

Study On Scope And Potential Of Ai Induced Medical Tourism In North Eastern States Of India

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Abstract

India has subtropical climate with hot, humid summers, severe monsoons, and mild winters. The present study had been focused on the strategic position of northeastern sister states as a natural frontier. The northeastern states of india shares boundaries with countries like china, bangladesh, nepal, and bhutan. Northeast shares 99 per cent of its boundaries with international countries like china in north, myanmar and various south-east asian nations in the east, bangladesh in south and bhutan to the west. This study examines the strategic location of north eastern indian states with respect to south-east asian nations, china and its proximity with them. The study uses secondary data sources like government reports, books, journals, and other periodicals outlining the potential of north east on socio-economic fronts. The research highlights untapped potential of north-eastern states in delivering advanced healthcare to international patients from countries like bangladesh, nepal, bhutan, myanmar, africa, the middle east, southeast asian nations especially for various medical specialties with ai and robotic surgery, positioning north-east as hub of healthcare service transforming india's healthcare economy. The findings will offer a roadmap for policymakers to harness the region's potential for economic growth and inducing artificial intelligence at the right moment. Key recommendations include strengthening relations with neighboring countries, promoting ayurvedic, wellness and ai induced medical tourism and support seamless movement of people to attracting investments in this region.

Keywords: North-Eastern States, Ai Induced Medical Tourism, Healthcare Services, Economic Integration, Ayurvedic And Wellness.

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Introduction

India's hot, humid summers, severe monsoons and cool winters. The country's diverse climatic conditions, including the tropical wet climate, support a wide range of medical services and treatments. Though the heavy rainfall during the monsoon brings challenges like floods

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and soil erosion but attracts medical tourism in India, making it a popular choice for patients seeking medical care. The Northeastern region of India shares 99% of its borders with countries like China, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan, making it a strategically significant area. The Northeastern region comprises eight states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. This region is culturally and ethnically super-rich with various ethnic groups, distinct languages, dialects and socio-cultural identities. The Region covers 7.97% of the country's geographical area and 3.78% of its population. It has 5,484 km of international border viz. Bangladesh (1,880 km), Myanmar (1,643 km), China (1,346 km), Bhutan (516 km) and Nepal (99 km). The Siliguri Corridor connects northeast to the mainland and is crucial for national security and economic stability. The region's strategic importance is further highlighted by its rich mineral wealth and its role in India's Look-East connectivity project. India is recognized as a top medical tourism destination due to fantastic global patient support network in major cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore and thus have become hotspots for medical tourism. Recently **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** said "Bharat is considered the world's most diverse nation, and our Northeast is the most diverse part of this diverse nation. From trade to tradition, from textiles to tourism, the diversity of the Northeast is its greatest strength".

Medical tourism is a type of tourism where patients and family members travel to another medically renowned place for specific medical treatments or enhancements which generally is either absent, very costly or not that reliable in their own country. Technically, when a tourist stays for one night or more at a destination for any medical treatment or wellness and rejuvenation or even for improving or restoring health through medical intervention, it is called medical tourism. Patients and their families are attracted by the availability, better quality, and/or price of medical care and treatment at these destinations. Tourists who travel for Wellness tourism seek activities and destinations to relax out and adopt wellness lifestyle to proactively maintain and improve their health and wellbeing. This medical Tourism gives a wider economic impact on nations hosting them. As per records, around 15 million people travel to for dental, cosmetic and other surgical treatments to Thailand, Singapore, India, Brazil etc. National Medical & Wellness Tourism Board (NMWTB)

