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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF YOGA TOURISM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Yoga tourism is an act in which people from all around the world travel to other countries to obtain salvation & medical care while at the same time touring, vacationing, and fully experiencing the attractions of the countries in which they are visiting. Actually, people travel to avail such facilities because these unique therapies are not available in one's own country. Yoga is fast growing healthcare therapy towards which people are getting aware and start learning yoga to live fit and fine life. It has enormous prospective for generating employment and earning huge sum of foreign exchange. India is the origin place of yoga; it has lot of opportunity to develop yoga tourism and to capture a big share of tourism industry. But on the other hand, there are lots of challenges which Indian tourism industry has to face before developing yoga tourism in India. The present paper outlines an overview of yoga tourism in India and discuss about various opportunities and challenges of promoting it in India with some valuable suggestions to develop India as a global destination for those who are seeking to learn yoga or want healthy life by exercising it.



KEYWORDS: Yoga, Tourism, Medical tourism, Healthcare, India.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in India is not only generating value for the country, but also led to the development of a accomplished workforce. Growth is driven by a combination of expansion in income levels and routine changes, the development of a diversity of tourist offers, policy and regulatory carry by the government. Spirituality, yoga has newly become a significant subject of investigate in the areas of social and economic. It

adds a new dimension to the tourism industry, as it is called Yoga tourism. "As a result, there has been increased interest in awareness and research in the field of yoga thematic tourism. Tourism is an old movement of age-related" Wellness "of civilized nations is normally used to mean a healthy balance of mind, body and spirit, which leads to an overall feeling of well-being. "yoga and wellness tourism" it can consequently be defined as physical, mental and

spiritual practice or discipline that originated in ancient India. There is a wide variety of yoga schools, practices and goals in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Among the best known types of yoga is hatha yoga and Raja yoga. In other words, "Beauty" is the view of health that focuses on the entire being and its further development. India has always been known for its rich heritage tradition of "Wellness" and It has great opportunities to offer to

applicants for "wellness". Carrera and Bridges have been defined medical tourism trip, which is systematically planned to maintain their physical and mental health. The yoga guru from India introduced yoga in the Western countries, after the success of Swami Vivekananda in the late 19th and early 20th century. In 1980, yoga has become popular as a structure of physical exercise throughout the Western world. Yoga in the Indian tradition, however, is more than a physical exercise, a meditation and spiritual core. One of the six major schools of orthodox Hinduism is also called yoga, which has its own epistemology and metaphysics, and is closely related to the philosophy of the Hindu Samkhya.

WHY YOGA:

Yoga aimed to unite the body, mind & soul. It helps to become more aware of our body's posture, alignment & patterns of movements which help in getting flexibility & calming the mind in the stress stricken environment. This is one of the main reasons, why people attract toward adopting yoga practice. Actually yoga consists of ancient theories, observations & principles about relationship of mind and body. Yoga can help up to prevent from diseases & help in curing from it. Some main benefits from yoga have discussed here:

- Weight loss.
- Inner peace.
- Boost Immunity
- Maintains your nervous system
- Boost Sexual Performance
- Keeps allergies and viruses
- Control blood sugar & blood pressure level.
- Benefits your relationships.
- Improves your flexibility & posture.
- Better your bone health.
- Massaging of ALL Organs of the Body
- Complete Detoxification
- Increasing lubrication the joints, ligaments and tendons
- Helps keep you drug free
- Increases your blood flow.
- Helps you serve others
- Relaxes you & helps you to sleep properly
- Prevents cartilage and joint breakdown
- Helps you in meditation.
- Stress relief
- Perfect your posture
- Builds muscle strength.
- Better intuition
- Boosts energy.
- Helps in healthy lifestyle
- Helps in All-round fitness & encourages self care
- Ease Migraines

YOGA TOURISM IN INDIA:

India offers a diverse basket of healthcare services and rejuvenation amenities to tourist(seeking medical treatment) at reasonable prices. Some of the different forms of healthcare tourism offered in the country includes yoga, meditation, ayurveda, allopathy, naturopathy, unani, etc. which make India the unique destination. People are increasingly realizing the value of such alternative forms of treatment that focus on naturally curing body. In India there is also a dedicated department to focus on the development of education and research in these unique therapies. Yoga is on the top among these and in recent years it is getting popularity at global level. Now people from outside India also started practicing Yoga to heal their body and mind with this powerful therapy.

Realizing the potential to develop and promote Yoga Tourism as the niche tourism products among international tourists, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has also initiated to make proper plan and policies to promote Yoga as a main Tourism Product.

