

REVIEW ARTICLE

A Review of the Future of Wellness Travel: Career Option in Ayur-Tourism

Tanwar Mamata^{1*}, Rakesh Kumar Nagar², Kamla R. Nagar³, Shraddha Kumawat⁴, Promila Yadav¹

¹PG Scholar, Department of Kaumarbhritya, National Institute of Ayurveda (Deemed to be University), Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

²Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, National Institute of Ayurveda (Deemed to be University), Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

³Associate Professor, Department of Ayurveda Poshan-Ahar, National Institute of Ayurveda (Deemed to be University), Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, Keshav Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Jhalawar, Rajasthan, India.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received on: 03-04-2026

Accepted on: 16-05-2026

Available online: 31-05-2026

Key words:

Ayur tourism,
Ayurveda,
Career opportunity,
Holistic health,
Wellness tourism

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda wellness tourism is an emerging sector of the tourism sector, which is defined as vacations done primarily for the purpose of improving one's health and well-being. Focusing on leisure and quality is its primary goal. India is currently becoming a popular destination for health tourism because of its excellent medicinal remedies, affordable prices, convenient accessibility, and amazing vacation experiences. India is home to numerous holistic health resorts that offer alternative therapies along with *Yoga* and meditation sessions. Their residential packages include cleansing, rejuvenation, weight management, and anti-aging programs for improving physical and psychological health by eliminating excess weight and toxins from the body and stress from the mind. Therefore, as a major component of the health tourism industry, numerous hotels and resorts are emphasizing the marketing of these traditional national cures in international Forums through their service offerings. Numerous Ayurveda treatment facilities and spas have arisen in the hospitality sector for strengthening health and wellness tourism, enabling comprehensive patient care and a full vacation experience. In addition, *Pancha-karma* and various forms of therapy are also added to these services. This review explores the emerging opportunities and career pathways in Ayurveda wellness tourism. It is based on earlier studies, academic publications, databases, and the internet. Studies show that the Ayurveda wellness centers based on genuine practices and meeting Ayush and National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers – Ayush Treatment and Wellness Centers norms are more credible and of better quality. The presence of qualified professionals and organized clinical practices leads to better patient care and management. The tie-up with wellness and medical tourism helps in gaining international acceptance and financial viability. India is poised to dominate the international wellness tourism market through professionally designed Ayurveda wellness centers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ideal remedy for the growing global awareness of wellness offering individuals a path to detach from a hectic pace of life. Ayurveda getaways in India offer an environmentally friendly method of rejuvenation through the use of natural materials such as herbs, oils, and massages. Wellness programs are customized for each patient to address specific imbalances and health issues based on the individual's *Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*). Combined with yoga, meditation, and a nutritious diet, these personalized treatments offer a comprehensive route to well-being.^[1] The ancient Indian system

of holistic health known as Ayurveda is quickly becoming well-known throughout the world as a key component of wellness travel.^[2] Travellers are looking for places that provide holistic rejuvenation as a result of growing awareness of natural remedies, mental health, and preventive healthcare, particularly in the post-COVID period.^[3] Ayurveda and Yoga shares a common goal of attaining harmony and balance among the body, mind, and spirit, and their practices are closely related. Daily yoga sessions offer evidence-based benefits for physical flexibility, mental well-being, and overall health markers. Scientific reviews highlight improvements in strength, cardiovascular function, and stress reduction from regular practice. These effects make yoga a valuable adjunct to an Ayurveda treatment plan, whether the goal is to increase immunity, reduce stress, or increase flexibility, this integration of Ayurveda, yoga, and meditation sessions is being customized to meet each person's unique health needs.^[1] India's wellness tourism

Corresponding Author:

Tanwar Mamata, PG Scholar,
Department of Kaumarbhritya, National Institute of Ayurveda
(Deemed to be University), Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.
Email: drtanwar85@gmail.com

market experienced robust growth from 2020 to 2025, driven by rising demand for Ayurveda, yoga, and holistic retreats amid post-pandemic health focus. The market size is around USD 19–21 billion in 2025, up significantly from pre-2020 levels, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6–15% during the period. India's wellness tourism market size was estimated at USD 30.95 billion in 2026, and it is projected to reach USD 43.76 billion by 2031 at a 7.18% CAGR.

