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## Integration of Wellness and Heritage Tourism: A Sustainable Model for Medical Tourism in Rajasthan

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**Abstract:** A growing interest into a manner of tourism in general that provides the holistic experience has had stakeholders of one of the Indian states, Rajasthan, which has much of the healing practices and alike, to research into models that can optimally turn wellness tourism and cultural tourism into one. The researchers of this paper pay attention to this potential mix of these two sectors in order to develop a sustainable framework of medical tourism. To capture motivation, satisfaction and local impact data, this was conducted through the use of a mixed-methods design where stakeholders, tourists and a field trip to major heritage-wellness destinations (e.g. Pushkar, Ajmer, Jaipur) were surveyed to provide data on motivation, satisfaction, and local impact. The results indicate that blending Ayurvedic medicine, spiritual journeys as well as history experiences helps make visitors satisfied, local income improvement as well as an interest in preserving nature and culture. However, there exist problems relating to infrastructure, coordination of regulators and coordination of stakeholders. We propose a multi-stakeholding pro-sustainability model where they can balance economic growth with the maintenance of the cultural integrity. Going forward, the research should be experimented, regarding the long-term outcomes and applicability in new grounds.

### Introduction

Rajasthan in the splendor of the splendid palaces, soaring palaces and colorful history has the beauty of the jewel on the crown of the cultural tourism in India. The breath-taking experiences, the craftsmanship and the grandiose of historicity in the state appeal to the visitors of foreign origin. Meanwhile India has emerged as one of the most popular destinations in the world due to wellness tourism, which has its historical and cultural roots in Ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy and spiritual healing. This business sector has expanded rapidly, with in-coming foreign tourists that is seeking total-body health and rejuvenation.

Even though the two industries of the heritage and wellness tourist industries are running well at a personal level, the industries are normally independent of each other and the two sides of tourism industry have very different tourist circles and there is very minimal exchange. It is such a side by side operation that has been missed in the creation of a less degrading and more coherent tourism process. The ensuing

combination of such provisions has the capability not only to permit Rajasthan region to diversify its touristic provision but also permit them to extend the span of stay of the visitors, economic benefits to the local inhabitants, and provide a more sustainable provision of tourist activity.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and more precisely Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) are actually hand in hand with heritages and wellness tourism. As an example, the tourist may be offered with a sort of cultural experience such as the combination of physical fitness to heritages in health resorts that may be incorporated in redeveloped heritage buildings. Along this line, there must be thought of the involvement of Ayurvedic therapies and yoga practice in heritage circuits in the fashion that would both enhance the tourist experience and preserve and pass on the local knowledge systems.

Moreover, this traveling-hybrid proposal encourages sustainability as it facilitates the spreading of the tourist flow off hotspots, fosters adaptive reuse of historical buildings and job creation related to the sphere of wellness and culture. The local citizens are able to gain more due to increase in trade in local production, handicraft services, organic foods and cultural performances thus reinforcing a closed eco-system economy in cultural observance and healthiness. The implementation of a policy, infrastructure creation and interaction with stakeholders are how the actualization of this vision will be attained fully. To achieve the readiness to offer quality and authentic services, it is possible to organize the training of local guides, staff workers in wellness motives, and employees working in hospitality fields. Marketing campaigns too should be refocused to the integrated experience of tourism that Rajasthan can offer.

### Objectives

- Compare and contrast contemporary trends in heritage and wellness tourism in Rajasthan.
- Determine the constraints and success factors in their integrations.
- Construct a viable sustainable paradigm of medical tourism.
- Suggest policy, community and industry approaches to sustainable roll-out.

### Methodology

#### Study Area

Three sites in Rajasthan are the concern of the study:

- Jaipur (UNESCO palaces & burgeoning wellness resorts),
- Pushkar Ajmer region (holy lakes, folk ritual cure),
- Udaipur (lake city heritage and incipient provision of spa wellness).

The sites were selected due to the presence of developed tourism infrastructure and continuous activities in cultural and wellness tourism in those sites.

