



Rethinking Ayurvedic Tourism In Kerala: A Futuristic Stance

Arun Kumar V A^{1*}, Dr. G. Jerin Rose²

^{1*}(Register No: 19223011011016), Research Scholar, Annai Velankanni College, Tholayavatam, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India. (Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli).

²(Research Supervisor) Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Annai Velankanni College, Tholayavatam, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India. (Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli).

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ARTICLE INFO **ABSTRACT**

Around the world, the medical tourism industry is growing quickly. The leaders of the nation see tourism and healthcare integration as a progressive way to diversify their economies, attract foreign investment, promote job creation, boost the health services industry, and take advantage of local advantages to profit from the notion of comparative advantage. The medical tourism sector of Kerala's tourism business is growing faster and has built a strong reputation for itself in the health tourism market. This is because of its reputation for cost in both modern and traditional medical systems, specifically Ayurveda. Ayurveda has been practised for thousands of years in India, but it has only just begun to gain popularity as a key selling point for Kerala's tourism industry, especially from June to August. Given the sector's growth, it is essential to examine how unique Ayurveda tourism is and where it fits into Kerala's socioeconomic landscape. The effectiveness of Kerala's socioeconomic growth was investigated using multilayer analysis to determine the impact of the distinctiveness of Ayurvedic tourism. When it comes to accomplishing the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala through Ayurvedic tourism, especially during this time of COVID epidemic, the importance of health care infrastructure quality, cost, and standard accreditation must be addressed. It is impossible to create an efficient plan for achieving the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala through ayurvedic tourism to better serve the clients without the help of doctors' reputation and experience.

Key words: Medical Tourism, Ayurveda, Health Care Infrastructure Quality, Cost, Standard Accreditation, Doctors' Reputation

1.1 Introduction

The global market for medical tourism is expected to reach \$149,345.6 million by 2016 from \$58,622.2 million by 2018, with a CAGR of 12.4% over the forecast period of 2019–2026(**WWW.World Tourism**). The medical tourism sector is expanding rapidly throughout the world. Over three million patients who travelled the world for medical care in 2019 spent USD 278.5 billion on the medical tourism business. Medical tourism has been recognised as a national sector in more than 50 countries. Tourism-related income makes up a sizeable portion of the national economy in many nations. Tourism and healthcare integration is viewed by the country's leaders as a progressive means of diversifying their economies, luring international investment, fostering job growth, expanding the health services sector, and leveraging local advantages to capitalise on the theory of comparative advantage. The USA has a 40 percent global market share for healthcare, followed by Asia Pacific (33.5 percent) and India (21 percent). India is the third-highest country in the world for foreign visitor arrivals. In 2019, there were 10.89 million foreign visitors to India, a rise of 3.1% (**WWW.Indian Tourism**). The growth of healthcare in India has been aided by the presence of allopathic medicine as well as traditional healthcare systems like Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Naturopathy, Homeopathy, and Yoga. Additionally, aromatherapy is widely employed in India as part of the country's traditional healthcare practises. Essential oils from medicinal plants and spices are produced and extracted in India. All of these elements are luring domestic and foreign travellers, creating tourism-related cash flows. Additionally, there are faith-based and spiritual healers who conduct treatments using one or more conventional techniques.

1.2 Kerala medical tourism industry

The "National Geographic Traveler" chose Kerala, "God's own country," as one of the top ten paradises on earth. The tourist sector, which is expanding at a rate of 13.31%, is important to the state's economy. Kerala is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia due to its distinctive geographic features. Kerala is a charming destination thanks to its hospitable climate, extensive shoreline with peaceful beaches, tranquil stretches of emerald backwaters, lush hill stations and exotic wildlife, waterfalls, sprawling plantations and paddy fields, ayurvedic health holidays, alluring art forms, magical festivals, historic and cultural landmarks, exquisite cuisine, etc. Kerala tourism combines the natural world with the local culture. Monsoon tourism, backwater tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, rural / village tourism, houseboat tourism, honeymoon tourism, health tourism, ayurveda tourism, radiation tourism, culture and heritage tourism, pilgrimage tourism, spice tourism, wild life tourism, beach tourism, hill station tourism, etc. are all enriched by it. Kerala's tourist industry's medical tourism sector is expanding more quickly and has established an excellent brand for itself in the health tourism market. This is due to its reputation in both contemporary and conventional systems of medicine, namely Ayurveda for its affordability.

