

# ASSESSING THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AYURVEDA PRACTICES IN HEALTH TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF SRI LANKA.

Sugathapala M.A.S.H.

[sachinihansamali01@gmail.com](mailto:sachinihansamali01@gmail.com)

## KEYWORDS

Ayurveda, Case study, Cultural authenticity, Government policies, Health tourism, Integrative practices, Qualitative research, Regulatory frameworks, Sri Lanka, Sustainability, Thematic analysis, Traditional healing, Transformative experiences, Wellness tourism.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the intricate dynamics of integrating traditional Ayurveda practices into the fabric of health tourism in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on the moderating role played by Government Policies and Support. Employing a qualitative research design with thematic analysis, the research explores the perspectives of key stakeholders, including Ayurveda practitioners, health tourism establishments, government officials, and health-conscious tourists.

The findings illuminate the seamless integration of Ayurveda within Sri Lanka's health tourism landscape, emphasizing that Ayurvedic principles are integral components of wellness programs rather than mere additions. Tourists, driven by a pursuit of holistic well-being, seek transformative experiences aligned with Ayurvedic traditions. Notably, Government Policies and Support emerge as critical moderators, influencing the integration, economic impacts, and challenges faced by Ayurveda practitioners.

Economically, Ayurveda health tourism proves to be a substantial contributor to local economies, fostering growth, job creation, and financial benefits. The study recommends streamlined regulatory frameworks, targeted awareness campaigns, and sustainability guidelines, with Government Policies and Support acting as pivotal moderators in addressing challenges and fostering an environment conducive to the growth and authenticity of Ayurveda health tourism in Sri Lanka.

This research offers valuable insights into the role of Ayurveda in health tourism, underscoring the moderating influence of Government Policies and Support. The findings advocate for a collaborative approach that preserves cultural authenticity, promotes sustainability, and ensures the continued success of Ayurveda practices in Sri Lanka's health tourism sector under the guiding hand of governmental influence.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global landscape of tourism has witnessed a transformative shift towards health and wellness, with individuals increasingly seeking destinations that offer holistic experiences for rejuvenation and healing. Among the myriad approaches to wellness, traditional Ayurveda practices have emerged as a cornerstone, drawing attention for their centuries-old wisdom in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being (Perera et al., 2023). This research embarks on a comprehensive exploration, focusing on the intricate interplay between traditional Ayurveda practices and the burgeoning health tourism sector in the enchanting island nation of Sri Lanka (Kamalasena & Chamodya, 2021).

Sri Lanka, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and diverse natural landscapes, has strategically positioned itself as a hub for health tourism, prominently featuring traditional Ayurveda therapies. With a legacy deeply rooted in ancient scriptures, Ayurveda has seamlessly woven into the fabric of Sri Lankan culture, fostering a unique and authentic wellness experience (Sivesan, 2021). This study aims to delve into the nuanced dimensions of Ayurveda within the context of health tourism, unraveling its influence on visitor preferences, economic implications, and the overall tourism landscape of Sri Lanka.

As a holistic system of medicine, Ayurveda emphasizes balance and harmony in the body, mind, and spirit. The traditional practices encompass a range of therapies, herbal remedies, dietary guidelines, and lifestyle recommendations, all tailored to individual constitutions (Khanal & Shimizu, 2019). Understanding the contemporary relevance and application of Ayurveda in the context of health tourism is vital not only for the tourism industry but also for the preservation and promotion of Sri Lanka's cultural heritage.

This research will employ a case study approach, delving into specific instances and establishments where Ayurveda practices are integrated into the health tourism experience. By analyzing visitor perceptions, economic indicators, and the challenges faced by practitioners, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the symbiotic relationship between traditional Ayurveda and the evolving landscape of health tourism in Sri Lanka. Through this exploration, we aim to contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable and culturally enriched health tourism practices, ultimately fostering a deeper appreciation for the role of traditional Ayurveda in the well-being of individuals and the tourism industry as a whole.

