the balance of payment of the country.

#### 3. Developing Infrastructure :

Tourism tends to encourage the development of multiple-use infrastructure that benefits the host community including various means of transports, health care facilities, sports centres, in addition to the hotels & restaurants that cater to foreign visitors. The development of infrastructure in turn induced the development of other directly productive activities.

#### 4. Promoting Peace & Stability :

Tourism can also help to promote peace & stability in the developing country like India by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment & promoting cross-culture awareness.

#### CONCLUSION :

Ayurveda Tourism has vast potential for generating employment & earning large sums of foreign exchange, besides giving a fillip to the country's overall economic & social development. Much has been achieved but much more remains to do. Since Ayurveda tourism is multi-dimensional activity & basically a service industry, it would be necessary that all wings of central & state governments, private sector & voluntary organizations become active partners in the endeavour to attain sustainable growth in tourism if India is to become a world player in the tourist industry.

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