Role Of Yoga And Spirituality In Indian Tourism

People from all over the globe move towards India for Ayurveda, yoga and meditation in Rishikesh, Uttaranchal, which is practiced for centuries. In fact, India quickly emerged as a health tourism destination because of them. From time immemorial, India has been identified for its spirituality, yoga and religious tolerance and its secular nature. India is called the "Yoga Bhoomi" and

the gate of heaven. India is known throughout the world for its ancient curative practices and substitute therapies. Over thousands of years, we have to get our own systems of indigenous medicinal and healing practices such as Ayurveda, naturopathy and pranic healing, to name a few. It is no wonder that people from around the world turn to the Indian subcontinent for orientation towards a more spiritually satisfying way of life

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOGA TOURISM IN INDIA:

India is capable to promote yoga tourism by providing Medical & wellness facilities at international standard at comparatively low price & by starting new educational yoga courses. Some States of India have developed yoga tourism as one of the products for promoting tourism. Yoga tourism holds immense hope as it is among the most ancient systems of medical treatment of the world.

- **Increased demand for wellness tourism and alternative cures:-** in this fast-paced era, people are anxious about their life so, therefore in developing countries, there is an huge increase in the demand of alternative healthcare practices. India is the hub of some of the unique alternative healthcare practices like Yoga, Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Naturopathy etc. these alternative provide motivation to foreigner to visit India. Yoga is the main preference and need of present time in modern world..
- **Reduced cost of international travel and tourism:-**India develops all the facilities in bulk which are required by the tourists. There are a growing number of convenient, low cost non-stop flights, luxury hotels & resorts, developed highways, natural and artificial attractions. All these results in inexpensive tour packages to India, which directly attract people from the world.
- **Privatization and FDI in Tourism and healthcare sector in India:-** In recent years India opened doors for FDI in healthcare sector. The participation of private sector resulted in advancement of infrastructure and equipment of Indian hospitals. The private sector also invested huge in developing Yoga centers and creating product for tourist, seeking treatment from Yoga. All these made India globally competitive, particularly eyeing Indian high class and foreign patients.
- **Availability of English speaking staff:-** India is the largest English spoken county of the world, it benefits that there is an availability of English speaking staff at Yoga centers. This is one of the main advantages because it attracts many English speaking patients from different countries. Whereas, countries like Thailand, China etc are lacking this quality.
- **India have Incredible attraction:- India is the world's famous and exciting destination for tourism.** This country has rich and diversified culture, oldest history & heritage, people with unique lifestyle, fairs and festivals, food, wildlife, deserts, beaches as well as highest snow covered peaks of Himalayas.
- **Foreign patients can get planned yoga packages deals:-** with the involvement of private sector in tourism industry, now it is easy for patients to visit India for Yoga, because now they can get package deals for the treatment which includes flights, transfer, hotels, treatments & leisure etc.

CHALLENGES TO YOGA TOURISM IN INDIA:

Strong competition from countries:- in this global era many countries understand the value of developing healthcare tourism. Due to globalization Yoga therapy is now no more Indian property. Now many countries have developed Yoga centers and started promoting them as main yoga tourism products. No doubt, India has lots of opportunities to develop Yoga tourism but even then India has to face cut-throat competition from various countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines etc.) that actively promote Yoga tourism.

- **Lack of institutional tie-ups between different players of industry:-**lack of **coordination** and tie-ups between different players (yoga centers, insurance companies and travel companies) of industry is also one of the main problem for Indian healthcare tourism industry. This coordination is must for developing Yoga tourism in India.
- **Lack of proper safety & security facilities:-** when a person travel out of his familiar place he always expects proper safety and security measures at the destination. Whereas, Due to increase in

terrorist activities India is lacking in providing proper safety and security to tourists. Providing safety to tourist is one of the biggest challenges for the Indian tourism industry.

