



## HEALTH TOURISM DURING QUTB SHAHI DYNASTY AND NIZAM OF HYDERABAD-A HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT

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### Introduction

Healthcare Infrastructure Development developed at the time of Nizam rule. The establishment of hospitals, including the Nizamia General Hospital, demonstrated efforts to develop healthcare infrastructure. Such institutions contributed to the overall healthcare landscape in Hyderabad. Public health measures, such as vaccination campaigns and responses to epidemics, reflected an awareness of the importance of disease prevention and control. These efforts laid the groundwork for future advancements in public health. Some of the development here discussed as follows:

**Traditional Healing Practices:** Telangana has a history of traditional healing practices, including Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha, which are ancient systems of medicine. These practices have been part of the cultural fabric of the region and have contributed to healthcare in both historical and contemporary contexts.

**Charitable Institutions:** Historical rulers and philanthropists in the region have often supported the establishment of charitable hospitals and healthcare institutions. These institutions aimed to provide medical care to the local population and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.



**Nizam's Rule:** During the rule of the Nizams of Hyderabad, which includes parts of present-day Telangana, there were initiatives to improve healthcare infrastructure. The establishment of hospitals and the support for traditional medicine practices were notable during this period.

**Modern Healthcare Infrastructure:** In the post-independence era, including after the formation of Telangana as a separate state in 2014, there has been a focus on developing modern healthcare infrastructure. This includes the establishment of medical colleges, hospitals, and research institutions.

**Globalization and Medical Facilities:** With the globalization of healthcare services, there has been an increased focus on providing international standards of medical care. Some hospitals in Telangana have gained recognition for their medical expertise and have started attracting patients from other states and countries. It's important to note that the evolution of health tourism involves complex factors such as advancements in medical technology, globalization, economic considerations, and the promotion of healthcare services at an international level. The historical background of health tourism in Telangana is part of this broader context. For the most current and specific information on the historical background of health tourism in Telangana, I recommend checking with local historical archives, healthcare authorities, or tourism departments for any developments or initiatives that may have occurred after my last knowledge update in January 2022.

**Health tourism during Qutubshahi dynasty:** The Qutb Shahi dynasty, which ruled the Golconda Sultanate in the Deccan region of India from the late 16th century to the late 17th century, did not witness health tourism in the modern sense during its rule. The concept of health tourism, involving individuals traveling across borders to seek medical treatments, became more prevalent in the contemporary era. However, during the Qutb Shahi period, Hyderabad (then known as Golconda) was a flourishing center of culture, trade, and scholarship. The rulers were known for their patronage of the arts and architecture. While there might not have been health tourism as we understand it today, the region did have a vibrant healthcare system and an emphasis on traditional medicine.

Key aspects related to healthcare and medicine during the Qutb Shahi dynasty include:

**Unani Medicine:** The Qutb Shahi rulers were patrons of Unani medicine, an ancient system of healing that originated in Greece and later spread to the Islamic world. Unani medicine played a significant role in the healthcare system of the Deccan region during this period.

**Hakims and Healthcare Practitioners:** The Qutb Shahi rulers supported the establishment of traditional healing centers, and Hakims (practitioners of Unani medicine) were prominent in providing healthcare services. These practitioners were often associated with royal courts and were responsible for treating various ailments using herbal remedies and traditional healing methods.

**Charitable Hospitals:** The rulers were known for their philanthropic activities, including the establishment of charitable hospitals. These hospitals provided medical care to the local population, and the healthcare facilities in Golconda were well-regarded during the Qutb Shahi period.

**Promotion of Arts and Sciences:** The Qutb Shahi dynasty contributed to the overall development of arts and sciences. While this may not directly relate to health tourism, a thriving cultural and intellectual environment can indirectly influence the perception of a region as a center for knowledge, including traditional healing practices. While historical records highlight the presence of healthcare practices and institutions during the Qutb Shahi dynasty, there is no evidence to suggest that individuals from distant regions traveled specifically for medical treatments during that era. The evolution of health tourism as a phenomenon took place in later centuries with changing global dynamics, increased connectivity, and advancements in healthcare technologies.

### **Health tourism during Nizam of Hyderabad**

During the rule of the Nizams of Hyderabad, which lasted from the 18th century until the mid-20th century, the concept of health tourism as we understand it today was not prevalent. However, historical records suggest that Hyderabad, under the Nizams, was known for its rich cultural heritage, economic prosperity, and contributions to various fields, including medicine.

**Unani Medicine:** The Nizams were patrons of Unani medicine, an ancient system of healing that originated in Greece and spread to the Islamic world. Hyderabad, being a prominent center for Unani medicine, attracted people seeking traditional healing practices. Hakims (Unani practitioners) played a crucial role in providing healthcare services.

**Charitable Hospitals:** The Nizams were known for their philanthropic activities, including the establishment of charitable hospitals. These hospitals provided medical care to the local population and, in some cases, attracted patients from neighboring regions.