1.3 Need and Significance of the study

Ayurvedic treatment's intended aim for tourists has helped to promote its offshoots, such as meditation, yoga, and reiki. Growing herbs and medicinal plants on one's own is suitable due to the optimal climate and wonderful landscape of forests and mountains. The development of Ayurvedic therapies in Kerala is due to adequate infrastructure facilities and a sufficient number of highly skilled and experienced Ayurvedic physicians. By comprehending the underlying causes of the disorders, holistic medicine seeks to restore health. In order to ensure a full recovery, it aims to address the underlying reasons while also purifying, purging, strengthening body tissues (dhatus), and harmonising physiological doshas. Because it helps cure both the symptoms of a health problem and its underlying causes, Ayurvedic is the future of world healthcare. Additionally, it emphasises rejuvenation techniques that support the entire body-mind-spirit complex. Over a thousand years of Ayurvedic treatment have been developed on these shores, and now the rest of the world is slowly becoming aware of its contemporary uses. Kerala has served as the ideal location to carry out the practice since the beginning of time and is home to a large number of Treatment and Research Centers. The main advantages of Kerala Ayurvedic health tourism include lifelong relief for the entire body, no side effects and the availability of many tactics for freedom from infection, provide release from tension, and make the body younger. These illustrations will aid the customer in comprehending the vast array and scope of Ayurvedic treatments, which place an emphasis on the holistic growth and well-being of the individual. Although Ayurveda has been practiced for millennia in India, it has only recently emerged as a major selling point for Kerala's tourism sector, particularly from June to August. Examining the distinctiveness of Ayurveda tourism and its position in the socioeconomic elements of Kerala is crucial given the sector's expansion.

1.4 Objective of the study

To examine the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala

1.5 Hypothesis of the study

The uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala is promising

1.6 Methodology of the study

The present study is a descriptive in nature and the data was collected from the 120 Ayurvedic health tourists in Kerala equally divided between Southern region, Central region and Northern region. A structured questionnaire was administered among Ayurvedic health tourists under Judgement Sampling Method. The study period was April-May 2022. Multilayer analysis was done to examine the influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala.

1.7 Review of related literature

Padmasani and Remya (2015) conducted research on the variables affecting visitors to Ayurvedic medical facilities. The factors of quality of services, opportunity, attractiveness, rewards, and promotion are the most powerful in the field of destinations. According to **Jaiswal and Williams, Yoginiet (2017)**, the most well-liked form of medicine from ancient India has survived and thrived throughout time. **Yoshida et al. (2016)** investigated how well-known Ayurveda is among Dhaka residents. The usage of Ayurvedic medications is less certain among youngsters than among elderly. In their **2017 study, Katoch et al.** focused on various potential government regulations and innovations for the development and spread of traditional Ayurveda. The government of India founded the Indian System of Medicine, also known as AYUSH, to safeguard and promote Ayurveda and other conventional medical practises. **Pani and Das (2014)** place emphasis on the steps done by the tourist department to advance and expand Ayurveda's

activities. **Louis (2018)** sought to ascertain the contentment of visitors to Kerala, and the study set up correct understandings of the significance of Ayurveda for enhancing tourism-related activities.

1.8. Results and discussion

Table 1.1 Network Information - Influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala

Input Layer	Factors	1	Tourist
		2	Destination
	Covariates	1	Standard Accreditation
		2	Reputation
		3	Experience of Doctors
		4	Quality of health care infrastructure
		5	Cost
	Number of Units ^a		9
Rescaling Method for Covariates		Standardized	
Hidden Layer(s)	Number of Hidden Layers		1
	Number of Units in Hidden Layer 1 ^a		5
	Activation Function		Hyperbolic tangent
Output Layer	Dependent Variables	1	Connection of the Ayurveda tourism with other specialised tourism
		2	Combining Ayurvedic treatment with leisure travel
		3	Medical procedures would be outsourced to India by both foreign businesses and insurance companies
		4	The creation of employment avenues
		5	Possible to combine Ayurveda Tourism with business opportunities
		6	Investment by NRIs may increase
	Number of Units		6
	Rescaling Method for Scale Dependents		Standardized
	Activation Function		Identity
	Error Function		Sum of Squares
a. Excluding the bias unit			

