

Youth's Perception of Spa for Health and Wellness – A Case Study

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Wellness is viewed as a way of life including such holistic aspects as physical fitness, nutrition, refreshing mental activity and beauty care. The main focus is to create a healthy body, mind and soul. The present day youth go to spas for fitness, stress management, peace of mind, pampering and pleasure, health and wellness as spa is considered as a centre for healing and nourishing body, mind and spirit. The importance given to health and wellness is reflected by the fact that diet, weight loss and exercise programmes and equipment, fitness facilities, spas, nutritional supplements are now having a place in everyone's life. This change in life style is driven not only by the extreme demands and long waits for treatment and the desire of working generation for a more active lifestyle after retirement, but also with the hope of being fit and well enough to participate in their chosen activities. In spite of the fact that wellness is an important matter of concern of the present generation, the absence of a properly designed spa and wellness centre in Manipal which has huge student population both domestic and international is quite surprising. Is it because the population of Manipal is not demanding for it? This study was taken up to understand the perception of people living in Manipal about health and wellness.

KEYWORDS: *Wellness Center, Health, Spa, wellness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Wellness is defined as the balanced state of body, spirit and mind including emotional, physical, intellectual, social, environmental, occupational and spiritual wellness. It is also viewed as a way of life, including physical fitness, healthy nutrition, mental activity, and beauty care with the purpose to create a healthy body, soul, and mind.

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Eating right, exercising and sleeping well play an equal role in the prevention of infections and diseases. However, a good sense of self, a loving support network, and the potential for continued personal growth is also important for overall wellbeing. Many of us are not in control of the factors that cause us to become ill whether they be genetic, environmental, or something else entirely. There are many avenues for improving the health, which include the use of traditional and modern medicines. However, most people cannot access or afford proper health healthy sanitation and

hygiene, which is necessary to prevent the spread of disease.

While people of all ages should maintain good health, young people face special challenges during their transition from childhood to adulthood. With the onset of puberty, the body changes to accommodate physical and emotional growth, but it also marks one of the most vulnerable stages in a young person's life. During this time, females tend to struggle more than males with body image and self-esteem issues which can lead to dangerous eating disorders and even death. On the other hand substance abuse, depression, self-mutilation and suicide have higher incident rates in males than females and if left untreated these health concerns may lead to permanent mental and physical damage.

There is extensive international research documenting the ways in which the health status of individuals or groups is significantly determined by social and economic conditions as well as by therapeutic care or personal health behaviours. SDOH (Social Determinants of Health) are the social and economic conditions that influence the health of

individuals and communities. Research on SDOH provides evidence that : health follows a social gradient ;stress damages health; the health impacts of early development and education lasts a lifetime; poverty and social exclusion cost lives; stress in the workplace increases the risk of disease; job security improves health; unemployment causes illness and premature death; social supports and supportive networks improves health; alcohol, drug and tobacco use are influenced by the social setting; healthy food is a political issue; and healthy transport means walking and cycling and good public transport. Other basic determinants of health, such as genetics, interact with SDOH to present a broad overview of why some individuals and communities are healthy while others are not. Sustainable health and wellness is not only part of our survival but it is also a continuously rewarding way to live out our entire lives. Marmot, M.G; Raphael, D (2004).

Dimensions of Wellness

Social Wellness- emphasizes the interdependence with others and nature and thus encourages human and physical environment to the common welfare of one's community. *Occupational Wellness* is one-which will gain personal satisfaction and find enrichment in one's life through work. *Spiritual wellness* includes the development of a deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life and natural forces that exist in the universe. *Physical wellness* encourages cardiovascular flexibility and strength, regular physical activity, medical self care, and appropriate use of medical system. *Intellectual wellness* encourages creativity,stimulating mental activities.*Emotional Wellness*emphasizes an awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. *Environmental wellness* includes respecting the nature and those living in it. *Financial Wellness* is a unique combination with an intricate balance of mental, spiritual and physical aspects of money. *Mental wellness* is theabsence depressive symptoms behaviours and anxiety. *Medical wellness* is the approach of delivering health care that considers multiple influences on person's health and consequently multiple modalities for treating and preventing disease as well as promoting optimal well-being.

The belief in the curative powers of mineral waters goes back to prehistoric times, Balneotherapy, is the thermal or mineral water treatment offered to drinking and bathing for the cure of various ailments. The Spa towns or Spa resorts were very popular for offering personal care treatments. The word Spa in Latin is an acronym of "Salus

Per Aquam" or "health from water". The term Spa is also the name of the town of Spa, Belgium ,whose name is known back to Roman times, when the location was called AquaeSpadanae, perhaps related to the Latin word "Spargere" meaning to scatter, sprinkle or moisten.

Today's spa is an interesting combination of ancient traditions and modern mechanical wonders. However, the heart of the modern spa is water just as the ancient spa and the ritual that evolve around it. According to Prof. De Vierville, the proper sequence of the typical Spa ritual is cleaning, heating, treatment, and rest. In the first step, cleaning should be a visit to shower to purify the body. The second step is to heat the body. Many spas offer heated whirlpools, saunas, and steam rooms. The third step is the treatment such as a body scrub and massage. The last and equally important step is rest. Today's ritual is very similar to the spa ritual used at the Roman thermae. There have been many recent additions to spa water therapies in recent times. The Jacuzzi whirlpool, a central fixture in many modern spas, was invented in the 1950's followed by Hydrotherapy tubs, Swiss showers, Scotch Hoses and vichy showers. In addition to these mechanical inventions, new therapeutic ways to use still water have been discovered: floatation therapy, Watsu, Wassertanzen, Water Dance, Liquid sound, and dreams and ritual in healing waters have been developed. The spa today embraces and celebrates its origins in water and is constantly looking for new ways to express it.

The Spas are classified according to the accommodation and services offered. *Day spa*-do not provide overnight accommodation. They offer services wholly dedicated to health, beauty, and wellness services within a short pampering time, a day, half day, or an hour. *Resort spa/hotel spa*hotels, resorts, all-inclusive hotels, villages, country clubs, and inns which include a swimming pool, sauna, steam room, Jacuzzi, and treatment rooms etc.

