MEDICAL TOURISM IN BANGALORE

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Abstract
Bangalore is one of the fastest growing metropolitan cities of the world and is an international hub. The city is undergoing a sharp increase in human and vehicular population. Tourist activities are also being encouraged by the city’s environment. Alongside, Bangalore city exhibiting an excellent weather condition, it possesses a quality of social life with diversity. Bangalore’s advantages of medical hospitals made an attraction for the tourist from all the corner of the world. Being on the threshold of the status of an International City for medical tourist attraction it creates revenue to the state. Hence, the study of medical tourism of Bangalore city needs to be studied to understand geographical distribution of medical tourist centres and role of them in providing service across the world.

Keyword: Medical, Tourism

Introduction
Medical tourism which is also called as medical travel or health tourism or global health care) is a term initially coined by travel agencies and the mass media to describe the rapidly-growing practice of traveling across international borders to obtain health care. Medical tourism can be defined as provision of ‘cost effective’ personal health care/private medical care in association with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical healthcare and other forms of dedicated & specialized treatment. Medical tourism is an emerging concept. Governments all over the globe are highly concerned about their ability to meet their social obligations in the health sector. They are highlighting it as ‘International standard healthcare services at affordable prices.’ Medical or Health treatment package tourism is a recurrent form of vacationing, and covers a broad range of medical services. It mingles free time, leisure, fun relaxation, amusement and recreation together with wellness and healthcare packages. At the same time tourists are able to receive an orientation that will help them to improve their life in terms of their health and general well being. It is like rejuvenation and cleans up process on all levels – physical, mental and emotional. Medical or health tourism is among the fastest growing industries in the world. The major forces driving growth of this emerging industry The major forces driving growth of this emerging industry include the rising cost of healthcare and limiting scope of insurance coverage in developed countries, increasing waiting time for treatments, and low cost of treatments elsewhere. The three major medical tourism hubs in the world are Singapore, India and Thailand. Indian tourism industry is experiencing a strong period of growth, driven by the burgeoning Indian middle class, growth in high spending foreign tourists, and coordinated government campaigns to promote ‘Incredible India’. Medical tourism is perceived as one of the finest growing segments in marketing ‘Destination India’ today. India is on threshold of a healthcare revolution and emerging as the destination for medical tourist. Healthcare industry accounted for 5.1 per cent of the country’s GDP in 2006.
Medical Tourism in Bangalore

Bangalore is one of the top medical tourism destinations in India, with professional experts, technological sophistication and health care services that easily match the best in the world. Its reputation as the global technology hub and cosmopolitan city has made it a prominent health care destination for foreigners from developed as well as developing countries. Bangalore has a pleasant weather all through the year. Bangalore has few of the world’s best doctors and medical practitioners, who have been trained by the rigorous Indian medical
education system as well as in countries like UK and USA. The practitioners are registered with the Indian Medical Association and other Indian and international professional bodies. Many hospitals now have international accreditation to dispel any concerns of patients coming for treatment. Most big hospitals have eminent doctors from abroad as consultants. Also, most hospitals that have foreign patients have facilities and services customized for the comfort and convenience of the patients. Popular specializations for medical consultation, treatments and surgeries in Bangalore include Cardiology, Orthopedics, Nephrology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Dentistry, Oncology, Infertility, Gynecology, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Naturopathy etc.

Main Aim
The main intention of the work is to generate information regarding the geographical distribution of canter of medical tourism in Bangalore city.

Data Sources
The work is supported both by primary and secondary data sources. Primary data has been collected through personal field investigation in Bangalore. A fieldwork has been organized by the researcher to extract primary data. Secondary data has been extracted from various public and non-public departments.

Methodology
To achieve set goals geospatial technology has been used. Geographic Information System software has been used to map the tourist places. Toposheets published by Survey of India have also been merged to get Bangalore map.

Geographical Distribution of top five Medical Hospitals in Bangalore
Bangalore promises to be the perfect destination for any medical tourist. The government, the medical fraternity and the tour operators are all preparing for this new revolution. Here’s a list of top five hospitals in Bangalore. Bangalore is one of the topmost medical tourism destinations in India, with professional experts, technological sophistication and health care services that easily match the best in the world. Its reputation as the global technology hub and cosmopolitan city has made it a prominent health care destination for foreigners from developed as well as developing countries.

Narayana Hrudayalaya: Caring with Compassion, this world’s largest heart hospital for children, is set to be transformed into the world’s biggest health city, with all super-specialties that the medical world offers. Narayana Hrudayalaya is founded by one of the India’s oldest construction company “Shankar Narayana Construction Company”. Narayana Hrudayalaya group currently has 5000 beds in India and aims to have 30,000 beds in the next 5 years in India to become the one of the largest healthcare player in the country. The Group performs largest number of heart surgeries on children in the World providing cardiac care to children from 73 countries. The postoperative pediatric cardiac surgical unit has 80 critical care beds which is World’s largest Pediatric cardiac surgical Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU) to look after children who have undergone heart operations.

