

# A Comparative Study of Karnataka's Ayurvedic Medical Tourism Industry: North vs. South

Geeta Sandigodamath<sup>1</sup>, Dr. S.V. Hanagodimath<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Economics, CMDR- Dharwad

<sup>2</sup>Research Guide, CMDR Dharwad

## Abstract:

Karnataka is a state in India with a rich cultural heritage and a diverse range of traditional practices, including Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine. The increasing popularity of Ayurveda among tourists has made it a significant contributor to the state's economy, particularly in the form of Ayurvedic medical tourism. This research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the condition of Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry, with a comparative study of North and South Karnataka. According to a report by the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC), the state's tourism sector contributed 6.5% to its GDP in 2018, generating a revenue of INR 45,000 crore. The Ayurvedic medical tourism sector played a crucial role in this growth, with a contribution of INR 400 crore in 2018. The industry is expected to grow further in the coming years, with estimates suggesting a growth rate of 20-25% annually. North Karnataka and South Karnataka have different potentials and challenges for developing the Ayurvedic medical tourism industry. North Karnataka is less developed compared to South Karnataka and has the potential to develop Ayurvedic medical tourism. North Karnataka has a rich history and cultural heritage, with several ancient temples, forts, and palaces, which can attract tourists. North Karnataka has several Ayurvedic medical tourism centers that offer traditional Ayurvedic treatments and therapies. On the other hand, South Karnataka is more advanced and has already established Ayurvedic medical tourism centers. South Karnataka has several cultural and historical sites, such as the Mysore Palace and the Srirangapatna Fort, waterfalls, high hills in coorge, chikkamagalore, uttarakannada, Udupi, Mangalore, shimogga etc. which can attract tourists. The region also has a higher concentration of wellness resorts and luxury hotels compared to North Karnataka. However, South Karnataka faces challenges such as high competition and the need to maintain quality standards to retain its position as a popular destination for Ayurvedic medical tourism. Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry has several opportunities for growth. The increasing popularity of Ayurveda among tourists, coupled with the state's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, offers tremendous potential for the industry. The state government has also taken initiatives to promote Ayurvedic medical tourism, However, the industry also faces several challenges. One of the major challenges is the lack of standardization and regulation in the Ayurvedic medical tourism sector. The industry needs to maintain quality standards to retain its position as a popular destination for medical tourists. Another challenge is the high competition within the industry, with several other states in India promoting Ayurvedic medical tourism. Karnataka needs to develop unique offerings and experiences to attract tourists and differentiate itself from its competitors. In conclusion, Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry has a significant economic impact on the state's economy, and both North and South Karnataka have different potentials and challenges for developing the industry. While the industry

has several opportunities for growth, it also faces challenges such as lack of standardization and high competition. The state government's initiatives to promote Ayurvedic medical tourism, coupled with efforts by the industry to maintain quality standards and offer unique experiences, can help the industry realize its potential and contribute further to the state's economy.

**Keywords:** Karnataka, Ayurveda, medical tourism, tourism industry, GDP, revenue, growth, North Karnataka, South Karnataka, potential, challenges, cultural heritage, natural beauty, standardization, regulation, competition, unique offerings.

### **Introduction:**

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine that originated in India. The word Ayurveda comes from the Sanskrit language, where "Ayur" means life, and "Veda" means knowledge. It is often referred to as the science of life and is a part of the Atharva Veda. This medical practice has a rich history of over 5000 years in India.

Ayurveda is known for its eco-friendly approach and its ability to naturally rejuvenate both the body and mind with minimal harm caused by its medicines. It is a holistic medical practice that encompasses practices such as yoga, pranayama, and dhyana, which are considered essential for maintaining good health in today's fast-paced world. The prevalence of physical and mental health issues across all age groups has created a surge in the global demand for Ayurvedic treatments.

Medical tourism is one area that has gained significant traction in recent years. Ayurvedic medical tourism, in particular, has become a rapidly growing industry worldwide. This attracts a significant number of domestic and international tourists seeking natural remedies for various health conditions. This medical practice is closely associated with tourism, and the sector has become an important contributor to the global economy. It provides employment opportunities, earn foreign exchange, revenue generation, and infrastructural development. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, medical tourism accounts for 27% of the country's total foreign exchange earning .