### Research Design

#### A mixed-methods approach:

- Quantitative: tourist surveys (N=300) of motivations, expectations of behavioural intentions, and degree of satisfaction.
- Qualitative: semi structured interviews of 25 stakeholders (tour operators, resort managers, heritage custodians, local officials).
- Observational Audits: evaluation of on-site infrastructure, services and environment.

### Data Collection

- In the resorts and heritage sites where the survey was conducted during the peak season (Oct-Dec 2024), there were Likert and open ended questions in the survey.
- Face to face consensually recorded and transcribed interviews using thematic analysis.
- Inspection of visitor facilities, signs, the availability of such facilities, the environment (both ecological), and interpretation/interpretive material based on a checklist.

### Analysis Methods

- **Quantitative Figures:** descriptives, correlational and regressive statistics to provide testing of associations between integration and satisfaction.

- **Qualitative Data:** thematic coding with NVivo to detect the patterns of the issues (e.g., stakeholder collaboration, cultural authenticity, sustainability).
- Data verification with triangulation also provided the reliability of data.

## Results & Discussion

### Integration Strategies Identified

Based upon qualitative interviews and observational audits four major strategies on integration were identified:

Strategy	Description
Heritage-wellness packages	Combined itinerary (fort tour + yoga + Ayurvedic massage)
Spiritual-cultural circuits	Routes linking temples and healing centres (e.g., Pushkar → Ajmer)
Local community engagement	Cooking classes, craft workshops, traditional music at wellness centres
Green infrastructure	Eco-friendly spa design in restored heritage buildings

In order to successfully exploit the synergy existing between heritage and wellness tourism in Rajasthan, a number of focused strategies have been figured out. Such strategies will not only be intended to maximize the tourism experience but will also strive to promote cultural conservation, involvement of the community, and sustainable environment. There are four of these integrated approaches described in the table:

### Heritage Wellness Packages

This can be created along the lines of aggregate itinerary where history exploration is intertwined with rejuvenation solutions. As an illustration, a tourist will be able to attend a tour of the fort or palace in the morning and yoga class or Ayurvedic massage in a traditional wellness centre in the afternoon. Such dual experience is very attractive to the culturally curious and health conscious tourists. With that smooth package, it entices visitors of a longer stay and higher connection with the rich heritage and ancient wellness tradition to Rajasthan.

### Spiritual Cultural Circuits

These paths are set to connect places of spiritual importance and community healthy centers to form quality reflections as well as healing expeditions. The classic route could be around Pushkar and Ajmer where travellers visit temples, dargahs and therapeutic centers. Such circuits meet the needs of such tourists who want to enrich themselves spiritually and have emotionally healthy life; they serve to benefit in regional tourism across various towns. They are also bringing out the syncretic traditions in Rajasthan and this can point towards the religious and cultural diversity.

### Involvement of the Local Community

It is necessary that wellness tourism be made more authentic and inclusive by means of community-based experiences. One of the approaches in this is to carry out activities like conventional cooking lessons, craft-making classes, performances of folk songs around wellness centres or in them. Such interactions do not only present tourists with culturally rich experience but also act as an economic empowerment tool to artisans, musicians and cooks that live in the neighborhood. It creates a connection between tourists and the local communities, where each is valued and treated as an equal.

### Green Infrastructure

The future of tourism upholds the use of sustainability. Mantra If it applies to the process of making wellness infrastructure in general, it is done with the vision of environment-friendly design. As an example, spas and wellness centres are using solar energy, natural ventilation, and organic materials and maintaining the old aesthetically pleasing image of a building. This decreases the impact on the environment and supports the notion that caring about heritage and natural wellness products can be combined peacefully.

The above four strategies in a combination will provide an intensive guide towards positioning Rajasthan as a major destination in integrated heritage and wellness tourism.

### Stakeholder Perspectives

- **Resort Managers Noted**
  - The act of visiting a palace in addition to meditation along with meditation makes the visitors stay longer as they feel like having a complete tour.
  - There was concern among the heritage guide associations:
  - What we require are additional formal “guides to coordination” that are not on the same page with resort operators.
  - Nov 2024 Dec 2024 (N=25; thematic quotes, interviews).
- **Tourist Survey Results**

**Motivations**

  - Wellness seekers: 41%
  - Heritage/cultural explorers: 29%
  - Interested in both: 30%

### Satisfaction Scores

- **Using a 5-point Likert Scale**

Type of Experience	Mean Satisfaction
Heritage only	3.9
Wellness only	4.1
Integrated experiences	4.6

Even after correcting the age and previous travel integration proved to be a significant predictor of satisfaction (beta 0.42,  $p < 0.01$ ) in the regression analysis.

