

# MARKETING OF AYURVEDA TOURISM – WHERE WE STAND NOW AND WHAT FUTURE HOLDS

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## ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda tourism, a niche yet burgeoning sector within global health tourism, particularly thrives in Kerala, India – popularly referred to as the “Land of Ayurveda”. Despite its historical roots and international acclaim, marketing efforts for Ayurveda tourism have not kept pace with global wellness trends and evolving consumer demographics. This communication explores the current landscape of Ayurveda tourism marketing, identifies key gaps, and also outlines future directions. It concludes with actionable recommendations to reposition Ayurveda tourism in global and domestic markets through integrated marketing strategies, technology adoption, and stakeholder collaboration.*

**Keywords:** Ayurveda Tourism, Ayurveda Tourism Marketing, Marketing Strategy.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is India’s traditional medical system which has evolved over the years and has gained global recognition and emerged into a pivotal part in the global wellness tourism arena. Kerala, with its authentic practices and state-backed initiatives, has become a significant Ayurveda tourism hub. However, challenges such as fragmented marketing efforts, poor digital visibility, and inadequate integration with global tourism networks hinder its full potential. With Ayurveda tourism expected to grow rapidly, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic and awareness about and wellness and wellbeing, there is an urgent and indispensable need for a robust marketing strategy for Ayurveda tourism.

The fusion of tourism and traditional medicine has given rise to Ayurveda tourism, a sector gaining significant attraction in health-conscious markets. As people seek holistic wellness solutions, Ayurveda, a 5000-year-old Indian medical system, offers therapeutic and preventive care that aligns with global wellness trends. Kerala, branding itself as "God's Own Country," has become a pioneer in promoting Ayurveda tourism. However, the sector remains under-leveraged due to fragmented marketing efforts, infrastructure bottlenecks, and insufficient global branding (Anju & Bindu, 2024).

India's position as the birthplace of Ayurveda provides it with a competitive edge in the burgeoning health and wellness tourism sector. Kerala also known as the "Land of Ayurveda," is the main hub for Ayurveda treatment and traditional healing therapy. Ayurveda tourism involves the travel of individuals seeking rejuvenation and curative therapies, often in serene, eco-rich environments. We can see a global shift in people's perspective towards preventive healthcare, traditional wellness-based lifestyles and tourism avenues. Thus, Ayurveda tourism is in a great position to tap this great opportunity (Aswathy & Sanjeev, 2024).

Though Ayurveda tourism has witnessed a steady influx of international and domestic tourists, the marketing approach—especially in digital avenues—has remained fragmented and

underutilized. This is particularly significant considering the varied digital consumption patterns of each generational group. A nuanced understanding of these generational preferences is vital in crafting targeted marketing strategies.

This endeavour seeks to assess the current marketing landscape of Ayurveda tourism, identify gaps, and propose a future-ready strategy by blending traditional wisdom with modern communication tools.

### **Current Landscape of Ayurveda Tourism Marketing**

Kerala stands out the premier destination that offers authentic Ayurveda experiences. According to research insights from an extensive literature review on Kerala Ayurveda Tourism, the key strengths include:

- Traditional and authentic practices
- Scenic and therapeutic landscapes
- Government support and international recognition

Despite these advantages, marketing efforts are largely fragile. Challenges include limited digital presence, poor coordination between tourism and Ayurveda sectors, inadequate standardization, and minimal international outreach. The SWOT analysis reveals competition from countries like Sri Lanka and Bali and highlights the under-utilization of social media marketing and influencer engagement (Muralidhar & Karthikeyan, 2016).

### **Traditional vs Digital Marketing**

Historically, Ayurveda tourism has leaned heavily on traditional marketing methods such as:

- Trade fairs, roadshows, and expos.
- Seminars and medical tourism conferences.
- Advertisements in travel magazines and newspapers.
- Word-of-mouth and peer recommendations.

