

*Impacts of medical and wellness tourism centers on the communities around them:  
Case studies in Delhi and Kerala*

Rudra, Purba (2011)

Abstract: Over the past decade or so the movement of patients and wellness seekers across borders, over long distances, has increased and India has been the destination of choice for many. This is private sector led growth, but the government has provided support in terms of subsidies and its promotion. With the alignment of governmental support and other enabling circumstances, many new centers-both corporate hospitals and Ayurvedic wellness centers-have opened in India. The case studies for this research were centers in Delhi, for medical tourism, and Kerala, for wellness tourism. This study involved assessing the impacts of these centers on the local communities around them, in terms of medical, economic, and infrastructural consequences. Another question was whether these centers formed enclaves, of varying degrees, where the impacts were focused, or were there significant benefits for these communities from the centers being there. The flow of benefits to the locals, in terms of access to healthcare and other economic and infrastructural impacts was limited, more so around the wellness tourism centers. Many, living close to these centers, could not afford the facilities because of the expense involved. All the medical tourism centers in the study were built on land given at concessional rates, with the promise that the hospitals would reserve a certain percentage of their outpatient and inpatient capacities for people below poverty level. Most of these hospitals have failed to follow that. In terms of other benefits, some local businesses and the accommodation sector have benefitted from these centers being located in their neighborhoods.