

Unapdev – Medicare of Tourism

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Abstract: *Medical tourism is often used synonymously with health tourism. Medical tourism is a growing sector in India. The term “medical tourism” was coined by travel agencies and the mass media to describe the rapidly growing practice of travelling across international borders to obtain hi-tech medical care. Healthcare has become a global market, with emerging, developing and developed nations competing for health tourists. Medical tourism is the travel of people to another country for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment in that country. Traditionally, people would travel from less developed countries to major medical centres in highly developed countries for medical treatment that was unavailable in their own countries. The recent trend is for people to travel from developed countries to third world countries for medical treatments because of cost consideration, though the traditional pattern still continues. Located at a distance of 25kms from Chopda city and 4kms from Adavad, Unapdev is listed as ASI site and is famous for its hot water fountain. The place is known for its hot spring. Unapdev is situated on Amalner-Chopda-Vari state high way. Tourist can reach this health resort by taking route from Chopda to Yawal on which Advad is situated. The surrounding area of Unapdev is highly dissected by swift steams originating in south slope of the Satpura range and facing towards Tapi River. Unapdev is a health resort. All over Maharashtra hot springs are found at the base of the mountain ranges of the Sahyadri, Ajanta and Satpura ranges. Unapdev is a pilgrim site.. There is a need for marketing of this hot spring tourism. An attempt is made to apply SWOT analysis which reveals the significance of Unapdev as medicare of tourism.*

Keywords: *Geothermal, Hot springs, Deity, Medicare, SWOT*

1. INTRODUCTION

India's medical tourism sector is expected to experience an annual growth rate of 30%, making it a \$2 billion industry by 2015. As medical treatment costs in the developed world balloon - with the United States leading the way - more and more Westerners are finding the prospect of international travel for medical care increasingly appealing. An estimated 150,000 of these travel to India for low-priced healthcare procedures every year

Advantages for medical treatment in India include reduced costs, the availability of latest medical technologies, and a growing compliance on international quality standards, as well as the fact that foreigners are less likely to face a language barrier in India. The Indian government is taking steps to address infrastructure issues that hinder the country's growth in medical tourism. A visa-on-arrival scheme for tourists from select countries has been instituted which allows foreign nationals to stay in India for 30 days for medical reasons.

Confederation of Indian Industry reported that 150,000 medical tourists came to India in 2005, based on feedback from the organization's member hospitals. The number grew to 200,000 by 2008. A separate study by ASSOCHAM reported that the year 2011 saw 850,000 medical tourists in India and projected that by 2015 this number would rise to 3,200,000.

Most estimates claim treatment costs in India start at around a tenth of the price of comparable treatment in America or Britain. The most popular treatments sought in India by medical tourists are alternative medicine, bone-marrow transplant, cardiac bypass, eye surgery, hip replacement and dental treatment. India is known in particular for heart surgery, hip resurfacing and for dental treatments at cheap prices.

Lower treatment cost does not necessarily mean lower healthcare standards. However, for a patient travelling to India, it is important to find the optimal Doctor-Hospital combination. After the patient has been treated, the patient has the option of either recuperating in the hospital or at a paid

accommodation nearby. Many hospitals also give the option of continuing the treatment through telemedicine.

Medical tourism is often used synonymously with health tourism. One can, however, differentiate health tourism from medical tourism, where health and wellness tourism indicates travel to spa resorts or for traditional and alternative therapies. Medical tourism encompasses primarily and predominantly biomedical procedures, combined with travel and tourism (Whittaker 2010, Connell 2006). The term “medical tourism” was coined by travel agencies and the mass media to describe the rapidly growing practice of travelling across international borders to obtain hi-tech medical care. It is based on cheaper air fares, and internet and communication channels in developing countries and cheaper hi-tech super-speciality medical services for people who can afford it – be they foreign or national medical tourists. Using informal channels of communications and contacts, the practice avoids regulatory and legal scrutiny to generate substantial profits to the providers of various services.

Healthcare has become a global market, with emerging, developing and developed nations competing for health tourists. Medical tourism is the travel of people to another country for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment in that country. Traditionally, people would travel from less developed countries to major medical centres in highly developed countries for medical treatment that is unavailable in their own countries. The recent trend is for people to travel from developed countries to third world countries for medical treatments because of cost consideration, though the traditional pattern still continues. Another reason for travel for medical treatment is because some treatments may not be legal in the home country, such as some fertility procedures. With these considerations in mind, there appear to be some important differences between health tourism of the 21st and late 20th centuries and what has occurred previously.

