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"A Critical Analysis to Improve Medical Tourism and Hospitality"

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Abstract: ***Medical tourism refers to visiting another country for medical care. The twentieth century witnessed the exorbitant price hike in medical treatment in the developed countries. Hospitality has proven its incredible potentials in most of the countries and its signature power in the modern era. Similarly, hospitality is capable to cure diseases with its magical flair of service in a hospital or treatment center.***

The study aims to determine the challenges of hospitality in medical tourism, improve key areas and build a strategic initiative to improve the performance of a country's medical tourism for the smooth visit of tourists. The researcher has framed research questions and distributed the questionnaires in 3 multi-specialty hospitals which are placed in the hubs of medical tourism in India. The data gathered of a hundred samples are analyzed and interpreted using a 5-point Likert scale. The need for improvements in the state, central policy, execution of in-house hospitality as well as distinct international lounges for patience and bystanders are needed. The study emphasizes the significance of a new medical tourism model and suggests a mechanism for implementing it.

Keywords: Hospitality, Hospital, Diet, Medical Tourism, Visitor

I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the fast-growing countries in medical tourism with its modern infrastructure, latest technologies, experts, quality, and service standards. Medical tourism has made its boom from the 1960s and persisted to do its magical touch in India and additionally entice many worldwide travelers. It is anticipated to attain the total share of world medical tourism to Rupees 2058 billion by the end of the year 2024. The assumed Compound annual growth rate is around 8.8% from 2018 to 2024. India is a paradise for Ayurveda remedies and many people pick out this due to no aspect outcomes from remedy. Many global vacationers pick out India because of its affordability in remedy expenses and facilities.

India was ranked the third position globally in medical tourism and these days facilitated the visa procedures to make sure the easy waft of visitors. Bengaluru and Kerala are the few states which are known as hubs for medical tourism. It was evident through the survey that there is a lack of accommodation or guest rooms in the hospitals as these hospitals or diagnosis centers are mainly intended for treatment only. This has created many hurdles for local hospitality for the global vacationers and they have to start searching for the arrangements locally with the language being another barrier. The majority of hospitals ensure that the in-house patient receives a diet plan and hospitality. The diet plan is offered before and after an illness, treatment, surgery. A dietitian and nutritionist work together, decide and plan the diet of a patient with the utmost care. The menu design is completed by assuring the required calories of a particular day are made available. The cafeteria is given the menu to ensure that the patients, bystanders, and visitors are fed with tasty great meals. Any ailment can be cured with the power of hospitality and proper diet. The aroma, texture, presentation, and quality of food and hygiene accommodation can be a revelation in medical tourism.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The international visitors or any visitor who intended to have med tourism is not sure about the policies of different governments. It is always suggested to provide a separate category where Medical tourism is offered in a hospital of a country so that a visitor can easily avail the facilities under the category as per the above model and a nodal officer can facilitate their requirement.

Currently, the visitor has to look for the local hospitality, food for himself and the bystanders also. The government has eased out the visa procedures for medical tourism in India and hence the security of the international visitor needs to be framed with utmost care. Most of the travelers visit India for Medical tourism intending to have a leisure stay after the treatment due to the affordability and various cultures and attractions in India.

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III. OBJECTIVES

1) To measure the level of satisfaction during medical tourism.
2) To evaluate the significant difference after the treatment.
3) To determine the various challenges in the hospital for hospitality.
4) To know the various requirement of an international visitor.

A. Governing Bodies of medical tourism in India

The worldwide tourist visiting India for medical tourism can check the authenticity of activities through various governing bodies like NABH- National Accreditation for
Hospitals & Health care providers where one can see all the government policies, approved lists, Hospitals, Travel and tour operators, hotels, and restaurants. The website of NABH can be accessed through https://www.indiahealthcare.org/ where other specialized following departments also can be accessed by a tourist.