Destination Spa is totallyoriented to the spa experience. Besides the usual treatments (facial, beauty, body, baths, massage, etc) they also offer health food, nutrition and weight loss treatments, detoxprogrammes, fitness programmes, wellness education, and consultation mainly health and wellbeing. *Wellness Center spa*offers traditional spa treatments to nourish body, mind, and soul combined with physical activities like yoga, hiking, mountain climbing, kayak or river rafting *Healthspa*-offer similar facilities of an hotel focusing on beauty, nutrition, fitness and health which also include traditional health services,-weight loss, detoxing, relaxation, healing services, holistic treatments, medical clinics, services

through mineral, thermal or sea water *Pamper spa* offers stress relieving treatments and relaxation. *Club spa* is a fitness location with Spa facilities including health club, gym or leisure services. *Therapeutic spa* offer services of mind or body, which include thalassic therapy spas, mineral water springs, and medical clinic services. *Holistic spa* offer traditional wellbeing services focusing on beauty and health therapies for body and soul. Natural herbs, minerals, and oils are the base of treatments. Shiatsu massages, acupressure and aromatherapy are examples of services offered at a Holistic Spa. *Medical spa* offers wellness treatments under the direction of medical doctor, nutritionists, sport medicine practitioners, physiotherapists, nursing practitioners etc., *Cruise spa*-Spa center inside the ship offer professional treatments, fitness, Wellness Services, and healthy Spa cuisine *Mobile spa* offer a full scale spa treatments at home or office *Real Estate Spa* provides health, beauty and wellness at home

The United States became a center of spa innovation beginning in the 1850's when New York's Saratoga springs emerged as a fashionable retreat for luminaries ranging from Edgar Allan Poe to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The first day spa, Manhattan Red door Salon, was introduced by Elizabeth Arden in 1910, offering manicures, facials, and signature "Arden Wax" A Second generation American, Deborah Szekely also created the first destination Spa, Ranchola Puerta, located just south of the border in Baja, California. In 1958 Szekely also opened the pioneering Golden Door spa in California, offering weight loss and fitness programmes. By 1997, innovative US doctors began to introduce "medical spas" combining Western and holistic medicine in a luxurious, spa inspired environment alongside Spa services. In 1986, New York based Spa finder Inc, opened its doors, becoming the first travel agency specializing in Spa vacations. The spa industry has grown from a fledging niche business in to a booming \$15 billion global industry.

With record numbers of people turning to the spa for some of their most important life style pursuits, today's Spa experience covers medical and Spiritual programs to outdoor adventure and exotic travel-with spas located in virtually every global region including Africa, Middle East, and the former Eastern Bloc. The Spa aesthetic meanwhile has broken out of the spa and in to popular culture, influencing everything from fashion and cosmetics, architecture, home décor, to cuisine.

Spa finder-the global spa resource through its award-winning website (Spafinder.com) its popular consumer publications and the world's largest Spa gift certificate program, connects millions of spa goers to thousands of the

world's finest spas and has played a pivotal role in making the "Spa" the fourth largest leisure industry in the US, generating more revenue than ski resorts, amusement/theme parks and even box office receipts.

Health Tourism was defined by the International Union of Tourism Organizations - the forerunner to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1973 as "the provision of health facilities utilizing the natural resources of the country, in particular mineral water and climate". Since this definition the development of health tourism and spa tourism as its main sector has been rapid and resulted in drastic growth of supply and service. Natural resources (mineral water, salt, mud) products and services are still in use, but overall integrated provision of body and mind is the trend including wide spectrum of wellness, fitness, eduwellness, medical wellness, etc.

ILIS project has defined a Spa as "a designated place of services in the continuum of health, wellbeing, relaxation and body styling (nutrition, gym, Physical activities, Plastic /surgery, beauty care, etc) which are offered holistically by skilled professionals often with aid of (healing) water".

Spa tourism is widely acknowledged as a core element of the health and wellness movement which covers a broad spectrum of holistic, curative and preventive activities. The European Travel commission (ETC) in its article "Tourism Trends for Europe" (2006) argues that the ageing population and an increasing concern for health are likely to drive a growth in demand for health tourism products and Spa services.

The new millennium is welcoming a series of industry and life style trends arising out of a growing awareness of what it means to be well and how this can be achieved. The demand for wellness-related services is intensifying and constantly evolving and it has been observed that the public is becoming aware of the potential for optimizing health, improving performance, preventing disease and aging, and enhancing beauty from the inside out, through investment in wellness.

The World Health Organization defined health as being more than freedom from illness, disease and debilitating conditions. Health is optimal well-being that contributes to quality of life. It is more than freedom from disease and illness, though freedom from disease is important to good health. Optimal health includes high-level mental, social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellness within the limits of one's heredity and personal abilities. A positive outlook on life is essential to wellness and each of the wellness dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the People's perception towards health and wellness, study was done a sample size consisting of 100 people each from Manipal and Bangalore (total 200samples)The respondents were all 18 years and above and consisted of the general population. The data was collected through a questionnaire containing 30 questions relating to health and activity levels and also the wellness perception of the people. Ringer, G (2007) talks about the critical benefits of health related tourism as well as alternative resources and preventive therapeutic treatments that would complement existing curative facilities, and provide meaningful opportunities for small and medium sized hotels and tours in Montenegro The questionnaire was derived on the same lines as that reported by Ringer, G (2007). The questions were framed on age, sex, income, awareness of health and wellness and spas, spending patterns of people on health and wellness facilities, kind of treatment people would like in their locality. The questionnaire will also help us to understand the preferences of people for treatments, where they got the information about spas and health and wellness facilities etc. The questionnaire was developed and distributed among the final year students of Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, and appropriate corrections were made in the final questionnaire.

Bangalore the fastest growing capital city of Karnataka is identified to be compared with Manipal, the International University town having students from 56 countries. Bangalore a cosmopolitan city having a number of Spas and Wellness Centers of international Standard could be used as a model to compare the awareness and perception among the youth.

The Six Spas in Bangalore are analyzed in terms of facilities they offer

1. Soukya
2. Club Citrus
3. The 5th Element
4. Aroma Home spa
5. SPA.ce
6. Body Craft-Spa and Salon

The four Health and Wellness Centers chosen in Manipal for study are

1. Sri DharmasthalaManjunatheshwara Yoga and Nature Cure Hospital, Pareeka
2. Muniyal Institute of Ayurveda Medical Sciences, Manipal

3. Department of Ayurveda- Kasturba Medical College, Manipal
4. Marena- Indoor sports and Physical Fitness Centre of Manipal University

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main focus of the study was to understand the perception of youth about spas for health and wellness. The questionnaire was devised to get the information at two levels.

