



MARKETING OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES BY PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR HOSPITALS IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT :

Hospital is an integral part of a social and medical organization. The function of a hospital is to provide complete healthcare, both curative and preventive. The health care industry in India is becoming increasingly more competitive. There are different types of hospitals like the government hospital, private hospital, and single and multispecialty hospital, trust hospital which provide different kinds of facilities to the patients. The scope of the study is confined to the marketing of healthcare by private and public hospitals on patients' perspective located in Tirunelveli Corporation of Tamil Nadu state. In Tirunelveli Corporation there are good numbers of private and public hospitals in both urban and rural areas providing advanced methods of treatment to the people. Further, the study is confined to factors that influence the patients' to select a particular hospital. As regards patients', the study is confined to the problems that are faced by them in availing healthcare services by private and public hospitals in Tirunelveli District. Both primary and secondary data have used to study the objectives of this research. From the patients' perspective, their reasons for preferring either level of attitude towards the health services provided by the both government and private hospitals and the problems that have been faced by them in availing health services both from the Government and the private hospitals have been elicited.



KEYWORDS : Healthcare Services, Government Hospitals and Private Hospitals.

INTRODUCTION

Hospital is an integral part of a social and medical organization. The function of a hospital is to provide complete healthcare, both curative and preventive. The health care industry in India is becoming increasingly more competitive. There are different types of hospitals like the government hospital, private hospital, and single and multispecialty hospital, trust hospital which provide different kinds of facilities to the patients. This has necessitated each hospital to identify the functions of services which could provide a competitive edge. The products or the services in one hospital differ from another hospital. There are three categories of services such as line services, supportive services and auxiliary services.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The marketing of professional services is different in many respects compared to marketing of tangible products. It is in this context that this study has been undertaken to find out the problems that are being faced by the patients in availing healthcare service, to ascertain the factors influencing the patients to select a particular hospital, to assess the patients' attitudes towards healthcare services.

Now, many private hospitals have manifested their role in the healthcare sector to meet the inadequacies in the healthcare. This study is thus undertaken to know the various aspects and issues of hospital marketing in Tirunelveli District. In Tirunelveli, the private hospitals play a major role in providing healthcare to all strata of society and these services are well utilized by all.

Nevertheless, the government hospitals, Primary Health centers and Health Sub-Centers have also been playing a vital role in providing healthcare services. Further, it is believe that the provider of healthcare service have their own constraints in delivering health care services to the people of the study area. It is in this context this study has been attempted primarily to assess the patients' choice of hospitals and attitude towards health care services both private as well as public hospitals.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is confined to the marketing of healthcare by private and public hospitals on patients' perspective located in Tirunelveli Corporation of Tamil Nadu state. In Tirunelveli Corporation there are good numbers of private and public hospitals in both urban and rural areas providing advanced methods of treatment to the people. Only the hospitals run by the private parties with profit motive have been included in this study as this type of hospitals are plenty in the district. Further, the study is confined to factors that influence the patients' to select a particular hospital. As regards patients', the study is confined to the problems that are faced by them in availing healthcare services by private and public hospitals in Tirunelveli District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To analyze the decision-making factors affecting in the marketing of hospital services.
- ✓ To assess and analyze the problems faced by the providers of hospital services and the patients respondents and also to offer suitable suggestion to overcome the problems.

METHODOLOGY

The study pertains to the marketing of hospitals in Tirunelveli District. Both public and private health care sectors have been selected for this purpose. However, private hospitals run by charitable institutions, trusts and Non-Governmental organizations are not taken for the study. Hence, this study has been confined to both the Government and private hospitals in Tirunelveli District.

Both primary and secondary data have used to study the objectives of this research. From the patients' perspective, their reasons for preferring either level of attitude towards the health services provided by the both government and private hospitals and the problems that have been faced by them in availing health services both from the Government and the private hospitals have been elicited.