The practice of travelling to improve one's health has emerged as a growing component of tourism behaviour and products (Hall, 2003). With the increasingly frenetic pace of life in the twenty-first century, the desire to use leisure time to pursue activities that contribute positively to health and well-being is anticipated to show continuing growth. A belief that 'taking the waters' contributes to physical and emotional well-being persists and underpins the motive of spa visitation as the growth of spa tourism as a significant component of the health tourism phenomenon (Hall, 2003).

With growing scientific evidence that minerals from certain springs have special properties which can cure or ease the symptoms of various ailments, the tourism industry has sought to deploy these resources to attract interactional visitors. The rapid growth of spa tourism in recent years has provided an incentive for countries, endowed with the relevant natural resources such as mineral springs, to pursue the development of their own health spa resort sectors. The economic potential has led many countries to finance, plan and develop the regions where these natural resources are found and to engage in promotional campaigns to encourage visitors to these sites. While well-established in Western society, the development of spa and health tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon in many Asian countries (Henderson, 2004). Tourism have largely categorised tourism as a leisure-related activity separated from the everyday, whereby the tourist gazes upon the ‘other’ in a foreign locale (Urry 2002). Health and medical tourism, however, challenge such understandings on several grounds. Firstly, tourism does not necessarily involve a retreat from everyday experiences. As a consequence, tourism may involve an increased rather than decreased engagement with everyday reality. Secondly, this reveals tourism is not necessarily a passive activity, but an embodied experience. For the health and medical tourist, their ‘tourist experience’ is partially or solely motivated by their health or perception of their health (Cook, 2008).

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The paper focuses on five specific aims:

- To investigate the evolution and pattern of medical tourism of Unapdev’s prospective development of hot springs tourism sector.
- Identify the key underlying determinants of hot springs sector in general.
- To ascertain the relative importance of Unapdev as hot spring tourist site.
- To propose Unapdev as potential medical tourism in Maharashtra with reference to hot springs tourism destination.
- To create a SWOT analysis for Unapdev.

3. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The database for the paper is based on field experience. Certain data was collected through observation and questionnaire. Other related data for the paper was collected from Imperial Gazetteer of India and other books and government publications. Base map for the study area is based on Survey of India topographic map no. 46 O. Cartographic and SWOT analysis technique is applied for the study.

4. STUDY AREA

Unapdev is located at a distance of 25 kms. from Chopda city and 4kms from Advad, Unapdev is listed as ASI site and is famous for its hot water spring.

Unapdev is located at the intersection of 20° 16' North latitude and 75° 29' East longitude. Its location is one the foot of the high spur of the Satpura range penetrating into the flat plateau in the south. The area in which Unapdev is located is drained by the tributaries of the Tapi River, which flows in the South of Unapdev.

Unapdev is situated on Amalner-Chopda-Vari state high way. The village Advad is 6 km. South of Unapdev. Unapdev is situated in Chopda tahsil of Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Tourist can reach this health resort by taking route from Chopda to Yawal on which Advad is situated. The surrounding area of Unapdev is highly dissected by swift streams originating in south slope of the Satpura range and facing towards Tapi River. (Fig 1)

