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## DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE AT MANIPAL – AN INTROSPECTION

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### ABSTRACT

*The concept of wellness developed by doctor Halbert Dunn in 1959 defines this as the special state of health comprising of overall sense of wellbeing dependent on environment, body, spirit, and mind. The holistic approach to wellness tourism is now creating major opportunities for destinations, resorts, spas, hotels and other smaller business throughout the tourism industry. Since last decade, India has emerged as one of the most important hub for health wellness and medical tourism. Many people from the developed countries come to India for rejuvenation by siddha, yoga and ayurvedic massage therapies as well as high end surgeries like cardiac or knee/hip replacement and spiritual healing. The “Ayush” department of Karnataka state is promoting the yoga and ayurvedic spa tourism as a best remedy to refresh mind and body and refill the spirit with freshness and peace. Keeping in view the current scenario of health and wellness tourism in the state, a study has been conducted to identify Manipal’s potential to be developed as a health and wellness tourism centre and the various factors that influence Manipal as a health and wellness tourism destination. This was done by considering the variables such as motivational factors, facilities, location and marketing. Since majority of the population mix of Manipal are students, one of the main motives for the students are of stress relief, fitness, exercise and considered important in wellbeing, health and wellness. The presence of sports and physical fitness Center “Marena”, yoga and ayurveda Department at Kasturba Medical College, Muniyal Ayurveda College, SDM Yoga, Nature cure and Ayurveda -an apt destination for health and wellness. The eight P’s of hospitality tourism marketing (Product, Place, Price, Promotion, People, Process, Productivity & Quality and Physical evidence) are quite visible in Manipal.*

**Keywords:** *Health and wellness, destination tourism, physical facilities, promotion, marketing, motivational factors*

### Introduction

The concept of "wellness" – and along with it wellness philosophy – was developed by the American doctor, Halbert Dunn in 1959 when he wrote for the first time about a special state of health comprising an overall sense of well-being which sees man as consisting of body, spirit and mind and being dependent on his environment. Dunn called this condition of great personal contentment "high-level wellness".

Adams (2003) refers to four main principles of wellness: (1) Wellness is multi-dimensional, (2) Wellness research and practice should be oriented towards identifying causes of wellness rather than causes of illness, (3) Wellness is about balance and (4) Wellness is relative, subjective or perceptual.

According to Myers et. al., (2000), Health and Wellness is defined as a “Gateway to emotional, spiritual and psychological well-being. A way of life oriented towards optimal health and wellbeing in which the body, mind and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community”.

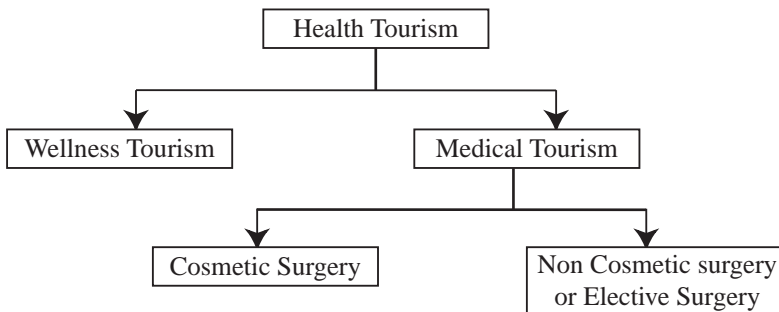
Even though the life expectancy has increased the age when people are afflicted with chronic and debilitating diseases is moving downwards, hence people start getting sick earlier, and claims for medical and health insurance begin at younger age. The combination of these factors means that the draw on country’s GDP is higher. In 2004, in the US, this cost employers \$1685 per employee per year, amounting a total loss of \$225.8 billion. With the rising direct and indirect costs, corporate companies in US bear approximately 25% of the total nation’s health expenditure, and up to 50% of corporate revenues are spent on managing ill health of employees. Only 31% of health care expenditure in organizations are spent on direct medical costs, whilst 69% of medical costs are due to productivity loss. Absenteeism and presenteeism (being at work, but not being fully functional) are used to measure productivity losses that are related to personal and family health problems, stress and unhappiness.

