

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF AYURVEDIC HEALTH TOURISM IN KERALA

Anjaly B Lal

Assistant Professor

Department of commerce

Dr. Palpu College of Arts & Science, Pangode Puthussery, Thiruvananthapuram, India.

Abstract : Health/Medical tourism is a booming niche tourism market in the tourism industry. The main reason for the increasing trend is the attitude of people to spend holidays in a quality manner with the aim of improving health. In India, Kerala is emerging as a prime health tourism hub for its Ayurveda packages. The state attracts millions of foreign and domestic tourists to visit the state's incredible heritage and experience the traditional nature based treatment therapies. . This study aims to find out the satisfaction of customers and quality of services provided to the tourists in Kerala. The present study identifies the strength of Kerala for Ayurveda health tourism also.

IndexTerms : Kerala tourism, satisfaction level, quality, perception.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is generally viewed as a treatment for relaxation of mind and body and for overall wellbeing. It is acknowledged as the oldest and most comprehensive system of natural medicine in India and Kerala is a master in administrating Ayurvedic treatment for all diseases including mental illness. Among the various methods of healing Ayurveda has emerged as the most credible form. Health tourism covers a broad spectrum of services from conventional treatment to rejuvenation therapies. Most international tourists have extreme confidence in Kerala's traditional Ayurveda because there is a concrete belief that Ayurvedic medicine and methods of treatment have no side effects. Kerala's strong base of Ayurveda attracts foreign health tourists and this helps to improve our balance of payment position on a permanent basis.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

- To evaluate the level of satisfaction of tourists in comparison between their perception before undergoing the treatment and the actual experience after having health care services.
- To access the quality of health products available.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study. For the study both primary and secondary data are collected. Primary data was collected by using structured interview schedule. The data collected were analyzed and interpreted by using mathematical tools like percentage and average method and statistical tool like bar diagrams, pie diagrams etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Level of satisfaction wise classification

table 1.1: Level of satisfaction

Opinion	Percentage
Highly satisfied	25
Satisfied	55
Moderately satisfied	20
Unsatisfied	0
total	100

The respondents under study were asked to state their level of satisfaction. The table depicts that 55% of the health tourists were satisfied, 25% of the tourists opined that they are highly satisfied, 20% of them viewed it as moderate and no one was unsatisfied.