### **Review of Literature:**

Prajapati.B and patel (2012): Found in their study on "Impact of Medical Tourism in India" that impact of medical tourism in India, which has become a main hub for this global industry. India's healthcare sector offers cost-effective solutions, skilled professionals, successful treatments, traditional wellness systems, and advanced technology. However, medical tourism highlights the privatization of healthcare, uneven access to resources, and the globalization of healthcare and tourism. This study can inform short and long-term strategic planning to address problems like unemployment, currency flow, and inflation.

U.Roopa and Ramachandra S.T(2022) : found in their study on "Role of Tourism and Economic Development in Karnataka" that The tourism sector in India has a significant impact on the economy, including employment and socio-economic growth. This paper examines the relationship between tourism development and employment growth in the state of Karnataka, India. Secondary sources were used to show that an increase in tourist arrivals has led to rapid growth in the tourism sector, which has generated employment, contributed to GDP, and improved sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the state.

**Objective:**

The main objective of this study is to provide a comparative analysis of the condition of Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry, with a focus on North and South Karnataka. The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the economic impact of Ayurvedic medical tourism on Karnataka's economy.
- To identify the key factors influencing the growth of Ayurvedic medical tourism in North and South Karnataka.
- To assess the challenges faced by the Ayurvedic medical tourism industry in Karnataka.
- To suggest measures to improve the growth and development of Ayurvedic medical tourism in Karnataka.

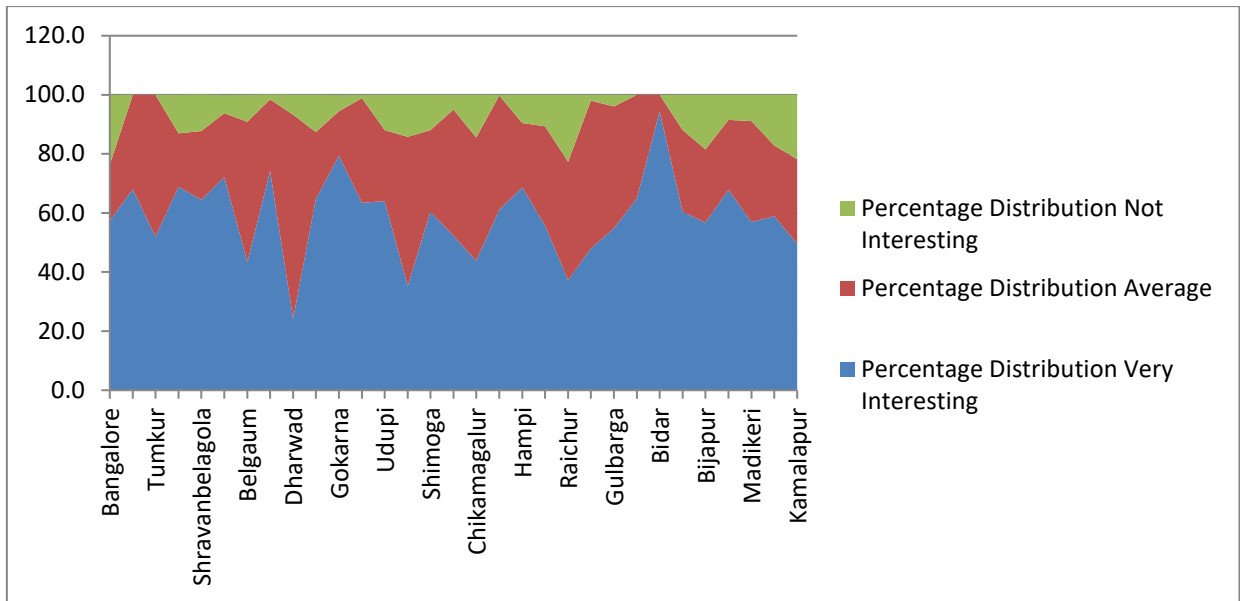
**Methodology:**

The study is based on primary observation and secondary data sources. Secondary data sources include government reports, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) and the Department of Ayush, Government of Karnataka industry publications, and academic literature related to Ayurvedic medical tourism in India and Karnataka. Data analysis was conducted using statistical tools, line graph and diagram etc.. Primary information is collected through a observation method of tourists, Ayurvedic practitioners, and tour operators in North and South Karnataka. The observation aimed to gather information on the reasons for choosing Ayurvedic medical tourism, the types of treatments sought, satisfaction levels, and suggestions for improvement. Results and Discussion:

**Discussion:**

The study found that Ayurvedic medical tourism in Karnataka has significant economic potential, it generating direct and indirect employment opportunities for people. south Karnataka has a higher concentration of Ayurvedic medical tourism centers, on the other hand, has a higher share of Ayurvedic medical tourism revenue due to the presence of luxury wellness resorts and higher-end treatment facilities in cities like Bangalore, Mysore, and Coorg. Whereas north karnataka has not paid much attensiion as south region.