was constituted in 2015 under MoT (Ministry of Tourism) and Tourism Minister as its Chairman promoted Indian system of medicine, Medical and Wellness Tourism covered by (AYUSH) i.e. Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy. (GoI) i.e. Government of India identified the competitive advantage of medical and wellness tourism in India as important sectors with potential to accelerate the development of country's objective of Aatma-nirbhar Bharat. The National Strategy for Medical and wellness Tourism has provided an institutional framework towards strengthening the ecosystem by developing a brand Image of Indian Medical Tourism and ensuring quality services. Wellness tourism is often clubbed with medical tourism to meet different consumer needs. Northeast which was once seen as a distant frontier is now a beacon of progress, peace, and potential due to mantra of "Act East" and "Transformation by Transportation, by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER). India has developed as a favorable destination of Medical Tourism due to overall quality of cost-effective care and super-specialty surgical procedures performed by medical experts. India has also become a favored destination for Yoga and Wellness with its focus on traditional therapies through AYUSH. India has been ranked 10th in Medical Tourism Index (MTI) for 2020-21 out of 46 destinations of the world by Medical Tourism Association. In Recent Years, the number of international patients visiting India has increased significantly, and further forecasts indicate that the number of medical tourists visiting India may go around 8.3 million in 2026. This increase is attributed to India's potential in medical tourism, which includes chronic diseases and transplants, cost-effective treatments, cosmetic surgeries, and wellness tourism. India ranks third in medical tourism costs and fourth in facility and services globally. The medical tourism Market of India is valued at \$8.7 billion in 2023 and \$10.4 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow at a 17.2% CAGR from 2024 to 2034. These forecasts indicate a significant growth trajectory for medical tourism in India, driven by factors such as cost-effectiveness, advanced medical infrastructure, and the availability of highly skilled healthcare professionals. The Indian government's initiatives, including the e-medical visa and investment in healthcare infrastructure, further support market expansion. The Indian government is actively promoting medical tourism and has welcomed patients to come to India for treatment by easing out number of policies.

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Indian medical tourism market Primarily consists of dental treatment owing to the high demand for dental implants and other dental procedures in India. The Indian medical tourism market is segmented into wide range of medical and dental treatments, like cardiac surgery, orthopedics, oncology, cosmetic surgery, dental implants, teeth whitening, and braces apart from the Traditional and wellness expertise. South India is one of the front runner in medical tourism due to large number of hospitals and clinics in the region. But realizing the Potential of the Northeastern states in 2022 the National strategy and roadmap developed for Medical and wellness tourism promotes “Heal in India” Initiative which consists of three elements :- a person doing Yoga, a book and leaf; Potraying health and Holistic wellness flourishing and sharing the Knowledge of Indian ancient teachings and modern learnings of the world. Assam is Gateway to Northeast India and Guwahati being its major city is emerging as a medical tourism hotspot with enormous expansion potential due to amalgamation of contemporary medical treatments with conventional therapies like naturopathy and Ayurveda apart from the wilderness and wellness. Its strategic location of being the pivot of North-east of India gives it the ability to serve patients from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and giving a tough competition to their counterparts like Thailand and Singapore. Guwahati's can be a top medical tourist destination by smart investments in healthcare infrastructure, branding, policy support, and public-private partnerships.

Literature review: -

Chinai & Goswami, 2007 highlighted India advantages for Medical Tourism due to highly qualified physicians, cutting-edge medical technology, and affordable therapy. Due to crucial branding, accreditation, highly qualified surgeons, government-backed policies and advanced care provided by hospitals, nations like Thailand, Singapore, and South Korea have become popular destinations for medical tourism (Bookman & Bookman, 2007).

Lunt & Carrera, 2010, highlighted that India's appeal to overseas patients was further enhanced by the existence of internationally recognized facilities and English-speaking medical personnel.

The term "medical tourism" refers to the migration of individuals across international borders for medical care, frequently because of lower waiting times, better care, or cost differences (Connell, 2013).

According to Lunt, Horsfall, and Hanefeld (2015), the growth of wellness tourism, improvements in healthcare

infrastructure, and rising treatment costs will all contribute to the steady growth of the global medical tourism business.

