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THREE DIMENSIONAL HEALING: BENEFITS FROM THE WELLNESS

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ABSTRACT

All around the globe, spas are known for their significance to the physical and mental being of individuals. This industry is regaining its old charm with the promises of providing rejuvenation and relaxation to all the stressed people. Not just this, with the advent of cosmetic procedures and alternate healing methods, spas are providing anti-aging solutions to those who want to look and feel good. These benefits have gained monumental recognition and appreciation by all making spa industry one of the most promising industry in coming years. Spa industry, as a part of wellness industry, holds tremendous scope in the economy and the tourism of a destination. This paper is dedicated to finding the benefits of the spas, their services and products to the economy in general and tourism of a place in particular. For this purpose, a study was conducted in USA and India to get a comparative insight into the overall picture of paybacks derived from these services. With a sample size of 100 people in each country, a survey was conducted and then a country wise dissection is done for each item and in the end a summarized chart is drawn to present a clear picture of the prominence of the spas and their services and products to these dimensions. The vitality percentage analysis of the spas to the economy is clearly elucidated in the given paper and it has been found that apart from employment and revenue generation, the spas bring in lot of tourists to a place, consequently promoting all kinds of tourism of that destination.

KEYWORDS

Spas, significance, tourism, economy, dimensions.

INTRODUCTION

All around the globe, spas are known for their significance to the physical and mental being of individuals. This industry is regaining its old charm with the promises of providing rejuvenation and relaxation to all the stressed people. Not just this, with the advent of cosmetic procedures and alternate healing methods, spas are providing anti-aging solutions to those who want to look and feel good. These benefits have gained monumental recognition and appreciation by all and this is one of the reasons, it is counted among the most promising industry in coming years. Spa industry as a part of wellness industry holds tremendous scope in the economy and the tourism of a destination. It is a well-known fact that the spa services are beneficial to the physical and psychological health of the individuals. This paper is dedicated to finding the benefits of the spas, their services and products to the other two dimensions as well, namely the economy in general and tourism of a place in particular. Also, for a comprehensive global picture, two vastly different economies (USA and India) were chosen so as to get a comparative insight into the paybacks derived from these services. A country wise dissection is done for each dimension and in the end a summarized chart is drawn to depict the three dimensional healing of the spas.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To understand the significance of the spas, it is imperative to understand the benefits that they accrue on individuals. A look into the related literature and evidences available confirms the importance of alternate healing methods offered by spas.

Harcup and Harrington (2005) reiterated in a study that during the eighteenth century spring waters started getting acceptance by Italian, German and English physicians. In 'The Effects of Water' published in 1797 by Doctor James Currier, bathing in cold and warm water was suggested as a remedy for fever and other diseases. This book aroused interest in water cures through the external and internal use of water as part of the curing process.

Lehto and Brown (2006) in their article placed Yoga Tourism as a niche within the wellness tourism and provided empirical evidences that yoga and physical as well as mental health contribute to the propensity to travel for yoga hence giving a strong boost to the potential of Indian spas.

Spa Wellness Association of India's Report (2006) gives its tourism promotion as one of its five core competencies and claims to serve the industry through them. The presence of such associations is a good indicator of robust health of the spa industry in India.

Travel News Asia(2007) claimed that the spa, an established industry already in US and Europe now is going further east with great growing potential in Asia region and especially in China and India which are defined as the fastest growing countries over 2007 and the decade to come according to the World Travel and Tourism Council numbers.

The spa experts at **Spa Finder, Inc.(2007)** in their fourth annual prediction of the spa industry trends said that entirely new concepts will hit the scene as evolution is the new constant in the vibrant world of spa in the present scenario.

UNIPRO SPA Industry Research (2008) in its analysis of trends and business models in top countries gave a figure of 10.5 billion euros with 20,662 spas and 307,229 employees and 1 billion euros with 21,565 spas and 363,648 employees ; making it an industry with huge potential.

India Hospitality Review (2012) divulged that year 2012 started with great expectation and optimistic outlook for hospitality industry and major brands planning for expansion in the coming year.

