

An Empirical Study on Challenges for the Healthcare Services Providers to Enhance the Patient Satisfaction

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Abstract: *The increasing competition and the constant advancement in technology are a threat to the development of any health care organization especially in cases when there is a lack of capital investment and thereby infrastructure. In case of India as a country various problems have been noticed in the health care industry which either directly or indirectly has also led to a compromise in the quality of the services offered. The study has been attempted to analyze the challenges for the healthcare services providers to enhance the patient satisfaction. The questionnaire has been prepared to collect views of employees from five leading multispecialty hospitals of NCR. Around 264 questionnaires were analysed and result indicated that The results firmly indicated that on the overall basis inappropriate patient history is assigned first rank and an important factor in enhancing patient satisfaction.*

Keywords: *Healthcare, Multispeciality, Infrastructure.*

Introduction:

The current status of medical service in India provides the country's healthcare industry with some serious realty checks. There is a serious dearth of infrastructure facilities especially at the primary healthcare levels. According to data statistics reported in the year 2015, 70 per cent of healthcare infrastructure in the country was found to be limited to the 20 top notch cities. Moreover, India had hospital bed number of 0.9 beds per 1000 population compared to China whose number of beds for the same population

were as high as 5. It has been estimated that India needs around 6,50,000 beds by 2017 which will require a big capital investment of INR 1,62,500 crore (PWC, 2015). India has only 7 physicians for every one lac people in the country. The number of midwives and pharmaceutical personnels for these individuals accounted for 17.1 and 5 respectively.

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and thereby infrastructure. In case of India as a country various problems have been noticed in the health care industry which either directly or indirectly has also led to a compromise in the quality of the services offered. India has a very weak primary health care sector (Reddy, 2014). The infrastructure that is present at the lower levels is of poor quality and also less in number compared to those that are present at the higher levels. Urban rural divide is pretty common in India as a country for all services but especially in case of medical service sector (Jayaraman, 2014). Medical services are like basic amenities for all populations and they cannot be ignored. Absence of primary infrastructure is a severe problem and the rural population suffers because of it.

Another major problem that has been noticed with India's health care sector is the dearth of skilled practitioners, be it doctors or other auxiliary staff members (Ramani & Mavalankar, 2006). India produces a vast number of health care professionals not only domestically but even to the outside world. Doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives etc. are all trained in huge numbers but there is still a deficiency of their services. It has been

noticed that there is an acute shortage of nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives and dentists for whom more than 100 per cent shortage is reported. The least shortage is reported for AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) practitioners. Such severe scarcity of practitioners is a matter of concern as without adequate number of practitioners it is almost impossible to provide quality services (Krishnan, 2015).

Another noticeable point is the highly unregulated private sector. Public sector is under the control of government and hence can be monitored and managed. A study based on Madhya Pradesh private hospitals shows that out of the practitioners that were sampled only 11 per cent had a medical degree and 53 per cent were just high school pass outs. Despite these numbers people in India prefer private hospitals compared to the government hospitals. These statistics indicate misplacement of doctors and wrong inclination of the patients. The patients thereby suffer and have to face the wrath of low quality services.

The health information systems are the other bottleneck in this industry (Pandey et al, 2010; Krishnan, 2015). IT systems are an important part of all industries in today's era and the same goes for health

care industry. Health care practitioners and other people related to the industry also need information so that they can make the developments accordingly. Research and development is low and so is the resulting services provided by the medical practitioners.

Despite the number of schemes that are functional and the laws that have continuously being introduced, India's health care is lacking the accountability that is mandatory for proper functioning of a system (Krishnan, 2015). The medical devices that are used in the Indian health care sector are mostly developed outside the country and hence are imported. The Indian medical devices sector is very small and forms the smallest portion of the Indian health care sector. It is growing at an enormous pace but is still at a very small scale. This results in high amount of expenditure on these devices and machines thereby increasing the cost of treatment and surgical procedures. This increase in the cost of medical services discourages the patients from taking them. The hospitals and practitioners thereby look for cheaper options for these devices and the costly drugs like mentioned above. This leads to a situation of trade-off between quality and cost of the treatment and leads to

degradation in the service quality of the Indian health care sector.

Research methodology

This study has been attempted *to analyze the challenges for the healthcare services providers to enhance the patient satisfaction*. The research study is descriptive cum diagnostic. The questionnaire has been prepared to collect views of officials/employees on statements related to challenges faced by the selected multispecialty hospitals of NCR during execution of healthcare services. Officials/employees were asked to rate (1 highest to 10 lowest) these statements. The data was obtained from the administrators, doctors and other related supporting staff within the organizations

The sample unit included five leading multispecialty hospitals of NCR (All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Delhi; Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi; Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi; Artemis Hospital, Gurgaon; and MedantaTheMedicity, Gurgaon), total 400 employees were surveyed from the selected multispecialty hospitals. The response rate was 66% and around 264 questionnaires were analysed.