The industry is dominated by metropolitan areas like Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore, which provide specialized services like orthopaedic surgeries, organ transplants, and cardiac surgery (Reddy, Qadeer, & Patel, 2018). Medical tourism in India has grown rapidly in metropolitan hubs (e.g., Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai) due to comparably low-cost yet advanced quality care, due to effective policy frameworks of Government. However, The North Eastern Region (NER) remained relatively devoid underexplored despite possessing strategic geographic proximity to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal and distinct healthcare and wellness resources (e.g., AYUSH systems). The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into healthcare delivery can substantially enhance diagnostic capabilities, patient management, and international coordination, positioning the NER as a future medical tourism hub. AI technologies — including machine learning, predictive analytics, and digital health platforms — are increasingly reshaping global healthcare, offering improved diagnostics, personalized treatment planning, and enhanced patient experiences (IndiaAI / PwC analysis).

Despite these advancements, medical tourism in India still faces obstacles such uneven legal frameworks, worries about moral medical conduct, and problems with accessibility for foreign patients (Bennett, 2020).

India's medical tourism market was esteemed at USD 7.69 billion in 2024 and is anticipated to reach USD 14.31 billion by 2029 (ClinicSpots/Industry reports). India has also witnessed ≈ 7.3 million medical tourists in 2024, reflecting robust recovery post-pandemic (ICRA estimates).

Medical tourism is travel of individuals outside their usual residence for medical treatment and healthcare services that include procedures, surgeries, rehabilitation, and wellness therapies (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India). According to “Global Wellness Institute”, wellness tourism is “travel associated with the goal of maintaining or enhancing one's personal well-being and includes the pursuit of physical, mental, spiritual or environmental ‘wellness’ while traveling for either leisure or business.” Global Wellness Institute has projected the market of global wellness tourism to reach USD 639 Billion in 2017 where 89% trips come from the Secondary wellness travelers spending 86%. Domestic

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wellness travel contributes 82% of total trips with 65% of outflow. India has become a global leader in medical tourism, drawing patients from the Middle East, Africa, southeast Asian countries. The "Heal in India" campaign of the Indian government encourages foreign patients to use the nation's medical services (Government of India, 2023).

Significant Developments have happened in Indian Medical Tourism Sector in recent years. In August 2022, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise, India's first multi-specialty, announced the acquisition of a hospital asset in Gurugram from Nayati Healthcare and Research for a consideration of around INR 450 crore (USD 6.075 Million) and in January 2023, Alpine Health Systems launched a new AI-powered solution to streamline complex hospital discharge with OSF HealthCare and High Alpha Innovation support. The platform allows case managers to quickly identify at-risk patients and transition to an appropriate care site.

According to <https://tourism.gov.in/market-research-and-statistics>, World Tourism Scenario and India's Position in the World International Tourist Arrival crossed 1465 Million and International Tourism Receipts passed 1731 USD Billion. India recorded 20.6 million international arrivals in 2024, registering an annual increase of 8.89% and a growth of 14.85% over 2019. India's share in global tourist arrivals rose modestly from 1.22% in 2019 to 1.41% in 2024. India's 1.40% share of global arrivals brings in 2.02% of global earnings—showing its strong impact in world tourism. India marches towards a global tourism economy by attracting international tourism receipts from USD 32.19 billion in 2023 to USD 35.02 billion in 2024, registering annual growth rate of 8.79% which is 14.00% above 2019 i.e 2.02% share in terms of global tourism receipts in 2024. India's global rank improved notably over time—from 36th in 2001 to a peak of 13th in 2016–2018, before stabilizing at 15th in 2024. Source:- <https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025>

In terms of International Tourist arrivals India's Position improved from 17.91 million in 2019 to 20.57 million in 2024 registering a 14.85%. India's share in global arrivals grew from 0.37% in 2001 to 1.40% in 2024, with its global rank improving from 51st in 2001 to 20th in 2024. attracting 20.57 million international tourists. Source: UN Tourism, World Tourism Barometer May 2025.