Ken Research (2012) stated that the wellness industry in India grew by 16.9 per cent in 2011, mainly driven by the urban population majorly within the age group of 25-49 years, especially the working population.

Another research report on Health and wellness tourism industry by **Euromonitor International (2012)** presented the positive spa trends as the spa sales grew by only 1.3 percent in 2011 in value terms to reach US \$ 5.8billion. It also reported the several steps that the spas undertook to cut down the costs like reducing staff, offering discounts and packages with spa treatments of shorter duration. It also mentioned that health and wellness tourism is expected to increase by 18 percent in the coming year holding good promises for future.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study carries lot of significance in the modern world as the ancient old spas bring back their healing touch and reclaim their significant position in the society. Being recession proof, health industry along with wellness industry enjoys a unique position in the economies of the world. Spas have since long been a place to relax, heal and rejuvenate and it is interesting to see their contribution towards various sectors. This study brings out the benefits they endow on the economy and the tourism of a place. This would give an impetus to the allied industries like beauty and medical industry to work in collaboration with spa industry. Moreover, any industry that proves to be really beneficial to not just individuals but also to the economy; is bound to attract the attention of the government and the picture of the benefits of the services and the products of this industry brought out by this study may act as a booster to the increasing awareness about them, consequently, benefitting the industry. The significance of this study also lays in the fact that wellness industry has been projected as one of the most promising one in terms of revenue generator in the coming years and thus needs more and more research in the field. . Not just this, even the scholars conducting researches in the field can benefit from the information provided and highlighted issues can be taken up for further researches. This study hopes to fill in the research gaps and spearhead the progress of the industry.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research paper is an analysis of contribution of the spa industry towards the latter two of the three dimensions, namely individuals, economy and the tourism of an area. Also, a comparative analysis is made of two vastly different economies (USA and India) for this purpose. These economies were chosen to understand if there is a difference between developed and developing spa industries.

OBJECTIVES

This study is conducted with the following objectives:

- To find the benefits of this industry to the economy as a whole of an area.
- To find the payoffs to the tourism of a destination specifically due to the spa industry.
- To compare these benefits in USA and India.

HYPOTHESES

This study is based upon the hypothesis that better is the spa industry of a place; more would be the benefits to the individuals, economy and the tourism of the destination.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory cum descriptive research. The universe of the study is confined to the spas in India and the USA. However, within the countries, the universe is limited to the people residing in and around New Delhi in India and Los Angeles in USA. The survey sample consists of 200 respondents, 100 from each country. On the recommendations of the experts, the number of respondents was kept same for the two countries. The samples were selected by applying non probability purposive sampling.

For the primary data, a single set of questionnaire was prepared for the people residing in the two countries and the responses were measured on a five point scale of satisfaction. The purpose of the survey was to understand the benefits of the spas to the three dimensions: individuals, economy and tourism. All the statements pertaining to various parts were structured and the responses of the respondents have been measured on a Likert type five point scale. The collected data was thus analyzed through both descriptive and standard statistical tools like percentage analysis and bar diagrams.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

