

## **DENTAL TOURISM: AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE VACATION IN INDIA**

**<sup>1</sup>\*Dr. Ila Verma, Dr. L. Vamsi K. Reddy, Dr. Panchali Kashyap and Dr. Md. Sanaullah**

<sup>1,3,4</sup>Resident, Sardar Patel Post Graduate Institute of Dental and Medical Sciences.

<sup>2</sup>Principal, Prof and Head Department of Public Health Dentistry Anil Neerukonda Institute of Dental Sciences.

### **ABSTRACT**

The common word globalization in the 21st century reflected a surplus of progress, industrial prosperity, streamlined corporate dentures, and new attitudes to health-seeking behaviour. A heterogeneous trend of transnational health travel has lately been attracting interest as a tool for patients to achieve cost-effective, reliable and higher clinical treatment of comparison to their home countries. Dental tourism has been acknowledged as it varies considerably between industrialized and developing countries in care costs. Dental tourism, commonly referred to as dental vacations, is subset of medical tourism, involving those who are seeking dental care outside their local healthcare

systems during their holiday. Thanks to the increasing worldwide dental tourism, India, a continental republic, has recently become a popular destination for international dental patients due to its successful and improved care. However, people still face many problems in order to take advantage of the industry. For example, simplifying the health visa process and instituting visas upon arrival for patients to encourage dental services are essential to eliminate the complexities of this process. The lure of dental tourism is price and quality. Foreigners travelling to India for their treatment can save upto 70%. Odontology and dental companies advertise "all-inclusive" package deals including dental procedures, booking hotel rooms, side trips to tourist attractions and airline tickets to attract global customers. The wave of dental tourism aims to improve India's multifaceted economy with existing policy operation in full speed. It's not in the horizon. Here it is! In India, dentistry provides Americans who are searching for a more accessible alternative to expensive dental treatment in the US with a competitive advantage. Many Mexican dental clinics, including new

Article Received on  
11 July 2021,

Revised on 01 August 2021,  
Accepted on 22 August 2021

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr.202111-21530

### **\*Corresponding Author**

**Dr. Ila Verma**

Resident, Sardar Patel Post  
Graduate Institute of Dental  
and Medical Sciences.

technologies, provide healthy and high-quality dental services. As healthcare expenses in the United States are an issue, solutions like India's dental facilities would continue to be a welcome help for many Americans. India, because of its resources, is a desirable destination and technologies in which developing countries have similar standing. Here are some of the finest clinics and worldwide rehab centres have the latest facilities.

**KEYWORDS:** Dental Tourism, India, Dental care, Affordable.

## INTRODUCTION

**“I wish I had never gone traveling. Said no one ever”.** Tourism is an increasing tourism sector with tremendous potential for development and thus one of the most critical issues not just of the countries but of the foreign community at large.<sup>[1]</sup> Over the last decade a modern and independent niche in the tourist sector, called medical tourism, has been attempted to enhance wellbeing during vacation through rest, preparation and visits to spas. The rapidly expanding market has contributed to medical tourism as a niche, which typically flies long distances to countries in abroad to get medical, dental and operating services, while becoming holidaymakers in a more traditional manner.<sup>[2]</sup>

Dental tourism which is an important sector of the growing health tourism industry is a sub-category of medical tourism where the chief goal of the individual is to seek dental treatment exterior their local healthcare delivery system coupled with a vacation.<sup>[3]</sup> Dental tourism is defined by the American Dental Association (2009) as the act of traveling to another country for obtaining dental treatment.<sup>[4]</sup>

Dental tourism involves travel abroad, which would cost a great deal in a region, for cost effective, available dental treatment, dental counselling, dental surgery or dentistry. The phenomenon has initiated owing to the increasingly rising healthcare costs. Long appointments and lengthy waiting lines in the West tended to improve this trend. While dental tourism is a matter of intense discussion, research studies on the topic still lack. There are several factors behind dental tourism. Such considerations included rising medical insurance rates, gaps in referral to medical dentists, professional services at some overseas hospitals, discount air travel and the capacity of the Internet to connect 'customers' to health-related market brokers.<sup>[7]</sup>