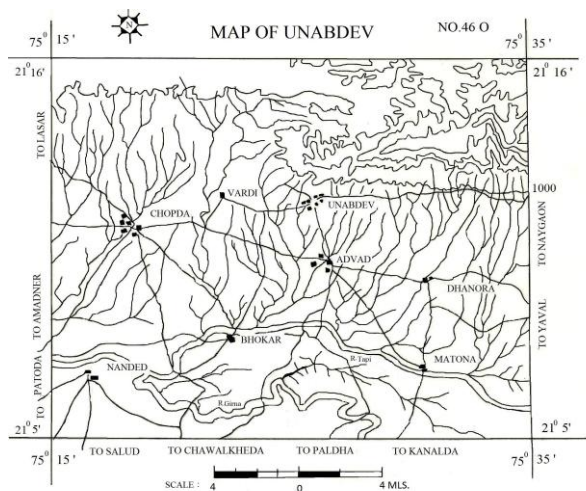


Fig 1

The word 'Unap' means hot water and in Khandesh's Ahirani language 'Vuna Dev' stands for the almighty that generated this spring. It has a permanent natural hot water source, and it flows throughout the year from a structure in the shape of a cow's mouth, which always flows even in hot summer. Hot water spring is one of the key attractions of Unapdev tourist place. Alike Unapdev, Sunapdev, Nijhardev are two other hot water breezes generated in Satpuda hill range. All these three places have special mention in ancient holy 'Ramayana' and had auspicious touch of Lord Rama during his fourteen years expulsion from Ayodhya. The hot waters collect in a twenty-five feet square pond surrounded by a red-brick wall. Within the enclosure, close to the edge of the pond, is a rest-house and two small Hindu shrines. Outside the enclosure the hot water collects into a cattle trough. Anakdeo, Unabdeo, Ramtalab, and Nazardeo hot springs are the best suited for installation of cold storage plants. Shahada and Chopda are the Taluka places near these thermal springs where the production of crops such as potatoes, bananas, pomegranates etc. are the main crops. If cold storage facility is provided these crops may yield better values in monetary terms in off-seasons.

5. CLIMATE

The climatograph (Fig 2) has drawn for Unapdev represent three types of climate of hot, warm and cool. The hot and cool climates are sandwiched between warm climates. The months of April, May and June experience hot conditions with temperature above 30° C. The cool climate is of short duration from mid-November to December. The remaining months from July to November and another from February to April experience a warm climate.

The month of July is the wet recording 22.85 cm. of rainfall. The rainy season extends up to September. Because of the situation on the foot of mountains very small amount of rainfall is received in every month. . The annual rainfall received is 74 cm. The normal maximum temperature is 34.9⁰C and minimum is 20⁰C.

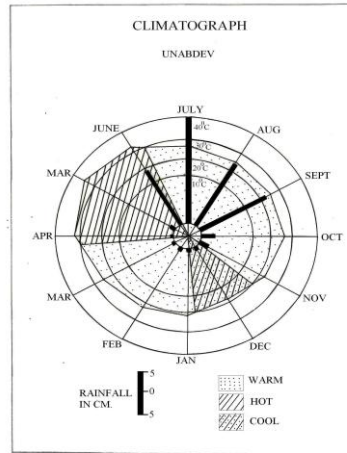


Fig - 2

6. HOT SPRING

The place is known for its hot spring. All over Maharashtra hot springs are found at the base of the mountain ranges of the Sahyadri, Ajanta and Satpura ranges. The hot water comes out from a solid rock. These solid rocks form a lower part of a temple. The hot water flows through a stone conduit fashioned in the form of a cow's head and collected in a small pond surrounded by a red brick walls. (Plate I)

The important features of this spring are that the temperature at different points varies.

- At the origin of spring (i.e. at Gomukh) the temperature is 58⁰C.
- Once it is collected in the pond the temperature is usually 40⁰C.
- There is a layer of vegetation submerged in water. The vegetation known as Nerium. The temperature under Nerium leaves is around 38⁰ C.
- The algae are floated in a pond. There the temperature is 40⁰ C.



Hot Spring at Unapdev



Umbrella at Unapdev

Plate1. *The Unapdev is a remote place. The present day definition of accessibility cannot be applied. Still the place is worth visiting.*

Close to the enclosure of the pond, is a Rest house, Umbrella and two small Hindus shrines and outside the enclosure the water from the pond is collected in a tank used for cattles and the cattle trough built out of local funds in 1876.

7. PHYSICAL GEOLOGY OF TOURISM IN THE STUDY AREA

General regional geology of the area between Tapi and Narmada River valley consists mainly of basalts. Thermal springs of Tapi valley are located in the Deccan volcanic terrain. The alluvial deposits are also found in this region. Three thermal manifestations of Dhule and Nandurbar district are controlled by dykes, whereas, all the four thermal manifestations of Jalgaon district are discharging water through faults or other weaker planes.

The Tapi banks are high and bare, and due to heavy regional erosion the land on both sides is seamed by tributary rivers and streams. Now and again from the north, spurs of the Satpuda stretch close to the river bank, and on the south rise some low barren hill ranges. Although the Tapi valley consists of a vast alluvial plain, intense gully erosion is the major key-note of its landscape, and it acts as a serious and increasing limitation on the traditional agricultural wealth of the region. This is particularly noticeable on the northern flank between Faizpur and Chopda and on the southern in the immediate vicinity of the Girna and the Vaghur rivers. Cultivation evidently dominates the valley landscape, though to the north, near the base of the Satpuda, it yields progressively to forest growth and in the south to barren grass lands with the approaches of the Ajanta ranges.

Many hot springs occur in Tapi basin along the foothills of Satpura Mountains. It is observed that hot springs of higher temperature occur near the junction of faults.