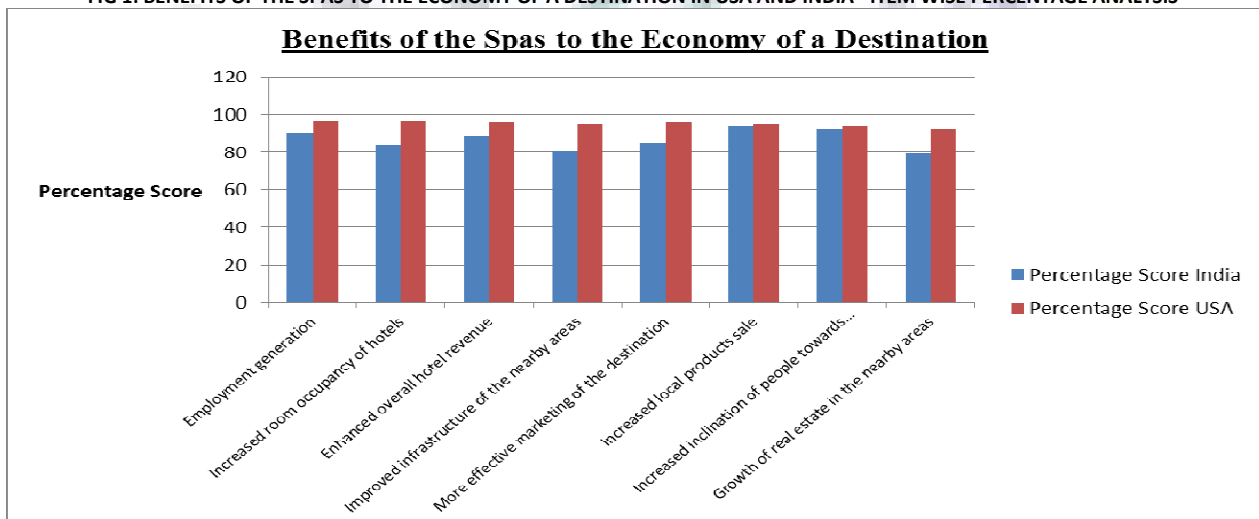
The industry offers services that claim significant three in one advantage to the clients availing of them. Physical, psychological and spiritual benefits are the most important ones with some of them offering scientific backing too. Recently, there is a surge in the number of people who are willing to stretch their spa time from hours to full days and weeks. People are making their spa visits a monthly or and even annual event. These trends are, in fact, like a revival of the ancient European tradition of Kur, the three to four week course of spa culture. The improved perception of the people about the spas and the benefits from their services and products has brought in a major push to the evolving industry. This, in turn, has benefitted the economy through more work opportunities, more revenue and overall development of the infrastructure of that area. The following table explains the benefits of the spa services specifically to the economy:

TABLE 1: BENEFITS TO THE ECONOMY FROM THE SPA SERVICES- ITEM WISE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

S. No	Benefits to the economy from the spas are :	Obtained Score N = 500		Percentage Score	
		India	USA	India	USA
1	Employment generation	451	485	90	97
2	Increased room occupancy of hotels	420	484	84	97
3	Enhanced overall hotel revenue	440	481	88	96
4	Improved infrastructure of the nearby areas	401	476	80	95
5	More effective marketing of the destination	423	478	85	96
6	Increased local products sale	422	473	94	95
7	Increased inclination of people towards healthy lifestyle	426	468	92	94
8	Growth of real estate in the nearby areas	395	458	79	92
Total	N= 4000	3378	3803	84	95

More and better spas mean more clients; it would automatically engage more people in employment. Moreover, as the spas became popular, it would add to the marketing and improvement of the destination bringing about the improvement in the infrastructure of the area. The sale of the local products increases as the spas involve authentic and indigenous experiences in their services increasing the sale of the local products. All these factors combined in one, lead to people flocking to the place as better employment opportunities and developed infrastructure raises the real estate in the nearby area. These points clearly show the benefit accruing from the spas to the economy. As an industry, they influence the allied industries positively. In the hotel industries they bring more revenues, improve the occupancy rates of the hotel rooms, thus, helping in the overall economy growth. These results supplemented by various studies done by international associations and summits like Global Spa Summit strongly associate the benefits of the spas and their services to the economy and its growth through the development of the destination, nearby areas and the growth of allied industries like hospitality, medical, real estate and tourism of the area.