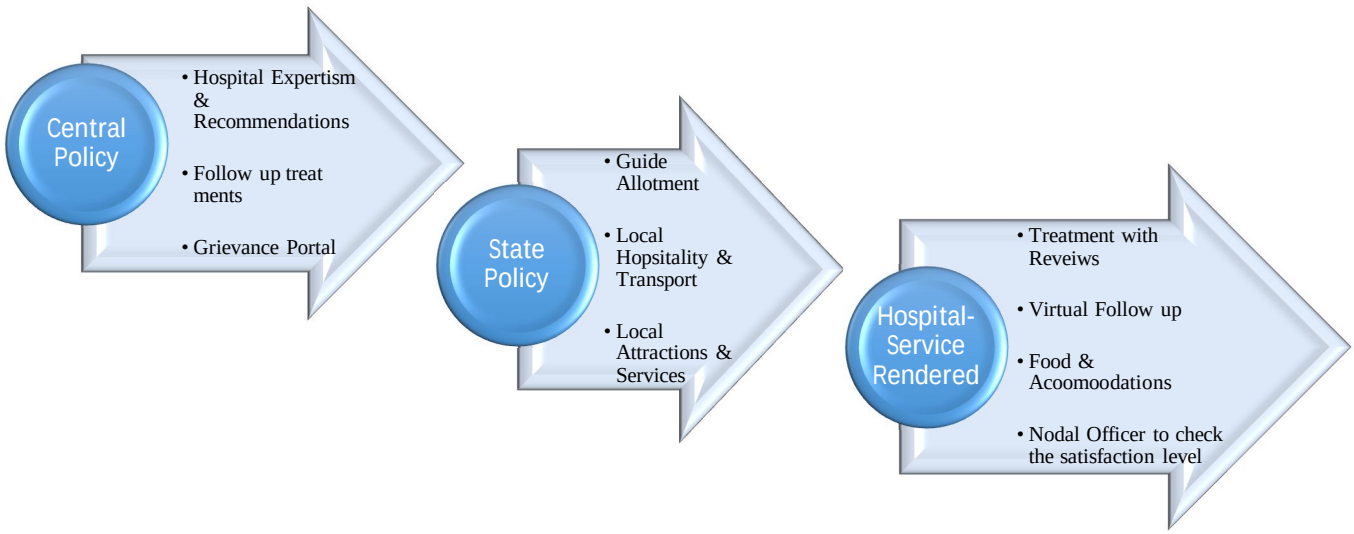
1) Department of Commerce
2) Yoga for Harmony and peace
3) Ministry of Health and Family welfare
4) Ministry of Tourism

The following is the corporate link for Manipal Hospital, where the corporate list is mentioned in detail https://www.manipalhospitals.com/oldairportroad/corporate-and-psu/. Similarly, all the 3 hospitals included in the current study are tied up with various corporates like CSIR, ISRO, DRDO, Air India, PSU's, Banks, Universities, Colleges, Autonomous Bodies, etc. These hospitals have provided a dedicated link for the international tourist to make sure the bookings are done in a friendly and fast manner. It is evident that the sustainable business model for these hospitals is through these corporates and therefore it is very much required to have a separate policy as indicated in the above theoretical framework and also guidelines for international visitors visiting for medical tourism.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

The significance of hospitality in medical tourism is relatively a new aspect of the area and the lack of studies and research on the subject has been a big setback. The significant research gap was to determine the visitor's expectations as well as the medical tourism facilities offered. The level of willingness for a feedback and interview section was observed to be below 50%. Interviewing the visitor at the time of check out requires so much time and effort.
Medical tourism and its importance are still a major area that required proper care and research to ensure a smooth flow of international visitors are attracted towards India including VIPs and VVIPS from across the countries. The probability and introduction of group packages, special promotional activities are also needed to determine.

Theoretical framework



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V. AREA OF THE STUDY

The current research topic is mainly concentrated on three multi-specialty hospitals in India namely 1) Manipal hospital, Bengaluru 2) Amrita Hospital, Ernakulam 3) KIMS Hospital, Trivandrum. These Hospitals are with all the international standard accreditations, which is the basic requirement of many of the global visitors.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was mainly concentrated on the hubs of med tourism like Bengaluru with a questionnaire method. Subsequently, the research of the study extended to some of the other cities in Kerala like Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram. The international travelers visit Kerala mainly to have expertise in yoga, Ayurveda, beauty treatments, wellness and they were aiming to have leisure tourism with a longer stay. The research questions framed have been distributed in the form of a questionnaire at the time of check out. The reliability of questions has been checked and verified using a t-test. The researcher received a sample of only 100 questionnaires with completely filled answers, out of 120 issued to the international visitors for medical tourism.

