

## ISSUES AND EMERGING TRENDS OF MEDICAL TOURISM - AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEALTHCARE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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### ABSTRACT

Medical tourism is an expanding worldwide sector that operates at the domestic as well as international levels. The study lists the advantages of medical tourism service providers in Andhra Pradesh it is also highlighting a number of issues that could limit this industry's potential for expansion. In order to overcome local and international hurdles and improve its medical services, this article focuses on the main problems and opportunities that the Indian medical tourism business possesses. This paper analyzes and summarizes the primary factors that cause developing state like Andhra Pradesh to draw foreigners seeking medical care. In line with the constraints of the current market, the study seeks to establish medical tourism as a competitive and sustainable business model in the chosen study area. The findings of this paper seek to demonstrate, in addition to the information learned from literature and earlier research, the use data analysis is to offer both academics and practitioners a useful perspective on the process of future research, pursue studies, and employing approaches in the context of medical tourism.

**Keywords:** Tourism industry, Sustainability, Medical Tourism, Healthcare service, Patient care

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A multi-billion dollar industry, medical tourism draws millions of domestic and global tourists to the country's rich legacy. Professionals and medical personnel with advanced degrees, credentials, and experience abound in India. India is a very lucrative destination for patients who want to receive treatment for their medical issues but are dissatisfied by the lengthy waiting lists at medical diagnostic facilities in their own country. India has some of

the most skilled doctors in the world. Despite the worldwide economic slump, India's medical tourism business has become the one with the quickest growth. Patients from these regions have been forced to look for alternate and more affordable locations to receive their medical care due to the high expense of treatments in affluent countries. One of the greatest pools of doctors, many of whom work in many nations around the world, was developed in Andhra Pradesh. Studying the problems and new trends in medical tourism is necessary in order to fulfil the industry's full potential. A strategic plan for medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh should also be developed. The focus of this study is medical travel to Andhra Pradesh. The major goal of this study is to concentrate on the problems and new medical tourism trends from the viewpoint of healthcare service providers in Andhra Pradesh.

**Medical Tourism:** Health tourism, wellness tourism and medical tourism are all phrases that are sometimes used interchangeably. However, the term "medical tourism" is typically applied to travellers who seek medical care, such as surgery, hip replacement, etc., in multi-specialty facilities. Fitness and alternative treatments for treating and maintaining health are tied to wellness tourism. It involves therapies for the renewal of the body, mind, and spirit through yoga, meditation, and herbal massage. Medical travel and wellness travel are both included in health tourism. One of the rapidly developing ideas in the travel sector is medical tourism. Medical tourism can be divided into three primary groups:

**Outbound medical tourism** describes visitors who depart from their own nation and visit another one. When medical tourists visit a foreign country, it counts as outbound travel for that nation.

**Inbound medical tourism** describes visitors who arrive from outside the country. Inbound medical tourism is what a nation refers to when people visit there for medical treatment outside of their home or native country.

**Domestic medical tourism** is when residents of one nation travel to a different city, region, or state for medical, dental, and surgical care while receiving the same level of care, if not a higher level, than they would have received in their own hometown. These patients travel for medical care due to affordability, better access to care, or a higher standard of care.

**Development of Medical Tourism:** People are increasingly gravitating toward the practice of travelling in the hope of locating health care that is of higher quality and more affordable as a result of the rise of globalization and the culture of consumerism. The most obvious manifestation of a more widespread trend toward the globalization of health, medical tourism

is a form of international trade in healthcare that has become increasingly common in recent years. The expansion of the worldwide medical tourism market can be attributed to a great number of different factors. According to the most recent report published by Market Research Future, these factors include the availability and affordability of quality healthcare services, assistance from local governments as well as tourism departments, easy accessibility of state-of-the-art medical technologies in leading medical tourism hubs, inadequate insurance benefits, the absence of healthcare insurance in local markets, and a growing demand for procedures that are not covered by insurance such as cosmetic surgery, dental reconstructive surgery, and laser hair removal. Furthermore, the availability of many benefits such as individualized care, improved hospitality, modern devices, breakthrough medicines, latest technology, and improved healthcare is also contributing to the growth of the market. This is one of the many factors that are driving the growth of the market. Among them, the cosmetic treatment category is expected to hold the largest share of the market over the course of the time covered by the forecast. There are a number of factors that are contributing to the expansion of this market sector. Some examples of these factors include the fast growing need for breast reconstruction treatments, the high demand for facial rejuvenation, and the cost-effective costs of cosmetic operations at medical tourism destinations.