According to Mueller and Kaufmann (2001), wellness tourism is the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and residence by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health. They stay in a specialized hotel which provides the appropriate professional knowhow and individual care. They require a comprehensive service package comprising physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition/ diet, relaxation/meditation and mental activity/education.

Wellness tourism is one of the most ancient forms of tourism if one considers the scrupulous attention paid to well- being by Romans and Greeks, the quest for spiritual enlightenment of Medieval pilgrims, or the medical seaside and spa tourism of 18th and 19th century of the European elite. However, there has been an unprecedented intensification in the pursuit of wellness in the history of tourism in recent years. The proliferation of wellness centres, holistic retreats, spas, spiritual pilgrimages, complementary and alternative therapies is unprecedented

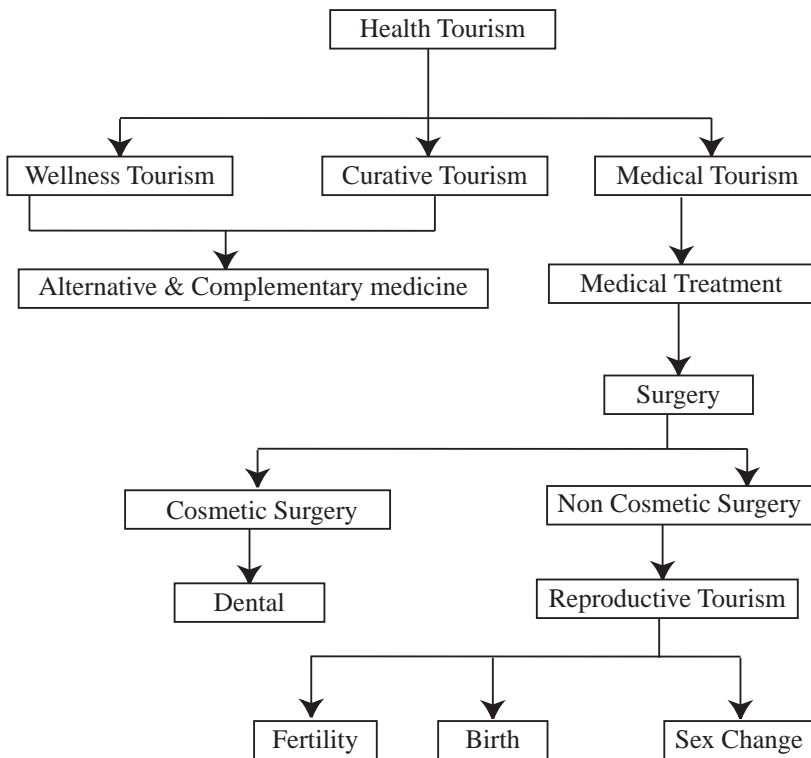
Health and Wellness has to be holistic and encompasses physical, spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and environmental wellness. For its effective implementation wellness programmes should be made holistic, integrated, compulsory, strategic and evidence based. Any factor or condition that affects one of these dimensions will have an impact on our health status and our social and family commitments thus inflicting loss of worksite productivity. Health risk assessment is the single most important tool used in wellness programmes to determine the pre-existing conditions that make

**Health Care Tourism (Structure - I)**



(Source : Caballero Danell & Mugomba, 2007)

**Health Tourism (Structure II)**



(Source : Jabbari, 2007)

a person vulnerable to poor health. Wellness programmes increases productivity by decreasing indirect costs related to presenteeism as well as direct costs as there will be lower incidents of employees getting sick. Furthermore, as a result of all this, administration costs associated with replacement, retraining and new hiring will be lower. In the best scenario, wellness programmes should be able to save more than 70% of total medical costs: direct and indirect.

In the last few years, new strategies and initiatives imbedding a health label both physical and psychological in scope have been developed by the hospitality sectors – especially upscale hotels. Such service innovations have been centred on promoting individuals' state of well-being. In Europe, some lodging facilities tend to use health and wellness (eg. Wellness centre, wellness hotel or wellness resort) as a new frontier of the trade in order to position themselves as a rejuvenating retreat from the perspective of body, mind and spirit. The common wellness themes are spas, massages, body pampering, healthy gourmet meals, fitness classes and in minority alternative clinical treatments (such as aquatic therapies).