SAMPLING DESIGN

This study was conducted in Tirunelveli District and the study area consists of the taluks namely, Sivagiri, Sankarankoil, Shencottai, Tenkasi, V.K.pudur, Alangulam, Tirunelveli, Ambasamudram, Palayamkottai, Nanguneri, Radhapuram. In this study, stratified random sampling method has been adopted in select the sample patient respondents from each taluk except Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai, ten patients availing were healthcare services from both private and public hospitals and from the Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai taluk 15 patients' were taluk as there two taluk have more number of hospitals. Thus, the total patient sample respondents for the study amount 240(120+120).

There are 258 Government hospitals (including PHCs and HSCs) in the study area and there are 310 (private hospitals including Nursing Homes and Clinics) functioning in Tirunelveli District. Under convenience sampling method, 10 hospitals from each category were selected as sample healthcare service provider.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1
Factors Influencing the Patients to Select Private Hospitals

Sl. No	Variables	Component				(h ²)
		F1	F2	F3	F4	
1.	Availability of doctors all the time	.845	.077	.060	.012	.112
2.	Availability of trained nurses	.755	.212	.024	.269	.321
3.	Accurate diagnosis of disease	.617	.267	.139	.060	.621
4.	Core services	.034	.783	.009	.084	.418
5.	Physical evidence of healthcare service	.237	.653	.227	.178	.442
6.	Familiarity	.351	.530	.155	.234	.411
7.	Availability of equipment	.371	.527	.228	.022	.979
8.	Peripheral services	.092	.510	.259	.286	.597
9.	Location of the hospital	.139	.290	.669	.060	.703
10.	Pre consultation services	.179	.201	.604	.048	.565
11.	Hospitality	.345	.149	.744	.094	.467
12.	Hygiene	.238	.175	.709	.083	.483
13.	Quality of hospital service	.109	.019	.628	.062	.475
14.	Transparency	.159	.286	.290	.708	.688
15.	Fee charged	.217	.240	.264	.897	.724
	Eigen Value	5.0555	1.916	1.169	1.038	
	Per cent of variance	18.628	15.028	14.711	12.824	
	Cumulative per cent of Variance	18.628	33.656	48.366	61.191	

Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis
 Rotation Method : Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
 Source : Primary Data

Table 1 exhibits the rotated factor loading for the fifteen variables factors influencing the patients to select a private hospital. It is clear that all the fifteen variables have been extracted into four factors.

Factor 1

The first factor (F1) ‘**Quick treatment and Safety**’ represents 18.628 per cent of variation. These are three variables positively loaded in this factor. They are availability of doctors all the time, availability of trained nurses, accurate of diagnosis of diseases. It implies that there is a positive correlation among these variables.

Factor 2

The second factor (F2) ‘**Technology and Services**’ represents 15.028 per cent of variation. These are five variables namely core services, physical evidence of healthcare services, Familiarity, availability of equipment, peripheral services. These variables are positively loaded in this factor. The inference to be drawn from the above analysis is that the variables ‘physical evidence of healthcare service’, ‘availability of equipment’, ‘peripheral services’ positively influence the patients to select a private hospitals in the study area.

Factor 3

The third factor (F3) ‘Convenience and Infrastructure’ represents 14.711 per cent of variation. These are five variables namely ‘location of the hospital’, ‘pre consultation services’, ‘hospitality’, ‘hygiene’, ‘hospitality’, ‘quality of hospital services’. These variables are positively located in this factor. The inference to be drawn from the above analysis is that the variables ‘location of the hospital’, ‘hygiene’, ‘hospitality’; positively influence the patients to select a private hospitals in the study area.

Factor 4

The fourth and final factor (F4) ‘Cost of health services’ represents 12.284 per cent of variation. These are two variables ‘fee charged’, ‘transparency’ for fair and reasonable characterized as ‘cost of health service’. These variables are positively located in this factor. The inference to be drawn from the above analysis is that the variables ‘fee charged’, ‘transparency’ positively influence the patients to select private hospitals in the study area.