Fortis Hospital: It is formerly known Wockhardt Hospitals. Bangalore is a part of the 40 hospitals chain of Fortis Healthcare. The Fortis Hospitals network consists of 11 hospitals focusing on the high end tertiary care around the specialties of cardiac care – adult and
pediatric cardiology and cardiac surgery, complex brain & spine surgeries, orthopedics and joint replacement surgery and minimal access surgery. The entity consists of 2 JCI accredited hospitals located in Bangalore and Mulund. Fortis Healthcare is engaged in providing the latest in internationally recognized medical care to patients with a variety of ailments and medical conditions. Their network consists of Super Speciality Hospital Hubs that concentrate on one or more specialties. These hospitals are interconnected to a larger network of multi-speciality hospitals that ensures patient access to expert care for any speciality. This unique network architecture provides expert care to patients and a level of confidence in receiving the latest medicine has to offer.

**Mallya Hospital:** Mallya Hospital is located in the heart of the Bangalore city. Mallya Hospital has grown over the years with substantial increase in bed strength, infrastructure and an assurance of quality patient care with human touch using state-of-the-art technology with quality health care under one roof. Mallya hospital has to its credit as the first Multispeciality hospital in the country to received the coveted ISO-9002 certification award which has been recently upgraded to ISO 9001:2000. In Mallya Hospital “Individual care to deliver the best results – that is what hospital focus at every step”. With the 360-degree care, patients experience the concept of Total Quality Management. The consultants and Nursing staff are not only just experts in their specialty, they are also driven by the vision of quality and commitment in giving individual attention for maximum treatment outcome. Mallya hospital is well known for its clinical skills, friendly ambience and motivated staff; patients who admit here leave with delight and fondle the memorable moments of their stay.

**Apollo Hospital:** Apollo Hospitals offer the best of medical facilities coupled with warm hospitality. It is among the latest additions to the Apollo Group of Hospitals known for excellent healthcare standards. There are more than a hundred consulting doctors round the clock at the service of patients. Due to the economical treatment combined with world class facilities, hospitals in Bangalore are catching the world’s vision every day. There a quite a few consulting companies which offer end to end medical services to foreigners who are interested in undergoing treatment in Bangalore. They take care of every step right from tickets, hospital reservations, appropriate doctor selection, city tour post surgery (if the patient is interested and in a situation to have) and then finally sending back to the home country. In any angle, this process is much simpler to the processes followed in western countries for the same surgery or treatment.

**Manipal Hospital:** Manipal Hospital in Bangalore is considered to be India’s first hospital to be ISO 9001:2000 certified for Clinical, Nursing, Diagnostics and Allied Areas. Also, the hospital is the winner of the Golden Peacock National Quality Award 2005 in the service category. Manipal Hospitals is an integrated hospital service system that provides healthcare from the smallest to the most complex medical problems. Manipal Hospitals is a certified pioneer in the Indian healthcare industry for over 4 decades and has been delivering state-of-the-art healthcare services that are curative and preventive in nature, to both national and international patients’ world over. Driven by clinical excellence, patient centricity and ethical practices Manipal Hospitals provides path-breaking medical services and technologies in this new age of healthcare. Manipal Hospitals offers quaternary, tertiary, secondary and primary health care delivery services which are covered over, 15 hospitals, 9 primary care clinics and 55 community health programmes. Manipal Hospitals has strength of 3700 Beds and over 1000 Doctors.
Top Five Hospitals in Bangalore

Legend
+ Hospitals

Scale
8 4 0 8 16 Kilometers

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Why Medical Tourism in Bangalore?

Bangalore is really a place where travelers from all corners of the world can gather for their medical care, the city provides unprecedented opportunities both as a market and solutions. The following are the reasons that highlight the need of healthcare or medical care in the city. End user expectations and costs are increasing as there is a growing imbalance between the developed and underdeveloped countries. Some countries are vulnerable to bioterrorism and thus it needs to have a restructuring of health delivery systems.

Bangalore offers holistic healthcare addressing the mind, body and soul, with yoga, meditation, ayurveda, allopathy and other traditional Indian systems of medicine. Tourists are being pulled by the city especially by yoga and ayurveda. Demographic variation, urban tension, social segregation, unhealthy life environment, pollution, epidemics, natural disasters, and ethical considerations are the main reasons to grow more number of healthcare services. The city holds a strong status in advanced healthcare segment, viz., cardio-vascular surgery, and organ transplant and eye surgery. Bangalore provides an enormous array of customized medical packages with the cultural warmth which other countries of world find it difficult. Improved world-class medical services with comparatively low cost are being served in Bangalore city.