Source:- Primary Data

As per the net work information to examine the influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala, there are 2 factors considered. They are Tourist and Destination. Tourist is classified into Domestic health tourist and foreign health tourist. Destination is classified into Ayurvedic hospitals and Ayurvedic centres. There are five covariates were included in the model and they are Standard Accreditation, Reputation, Experience of Doctors, Quality of health care infrastructure and Cost. The number of units is 9 and the rescaling method for covariates is standardised. The Dependent variables are Connection of the Ayurveda tourism with other specialised tourism, Combining Ayurvedic treatment with leisure travel, Medical procedures would be outsourced to India by foreign businesses and insurance companies, The creation of employment avenues, and Investment by NRIs may increase.

Figure 1.1 Multilayer Graphical Representation - Influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala

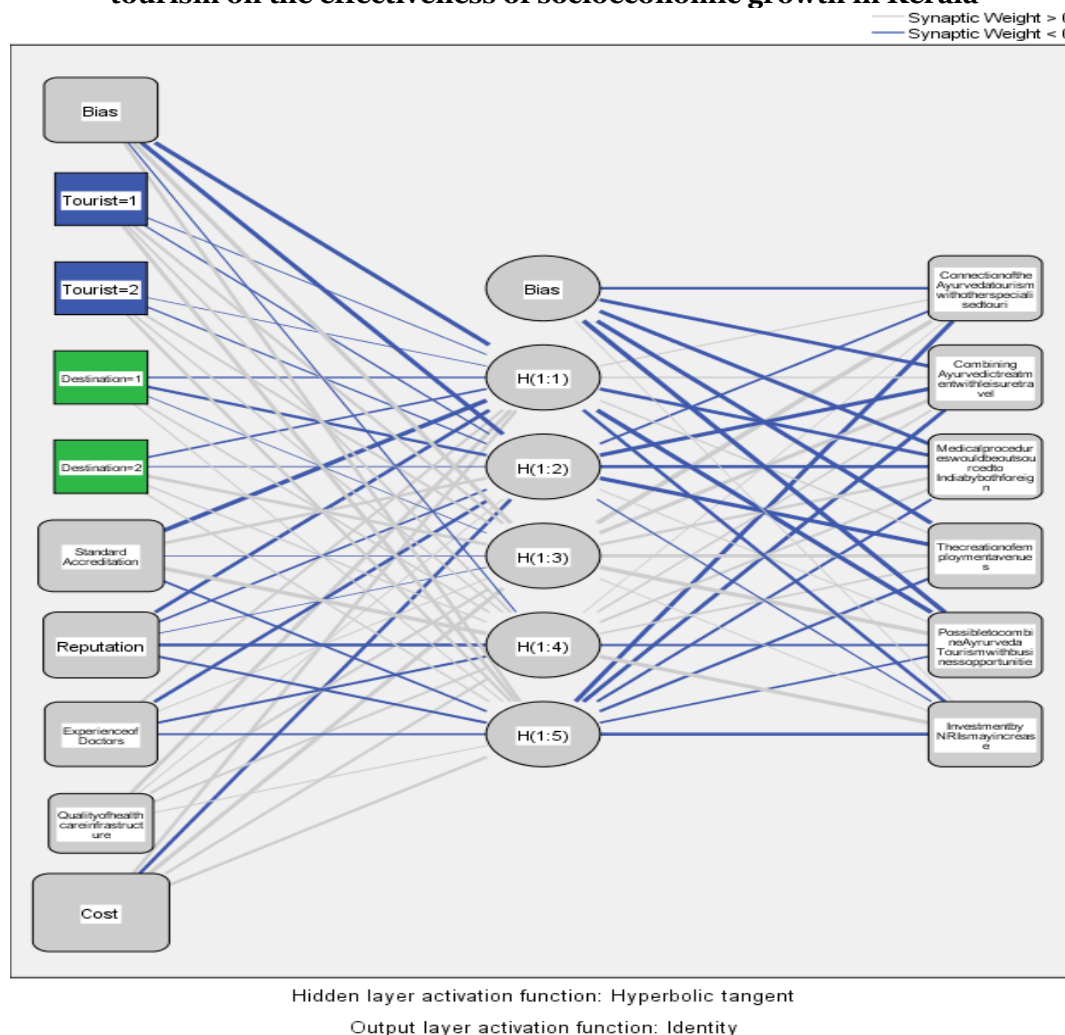


Table 1.2 Model Summary - Influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala

Training	Sum of Squares Error		33.897
	Average Overall Relative Error		.076
	Relative Error for Scale Dependents	Connection of the Ayurveda tourism with other specialised tourism	.086
		Combining Ayurvedic treatment with leisure travel	.018
		Medical procedures would be outsourced to India by both foreign businesses and insurance companies	.114
		The creation of employment avenues	.024