With the dawning of a new age of total health and wellness sustainable corporate strategies are developed in US for the benefit of employees. The most essential and valuable asset and resources of companies of 21st centuries are its employees and approach to health care is considered as benefit to battling symptoms instead of addressing the causes of poor health. It is a fact that poor health leads to productivity losses and indirect costs are twice as expensive as direct medical costs, thus indirectly impacting corporate profitability. Corporate health and wellness is practically any corporate programme or activity that aims at assisting employees in attaining best possible state of health. At the highest level, it is the state of health and wellness or state of being free from any illness. Several multinational corporations in US have some kind of health and wellness programmes such as executive health and wellness screening fitness centres, or professional advice on healthy diet, weight loss and managing stress. The potential benefits of health and wellness often attracted members of the increasingly stressed, over worked population as well as the corporate companies.

The studies have proved that 50% of the medical costs are prevented by lifestyle adjustments, and 75% of all medical costs caused by chronic diseases are best prevented and treated through life style adjustments. In Europe and North America 75 percent of companies employing more than 300 or more employees had taken up the health and wellness programmes. The top five biggest contributors of health complications are attributed to obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and poor diet. Poor health is caused by ageing, which increases chances of chronic and age related diseases. Some of 50% of all diseases can be avoided and prevented by lifestyle changes and 50% of all medical costs can be saved with integrated and comprehensive health and wellness management. Typically, 80% of medical costs are driven by 20% of the employees. The past was about employee benefits, whilst the present and future is about investments in employee's health. The irony is that people live longer and have access to more technology and convenience than previously, but busier, more stressed and unhappier than before. This is primarily due to the changes

in the environment and lifestyle, coupled with bad habits such as poor diet, alcohol consumption, smoking and low physical activity.

Health and Wellness is one of the fastest growing segments of global tourism and is now an international trend driven by health conscious consumers seeking to enhance their wellbeing through their travel experiences. They travel for the purpose of enhancing and engaging all aspects of a person's physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being, especially when maintained or achieved through healthy diet and regular exercise such as massage therapy, thalasso therapy or fitness training. According to a commonwealth secretariat study, the worldwide health and wellness sector is a \$40 billion market, estimated to be growing at 30% per annum. Caribbean: Health and Wellness tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of global tourism.

Countries like Egypt and Sri Lanka are now delving in to wellness tourism with the philosophy to be one with nature by using organic herbs and therapies as healing components that will cleanse, detoxify, repair, restore and rejuvenate mind, body, and soul.

Since the last decade, India has emerged as one of the most important hub for health wellness and medical tourism. Many people from the developed countries come to India for the rejuvenation promised by yoga and ayurvedic massage therapies as well as for high end surgeries like cardiac or knee/hip replacement. Residents are equally patronising alternative medicine therapies and undertaking travel to places with specialised facilities for health and wellness across the country.

As per the joint report of the Indian chambers of commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst and Young, the Indian market for health and wellness services is estimated at Rs.110 billion (\$2.2 billion) and is projected to grow at annual rate of 30-35 percent. This growth is expected on the back of favourable market demographics, consumerism, globalisation, changing lifestyles, increasing availability across categories and regions and rising awareness among people. The report also classifies the health and wellness industry in to seven core segments within different products and services, such as allopathy, alternative therapies, beauty, counselling, fitness and slimming, nutrition and rejuvenation.

A new policy guideline for promoting health and wellness tourism in India has been announced. The policy would aim to leverage India's potential in traditional systems of Ayurveda, Siddha and Yoga which in turn will help to project India as a unique destination for health and spiritual healing.