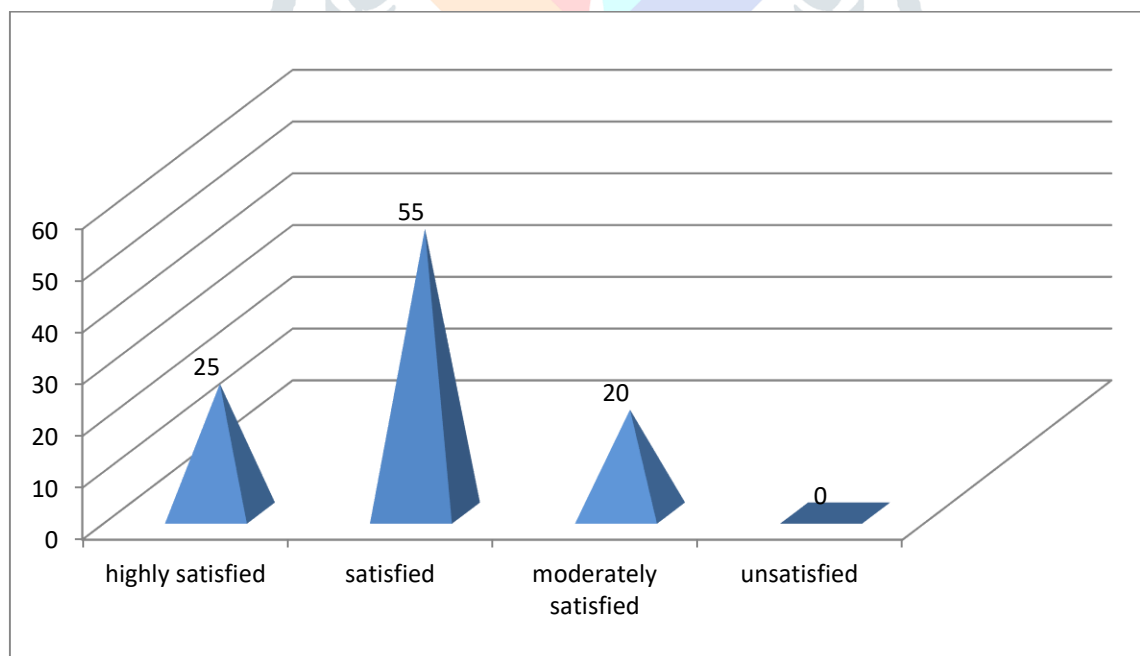


figure 1.1: Level of satisfaction

1.2 Difference between perception and actual experience

Table 1.2: Difference between perception and actual experience

Opinion	Percentage
Very high	0
High	10
Moderate	14
Low	64
Very low	12
Total	100

The above table depicts the clear picture of the difference between the perception and actual experience of the respondents about the Ayurvedic treatment. 64% of them were of the view that it was low, 14% viewed it as very low, 12% of them viewed as moderate and 10% opined that it was high. Nobody viewed it as very high.

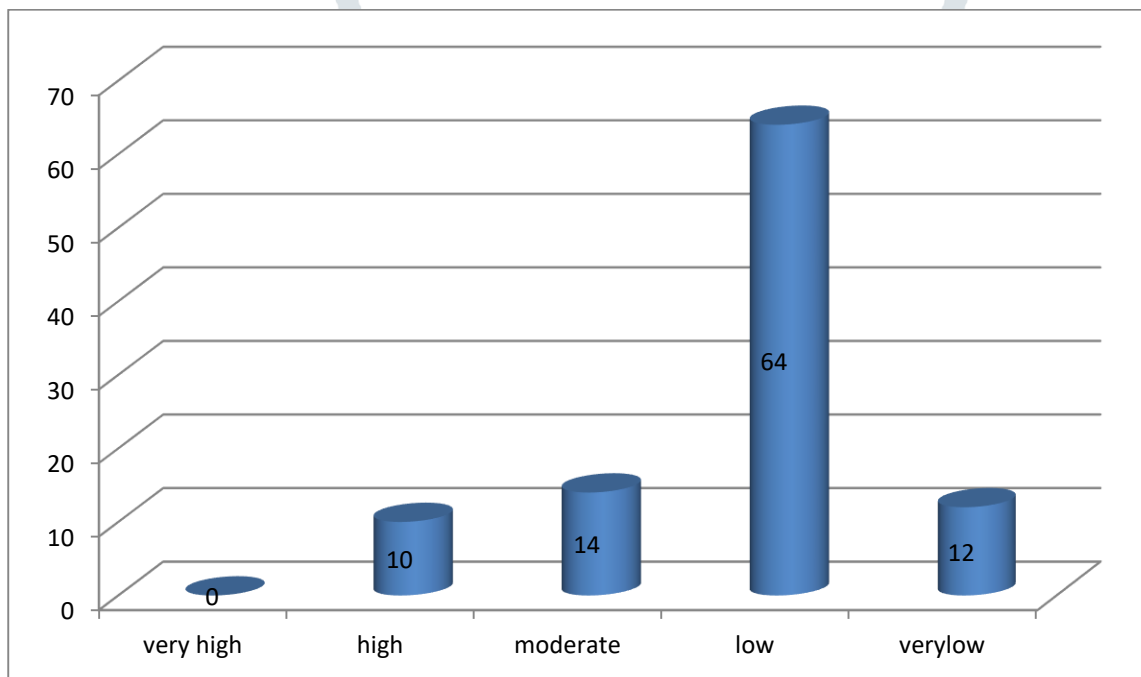


figure 1.2: Difference between perception and actual experience

1.3 Quality of products and services

Table1.3: Quality of products and services

Quality of products and services	Percentage
Excellent	28
Very good	48
Good	24
Satisfactory	0
Poor	0
Total	100

The above table depicts that 48% of the respondents viewed the quality of products and services as very good, 28% of them of the view that it was excellent, 24% of them opined that it was good and nobody viewed it as satisfactory or poor.