Sl. No.	Particulars	Respondents Ratings						
		Strongly Disagree	Dis agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Results
1	Cleanliness and Hygiene in the hospital	0	5	20	45	30	4	Good
2	Timely accommodation and services	0	10	25	35	30	3.85	Good
3	Accurate information	2	8	5	50	35	4.08	Good
4	Facilities	5	10	22	33	30	3.73	Good
5	The performance of employees at the hospital are noticeable	12	28	20	21	19	3.07	Neutral
6	Employees at hospital are very happy	27	29	24	11	9	2.46	Neutral
7	The personal attention provided by staff	5	15	20	28	32	3.67	Good
8	Prompt service	7	17	26	31	19	3.38	Neutral
9	Clear and effective communication	14	21	12	30	23	3.27	Neutral
10	Affordability of Service	2	18	32	28	20	3.46	Good
11	There was no hurdles or challenges in terms of hospitality	12	21	30	24	13	3.05	Neutral
12	The expected level of satisfaction achieved during medical tourism	18	18	12	32	20	3.18	Neutral

Table 1. Data Analysis & Interpretations

Mean Interpretation: 1 - 1.80 = Unsatisfactory, 1.81-2.60 = Satisfactory, 2.61-3.40= Neutral, 3.41- 4.20= Good, 4.21- 5.0= Very good

Respondents Ratings: Strongly Disagree= 1, Disagree= 2, Neither= 3, Agree= 4, Strongly Agree= 5

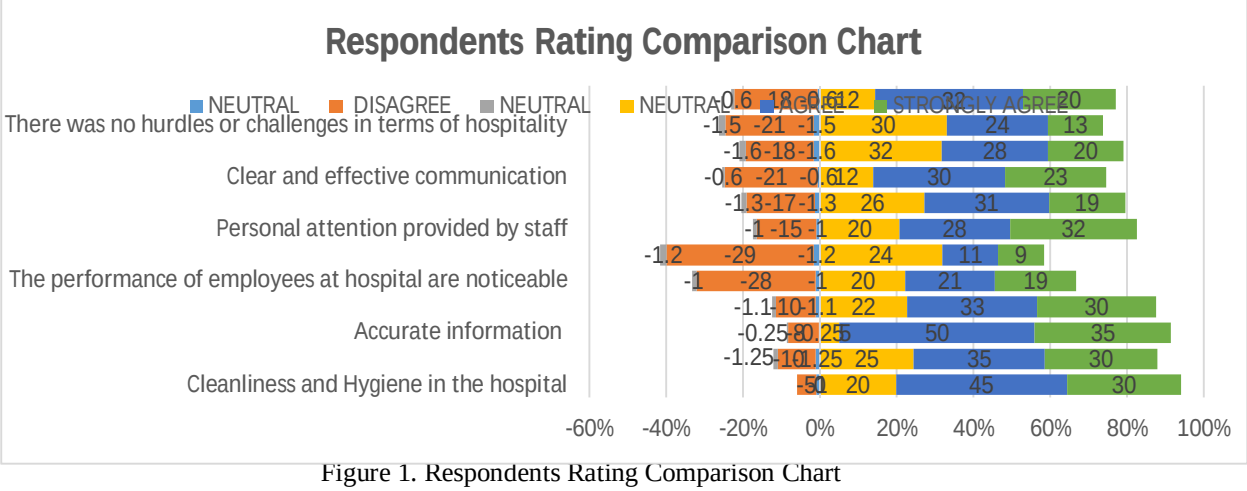

Figure 1. Respondents Rating Comparison Chart

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VII. CONCLUSION

The travelers have given an average satisfaction level and expected a better overall experience. The majority of the visitors were happy after the course of treatment where some were bothered about the time and constraints of boarding back to the long journey.
A specialized database for the diet plan based on age, gender, and other illness could help future studies be more methodical. If the diet plans are hosted in a central database, they can be standardized and reviewed periodically based on the latest research outputs. The study can help to frame various policies at the state level, central level, and hospital management level to improve the hospitality and stay of a patient in a hospital. The suggested model can improve the performance and business level of a country. This can help the users, global visitors to ensure a hassle-free visit to India. The need for In house total hospitality in terms of food and accommodation is clear through this study.

VIII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The importance of loyalty programs, databases are defined to promote their visit again and also for the follow up of course of treatment. The state and central government need to frame proper policies to ensure that the global visitors are provided with proper hospitality in India to the extent of allotting a local guide also for transport and purchase-related requirement. Domestic and International Lounges also can be planned for the patients and bystanders in the hospitals.