### **1.1 Context and Rationale**

The context for this research is grounded in the contemporary global tourism landscape, which has witnessed a paradigm shift towards health and wellness tourism. As individuals increasingly prioritize well-being and seek transformative travel experiences, destinations around the world are exploring unique offerings that cater to this growing market. Sri Lanka, with its profound cultural heritage and natural beauty, has positioned itself as a prime destination for health tourism. The country's embrace of traditional Ayurveda practices further distinguishes it in the realm of holistic wellness experiences. Ayurveda, with its roots deeply embedded in Sri Lankan culture, offers a unique value proposition, attracting health-conscious travelers seeking authentic and time-tested healing practices.

Several factors contribute to the rationale behind focusing on the role of traditional Ayurveda practices in the health tourism sector in Sri Lanka. First and foremost is the historical significance of Ayurveda in the country. Sri Lanka boasts a rich heritage in Ayurvedic medicine, with practices that have been handed down through generations. Understanding how these traditional practices are incorporated into the modern health tourism framework is essential for preserving cultural identity and ensuring the authenticity of wellness experiences.

Moreover, as health tourism becomes a significant economic driver for Sri Lanka, it is imperative to assess the specific contributions of Ayurveda to the industry. The integration of traditional Ayurveda practices not only caters to the demand for unique wellness experiences but also presents economic opportunities for local practitioners, businesses, and the tourism sector as a whole.

By conducting a case study, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play. This includes exploring visitor preferences, economic impacts, and potential challenges faced by those involved in delivering Ayurveda-based health tourism experiences. Such insights can inform sustainable practices, enhance the overall quality of health tourism offerings, and contribute to the positioning of Sri Lanka as a leading destination for holistic well-being.

In summary, the research is driven by the need to comprehensively examine the symbiotic relationship between traditional Ayurveda practices and the evolving landscape of health tourism in Sri Lanka. Through this exploration, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights that can inform industry stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners about the unique role of Ayurveda in shaping the health and wellness tourism narrative in the country.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Research**

- i. To examine the Integration of Ayurveda in Health Tourism in Sri Lanka.

Investigate how Ayurveda practices are woven into the health tourism landscape in Sri Lanka, identifying key establishments, programs, and initiatives that showcase the integration of traditional healing practices.

- ii. To analyze Visitor Perceptions and Preferences Regarding Ayurveda-based Wellness Experiences.

Explore the perspectives of health tourism visitors in Sri Lanka, focusing on their perceptions, motivations, and preferences related to Ayurveda-based wellness offerings. Understand the factors influencing their choice of Ayurveda-centric programs and services.

- iii. To evaluate the Economic Impacts and Opportunities of Ayurveda Health Tourism.

Assess the economic contributions of Ayurveda practices to the health tourism sector in Sri Lanka, examining the financial benefits for local businesses, practitioners, and the broader tourism industry. Identify potential opportunities for sustainable growth and development within the Ayurveda health tourism niche.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of traditional healing practices and contemporary health tourism has become a focal point for researchers and industry practitioners seeking to understand the dynamics of this evolving niche. In the context of Sri Lanka, a nation with a rich cultural heritage and a growing reputation as a health tourism destination, the integration of traditional Ayurveda practices holds particular significance. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research, theories, and perspectives relevant to the role of Ayurveda in health tourism, with a focus on the Sri Lankan context.

### 2.1 Key Factors of Traditional Ayurveda Practices in Health Tourism

#### 2.1.1 Integration of Ayurveda in Health Tourism

- Presence of Ayurveda in Health Tourism Offerings

Research by Payyappallimana (2010) emphasizes the significance of Ayurveda's presence in Sri Lanka's health tourism landscape, highlighting how establishments integrate traditional healing practices into their wellness programs.

- Types of Ayurveda-based Programs and Services

Studies by Mirando et al. (2022) delve into the diverse range of Ayurveda-based programs and services offered in Sri Lanka, emphasizing the customization of wellness experiences to meet the unique needs of health-conscious travelers.

- Collaboration with Ayurveda Practitioners and Institutions

The work of Cyranski (2017) explores successful collaborations between health tourism establishments and Ayurveda practitioners, showcasing the importance of partnerships in delivering authentic Ayurveda experiences.

- Inclusion of Ayurveda in Tourism Marketing Strategies

Literature on Destination Marketing Fernando (2021) underscores the role of Ayurveda in Sri Lanka's tourism marketing, examining how promotional strategies leverage traditional healing practices to attract health-conscious tourists.

