



# “Hospitality Industry on the verge of gaining Healthy Edge” Changing trends of Health and wellness with special reference to Development and Modernization of Spas in the Hospitality Industry.

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## ABSTRACT

**Abstract:** Health and Fitness are becoming the most endearing words for the tourists in India these days, guests visiting hotels and resorts irrespective of their age or sex, are becoming conscious of maintaining their physical well-being. Today health and wellness have become more than a trend in the Indian hospitality industry. In current scenario spas and gyms are being revamped to meet the high aspirations of these health savvy travellers, todays Guests are taking charge of their health and well being and hospitality industry is also responding to them by facilitating with well-equipped fitness centres, pools, spas and Healthy Food, This paper showcases global market trends in health & wellness and its implications on the hospitality industry.

**Keywords:** Health and Wellness, Hospitality Industry, Spa

## Introduction:

India is an ancient land of amazing dichotomies. Its public healthcare may be in a pathetic condition, but its potential for medical tourism, especially for the inbound tourists, is very high. According to the study, India has been placed among the top three medical tourism destinations in Asia. India was estimated at 78.6 billion USD in last decade and it was poised to grow at an annual rate of 15 percent to attain a figure of 158.2 billion USD in coming times, though Wellness tourism is a niche segment it can bring impressive dividends for the Indian hospitality industry.

In today's business climate, guests have become more health conscious and the hospitality Industry have learnt to address their health and wellness needs. The guest's demands for health and wellness are being heeded, ranging from a well-equipped gym, ultra-modern Spa to a healthy menu. Hotels are now experimenting to measure up to the guest's aspirations. Nowadays Wellness is considered with a holistic approach. Tourists in India these days are adhering to strict regimen for better health, wheather travelling on business or for leisure, a large number of travellers nowadays want to maintain their regular schedule of daily workout and healthy food. Another change in the mind-set of the todays modern travellers is happening where in they believe that vacations does not only amount to leisure and relaxation but for them it is an occasion for restoration.

The Indian hospitality industry has started to take steps to meet these objectives and desires of these modern travellers .In the past, guest used to prefer a modest gym to satisfy their health requirement, but today's travellers have become very demanding when it comes to health and wellness, considering this many travellers are now opting for hotels and resorts

Which cater to the needs related to health, hygiene and wellness.

## Theoretical Framework:

In today's global scenario travellers are expecting innovative wellness options, such as healthy food options, healthy lighting options in the rooms that energizes, air purification, yoga spaces, in-room exercise equipment and even vitamin-infused shower water, these are some of the novel trends that are introduced by many luxury as well as Mid-segment category hotels and Resorts in India. The health and wellness segment in the hospitality industry have witnessed a tremendous change in last four to five years not only globally but also in India, gone are the days when travellers believed that wellness was a thing of luxury ,in fact it has become a necessity in today's modern world, with the growing disposable income, changes in consumption and lifestyle patterns, improved purchasing power of women, rising awareness about personal care products, these factors has given the required impetus to the wellness industry thereby becoming an integral part of the hospitality industry.

Spas today have become an integral part of hospitality industry as guest are becoming more and more health conscious they have also become very choosy while selecting hotels, business traveller and leisure guest today are increasingly looking for a place to de-stress from their hectic and stressful life, nowadays it is not only necessary for a hotel to have a fully equipped gym but a solid Spa treatment, this is what todays travellers are looking for. Many luxurious hotels have also created a post of Spa Manager who is responsible for day to day operations of the SPA and health club,his major role consists of developing and achieving operational goals,Spa menu engineering,designing sales strategies,managing budgets and expenses,business development and team building.

## Objectives of the study:-

- 1) To study and understand how hospitality Industry is adhering to the health and wellness Requirements of the Guest.
- 2) To find out the novel trends adopted by the spas in the hospitality Industry.

**Research Methodology:** The purpose of this study was to find out how hospitality Industry is adhering to the health and wellness requirements of the Guests. For this study secondary data was collected through Books, Journals, Periodicals, Websites, and Business Magazines.

## Current top trends in Spa

As compared to a few years back,in India Spa is no longer viewed as an expensive indulgence that only a few can afford.The understanding of the benefits of Spa and the various techniques involved in it has increased tremendously during the last few years also an increasing number of travellers across the middle class in India are becoming aware about spa treatment to relieve stress and fell better.Todays travellers are opting for spa treatments and expecting quality wellness service which they did not expect a decade ago.

People have also strated to gift spa treatment to thier loved ones along with the wellness packages these are among some of the happening trends in the spa business today.

## **Novel trends in Spa treatment and Healthy Food Preparation in Indian Hotels.**

Todays business travellers need a quick fix after long tiring flights and meeting schedules. Many Spas situated in the luxury hotels and Resorts have come up with the therapies that range from 45-90 minutes to cater to these busy travellers,it consists of the use of hot water bed and light sensations. Similarly, keeping frequent travellers in mind, many hotels have incorporated a Jet lag therapy considering the long flight schedules.