So millions of people every year travel around the planet to seek dental care and spend a nice holiday all at once. Customers don't have to pick between their dental treatment and vacations, because you can both brought it in one location to experience a fantastic holiday to dental practice together. This saving concept has its appeal throughout the holidays and is genuinely at the forefront of this rising phenomenon.<sup>[8]</sup>

## HISTORY

Healthcare 'Tourism' is not a brand new idea. An early type of healthcare tourism was probably the spa town and sanitarium. When individuals were able to communicate with one another, medical tourism began to take off. Services in their own country as well as in other countries across the world became apparent to them as a result of their research. For a long period of time, doctors suggested traveling abroad to a more hospitable environment that might alleviate their illness. Dental tourism may have begun as a personal experience that spread through word-of-mouth. As a result, more and more individuals were interested in alternative dental treatment options. Increased popularity has accompanied the EU's expansion.<sup>[9]</sup>

## DENTAL TOURISM HISTORY ON NATIONAL LEVEL

### India

Since British dominance in India, medical tourists have flocked to the country for treatment. During their time in India, they were able to force Indians to undergo their therapy. But as time has gone on, things have altered dramatically. "Hotel-spitals," business-like hospitals that combine high-class medical and hospitality services for a foreign clientele, have emerged and grown in popularity.<sup>[9]</sup>

Back then, when Yoga and Ayurveda were very popular, hordes of medical tourists and spiritual seekers descended on India, seeking their cure.<sup>[10]</sup> In the year 2000, India became a recognized medical tourism destination in the United States. Despite being known for its yoga and meditation centers, India is also offering dental tourism services to tourists.<sup>[3]</sup> Because of its sophisticated infrastructure and technology, India is becoming a popular destination for dental tourism, on par with wealthy countries like the United States.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Context For Dental Care Tourism

Dentists use dental tourism as a way to treat patients on an as-needed Multiple operations are crammed into a short therapy session. Some patients may find it difficult to return to overseas

clinics for additional treatment if issues arise. A large number of dental professionals in your area will not be willing to treat dental issues that are the result of care done by dentists in another nation. Some dentists will be deterred from correcting poor procedures because of liability concerns.<sup>[9]</sup>

Dentourism is a complicated idea. As a result, there are two sorts of travelers.

1. **The classic dental tourist** - Who visits a foreign nation solely or in conjunction with a holiday package to receive dental care;
2. **Migrant tourists**- Who return to their home country for vacation or a visit with family and seek dental care while there. As Kamath et al., (2015) point out, the synergy between dentistry and tourist services is seen as more than just a financial opportunity.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Dental Tourism In India

India has evolved as one of the world's leading destinations for Medical and Wellness Tourism. Medical Tourism is a specialized area of the Indian tourism industry that has just lately grown. Indian invisible health services export company is involved in this. Dental tourism is often referred to as another manifestation of globalization.<sup>[6]</sup>

Mexico is a popular dental tourism destination because of its proximity to the United States, where 25 percent of the world's dental tourists originate. Together, India and Hungary are tied for the number two position. As a result, Hungary provides more assistance to European patients, while India provides assistance to Asian patients, and the two countries also share certain US nationals.<sup>[12]</sup> All eyes are on India, a young nation that is also known as the Incredible India. One of the most famous Sanskrit sayings is "Athithi Devo Bhava," which means to treat visitors like gods.<sup>[13]</sup> The key hubs for dental tourism in India include cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Kerala and Goa.<sup>[4]</sup> These clinics offer trained dental experts, latest dental technology and world class facilities.<sup>[5]</sup>