#### 2.1.2 Visitor Perceptions and Preferences

- Visitor Awareness and Knowledge of Ayurveda

Studies by Ranasinghe and Jayawardena (2016) reveal the impact of visitor awareness and knowledge of Ayurveda on their decision to engage in health tourism, underscoring the need for educational initiatives.

- Visitor Motivations for Choosing Ayurveda-based Wellness Experiences

Research by De S Wicramasooriya et al. (2020) explores the motivations behind tourists' choices of Ayurveda-based wellness experiences, shedding light on the factors influencing decision-making in health tourism.

- Visitor Satisfaction with Ayurveda Integration

A comprehensive study by Amarathunge et al. (2021) assesses visitor satisfaction levels with the integration of Ayurveda, providing insights into the factors that contribute to positive experiences for health tourism visitors.

- Factors Influencing Visitor Decision-Making

Consumer behavior literature (Ranasinghe et al., 2020) informs the exploration of factors influencing visitor decision-making in the context of Ayurveda health tourism, uncovering the intricacies of tourist preferences.

### **2.1.3 Economic Impacts and Opportunities**

- Economic Contributions of Ayurveda Health Tourism

Economic impact studies (Fernando et al., 2021) analyze the contributions of Ayurveda health tourism to Sri Lanka's economy, providing valuable insights into the financial benefits for local businesses and the broader tourism industry.

- Financial Benefits for Local Businesses and Practitioners

Samarawickrama and Perera (2017) investigate the financial benefits accrued by local businesses and Ayurveda practitioners, examining the economic empowerment resulting from the integration of traditional healing practices.

- Employment Opportunities in Ayurveda Health Tourism

Research by Abeysekara (2021) assesses the employment opportunities created by Ayurveda health tourism, shedding light on the socio-economic impacts of the industry on local communities.

- Potential for Sustainable Economic Growth

The literature on sustainable tourism (Warrier, 2011) contributes to understanding the potential for sustainable economic growth within the Ayurveda health tourism sector, emphasizing the importance of responsible development.

### **2.1.4 Challenges Faced by Ayurveda Practitioners**

- Regulatory Challenges in Offering Ayurveda Services

Studies by De Silva and Perera (2016) address regulatory challenges faced by Ayurveda practitioners, highlighting the need for a supportive legal framework to ensure the quality and safety of traditional healing practices.

- Cultural Sensitivity and Authenticity Challenges

Research on cultural tourism (Rajapaksa & Hettiarachchi, 2019) explores the cultural sensitivity and authenticity challenges in presenting Ayurveda as a cultural attraction, emphasizing the importance of preserving its traditional essence.

- Operational Challenges in Integrating Ayurveda

Operational challenges faced by Ayurveda establishments are discussed by Karunaratne and Gunawardena (2018), offering insights into the practical hurdles encountered in successfully integrating traditional healing practices into health tourism offerings.

- Awareness and Education Challenges among Tourists

The role of awareness and education in Ayurveda health tourism is examined by Herath and Abeygunawardena (2021), providing a nuanced understanding of challenges related to visitor knowledge and perception.

### **2.5.1 Government Policies and Support**

- Existence of Government Policies Supporting Ayurveda Health Tourism

Government policies supporting Ayurveda health tourism are explored by Jayaweera and Perera (2019), highlighting the role of the government in shaping the regulatory and promotional landscape.

- Collaborative Initiatives between the Government and Ayurveda Practitioners

The study by Rajapakse et al. (2020) investigates collaborative initiatives between the government and Ayurveda practitioners, emphasizing the significance of partnerships for effective industry regulation and promotion.

- Regulatory Frameworks for Ayurveda Health Tourism

The regulatory frameworks governing Ayurveda health tourism are examined by Perera and Gunathilaka (2018), providing insights into the legal structures that influence the integration and operations of traditional healing practices.