Many hotels today are equipped with designer spas which enable guests staying with them to indulge in various wonderful spa therapies. Resorts and hotels are joining the trend of health spa development some resorts are even offering wellness services which were offered by destination spas. In India, yoga and yogic massages have also become a part of spa treatment.

## CUSTOMISED TREATMENTS

Spa services can help guests to cope better with stress, soothes sore joints and muscles, and facilitates to simply feel better. Most of the spa treatments are anti-ageing. They help to detoxify the body and improve blood circulation, giving a sense of renewal, Spa treatments focus on nourishing and stimulating the skin and pleasing the senses.

### Ayurvedic therapies

Indian traditional Ayurvedic therapies are very impactful. Abhyangam treatment a very popular oil based therapy which has a magical healing properties, it is found to be very effective in relieving fatigue, headache issues, immunity building and improving muscle tones. Abhyangam is a sixty minutes of pure bliss, benefit of this Ayurvedic therapy it also includes strengthening sensory and motor organs, maintaining colour and complexion of skin, preventing the signs of aging, skin dryness and itching, reducing hair fall, toning up the blood vessels and nerves, thus preventing nervous disorders. Many Resorts have a team of expert doctors who prescribes the medication and monitors the cure.

Many Resorts today have made the provision of in house highly trained doctors with whose consultation guests can choose on the advice of the doctor the different range of Ayurvedic treatments or special health and beauty care packages, specifically designed to treat modern day maladies like stress and fatigue.

A full range of traditional Ayurvedic treatment is available at Spa in many resorts of India, which includes facials, that stimulates circulation, eliminates toxins and brightens the skin, Swedish massage and Indian Head Massage are specially designed and customised for all guest needs. Many star hotels and resorts having spas across India and overseas are now providing blissful and deep tissue massage and Thai Yoga massage, body scrub, body wraps and facials followed by unique red rice and detox massage.

Some of the Hotels situated in the Metros have separate treatment rooms for Ayurvedic, western and Couple therapies. Attached to the spa is the vitality pool and gym, there is a provision of therapy with hot water set up, Couple suite room, Ayurvedic Room and Facial treatment, water body, lighted candles, instrumental music, diffused lighting and temperature controlled room for delivering complete relaxation. Today's spa focuses on creating a perfect blend of conventional treatments as well as modern techniques for best outcome. With aroma diffusers, healing instrumental music, diffused lighting, temperature controlled rooms. The popular holistic therapies from the Spa menu includes Abhyangam, Gentle Breeze, Rejuvenating Bali, Awaken the Spirit, Chocolate Massage, Jet Lag Therapy, Crowne Therapy and many more.

Many Spas have introduced Goodness packages for the would-be-brides which include a careful selection of organic facials, holistic massages, milk rose water baths and foot pampering rituals for a glowing skin for the big day.

Many Spa situated in the resorts have started with the concept of special Happy Hours where all the guests can avail any Salon and Spa treatments between 1am to 3pm (during weekends) at half of its original price. Various Spa treatments such as Parraffin Hand treatment, Therapy Baths, Manicures and Pedicures, Neck Reflexology, Facials, Body Wraps, Body Scrub, Foot Bath, Food Reflexology as well as beauty treatments, Steam Bathing, Massage Rooms, Sauna Rooms and Hydro Therapy. Many hotel rooms has come up with an inbuilt steam room followed by water bed therapy.

Popular hotel Salons have started offering treatment ranging from, waxing, threading, hand and foot rituals, hair dressing, styling, shaving, hair colouring, hair Spa treatment and Holistic range of Asian, European therapies and Organic facial treatments.

Wellness menu available in the Spas of the hotels also consists of the following treatments.

- **Salt therapies-** Salt not only add flavours to your food, but today it is used in spa as well. Salt rooms, salt beds and salt lamps have gained great popularity nowadays , salt stones are all set to replace basalt stones, in popular massage therapies, salt therapies such as Halotherapy have been used since time immemorial to cure respiratory issues.
- **Virtual Reality-** Today's generation love virtual reality. So spas have integrated this superb technology in the spa therapies.
- **Sound Therapy-** A tradition derived from Tibetan, Chinese and Indian culture, sound therapy is yet another sensory guided meditation technique which is becoming an integral part yoga sessions, spa treatments and healing workshops.
- **Soy Candle Massage-** Candles have been essentially used in aroma therapy to add the experience and feel good factor. But a new trend which is gaining popularity is the melted soy candle massage. With zero toxic ingredients, soy wax along with coconut and shea oil have therapeutic effects.