Health and Wellness tourism road shows focusing on health and wellness facilities were also organised in overseas market starting with Scandinavian countries, Dubai, Kuwait, Riyadh, and Doha as part of niche tourism marketing which is considered as one of the major initiatives and achievements of the ministry of tourism in the year 2010

There has been a phenomenal increase in the demand for specialized therapies of Ayurveda not only for treatment of diseases but also for rejuvenative healthcare. As a result many health centres and tourist resorts providing Ayurveda therapy have come up in various parts of the country and in Karnataka with or without adequate facilities.

Over the years, Karnataka has had a number of excellent health and wellness centres operating in the health and wellness tourism space. This activity of Tourism is also being highly promoted by the tourism department of Karnataka. Also, there is a need to prevent deviations or misuse of therapies provided from health and wellness centres. It is important to ensure that yoga, ayurveda therapy is administered as per standard operating procedures and there should be some minimum pre-requisites of infrastructure that must be complied with by every health and wellness centre. For this reason, the tourism department of Karnataka has formulated guidelines for the accreditation of health and wellness centres (Ayurvedic centres, spas, yoga and naturopathic centres etc.)(Karnataka Tourism Policy 2009-2014). This concept of health and wellness tourism has been positioned strategically and financially supported in order to promote the state as a health and wellness tourism destination.

Keeping in view the current scenario of wellness tourism in the state, a study has been conducted to identify Manipal’s potential to be developed as a health and wellness tourism centre. Manipal being an international university town, has a multicultural population of about 20,000 people in a radius of about 4km, which includes the students, faculty, university staff, service providers, local residents, parents visiting their wards, delegates coming in for conferences and also transit tourists coming from the coastal belt or other nearby pilgrim sites.

Since Manipal being an International University town and dominated by students in the population mix, a content analysis study is carried out to understand the facilities offered to students at various Universities in India and abroad.

The identified universities in USA are The Harvard University, Princeton University, Yale University, Massachusetts University, and Stanford University, USA

University Name	Wellness centre
Harvard University	Centre for Wellness
Princeton University	Health and Wellbeing
Yale University	Yale Health Plan
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Department of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation (DAPER)
Stanford University	BeWell @ Stanford

The identified Indian Universities include IIT Mumbai, IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras. and University of Delhi.

University Name	Wellness and Health Activities
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)	GYMKHANA
Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)	Community Centre, Faculty Club, Gliding Club, Nursery, Swimming pool, Staff Gymkhana, Student Gymkhana

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)	Board for Students Welfare [BSW], Student Counselling Service [SCS]
Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM)	Sports and Recreation, Medical Facilities
University of Delhi	Students Welfare, Students Council

The study proved that the American Universities are creating an awareness among the students by providing health and wellness facilities which is of holistic nature, and encompassing physical, mental, social, intellectual and emotional, which is necessary for the overall development of healthy body, mind and spirit. The Indian institutions are mainly providing facilities only for the physical development and are ignoring the other aspect of awareness, fitness, stress relieving, and nutrition, which are the core element of health and wellness.

Taking into account the different kinds of people that pour into Manipal each year, the concept of health and wellness can be introduced here and developed to a great extent. Absence of a full-fledged wellness treatment in Manipal has led to the failure of understanding its importance among people. But, according to perception analysis of the population of Manipal taking people from different age groups and profession as samples, it is found that the people have felt the necessity of a wellness centre to reduce stress and work pressure and also to safeguard the health and well-being of students. The study also revealed that 86% of the people in Manipal desire for a spa or personal care centre and 75% of the people would like to have exercise equipments, dieticians, swimming pools, weight management programmes and beauty treatments (Tharakan et.al, 2010) This shows that more people are looking forward for more such centres. With the available facilities in Manipal like the high-end medical facilities at Kasturba Medical College and hospital with separate wings for Yoga, Ayurveda and Marena- the sports complex of international standards and with the right promotion, positioning and packaging, Manipal, an educational hub can also be developed as a health and wellness destination.

In order to analyse the possible factors to establish a health and wellness tourism centre at Manipal, four variables ,motivational factors, physical facilities, promotion and location are studied

### **Motivational Factors that may influence Manipal as a Health and Wellness tourist destination:**

Motivations have also been seen as a tool to segment tourism market. According to Backman et al. (1995) motivations are associated with individual basic needs for participating, for instance, in activities. Hence, motivations of tourists are important in explaining why tourists are travelling.