This expansion reflects the integration of holistic health into mainstream travel decisions for both domestic and inbound visitors, who now plan trips around Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy, and mental wellness programs rather than adding them as incidental activities. Policy measures are reinforcing this shift, including the Union Budget 2025–2026's "Heal in India" thrust with a dedicated USD 2.2 billion (INR 20,000 crore) allocation that anchors Ayurveda, yoga, and naturopathy as exportable services within India's service economy. Visa facilitation is scaling demand as the e-Ayush stream formalizes entry for wellness-seeking visitors.^[4]

To strengthen India's position as a global wellness hub, the Ministry of Tourism has established standards for wellness centers to ensure quality and accreditation.^[5] About 12,500 AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers have been approved under "National Ayush Mission" thus far, and 6871 AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers are currently operational. An estimated 3,84,69,449 persons have benefited from the National Ayush Mission.^[6]

Projected to rise from its 2024 valuation of around USD 19.43 billion to approximately USD 29.88 billion by 2031. This will help to modernise AYUSH education and training, expand and strengthen AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers under the National AYUSH Mission, and scale up research, standardization, and quality assurance initiatives. It will also encourage evidence-based research and innovation, strengthen institutional infrastructure, and increase the capacity of human resources nationwide.^[5]

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review focuses on a qualitative exploration of Ayur-tourism and its increasing contribution to the wellness travel industry.

2.1. Aim

This study aims to comprehend how Ayurveda wellness tourism is developing and how it might be a viable career path for Ayurveda scholars.

3. METHODOLOGY

Data were gathered using a combination of field observations, book reviews, and casual expert discussions. Reputable journals, official websites such as "Incredible India," newspapers, government publications (AYUSH Ministry, Tourism Department), and employment portals such as Naukri.com, LinkedIn, and other various online platforms and websites were the sources of the secondary data, which was used to track current career demands. Only papers that were directly relevant to Ayurveda, tourism, or wellness-based occupations were gathered, including first-hand accounts. In addition to reading literature, and casual conversations were conducted with *Panchakarma* therapists, faculties of Ayurveda institutions, and Ayurveda practitioners. Ayurveda-driven tourism's socioeconomic effects, educational skill gaps, infrastructure requirements, and developing employment profiles were the main topics of the thematic

analysis of the data. These methods aided in creating a comprehensive understanding of the employment opportunities at the nexus of Ayurveda, tourism, and rural development.

The analysis shows that the Ayurveda wellness industry in India is poised to play an important role in the development of world-class wellness centers that combine traditional Ayurveda systems with modern healthcare delivery and hospitality standards. Wellness centers that follow genuine Ayurveda systems, especially in *Panchakarma*, lifestyle management, dietetics, yoga, and preventive programs, and are also compliant with the Ministry of AYUSH and National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers – Ayush Treatment and Wellness Centers (NABH-ATWC) regulations, have greater credibility, safety, and international acceptance.

3.1. Findings

The findings of the study show that the presence of qualified professionals, such as Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery and Doctor of Medicine (Ayurveda) practitioners, trained *Panchakarma* therapists, certified therapists, and wellness managers, are the most important factor for operational excellence and service quality. Organized human resource deployment as per accreditation standards improves patient outcomes, standardization of services, and global acceptance.

3.2. Further Findings

The findings further show that integration with wellness tourism, eco-tourism, and medical tourism models has greatly improved market reach and economic sustainability. Wellness centers that provide immersive and guest-centric wellness experiences have greater demand from local and foreign customers. In summary, the study confirms that a mix of clinical authenticity, professional standardization, qualified manpower, and hospitality integration is essential for developing sustainable and globally competitive Ayurveda wellness centers in India. Baragi also emphasized the growing demand for Ayurveda experts in holistic wellness and global health tourism, stating that expanding students' vision beyond outpatient department (OPD) and hospital-based roles is the need of the hour.^[7] Kumar stressed the importance of aligning Ayurveda education with the National Education Policy 2020, which advocates interdisciplinary and vocational integration.^[8] Together, these insights suggest that there is an urgent need for curriculum reform. Ayurveda institutions must introduce modules on career counseling, skill-based training, and exposure to emerging industries such as Ayur-tourism, resort consultancy, herbal farming, and global wellness.