In 2024, FTAs to India stood at 9.95 million, showing a recovery of 4.52% over 2023 and a shortfall of 8.95% compared to 2019. Asia and the Pacific remained the

largest source region, accounting for 43.00% of total FTAs in 2024 (4.28 million arrivals). However, this represents a 22.58% decline from 2019, mainly due to continued decline from South Asia (-28.62%) and North-East Asia (-49.38%). However, from 2023 to 2024 the FTA rose from 95,20,928 to 99,51,722 i.e 4.52 % change in a year. source: Bureau of Immigration (BOI), Govt. of India

As per the data insights market reports on India Medical Tourism Market Analysis 2026 and Forecasts 2034: Unveiling Growth Opportunities: - The India medical tourism market is poised to reach a value of USD 13.44 Billion by 2026, registering a CAGR of 15.2% during the forecast period (2021-2026). This growth can be attributed to the opportunity grabbed by India world-class medical facilities and Government initiatives to promote medical tourism which the developed countries are losing due to their higher healthcare cost. This growth of Medical Tourism Market is majorly driven by factors like increasing cost which is segmented by treatment type, service provider, and region. India's medical tourism market is projected to reach USD 13.42 billion by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 13.23% from 2023 to 2033 owing to the availability of affordable and quality medical services in India, and the growing popularity of alternative medicine. In GST 2.0, Healthcare, has been categorized as essential, and classed into the nil or 5% bracket putting India's healthcare sector to be more cost effective, As the medicines, medical equipment get cheaper and medical insurance penetration improves, the demand for healthcare In India has received a boost. With shifting Focus towards improving overall patient's experience by providing personalized care, comfortable accommodations, and a wide range of amenities.

Objective:-

- 1) To study the Driving Forces Propelling the India Medical Tourism Market.
- 2) To conduct a swot analysis of the status of Medical Tourism in Northeastern states
- 3) To study the Market size of Ai Induced Medical Tourism in Northeastern states and identify the Challenges
- 4) To study the Key Initiatives and strategies adopted by stakeholders towards development of medical and wellness Tourism in Northeastern states.

Methodology

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The study adopts exploratory view to grab the available data from the secondary data sources like government reports, Policy papers, books, journals, and other periodicals outlining the potential of North east on socio-economic fronts. The state wise list of Hospitals were studied for the research. The research attempts to figure out the untapped potential of North-eastern states in delivering advanced healthcare to international patients from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asian nations especially for various medical specialties with AI and robotic surgery, positioning north-east as hub of healthcare service transforming India's healthcare economy. Research is based on the secondary data accumulated from various Government resources. **Data is collected from the Government reports Highlighting Medical Tourism.** The mentioned resources allow residents or visitors to locate hospitals, check specialties, availability, contact information, and choose hospitals suitable for emergency or specialty care in northeastern India.

Analysis :-

This dataset covers medical colleges, civil hospitals, sub-divisional hospitals (SDCHs), community health centres (CHCs), primary health centres (PHCs), and first referral units (FRUs) from 27 districts of Assam covering many Hospitals and super specialized centers of excellence. From Meghalaya,- District Hospitals (11) – Major secondary care hubs, 100–200 beds, surgery, ICU, diagnostics. MCH Hospitals (3) – Specialized maternal & child care (Shillong, Tura, Jowai). Specialty Hospitals (2) – MIMHANS (mental health), R.P. Chest Hospital (TB). SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, FRUs – Spread across all districts, providing tiered healthcare from primary to referral services. From Nagaland:- District Hospitals (11) – Major secondary care hubs, surgery, pediatrics, diagnostics. Private Super-specialty (Dimapur, Kohima) – CIHSR, Faith, Olive, Nikos, Bethel. SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, FRUs – Spread across all districts, providing tiered healthcare from primary to referral services. From Arunachal Pradesh:- District Hospitals (25) – Major secondary care hubs, surgery, pediatrics, diagnostics. Medical College (TRIHMS, Naharlagun) – Tertiary referral center with super-specialty care. SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, FRUs – Spread across all districts, providing tiered healthcare from primary to referral services. From Manipur:- District Hospitals (16) – Major secondary care hubs, surgery, pediatrics, diagnostics. Medical Colleges (2) – RIMS (Imphal West), JNIMS (Imphal East). Private