Strength of motivation lies in unique concept location, use of ingredients, and brand name for its high quality services - in short journey of experience, the physical environment as well as the experience gained by the guests.

Wellness and wellbeing tourism have become important topics in tourism research and tourism business and the concepts of wellbeing and wellness have established their standing in tourism terminology (Kangas and Tuohino, 2008). Wellbeing/wellness tourism is tourism where the main travelling motive is maintenance of one's own health aiming to highlight holistic wellness which includes wellbeing of body, mind and soul. (Mueller and Kaufmann, 2001; Smith and Puczko, 2009). Health and wellness tourism has raised its popularity among tourism companies because products and services connected to it are not dependent on any particular tourism season. The demand of wellbeing and wellness services has increased while large number of people is stressed of living in work-obsessed, time-pressured, materialistic and over-individualistic societies (Smith and Puczko, 2009).

People are seeking balance in their busy lives, and wellbeing and wellness services are thought to be helpful in achieving this balance. For instance, ISPA (2007) has estimated that there are nearly 100 million active spa-goers worldwide. It is anticipated that some sort of spa and spa treatment services will be available in almost any health and wellness tourism – mobile spas, residences, festival, cruises, clinics, and hospitals. In 2005 2 million spa goers took part in life style classes which include healthy looking achieving balance and managing stress. Spas are therefore incorporating lifestyles elements such as fitness, healthy nutrition and stress relieving techniques.

One of the most popular typology of tourist motivation is the Crompton's (1979) push and pull model which emphasizes that tourist's choice of a travel destination is influenced by two forces. Push factors that push individuals out of home, and pull factors that pull individuals towards a destination. In other words, people are travelling because they are pushed by their internal motives and pulled by external forces of a travel destination (Lam and Hsu, 2006). It has been stated that most push factors derive from individuals intangible or intrinsic desires such as desire for escape, adventure seeking, dream fulfilment, novelty seeking, rest and relaxation, health fitness, prestige, and socialization (Chon, 1989; Lam and Hsu, 2006; Uysal and Jurowski, 1993)

The motivations of wellbeing and wellness activities, purchasing wellbeing and wellness products and services or participating in wellbeing holiday are also connected to customers needs and interests. Mak et al. (2009) found five motivation factors, friendship and kinship, health and beauty, self reward and indulgence, relaxation and relief, escape, among Hong Kong spa goers. They found out that relaxation and relief self reward and indulgence, and health and beauty were important underlying motivations for spa-goers (mean over 3 on five point Likert Scale). Smith and Puczko (2009) have listed reasons, why people are going to spas and health and wellness centres. For example, one of the main motives is stress relief. They continue that fitness and exercise have also a very important role in wellbeing and wellness. Smith and Puczko (2009) emphasize as well that trends and reasons to participate wellbeing and wellness activities vary considerably, and the trends are based closely to leisure patterns.

Only few studies concentrate on examining the motivations and profiles of health and Wellbeing of tourists. Some studies have focused on different sub-sectors, such as spa tourists, yoga tourists or spiritual tourists (Lehto et al., 2006; Mak et al., 2009; Smith and Puczko 2009), but more general research concerning wellbeing tourists has been rather rare. Few factors that were identified are self- development, health and physical activity, relaxation and escape, isolation and nostalgia, nature, autonomy and stimulation and social status.

Affordability, free time, disposable income, age, nationality, and life styles, are the main motivators for a traveller. A trip can actually do a traveller a word of good, and giving something that is physical, biologically emotional, or psychologically beneficial to a guest is almost priceless.

Tourism is able to augment quality of life through variety of touring experiences at various vacation destination of interest. Travellers are concerned about enriching their quality of life. The number of travellers from developed and emerging economies undertake in varieties of trips to different destination in order to gain wholesome and pleasurable experiences during young age in contrast to travel behaviour of previous generations.