**Medical Tourism in India:** The medical tourism business in India has been seeing constant growth, with annual increases in medical tourists ranging from 15% to 30% higher than the previous year. These medical tourists are anticipated to contribute \$450 million to the economy of India. India was historically a hub for neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, and the Maldives; however, the country has since expanded their clientele to include more developed and distant countries such as the United States of America, Canada, and Europe. Patients seeking treatments such as knee and hip replacements, bariatric surgeries, hip resurfacing, cardiac procedures, and AYUSH treatment have been drawn to them in huge numbers. India's ability to perform medical operations at far lower prices than other countries has allowed it to capture an increasing share of the market. Although the scientific rigor of this study's methods are unclear, it has been suggested that India's medical tourism industry has grown due to the high quality of healthcare that is offered at low costs, the expertise of their medical providers, the high-end medical and health care facilities, their hundred percent success rate, and a perception of being cent percent trustworthy.

During India's nationwide lockdown due to a novel coronavirus outbreak, planned hospital operations decreased by up to 80%, while unplanned operations decreased by 66%. According to the Ministry of Tourism, foreign tourist arrivals for medical treatment in India fell by 73% in the calendar year ending December 2020, to 0.2 million, from 0.7 million in 2019. During FY 2021, medical tourism in India fell to nearly 33%. However, it reached 50% in FY 2022. India has become a center for medical tourism due to well-trained medical staff and doctors, access to cutting-edge medical equipment, and reasonably priced medical care. According to the Medical Tourism Index 2020-21, India is ranked 10th out of the top 46 nations, 12th out of the top 20 wellness tourism markets, and 5th out of the top 10 wellness tourism destinations in the Asia-Pacific.

2023 is expected to be a booming year for medical tourism. Pent up demand, inflation increasing cost of treatments in the western countries, and the Ukraine Russia war driving more patients from both countries for treatments to India, are key factor because of which this sector is expected to grow 21 per cent in 2023. To add momentum to all these growth factors, the Indian government is expected to launch its Heal in India campaign in 2023, allocating over 2000 crores in budgets under the champion service sector to promote medical tourism to India and scale it from \$6 billion currently to \$13 billion by 2025. The medical tourism market in India is expected to reach INR 2,670.37 Bn by 2027, expanding at a CAGR of ~34.92% during the 2023 - 2027 forecast period.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Tourism refers to the activities of those who travel to and stay in locations outside of their normal environments for leisure, business, or other objectives for no longer than one year in a row. The success of many economies throughout the world depends on tourism. Tourism has a number of advantages for host locations. The economy is boosted by tourism, which also generates thousands of employment, builds a nation's infrastructure, and instils a sense of cultural change in both visitors and the local populace. A service-based sector, tourism includes both tangible and intangible components. Transportation, lodging, food, and other mechanisms used in the hospitality business are examples of physical aspects. The most crucial illusive components have to do with the goal or reason for travelling, such as learning, unwinding, and the chance to meet new people and see other cultures, having an adventure, or just trying something new. Through sales of hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, taxis, cars, and souvenirs as well as indirectly through unofficial jobs like street vendors, rickshaw drivers, tour guides, etc., tourism creates a constant flow of job openings. Due to the revenue created

by tourist purchases of products and services, taxes imposed on the industry, and opportunities for employment and economic progress provided by working in the sector, tourism is crucial for many nations.