Table 2
Factors Influencing the Patients to Select Government Hospitals

Sl. No	Variables	Component				(h ²)
		F1	F2	F3	F4	
1.	Pre consultation services	.803	.332	.014	.043	.684
2.	Core services	.776	.024	.032	.298	.756
3.	Peripheral services	.739	.016	.128	.256	.692
4.	Location of the hospital	.723	.176	.282	.224	.628
5.	Accurate diagnosis of disease	.164	.730	.197	.012	.462
6.	Availability of doctors all the time	.053	.724	.132	.204	.607
7.	Availability of trained nurses	.219	.692	.113	.286	.617
8.	Familiarity	.208	.218	.793	.098	.696
9.	Availability of equipment	.082	.383	.658	.057	.534
10.	Transparency	.140	.116	.608	.244	.381
11.	Fee charged	.043	.463	.575	.268	.586
12.	Physical evidence of healthcare service	.179	.255	.406	.344	.729
13.	Quality of hospital service	.075	.215	.102	.738	.599
14.	Hospitality	.276	.130	.213	.629	.621
15.	Hygiene	.466	.164	.241	.627	.586
	Eigen Value	5.055	1.916	1.169	1.038	
	Per cent of variance	18.628	15.028	14.711	12.824	
	Cumulative per cent of Variance	18.628	33.656	48.366	61.191	

Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis
 Rotation Method : Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
 Source : Primary Data

Factor 1

Table 2 reveals that the first factor (F1) '**Convenience and Services**' represents 18.628 per cent of variation. There are four variables positively loaded in this factor. They are 'pre consultation services', 'core services', 'peripheral services', and 'location of the hospital'. It implies that there is a positive correlation among these four variables and make a variation of 18.628 per cent in the factors influencing the patients to select government hospitals in the study area.

Factor 2

The second factor (F2) '**Staff and Treatment**' represents 15.028 per cent of variation. There are three variables positively loaded in this factor. They are 'accurate diagnosis of diseases', 'availability of doctors all the time', 'availability of trained nurses'. These variables are positively loaded in this factor which influences the patients to select government hospitals.

Factor 3

The third factor (F3) '**Technology and Cost of health services**' represents 14.711 per cent of variation. These are five variables namely 'familiarity', 'availability of equipment', 'transparency', 'fee charged', 'physical evidence of health services'. These variables are positively loaded in this factor. The inference to be drawn from the above analysis is that the variables 'familiarity', 'availability of equipment', 'transparency', 'fee charged', 'physical evidence of health services' positively influence the patients to select government hospitals.

Factor 4

The fourth factor (F4) '**Infrastructure and Quality of health services**' represents 12.824 per cent of variation. This factor includes three variables namely 'quality of hospital service', 'hospitality', 'hygiene'. These variables are positively loaded in this factor. It implies that there is a positive correlation among these variables 'quality of hospital service', 'hospitality', 'hygiene' and make a variation of 12.824 per cent in the factors influencing the patients to select a government hospitals in the study area.

Table 3
Patients' Problems in Availing Health Services from Private Hospitals

Sl. No.	Problems	Garrett Mean Score	Rank
1.	High fees	75.88	I
2.	Long waiting time	71.80	II
3.	Poor hygienic conditions	24.22	VIII
4.	No operation theatre	37.18	V
5.	Poor relationship with patients	34.28	VI
6.	Poor pre consultancy services	28.68	VII
7.	Lack of new technology and equipment's and lab facilities	52.64	IV
8.	Discrimination in fixing fees	11.98	X
9.	Discrimination in providing quality services	19.68	IX
10.	Lack of canteen facilities and ambulance services	54.68	III