- Financial Support and Incentives for Ayurveda-based Establishments

Financial support and incentives provided by the government to Ayurveda-based establishments are discussed by Ranaweera and Liyanage (2017), shedding light on the economic backing necessary for the sustainable development of the industry.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background of the Study**

*Health and Wellness Tourism Theory* serves as a comprehensive framework that delves into the motivations, behaviors, and experiences of individuals seeking travel opportunities to enhance their overall well-being. Rooted in the broader field of tourism, this theory recognizes the growing global trend of prioritizing health, relaxation, and personal growth as key drivers for travel decisions (Frenk et al., 2010). It provides a lens through which scholars and practitioners can understand and analyze the multifaceted dimensions of health and wellness tourism.

The Health and Wellness Tourism Theory serves as a comprehensive framework that aligns with the multidimensional aspects of the Concept-Indicator Model. It links the integration of Ayurveda practices, visitor perceptions, economic considerations, challenges faced by practitioners, and the moderating influence of government policies within the overarching context of health and wellness tourism (Kemppainen et al., 2021). This theoretical foundation ensures a cohesive and holistic analysis of the role of traditional Ayurveda practices in health tourism in Sri Lanka.

### **2.2.1 Integration of Ayurveda in Health Tourism:**

This theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the integration of traditional healing practices, such as Ayurveda, within the broader context of health and wellness tourism. It guides the exploration of how Ayurveda contributes to the overall health and well-being goals of travelers seeking transformative experiences.

### **2.2.2. Visitor Perceptions and Preferences:**

The theory informs the study by emphasizing the motivations, behaviors, and expectations of health tourism visitors. It provides a lens to explore how Ayurveda aligns with the holistic wellness goals and preferences of tourists engaging in health and wellness travel.

### **2.2.3. Economic Impacts and Opportunities:**

The theory facilitates an understanding of the economic aspects of health tourism, including the contributions of Ayurveda. It guides the investigation into the economic impacts, financial benefits, and employment opportunities within the context of Ayurveda health tourism.

### **2.2.4. Challenges Faced by Ayurveda Practitioners:**

The theory helps identify and analyze challenges faced by Ayurveda practitioners within the broader health tourism industry. It guides the exploration of how cultural, operational, and regulatory challenges impact the seamless integration of Ayurveda into health tourism offerings.

### **2.2.5 Government Policies and Support:**

The theory acknowledges the role of external factors, including government policies, in shaping the health and wellness tourism landscape. It provides a theoretical basis for understanding how government support moderates the integration, economic impacts, and challenges faced by Ayurveda practitioners in health tourism.

## 2.3 Application to Ayurveda in Health Tourism in Sri Lanka

In the context of the study on Ayurveda practices in health tourism in Sri Lanka, the Health and Wellness Tourism Theory provides a robust foundation. The theory guides the exploration of how Ayurveda aligns with the holistic well-being goals of travelers, influences motivations for wellness travel, contributes to a diverse range of wellness offerings, and impacts the economic and sustainable development of the destination. It also underscores the significance of the tourist experience, cultural authenticity, and destination branding in shaping Ayurveda's role within the broader landscape of health tourism in Sri Lanka. Overall, Health and Wellness Tourism Theory offers a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interplay between health-conscious travelers and the holistic wellness experiences they seek.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, aiming to explore in-depth insights into the role of traditional Ayurveda practices in health tourism in Sri Lanka. Qualitative research allows for a nuanced understanding of the cultural, experiential, and contextual aspects that influence the integration of Ayurveda in the health tourism sector.

### 3.2. Population and Sampling

Participants will be purposively selected to ensure representation from key stakeholders, including Ayurveda practitioners, health tourism establishments, government officials, and health-conscious tourists. The sample size will be determined by data saturation, ensuring that a comprehensive understanding is achieved. Saturation is the point at which more data stops producing new knowledge. The authors also mention that a major project often calls for 20+ interviews. According to this definition, the data saturation point for this study was the 14th interview. However, six additional interviews were conducted to verify this saturation point.

### 3.3. Data Collection

#### *In-depth Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with participants to gather rich, detailed narratives. These interviews will explore participants' perspectives on the integration of Ayurveda in health tourism, economic impacts, challenges faced, and the influence of government policies.

#### *Documentary Analysis*

Relevant documents, such as tourism promotional materials, government policies, and industry reports, will be analyzed to provide additional context and triangulate findings from interviews.