4. DISCUSSION

There is a clear disconnect between traditional Ayurvedic education and the evolving demands of the wellness tourism sector, as evidenced by the literature currently available. Despite having received extensive training in clinical skills, many studies indicate that Ayurvedic students may not be fully aware of more recent career options such as ayur-tourism, wellness centers, and spa-based practice. This suggests that more career-oriented and hands-on experience should be included in the current curriculum (Telang and Baxi, 2024).

People's interest in preventive care, natural healing, and general wellness has increased globally since the COVID-19 pandemic. Herbal remedies and Ayurvedic therapies, such as *Panchakarma*, are currently becoming more popular worldwide. For the part they play in enhancing health and fostering happiness. Ayurveda is actively

promoted as a component of wellness tourism in India by the Ministry of AYUSH.

However, literature also highlights some significant difficulties. These include inadequate infrastructure, little exposure to the industry, and a shaky relationship between academic institutions and the wellness industry. According to Kumar, by emphasizing skill development, vocational training, and entrepreneurship, the National Education Policy 2020 can assist in resolving these problems.

Numerous studies also indicate that providing students with hands-on experience, such as internships in resorts, spas, and wellness centers, can enhance their abilities and employment prospects. To prepare students for the demands of the real world, cooperation between universities and the wellness sector is crucial (Baragi, 2025).

All things considered, the reviewed literature indicates that Ayurvedic education requires some significant adjustments. Students can discover new career options by studying subjects such as wellness tourism, product development, branding, and healthcare management. As a result, India will become a world leader in the wellness travel industry.

4.1. Establishing a World-Class Ayurveda Wellness Center: Requirements, Qualifications, and Future Directions

The Ayurveda wellness industry in India is a distinct fusion of traditional medical knowledge and modern hospitality, making the country a leader in the global wellness tourism market. With increasing global demand for alternative and preventive healthcare, government support through the Ministry of AYUSH, and growing professional standardization, Ayurveda wellness centers are poised to become credible, sustainable, and economically viable institutions. Establishing a successful Ayurveda wellness center in the current scenario demands a robust foundation in clinical authenticity, regulatory standards, human resource expertise, and hospitality excellence.

4.2. Basic Vision and Concept

A contemporary Ayurveda wellness center needs to be established on the lines of authentic Ayurveda concepts, particularly *Panchakarma*, lifestyle management, dietetics, yoga, and preventive medicine, in a professionally managed and guest-oriented setting. The wellness center should be designed to offer not only treatment but also an immersive wellness experience that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional rejuvenation. Concepts of eco-tourism, luxury hospitality, or medical tourism can further add to the global appeal.

4.3. Regulatory Compliance and Accreditation

Compliance with regulations is essential for quality assurance, international acceptance, and sustainability.

The key requirements are as follows:

- AYUSH clinic license: AYUSH clinic license: Required for providing Ayurveda services, to be obtained from State AYUSH Departments
- Good manufacturing practices (GMP) certification: Mandatory for any in-house preparation of formulations, ensuring GMP
- Drug manufacturing license and sale license as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act: Required for manufacturing, selling, and storing medicines issued by state AYUSH departments or the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
- NABH accreditation for ATWC: Involves the outpatient department, day care facilities, patient safety, and management

systems

- AYUSH standard mark/AYUSH premium mark: Required for adherence to national and World Health Organization (WHO)-GMP norms
- ISO 21426 (AYUSH adapted): Helps in international acceptance and tourism development.

These standards promote standardization in therapies such as *Panchakarma* and yoga, thus increasing credibility among national and international clients.