Considering Manipal as an International University town housing eighteen constituent colleges and allied departments it can be found that it has a wide scope of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), which is an emerging segment in the health and wellness sector. The super speciality medical college and sports complex of International standard could engage various health and wellness activities to augment the experience of students, faculty, parents and delegates, residing at Manipal. This allows the participants to relax together in an atmosphere conducive to social interaction and develop rewarding network experience, which may be considered as a motivating factor for the repeat visits at various facilities.

In last decades, cultural trips and ecotourism was seen as fashionable products of tourism but now it is the consumers who are encouraged to seek psychological, spiritual and health benefits while travelling.

In order to enrich customer experience and to add value to their wellbeing and appearance, workshop on topics such as skin care, stress reduction, diaphragmatic breathing, healthy cooking, dressing for success and relaxation techniques could be included in the package for increasingly stressed, overworked students delegates, at Manipal.

### **Physical Facilities that may influence the health and wellness tourist to choose Manipal as a destination:**

People now expect more from wellness centres and spas. They are increasingly sees the spa as a necessity and entitlement rather than simply a luxury or a vacation treat. The Spa Research Fellowship (2008) has shown that customers are likely to become more demanding, as they expect high quality treatments, impeccable hygiene, well qualified therapists, and value for money. The steam rooms, sauna and Jacuzzi, are

usually considered as the basic facilities. Besides this aromatherapy, environmental saunas, air jet colour therapy tubs, speciality hydro massage showers, reflexology water walks, relaxation meditation pods, product bars, aqua massage tables, foot massagers, could also be added to satisfy the customer needs and wants.

Dosh (2006) refers to consultants and price water coopers opinion that spa treatments have overtaken golf as the most popular supplementary activity during corporate meetings and events, especially in United States. The popularity of spas has come at the expense of golf and other activities.

Fusion treatments, Thai Yoga massage (a fusion of yoga stretches and massage), Watsu (Water and Shiatsu)Yogalates (Yoga and Pilates) or Aquaveda (hydrotherapy and Ayur veda) are becoming more popular as “wellness” and considered as “therapeutic”

The spa industry together with the pharmaceutical companies and cosmetics brands promotes new generation of clinically enhanced skin care products. The spa cooking phenomenon or gastro travel that offers cooking experiences, nutritional consultations, healthy eating classes, are also offered along with aroma therapy and relaxing spa treatments as a part of recreation of health and wellness programme.

The operation of health and wellness tourism facilities, services and amenities are often dependent on a number of travel infrastructure networks. These networks may include transportation, water supply, energy/power, waste disposal and telecommunications. The existing facilities of the department of Ayurveda and Yoga at the Kasturba hospital at Manipal in liaison with the “Marena”- the sport complex of the Manipal University could be integrated to offer a health and wellness package to students, student parents, faculty members conference delegates, and tourists. The established ayurveda, naturopathy and yoga centres (Dharmasthala and Muniyal) practicing, ayurveda, unani, naturopathy and yoga also could contribute for the development of health and wellness tourism in this part of the state.

## **Influence of Health and wellness tourism promotion at the destination Manipal.**

Wellness and spa industry enjoys a great popularity among travellers worldwide. Refreshing massages, soothing herbal baths or exotic hot stones therapy lure an increasing number of women as well as men every day. Countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and United Arab Emirates devote a lot of money and energy in advertising their spa industry.

The rich culture and history of India have an upper hand on traditional Auyurveda, naturopathy and yoga practices as a part of health and wellness programme .Holistic tourists enthusiastically consider it as a spiritual path which aims to balance body, mind and soul.

Wellness tourism in India is booming now-a-days. Kerala is also promoting wellness tourism since a few years now. Many resorts in Kerala state are promoting wellness tourism by setting up spa and ayurvedic clinics. The “Ayush” Department of

Karnataka State is promoting by setting up ayurvedic clinics in Bangalore and nearby cities. In the changed condition of life people are suffering from a lot of pressure stress and tension in their day to day life. The integrated practices of yoga and Ayurveda breathing meditation and nutrition (Vegetarian and Organic) and Ayurvedic massages relaxes the body and refresh mind and body and refill the spirit with freshness and peace. spa tourism is a best way to refresh your mind and body and to refill your spirit with freshness and peace.

