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## A STUDY ON THE CURRENT STATE OF INDIAN HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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### ABSTRACT

*Paper is a comprehensive study of the current state of Health care industry in India. It identifies different ways of defining quality in the health care sector with the help of study of literatures. Paper highlights the challenges and difficulties in healthcare service delivery and offers the valuable suggestions/observations from the reviews and findings to improve the healthcare service quality. This paper also highlights the government contribution to our Indian Healthcare Sector.*

### KEYWORDS

healthcare service quality, service quality, indian healthcare industry, difficulties in service delivery, healthcare perception.

### INTRODUCTION

Healthcare has become one of India's largest sectors - both in terms of revenue and employment. Healthcare comprises hospitals, medical devices, clinical trials, outsourcing, telemedicine, medical tourism, health insurance and medical equipment. The Indian healthcare sector is growing at a brisk pace due to its strengthening coverage, services and increasing expenditure by public as well private players.

Indian healthcare delivery system is categorised into two major components - public and private. The Government, i.e. public healthcare system comprises limited secondary and tertiary care institutions in key cities and focuses on providing basic healthcare facilities in the form of primary healthcare centers (PHCs) in rural areas. The private sector provides majority of secondary, tertiary and quaternary care institutions with a major concentration in metros, tier I and tier II cities.

India's competitive advantage lies in its large pool of well-trained medical professionals. India is also cost competitive compared to its peers in Asia and Western countries. The cost of surgery in India is about one-tenth of that in the US or Western Europe.

### MARKET SIZE

The overall Indian healthcare market as on December 2015 is approximately worth US\$ 100 billion and is expected to grow to US\$ 280 billion by 2020, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.9 per cent. Healthcare delivery, which includes hospitals, nursing homes and diagnostics centers, and pharmaceuticals, constitutes 65 per cent of the overall market.

There is a significant scope for enhancing healthcare services considering that healthcare spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is rising. Rural India, which accounts for over 70 per cent of the population, is set to emerge as a potential demand source.

India requires 600,000 to 700,000 additional beds over the next five to six years, indicative of an investment opportunity of US\$ 25-30 billion. Given this demand for capital, the number of transactions in the healthcare space is expected to witness an increase in near future. The average investment size by private equity funds in healthcare chains has already increased to US\$ 20-30 million from US\$ 5-15 million, as per Price Water House Coopers.

The Indian medical tourism industry is pegged at US\$ 3 billion per annum, with tourist arrivals estimated at 230,000. The Indian medical tourism industry is expected to reach US\$ 6 billion by 2018, with the number of people arriving in the country for medical treatment set to double over the next four years. With greater number of hospitals getting accredited and receiving recognition, and greater awareness on the need to develop their quality to meet international standards, Kerala aims to become India's healthcare hub in five years.

### HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY IN INDIA – MACRO ECONOMICS

(Source: <http://www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-presentation>)

The healthcare sector industry is expanding rapidly. It comprises of hospital services, diagnostic services, diagnostic products, medical technology, clinical trial services and clinical research organizations. The composition of the Healthcare Industry is as follows:

**TABLE 1**

|  |
|--|
| Healthcare Equipment                           |
| • Medical Equipment                            |
| • Medical Supplies                             |
| Healthcare Services                            |
| • Hospitals                                    |
| • Home Healthcare Providers                    |
| • Nursing Homes                                |
| Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology & Life Sciences |
| • Miscellaneous Scientific Services            |

The Indian Healthcare sector is emerging as one of the fast-growing service sectors in India, currently contributing around 6 – 7 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This sector is predominantly privatized which accounts for more than 80 percent of total healthcare spending in India with almost 75 to 80 percent of hospitals being managed by private sector.

The overall Indian healthcare market today is worth USD 100 billion approximately and is expected to grow to USD 280 billion by 2020, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.9 per cent. It is undergoing metamorphosis by broadening focus of the services by using technology, deliverables and newer applications. (Source: <http://www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-presentation>)

Healthcare delivery, which includes hospitals, nursing homes and diagnostics centers, and pharmaceuticals, constitutes around 65 per cent of the overall market. The existing hospitals are expanding specified area with infrastructure and services mainly due to the foreign investment being received by the sector.