1. Personal information

This would give the information of the people under survey in terms of the gender, age, education, occupation, marital status, annual family income.

The personal information has helped in seeing that the sample strata is equally distributed among males and females, different age groups, working people and students, married and unmarried and the different ranges of family income. Figures 1-6 shows the distribution of the sample in terms of above categories at Manipal and Bangalore. It is seen that with the reference to gender among the people who responded, the number of males in Bangalore was 55% and females was 45% and in Manipal the percentage of male respondents was 52% while the females was 48%. Therefore, the number of male and female respondents is almost equal in number in Bangalore as well as in Manipal. (Fig.1)

Gender

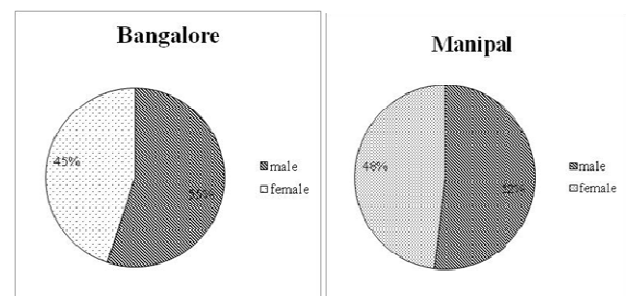


FIGURE 1

In the case of categorization with respect to age, the responses were received from every age group. The number of people under the age group of 25 was slightly higher than the other age groups. This can be attributed to the fact that a large number of student population resides in

Manipal. The classification of age group was done from the ages of 18 years to 25 years, 26to35, 36to45, 46to55, 56to65 and 65 and above. (Fig.2)

Age

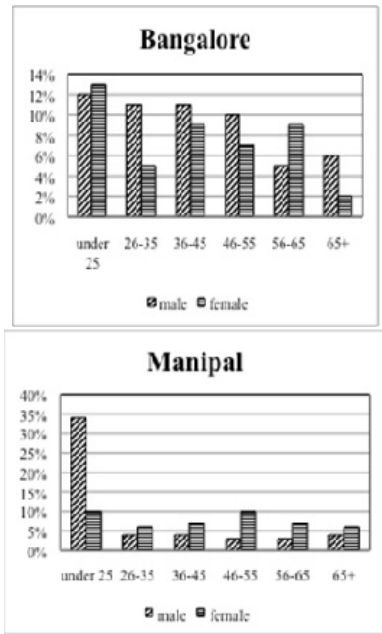


FIGURE 2

There was not much of variation in education since most of the people who responded in both Manipal and in Bangalore were graduates, with a few high school educated and Post Graduates. This was mainly because Manipal is known as an education city and the population mainly consists of students or professionals. Due to this a similar group was targeted at Bangalore as well. (Fig.3)

A similar trend was seen with reference to occupation as 44% of the respondents from Manipal were students where as 31% of the respondents from Bangalore were working. (Fig.4)

Educational Qualification

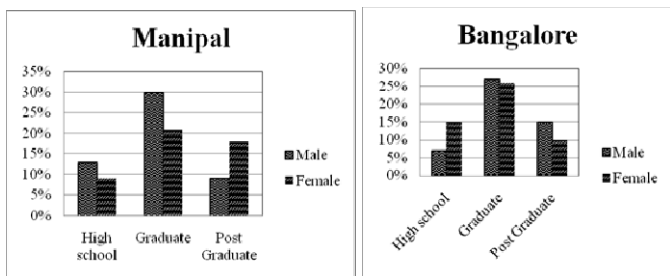


FIGURE 3

Occupation

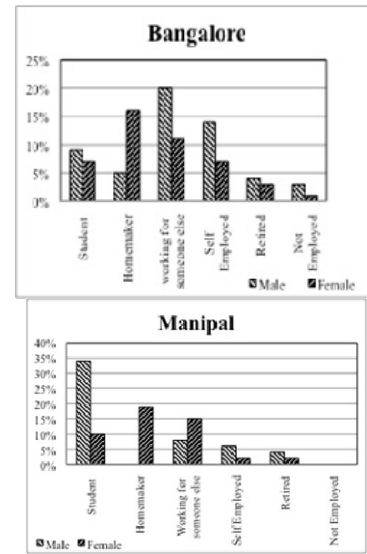


FIGURE 4

There was a balance in the samples between the married and unmarried with married occupying 52% and 51% in Bangalore and Manipal respectively and single occupying 36% and 46% in Bangalore and Manipal respectively. The higher percentage of singles in Manipal is again an indicative of student population in Manipal. (Fig.5)

Marital Status

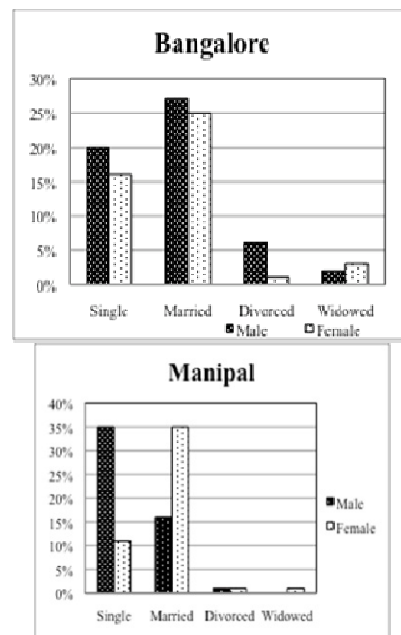


FIGURE 5

Annual family income was included in the questionnaire to understand whether income was a constraint for the people to visit spas. The income level was divided as to 1lakh, 2 to 5 lakhs, 6 to 10lakhs and 11 and above per annum. In Bangalore 76% of respondents fell under the income bracket of 2 to 10lakhs while, the respondents with a family income of 11 lakhs and above per annum was 7%. In Manipal the respondents from the family income bracket of 2to 10 lakh was 75% while those whose family income is 11 lakhs and above per annum was 9% which is slightly higher as compared to Bangalore. (Fig.6)

2. Perception about health and wellness

The answers to questions 7 to 30 in the questionnaire was used to understand the perception of people about health and wellness. Figures 7 to 28 shows the details of the results.