### **3. EMERGING TRENDS IN THE MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY**

One of the most recent trends is seeking medical treatment in another country. For dental work, reproductive troubles, cosmetic surgery, and other medical reasons, a lot of people relocate abroad. The cost of healthcare is high in the majority of industrialized countries, yet there are numerous treatment options that are affordable in India. Therefore, one of the sectors in India that is developing the fastest right now is medical tourism. In addition, a large number of medical tourists from other countries have been interested in the region due to technical advancements and higher industrial standards. The most recent research states that in 2022, India's medical tourism industry will generate \$7417 million in revenue. By 2032, market analysts predict it will reach \$42237 million. According to the data, India's demand for wellness tourism is expanding rapidly.

- **Variety of Medical Processes**

From the viewpoint of medical tourism, receiving healthcare involves travelling overseas. While some visitors require aesthetic surgery, others want life-saving procedures (such as organ transplants and heart procedures). Other popular procedures include rhinoplasty, breast augmentation, and bariatric procedures. The medical tourism industry contributes significantly to the economies of several communities across the world. The majority of visitors come from nations where healthcare is very expensive. They select an international option even when their chosen treatments are available in their native nations.

- **Significant contribution from private clinics and hospitals**

The most well-known brands among private hospitals in India include Apollo Fortis, Breach Candy, Escorts Hospital, Manipal Hospitals, and Sankara Nethralaya. The majority of private hospitals offer a wide range of services under one roof. Another element luring many patients from many nations is the calm and welcoming environment. India has acquired popularity in Southeast Asia thanks to its many wellness tourist spots. Consequently, these are some trends in the field of medical tourism.

#### 4. ANDHRA PRADESH AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

Andhra Pradesh has a lot of potential for tourism. The State of Andhra Pradesh has enormous tourism potential thanks to its second-longest coastline in the nation—974 kilometres—as well as its rich spiritual and cultural heritage, ancient and historical religious sites, tranquil valleys and hills, forts, national parks, bird sanctuaries, caves, airports, and seaports. The tourism industry is one of the State's main growth engines for the economy and is essential for creating jobs, according to the Andhra Pradesh government, which is dedicated to the socioeconomic development of the State. The State is now among the most popular travel destinations in the nation thanks to its natural benefits for tourism.

The State has won numerous accolades at various events, including the renowned Best State for Comprehensive Tourism Development National Tourism Award. Even though Andhra Pradesh has made great progress in the development of tourism, the State's full tourist potential has not yet been realized. To fully realize the State's tourist potential, the next stage of growth will require a reimagining of tourism and a re-evaluation of the tourism development strategy. The Andhra Pradesh government plans to create top-notch luxury resorts and other tourism-related infrastructure, draw substantial investment, create distinctive products, and promote the State as a top travel destination. The draft national tourism policy that is currently being developed was studied, benchmarked against other states' policies and internal talks in order to create the tourism policy for the years 2020 to 2025. The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2020-25 aims at building a robust tourism infrastructure in tune with the ever-changing nature of tourism and promoting responsible tourism practices among all stakeholders.

#### 5. CHALLENGES BEFORE MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The global tourist business is expanding daily, and India contributes a sizable portion of global tourism earnings and traffic while also successfully retaining its position on the global tourism map. The main obstacle to the growth of medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh is the lack of suitable infrastructure, including sufficient air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist sites, lodging, and a sufficient supply of skilled personnel. Poor visitor experiences are caused by a variety of things, including insufficient infrastructure, unsanitary conditions, occurrences of touting, and harassment of tourists in some locations. Other factors that are standing in the way of medical tourism include a lack of funding, a lack of community involvement and knowledge, a lack of involvement from the rural sector, a lack of concern

for sustainability, complicated visa requirements, and a lack of qualified language translators. Hospitals in Andhra Pradesh lag behind in offering patients clean medical facilities and room services, including hygienic meals. As a result, foreign patients are beginning to lose faith in Indian hospitals. By removing political instability, terrorism, bureaucratic impediments, and tax anomalies, the government of Andhra Pradesh can significantly improve the state of medical tourism. To benefit from medical tourism, the state government should start long-term revenue-generating projects and investor-friendly policies. The government should establish policies to give Indian health centres with Quality accreditation, training, and growth opportunities for doctors, nurses, and paramedical personnel, and should implement a customer-oriented strategy to enhance the reputation of healthcare service providers.