Super-specialty (Imphal West) – Shija Hospitals. SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, FRUs – Spread across all districts, providing tiered healthcare from primary to referral services. From Mizoram:- Aizawl Civil Hospital is the referral hub with advanced care, supported by mission/private hospitals. Other districts rely on Civil/District Hospitals with SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, and FRUs forming the backbone of rural healthcare. From Tripura:- Agartala (West Tripura) is the referral hub with advanced super-specialty care (Tripura Medical College, Cancer Hospital, IGM Hospital). Other districts rely primarily on Civil/District Hospitals supported by SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, and FRUs for tiered healthcare delivery. And from Gangtok:- Gangtok (East Sikkim) is the referral hub with STNM Hospital and CRH Manipal offering advanced super-specialty care. Other districts rely on District Hospitals supported by SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, and FRUs for primary and secondary healthcare. As per report published i.e. “North East: India's Beacon of Inclusive Growth” by Ministry of Information and broadcasting on 6th June 2025, apart from Cultural and heritage, It Highlights the socioeconomic and infrastructural development in North east i.e

Cultural and heritage

Assam's Moidams get recognized as 43 UNESCO's World Heritage site In India and Vibrant culture of Northeastern states celebrated in AsthaLakshmi Mahotsav

Socio economic Development

15 Medical colleges being set up in Assam and is well poised to have South Asia's Largest cancer care Network with 14 Hospitals and North east's first AIIMS in Guwahati.

Approximately 3613 Projects worth Rs 44859 crores have been already sanctioned for the Region.

974 Industrial Units Registered Under Northeast Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS).

Rs 1010.99 crore is disbursed till 31.03.2025 and Rs 400 Crore was disbursed in 2024-25 for Developmental Packages in the Northeastern Region.

Mizoram achieves full functional literacy.

Infrastructural Developments

Rs. 4136 crore allocated for the Hydroelectric Projects, Rs.135487.85 crore invested from 2012-2023 in 126 externally aided projects

Over 500-0 km of Road Projects currently Ongoing

Connecting all state capitals with Broad Gauge Rail and 10 Greenfield airports built in last 11 years

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ROLL -ON & ROLL OFF i.e Ro-Ro service started on Brahmaputra River.

The NER hosts a variety of hospitals, ranging from local general hospitals to super-specialty centers across seven sister states and Sikkim supported by SDCHs, CHCs, PHCs, and FRUs for primary and secondary healthcare. The states covered up are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura.

Assam

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Gauhati Medical College & Hospital (GMCH), Guwahati	Government, Teaching	Cardiology, Oncology, Neurology, Trauma Care	Address: Bhangagarh, Guwahati – 781032; Phone: 0361-2529457
Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh	Government, Teaching	General Surgery, Pediatrics, Orthopedics	Phone: 0373-2300080
Apollo Hospitals, Guwahati	Private, Multi-specialty	Cardiac sciences, nephrology, gastroenterology, ICU, emergency care	Phone: 0361-7105000
GNRC Hospital Dispur	Private, Superspeciality	Neurology, neurosurgery, cardiology, orthopedics, accident & emergency, MRI/CT, blood bank.	Contact: 0361-2227700
Gauhati Medical College & Hospital	(Government, Teaching)	Oncology, neurology, trauma care, general medicine.	Contact: 0361-2529457

Meghalaya

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS), Shillong	Government, Tertiary Care	Cardiology, Oncology, Neurosurgery	Phone: 0364-2538020
Civil Hospital, Shillong	Government	General Medicine, Surgery, Gynecology	Phone: 0364-2224100

Manipur

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal	Government, Teaching	Orthopedics, Cardiology, Psychiatry	Phone: 0385-2410009
Shija Hospitals & Research Institute, Imphal	Private, Multi-specialty	Plastic Surgery, ENT, Cardiology	Phone: 0385-2057700

Nagaland

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Naga Hospital Authority, Kohima	Government	General Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics	Phone: 0370-2240450
Christian Institute of Health Sciences & Research (CIHSR), Dimapur	Private	Internal Medicine, Surgery, Orthopedics	Phone: 03862-243005