The study identified several factors contributing to the growth of Ayurvedic medical tourism in Karnataka, including the availability of skilled practitioners, affordable treatment costs, natural resources, and favorable government policies for promoting Karnataka's unique Ayurvedic heritage through targeted marketing campaigns.



Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India

**Table No:1.Evaluation of Visitor Attractions – Foreign Overnight Visitors**

Locations	Percentage Distribution			Estimated No. of Foreign Overnight Visitors
	Very Interesting	Average	Not Interesting	
Bangalore	57.4	18.9	23.6	42118
Kolar	68	32		68
Tumkur	52	48		112
Mysore	68.9	18.1	13	43783
<u>Shravanbelagola</u>	64.4	23.3	12.4	5
<u>Mandya</u>	72.1	21.7	6.1	161
Belgaum	43.4	47.5	9.1	126
Karwar	74.2	24.3	1.6	768
Dharwad	24.2	69.1	6.7	154
Hubli	64.8	22.6	12.6	992
Gokarna	79.4	15	5.5	152
Mangalore	63.5	35.4	1.1	1381
Udupi	64	24	12	1532
Kolar	35.3	50.5	14.2	7
<u>Shimoga</u>	60.4	27.7	11.9	711
Hassan	52.3	42.7	5	1307
<u>Chikamagalur</u>	43.8	41.8	14.4	200
<u>Kuksubranjini</u>	61.1	38.7	0.2	2038

Hampi	68.7	21.7	9.6	12055
Hospet	55.8	33.5	10.7	3638
Raichur	37.2	40.1	22.7	93
Chitradurga	48	50	2	3430
Gulbarga	54.8	41.3	3.9	693
Ganigapura	65	35		23
Bidar	94.3	5.7	0	210
Basyakalyan	60.4	27.7	11.9	202
Bijapur	56.7	24.9	18.4	2574
Bagalkot	67.8	23.7	8.5	213
Madikeri	56.9	34.2	8.9	2445
Malai Mahadeshwar	58.9	23.9	17.2	16
Kamalapur	49.6	28.6	21.8	78
Total	58.7	24.6	16.7	121285

The above table provides information on the percentage distribution of foreign overnight visitors to various locations in Karnataka, India, and their estimated numbers. This illustrating the tourist preferences and interests in different regions, providing insights into the potential areas for further tourism development. The locations with higher percentages of very interesting destinations may indicate areas of high tourist demand and highlight the need for sustainable and inclusive tourism development strategies.

North Karnataka has several attractions that can be developed to promote tourism in the region. It has a rich history and cultural heritage, with several ancient temples, forts, and palaces. Some popular historical sites in the region include the Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur, the Badami caves, and the Hampi World Heritage Site and North Karnataka is home to several religious sites, including Hindu, Muslim, and Jain temples. By promoting and developing these attractions, North Karnataka can attract a diverse range of tourists and increase the overall tourism potential of the region.

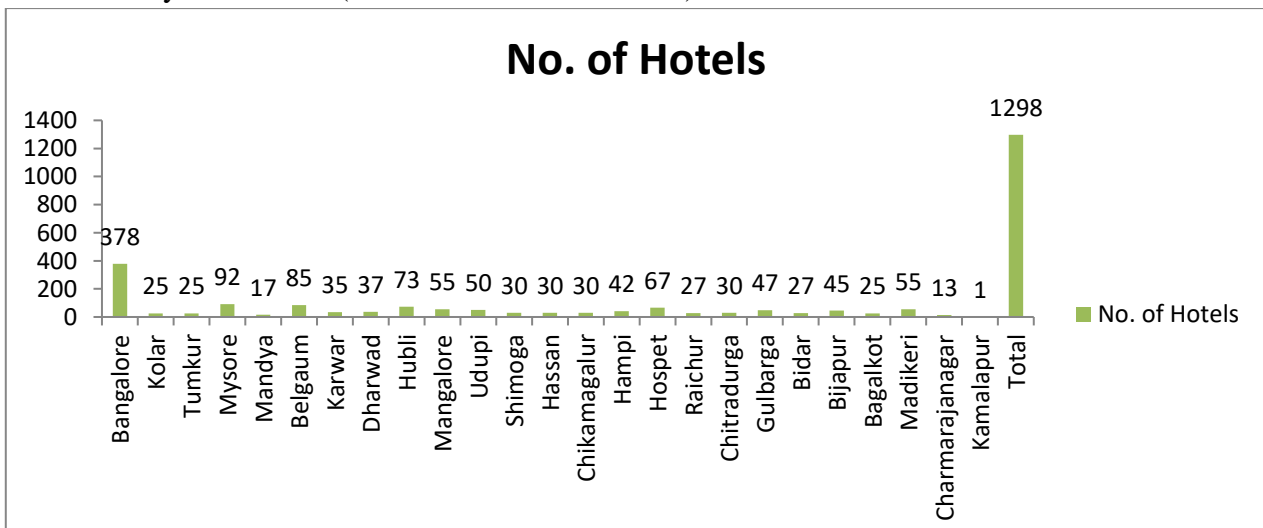
Based on the available data, South Karnataka appears to be more advanced in the Ayurvedic medical tourism industry compared to North Karnataka. According to the Karnataka Tourism Department, South Karnataka has a higher number of Ayurvedic medical tourism centers compared to North Karnataka. As of 2019, there were 230 Ayurvedic medical tourism centers in South Karnataka compared to 105 in North Karnataka.