However, these approaches are no longer sufficient in a digital-first world. The increased internet penetration and smartphone adoption—especially post-COVID—have pushed tourism stakeholders towards digital avenues like:

- Social media marketing
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Online paid advertising
- Influencer and content marketing
- Use of Email marketing and newsletters (Martins et al., 2025)

### **Kerala's Competitive Position**

Kerala's strengths include:

- Authentic Ayurveda practices.
- Government support and certification systems (e.g., NABH).
- Trained Vaidyas and certified therapists.
- Scenic natural locales enhancing wellness appeal.

Yet, weaknesses persist, such as:

- Lack of innovation in digital marketing.

- Poor integration with global wellness platforms.
- Inconsistent online presence among service providers.
- Limited youth-oriented awareness campaigns.

The rise of competitors like Sri Lanka and Bali, who offer similar packages with aggressive branding, highlights the need for Kerala to reinvent its marketing strategy.

## **SWOT Analysis of Kerala Ayurveda Tourism**

### **Strengths**

- Global recognition of Ayurveda.
- GMP-certified product manufacturing.
- Government-backed quality assurance.

### **Weaknesses**

- Poor digital presence.
- Marketing strategies not aligned with generational preferences.
- Dependence on seasonal tourism.

### **Opportunities**

- Post-pandemic health awareness.
- Rise of revenge and wellness tourism.
- Younger generations showing openness to Ayurveda.

### **Threats**

- Competitive pricing from Sri Lanka and Nepal.
- Mushrooming of unethical Ayurveda centres and Lack of quality control measures
- Aggressive branding from competitors (Anoop & Lakshmi, 2024)

### **Gaps in Marketing Strategy**

- Lack of tailored digital marketing strategies and content exclusively for Kerala Ayurveda tourism across platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and travel forums.
- The absence of differentiated marketing strategies targeting Gen X (value-seeking), Gen Y (experience-oriented), and Gen Z (digital-native) tourists limits campaign effectiveness.
- Large diaspora networks that can act as Ayurveda brand ambassadors remain largely untapped.
- Weak segmented branding strategies
- Limited digital infrastructure
- Poorly integrated booking and consultation platforms
- Absence of storytelling in content marketing
- Lack of internationally recognized accreditations (Patil et al., 2025)

### **Findings**

- **Low Visibility on Global Platforms:** Ayurveda tourism lacks a presence on international travel booking sites and wellness portals.
- **Absence of Unified Digital Infrastructure:** There is no centralized platform for Ayurveda resorts and centres.
- **Underutilization of Influencer and Content Marketing:** Global influencers and curated storytelling are missing from current campaigns.
- **Lack of Trust and Standardization:** Tourists are concerned about authenticity due to unregulated centres.
- **Policy-Level Gaps:** No uniform policy combining AYUSH, tourism, and online marketing directives.
- **Emerging AI and VR Opportunities:** There is scope to introduce AI chatbots, teleconsultations, and virtual Ayurveda therapy experiences.
- **Strengths:** Authentic practice, favourable climate, well-trained professionals, and Kerala's established tourism ecosystem.
- **Weaknesses:** Limited global marketing campaigns, inadequate digital outreach, and poor coordination between health, tourism, and academic stakeholders.
- **Opportunities:** 365-day market potential, rise in lifestyle-related diseases, and digital marketing avenues to tap into diverse generational groups.
- **Threats:** Rising competition from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bali; unethical practices tarnishing the brand image.

