



## Challenges of Manpower in a Spa Industry

### KEYWORDS

Spa tourism, wellness tourism, ISWA, on -job spa training,

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**ABSTRACT** *Wellness Tourism refers to the trips aiming at a state of health featuring the harmony of the body, mind & spirit, self-responsibility, physical fitness, beauty care, healthy nutrition, relaxation, meditation, mental activity, education, environmental sensitivity. Thus Spa Tourism refers to the overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage renewal of mind, body & spirit. For many, urban living is about high-flying careers competitive atmospheres and constant multitasking. Long working hours, late nights and the pressure of looming deadlines leave people overworked with depleted energy levels. Stress comes easy. Pain in the neck, shoulder and back areas are common complaints of modern living and are also caused by muscular tension and psychological stress Well-trained spa desk associates are the gatekeepers to Spa business' success. The present study was conducted on Challenges of Manpower in the spa in five star hotels in Bangalore eight five star hotels were selected for the study.*

**Introduction:** In the recent years, the major challenge faced by the growing Indian Spa and Wellness Industry has been that the sourcing of skilled manpower. It is crucial for the industry to source good spa therapist (manpower) that meet the required quality standards (training) set by government body, spa association or Institutes.

The problem of manpower in a Spa is mainly because the staff employed in a Spa comes from extremely low socio-economic backgrounds and hence are not well educated. It has been observed that the staff working in a spa has an average education up to V or VI grade. Labour employed in this Industry needs to be highly skilled in various aspects like Spa Therapies, hospitality, English Language manners, etiquette, grooming, hygiene, and sanitation as the therapists are coming directly in contact with the guest.

The Spa Industry is not being viewed as a formal sector and working as a Spa therapist has been considered as a taboo by many. Lack of standards and proper education at a cost effective price is also another stumbling block in the creation of manpower for this Industry. A basic curriculum must be created that can be then Introduced as education curriculum for Spa Industry in India. It is important that critical and sensitive issues like entry level requirements, course structure its duration, recognition to prior learning affordable fee structures etc are addressed with caution.

The Spa and Wellness Industry can come together and work on creating an Independent Industry status for their business. ISWA (Indian Spa and Wellness Association) has already been formed. It is important that other associations and forums need to collaborate to reform the Industry and it give it a respectable status and help spa training become a part of professional education stream. This will enable the parents to confidently send their children to pursue a spa course.

Many spas today, especially smaller ones have on-job-training or in-house training which is not upto the required standards. Very often this training does not allow the trainee to benefit from a professionally managed curriculum and quality education under the supervision of experts rather than colleagues at work. This problem needs a long term solution and the government is trying to address the issue by setting up a National academy. This can be further enhanced by funding Spa educators whenever possible. It is important to relax foreign hiring to ensure that the growth of spa Industry is not prematurely affected.

There is a strong need to create and provide a steady flow of skilled manpower in the Industry. Regular training is the need of the hour. Training academies need to work together to increase awareness and convince target students of the potential wellness as long term and respectable career option. If given the promise to the spa therapists that the wellness sector holds in generating employment, it is essential for the industry bodies and the government to help stimulate development. Institutes should be equipped with certifications in order to focus on quality and showcase viability. Interest and dedication are the key factors in making a career in this field as this course involves a lot of physical and skillful work.

According to the Industry estimates, the existing 2,300 spas in the country have created direct and indirect employment to about 400,000 people and require more 20,000 more trained professionals. With graded educational certifications and an industry driven approach which is standardized and consistent, it is evident that the wellness sector will thrive in the years to come.

It is not only in Indian Spa Industry, but the spa Industry worldwide there is a great demand for women therapist than male therapist. Spas were once perceived to be a place for "pampering" women and hence female therapist were more readily attracted to develop a profession within the spa industry due to its misconception. Through education aspiring male therapist can be attracted to join the spa industry as there is a positive growth in the trend with male clientele visiting spas regularly for varied treatments. In order to increase the enrollment of male therapists at spa institutes/ academies in India, the industry needs to be present at career fairs at colleges; schools etc. to spread the awareness collectively. Images of male therapists in brochures or treatment menus would also encourage men to enter the spa industry. However in India spas need to have a balanced male/female ratio of therapist to accommodate for their cultural restrictions of their guests. The gap in demand for male or female within the Indian spa Industry will begin to bridge to right education and awareness.