FIG 1: BENEFITS OF THE SPAS TO THE ECONOMY OF A DESTINATION IN USA AND INDIA - ITEM WISE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

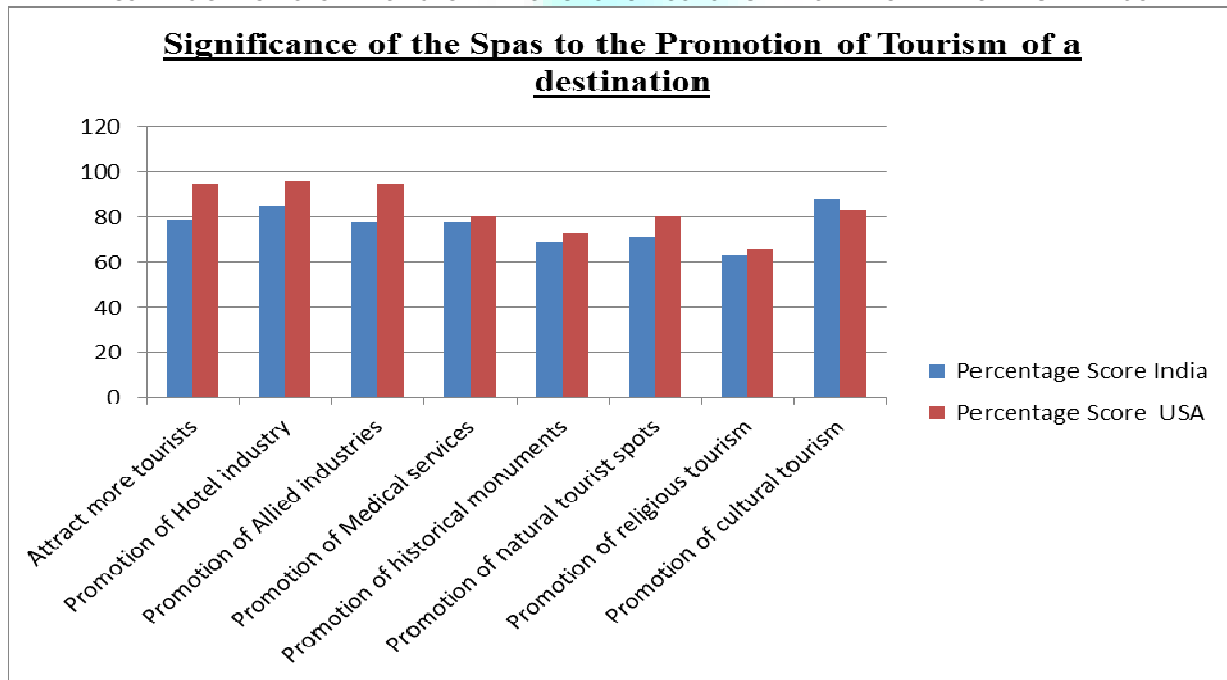


This study has brought the significance of spa services and products on individuals to the forefront by highlighting the physical and the psychological benefits to them. It has also worked on finding the contribution of spas towards the economy growth by finding the consequences of a destination’s popular spas on the development of the infrastructure, business and allied industries. This leads to the next step of recognizing the rewards of good spas to the tourism of the place. Following table indicates the advantages of the spas with a perspective of promotion of tourism:

TABLE NO. 2: CONTRIBUTION OF THE SPA TO THE TOURISM OF A PLACE – A PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

S. No	Contribution of the spas to the promotion of tourism :	Obtained Score N =500		Percentage Score	
		India	USA	India	USA
1	Attract more tourists	393	475	79	95
2	Promotion of Hotel industry	423	481	85	96
3	Promotion of Allied industries	390	474	78	95
4	Promotion of Medical services	391	404	78	80
5	Promotion of historical monuments	345	366	69	73
6	Promotion of natural tourist spots	355	400	71	80
7	Promotion of religious tourism	315	330	63	66
8	Promotion of cultural tourism	440	415	88	83
Total	N = 4000	3052	3345	76	84

FIGURE 2: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPAS TO THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM OF A DESTINATION: A PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS



The spas have invariably been inviting people from near and far since ancient times for the healing properties of waters and the therapies they offer. This study was conducted to find the ways in which the tourism of a particular place is promoted by the spas. The data given above corroborates the fact that spas help in the advancement of the vacation and leisure industry. Clearly, a large chunk of the clients visiting spas believe that it helps in the promotion of hotel industry (eighty five in India, ninety six percent in USA), promotion of allied industries (seventy eight percent in India and ninety five in USA), helps in attracting more tourists (seventy nine and ninety five percent) and helps in promoting the medical industry (seventy in India and eighty percent in USA). Not just this, as more people flock to the spas of a place, it becomes popular and as a consequence the natural tourist spots become more famous, the cultural tourism, the historical monuments and even the religious tourism gets promoted.