4.4. Human Resources Needs to Establish an Ayurveda Wellness Center

To build a trustworthy Ayurvedic wellness centre that meets national and international standards, proper human resource management is essential. The centre should follow official regulations and quality guidelines, including the standards set by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) for AYUSH Treatment and Wellness Centers (ATWC). A well-organised and qualified team helps ensure authentic Ayurvedic care, patient safety, and high-quality services. An important part of the staffing system is the appointment of a qualified Medical Director or Chief Ayurveda Physician. This professional should possess a recognised Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) degree and a valid registration with the state medical council to supervise clinical activities and maintain treatment standards. In addition, therapies such as *Panchakarma* should be conducted by trained *Panchakarma* specialists who have proper certification or diploma training in *Panchakarma* procedures. Their expertise ensures that traditional cleansing and detoxification therapies are performed safely, effectively, and under professional supervision (Table 1).

4.5. Strategic Recommendations for Ayurveda Scholars

- Skill diversification: Combine clinical expertise with hospitality management and foreign language skills
- Advanced degrees/certifications in wellness management, hospitality, or public health
- Internships at wellness resorts and spas
- Training in communication, guest handling, digital marketing, and service management
- Entrepreneurship focus: Explore niche markets such as Ayurveda skincare, dietetics, and eco-tourism
- Global networking: Participate in international wellness conferences and collaborations
- Research and innovation: Publish comparative studies bridging Ayurveda and modern medicine to enhance credibility.

4.6. Integration with Wellness Tourism and Government Initiatives

Government initiatives such as “Heal in India” and National AYUSH Mission facilitate the integration of Ayurveda with medical and wellness tourism. Global demand from Europe, the US, ASEAN, and the emerging markets is driven by the demand for authentic, organic, and chemical-free wellness practices. Domestic tourists remain a robust base, contributing close to 70% of the demand.

Successful centers will integrate with:

- Medical tourism facilitators
- Travel agencies and international wellness consultants
- Digital health platforms providing tele-Ayurveda and follow-up consultations

- Entrepreneurship and Economic Sustainability.

Ayurveda wellness centers provide multiple entrepreneurial opportunities ranging from boutique *Panchakarma* centers to luxury eco-resorts and digital wellness platforms. Income streams include clinical practice, wellness packages, retreats, educational programs, product branding, and online consultations. Well-established centers with strong brand identity and accreditation can generate substantial annual turnover while contributing to employment and rural development in India.

4.7. Challenges and the Way Forward

The competition from global wellness destinations such as Sri Lanka and Thailand underscores the need for:

- Effective digital marketing and storytelling
- International collaborations and accreditations
- Continuous employee training and research focus
- Transparency and ethical practices.

Adherence to AYUSH norms, NABH accreditation, and global quality standards will be critical in sustaining India's leadership position.

5. CONCLUSION

The reviewed literature demonstrates that Ayurveda holds substantial potential within the wellness tourism industry worldwide. However, a persistent gap exists between current educational frameworks and the competencies required to meet these emerging industry demands. Limited awareness of non-clinical career pathways, infrastructural constraints, and inadequate practical exposure continue to restrict the effective integration of Ayurveda education with wellness tourism, which ultimately hinders the ability to provide a strategic opportunity to address these gaps by fostering the sector.

The National Education Policy provides a strategic opportunity to address these gaps by fostering skill-based learning, interdisciplinary training, and entrepreneurship. Strengthening collaborations between academic institutions and the wellness industry, and incorporating modules related to wellness tourism, healthcare management, and product development, can significantly enhance graduate readiness. In general, it is important to align Ayurveda education with changing global wellness trends. This will not only make people more employable but also strengthen India's position as a top destination for holistic healthcare and wellness tourism.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nil.

7. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors give equal contribution in making of this manuscript.

8. FUNDING

Nil.

9. ETHICAL STATEMENT

Ethical approval was not required for this study as it is a review study.

10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication

of this paper.

11. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data analyzed in this review were obtained from publicly available sources, including peer-reviewed articles, observational studies, and surveys accessible through databases.