Role of Robotic surgeries in Bangalore’s medical tourism

Surgeries like these have not only cured thousands of patients but also helped boost Bangalore’s image as a leading medical tourism destination in the country. Anjana, a 42-year-old woman diagnosed with tumour in her left kidney, was told by doctors that she needed to have it removed. Since Anjana wanted to preserve her kidney and, at the same time, get rid of the tumour, she underwent a procedure called Robot-Assisted Partial Nephrectomy (kidney preserving surgery) wherein only the tumour was excised, leaving her kidney intact. She stayed in the hospital for just three days and was able to return to her job within two weeks. Till recently, the treatment of such tumours involved complete removal of the kidney and the tumour. Not anymore, thanks to robot-assisted surgeries.

Surgeries like this have not only cured thousands of patients but also helped boost Bangalore’s image as a leading medical tourism destination in the country. Patients with such condition come to Bangalore from the world over including the Middle East, Africa, Australia, The Netherlands, Denmark, Russia and Sri Lanka. Robotic radiation, that was introduced three years ago in the city, contributes to about 20% of the medical tourists. And robotic surgery is boosting medi-tourism in Karnataka. In fact, not just urology, most of gynaecological surgeries can be done with the help of robots. Over the past one year, Manipal Hospital has got patients from Africa, Maldives and Sri Lanka enquiring about robotic surgery.” The robot can be used in the removal of fibroids — myomectomy, removal of uterus, hysterectomy, re-canalization of fallopian tubes in patients with blocked tubes or when 6ale6ilization is to be reversed, endometriosis surgery and surgery for cervical and uterine cancers,” said Dr Gayathri Karthik, consultant, gynaecology and obstetrics, Manipal Hospital. She feels the city’s medical image has got a boost thanks to the progress made in this field. Take the case of Caroline (name changed) from Nigeria, who recently underwent surgery on her uterus, in the city, after being diagnosed with fibroid. She was advised removal of her uterus, which she was not comfortable with since she wanted another baby. She had heard of robotic surgery and decided to make a trip to Bangalore to undergo the same. She underwent a robot assisted myomectomy by Dr Karthik where two fibroids were removed. She recovered well and left for Africa in 10 days. Radiation with the help of robots (also called Cyber knife) is another specialization that has gained popularity among Indian and foreign patients over the past couple of years. According to
Dr Sridhar PS, consultant, radiation oncologist, Healthcare Global (HCG), robotic surgery is the future and the country so far has done well to gain expertise in this. “Earlier, we faced the problem where we did not achieve accurate radiation. So if there is a tumour in the lungs, radiation would affect the surrounding areas. However, now with the help of robotic radiation, there is little damage done to the surrounding areas,” he said. Robotic radiation also helps in reaching areas where it is not possible to operate through human hands he added. Hence, increasingly for doctors, robotic surgery is becoming an alternative to normal surgery, especially in cases where tumour in pancreas, prostate and lungs is involved. HCG has treated more than 1,000 patients in the past three-and-a-half years. Going by the demand of robotic surgery, other city-based hospitals are also planning to procure this advanced technology.

For instance, DGS Global Hospitals plan to introduce the technology in their hospital shortly. “The technology of robotic surgery is advancing and soon we are likely to have second generation robotic equipment,” said Dr NK Venkataramana, vice-chairman and chief neurosurgeon, BGS Global Hospitals. “Surgeons are resorting to more and more minimally invasive surgeries wherever possible. The advantages of this technology are minimal damage to tissue and less invasiveness, lesser hospital stay, speedy ambulation of the patient, less pain and cosmetically aesthetic with a smaller scar. Robotics will definitely help to achieve these goals with much more precision,” he said.

Medical Tourism - Challenges

Dearth of strong government support or initiative to promote medical tourism: One of the major drawbacks to be tackled is the lack of strong support from the government. Poor coordination between the various players in the industry- hospitals, air line operators, and hotels: Since there is no proper coordination between the various wings of medical tourism industry which also acts as one of the major impede for the growth of the same. Customer perception as an unhygienic country: Prevalence of unhygienic conditions is also one of the factors hindered the medical tourist inflow. Progress of Medical tourism in Bangalore is lagging behind due to the following such as improper regulatory system in hospitals, variations in pricing policies across the hospitals, strong competition from countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, and most importantly inadequate investment towards healthcare infrastructure. In addition to this, in order to have a worldwide recognition the need of international accreditation and also overseas medical care insurance coverage remains as significant.

Promote for medical Tourism in Bangalore

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with Ministry of Tourism need to set up a task force to evaluate the opportunities in the industry and formulate a policy to accredit healthcare institutions in Bangalore city. The need of the hour is to club together a couple of pathies there is a strong base of yoga, naturopathy, and ayurveda, as alternative healing therapies. Given below are a few guidelines to be considered to encourage medical tourism in Bangalore.