## 6. ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM

- With its established medical hub and numerous large multispecialty institutions, Andhra Pradesh has a clear edge. Following are some of the key points that can be taken into consideration by AP government for developing the medical tourism:
- To establish major regions of Andhra Pradesh as medical hubs for the affordable treatment of serious illnesses.
- Enable patients visiting Andhra Pradesh to stay and receive care without hassles by strengthening the eco-system for medical tourism.
- Create medical **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** with state-of-the-art facilities for research and treatment in two to three different locations of the state.
- Make connections with the Andhra NRI physician community to organize and draw funding for healthcare hubs.
- Create a medical tourism eco-system in collaboration with local stakeholders in the field, such as hospitals, hotels, tour operators, and transportation companies, to ensure that patients and their families receive quality care and affordable accommodations while receiving treatment.
- Encourage the development of new technologies for high-quality treatment and affordable alternatives by turning into a hub for research and innovation.
- Develop incentives for hospitals to provide high-quality care and establish international credibility through accreditation like Joint Commission International.

## 7. STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The following list includes various medical tourism promotion methods for Andhra Pradesh. These include enhancing and promoting India's reputation as a top-notch medical tourism destination, developing and promoting novel medical tourism products, maintaining a high standard of quality care at an affordable cost, and offering potential clients educational online and offline materials. Additionally, obtaining the certification or standard to guarantee the efficacy of therapies is necessary, as is stressing the requirements and wants of the current target markets. Setting high health standards for ourselves and working with the government and the medical council to ensure that all hospitals adhere to those standards will help Andhra Pradesh promote itself as a desirable healthcare destination. The healthcare federation is currently collaborating with several business chambers to promote medical tourism in the nation. In order to increase the perception of quality among international tourists, efforts must be advanced on acquiring accreditation for various hospitals.

## 8. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Anita Medhekar (2020)** mentioned that to be a top destination for medical tourists from throughout the world, India is a leading health tourism destination. Private healthcare is offered through health tourism, which involves working with the tourism industry and the government. By merging ancient Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) with allopathic treatment and sophisticated high-end medical procedures like cancer, cardiac, and hip and knee replacements, India has a competitive advantage over other nations that engage in health tourism. This study highlights the prospects for and barriers to expanding India as a destination for international healthcare, as well as the variables influencing the rising economic relevance of wellness and medical tourism to India.

**Bhargav Shreya (2018)** explained that medical tourism is a distinct type of specialty travel that is slowly gaining popularity in the modern world. India has become well-known for offering high-quality healthcare at reasonable prices. It combines relaxation, entertainment, and leisure with health and wellness. India, Thailand, and Singapore are the three Asian nations that host the most medical tourists because of the low cost of care, high quality of the healthcare system, and accessibility to highly qualified physicians. The location of medical travel, particularly from industrialized economies to Asian nations, has changed more lately. Currently, the Indian healthcare industry is among the top tourism industries in terms of both income and labour employment. The Indian medical tourism business is anticipated to reach



\$6 billion by 2018, with the number of patients travelling there for medical care predicted to double in the next four years.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 9. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

By providing a structured relationship between the numerous factors influencing the growth of medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh, this study adds to the theoretical advancement of the tourism sector. On the other hand, the results of this study can be used as an example by a number of researchers in the hospitality and medical fields, as well as by those working in these fields, to better understand how a political stability, international accreditation, and culture constrains affect how foreign tourists perceive and view medical tourism industry in Andhra Pradesh.

### 10. RESEARCH GAP

The term "medical tourism" seems to be a new form of tourism that has become extremely popular in recent years. Although there is a wealth of literature on the tourism sector and the competitiveness of the location, a developing Indian state like Andhra Pradesh is seldom ever mentioned directly when discussing the key factors that affect medical tourists' satisfaction. Also, there are no studies that cover medical tourism in healthcare providers' perspective. In this field of study, there is a gap in the empirical evidence that has to be filled. Thus, the goal of this study is to explore the many factors involving issues and emerging trends of medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