#### *Observations*

Site visits and observations at Ayurveda establishments will be conducted to supplement interview data, allowing for an exploration of the physical and operational aspects of Ayurveda in health tourism.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

#### *Thematic Content Analysis*

Thematic Analysis will be employed as the primary method for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014). This iterative process involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis will be both deductive and inductive, allowing for the exploration of predefined concepts from the Concept-Indicator Model while also capturing emergent themes.

### 3.5. Concept Indicator Model

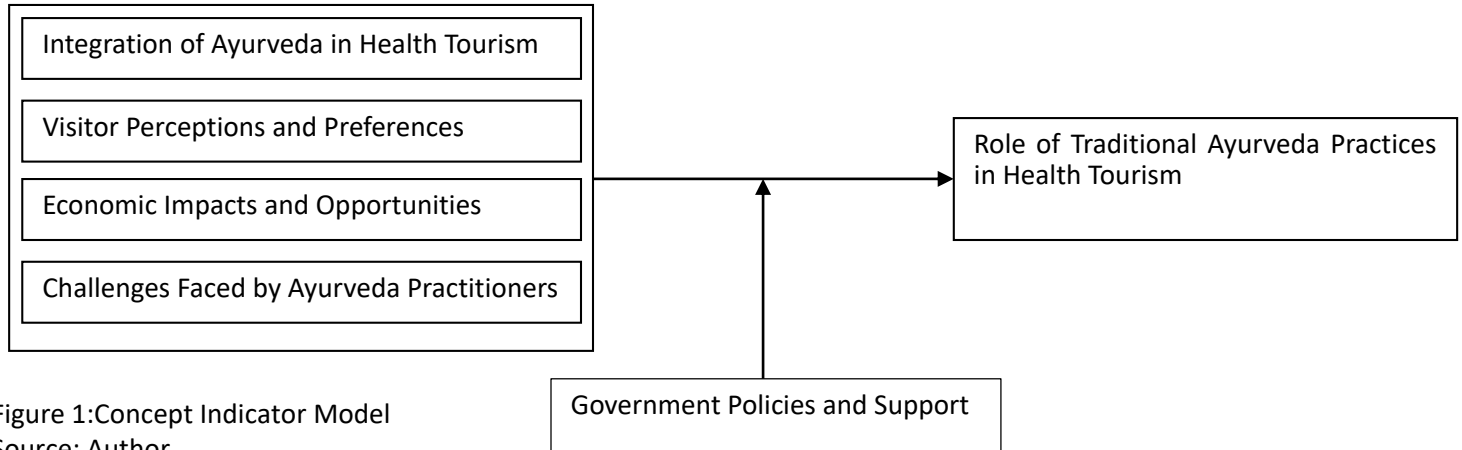


Figure 1: Concept Indicator Model  
Source: Author

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Integration of Ayurveda in Health Tourism

- Subtheme: Presence of Ayurveda in Health Tourism Offerings

Participants unanimously emphasized the pervasive presence of Ayurveda in Sri Lanka's health tourism landscape. Ayurvedic principles were seamlessly integrated into wellness programs, showcasing the symbiotic relationship between traditional healing practices and modern health tourism.

*"Every health resort here incorporates Ayurveda; it's not an add-on, it's ingrained in the experience."* -  
Ayurveda Practitioner

- Subtheme: Types of Ayurveda-based Programs and Services

The diversity of Ayurveda-based offerings emerged as a significant theme. From personalized treatment plans to immersive cultural experiences, participants highlighted the array of programs catering to the holistic well-being goals of health-conscious travelers.

*"We offer not just treatments but an Ayurvedic lifestyle experience, from dietary guidance to yoga sessions."* - Wellness Resort Manager

### 4.2 Visitor Perceptions and Preferences

- Subtheme: Visitor Awareness and Knowledge of Ayurveda

The study revealed a varied spectrum of visitor awareness regarding Ayurveda. While some tourists arrived with extensive knowledge, others sought educational initiatives, indicating a need for targeted awareness campaigns.

*"Many guests have some knowledge, but there's a demand for workshops or sessions to deepen their understanding of Ayurvedic practices."* - Tourist Experience Coordinator

- Subtheme: Visitor Motivations for Choosing Ayurveda-based Wellness Experiences

Motivations ranged from preventive healthcare to spiritual rejuvenation. Participants noted an increasing trend of tourists seeking transformative experiences, with Ayurveda fulfilling the desire for authentic and culturally rich wellness journeys.