Mizoram

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Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Civil Hospital, Aizawl	Government	General Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics	Phone: 0389-2323334
Synod Hospital, Durtlang	Private	General Surgery, Pediatrics, Gynecology	Phone: 0389-2301154

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Hospital, Gangtok			
Central Referral Hospital (CRH), Gangtok	Private, Teaching (SMIMS)	Cardiology, Neurology, Oncology	Phone: 03592-231111

Tripura

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Govind Ballabh Pant Hospital, Agartala	Government	General Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics	Phone: 0381-232-4000
Tripura Medical College & Dr. BRAM Teaching Hospital	Government, Teaching	Cardiology, Orthopedics, Gynecology	Phone: 0381-235-6700

Arunanchal Pradesh

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Tomo Riba Institute of Health & Medical Sciences (TRIHMS), Naharlagun	Government	General Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics	Phone: 0360-2246677
Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Itanagar	Private	General Medicine, Surgery	Phone: 0360-2212268

Sikkim

Hospital	Category	Specialties	Contact
Sir Thutob Namgyal Memorial (STNM)	Government	General Medicine, Surgery, Orthopedics	Phone: 03592-202601

Key Hospitals in Assam

- GNRC Hospital Dispur, Guwahati :- First super-specialty tertiary care hospital in Assam and NE India, offering neurology, cardiac surgery, orthopedics, emergency care, and multiple medical specialties.
- Sarathi Hospital :- General care and medical services in Nalbari. Nalbari-Hajo-Guwahati Rd, Khat, Nalbari, Assam 781335
- Swagat Superspeciality Hospital Offers comprehensive surgical and specialty services in Guwahati. Located at Mahapurush Damodar Deb Path, Maligaon, AT Road, Guwahati, Assam 781011
- Solace Hospital And Research Centre:-Multi-specialty medical and research facilities in Agia Road, Balijana, Assam 783121
- Arya Hospital provides comprehensive hospital services Ulubari G S Road, Guwahati, Kamrup, Assam 781007

Other notable hospitals listed through regional resources include GMCH, North East Cancer Hospital & Research Institute, Ayursundra Superspeciality Hospital, Narayana Superspeciality Hospital, Dispur Hospitals Pvt. Ltd., and Hayat Hospital.

NEIGRIHMS (Meghalaya) and RIMS (Manipur) are the two major referral institutes for the entire Northeast. Apollo Guwahati and Shija Imphal are leading private hospitals with advanced specialties.

Hospitals in Other Northeastern States

Nagaland: GNRC Hospitals also coordinate with CMHIS facilities

Manipur: Shija Hospital and Padma Diagnostic Centre in Imphal

Mizoram: Genesis Laboratory and Trinity Diagnostic Centre in Aizawl

Tripura: ILS Hospitals in Agartala, West Tripura, caters to general and multispecialty care

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The strengths of the Indian Medical Tourism (as observed from the reports, data readily available and literature)

- 1) Cost of medical Treatments is comparatively very low in India in comparison to competitors.
- 2) Availability of Top Notch Medical and diagnostic equipment in Indian Hospitals from International conglomerates.
- 3) Fact tracks appointments, zero wait time in treatments with good quality and well-trained medical surgeons
- 4) With the recent focus of the Government, India has built tremendous capacity in AYUSH. Offering Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy and other traditional systems of medicine for the treatment of various ailments and enhancing the well-being of medical Tourists
- 5) To provide best medical care above global standards, India has JCI (Joint Commission International) and NABH accredited hospitals in comparison to other countries in Asia.

The weaknesses of the Indian Medical Tourism (as observed from the reports, data readily available and literature)

- a) Lack of Government Regulatory Framework leaves the sector unorganized and unmonitored.
- b) Absence of a Nodal agency for aggressive marketing, campaigning and Promotion leads to low coordination amongst stakeholders like Airlines, Hospitals and Hotels.
- c) India's Robust NABH Accreditation system does not find its stance in foreign countries and international Patients greatly recognize and pay patronage to JCI Accreditation.
- d) Variable Pricing of same treatment leads to confusion and distrust among the International Patients
- e) Non coverage of Traditional Medical Treatments under various Insurance Policies and Unavailability of Medical Insurance Portability at international level.