### 11. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A portion of society has the opportunity to become self-employed through medical tourism, and infrastructural quality improvements will result in world-class services. Patients travel to India because there is a long waiting list and high cost of care in their country. The necessity to comprehend the potential of medical tourism and develop a suitable profile of medical tourism that can be provided by a model service provider in Andhra Pradesh is necessitated by the fact that the Indian government has introduced several incentives, such as medical visas, transfers, and other things. As the population continues to age and as life expectancies raise, the need for medical services will increase. These skills and cutting-edge technology may benefit our countrymen, give skilled medical professionals a fulfilling career, and halt the brain drain to wealthy nations. However, in healthcare providers' point of view, there is a need to research the new aspects such as political stability within the state or the country,

whether the state government provides required medical tourism facilities to the arriving patients, do the hospitals gain international accreditation, clearing the culture constrains and making medical tourism a sustainable business practice. Therefore, this study addresses these concerns and focuses on issues and trends emerging in medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

## 12. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the trend and issues of medical tourism in India and Andhra Pradesh
2. To determine the factors perceived by healthcare providers on the growth and development of medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh
3. To provide recommendations for augmenting medical tourism as a sustainable business practice in the state.

## 13. METHODOLOGY

**Table No – 1: Research design**

Research design	Research methodology	Description
Research type	Descriptive research	It entails gathering and characterizing various categories of qualitative data before organizing, tabulating, and describing the results.
	Empirical research	Analysis and interpretation of collected data.
Data Collection	Primary source	The primary method of gathering data is through surveys, which use structured questions about medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh that are based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The surveys were prepared for a field study that focused on three different types of respondents: medical professionals, tour operators, and management executives of selected hospitals.
		Information is obtained from various sources like Journals, Books and

	Secondary source	Newspapers, Periodicals, Magazines, Relevant websites etc.
Sampling	Sampling technique	For this investigation, a convenience sampling strategy is employed. This approach is used since it takes the least amount of money and effort.
	Sample population	The study considered three different sorts of respondents: medical professionals, tour operators, and management executives of selected hospitals in Andhra Pradesh.
	Study area	Major cities of Andhra Pradesh
	Sample size	Study Sample of 211 were collected among medical professionals, tour operators, and management executives of selected hospitals in Andhra Pradesh
Testing of Hypotheses	Statistical tools	Statistical tools used are Correlation and Regression.
Analysis of Data	Software used	Collected primary data has been analyzed by testing Hypotheses and the reliability of the questionnaire using Statistical. Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS version 20.

**Source:** Self-prepared by the researcher

## 14. DATA ANALYSIS

### Correlation Analysis – International Accreditation and Medical Tourism Facility

H<sub>01</sub>- There is no significant influence of international accreditation on the medical tourism facility

Table no – 2

		International Accreditation	Medical Tourism Facility
International Accreditation	r	1	.662**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	211	211
Medical Tourism Facility	r	.662**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 – Tailed)