## Recommendations

- **Integrated Branding Campaigns:**
  - a. Showcase Kerala internationally as the motherland of Ayurveda
  - b. Promote via international travel expos, wellness forums, and digital media
- **Digital Infrastructure Development:**
  - a. Create a unified platform with listing, consultation, booking, and review capabilities
  - b. Developing a one-step app for Ayurveda tourism which can connect customers with Ayurveda tourism providers and which can curate Ayurveda wellness journeys
- **Academic and Research Integration:**
  - a. Launch Ayurveda tourism-focused courses in hospitality and management institutes
  - b. Fund interdisciplinary research on Ayurveda therapy outcomes and tourism psychology
- **Role of Government:**
  - a. Draft a National Ayurveda Tourism Policy
  - b. Introduce wellness leave schemes for public and private employees
  - c. Implement NABH and AYUSH certifications across centres
  - d. Offer training programs for therapists and wellness guides
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):**
  - a. Collaborate with corporate hospital chains in India to incorporate Ayurveda into their facility along with modern medicine
  - b. Offer incentives for eco-friendly and smart Ayurveda resorts
- **Leverage NRIs and Diaspora:**
  - a. Use NRIs as the brand ambassadors for Ayurveda tourism
  - b. Host diaspora-led Ayurveda roadshows in target countries
- **Media and PR Strategies:**

- a. Regular features in global wellness magazines
- b. Celebrity endorsements and Ayurveda retreats for influencers
- **Sustainability and Local Involvement:**
- a. Promote community-based Ayurveda tourism
- b. Support local production of Ayurvedic herbs and products

### Future Prospects

- **Integrated Digital Campaigns:** Develop a centralized digital hub and app offering booking, reviews, virtual consultation, and video-based storytelling.
- **AI-Driven Personalization:** Use AI to recommend customized wellness journeys based on user preferences, age, and health concerns.
- **Global Outreach Programs:** Conduct roadshows, participate in international wellness expos, and collaborate with influencers and global wellness brands.
- **Academic and Research Integration:** Launch Ayurveda tourism courses in hospitality institutes and set up dedicated research centres.
- **Regulation & Standardization:** Establish NABH/AYUSH accreditation norms for Ayurveda centres to build trust and credibility globally.

### What the Future Holds

- **Need for Generationally Tailored Marketing**  
Marketing Ayurveda tourism as a one-size-fits-all solution no longer works. The proper segmentation of tourists is very important.
- **Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Strategy**  
An effective integration of both traditional and online marketing tools are required.
  - (i) **Digital Channels:**
    - a. SEO-optimized multilingual websites.
    - b. Paid social media campaigns targeting specific age cohorts.
    - c. YouTube content with testimonials, and therapy walkthroughs.
    - d. Instagram Reels/TikTok showcasing rejuvenation journeys.
    - e. Collaborations with health-focused influencers.
  - (ii) **Traditional Channels:**
    - a. Participation in international wellness expos.
    - b. Health and wellness columns in print media.
    - c. Public-private partnerships for offline awareness campaigns.

### Use of Data Analytics

- a. Track user behaviour across platforms using proper AI and analytics tools.
- b. Customize offerings based on generational preferences.
- c. Engage with existing tourists by offering discounts through newsletters, emails, and WhatsApp.
- **Collaboration with AYUSH and Global Wellness Bodies**
- a. Align marketing campaigns with Ministry of AYUSH directives.
- b. Co-market with international wellness associations.
- c. Establish wellness tourism clusters in collaboration with private players and local communities.

## CONCLUSION

Ayurveda tourism can experience exponential growth if Kerala and India strategically align their marketing efforts with global wellness trends. By leveraging digital platforms, enhancing infrastructure, and crafting generationally tailored campaigns, Kerala can not only consolidate its position as the epicentre of Ayurveda tourism but also shape it as India's flagship offering in the trillion-dollar wellness economy. A multi-pronged, professionally managed, and evidence-based marketing plan is not just timely but is essential. Ayurveda tourism in Kerala is on the verge of significant transformation and growth. However, to fully harness its potential, a paradigm shift in marketing strategy is required. The future lies in tailored, generationally appropriate, digitally integrated, and globally aware campaigns that position Ayurveda not just as a treatment modality but as a lifestyle choice.

Kerala, with its inherent advantages, can emerge as the undisputed global leader in Ayurveda tourism, provided it evolves its marketing approach to match the preferences of a digitally connected and health-conscious global audience. An omni-channel marketing strategy is the need of the hour which must be segmented and personalized. An omni-channel approach integrating SEO, content marketing, mobile apps, VR/AR experiences, and AI-driven personalization is essential.

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