Annual family income

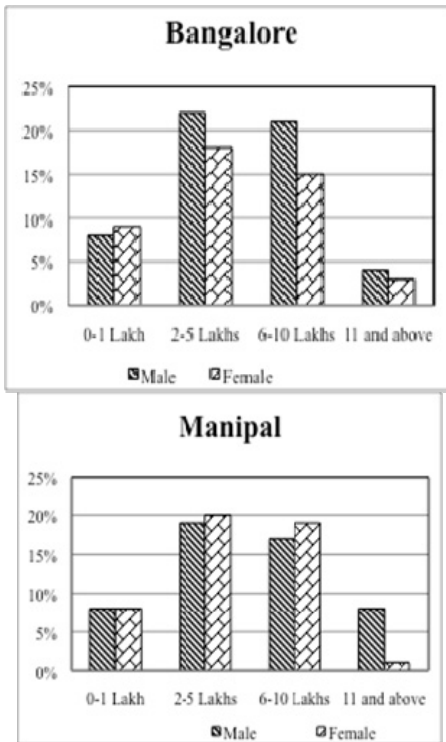


FIGURE 6

The analysis of the results showed that most people in the age group of 25 years and below felt that exercise was to stay fit, both in Bangalore as well as in Manipal. On the other hand, most of the people in Bangalore from the ages 26 to 55 said that exercise was a type of relaxation for them. 18% of the respondents in Bangalore and 1% of

respondents in Manipal felt that exercise was a burden to them. (Fig.7)

Exercise to you is

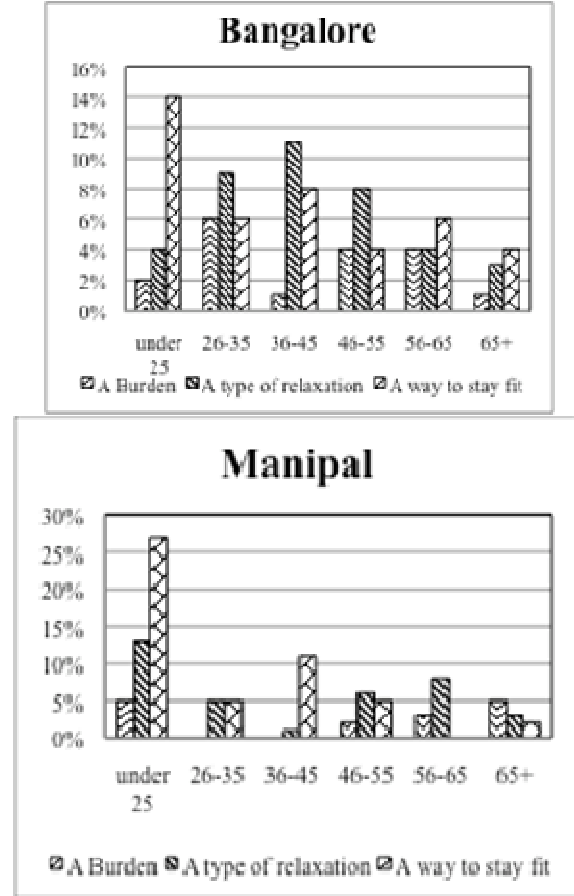


FIGURE. 7

With reference to the frequency of exercise when only 28% of people in Bangalore exercise daily, 39% of people in Manipal exercise daily. When 21% of respondents from Bangalore said that they never exercise and only 13% from Manipal never spent time for exercise. Therefore number of people who exercise in Manipal is greater as compared to those in Bangalore. This means people in Manipal are more health conscious and exercise more often compared to those from Bangalore. (Fig.8)

When respondents were asked whether they preferred to exercise indoors or outdoors, in both Bangalore and Manipal, more number of males preferred to exercise outdoors as compared to indoors. While if we observe the trend among women, the number of women who prefer to exercise indoors was higher than those who wanted to exercise outdoors both in Bangalore as well as in Manipal. (Fig.9)

How often do you exercise

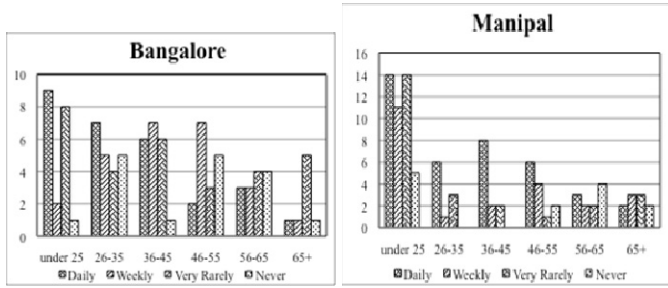


FIGURE. 8

Time of the day

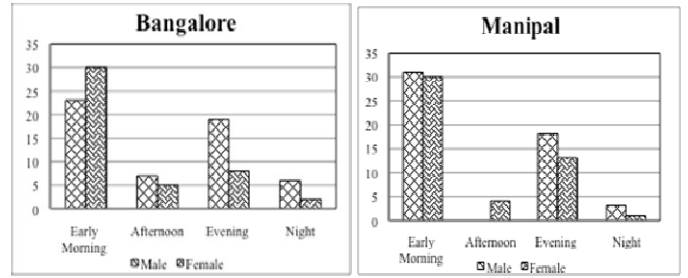


FIGURE 10

Where do you prefer to exercise?