### DEFINING QUALITY AND HEALTHCARE SERVICE QUALITY

Quality has become a predominant part of our lives and we are constantly looking for quality products and services without compromising on it. Our desire for quality has caused organizations across the globe to consider it as an essential component of any service or a production process. Organizations also consider quality as a strategic tool to distinguish itself from its competitors. Improved quality through improvised processes has resulted in numerous advantages by way

of reduction of waste, rework, delays, lower costs and higher market share. As a result, both productivity and profitability has improved, leading to a positive company image. From the view point of both service providers and service recipient, it has therefore become very important to define and measure quality of healthcare services.

Quality, because of its subjective nature and intangible characteristics, is difficult to define. Definitions vary depending on whose perspective is taken and within which context it is considered. Therefore, there is no single universally acceptable definition.

Quality, has been defined as '*value*'; '*excellence*'; '*conformance to specifications*'; '*conformance to requirements*'; '*fitness for use*'; '*meeting and/or exceeding customers' expectations*', and '*consistently delighted customers* by providing products and services according to the latest functional specifications which meet and exceed the customer's needs and satisfy producer/provider'.

Healthcare service quality is even more difficult to define and measure because of its distinct characteristics such as intangibility, heterogeneity and simultaneity. Healthcare service is an intangible product and cannot physically be touched, felt, viewed, counted, or measured like manufactured goods. The healthcare service quality depends on the interactions between the service process, customer and the service provider. Few healthcare quality attributes such as timeliness, consistency, and accuracy are hard to measure beyond a subjective assessment by the service recipient.

It is also often difficult to reproduce consistent healthcare services. Healthcare services can differ because different professionals (e.g. physicians, nurses, etc.) deliver the service to patients with varying needs. Quality standards are more difficult to establish in service operations. Healthcare professionals provide services differently because factors such as experience, individual abilities, and personalities etc. varies. Healthcare services are simultaneously produced and consumed. This makes quality control difficult because we cannot judge 'quality' prior to purchase and consumption. Unlike manufactured goods, it is less likely to have a final quality check. Therefore, healthcare outcomes cannot be guaranteed.

Quality healthcare is a multidimensional concept, defined by various author, some of the definitions are as follows:

- ❖ **Parsuraman, et al.** pointed out that many tangible cues such as style, hardness, color, feel, package and fit were used by the consumers to judge the quality of the products, but while purchasing services, the tangible evidence was limited to the service provider equipment, physical facility and personnel.
- ❖ **Donabedian** defined healthcare quality as 'the application of medical science and technology in a manner that maximises its benefit to health without correspondingly increasing the risk. He distinguished three components of quality: 1) technical quality, 2) interpersonal quality, and 3) amenities. Technical quality relates to the effectiveness of care in producing achievable health gain. Interpersonal quality refers to the extent of accommodation of patient needs and preferences. Amenities include features such as comfort of physical surroundings and attributes of the organisation of service provision.
- ❖ **Øvretveit** defines quality care as the 'Provision of care that exceeds patient expectations and achieves the highest possible clinical outcomes with the resources available.
- ❖ According to **Schuster et al.** good healthcare quality means "providing patients with appropriate services in a technically competent manner, with good communication, shared decision making and cultural sensitivity".
- ❖ For **Lohr**, quality is "the degree to which healthcare services for individuals and population increases the likelihood of desired healthcare outcomes and is consistent with the current professional knowledge".
- ❖ **Mosadeghrad** defined quality healthcare as "consistently delighting the patient by providing efficacious, effective and efficient healthcare services according to the latest clinical guidelines and standards, which meet the patients' needs and satisfies providers"

## GOVERNMENT'S KEY INITIATIVES IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

India's universal health plan aims to offer guaranteed benefits to a sixth of the world's population will cost an estimated Rs 1.6 trillion (US\$ 24.03 billion) over the next four years. Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government of India to promote Indian healthcare industry are as follows:

- ❖ A unique initiative for healthcare 'Sehat' (Social Endeavour for Health and Telemedicine) has been launched at a government run common service centre (CSC) to empower rural citizens by providing access to information, knowledge, skills and other services in various sectors through the intervention of digital technologies and fulfilling the vision of a 'Digital India'.
- ❖ India and Sweden celebrated five years of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The cooperation in healthcare between India and Sweden will help in filling gaps in research and innovative technology to aid provisioning of quality healthcare.
- ❖ Mr J P Nadda, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Government of India launched the National Deworming initiative aimed to protect more than 24 crore children in the ages of 1-19 years from intestinal worms, on the eve of the National Deworming Day.
- ❖ Under the National Health Assurance Mission, Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi's government would provide all citizens with free drugs and diagnostic treatment, as well as insurance cover to treat serious ailments.
- ❖ All the government hospitals in Andhra Pradesh would get a facelift with a cost of Rs 45 crore (US\$ 6.76 million), besides the establishment of 1,000 generic medical shops across the State in the next few months.
- ❖ Mission Indradhanush launched by Mr JP Nadda aims to immunise children against seven vaccine preventable diseases namely diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B by 2020. Government has set a target of 95 per cent immunisation cover by end of 2016.
- ❖ The E-health initiative, which is a part of Digital India drive launched by Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, aims at providing effective and economical healthcare services to all citizens. The programme aims to make use of technology and portals to facilitate people maintain health records and book online appointments with various departments of different hospitals using eKYC data of Aadhaar number.

## HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT IN THE BUDGETS 2016 & 2017

The government has also taken the following recent initiatives in the healthcare sector:

- ❖ New health protection scheme to provide for health cover to poor and economically weak families. The scheme will provide health cover up to Rs One lakh per family. The amount is raised during 2017-18 by another Rs.1 lakhs. For senior citizens an additional top-up packages up to Rs 30,000 will be provided.
- ❖ Under Prime Minister's Jan Aushadhi Yojana 3,000 Stores will be opened during year 2016-17.
- ❖ Proposition to start National Dialysis Service Programme under the NRHM through PPP mode to provide dialysis services in all district hospitals and give exemption on excise duty on certain dialysis equipment that will enhance services in the public and private sector.
- ❖ In the budget 2017, the overall health budget was increased from INR 39,879 crore (1.97% of total Union Budget) to INR 48,878 crore (2.27% of total Union Budget). Two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) are proposed to be set up in the states of Gujarat and Jharkhand. The government has set up short and medium term targets for key health indicators and wants to bring down the MMR to 100 by 2018-2020 and IMR to 28 by 2019.

## HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES/DIFFICULTIES IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Healthcare industry has been long facing the following difficulties, which needs to be addressed:

- ❖ Ineffective regulations - Careless monitoring, weak regulatory bodies and slack regulatory sanctions contribute towards ineffective regulations.
- ❖ Patient capacity - Low awareness and the patients' reluctance to seek justice through consumer protection courts contribute towards poor patient capacity.
- ❖ Inadequate Healthcare - Inadequate healthcare infrastructure, poor coordination among providers, absence third party scrutiny, fragmented care and ambiguous accountability contribute to inadequate healthcare providers.
- ❖ Absent benchmarks - Absent standards, variable costs, weak performance measures and clinical protocols contribute towards inappropriate benchmarks.
- ❖ Weak institutional setup - Hierarchies, poor capacity, poor documentation and weak accreditation agencies contribute towards poor institutional setup.
- ❖ Poor-professionals network - Absent trust, low information sharing and weak social capital contribute towards poor networks.

**STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY IN HOSPITALS**

Strategies reported in the literature are as follows:

- ❖ Increasing the financing, personnel, facilities or equipment used in a hospital, with the aim of treating more patients or treating the same number faster, better and at lower cost-per-person will surely improve the service quality.
- ❖ Hospitals can improve the quality of service by strengthening management and increasing management responsibilities and authorities.
- ❖ Financial reform can lead to better service quality by changing the structure of a hospital or health system so as to facilitate better decision-making and use of resources.
- ❖ Standards and guideline formulation and implementation - On-time professional and competent services are the patient's expectations from health care providers. Addressing the inconsistencies should form the basis for formulating strategies to ensure consistent expectations and experiences, thus increasing the likelihood of satisfaction and long-term patient-hospital relationships.
- ❖ Health care managers should focus on training the paramedical staff as well in order to build confidence in the patients' minds regarding service delivery.
- ❖ Safety strategies including risk management have proved to have a positive impact on the patients regarding the services offered.

**FINDINGS**

Undoubtedly, the Indian healthcare industry is rising at a faster pace. Though, Indian Government is committed to take necessary steps for the development of the Healthcare sector, yet there is a long way to go. Healthcare quality has varying definitions. Different authors have their own perspectives, interests and definitions of quality, based on the importance they place on different health-services elements. Steps should be taken by the healthcare professionals to improve their competencies i.e., the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to deliver high-quality services.

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