Opportunities In Medical Tourism

- 1) Demand for Ai Induced or robotic Treatments for standardization in treatment Results and satisfaction.
- 2) Demand from countries with undeveloped medical facilities
- 3) E-visa facilities and visa on arrival to international patients with Improved

connectivity can open the Pandora box for India

- 4) Demand from countries with aging Population in terms of fertility related concerns.
- 5) Demand for alternative treatments and Holistic approach to Medical Tourism

Threats

- a) Competitive Threats from Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.
- b) Unorganized facilitators and middlemen exploit the International medical patients for more commission etc.
- c) Lack of International Accredited Hospitals in Northeast India

Benefits of AI integration in Healthcare

- Ai Integration will increase employment, foreign exchange inflow, enhance medical standards and visibility of NER as a medical tourism destination
- AI-Integration in healthcare majorly focuses on robotic treatments and advanced applications of principles for Automated Diagnostics and interpretation of imaging with high precision and Zero error.
- AI enhances medical tourism ecosystem through improved patient triage, scheduling, and follow-up Promoting Telemedicine and remote monitoring for accessing Patients from faraway countries elevating patient's satisfaction and help in choosing a destination.
- Predictive analytics and personalized care for tailored treatment plans by analyzing extensive patient data.

The Key drivers of Growth of Medical Tourism are availability and accessibility of Good Health services by reducing the waiting time for treatment. The availability of latest medical technologies and accreditations create sense of trust in the patients. Due to several strategic advantages, Assam, especially Guwahati, has the potential to become a significant medical tourism destination in Northeast India:

- Strategic location of Assam and its connectivity to neighboring nations which lack sophisticated healthcare facilities, like Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. Guwahati boasts a sophisticated Air, rail and road network for medical travelers, as well as the recent extension of the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport will further give a push to the medial Tourism.
- Regulatory interventions of Assam government towards fostering public-private partnerships

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for advancing healthcare infrastructure will draw in more foreign patients,

- Affordable Healthcare: Assam is a popular destination for medical tourists because medical care there is substantially less expensive than in larger cities. Healthcare facilities like GMCH i.e. Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, Apollo Hospitals, Hayat Hospital, and Nemcare Hospital, provide multispecialty healthcare services.
- Expanding Healthcare Infrastructure and Availability of Skilled Medical Professionals: Impressive hospitals, specialty clinics upcoming medical colleges and urbane health care facilities in Assam is making it a regional center for advanced healthcare. Moreover, The availability of Internationally acclaimed and qualified physicians, nurses, and healthcare professionals bring the robustness to the Medical tourism. Additionally, hospitality projections of branded hotel capacity nearly doubling by 2030 will be beneficial to recuperating medical tourists.
- Integration of Traditional Healing: Assam and adjoining states practice traditional healing with Ayurveda, naturopathy, and herbal medicine which supplement contemporary medical care.

Conclusion and Finding

North-East region is endowed with many natural attractions and medical and wellness tourism can provide a driver for the economic growth of the region. The Ministry will work with the Department of Northeast Region and the North-East States to develop medical and wellness tourism in the region. Recent Technological advancements, Government support for Increasing demand for medical services act as Growth Catalysts in India Medical Tourism Industry. The leading players in the Indian medical tourism market are Tour2India4Health, MediConnect India, Global Treatment Services, Health Opinion, Vaidam, ANAVARA, Apollo Hospitals, Clinicspots, Mediniq, Forerunners Healthcare.

Current Status of Healthcare & Connectivity in NER

- NER's cultural resources (traditional medicine, AYUSH therapies, scenic landscape) can merge with AI-enabled medical tourism, offering a blended health and wellness travel experience.

- Government policy anticipates Assam emerging as a hub for medical education and health tourism by 2035 with expansion in medical colleges.

- New medical institutions like Tinsukia Medical College boost local tertiary care.