- **Poor infrastructure as well as information:-** India is one of the fastest developing countries but till date its infrastructure is not up to the mark. It is far behind the developed countries.
- **No strong government support:-** the role of government is always vital in the development of any industry, so the case is with the development of Yoga Tourism. But the govt. is non serious about developing tourism industry in India, which results that now industry is facing the following problems. They are: (a) no regulations, (b) taxation anomalies, (c) bureaucratic roadblocks, (d) no works on land reforms, (e) lack of long-term investor friendly policies and (f) instability with respect to terrorism and communal tensions.
- **Image as an unhygienic country:-** In foreign country India is known for unhygienic country. People of foreign countries have a bad image of India in their mind. New government of India started mission like SWACH BHARAT ABHIYAN to clean the country, but still the country is not coming across this problem.
- **Lack of uniform pricing policies in hospitals across India:** -Indian healthcare industry has a lack of proper pricing policies. There is lot of difference between the price of the same treatment or service in difference yoga centre & hospitals. Every service provider charges its own price for the treatment. The differences in pricing create confusion to patients.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

On December 11, 2014, the 193-member UN General Assembly official agreed by consensus a resolution of 21 June as "International Day of Yoga". The belief on this day came after the call for adoption on June 21 as the International Day of Yoga by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in speech to the UN General Assembly on September 27, 2014, suggesting June 21, which is one of two surprises, International Narendra Modi Day Yoga He said that date is the longest day in the northern hemisphere and is of particular importance in many parts of the world. The first International Yoga Day was pragmatic around the world on June 21, 2015. Approximately 35,000 people, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and many dignitaries, performed 21 asanas (yoga positions) for 35 minutes in Rajpath, New Delhi. . The yoga day, watched by millions around the world in Rajpath, established two Guinness World Records - the largest yoga class, with 35,985 people and records of the majority of nationalities participating in the group to eighty-four

SUGGESTIONS:

Yoga is famous Worldwide and everybody is willing to learn it. Now, it is time is to make this as India's BRAND. The following suggestions are laid down for the future path of India in order to develop India as a unique destination to yoga tourism.

- **Role of Government:-** The role of Government for developing any industry is as important as blood to the body. So, there is a huge need of support from Indian government to develop India as a hot destination for tourist seeking yoga tourism. The government can play role by:
 - Making proper policy and plan for the success of yoga tourism.
 - Acting as a Facilitator for encouraging private investment in this sector.
- **Yoga Visas:** A simplified system of getting medical visas should be developed in order to make travel across borders easier. Visas can be extended depending on the condition of the patients. A visa on arrival scheme for the tourists from selected countries should be instituted which allows foreign nationals to stay in India for healthcare reasons. There is a need to simplify and speed up these procedures to make India a more attractive healthcare tourism destination.
- **Making India as a Brand of Yoga Tourism:** Yoga is practiced in India since ages. If we market Yoga and its benefits worldwide, with various mediums like movies, internet and other social networking sites, then there are chances that people will be attracted towards India for seeking spirituality and wellness.

- **Making Yoga hubs and promoting organic food products:-** India should be develop as a hub of Yoga tourism by establishing yoga centers of international level with standardized services. There is also need to promote organic food products which will directly benefits to farmers and the tourism industry.
- **Developing standard Yoga and spiritual centers:** - there is need to establish yoga and spiritual centers and to develop already established centers. So that quality service of Yoga will be provided to the tourists. These centers should be certified by government authorized organization.
- **Coordination with the world -wide Travel agencies:** - to face increasing competition in tourism sector, there is need to tie-up with foreign institutions & Travel agencies for assured supply of tourists.
- **Training and development:-** the government should start training and development programs at different levels for the overall growth of employees involved in yoga tourism.
- **Develop basic requirements of tourists:-** This includes all the basic things that every tourist place needs
 - Hygiene and basic sanitation for tourists in public places
 - Making Transportation and travel easy and hassle-free
 - Safety and security for the tourists from theft and other problems
- **Setting Up National Level Bodies:** the country should plan to set up a inter-national level body with the objective to market India's specialized yoga tourism products in the world.
- **Create an image of a clean and safe country:-** India have an image as unhygienic country in foreigners mind. Before promoting yoga tourism in India it is necessary to create an image as clean and safe country.
- **Motivate Public-Private Partnership:-** to accelerate the growth of yoga tourism in India there is need to motivate public – private partnership so that difference financial and policy related hurdles can be solved timely

CONCLUSION

The tourism provides largest number of jobs in the world. India has always pointed to tourists from all over the world to experience 5000 years of civilization. Diversity of national cultures, Religions, languages, fairs and festivals, majestic nature monuments and many enchanting It can take almost the whole world. All these elements provide a unique set of capabilities, tourists to enjoy. The success the tourism industry will largely depend on the success of all strategic fronts. India must change their traditional approach to the market is more competitive and modern. India has to develop unique market position, brand and image that cannot be owned by another player. India can do it presents as a place of spirituality, meditation and yoga. Places such as Rishikesh Haridwar, already known as the world's yoga capital, still has a lot of potential they attract tourists, especially foreign tourists who visit India to study yoga and break up with life.

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