**Nizamia General Hospital:** In 1938, the Nizam's government established the Nizamia General Hospital, which became a significant healthcare institution. This hospital, with its modern facilities and trained medical professionals, served the people of Hyderabad and contributed to the overall healthcare infrastructure in the region.

**Educational Institutions:** The Nizams also supported the establishment of educational institutions, including medical colleges. These institutions trained healthcare professionals and contributed to the development of the local healthcare workforce.

While the historical context may not align precisely with contemporary health tourism, the emphasis on healthcare, medical facilities, and the availability of traditional healing practices during the Nizam's rule laid the groundwork for the development of healthcare services in the region. It's important to note that the modern concept of health tourism, with its focus on international patients seeking medical treatments for various reasons, evolved over the later decades. In summary, during the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad, there were efforts to promote healthcare, with a particular emphasis on traditional healing practices like Unani medicine. However, the concept of health tourism, as it is understood today, was not a dominant feature of the region during that historical period.

### **Health issues during Nizam of Hyderabad**

During the rule of the Nizams of Hyderabad, which spanned from the late 18th century until the integration of the state into the Indian Union in 1948, various health issues affected the population. Hyderabad, under the Nizams, experienced a mix of advancements in healthcare as well as challenges related to infectious diseases, sanitation, and limited access to medical facilities. While historical records provide insights, it's essential to consider the context of the time.

**Infectious Diseases:** Like many regions in the pre-modern era, Hyderabad faced challenges related to infectious diseases. Malaria, cholera, and smallpox were prevalent, causing periodic outbreaks and posing significant public health concerns.



**Limited Healthcare Infrastructure:** The healthcare infrastructure during the Nizam's rule was not as advanced as modern standards. Access to healthcare facilities was limited, especially in rural areas. The urban centers may have had hospitals and clinics, but they might not have been sufficient to meet the needs of the growing population.

**Traditional Healing Practices:** Traditional healing practices, including Unani and Ayurveda, were commonly used for treating various ailments. Hakims (Unani practitioners) played a crucial role in providing healthcare services. The Nizams were patrons of Unani medicine, and efforts were made to promote and support traditional healing systems.

**Water and Sanitation Challenges:** Issues related to water supply and sanitation could contribute to the spread of waterborne diseases. Access to clean water and proper sanitation infrastructure were challenges that affected public health.

**Public Health Initiatives:** The Nizams implemented some public health initiatives to address health concerns. Efforts were made to establish hospitals, charitable dispensaries, and other healthcare facilities to provide medical care to the population.

**Famines and Malnutrition:** Periodic famines and food shortages could lead to malnutrition and worsen the overall health of the population. Famine conditions often resulted in increased vulnerability to infectious diseases and other health-related issues.

**Vaccination Efforts:** Vaccination campaigns, especially for diseases like smallpox, were initiated during this period. Efforts were made to control and prevent the spread of contagious diseases through vaccination programs.

**Epidemics and Response:** The region might have experienced epidemics, and responses to such outbreaks involved quarantine measures, isolation of affected individuals, and efforts to limit the transmission of diseases. It's important to interpret historical health issues within the context of the time, considering the limited medical knowledge and resources available during the Nizam's rule. Advances in public health and healthcare infrastructure occurred in subsequent years as modern medicine and healthcare practices developed. The historical context provides insights into the health challenges faced by the population during a specific period in Hyderabad's history.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the historical context of health tourism in Hyderabad, particularly during the rule of the Nizams and other historical periods, reveals a complex interplay of factors. While the concept of health tourism, as we understand it today, was not prevalent in the past, there were significant elements that laid the foundation for the development of healthcare services in the region. **Traditional Healing Practices:** Hyderabad has a rich history of traditional healing practices, with a focus on systems like Unani and Ayurveda. The Nizams' patronage of Unani medicine and the presence of Hakims contributed to the region's identity as a center for traditional healing. **Charitable Healthcare Initiatives:** Charitable hospitals and dispensaries were established to address the healthcare needs of the population. These initiatives, supported by rulers and philanthropists, played a crucial role in providing medical care to the local community.

**Philanthropy and Medical Education:** Philanthropic activities and the support for educational institutions, including medical colleges, indicated a commitment to the advancement of healthcare knowledge and professional development. While health tourism, with its contemporary connotations, emerged in later years with globalization and advancements in medical technology, the historical elements of healthcare in Hyderabad contributed to its identity as a region with a diverse healthcare heritage. The emphasis on traditional healing practices, charitable healthcare initiatives, and the development of healthcare infrastructure set the stage for the region's later growth as a destination for medical services. In the present day, Hyderabad has continued to evolve as a hub for medical tourism, with modern hospitals, specialized healthcare facilities, and a growing reputation for providing quality healthcare services. The historical legacy of healthcare practices in Hyderabad has played a role in shaping its current status as a destination that attracts individuals seeking medical treatments and services.

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