8. GEOTHERMAL ANIFESTATIONS IN TAPI VALLEY

Table I. *The water is tasteless, with a peculiar but not sulphurous smell. It is reported to cure skin diseases.*

Thermal spring	Discharge rate (lpm)	Discharge temp (°c)	Estimated temp (°c)
Kundwa	25	44	90
Anakdeo	42	45	108
Unabdeo	38	60	130
Ramtalab	24	40	102
Nazardeo	16	40	105
Indave	30	41	100
Khadgaon	10	38	112

Tapi valley of Dhule, Nandurbar and Jalgaon district of Maharashtra hosts seven geothermal manifestations. These are located along dolerite dykes and more or less aligned along the southern foothills of Satpura ranges at an average elevation of 230m from Mean Sea level. (Figure 1) These dykes / faults and sets of fractures through which geothermal manifestation emerges are oriented almost parallel to the Tapi valley or Tapi lineament. Geologically all of these are confined within Deccan traps. Thermal springs of this region are perennial; liquid dominated and discharge thermal water through either faults or dykes in the Deccan volcanic terrain at a constant rate throughout the year.

About eight miles west of Unabdev, in a narrow glen formed by two outlying spurs of the Satpudas, lie the Sunabdev springs. The water is lightly sulphurous and has a varying temperature. It is also reported to cure skin diseases.

Najhardev, within a mile or two of Sunabdev, has a hot spring flowing into a built pool. The water has a slightly sulphurous taste and varies in temperature from dawn to noon.

Although the district belongs to the eastern part of the traditional Khandesh region, variations in relief and the character of local drainage have introduced significant changes in the regional landscapes. These, in their turn, have affected in no small degree the nature of land and the general economic development of the different localities.

On the northern border, lies the Satpuda Hill region with its characteristic feature of relief and drainage. Its plateau features have suffered intense erosion and consequently there is much unevenness within these hill regions. Much of this region is under forest cover, although severe depletion of forests is much in evidence. Substantial portions of the forests are reserved forests under the management of the Forest department.

8.1. Sunabdev, Vardi

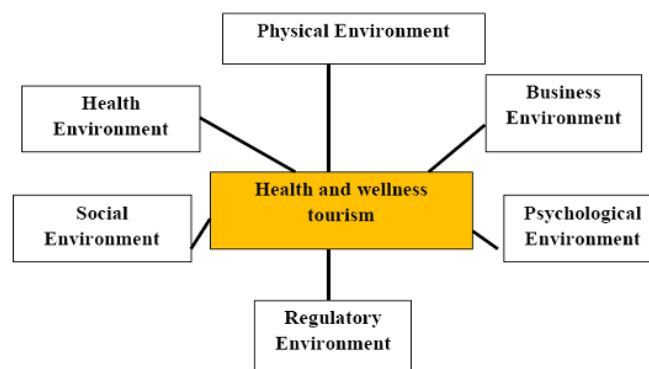
Sunabdev, also known as Ram Talav, has hot springs in a narrow gorge in the Satpada hills. They are only four miles west of the Unapdev hot spring, two miles from the village of Vardi. In woodland, close to Sunabdev, are traces of a large weir (a bandhara), which was once used to dam the hot water to form the Ram Talav. The hot water, which now wells from the ground in one or two places, is really more warm than hot. An old story tells of how a Moslem employed by the owner of Vardi, used the bricks of Ram Talav to build a step well. From the day the well was opened, a curse from the offended deity of the spring fell on the villagers. They were stricken with guinea-worm, and had to flee from the village. After a time the village was again peopled, and the bricks were used this time to build a village office, a Chavdi. No sooner was the office finished than the curse returned. Fever and dysentery broke out. In two years the village was once more empty and has never since been inhabited. The new village of Vardi had to be created outside the walls of the old village, and it is believed that the offended deity of the pond still angrily guards what are left of his ancient bricks.

8.2. Nazardev

Nazardev has a hot spring in forest land about eight miles north of Chopda, rising in the bed of the river Gavli. The water used to flow through the head of a cow on the side of an old six feet square tank. Now the water trickles from a cleft in the rock, a little to the side of this tank, and the tank is empty.