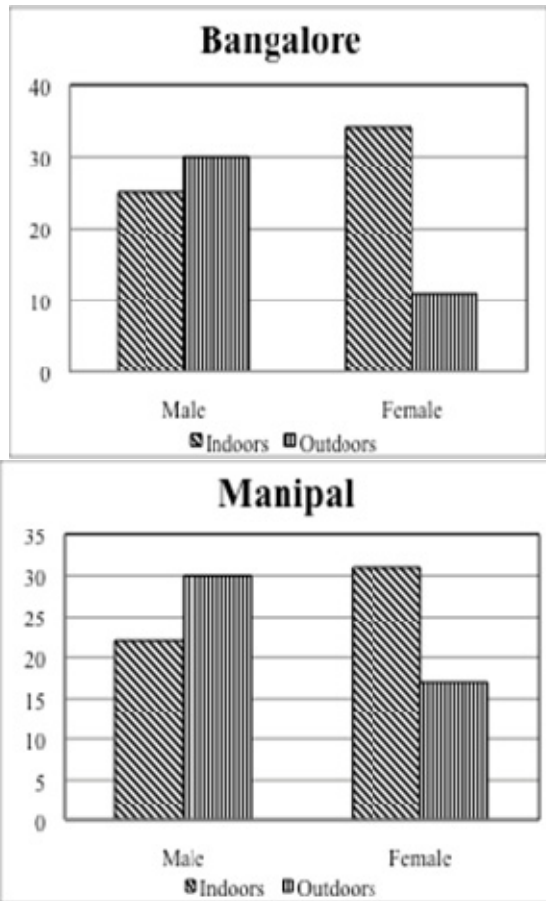


FIGURE. 9

Most of the people preferred to exercise early in the morning – Bangalore -53% and Manipal-61%. The second most popular time of the day when the respondents preferred to exercise was in the evening with 27% in Bangalore and 31% in Manipal who preferred to exercise in the evening. (Fig. 10)

When 42% of people in Bangalore were already members of fitness club only 31% were members in Manipal. This indicates that 69% of people in Manipal are not a part of a fitness club or wellness centre. (Fig. 11)

Among the people who said that they were not a member of a fitness club or wellness centre, 26% of people in Bangalore and 30% of respondents in Manipal said that they would join a fitness club or wellness centre soon.(Fig. 12)

Are you a member of a fitness club or wellness centre

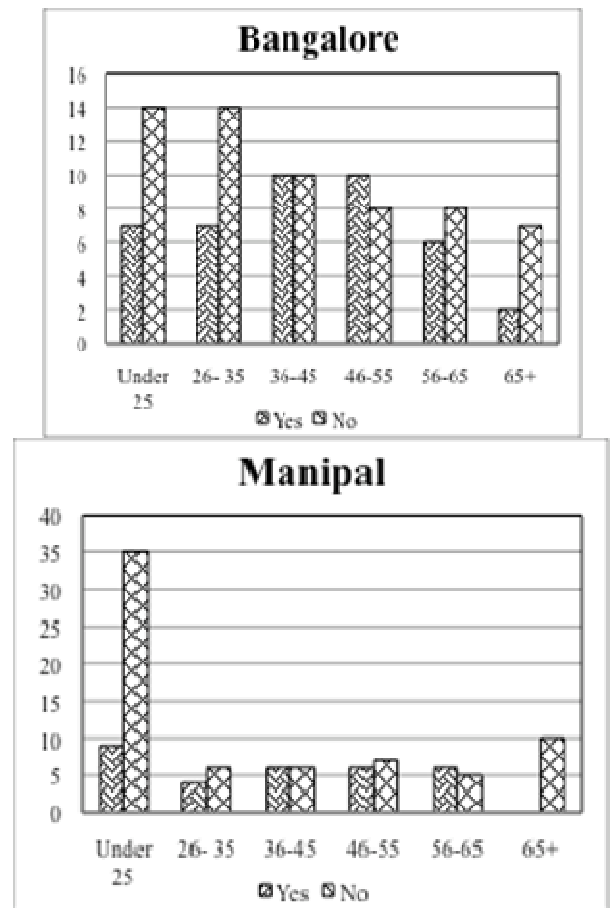


FIGURE 11

If you answered no, do you have plans to join a fitness club?

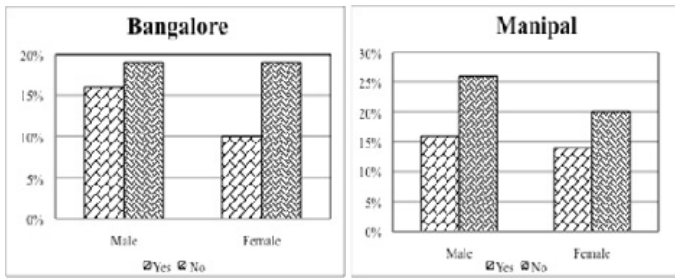


FIGURE 12

When asked about the preferred facilities in a wellness club or a fitness centre, people from Bangalore responded almost equally to the facilities mentioned whereas in Manipal, a higher demand for exercise equipment (34%) can be observed while a swimming pool (31%) comes a close second. (Fig. 13)

Facilities you would look for in a fitness club or wellness centre

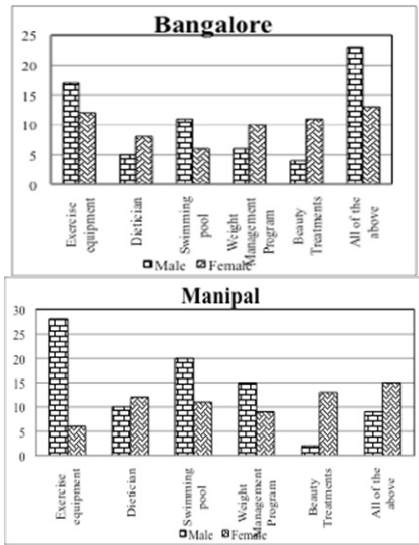


FIGURE 13

44% of respondents in Bangalore play sports and 51% of respondents from Manipal play some kind of sport. The general trend is that males play more sports as compared to women. (Fig. 14)

Among the activity preferences, most respondents in Bangalore as well as in Manipal preferred to walk while in Manipal football seems to be a popular activity among men. (Fig. 15)

Do you play sports?