The Tourism Department of Karnataka has taken up initiatives of promoting and developing wellness tourism throughout the state providing incentives, promotional and advertising aids, as per the tourism policy 2009-14 The upcoming town of Manipal could capture the opportunity for the development of an accredited health and wellness tourism centre.

### **Promotional activities suggested for projecting Manipal as a health and wellness tourism destination.**

#### ***Co-branding:***

This is a powerful way to bring attention to the business. This is done by linking the brand with another successful brand in an area, by putting up the brand in the spotlight with a winner. Manipal's health and wellness tourism centres could be co-branded with those of Bangalore and few cities of Kerala.

#### ***Sponsor or co-sponsoring an event:***

Draw the attention of the people by sponsoring certain events like Brand Scan, Utsav and other inter collegiate sports and cultural events. Signages, brochures and display hoardings put up during these events would help to promote the health and wellness tourist destination at Manipal.

#### ***Networking and referrals:***

This could be from other businesses or customers and is a great way to improve the business. Manipal University's partnership with other international universities for varied academic programmes, and could help in building network and create an awareness of health and wellness programme available in Manipal among the people of other countries who are more health conscious.

#### ***Publication of articles:***

Publication of articles in the local newspaper or for online publications and newsletters, provide a great way to establish the credibility and promote the health and wellness tourism destination at Manipal.

#### ***Internet forums :***

A small space in the I-O-N page (Local Internet service providers) and on Manipal University community pages on social networking sites would also help to create awareness among the local student population about the health and wellness facilities at Manipal

***Give customers more than they expect:***

The international standards maintained at the facilities of Marena (Sports complex) at Manipal will also lead to awareness through word-of-mouth among the students, parents, and visiting delegates

***Few other methods that could be adopted for the promotion of health and wellness tourism in Manipal are:***

- Pamphlet on health and wellness tourism destination at Manipal could be put in every copy of the university prospectus
- A leaflet about the health and wellness tourism destination at Manipal could be included in every postal correspondence.
- Hoardings and billboards can be put up at the international airport in Mangalore, Bangalore and also on the national highways.
- Pop-ups showing the Health and wellness tourism at Manipal could be created on the Manipal University web portal.
- A small brochure or a leaf let could be included in every conference or convention kits.

**Role of marketing in promoting Manipal as a health and wellness tourism destination**

The concept of marketing is based on the promise that the industry should determine consumer wants and needs before designing products and services. This consumer-orientation results in greater demand for the products and services and higher levels of customer satisfaction after the purchase. Increased travel and improved communications have contributed to a convergence of tastes and preferences in many product categories.

Manipal has students from fifty six countries. The visiting parents, students, delegates are coming from different cultures and the destination has to meet changing tastes and preferences as well as to provide the highest quality of services. If the 8 Ps of hospitality and tourism marketing (Product, Place, Price, Promotion, People, Process, Productivity Quality, &Physical Evidence) are to be incorporated in Manipal, its potential to be marketed as a health and wellness tourism destination becomes evident.

Product involves the concepts like accommodation, attraction, transportation, restaurants, recreation. Manipal has variety of accommodation facilities from budget hotels to star category which gives a wide choice to the traveller. The destination also covers an area of 10 sq. kms which include Malpe beach, Kaup beach and St. Mary's Island .Manipal has a good network of internal transportation. Udupi is the nearest railway station (3km) and the nearest airport is at Mangalore (80km). Many restaurants serving various cuisines to satisfy the tastes of the multi-cultural population are also present at Manipal.