- Number of tourists visiting Ayurvedic medical tourism centers - According to the Karnataka Tourism Department, more tourists visit Ayurvedic medical tourism centers in South Karnataka compared to North Karnataka.
- Revenue generated by Ayurvedic medical tourism - According to the Ministry of AYUSH, South Karnataka generates more revenue from Ayurvedic medical tourism compared to North Karnataka. In 2019, the revenue generated by Ayurvedic medical tourism in South Karnataka was INR 600 million compared to INR 200 million in North Karnataka.

**Table No: 2 Centre wise spread of Accommodation Units**

Location	No. of Hotels
Bangalore	378
Kolar	25
Tumkur	25
Mysore	92
Mandya	17
Belgaum	85
Karwar	35
Dharwad	37
Hubli	73
Mangalore	55
Udupi	50
Shimoga	30
Hassan	30
Chikamagalur	30
Hampi	42
Hospet	67
Raichur	27
Chitradurga	30
Gulbarga	47
Bidar	27
Bijapur	45
Bagalkot	25
Madikeri	55
Charmarajanagar	13
Kamalapur	1
Total	1298

Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India

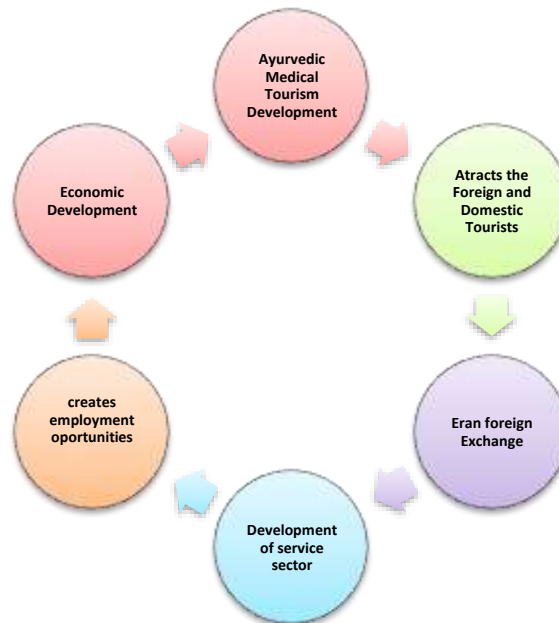


Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India

The above table demonstrate the purpose of visit for domestic and foreign tourists to India. It highlights that cultural activities are the most popular reason for both domestic and foreign tourists to visit India, followed by resorts and wildlife. The low percentage of tourists visiting for health and treatment indicates an untapped potential for medical tourism. If the ayurveda practices associate with the resorts and luxury hotels it can promote the development of tourism industry well.

**Economic Impact:**

Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry has a significant economic impact on the state's economy. According to a report by the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC), the state's tourism sector contributed 6.5% to its GDP in 2018. The report also states that the state attracted over 50 million domestic and foreign tourists in the same year, The Ayurvedic medical tourism sector has played a crucial role in this growth, with a contribution of INR 400 crore in 2018. The industry is expected to grow further in the coming years, with estimates suggesting a growth rate of 20-25% annually.