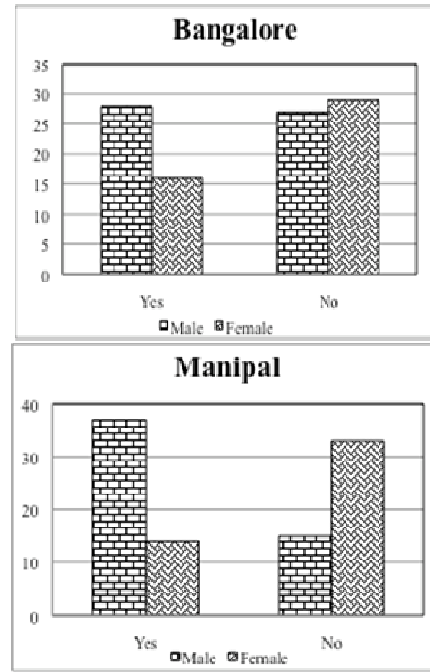


FIGURE 14

Activities you are interested in

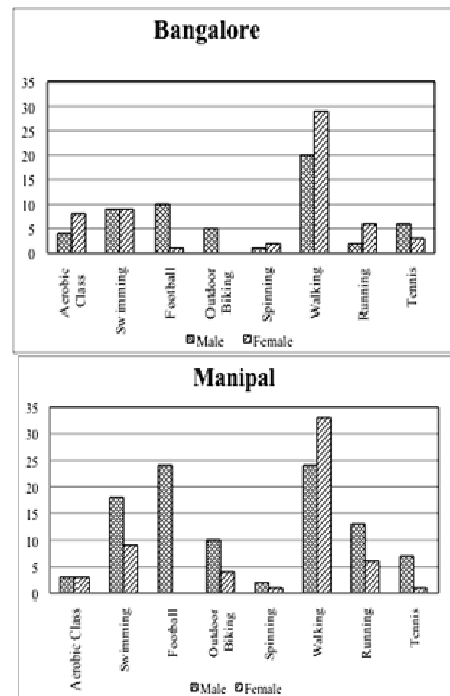


FIGURE 15

Majority of the people from Bangalore and Manipal seemed to have a better understanding about health. Only 22% from Bangalore and 19% from Manipal said that

health was being fit, while 59% in Bangalore and 67% of respondent in Manipal believed that health is the absence of disease, absence of stress as well as being physically fit. (Fig.16)

What does health mean to you?

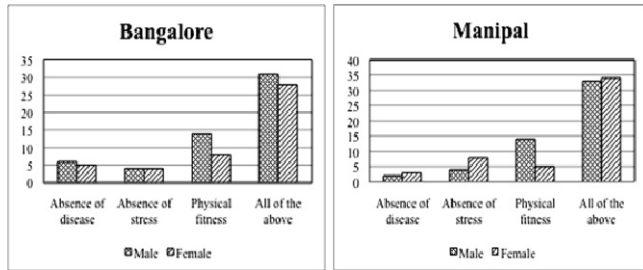


FIGURE 16

23% in Bangalore and 26% in Manipal were regular smokers where as 55% in Bangalore and 58% in Manipal responded negative. (Fig.17)

21% in Bangalore and 22% of respondents in Manipal responded that they consumed alcohol on a regular basis and 25% in Bangalore and 37% in Manipal said that they consumed alcohol on a less regular basis. (Fig. 18)

Do you smoke?

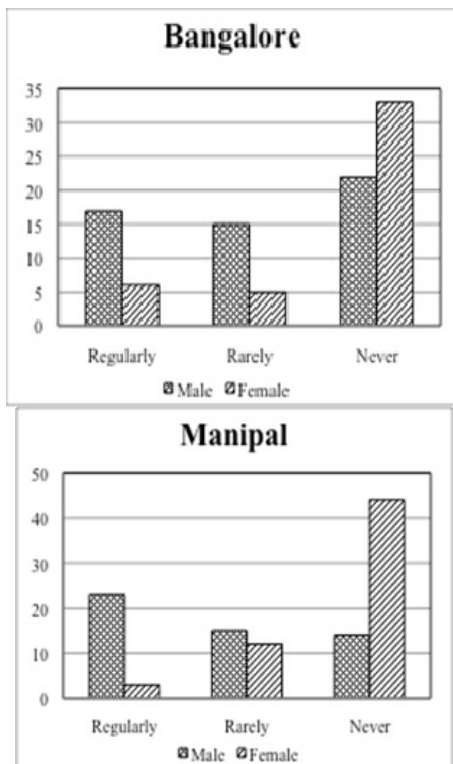


FIGURE 17

Do you drink alcohol?

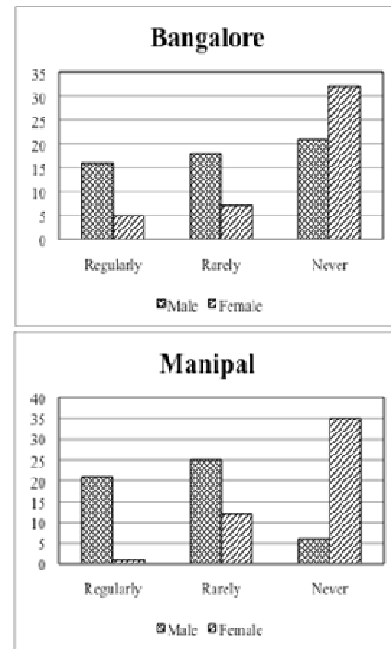


FIGURE 18

When respondents were asked about the kind of facilities that they would like to have in the area that they lived, most people from Manipal said that they would like a fitness club and a massage centre. The beauty salon and ayurvedic centre were a more popular choice among women. (Fig. 19)

Facilities that you would like to have in your Locality

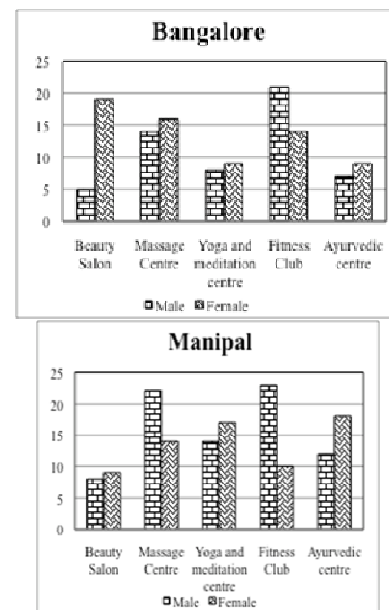


FIGURE 19

It was quite interesting to note that 75% of respondents from Bangalore and 86% of people in Manipal said that they were aware of the term Spa. Friends, family and internet were the most popular sources from where they had heard about Spa. (Fig. 20 and Fig. 21)

When respondents were asked what according to them was a Spa, most of them in Bangalore said that it was a beauty salon and beauty treatment centre and a massage centre while 43% in Manipal said that it included a beauty salon, massage centre, meditation and yoga, nutrition and diet counseling as well as therapeutic healing. (Fig. 22)

Are you aware of the term spa?