The above data strengthens the fact that spa industry helps in elevating the status of medical services and in promoting the natural tourist spots of the area. It was also found that they help in boosting not only the cultural tourism of the place but also promote the historical monuments. The religious tourism too gets uplifted as more people visit the place because of spas and then spend time exploring the area.

The significance of the spa services and products is also elucidated by the fact that they help in improving and refining the physical and the mental well-being of an individual. They also supplement the usual medical therapies for a better and improved physical health apart from showing improvement in sleep patterns and the confidence levels.

The findings of the survey clearly show that the spa services are highly significant to the economy and the tourism of the place. The data given above clearly show that spa services clearly benefit the individual’s physical and psychological health. The services help in improving health by boosting not just the immunity power and providing relief in chronic conditions but also by enhancing the overall confidence and self-esteem of the client. The procedures done at a medical spa can rejuvenate the skin and make one look more youthful. Moreover, the most talked about benefit that spas offer is rejuvenation of mind, body and soul. Considering the fact that medical experts cite stress as the number one factor in illnesses, stress relief is the main priority of most spa seekers. With services that focus on de-stressing the mind, body and spirit, the benefits of a spa vacation go beyond mere relaxation and beautification. In general, we can count following as the benefits of a proper spa treatment: Enhanced spiritual awareness ,increased body’s energy flow, improved flexibility of our body, reduced high blood pressure, healing of emotional distress ,reduced effects of ageing, soothing of tired muscles , toning and nourishing of the skin , detoxification of the body , stimulated circulation , reduced weight and weight-related problems , reduced insomnia, stress and fatigue. Looking at the benefits the various spa treatments provide and if spa visits are informed decisions, especially if it is regarding medical reason, we can safely assume that spas, their services and products carry lot of psychological, medical and spiritual significance. Not just that, as an industry also it is playing a momentous role in the economy.

Apart from this, the spas are a vital part of the economy with a great prospect for the future. The spa business is booming and the findings of the study corroborate with the international research reports. According to the Global Spa Economy Report released at The Global Spa Summit in New York, the global spa industry is estimated to be over \$250 billion and this amount includes \$60.3 billion in core spa industry revenues, such as spa facilities, capital investments, education, consulting, media, associations and \$194 billion in spa-related hospitality, tourism, and real estate. "The spa industry is growing at a breakneck pace, but its diversity and scope have always made it difficult to quantify its size and financial strength, as well as to harness the full power of its collaborative voice,"