9. ELUCIDATION

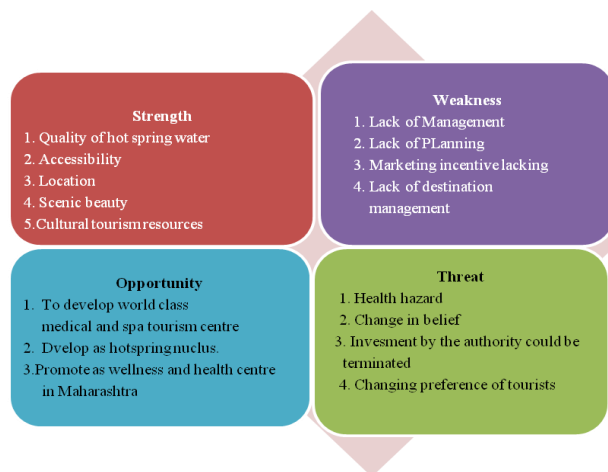
In terms of international health and wellness destinations, the research found that hot spring or thermal spring with its mineral content has important roles from the past until now via recorded history or beliefs. Some successful countries have been developing their hot springs sites under the environments of health and wellness tourism that included physical, health, and business, social, psychological and regulatory environments. Same has to develop for Unapdev. The result from SWOT analysis found that the sustainable health and wellness tourism development of Unapdev hot spring should be planned appropriately with its natural attractive resources. The mineral of hot spring according to the health and wellness tourism trends that travellers are seeking from different places for new natural experience to maintain health and life wellness.



Health and Wellness Tourism Model
Cooper and Cooper (2009)

According to Cooper and Cooper (2009) described the origins of hot mineral spring is the nature flow of water from the ground which can occur when geologic, hydrologic or human forces cut into the underground layers of soil and rock where water is circulating thus allowing the water to rise to the surface under pressure. Some scientific evidence that minerals obtainable from certain springs have special properties which can cure or ease the symptoms of various ailments, the tourism industry of Unapdev has sought to deploy these resources to attract more domestic than international visitors. The recent increase in public awareness of the importance of good health has provided an incentive for

countries to develop their mineral spring resources. Because heated water can hold more dissolved solids, warm and especially hot springs also often have a very high mineral content, containing everything from simple calcium to lithium, and even radium. Because of both the folklore and the claimed medical value some of these springs are often popular tourist destinations, and locations for rehabilitation clinics for those with disabilities. The amount of water that flows from a spring depends on several factors, including the size of spaces within rock, the water pressure in the aquifer, the size of the reservoir basin and the amount of precipitation that is necessary to replenish the aquifer. Also they presented the variation of and classifications of mineral hot spring water in various countries according to individual terms used and the findings from different disciplines of scientists and researchers, hence it led to a non-universal definition.



10. SWOT ANALYSIS

Thermal spring health resorts around the world are repositioning themselves by moving away from medical treatments, and moving towards fitness and wellness, often accompanied by an increase in facilities for recreation. It is suggested in this paper that this represents a turning point for the thermal spring health tourism product, with the focus changing from using thermal water primarily for the treatment of illnesses, to helping already healthy people become even healthier. In the light of current developments, the historical development and geographical distribution of thermal spring tourism is discussed, with new developments highlighted, particularly those involving local communities. A historical overview of thermal spring health tourism exists starting with the ancient Greeks and their belief in the healing powers of water, and Roman bathing culture, where a symbiotic relationship between health and recreation developed. It is concluded that thermal spring health tourism has indeed turned a corner, and a new kind of product has emerged, where the medicinal properties of thermal waters are now being successfully used for wellness treatments. It is recommended that developing countries create thermal spring tourism products that combine thermal water resources with location-specific healing methods and remedies, but are extended to encompass surrounding natural and cultural attractions, and where possible, involve and benefit local communities.

11. CONCLUSION

In short hot spring tourism resources of Unapdev are rich in reserves. It has also been located in a hot spring zone adjacent to a natural scenic region. Unapdev could be developed and linked to the other types of tourism in Maharashtra. There is a need for marketing of this hot spring tourism. Except local and regional tourists Unapdev is not a familiar tourist spot. Integrated tourism projects could be carried out based on scientific planning and the implementation of policies for the development of hot spring tourism products. This tourism site can be linked with mountain resorts in Satpudas. This site can be networked with river water sports, religious, cultural tourism in the nearby region. Therefore a multi-triangular cost-effective tourism with special reference to Medicare tourism could be initiated. Hot spring tourism theme is not prominent. It is low brand awareness in case of Unapdev. Spa tourism resources in the location could be developed to foster more tourism-related activity. Government initiative is warranted. Most of the development belongs to individual operators of the area. Funds are limited and development scale is not large. Unified planning and management is necessary.

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