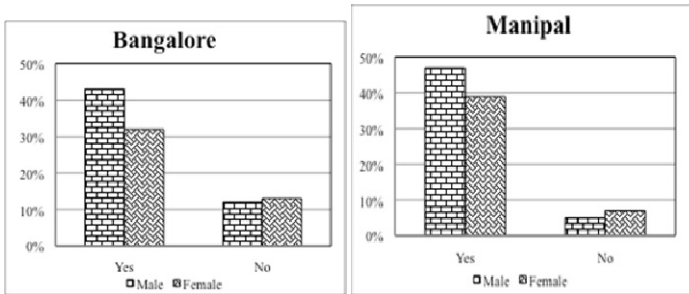


FIGURE 20

If you answered 'Yes' then the source

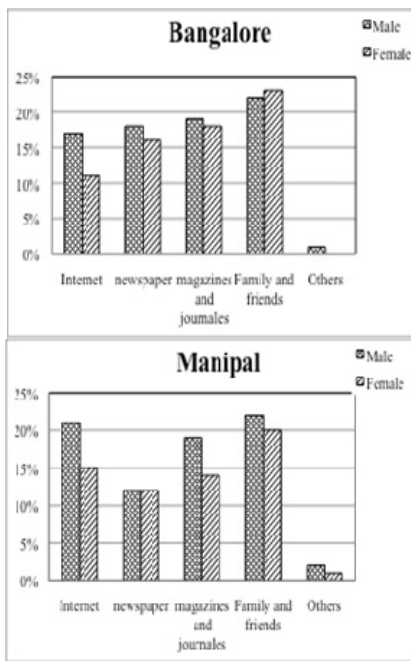


FIGURE 21

What according to you is a spa?

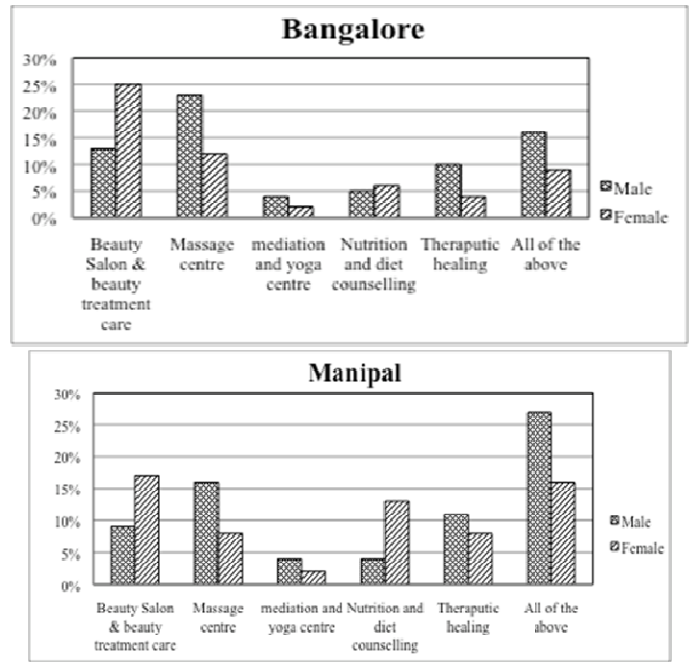


FIGURE 22

Even though 41% from Bangalore and 56% in Manipal said that they would never visit a spa, the reasons given to this was different. (Fig. 23 and Fig. 24)

How often would you visit a spa?

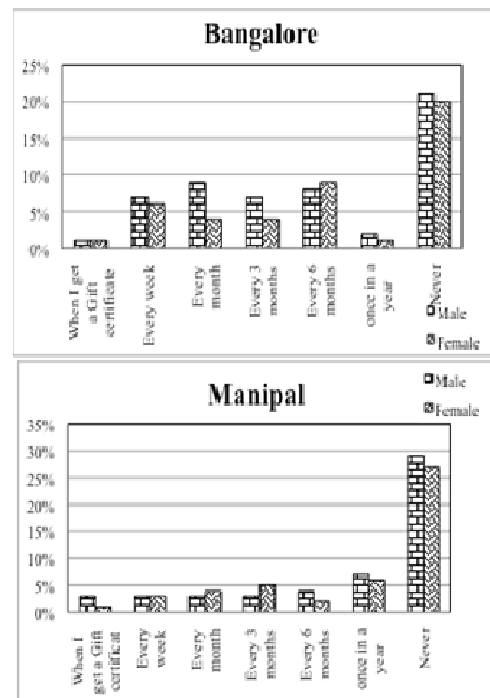


FIGURE 23

If you answered never, why?

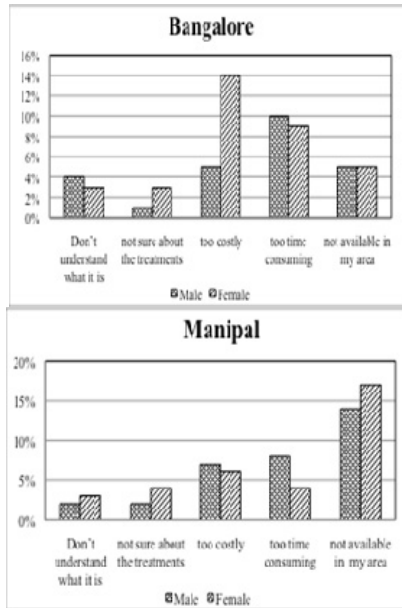


FIGURE 24

Most of the people in Manipal said so because it was not available in their area and the main reason for the people in Bangalore was that it was too time consuming or too costly (Fig. 24). On the other hand 70% of people in Bangalore and 86% of people in Manipal would like to have a personal care and a day spa in their community. (Fig.25)

Would you like a personal care and day spa in your community?

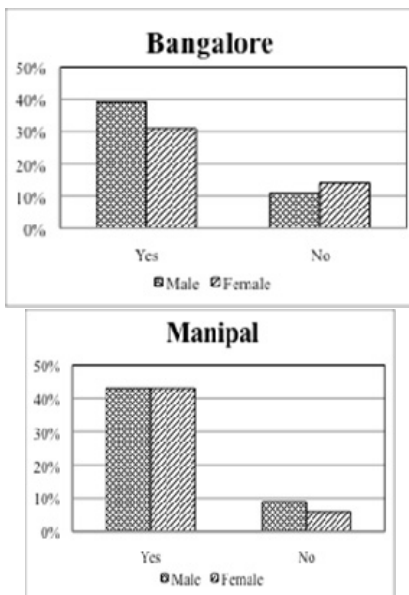


FIGURE 25

Most respondents in Bangalore as well as in Manipal liked to listen to music to relax while exercise and meditation came a close second both in Bangalore and in Manipal. (Fig. 26)

What do you usually do to relax?