- Regional research bodies (e.g., ICMR's RMRC Dibrugarh) contribute to advanced healthcare research.

Key trends witnessed by The Indian medical tourism market:-

- Due to the high quality of care and the low cost of treatment in India the number of patients from developed countries are Increasing:

- Growing popularity of alternative medicine like Ayurveda, Unani, siddha, yoga etc due to the therapeutic beliefs towards more holistic and natural approach to healthcare is becoming increasingly popular among medical tourists.

- use of Advanced Robotics, AI for telemedicine, online appointment scheduling, and patient tracking systems are elevating the Medical Tourist receipts.

Challenges and Restraints in North India's Medical Tourism Market

- The factors posing a challenge for the growth of the Indian medical tourism market are lack of Awareness at Global level apart from cultural or linguistic factors and Visa restrictions.
- Medical Infrastructure investment needs a boost to meet international standards.
- AI adoption may raise ethical and legal considerations like data privacy and regulation
- upskilling of clinicians and administrators Digital literacy and AI expertise shortages requires upskilling clinicians and administrators.

Suggestions and recommendations.

Northeast India Booming Prospects in Medical Tourism is due to

- Strategic geographic location (gateway to BBIN/BIMSTEC countries) and rich indigenous medicinal and wellness traditions combined with ultra-modern healthcare facilities.

- Northeast-focused medical tourism research echoed to overcome the infrastructure gaps, limited international marketing, and overcome regulatory complexities.

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• Apt and timely Branding of Increasing healthcare infrastructure and institutional presence (e.g., medical colleges, research centers).

AI-Induced Medical Tourism: Scope and Mechanisms
AI can transform Pre travel to Post visit queries and concerns of a Patient with the help of AI chatbots and virtual platforms to provide personalized opinions by conducting automated permutations and combinations using AI Algorithms. Ai Induced Medical Tourism will Increase competitiveness, patient satisfaction and destination selection

To Boost industry growth coupled with high foreign exchange earnings Government must make unified branding, marketing, institutional tie-ups, investments and ensure

- (i) Dedicated Medical Help desks and free ambulance service for International Patients and family members at all the airports.
- (ii) Reduction in incidence of illegal foreign nationals operating in the industry
- (iii) Implementation of a centralized payment system to nullify the risk associated with defaults or frauds

Medical tourism has grown to be a multibillion global industry, and the competition has intensified by providing AI induced medical facilities by highly qualified physicians in internationally accredited hospitals at 1/10th -1/20th of price than what is offered in Western countries. The reasonably priced recuperation and wellness therapies will draw millions of medical visitors every year making cities like Guwahati to become hotspots for medical tourism.

- Strengthen regional healthcare infrastructure with accreditation standards (NABH/JCI).
- Invest in AI capacity building (training, digital records, research collaborations).
- Promote cross-border collaborations with neighboring countries to attract medical tourists.
- Brand NER holistic healthcare + wellness packages integrating AI and traditional therapy.

The worldwide healthcare and tourism sectors now include a sizable portion of medical tourism. Numerous studies have examined its problems, driving forces, and economic consequences. The literature on medical tourism is reviewed in this section, with an emphasis on Indian and global trends, the function of healthcare infrastructure, and comparative observations that

establish Guwahati as a possible center for medical tourism.

Conclusion

Successful medical tourism depends upon the status of a country's broader medical sector, along with appropriate government regulations, patient safeguards, training standards, insurance frameworks, travel and visa restrictions, and other issues that drive the patient's experience and treatment outcomes. The appeal and success of wellness tourism depends on an entirely different set of factors, business models, customer mindsets, human resources, and industry culture, and it is more closely aligned with leisure, recreation, and hospitality.

AI can be a transformative catalyst for medical tourism in the North Eastern States of India by enhancing healthcare delivery, patient-centric services, and operational efficiency. Despite challenges in infrastructure and regulatory frameworks, the strategic integration of AI technologies, coupled with improved connectivity and marketing, position the region to emerge as a promising destination for both domestic and international medical tourists. Continued empirical research and policy support are key to realizing this potential.

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