*"People aren't just here for relaxation; they want a meaningful shift in their well-being. Ayurveda aligns perfectly with this shift."* - Tourism Specialist

### 4.3 Economic Impacts and Opportunities

- Subtheme: Economic Contributions of Ayurveda Health Tourism

The economic impact of Ayurveda health tourism extended beyond individual establishments. Participants highlighted the ripple effect on local businesses, employment opportunities, and the overall growth of the health tourism sector in Sri Lanka.

"Our community has seen a positive economic shift with the influx of health tourists. Local markets and businesses benefit from this symbiosis." - Local Business Owner

- Subtheme: Financial Benefits for Local Businesses and Practitioners

Ayurveda practitioners emphasized the financial sustainability of their practices, attributing it to the increasing demand for traditional healing. However, challenges such as pricing strategies and profit distribution were acknowledged.

"Financially, it's rewarding, but we must balance the commercial aspect with the essence of Ayurveda. It's a delicate equilibrium." - Ayurveda Clinic Owner

### 4.4 Challenges Faced by Ayurveda Practitioners

- Subtheme: Regulatory Challenges in Offering Ayurveda Services

The study identified regulatory challenges affecting Ayurveda practitioners, including standardized licensing procedures and the need for a cohesive regulatory framework. Participants expressed a collective desire for streamlined processes.

"We navigate through varying regulations. A standardized approach would simplify operations and elevate the credibility of Ayurvedic services." - Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

- Subtheme: Cultural Sensitivity and Authenticity Challenges

Maintaining cultural authenticity while catering to diverse tourists emerged as a central concern. Participants discussed the delicate balance between cultural preservation and meeting the expectations of a global audience.

"There's a challenge in preserving centuries-old practices while ensuring they resonate with a modern, diverse clientele." - Cultural Heritage Specialist

### 4.5 Government Policies and Support

- Subtheme: Existence of Government Policies Supporting Ayurveda Health Tourism

Participants acknowledged the positive impact of government support, particularly in terms of promotional campaigns and infrastructure development. However, the study revealed a need for more targeted policies addressing regulatory challenges and sustainable development.

"Government initiatives have elevated Ayurveda's visibility, but a more nuanced policy approach could address industry-specific challenges." - Government Representative

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to create a supportive ecosystem that enhances the integration, sustainability, and growth of traditional Ayurveda practices within the health tourism sector in Sri Lanka. Implementing these measures will contribute to a vibrant and culturally rich Ayurveda health tourism experience, attracting diverse audiences and ensuring the long-term success of this unique facet of Sri Lanka's tourism industry.

- ✓ Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks



Enhance and streamline regulatory frameworks governing Ayurveda health tourism. Collaborate with industry experts, practitioners, and regulatory bodies to establish standardized licensing procedures, ensuring a cohesive and transparent environment for Ayurvedic services. This will boost credibility, address operational challenges, and contribute to the sustainable growth of Ayurveda practices.

✓ Develop Targeted Awareness Campaigns

Launch targeted awareness campaigns to educate both domestic and international tourists about Ayurveda. These campaigns should highlight the cultural significance, health benefits, and diverse offerings of Ayurveda in Sri Lanka. Collaborate with tourism boards, health organizations, and wellness influencers to amplify the reach of these campaigns and attract a wider audience.

✓ Foster Collaboration Between Government and Practitioners

Encourage collaborative initiatives between the government and Ayurveda practitioners. Facilitate regular forums, workshops, and partnerships to address challenges, share best practices, and collectively contribute to the growth of Ayurveda health tourism. Government support should extend beyond promotional activities to actively involve practitioners in policy discussions.

✓ Establish Sustainability Guidelines

Develop sustainability guidelines for Ayurveda health tourism establishments. Emphasize eco-friendly practices, cultural preservation, and community engagement. Encourage businesses to adopt responsible and ethical approaches, ensuring that the benefits of Ayurveda health tourism contribute positively to the environment, society, and local economies.