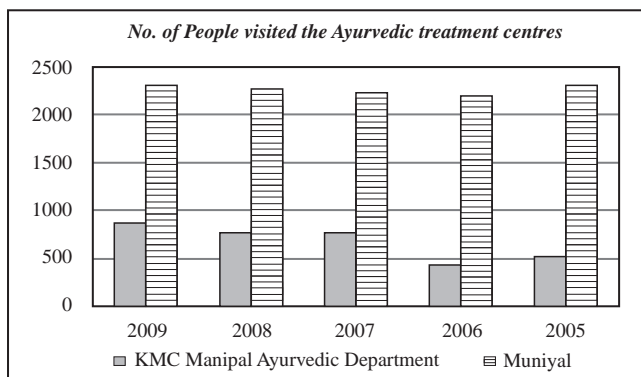
## Role of location in developing a health and wellness tourism destination:

According to the report, the southern part of the country is much ahead of organised wellness based centres. There are also clear customer preference in each region with regard to each segment- alternative therapies are the most popular choice of people in Southern India, while customers in north are inclined towards beauty. The maximum number of fitness and sliming centres are in the western part of the country.

Tourists frequently seek locations and activities that are transcendent. De Botton (2002) describes how travelers are attracted to 'sublime' landscapes that benefit their soul by making them feel small, yet part of an infinite and universal cycle. It is no coincidence that many wellness centers are located beside the ocean or on a mountain top. (Pechlaner and Fischer 2006) note the importance of location in the context of 'Alpine Wellness'. A tourist location is a place of interest where tourists visit, typically for its inherent or exhibited cultural value, historical significance, natural or built beauty, or amusement opportunities. So the location plays a very important role in tourism.

Manipal, situated on a valley has beautiful scenic views and greenery all around which could provide a soothing and rejuvenating experience for a wellness tourist. Also, close proximity to Goa - Mangalore highway helps in pouring in lot of tourist from all over the world. Its central location on the Karnataka coastal belt attracts transit travellers to Manipal. It also has a considerable amount of pilgrim tourists from temple towns around Manipal (Udupi, Dharmasthala, Murdeshwara, Kollur Mookambika, Kukke Subramaniya etc). These comprise mainly of people above the age of 55 and can be targeted for health and wellness tourism as well. All these implies that Manipal has a wide variety of domestic tourists coming in and various wellness packages can be promoted to each of these groups to suit each individual's needs. It is also found that quite a number of people visit the Ayurvedic centres in and around Manipal for various wellness treatments. Fig. 1 shows the number of people visited the Ayurvedic department of KMC Manipal and Muniyal Ayurveda Medical college which is just about 1 km from Manipal

**Fig 1. : No. of people visited the Ayurvedic centres in and around Manipal**



Suvarna river which flows along the valley could be used as a facility in the future for students rowing activity, entertainment, sailing, house boat and pontoons facilities. These also contribute towards the wellness programmes. It could be utilised as weekend activities for students, providing wellness spa facilities for visiting parents and conference delegates, which also could be an added attraction for transit travellers. These could be further developed into floating restaurant, ayurvedic treatment areas for overall rejuvenation activities.etc.

## Conclusion:

Health and Wellness tourism is both simple and a complex concept and is driving destination and hotel investments around the world. The simple concept is by providing guests with integrated experience of indoor and outdoor exercises, good food, relaxation and traditional Spa treatments. The complex concept is providing an integrated range of experiences that deliver recuperation, relaxation, and regeneration for its guests.

The holistic approach to health and wellness tourism is now creating major opportunities for destinations, resorts, spas, hotels, and other smaller business throughout the tourism industry. The consumers are actively seeking out a combination of experiences that embrace a full range of emotional and physical factor from authentic locally sourced food to unique spa treatments using indigenous raw materials. Many holiday makers /tourists are now looking to incorporate the elements of healthy eating, nutrition, exercise, beauty treatments, relaxation and pampering to counter the work stress.

Over the past decade a number of leading tourism countries, Switzerland, Austria, Ireland, Slovenia, and Finland have strategically realigned their brand and position with health and wellness tourism. In addition, a number of emerging destinations such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Croatia have chosen to align their brand and position with the health, wellness and wellbeing.

In short, the health and wellness tourism is about getting back to basics and connecting students, parents of students, and delegates of various conferences who are visiting Manipal, to nature, natural resources, healthy eating, nutrition, exercise, beauty treatments, recuperation, relaxation, and regeneration incorporating local culture, and local products.

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