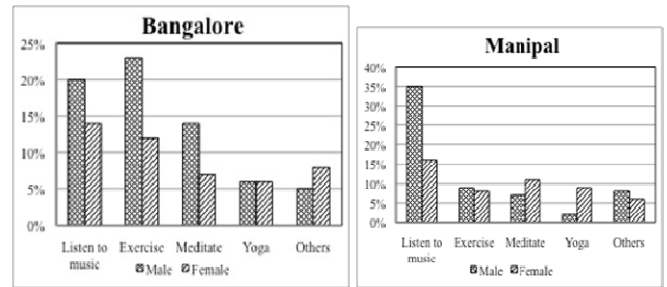


FIGURE 26

40% in Bangalore and 51% of respondents in Manipal said that they did not suffer from any lifestyle diseases. 18% of respondents suffer from diabetes and 13% from higher or low blood pressure in Manipal. (Fig. 27)

Which of the following lifestyle diseases do you suffer from?

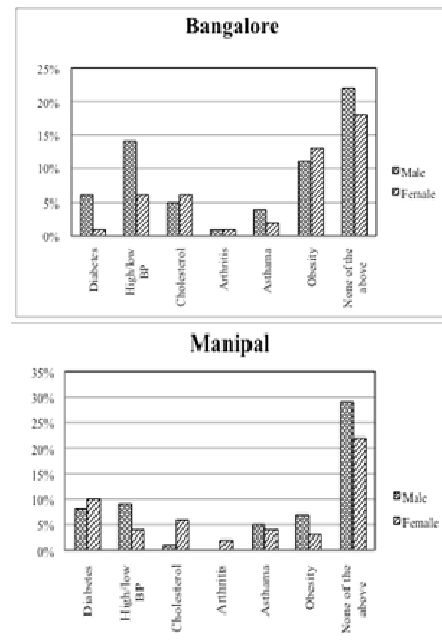


FIGURE 27

Healthy diet, regular exercise, yoga, meditation and a stress free life, were attributed to the main factors for a healthy living. (Fig. 28)

What according to you is the most important thing to stay healthy

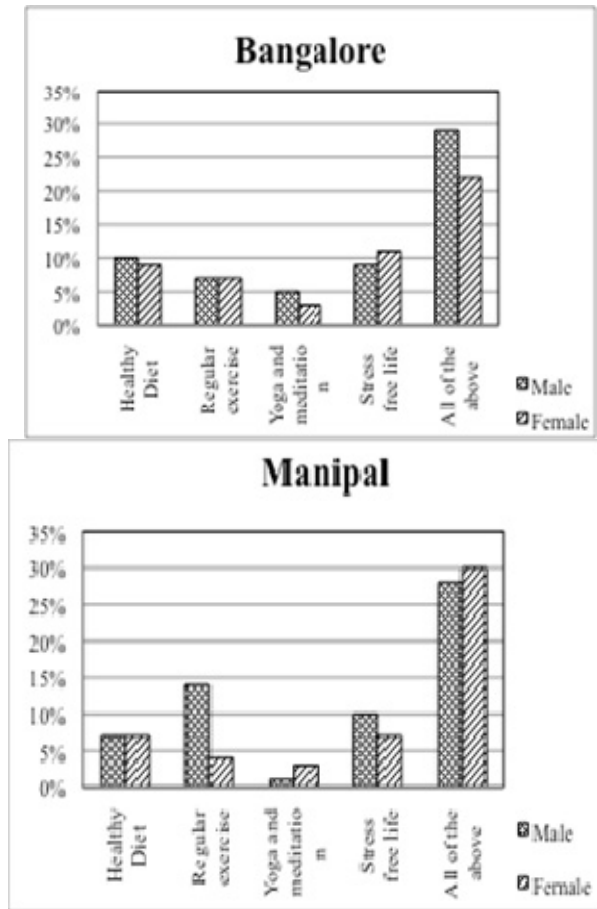


FIGURE 28

CONCLUSION

Wellness is viewed as a way of life, including such holistic aspects as self-responsibility, physical fitness, healthy nutrition, mental activity, environmental sensitivity and beauty care. The purpose is to create a healthy body, soul and mind. Today's spa is a center for healing and nourishing mind, body, and spirit. People go to spas for fitness, stress management, peace of mind, pampering and pleasure, and health and wellness. The importance of health and wellness is reflected by the fact that diets, weight loss programs, exercise programs and equipment, fitness facilities, spas, nutritional supplements and activity/leisure groups of all sorts are now common place in our everyday lives. Some of these changes are driven not only by the extreme demands and long waits for treatment in the health care system, but also by the desire of the working generation for a more active lifestyle after

retirement, with the hope of being fit and well enough to participate in their chosen activities.

The main purpose of the study was to focus on finding out the perception of people living in Manipal as well in Bangalore about health and wellness. Since Bangalore is more developed and well equipped with spas and wellness centers, it was thought to be an ideal place to be compared with Manipal. For this purpose, a survey was carried out with the help of a questionnaire that consisted of 30 questions pertaining to health and wellness awareness and perception of the people as well as questions on their own fitness levels and activity preference. The questionnaire was framed based on the observations by Ringer, G, (2007).

The key trends observed after analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire as follows:

More people in Manipal as compared to Bangalore think that exercise is important to stay fit. A very small number of people in Manipal find exercise to be a burden. More people in Bangalore are already members of a fitness club as compared to Manipal. 75% of people in Manipal would like to have exercise equipments, dieticians, swimming pools, weight management programs and beauty treatments available in their area. 56% of people in Manipal would never visit a spa and the main reason for this is that it is not available in their area. 86% of the people desire for a spa or personal care centre in Manipal. Family, friends and the internet, have played a major role in creating awareness about spas among the people in Manipal. It was also found that 'work' is the major stressor for men in Manipal while the major stressor for women is 'health'.

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