**Table 1: Worldwide market shares in dental tourism by countries.**<sup>[22]</sup>

Country	Percentage
India	14
Thailand	14
Poland	13
Spain	3
Bulgaria	3
Turkey	6

**A) Why India Is A Hub For Dental Tourism?**

Because of excellent standards and affordable rates, India has become a popular dental tourism destination across the world. These include root canals, crowns, bridges, dental implants and teeth whitening - all of which are far less expensive in India than they are in the U.S.<sup>[14]</sup>

**The advantages of opting for dental treatment in India include**

1. Access to quality dental care at reasonable cost
2. Comfort level
3. Less waiting time
4. Improved sterilization techniques
5. Lower Medication cost
6. Low labour cost
7. Tourist interest
8. Alternative medical proposition

**B) ADVANTAGES OF DENTAL TOURISM IN INDIA****1. Affordable dental treatments**

**2. Dental Specialists:** - Nationwide, there are more than a million dentists, including over 20,000 dentists in the major cities and more than ten thousand dental experts. There are orthodontists, periodontists, endodontists, prosthodontists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, pedodontists, and implantologists among the experts.<sup>[3]</sup>

**3. Insurance plans in India cover treatments that are not covered in insurance packages outside of India**

**4. English speaking doctors/ dentists:-** In India, doctors and employees are fluent in English.<sup>[3]</sup>

**5. Large Indian population living outside India choose to come here for treatments: -** Due to their frequent visits, non-resident Indians (NRIs) prefer to be treated by their local dentists. For both routine and aesthetic dental operations in India, they play a vital role.<sup>[3]</sup>

**6. Travelers combine alternative health care with dental treatments**

**7. Relaxation Centers:-** There are many health spas, relaxation and meditation centers. These offer therapeutic healing to the body, mind and soul so that the tourists can relax, rejuvenate and replenish themselves.<sup>[3]</sup>

**8. Excellent connectivity via air, road and railways**

**9. Key hubs for dental clinics:** - Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Kerala, and Goa are just a few of the cities. All forms of transportation, including airplanes, provide easy access to these areas. As a result, outsiders will feel just at home.<sup>3</sup>

**10. No waiting period**

**11. Stable and favorable political environment favors tourists to visit India-** As a result of the government's efforts, dental schools now offer a standardized education. There are now fewer quacks and more specialists in the field of dentistry.<sup>3</sup>

## FUNCTIONING

### Process flow

1. Travellers either contact tour operators or surgeon directly. The queries are answered and the schedule is fixed



2. Tour operators arrange all the documents and facilitate the trip.



3. Traveller visits the tourist country and undergoes the treatment.



4. Post treatment, tour operators organize the trip and provide all the facilities.



5. Traveller may need to visit the dentist again as per treatment required.



6. Traveller leaves the country and remains in contact with the dentist.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Strategy For Dental Tourism

A strategy for Dental Tourism that would take dental tourism closer to tourism, we apply the ‘Get there-stay there-live there’ model which distinguish these three phases of the tourism experience.<sup>[11]</sup>

1. **The GET THERE** phase-covers holiday start-up activities as information gathering (“Virtual Get There”) and mobility (“ Real Get There”).<sup>[11]</sup>
2. **STAY THERE** - regards the satisfaction of basic holiday needs, i.e. accommodation and food, and

3. **LIVE THERE** - is about the satisfaction of secondary holiday needs and including all the activities of tourists at destination.<sup>[11]</sup>

### PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

In order to promote dental tourism in our country, it is crucial to provide quality dental treatment at a reasonable price.<sup>6</sup> The Indian Dental Association (IDA), its local affiliates, and tourism-promoting organizations in the country should work in unison to achieve this objective.<sup>[5]</sup>

To provide excellent dental treatment, the federal ministry of foreign affairs should oversee and supervise the dentistry regulatory organizations, which in turn should coordinate with the different state tourist corporations or famous private tour firms. Providers that do not adhere to the quality norms, protocols, and standards established by the regulatory agencies should be prosecuted and subjected to severe punishment.<sup>[5]</sup>