		Possible to combine Ayurveda Tourism with business opportunities	.121
		Investment by NRIs may increase	.095
	Stopping Rule Used		1 consecutive step(s) with no decrease in error ^a
	Training Time		0:00:00.03
Testing	Sum of Squares Error		16.018

Relative Error for Scale Dependents	Average Overall Relative Error	.099
	Connection of the Ayurveda tourism with other specialised tourism	.161
	Combining Ayurvedic treatment with leisure travel	.009
	Medical procedures would be outsourced to India by both foreign businesses and insurance companies	.096
	The creation of employment avenues	.013
	Possible to combine Ayurveda Tourism with business opportunities	.179
	Investment by NRIs may increase	.182
a. Error computations are based on the testing sample.		

Source: - Primary Data

In the model summary to examine the influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala, the prediction level of Training and Testing was explained. During training phase the average relative error for the scale dependent Connection of the Ayurveda tourism with other specialised tourism is 0.086, Combining Ayurvedic treatment with leisure travel (0.018), Medical procedures would be outsourced to India by both foreign businesses and insurance companies (0.114), The creation of employment avenues(0.024), Possible to combine Ayurveda Tourism with business opportunities (0.121) and for the variable Investment by NRIs may increase is 0.095. The overall average relative error is 0.076. Similarly with regard to the testing phase, the overall average relative error is 0.099.