✓ Promote Research and Innovation

Encourage research and innovation within the Ayurveda health tourism sector. Establish grants, incentives, and partnerships to support research projects that explore the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments, enhance visitor experiences, and contribute to the scientific validation of traditional healing practices. Foster an environment that promotes continuous improvement and innovation.

✓ Diversify Ayurveda Offerings

Promote the diversification of Ayurveda-based programs and services. Encourage establishments to tailor offerings to meet the evolving preferences of health-conscious travelers. This may include personalized wellness plans, immersive cultural experiences, and collaborations with other wellness practices. The diversification will cater to a broader range of tourists seeking holistic well-being.

✓ Facilitate Training and Capacity Building

Invest in training and capacity-building programs for Ayurveda practitioners. Ensure that practitioners are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and cultural sensitivity needed to deliver high-quality services. Collaborate with educational institutions, industry experts, and associations to design comprehensive training programs that enhance the professionalism of Ayurveda practitioners.

✓ Monitor and Evaluate Government Policies

Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of government policies supporting Ayurveda health tourism. Regularly assess the impact of policies on practitioners, businesses, and overall industry growth. Solicit feedback from stakeholders and be responsive to emerging challenges, adapting policies as needed to foster a dynamic and supportive ecosystem.

✓ Foster Public-Private Partnerships

Encourage public-private partnerships to leverage resources and expertise for the development of Ayurveda health tourism. Facilitate dialogue between government entities, private businesses, and community representatives to collectively address challenges, enhance infrastructure, and promote sustainable practices. This collaborative approach will contribute to the overall success and resilience of the industry.

✓ Establish a Center for Ayurveda Excellence

Consider the establishment of a dedicated Center for Ayurveda Excellence. This center could serve as a hub for research, training, and promotion of Ayurveda health tourism. It would bring together practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and educators to collaborate on advancing the field, ensuring the continued growth and authenticity of Ayurveda practices in Sri Lanka's health tourism landscape.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has provided a nuanced understanding of the integral role that traditional Ayurveda practices play in Sri Lanka's health tourism landscape. Through qualitative analysis and thematic exploration, the research has uncovered key insights into Ayurveda's seamless integration, economic impacts, challenges faced by practitioners, and the moderating influence of government policies.

The study reveals a harmonious integration of Ayurveda into Sri Lanka's health tourism offerings. Ayurvedic principles are not mere additions but rather intrinsic components of wellness programs, creating a unique and authentic experience for health-conscious travelers. This integration, as highlighted by participants, forms the foundation of a holistic approach to well-being within the health tourism sector.

Tourists, motivated by a desire for comprehensive well-being, seek transformative experiences aligned with Ayurvedic principles. The findings emphasize the importance of targeted awareness campaigns to cater to the diverse levels of visitor knowledge and preferences. Education and promotion efforts are crucial in enhancing the understanding of Ayurveda and fostering an appreciation for its cultural and therapeutic significance.

Economically, Ayurveda health tourism emerges as a significant contributor to local economies. The study illustrates its role in fostering economic growth, creating job opportunities, and providing financial benefits to practitioners. However, participants recognize the delicate balance required between commercial viability and the preservation of Ayurvedic authenticity to ensure sustained growth.

Challenges faced by Ayurveda practitioners, including regulatory hurdles and the need for cultural sensitivity, are highlighted. The study underscores the importance of a streamlined regulatory framework, collaborative initiatives between the government and practitioners, and the establishment of sustainability guidelines to address these challenges.

In conclusion, this research not only contributes valuable insights into the present state of Ayurveda in Sri Lanka's health tourism but also offers a foundation for future developments. The recommendations provided aim to guide policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders toward fostering a supportive environment that enhances the authenticity, sustainability, and overall success of Ayurveda health tourism in Sri Lanka.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would want to use this opportunity to offer my sincere gratitude to everyone who helped me accomplish this study. First of all, I would like to sincerely thank my research supervisor, Dr. Samantha Rathnayake, for aiding me in my journey by illuminating my ideas and instilling confidence. Without this continuous assistance, it would not have been able to do this project. Then I want to convey my deep thanks to my parents, family members, friends, and coworkers for their support and insights during this process.