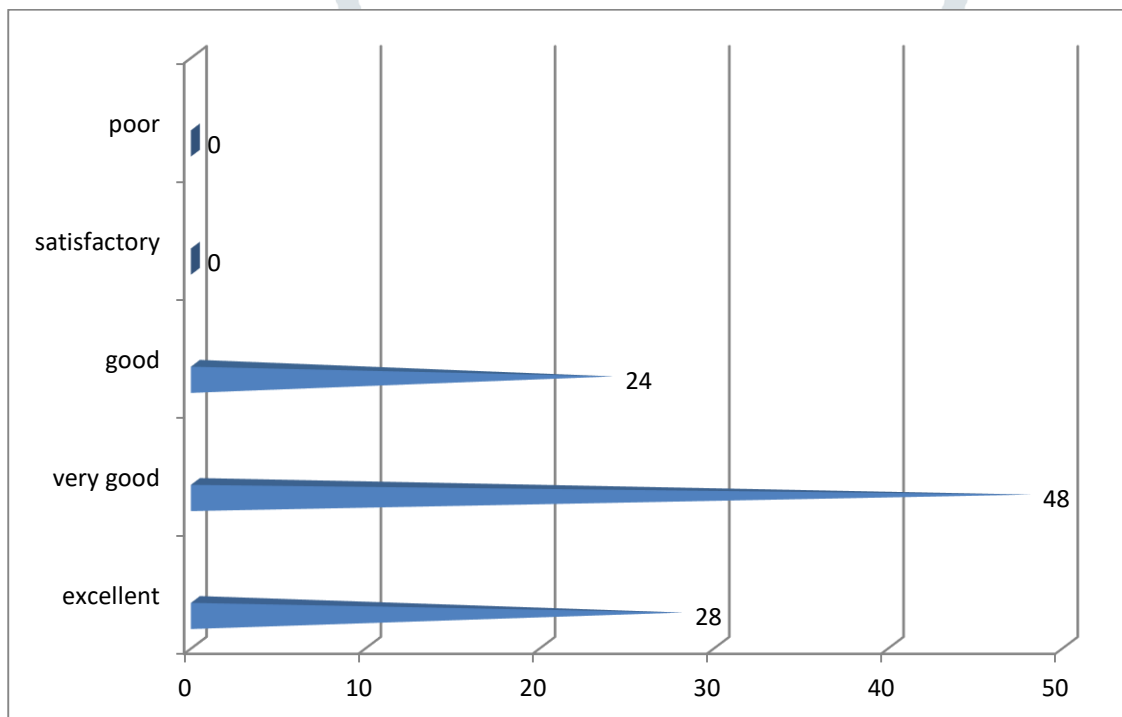


figure1.3: Quality of products and services

SUGGESTIONS

1. It is suggested that exhibitions and trade fairs may be conducted at frequent intervals in order to promote Ayurvedic tourism packages.
2. The department of tourism should consider seriously the scope for Ayurvedic tourism by blending other packages of yoga and meditation along with the provision of Ayurveda.
3. Implementation of serious facilities for protecting international tourists.
4. Better sanitation and hygiene can attract more tourists to our state..

CONCLUSION

Kerala has enormous potential to emerge as one of the world's best health tourism destinations. Its splendid flora and fauna, beaches, back waters; festivals etc. have the ability to lure more and more tourists. Health tourism is not a onetime business. Satisfied health tourists will recommend Kerala as a health tourism destination to their nearby. Hence health tourism providers should try to maintain service quality. This study also evaluates the service quality of health tourism providers of Kerala.

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