- **Sustainable Outcomes**
  - **Economic Impact:** The combination between wellness and heritage services caused a visible economic boost, which was reflected in the fact that the limit of spending of the visitors was measured by 22 percent and amounted to an average of 12500 rupees per tourist. These developments are credited to the packaged products where wellness, spiritual and cultural products are brought together. Furthermore, local craftsmen at the small scale also complained of increase of up to 30 percent in their sales with the implementation of the pilot phases. These benefits show the possibility of such integrated models in stimulating micro-economies by going beyond the traditional form of tourist activities, which includes wholesale sightseeing, towards inclusion of more expansive and encompassing monetary benefits to the local community.
  - **Environmental Outcomes:** The development of green infrastructure in the heritage buildings delivered good environmental outcomes. An initial reading of two buildings that were retrofitted indicated that water consumption was decreased to 15 percent and energy used was reduced by 11 percent, indicating the possibility of modern sustainability in the context of history. Not all the effects on environment were however mixed. A large number of smaller wellness spas still did not fare well in terms of poor WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, which poses a big setback in long run environment and health aspects of people. These are the existing gaps that should be addressed in order to make sure that the ecological advantages are complemented with steady infrastructural changes.
  - **Cultural Enrichment:** The interviews with tourists were used to find the fact that the interaction with local heritage due to active, experience-oriented activities made them appreciate and comprehend it more. Respondents more particularly named such memorable elements as authentic cooking sequences, evening storytelling, and practical craftwork as those elements that got them further connected to their culture. These participatory experiences enabled the tourists not only to advance their individual experiences, but also made them understand the importance of preserving the local traditions since they had been actively involved in the given activities. This type of cultural immersion has been part of

heritage education, and also it makes Rajasthan a place where the wellness tourism is grounded firmly.

#### Stakeholder Concerns

- **Disproportionate Distribution of the Advantages:** the huge resorts benefited more than smaller B&Bs and single proprietorships.
- **Infrastructural Constraints:** the road connectivity on each of the wellness centres and the heritage sites was poor, particularly the condition of the roads during monsoon season.

#### Discussion

The qualitative findings depict that there is a viable synergy between the wellness and heritage tourist segments of Rajasthan:

- Combined experiences improve spend and satisfaction a great deal.
- Tourism can be useful to the locals through the storytelling, creation of crafts and cooking.
- Potential environmental gains can be achieved that comes in the form of retro-fitting heritage grounds with eco-friendly infrastructure.

#### Challenges

- **Coordination Gap**

Lack of a centralized coordinating agency that takes charge of the cross-sectoral planning is one of the main problems in integrating heritage and wellness tourism in Rajasthan. Presently, the work in tourism, heritage preservation, wellness services, and infrastructure are in silos and in many instances, under different authorities or departments. Such non-integration on the institutional level has the negative effect of undermining the development of a unified development strategy and the duplication of efforts or service delivery gaps. Through the lack of a coherent framework, the possibility of synergy, including the interconnection of heritage preservation missions with wellness tourism infrastructure, are underused. To achieve successful cross-sector collaboration, there is need to have a body that will coordinate the efforts so that the policies can be simplified, coordination of interests at departmental levels and collaboration of the interested stakeholders who are the public, privates and community in order to limit imbalances in the development of tourism.

- **Resource Imbalance The imbalance of resources is one of the factors which affect the intention to visit (the willingness to visit); this is about the drive to successfulness.**

A huge divide has been observed between mega tourism operators and micro/ community based providers resulting in disproportionate benefits. Large hotel names, having an enormous marketing budgetary allocation, better infrastructural support and global recognition are more likely to get the majority chunk of the tourist flow. Comparatively, smaller operators such as local wellness practitioners, homestays and artisan collectives fail to harness the visibility or access resources. This ends up with their sidelining even though they can provide culturally abundant and genuine experience. These micro-providers are left with no economic security without special aid like access to funding, training as well as positioning them in promotional circuits. This imbalance should be addressed in the interest of fair development as well as in the interest of sustaining very rich cultural fabric on which the wellness and heritage tourism model in Rajasthan stands.