## REFERENCES

- 1) Abeysekara, U. L. D. P. (2021). Business value of ICT for small tourism enterprises: The case of Sri Lanka. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.17058164>
- 2) Amarathunge, S. M., Gunaratne, L. H. P., & Prasada, D. V. P. (2021). A case study in the utilization of the underutilized crop; <em>Salacia</em>; species in lowland wet zone of Sri Lanka. *Agrieast (Chenkalady)*, 15(1), 43. <https://doi.org/10.4038/agrieast.v15i1.100>
- 3) Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2014). What can "thematic analysis" offer health and well-being researchers? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 9(1), 26152. <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.26152>

- 4) Cyranski, C. (2017). Purifying purges and rejuvenating Massages: Ayurvedic health tourism in South India. <https://doi.org/10.11588/heidok.00022342>
- 5) De S Wicramasooriya, L., Chandralal, K., & Jayawickrama, W. D. C. (2020). How Sri Lanka has been promoted as a tourist destination? An Exploration of the promotional efforts of Sri Lanka Tourist Promotional Authority of Sri Lanka. *Sri Lanka Journal of Management Studies*, 2(2), 67–96. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sljms.v2i2.39>
- 6) Fernando, I. (2021). Tourism amid COVID-19 Pandemic in Sri Lanka Way-Forwarding strategies through the Porters' Diamond Model. *Sri Lanka Journal of Marketing*, 7(1), 22–45. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sljmuok.v7i1.55>
- 7) Frenk, J., Chen, L., Bhutta, Z. A., Cohen, J. J., Crisp, N., Evans, T., Fineberg, H. V., García, P. J., Ke, Y., Kelley, P. W., Kistnasamy, B., Meleis, A. I., Naylor, D., Pablos-Méndez, A., Reddy, K. S., Scrimshaw, S. C., Sepúlveda, J., Serwadda, D., & Zurayk, H. (2010). Health professionals for a new century: transforming education to strengthen health systems in an interdependent world. *The Lancet*, 376(9756), 1923–1958. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(10\)61854-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(10)61854-5)
- 8) Kamalaseena, B. T., & Chamodya, M. (2021). Impact of service quality on foreign tourists' satisfaction of medical tourism in Western Province, Sri Lanka. *Proceedings of International Conference on Business Management*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.31357/icbm.v17.5206>
- 9) Kemppainen, L., Koskinen, V., Bergroth, H., Marttila, E., & Kemppainen, T. (2021). Health and Wellness–Related Travel: A scoping study of the literature in 2010-2018. *SAGE Open*, 11(2), 215824402110137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211013792>
- 10) Khanal, B. P., & Shimizu, T. (2019). Strategies for Development of Yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation-based Health tourism in Nepal: Using SWOT Analysis. *Journal of Tourism and Adventure*, 2(1), 85–107. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jota.v2i1.25934>
- 11) Mirando, U. J., Dabare, P. U. I., & Chathuranga, B. T. K. (2022). A Literature Review on How Wellness Tourism Contribute to Re-Building Sri Lankan Tourism. *Sri Lanka Journal of Marketing*, 8, 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sljmuok.v8i0.93>
- 12) Payyappallimana, U. (2010). Traditional Medicine in health system Development : A case study of Kerala State, India. *横浜国際社会科学研究*, 15(3), 259–283. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110009587222>
- 13) Perera, P. K. U., Jayasinghe, J., Nanayakkara, N., & Mahaliyanaarachchi, R. P. (2023). Exploring the potential to promote Ayurvedic tourism Post-COVID-19 pandemic in Western Province, Sri Lanka. *South Asian Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, 3(1), 77–113. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sajth.v3i1.58>
- 14) Ranasinghe, R., Damunupola, A., Wijesundara, S., Karunarathna, C., Nawarathna, D., Gamage, S., Ranaweera, A., & Idroos, A. (2020). Tourism after Corona: Impacts of Covid 19 Pandemic and Way Forward for Tourism, Hotel and Mice Industry in Sri Lanka. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3587170>
- 15) Sivesan, S. (2021). Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the wellness tourism in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, 4(2–3), 160–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2021.1987001>
- 16) Warrier, M. (2011). Modern Ayurveda in transnational context. *Religion Compass*, 5(3), 80–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2011.00264.x>