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*A CASE STUDY*

# Prospects of herbal gardens as new vistas of medical tourism in North East India

**BINA PANI DEKA, RUPAM BORGOHAIN AND DIBYAJYOTI BHARALI**

## ABSTRACT

The medical tourism is a growing sector in India and is expected to experience an annual growth rate of 30 per cent with a projected outlay of \$2 billion industry by 2015. The Indian systems of medicine like ayurveda, yoga, panchakarma, rejuvenation therapy are among the most ancient systems of medical treatment of the world. All these types of treatments are entirely based on herbs, which have certain medicinal values and provide one-stop solutions to cure large numbers of health related problems and diseases. Being the biodiversity 'hotspot', North East India has a valuable heritage of herbal medicines and the usage of herbs in traditional medicine was recorded since time immemorial in this region. The traditional use of herbal health remedy in N. E. India provides significant nutritional, economic and ecological benefits for rural communities. A large number of ethnic people or tribes possess a vast traditional knowledge on effective herbal medicines which were acquired through the experience are usually passed on by oral traditions as a guarded secret of certain families. However, the documentation of traditional and indigenous knowledge on medicinal significance of herbal plants is yet to be initiated in a scientific manner. For this, the establishment of herbal garden as a vital component of rural as well as medical tourism to attract tourists from other parts of India and abroad is has become new vistas in the growing tourism sector. Considering above facts, a herbal garden was established in Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kaliapani, Teok in 2012, not only to encourage the farmers to introduce the home herbal garden but also to inculcate a sense of familiarity with surrounding biodiversity and its conservation, especially herbal plants. Awareness, the basic requirements of establishing herbal gardens, uses of herbs and the issues related to employment generation avenues are studied in nearby villages of KVK, Jorhat. Results showed that people are found to be interested in herbal medical tourism but lack of awareness and acquaintance people showed apathy to start as employment generation avenues.

**Key words :** Herbal gardens, New vistas, Medical tourism

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