- **Regulatory Barriers**

Tourism-related services in Rajasthan regulation is typically permeated and varied depending on municipalities. Compliances, licensing process, safety audit and other processes vary widely across districts, confusing the operators, particularly the small and medium businesses. Such administrative anomalies create a major impediment in the efforts made by businesspeople to establish composite services like wellness treatment at heritage assets. This absence of efficient, standardised procedure could slow down permitting of projects, put off investment, and lead to under use of heritage resources. To make this sector blossom, an immediate need of regulatory convergence is also necessary including the formation of state-based frameworks that ease the reporting without compromising the safety and quality standards.

- **Seasonal and Infrastructural Non-Addendum**

Tourism industry in Rajasthan is also under the influence of seasonal changes and infrastructural limits, mainly in monsoon season. The occurrence of special rains commonly causes the destruction of roads, flooding and network disruptions particularly within the semi-drove and farming circuits where most wellness and legacy destinations can be found. Moreover, not all areas have any transportation infrastructure built, and it is not possible to have access to some potentially enticing destinations year-round. This does not only impact the inflow of tourists but also increases logistic problems with the operators and reduces inflows of investments in far segments. To ensure heritage-wellness tourism as an all-year viable option, the transport networks/drainage systems and social responsibilities of digital connectivity should be enhanced. The strategic investments in the sphere of infrastructure will aid in overcoming seasonality effects and secure the possibility to include the lesser explored territory into the larger tourism routes.

- **Heritage–Wellness Synergy: Cultural Fusion in Practice**

Wellness and heritage in combination make the tourist experience multidimensional that will satisfy the body, mind, and soul. Multiple synergy mechanisms could be noted:

- Therapeutic storytelling about cultures: In the Udaipur resorts, the stories that cropped up during the therapy session were Rajasthani folk stories, making cultural immersion more robust.
- Traditional practices of healing: Ayurveda history and Sufi mysticism stories were mentioned during temple walks and wellness talks by tour guides in Pushkar.
- Architecture as therapy: Healing courtyards refurbished the havelis and provided yoga and meditation with the physical built environment to assist in the healing process.
- These incorporations augmented the emotional health and cultural knowledge, which met the hedonic and eudaimonic objectives of tourism.

- **Economic and Environmental Implications**

**Economic Benefits**

- **Lengthening of Stay:** Fusion of wellness and heritage tourism products has also led to significant rise in the average length of stay of tourists with the tourists staying 2.1 days longer than before. The long stay is explained by the wellness-heritage packages gathered together, all containing a blend of cultural sightseeing and relaxation approaches, including yoga, meditation, and Ayurvedic cures. An extended stay therefore has a direct into local sheet on accommodating costs, food, services, and shopping; therefore increasing the economic dividends to more stakeholders such as small-scale retailers, tour operators, and hoteliers along with other sources of the tourism value chain network.
- **Cluster Building and Local Enterprise Development:** The tourism has enabled the formation of entrepreneurial clusters through integrated wellness-heritage tourism with major destinations being Pushkar. Such clusters have experienced an increase in micro-enterprises such as organic restaurants, cooperatives of handicrafts, stalls on traditional medicines, and Ayurveda corners. This expansion does not only offer a way to make an income to local craftspeople, independent young people, and holistic health providers, but also enriches the tourist experience by its realism. This model contributes to the increased involvement of communities in tourism and the creation of a more comprehensive economic environment by supporting locally established businesses, which facilitate a more bottom-up development in the smaller towns and off-the-beaten-tracks.
- **The Increase in the Arrival of Medical-Wellness Tourism:** Department of Tourism Rajasthan 2024 Review indicates that the number of arrivals on a medical-wellness basis increased by 9 percent which is directly linked to introduction of integrated wellness-heritage packages. This Development implies that Rajasthan is managing to establish itself as wellness and culturally based medical tourism competing destination. There is a growing demand among tourists on visiting places that offer them not just a physical healing experience but also a cultural and spiritual experience. This is a good trend and means a good direction to diversify towards the economy, foreign exchange revenue and status of Rajasthan in the global wellness tourism chart.