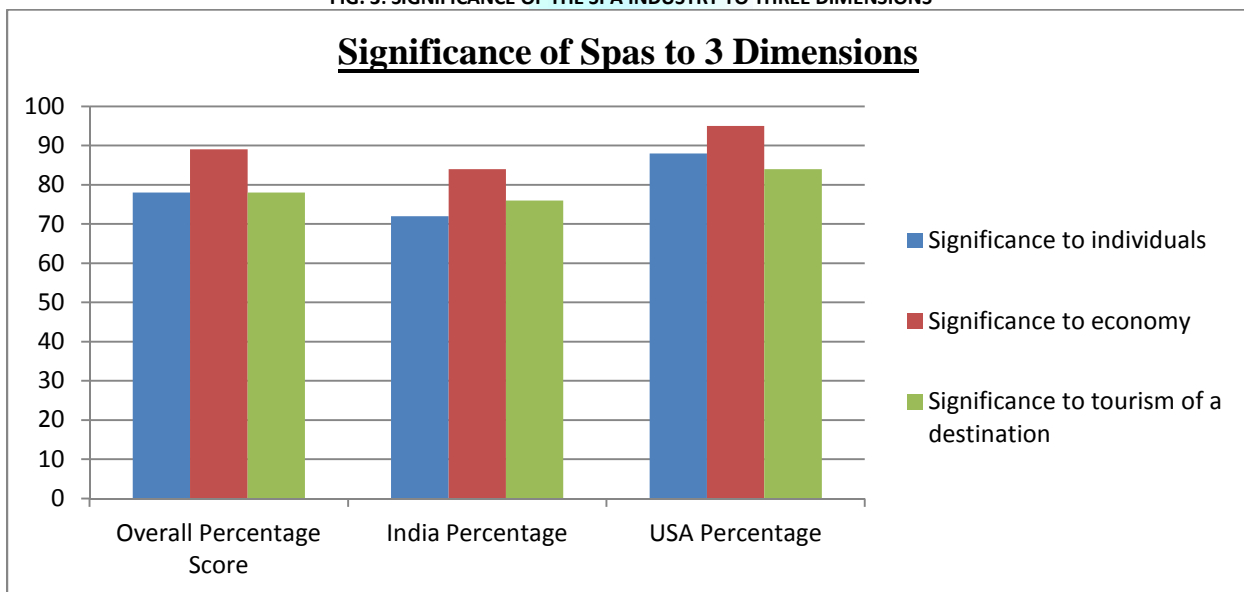
quoted Pete Ellis CEO, Spa finder and chairman of the board for the Global Spa Summit. Breaking down spa revenues by nation, the report placed United States at the top with \$12 billion, followed by Japan, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and China. The size and significance of the spa industry has surprised the incentive planners. Even Ellen Saxe, Vice President of Los Angeles-based Carlisle Incentives, mentioned that most of the clients ask for a spa option and that this demand has been encouraged by the expanding options and improved quality of hotels' offerings. She pointed out that even on an incentive trip; individuals make their own contributions to that \$255 billion figure, as they are often willing to spend their own money for a higher-tier treatment. Individuals will pay more for extra special treatment since they are finding the benefits worth it. Consequently, the spas are adding to the revenues of the hotels, adding to the number of days guests stay there. Not just this, the spas help in employment generation as well. More than anything else, it is the economy that benefits immensely from the spas and even the tourism gets a lot of push if the spas are good and effective.

All these facts support the findings of the study and it has been as summed up in the following table:

TABLE 3: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPA INDUSTRY TO THE THREE DIMENSIONS

S.NO	Indicators of significance	Maximum Score	Obtained score	Percentage Score	Maximum Score	Obtained Score	Percentage	Obtained Score	Percentage
		Overall			India			USA	
1	Significance to individuals	32000	25093	78	16000	11507	72	14023	88
2	Significance to economy	8000	7120	89	4000	3378	84	3803	95
3	Significance to tourism of a destination	8000	6240	78	4000	3052	76	3345	84

FIG. 3: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPA INDUSTRY TO THREE DIMENSIONS



It is quite clear from the above diagram that well-run spa operations have lot of significance on various dimensions. Apart from the monetary contribution, a spa can improve the employment and infrastructure conditions of the place and bring in a competitive advantage alluring a diversified client segment. The dynamics of the spa industry empower it to persevere even in turbulent times and since the major segment of its market belongs to the affluent class, who tend to spend more on their health in stressful times; it has continued to grow despite the economic slowdown, contributing a lot to the economy of the nation. It has emerged as the dimension that benefits the most from the spas with a score of eighty four percent in India, ninety five percent in USA and eighty nine percent overall. Not just this, spas have a lot of effect on the tourism of a destination as they help in promoting the natural, cultural and historical tourism of a place. The findings support this fact (seventy six percent in India, eighty four percent in USA and seventy eight overall). Irrespective of the place, people have responded similarly in accepting the contribution of the spas and the tourism of a destination. The findings provide a lot of scope to the development of spas as it is instrumental to the improvement, expansion and growth of the tourism of a place. The allied industries get a boost as a consequence. Last but not least, the spas have a lot of impact on the improvement and maintenance of good health of individuals, thus, placing them at a vital position in today's stressful times. People accept and recognize the benefits of spas and their services to their overall health making it the second most affected dimension, hence, inviting the beauty, hospitality and medical industry to work along with it to cash in the opportunity.