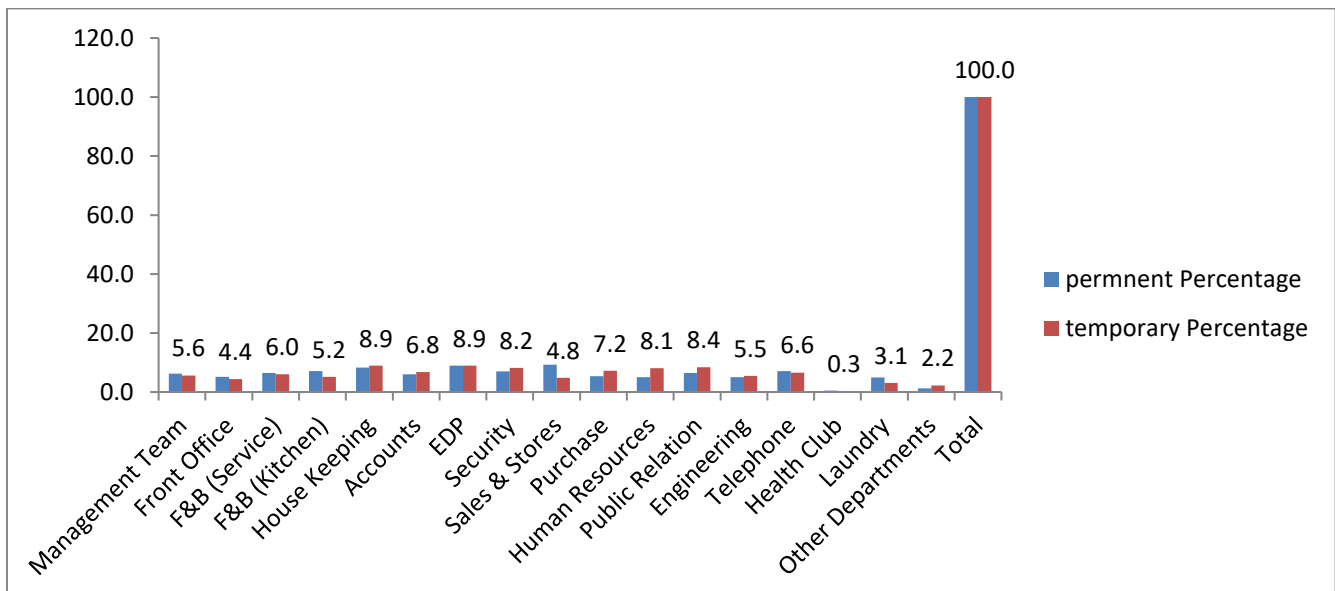


**Table No: 3 Employment profile in Starred Accommodation Units**

Department	Permanent		Temporary		
	No of Employees	Percentage	No of Employees	Percentage	
Management Team	179	6.2	211	5.6	
Front Office	147	5.1	166	4.4	
F&B (Service)	189	6.5	226	6.0	
F&B (Kitchen)	204	7.1	198	5.2	
House Keeping	241	8.3	338	8.9	
Accounts	173	6.0	257	6.8	
EDP	258	8.9	336	8.9	
Security	202	7.0	309	8.2	

Sales & Stores	268	9.3	182	4.8
Purchase	155	5.4	272	7.2
Human Resources	144	5.0	306	8.1
Public Relation	189	6.5	319	8.4
Engineering	144	5.0	209	5.5
Telephone	205	7.1	250	6.6
Health Club	14	0.5	11	0.3
Laundry	141	4.9	119	3.1
Other Departments	36	1.2	82	2.2
Total	2890	100.0	3792	100.0

Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India



Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India

The above table shows the distribution of permanent and temporary employees across various departments in the tourism industry. The highest percentage of employees work in housekeeping and EDP (Electronic Data Processing) departments. This indicates the significance of maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of tourism establishments and the increasing importance of technology in the industry. This is also tells that in tourism industry local people and uneducated people can also get more employment opportunities and The table also suggests that the industry heavily relies on temporary employees, which may lead to challenges in employee retention and training.