### Environmental Outcomes

Solar and water harvesting as well as single-use plastics led to the Green Key certification of two retrofitted heritage hotels.

Nonetheless, at smaller operators an environment audit showed that there were problems, namely: absence of composting, absence of grey water usage and absence of eco certification awareness.

### Policy Implication

A state level wellness-heritage roadmap is required, which should consider:

- Small operators capacity building.
- Single branding (e.g., "Sacred and Serene Rajasthan").
- Retrofit and green transformation grants on heritage buildings.

### Conclusion

Integration of both wellness and heritage tourism provides a sound and stable platform upon which medical tourism in Rajasthan should be developed. This paper confirms the possibility to merge these two industries in order to develop a unique niche that would attract both local and foreign visitors who compete in their aspirations to culturally immersive and healthy environments. Marriage of heritage rich settings, with wellness services not just enhances tourist experience but creates abundance of benefits to communities hosting them, environment and the economy in large.

Among the most considerable benefits which are witnessed in this model is an improvement in the satisfaction of the tourists. Tourists going to Rajasthan are now more attracted to adventures that not only rejuvenate their spirit physically, but also emotionally and culturally. Heritage buildings with their architectural grandiloquence, historical value and spiritual atmosphere would make the best location of the wellness facilities like Ayurveda, meditation, yoga, naturopathy and holistic healthcare. Such aspects make the process of getting such experiences emotionally satisfying and unforgettable thus influencing tourists to make a stay extension decision. And the longer the period of stay is, the more tourists invest financially in the regional economy. There is a lot of ripple effect on the economy including long term bookings of heritage hotels and spending a lot of money on wellness, cultural tours, handicrafts, and local food. This model encourages broad based growth that involves wider range of the local stakeholders such as artisans, wellness practitioners, tour guides, and traditional healers. Additionally, the concern of incorporating heritage buildings as wellness/medical sites augers well with environmental sustainability. Rather than building new infrastructures, a lot of projects have seen the adaptation of old historical structures by using new constructions on them and refurbishing them. That not only saves architectural heritage but also limits the impact on the environment connected with new constructions. It guarantees that development will be corresponding to conservation intentions and contemporary health and security models. Nevertheless, the process of putting this kind of an integrated model into practice does not happen without its difficulties. The existing situation demonstrates an evident asymmetry of the benefits in favor of the bigger hospitality and wellness corporations that have an excessive advantage. These organizations are usually able to take advantage of new opportunities because of the financial position they are in, as well as the extended professional contacts and the marketing potentials. Contrastingly, smaller operators, many of whom are highly embedded in local customs and traditions, succumb because of weak capacity, co-ordination, and low institutional outreach. What is necessary to deal with such inequity is to implement a whole new Public-Private-Community Partnership (PPCP) model. Through such a framework the distribution of benefits along fair lines would be ensured with the convergence of the government bodies, the participation of the stakeholders of the private sector as well as the local population. PPCP, through joint investment, training and capacity-building projects, and jointly-developed marketing, will be able to equip small-scale operators and traditional wellness practitioners to contribute more thoroughly to the tourism economy. To sum it all up, though the blending of the wellness and heritage tourism has already started to transform the tourism sector in Rajasthan, it is not until the process of development is brought inclusive and sustainable only then we can fully experience the potentiality of it in Rajasthan. It needs a community working together in order to see that medical tourism in Rajasthan develops in a manner that acknowledges their cultural values, promote local economic activities and is globally ranked in terms of health and hospitality services.

### Future Directions

- Follow up thereon, longitudinal studies on tourist maintenance, and community impacts.
- Reproduction of this model in other Indian heritage states (e.g. Kerala, Himachal Pradesh).
- Artificially intelligent and augmented reality itinerary applications of heritage-wellness.

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