12. DISCLAIMER/VIEW AND OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the International Research Journal of Ayurveda and Yoga or its editorial board.

13. AI-USE DECLARATION

The authors declare that no generative AI tools were used to create scientific content, interpret data, or draft any sections of this manuscript. AI-based tools were used solely for minor language and grammar refinements to improve clarity and readability. All scientific content, analysis, and conclusions remain the sole responsibility of the author.

14. PUBLISHERS NOTE

This journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published institutional affiliations.

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How to cite this article:

Mamata T, Nagar RK, Nagar KR, Kumawat S, Yadav P. A Review of the Future of Wellness Travel: Career Option in Ayur-Tourism. *IRJAY*. [online] 2026;9(5):42-46.

Available from: <https://irjay.in>

DOI link- <https://doi.org/10.48165/IRJAY.2026.90508>

Table 1: Human resources need to establish an Ayurveda wellness centre

Specialist role	NABH-ATWC relevant requirements	Minimum qualification	Preferred/advanced qualification	Skills/competencies
Medical Director/ Chief Ayurveda Doctor	Must be a qualified Ayurveda doctor responsible for clinical governance, care protocols, and supervision of therapeutic services per ATWC norms.	BAMS (AYUSH registration)	MD (Ayurveda), e.g., <i>Kayachikitsa, Panchakarma</i>	Clinical leadership, quality assurance
<i>Panchakarma</i> Specialist (Clinical)	NABH expects structured therapy plans, hygiene, documentation, and a trained therapeutic workforce.	BAMS+Certificate in <i>Panchakarma</i>	MD (<i>Panchakarma</i>) or advanced fellowship	Therapy protocols, safety and patient assessment
<i>Panchakarma</i> Therapist (Technical)	Trained therapist delivering procedures under supervision, with competencies documented per ATWC HR standards.	Diploma/Certificate in <i>Panchakarma</i> Therapy	Advanced training in hygiene and techniques	Manual therapy, patient comfort, and sterilization
Ayurveda Dietician and Lifestyle Consultant	Patient assessment and personalized diet/lifestyle planning with documentation and evidence of training.	BAMS or B.Sc. Certificate in Ayurveda Diet	MD <i>Swasthavritta</i> /Wellness certification M.Sc. – Ay. Diet and Nutrition	Dietetics, consultation skills
Yoga and Meditation Instructor	NABH HR standards expect documented competencies and appropriate training for holistic therapies.	Diploma/Degree in <i>Yoga</i>	PG Diploma/MSc Yoga/ International certifications	Therapeutic <i>Yoga, pranayama</i>
Ayurveda Pharmacist/QA Specialist	The facility must comply with GMP and safe medicine storage per regulatory and NABH documentation expectations.	Diploma/Degree in Ayurveda Pharmacy	B.Pharm (Ayurveda)/GMP training	Quality control, inventory
Wellness Consultant/ Program Designer	Centers must show structured wellness programs and trained staff per ATWC human resource policies.	BAMS/Wellness Management	MBA/Wellness/Tourism management	Client assessment, program design
Wellness Center Manager/ Administrator	NABH ATWC requires documented managerial roles, SOPs, HR management, quality improvement systems, and training records.	Graduate in Management/ Healthcare	MBA (Hospital/Wellness/ Tourism)	Operations, quality systems
Research and Documentation Specialist	ATWC standards emphasize documentation, record-keeping, patient care reports, and evidence of continuous quality improvements.	BAMS/Life Sciences	MD/Clinical Research certification	Data analysis, reporting
Digital Health and Tele-Ayurveda Specialist	NABH ATWC requires documented tele-consultation policies, information systems, and patient data protection protocols.	BAMS+Digital Health Training	Telemedicine/Digital Compliance cert	Tech adoption, online communication

NABH: National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers, ATWC: Ayush Treatment and Wellness Centers, BAMS: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery, MD: Doctor of Medicine, MBA: Master of Business Administration, M.Sc.: Master of Science, B.Sc.: Bachelor of Science, SOP: Standard operating procedures, HR: Human resource, QA: Quality assurance