**Regional Comparison:**

North Karnataka and South Karnataka have different potentials and challenges for developing the Ayurvedic medical tourism industry. North Karnataka is less developed compared to South Karnataka and has the potential to develop Ayurvedic medical tourism. North Karnataka has a rich history and cultural heritage, with several ancient temples, forts, and palaces, which can attract tourists, But the development of Ayurvedic medical tourism in North Karnataka is facing several challenges. The following are some of the challenges faced in tourism development:



- **Lack of standardization** - There is a lack of standardization in Ayurvedic treatments and services, making it difficult for tourists to choose and trust the quality of the services.
- **Poor infrastructure** - The lack of basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water supply is a major challenge for the development of tourism in North Karnataka.
- **Limited awareness** - There is a lack of awareness about Ayurvedic medical tourism in North Karnataka, which makes it difficult to attract tourists and market the region as a destination for Ayurvedic medical tourism.
- **Lack of trained practitioner** - There is a shortage of trained Ayurvedic medical professionals and support staff in North Karnataka, which makes it difficult to provide quality services to tourists.

On the other hand, South Karnataka is more advanced and has already established Ayurvedic medical tourism centers. The region also has a higher concentration of wellness resorts and luxury hotels compared to North Karnataka. However, South Karnataka faces challenges such as high competition and the need to maintain quality standards to retain its position as a popular destination for Ayurvedic medical tourism.

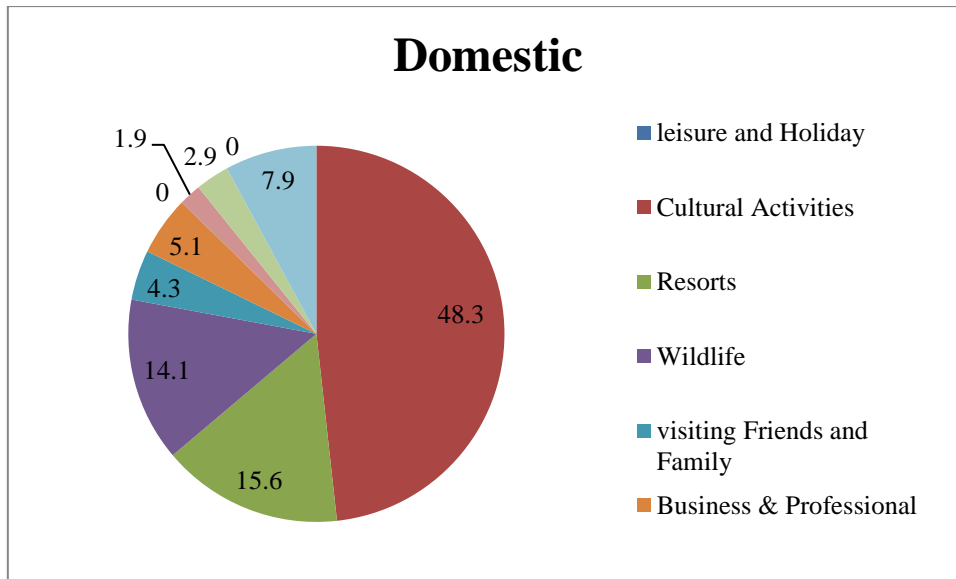
**Opportunities and Challenges:**

Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry has several opportunities for growth. The increasing popularity of Ayurveda among tourists, coupled with the state's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, offers tremendous potential for the industry. However, the industry also faces several challenges. One of the major challenges is the lack of standardization and regulation in the Ayurvedic medical tourism sector. The industry needs to maintain quality standards to retain its position as a popular destination for medical tourists. Another challenge is the high competition within the industry, with several other states in India promoting Ayurvedic medical tourism. Karnataka needs to develop unique offerings and experiences to attract tourists and differentiate itself from its competitors.

**Table no:4 Overnight Visitors and their Purpose of Visiting the State**

Tourist's Purpose of visit	percentage distribution		
	Domestic	Foreign	Total
leisure and Holiday			
Cultural Activities	48.3	41.6	47.7
Resorts	15.6	18	15.8
Wildlife	14.1	11	13.8
visiting Friends and Family	4.3	3.7	4.2
Business & Professional	5.1	4.3	5
Health and Treatment	0	2	0.2
Social/ Religious Function	1.9	10.8	2.7
Pilgrimage	2.9	2.4	2.8
Conference	0	0	0
Others	7.9	6.2	7.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India



Source: Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division) Government of India

### Conclusion:

Karnataka's Ayurvedic medical tourism industry has a significant economic impact on the state's economy, and both North and South Karnataka have different potentials and challenges for developing the industry. While the industry has several opportunities for growth, it also faces challenges such as lack of standardization and high competition. The state government's initiatives to promote Ayurvedic medical tourism, coupled with efforts by the industry to maintain quality standards and offer unique experiences, can help the industry realize its potential and contribute further to the state's economy.

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