TableI

Hospital wise Response Rate

Name of multispecialty hospital	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
AIIMS	114	43.2	43.2
Sir Ganga Ram Hospital	40	15.2	58.3
Indraprastha Apollo Hospital	32	12.1	70.5
Artemis Hospital	38	14.39	84.85
Medanta The Medicity Hospital	40	15.15	100.0
Total	264	100.0	

Analysis

The data collected has been analysed using ranking method (on the basis of mean value). The results (table II) firmly indicated that on the overall basis

inappropriate patient history is assigned first rank (mean 3.11) meaning thereby that the employees considered it as major factor in enhancing patient satisfaction.

TableII

Factors affecting healthcare services execution

Rank	Factors affecting healthcare services execution	Mean
1	Inappropriate Patient History	3.11
2	Poor Attendant Attitude	4.00
3	Treatment Cost	4.01
4	Demanding Patient	4.66
5	Annoyed Customer	4.70
6	Odd Working Schedule	4.77
7	Poorly Applied Procedures	6.89

8	Low Technical Skills	7.36
9	Team-mate Resistance	7.41
10	Low Level of Cooperation among team mates	8.11

Other factors viz. Lack of know-how, Treatment Cost, Demanding Patient, Shortage of human resources, Cost of healthcare services, Poorly Applied Procedures, No mandatory regulation, Team-mate Resistance, and Low Level of Cooperation among team mates etc. has been ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th respectively by the official/employees. The results clearly indicated that Inappropriate Patient History is essential for companies in effective and efficient implementation of healthcare services. While Low Level of Cooperation among team mates related factors (mean 8.11) is considered least important by the respective official/employees.

To have an insight of the responses of official/employees regarding factors affecting healthcare services execution, inter comparison of ranks (mean scores) of each selected multispecialty hospitals has been prepared respectively. The table III showed that the official/employees of AIIMS had assigned first rank (mean 2.61) to Inappropriate Patient History and

lowest (mean 8.25) to Low Level of Cooperation among team mates were the major and minor hindrance in the healthcare services execution, respectively. The Sir Ganga Ram Hospital official/employees believed that Treatment Cost (ranked first - mean 2.50) is the major and Low Level of Cooperation among team mates (ranked last - mean 9.00) is the minor hindrance in the healthcare services execution. The practitioners at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital ranked Inappropriate Patient History first (mean 1.88) and ranked Low Technical Skills factor last (mean 8.50)..

Table III

Factors Affecting The Affecting healthcare services Execution in The selected multispecialty hospitals

Name of the Multispecialty hospital	Annoyed	Poor	Poorly	Inappropriate Patient	Low Technical	Demanding	Treatment	Team-mate	Odd Working	Low Level of Cooperation
AIIMS	5.28	3.23	5.39	2.61	6.51	4.44	5.91	7.81	5.58	8.25
Sir Ganga Ram Hospital	3.00	4.50	7.50	4.00	8.50	3.00	2.50	8.00	5.00	9.00
Indraprastha Apollo Hospital	5.63	5.50	7.75	1.88	8.50	5.75	2.19	6.81	3.44	7.56
Artemis Hospital	5.94	5.72	7.83	3.00	7.67	5.83	2.94	5.83	3.61	6.61
Medanta The Medicity Hospital	2.95	3.00	8.95	4.62	7.43	5.00	2.57	7.57	4.33	8.57
Total	4.70	4.00	6.89	3.11	7.36	4.66	4.01	7.41	4.77	8.11

The Artemis Hospital employees believed that Treatment Cost retention factor (ranked first - mean 2.94) is the major and Poorly Applied Procedures (ranked last - mean 7.83) is the minor factor that adversely affected the healthcare services execution. The practitioners of MedantaTheMedicity

Hospital ranked treatment cost first (mean 2.57) and ranked Poorly Applied Procedures last (mean 8.95). The results of inter comparison of the selected multispecialty hospitals officials/employees responses regarding factors affecting healthcare services execution process clearly indicated that Inappropriate Patient History and

Treatment Cost has been considered as the most important factor that adversely affected the affecting healthcare services execution process and Low Level of Cooperation among team mates and Poorly Applied Procedures has been considered as the least important factor that adversely affected the affecting healthcare services execution process.

Conclusion:

All the factors mentioned above affect the service quality and are serious issues for the Indian healthcare sector. These issues, if not solved can discourage the patients from undertaking health care services or worst case they will take on bad quality of services and drugs. This will cause a serious impact on the health status of the citizens of the society and thereby cause massive losses to the society's economic status as well. Improvements are therefore needed on medical service quality front of the Indian health care sector.

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