Create incentive structures (e.g. tax breaks) which encourage the corporate sector to set-up more infrastructure. Need to set-up more high-value hospitals/health care facilities – specialty facilities with state of the art equipment and high service levels. Develop business models to make these facilities have a smaller gestation period. Private firms in the insurance sector should set-up medical insurance facilities and also tie-up with foreign insurance companies to cover foreigners coming into India for healthcare facilities. Corporate in the healthcare sector should actively control medical fraud, insurance fraud in order to encourage insurance firms to provide medical insurance products.
Tourism developed naturally due to increased travel pattern of executives. Hotels of all status were established in and around Bangalore. This was supplemented by progressive tourism plan and policy of Government of India and Government of Karnataka. Bangalore’s cool salubrious weather and the green foliage with beautiful gardens conferred the Garden City name to the city. All these undoubtedly were attractions for tourists as well as immigrants. The researcher’s study thus revealed industrial growth; climatic conditions, rich heritage and concentrated tourism development policies, all were responsible for growth of tourism entrepreneurship in Bangalore. The study also reveals the misconception that software and IT industry were solely responsible for tourism entrepreneurship growth in the City.

Tourism Impact on Rural Economy
Rural tourism focuses on letting the rural population of the country promote tourism. Along with the creation of an alternative source of income, rural tourism contributes to the revival of folk art and handicrafts. It is an ideal and natural method of rural and urban economic exchange. Rural tourism can be a viable economic component in rural community development. The benefits are many, ranging from sustainable livelihood, poverty alleviation, upliftment of rural artists/ art forms, empowerment particularly for women and higher standard of living.

![Diagram of Tourism Impact on Rural Economy]

Results
There are number of key factors that play a responsible role for medical tourism growth in the city. The information technology, bio-technology, industries, culture, transportation system, etc support Bangalore's economy. However, medical tourism is growing sector and is pulling huge number of consumers as there are good facilities. Educational facilities by and large played a role indirectly and helped the medical tourism in the city. All these in turn stimulated the emergence of hundreds of tourism entrepreneurs in Bangalore. Bangalore is endowed with a large number of diverse tourists’ attractions that entice significant number of tourists to flock to Bangalore. By virtue of their potential these attractions not only attract the domestic tourists but also tourists from abroad. Though the proportion of domestic tourists to international tourists is high, the latter categories increasing tremendously over the years. Interviews with various tour operators, transport operators and travel agents revealed that lot of
business generation is generated from domestic tourism. Domestic tourism was found to be active in about 100kms radius around Bangalore city. Mostly these places include places of religion, historical and cultural significance.

“Earlier, tourism was considered as a luxury activity but now it is an important source of economic development worldwide. Many economies have been transformed through tourism, particularly the opportunities it provides in employment generation and poverty alleviation,” Gupta said. The rate of growth in foreign exchange earnings from tourism is exceptionally high. The most significant feature of the tourism industry is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. It offers enormous potential for utilizing natural resources like landscapes, mountains, beaches, rivers etc. for the economic benefit of the population. It also adds value to a multitude of human-made attractions such as monuments, palaces, forts and the unique rural and city environments. A special feature of the tourism industry is that it employs a large number of women and young people in hotels, airline services, travel agencies, making handicrafts, undertaking cultural activities, and other tourism-related tasks. Different forecasts of direct employment in the sector have been made, however, they underline the fact that tourism is growing to become an important economic activity. It is estimated that one new job is created in tourism every 2.4 seconds the comparative strength of tourism in creating jobs. A million rupee invested (1985–86 prices) in the hotel and restaurant industry created 89 jobs, against 44.7 jobs in agriculture or 12.6 jobs in manufacturing industries for the same investment. The average for the whole tourism sector was 47.5 jobs. Tourism has become an instrument for sustainable human development through poverty alleviation, environmental regeneration, job creation, and the advancement of women and other disadvantaged groups.

A survey conducted by Times of India and Airports Authority of India, states Bangalore is the preferred Indian city for international travelers. The City’s phenomenal growth in international air traffic corroborates this. Going by these trends, industry observers say that Bangalore could before long become the gateway to India. As per the air traffic figures provided by Airports Authority of India (AA-1) Bangalore reported a 40% growth in international passenger traffic in the one year between September 2006 and August 2007. That’s the highest in the Country and more than double the all India average growth of 16%. Hyderabad was the next highest at 19%. The innovation of this paper is that it will deal with tourists matter in a substantial and considered manner, therefore provides a stage for action plans. In addition, this may also provide a ‘demonstration effect’ for other cities to boost tourism activities, and thus promote the use of GIS as tool for tourism assessment to update.

References