Hotels and spas need trained manpower, over the years Ananda has led the spa industry in India it has been realized that there is dire hard need for training spa therapists for delivering high quality service, the unfortunate part is all the concerned parties want trained talent but none are willing to invest in it. Since there are no short cuts in business training is an investment. Governments are currently the strongest

source of support for economically weaker sections. Governments from North East are currently leading the way in providing sponsorships for such students. But more importantly, it is those who need to recognize the need for trained talent.

The tremendous growth of the Spa Industry in the past decade has prompted a major dilemma: the hiring and subsequent retention of good employees'. Employees are an asset of any organization. But employee retention, especially of the best employee is one of the key challenges in the Spa Industry today. To ensure the acquisition and retention of great staff is the job of a tuned-in leader. Retaining a good staff is necessary as acquiring the same. Smart employers make it strategic imperative to understand what their employees want, their needs and give it to them. Staff Retention is a challenge and can be overcome by experience. It is an art, and not everyone can master it.

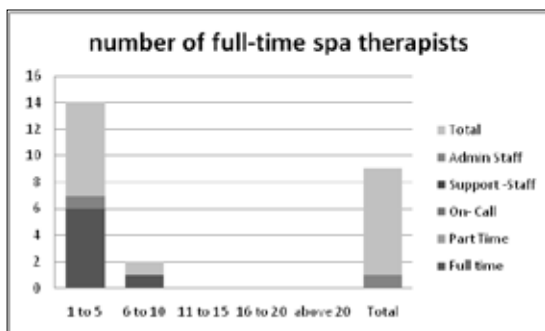
**Research Methodology:**

Research was conducted at five star hotels in Bangalore. Seven five star hotels were selected for research by simple random sampling process. A self administered questionnaire was prepared for the research & the Spa managers of the hotels were asked to fill the Questionnaire. The primary data for the research was collected from the findings and replies in the questionnaire and for the secondary data various books, websites and Spa magazines were sought by the researcher.

**Research Findings & Discussion**

The data collected from the questionnaire were tabulated and discussed and the research findings are as under Table No 1

Type of staff	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Above 20	Total
Full time	6	1	-	-	-	7
Part time	-	-	-	-	-	-
On-call	-	-	-	-	-	-
Support staff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Admin staff	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	7	1	-	-	-	8



Graph Number 1

A survey was conducted by the researcher in five star Hotels to find out the status of manpower in their spa it was seen that about 40% of the Hotels have a ratio of one to five of the full time spa therapists which is less the required manpower,

it is very evident from the graph and the table that there is a severe shortage of staff.

Spa staffing remains by far the most difficult responsibility facing spa owners today. With dramatic changes taking place in the spa industry, owners are finding themselves facing more difficult and complex situations every day. By gathering information on how other spas operate, the successful spa owner can make more educated and profitable decisions. There are no short cuts or magic formulas to creating the perfect staff or benefits program, but there are some proven combinations of full-time, part-time and contractors that prove useful.

A clear majority of respondents utilize full-time staff, part-time, or on-call technicians/spa Therapists are less preferred, but the availability of the staff is quite scarce.

**Recommendations:** The key is Hiring: It is important to have a clear and well-laid out check-list for competencies and other expectations.

**Communicate your business mission:** feeling connected to the organizations goals is one way of keeping employees mentally and emotionally tied to your company.

**Rewards and Recognition:** When it comes to giving rewards & recognition to your employees use creativity and innovation. Rewards and commitment can be simple as "thank you" as acknowledgement or something as profound as showing your trust and respect through your actions.

**Growth and future planning for the staff:** create personal growth plans with all employees Individual plans and strategies can easily align with corporate agendas to create a win-win scenario.

**Valued Employees may still leave:** for a variety of reasons despite many efforts an organization has made for them, find out what the reasons is, Conduct an exit interview .It is an opportunity to learn as well as to end on a positive note. Insights may even be gained to improve future processes .This is a small investment of time can prove to be a time and effort saver in the long run.

**Conclusion:** It is important for the spa to have accreditation which is a continuous process of improving services National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH), Quality Council of India has been driving the initiative of Accreditation Standards for Wellness Centre's. The organization having quality seal/accreditation shall be expected to maintain highest degree of cleanliness, customer friendly approach, transparency and professionalism in dealings with respect to the provided services and the projection of the same., training, and experience .Once the wellness centers are accredited new avenues will open for the staff which includes more number of spa training academies ,which will further result in university affiliated Spa courses, which will motivate students and youngsters to join the Spa as it will be a lucrative and more job-oriented career. It is for the universities and government to promote Spa courses in their curriculum like other professional courses which will solve the problem of manpower and recruitment to a greater extent.

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