### EXPECTED MYTHS ABOUT DENTAL TOURISM

Among certain dentists, the most frequent fallacy is that low-cost cross-border dental care is subpar.<sup>[6]</sup>

### SUSPECTED THREATS OF DENTAL TOURISM

1. Dental treatment performed in other nations are not guaranteed, which is the most serious risk of all.<sup>[6]</sup>
2. It's also possible that patients who have dental operations abroad will be charged higher prices for treatment in their own country if difficulties occur in the future.<sup>[6]</sup>
3. It is difficult for people to sue dentists in other nations because of differences in the legal systems.<sup>[15]</sup>
4. Sterilization and infection control standards are regulated by different organizations in different countries, which might have an influence on the patient's dental health.<sup>[6]</sup>

### FUTURE OF DENTAL TOURISM

India has the required manpower to cater to the dental needs of countries and continents far and near:

1. Enhanced dental jobs opportunities<sup>[5]</sup>
2. Enhanced professional practices and interpersonal skills
3. Dental tourism contributes to the national GDP<sup>[5]</sup>

4. Fostering exciting international alliances.<sup>[5]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Dental tourism is one of the newer forms of tourism that has recognized the dental requirements of a large number of visitors across the world. However, in the past several years, it has grown in popularity despite being unorganized. There is a great deal of potential for dental care tourism in India, which is currently being formalized and is already drawing visitors from nearby nations and other distant places.

When it comes to health care, the government should play both the regulatory and facilitative roles. Consider presenting a comprehensive package that includes medical services. Indian dental tourism has to be promoted in today's highly competitive globe. To make dental tourism in India more acceptable, the national and state governments must provide enough financial assistance and initiative. To ensure the industry's long-term viability, the government must provide all-around assistance.

## REFERENCES

1. **Kabia, Sunil K.** Tourism Industry, Reference Press, New Delhi, 2005; 10.
2. **Connell J.** Medical tourism: Sea, sun sand and surgery. *Tourism Management*, 2006; 27: 1093–1100.
3. **Mitra P, Chawla R.** Dental tourism in India- An update. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 2016; 4(1): 1271-1275.
4. **Jaapara M, Musab G, Moghavvemic S, Saubd R.** Dental tourism: Examining tourist profiles, motivation and satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 2017; 61: 538-552.
5. **Shah R, Jain C, Mitra D, Talati M, Vijaykar H, Dharne S.** Dental Vacation: Healthcare And Holidays In India. *International Journal For Research In Health Sciences And Nursing*, 2018; 4(8): 6-11.
6. **Reddy V K.** Dental Tourism-A boon to Indian Practitioner. *Research & Reviews: Journal of Dental Sciences*, 2016; 4(3): 101-103.
7. **Sandhu R.** Dental Tourism-A Review. *International Healthcare Research Journal*, 2018; 2(3): 55-58.
8. **Mohammed F, Thapasum A.** Dental Tourism-Global Competition in Health Care. *Medical Equipment & Automation*, 2012; 26-28.
9. **Priyambada P, Mamta C, Singh R K.** An Overview of Opportunity of Medical Tourism in India. *Tropical Journal of Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences*, 2014; 1(1): 26-33.



10. **Singh J P.** Healthcare Tourism In India: Opportunity And Challenge. Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research, 2015; 4(3): 37-47.
11. **Vikuk A L.** Consumption of Dental Services: Medical Tourism in CEE. European Journal of Service Management, 2018; 27(16): 135-142.
12. **Kamath K, Hugar S, Kumar V, Gokhale N, Uppin C, Hugar S S.** The business and pleasure of teeth: Dental tourism. International Journal of Contemporary Dental and Medical Reviews, 2015; 1-4.
13. **Mohan K, Agarwal J.** Dental Tourism: Twist In The Trend. Heal Talk, 2010; 13-14.
14. Available from: <http://www.various Indian Dental Tourism Package>.
15. **AGD:** FACTSHEET- dental tourism.