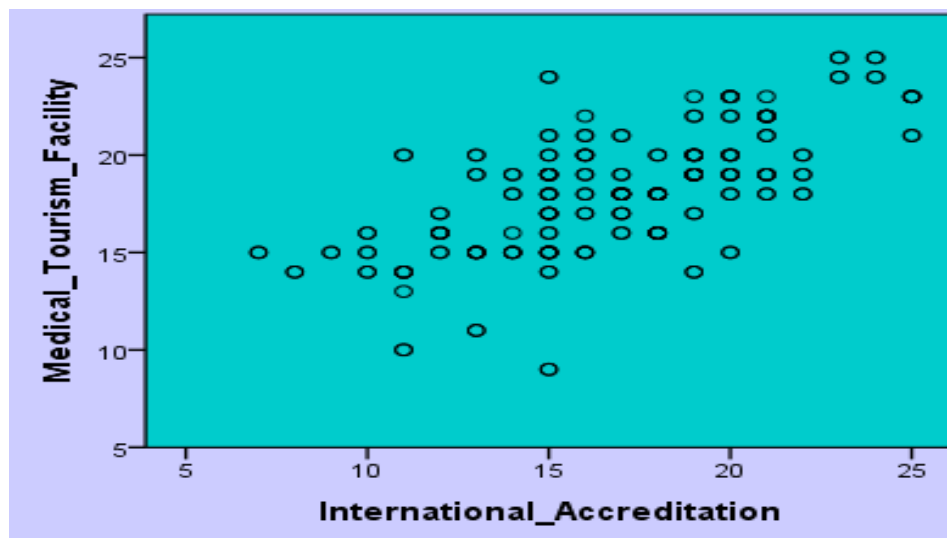


Figure - 1

### Interpretation

According to the correlation study,  $r$  (correlation value) = 0.662,  $N$  (number of respondents) = 211, and  $p$  (Significant value) 0.01 are the findings. It is shown that the  $p$  value is 0.000, which is significant. High positive connection is shown by the correlation coefficient value of 0.662. The scatter diagram also shows the points falling very close to a straight line, indicating a high correlation. These findings show a direct relationship between international accreditation and medical tourism facilities; as international accreditation rises, medical tourism facilities follow suit, further demonstrating the positive relationship between international accreditation and medical tourism facilities. The null hypothesis is disproved in considering the data presented above.

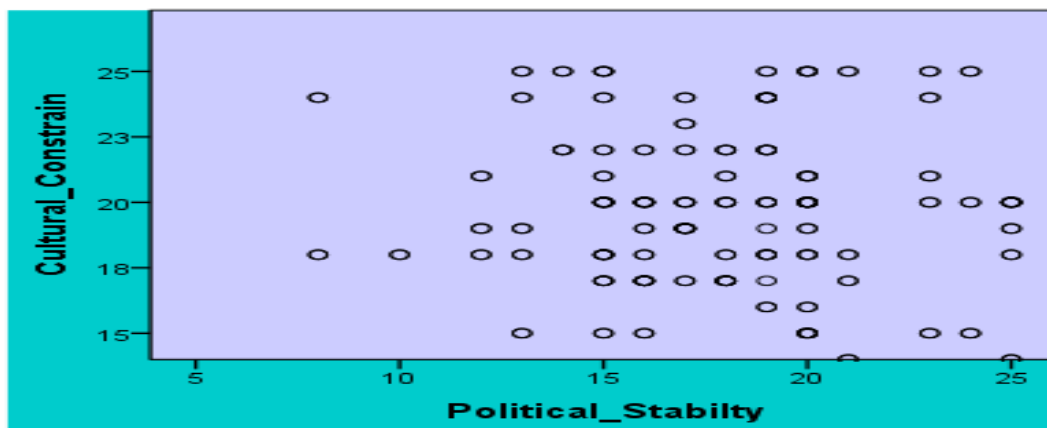
**Correlation Analysis – Political Stability and Cultural Constrain**

H<sub>02</sub> - There is no significant influence of political stability on cultural constrain

**Table no – 3**

		Political Stability	Cultural Constrain
Political Stability	r	1	.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	211	211
Cultural Constrain	r	.799**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 – Tailed)

**Figure -2****Interpretation**

According to the correlation study,  $r$  (correlation value) = 0.799,  $N$  (number of respondents) = 211, and  $p$  (Significant value) 0.01 are the findings. It is shown that the  $p$  value is 0.000, which is significant. High positive connection is shown by the correlation coefficient value of 0.799. The scatter diagram also shows the points falling very close to a straight line, indicating a high correlation. These findings show a direct relationship between political stability and cultural constrain; as political stability rises, cultural constrain follow suit, further demonstrating the positive relationship between political stability and cultural constrain. The null hypothesis is disproved in considering the data presented above.

## Multiple Regression

### Analysis of Job Dissatisfaction

The goal of regression analysis is to develop a useful mathematical expression that can accurately predict the values of a dependent variable based on the independent variable. The independent factors in this research include international accreditation, political stability, and cultural constraints, which are mentioned below. The dependent variable in this study is sustainable business practise.