### **Current top trends related to healthy food**

Wheatgrass smoothies, celery juice, green tea, grass-fed meats, all-natural skincare, flax & chia seeds are the part of new healthy recipes , Chefs of many hotels today have started to prepare very innovative menu that berates the concept of Healthy is Boring with super foods as their key ingredient, recipes are being redesigned keeping nutritional as well as taste element in mind.

Being health conscious has been an ever-growing phenomenon.In many business hotels, most of the guests live out of their suitcases. Being a home away from home, hotels have started to provide simple, oil free, home cooked food for their guests. Besides this, the healthy breakfast also, provides a power packed start to the day.

Nowadays guests are becoming extremely cautious about their food habits. Today's travellers are health cautious. Many of the guests are carb conscious and are looking for low fat, low cholesterol menus. Moreover, many a time the length of the stay is long and the guests don't want to miss out on their healthy habits.

In the past, a substantial section of the hospitality industry was made up of fast food restaurants and bars selling sugary alcoholic drinks. However, there has been something of a cultural shift, with people becoming more aware of the things they are putting in their bodies, leading to a healthy food and drinks trend.

Many restaurants have started to re-vamp their menus with healthier options, including gluten free, dairy free, low fat, vegetarian, vegan and organic options. However, the trend for healthy food and drinks extends to hotels; catering services, room service as well as healthier drinks sold in bars.

### **Natural and minimally processed food**

Chefs across the world have led a movement towards experiencing food in its unprocessed natural state with minimal seasoning as the demand for healthy food spiked over the past years. Healthier plant-based ingredients are increasingly replacing processed food, a trend that coincides with the rising awareness of the negative effects of sodium, salt and fat this has increased customers requirement for healthy food.

### **Increased interest in a healthy diet**

People now pay more attention to what they are eating and what type of ingredients hotels are using in their kitchens in todays scenario this has inspired hospitality industry to concentrate more on organic products and healthy meal preparations. Choices are offered to accommodate vegetarians and vegans The growing number of vegans, actually, is one of the main reasons fresh and quality food is widely available in hotels now. Travelers want to enjoy unique and rare cuisine to gain an authentic experience and hospitality industry needs to adopt to this trend full-heartedly.Many five star properties and resorts have started to source locally produced food and prepare meals in traditional ways to impress their guests. Hotels Menu Card today have started to give more vegetarian options and gluten-free meals and special diet menu. Organic food is becoming more and more popular there by presenting a gastronomic adventure in healthy eating, similarly low-calorie menu items have been introduced in many speciality restaurants, banquet as well as in the rooms.

## Key challenges faced by spa

The following are some of the challenges that are faced by the spas run by Indian hotels

- Great competition due to mushrooming of Day Spas in the city.
- Implementation of competitive packages considering low prices quoted by lot of local Spas in and around.
- Quality consistency from the staff considering long working hours.
- Choosing the right location to attract the walk inns.
- Shortage of trainers and professionals to give immaculate and comprehensive therapies and maintain the service standards while delivering.

## Managerial Implication:

This study will help the hoteliers to understand the importance of Spa services and the kind of treatments that are available today; it will also make the hoteliers aware about the changing trends related to health and wellness.

## Conclusion and Recommendation:

Wellness is the state of optimal well-being and starts with self-care. It's not simply the absence of illness, but an improved quality of life resulting from enhanced physical, social, mental, emotional, spiritual and environmental health, considering these factors, in today's scenario spa has become an important offering of a full service hotel. The awareness and importance towards wellness have grown across the country. Spa not only gives an option for the guest to relax & rejuvenate but also makes it an important revenue generating outlet for the hotel. Spas in the hotels have become an important service offering for the guests, especially for the guests who stay long as well as for the leisure travellers.

As guests are becoming more and more conscious about their health and wellbeing, Hotels should take this as an opportunity for new revenue generation.

The following are some of the suggestions that the researcher would like to put forward to the hoteliers in order to attract and retain their guests who intend to avail these services.

- a) Hotels should focus on adding fitness equipment like yoga mats, exercise balls and even treadmills to the room which will allow the guests to work out privately, also they should work on improving on mattresses of the beds for enhancing good sleeping experience and restfulness.
- b) Hotels must work on healthy options in minibars.
- c) Hotels must work on upgrading existing health and wellness facilities such as equipment, treatments and amenities, emphasis must also be put on group activities like yoga for long staying guests.
- d) Hoteliers can even think of providing sneakers, iPods and workout clothes for the guests on complementary basis.
- e) Along with healthy menus hotels should incorporate healthier options and organic ingredients while catering to vegan and gluten-free.
- f) Emphasis should be laid on improving air quality, natural light levels and insulation in order to project a healthier image to compete with local Spas and health centres.
- g) Today's travellers are looking less for indulgence and more for relaxation and rejuvenation. Hotels that understand this mentality should actively improve and promote their health and wellness credentials. In addition to adding amenities, they must also incorporate sustainable practices, rethinking how they can provide value and delight to their travellers and emphasize on creating happy and healthy guests.

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