A. Author contribution

The initial concept of the above research made Dr. Abin George prepared a systematic methodology followed by a data collection and research analysis. Ms. Ansiem George and Mrs. Aneesha has extended the supports in the review of literature, data collection and analysis, research discussion, review, and final manuscript editing.

B. Funding

The above research did not receive any grant from any of the funding agencies.

C. Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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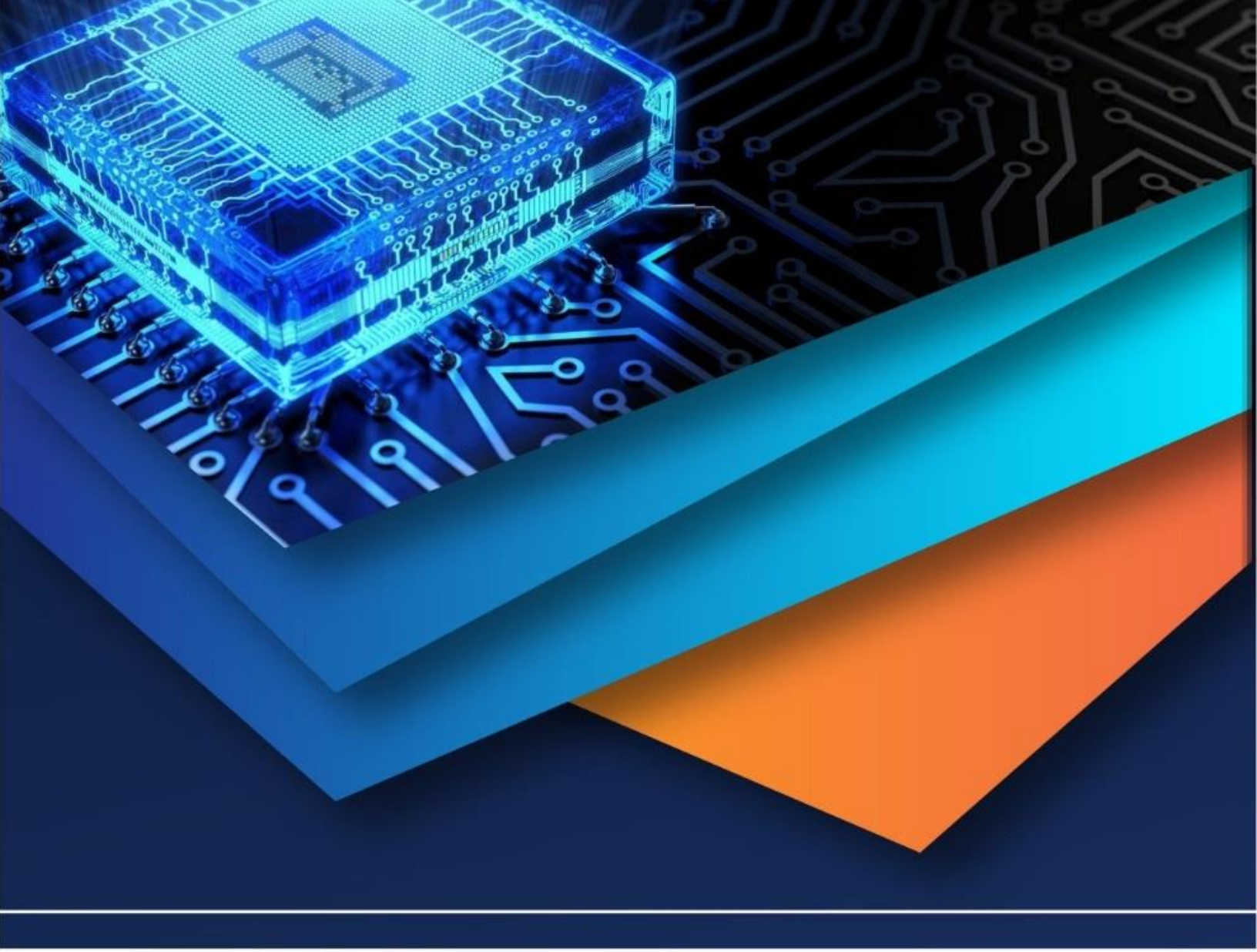

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