Dependent variable : Sustainable business practice (Y)

Independent variables: 1. International accreditation ( $X_1$ )  
2. Political stability ( $X_2$ )  
3. Cultural constrain ( $X_3$ )

Multiple R value : 0.194

R Square value : 0.038

F value : 2.713

P value : <0.000\*\*

**Table No – 4: Variables in the Multiple Regression Analysis**

Variables	Unstandardized co-efficient	SE of B	Standardized co-efficient	t value	P value
(Constant)	2.659	0.385		6.909	0.000
International accreditation ( $X_1$ )	-0.029	0.016	-0.175	1.758	0.080
Political stability ( $X_2$ )	0.023	0.017	0.135	1.364	0.174
Cultural constrain ( $X_3$ )	-0.036	0.015	-0.164	2.387	0.018

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable business practice

The multiple correlation coefficient of 0.194 calculates the degree of association between real and expected sustainable business practice values. The coefficient value of 0.194 suggests that the relationship between sustainable business practice and the independent

variables is very high and optimistic since the expected values are obtained as a linear combination of International accreditation ( $X_1$ ), Political stability ( $X_2$ ) and Cultural constrain ( $X_3$ ).

Thus, the value of R square is 0.038, which simply implies that International accreditation ( $X_1$ ), Political stability ( $X_2$ ) and Cultural constrain ( $X_3$ ) as independent variables explains approximately 3 percent of the variance in sustainable business practice, and the R square value is not significant at the 1% stage.  $Y = 2.659 - 0.029 X_1 + 0.023 X_2 - 0.036 X_3$  is the multiple regression equation.

## 15. FINDINGS

Political stability vs. cultural constrain and international accreditation vs. medical tourism facilities are significantly correlated, according to a correlation study of the factors.

According to regression analysis, the R square value is 0.038, which simply means that the independent variables international accreditation ( $X_1$ ), political stability ( $X_2$ ), and cultural constraints ( $X_3$ ) account for about 3% of the variance in sustainable business practises. However, the R square value is not significant at the 1% level. The multiple regression equation is  $Y = 2.659 - 0.029 X_1 + 0.023 X_2 - 0.036 X_3$ .

## 16. SUGGESTIONS

1.The government should actively encourage FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in the healthcare industry and establish supportive fiscal policies, such as low interest loans and reduced import/excise duties for medical equipment. Additionally, it makes clearances and certifications easier to get, such as medical registration numbers and anti-pollution certificates.

2.The state and central government must ensure that the political instabilities within the country should not affect those arriving for medical treatments from different parts of the globe.

3.The Indian healthcare federation must work toward obtaining international accreditation for various institutions in order to improve foreign tourists' perception of quality.

4.The tour operators must ensure that visitors of medical tourism do not face any culture constrains from the destination.

5. The application process for medical visas needs to be made simpler in order to facilitate cross-border travel. Depending on the patients' conditions, visas may be extended. The processes for applying for a medical visa, registering afterward, and extending a visa are difficult and time-consuming. To make a more desirable medical tourism location, these procedures must be made simpler and faster.

6. The government might assist in setting up a special immigration center and a welcoming desk at the airport for visitors who are there for medical treatment in Andhra Pradesh. Direct flights to nations that are the main source of medical tourists and have the ability to sign MOUs with international governments should be made available by the government.

## 17. CONCLUSION

Medical tourism has become a significant contribution to the state of Andhra Pradesh, which is a significant economic activity. One can see that a significant number of people are choosing medical tourism in Andhra Pradesh as it grows every day. This sort of tourism, also known as medical travel, health tourism, or global healthcare tourism, encompasses all medical illnesses and diseases and offers everyone in the world access to affordable healthcare. The goal of health tourism is to combine physical wellness with leisure and relaxation so that the visitor leaves the encounter feeling thoroughly recharged. The government needs to act both as a regulator and as a catalyst for private healthcare investment. Mechanisms must be developed so that foreign tourists travelling for medical treatment can get their visas quickly. Patients should be able to contact the immigration department at any point of entry for a speedy clearance. To promote tourism in the research area, it is also necessary to construct supporting infrastructure, such as transportation services, ensure political stability and harmony within the country, and make sure the medical tourists do not face any culture constraints and the genuine hospitals obtain international accreditation. For effective patient care, the tourism, health, information, and communication departments must collaborate.



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