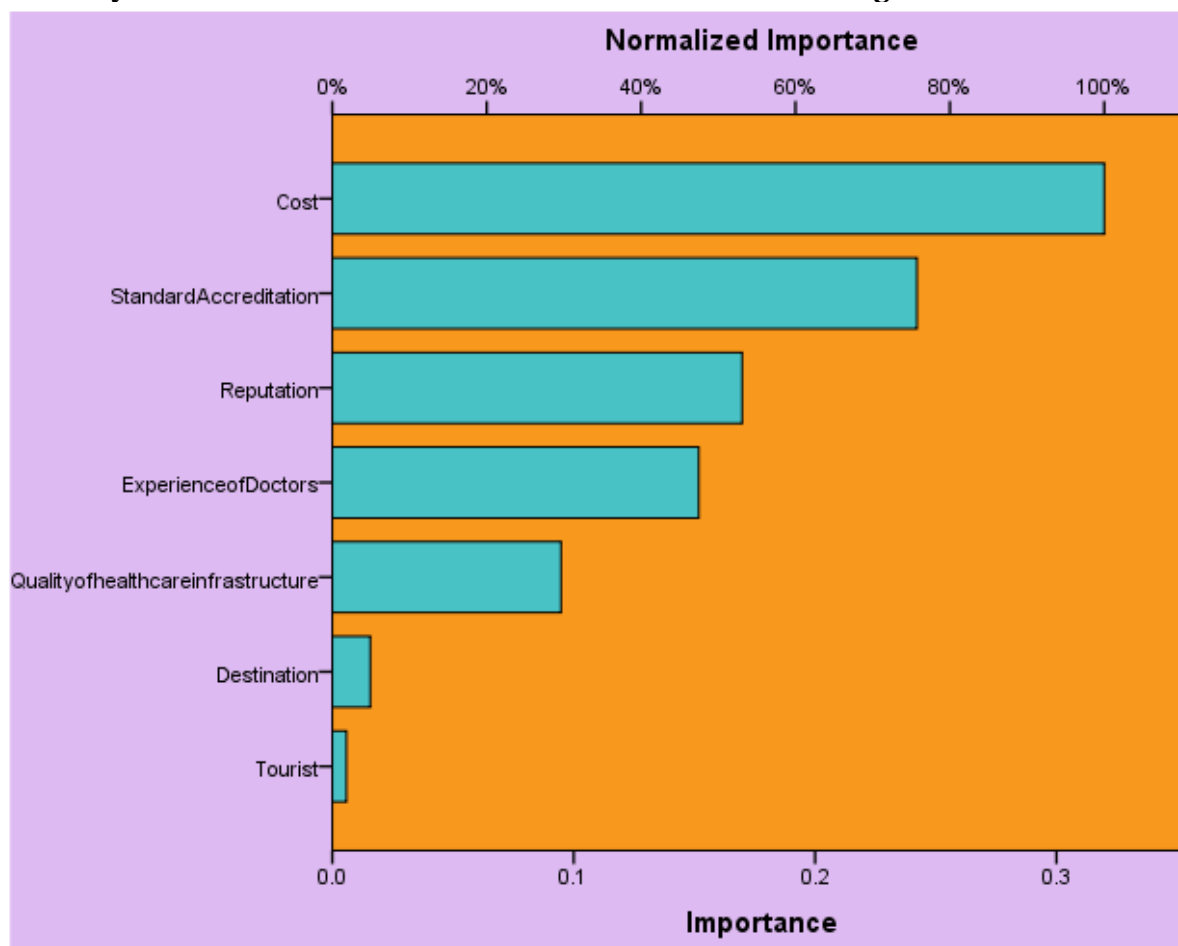
Table 1.3 Independent Variable Importance - Influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala

	Importance	Normalized Importance
Tourist	.006	1.8%
Destination	.016	4.9%
Standard Accreditation	.242	75.7%
Reputation	.170	53.1%
Experience of Doctors	.152	47.5%
Quality of health care infrastructure	.095	29.6%
Cost	.320	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The present table describes the importance of the independent variables on the dependent variables such as Connection of the Ayurveda tourism with other specialised tourism, Combining Ayurvedic treatment with leisure travel, Medical procedures would be outsourced to India by foreign businesses and insurance companies, The creation of employment avenues, and Investment by NRIs may increase. The level of influence by Tourist on the present model is 0.006 (1.8%), the influencing level of the variable Destination is 0.016 (3.1%). Hence the cumulative effect of the factor is 4.9%. The individual influencing ability of the covariate Quality of health care infrastructure is 0.095 and its effect is 24.7%. Thus the cumulative effect will be 29.6%. The influencing ability of covariate Experience of Doctors is 0.152 and the individual effect is 17.9%. Thus the cumulative effect will be 47.5%. The influencing ability of covariate Reputation is 0.170 and the individual effect is 5.6% thereby the cumulative effect will be 53.1%. The influencing ability of covariate Standard Accreditation is 0.242 and the individual effect is 22.6%. Thus the cumulative effect will be 75.7%. Finally when the covariate Cost joins, its effect will be 0.320 and the individual effect become 24.3% thereby the total effect will be 100%.

Figure 1.2 Graphical Representation –Normalized Importance- Influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala



1.9 Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a substantial influence of the uniqueness of Ayurvedic tourism on the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala. The influencing level of the Quality of health care infrastructure, Cost and Standard Accreditation are the key dominant factors predominantly support the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala through Ayurvedic tourism. Reputation and Experience of Doctors are also important. Therefore, the importance of Quality of health care infrastructure, Cost and Standard Accreditation must be improved for achieving the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala through Ayurvedic tourism, especially the current period of Covid pandemic. Without the support of Reputation and Experience of Doctors, it is not possible to craft an appropriate plan for achieving the effectiveness of socioeconomic growth in Kerala through Ayurvedic tourism to serve the customers in a better way.

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