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 depicts the problems that are being faced by the patients of private hospitals along with their mean scores and ranks. It is inferred from table that out of the ten identified problems, the problem of 'high fees' is ranked as the first and foremost problem with the highest mean score of 75.88 followed by the problem of 'long waiting time' with a mean score of 71.80. The problem of 'lack of canteen

facilities and ambulance services' with a mean score of 54.68 followed by 'lack of new technology and equipment's and lab facilities' with a mean score of 52.64. The problem of 'No operation theatre' is ranked fifth with the mean score of 37.18 followed by 'poor relationship with patients' service is ranked sixth with the mean score of 34.28 followed by 'poor pre consultancy services' with the mean score of 28.68. The problem of 'poor hygienic conditions' with a mean score of 24.22. The problem 'discrimination in providing quality' is ranked ninth with the mean score of 19.68 and last rank is given to 'discrimination in fixing fees' with the least mean score of 11.98.

Table 4
Patients' Problems in Availing Health Services from Government Hospitals

Sl. No.	Problems	Garrett Mean Score	Rank
1.	Unhygienic environment	74.12	I
2.	Lack of new technology and equipment's and lab facilities	63.73	III
3.	Poor relationship with patients	45.56	IV
4.	No proper consulting time	40.24	V
5.	Poor quality of service	38.58	VI
6.	Inadequate staff for emergency	29.68	VII
7.	Tips money demanded by sub staff	22.97	IX
8.	No quick process in paying bill	14.78	X
9.	No personal attention	27.64	VIII
10.	Lack of canteen facilities	58.19	II

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 clearly shows the problems of patient's government hospitals along with their respective mean scores and ranks. It is obvious from Table 4.15 that out of the ten identified problems; the problem of 'Unhygienic environment' is ranked first with the highest mean score of 74.12 followed by 'lack of canteen facilities' with a mean score of 58.19. The problem of 'Lack of new technology and equipment's and lab facilities' has been rank third with a mean score of 63.73 followed by 'poor relationship with patients' with a mean score of 45.56. The problem of 'no proper consulting time' has been rank fifth with a mean score of 40.24 followed by 'poor quality of service' with a mean score of 38.58. The problem of 'inadequate staff for emergency' has been rank seventh with a mean score of 29.68 followed by 'no personal attention' with a mean score of 27.64. The problem called 'Tips and demanded by sub staff' has been rank ninth with a mean score of 22.97 and the problem called 'no quick process in paying bill' has been ranked as the last with the least mean score of 14.78.

SUGGESTIONS

- To service providers can appoint trained and experienced doctors and nurses who are able to clear the doubts and handle the patients with care. This enhances the quality of service in the study area. Moreover, on Sundays the availability of doctors is mandatory to attend to emergency cases.
- Adequate Number of staff can be appointed from reception to billing section to take care of patients as patients in order to avoid crowd and to reduce the long waiting hours.
- The doctors and nurses can be updated now and then so as to improve their skills, performance and responsibility like that of teachers.
- The service providers can provide adequate salary, increments and rewards to the staff members so as to retain them in the same hospitals to satisfy the patients as well as to create goodwill about the hospital.
- Safe treatment without side effects is expected by the patients in hospitals. So, the hospital must ensure safe treatment by the specialized and well experienced doctors.

- Unnecessary medical testing is waste of time and money which must be avoided. The doctors must be able to diagnose the diseases correctly with due tests.
- The hospital must provide quality treatment at affordable price in order to enhance medical tourism.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the factors that are responsible for choosing either a Government hospitals or a private hospital are duly and analytically presented in the study area. The researcher hopes that the findings of the study would be of great help for the patients of both the private as well as the Government hospitals. The strongly believes that if the suggestions that are offered in the study are duly considered and subsequently if necessary actions are taken by the officials concerned, prompt delivery of the promised quality health services could be assured. Despite the above mentioned fruits of this research endeavor, the researcher is not fully contented with the study due to its own inherent and inevitable limitations. The researcher hopes very strongly that still there is a plenty scope for further research on different dynamics and dimensions of hospital marketing.

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