FINDINGS

The study brings out the fact that the spa industry is highly significant to the economy of a destination as it generates more employment, increases local products sale, increases room occupancy in hotels and enhances overall revenue. Spas also help in the improvement of the infrastructure and the real estate of the place. Moreover, the popularity of the spas increases the inclination of the people towards healthy lifestyle assuming that the spas would raise the level of awareness of people about eating and living healthy. This translates into healthy workforce, less sick leaves and more productive days.

The spa industry also contributes to the physical and the psychological health of the individuals. The different spa services have different beneficial effects on the health of the individual like providing relief from chronic pain, stress and joint stiffness apart from hydrating skin, improving sleep and immunity. They also help in overall fitness, weight loss and maintaining youthfulness of the skin, skin exfoliation, hydration, nourishment and beauty enhancement, better healthy lifestyle, detoxification and improving the existing medical conditions. With benefits like weight management, better health and youthful appearance, this spa service helps a lot in improving the self-confidence of the individual.

The spa industry is a major contributor to the tourism industry as well, since it helps in attracting more tourists to a place and consequently promoting the cultural, natural and historical tourism of the destination. It also promotes the allied industries like the hotel industry, medical industry, hospitality industry of the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The high significance of the spa industry to the physical health of individual means that the spa industry, in collaboration with the medical industry, should promote its therapies as Holistic healing experience.

- More stress should be given to the drive to increase awareness about the benefits accruing from them so that their acceptance level in the masses increases. As people start accepting the spa services and the products for their benefits, they would start exploring spas at different places. This would promote the spa industry and the tourism of the place where good spas are available.
- Also, since the spa services have significant psychological benefits like relaxation and anxiety reduction; these should be well advertised and used as the biggest selling point of the spas.
- Not just this, the spa services have been proven to boost the self-esteem of the clients by improving their looks, managing weight and reducing anxiety. So, spas should offer such therapies to the corporates, educational institutions and even to the entertainment industry where self-confidence is a pre requirement of success.
- Moreover, spa services like massages, facials, manicures and pedicures and also the cosmetic procedures have proven to support the anti-aging therapies; thus, these spa services should be brought up well. The spa industry would do well if it works in tandem with the beauty and the health industry and is endorsed by them.
- Other than the individuals, spas also help the economy as a whole through employment generation, improvement of the infrastructure and allied industries. Thus, to reap in these benefits, spas should organize themselves well especially in developing nations with proper support and acceptance from the government, media and allied industries.

CONCLUSION

In the nutshell, apart from the benefits bestowed on the physical and psychological health of the individuals, this paper has amply illustrated the fact that the spas contribute significantly to the growth of the economy and the tourism of the area. These results, corroborated with various other studies, can act as the guiding light for taking this industry ahead as strong pillar of the economy. The allied industries, too, can look at the growth opportunity in the future if they work in tandem with the spa industry.

LIMITATIONS

Just like every research, all possible care was taken to conduct the study in a precise manner and to keep the focus paramount in all the attempts. But just like any other study conducted at individual levels with limited resources of time, money and tools; this study also suffers from certain constraints. Hence, the recommendations or the findings of the study should be seen in the light of the following major limitations:

- The sample, being very small in comparison to the universe, might not reflect the trends of whole spa industry.
- Opinions of the respondents might not reflect their honest thoughts due to several reasons like lack of interest or awareness.
- Forecasts and conclusions may be subject to uncertainty and evolving trends.
- Actual results might vary from the projected results.
- Lack of previous research works in this particular field might lead to wrong assumptions.
- Tools to collect information in a nascent industry in a developing country like India might not be proper.
- Financial and time constraints might make some information unavailable or insufficient for the purpose.
- The secondary data used suffers from the limitations it imbibes and moreover not all the sources were freely accessible.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study starts a trail of further researches on the similar grounds but different and bigger samples. Bigger sample size would ensure a more comprehensive study. Moreover, a comparative study of two big growing economies India and China can prove to be very illuminating.

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