

A Study of Satisfaction Level of Customers in Government and Private Hospitals

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Abstract

The prime objective of any servicing organisation like hospitals is the creation of feeling of satisfaction among its customers. In hospitals patients are enumerated as the customers. The concept of patients' satisfaction is converted into patients' delight in the present healthcare industry which means patient should not only be cured during his stay in hospital but also should be delighted with the quality of services provided to him by the hospital and its staff members. It is an old saying that customers are the real evaluator of any organisation. Evaluation of any organisation may be judged through the perception of its customers. Here perception means the level of satisfaction of customers after availing the services of organisation. In case of hospitals patients' perception determines the success level of a particular healthcare unit as it is generally based on personal experience, word of mouth publicity or authentic information received by a close person.

Key Words: *Customers' Satisfaction Level in Govt. & Private Hospitals.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of patients' satisfaction is converted into patients' delight in the present healthcare industry which means patient should not only be cured during his stay in hospital but also should be delighted with the quality of services provided to him by the hospital and its staff members.

The satisfaction of patients of a hospital in term

of quality of services provided by a healthcare unit depends upon a number of factors such as timeliness, efficiency, authentic and genuine treatment of illness, reasonable fee structure, respect and caring, safety etc. The satisfaction level of patients of a hospital also depends upon the attitude of healthcare service provider and the environment of hospitals' organisations which may be enumerated with the help of following table :

Table No. 1 : Factors Affecting the Satisfaction of Patients

Factors Affecting the Satisfaction of Patients	Environment of Hospitals' Organisation		
	Category I	Category II	Category III
Attitude	Empathetic	Polite	Bureaucratic
Noise Pollution	Low and quiet	Noisy	Very destructive
Privacy	Concerned towards privacy	Reasonable	None
Information	Well informed through brochures and guides	Information given only to query level	None
Ambience	Caring environment	Comfortable surroundings	Institutional ambience
Service Time	Prompt service	Moderate waiting time period	Long waiting time period
CEO Commitment	Top priority towards service	Minimizes complaints	None towards services
Satisfaction Level of Patients	Completely Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Dissatisfied

Source: Practical Manual; Organisation and Mgt of Hospitals; IGNOU, New Delhi; 2013.

The above table depicts the effects of attitude of hospitals' administrator and organizational environment over satisfaction level of patients in a scientific manner. Here the researcher made an effort to present a comparative study of level of patients' satisfaction in government and private sector hospitals in Ghaziabad district with a belief that the results of the study would represent the true status of patients' satisfaction level in government and private sector hospitals of the state. For the purpose of analyzing patients' satisfaction, researcher personally interviewed 200 patients (100 each from the both categories of hospitals) admitted in the government and private sector hospitals of district Ghaziabad.

2. ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION LEVEL

The analysis of satisfaction level of patients is being analyzed with the help of following headings :

I. Satisfaction of Patients from the Point of View of Organizational Environment

The status of organizational environment affects the behaviour of employees, quality of services provided, management staff relationship etc. Healthy organizational environment is first thing which depicts the positive image of hospital in the mind of patients and builds the foundation of patients' satisfaction.

The following table presents the Status of Patients' Satisfaction in respect of organisational environment of hospitals :

Table No. 2
Status of Patients' Satisfaction in Respect of Organisational Environment of Hospitals

Particulars	No. of Samples	Government Hospitals		Private Hospitals	
		Positive Reply	Negative Reply	Positive Reply	Negative Reply
		In Percentage		In Percentage	
• Do you find the approach of hospital convenient?	100 from Each Category of Hospitals	88	12	91	9
• Do you find the environment of hospital free from the different types of pollution?		44	56	87	13
• Do you find all the required departments in the hospital?		82	18	76	24
• Do you think the departmentation of hospital is well planned?		73	27	94	6
• Do you feel proper coordination among different departments of the hospital?		22	78	89	11
• Do you find the dealing employees in a position to take decisions freely according to the situation?		14	86	74	26
• Do you find the organizational culture of hospital patients' friendly?		NIL	100	71	29

Source: Personal interview through a questionnaire.

According to the figures given in table no. 2, maximum number of patients of both government and private sector hospitals were found satisfied with the

approach of their hospitals. All the government hospitals of the area of study are located at the prime areas of the city and private hospitals are established

by their promoters at the best suitable place having considered the commercial aspect of location.

More than 50 percent of patients of government hospitals complained about the noise, bad smell and so many other types of pollution in these hospitals while maximum number of patients of private hospitals found their hospital free from different types of pollutions.

The government hospitals of the area of study maintain the maximum numbers of departments in their list. It is another matter either all the departments are in running mode or not. The private hospitals also carry all the prime departments in their organisation but they are found acquiring the number of supporting services through out sourcing.

Most of the patients of government hospitals observed lack of coordination among different departments of hospital. On the contrary the patients of private hospitals were remained witness of cordial environment among different departments of their hospital.

In government hospitals the employees of different departments were not observed in the capacity or in the mood of taking self decisions according to the circumstances while in private sector hospitals the concerning staff members were noticed taking decisions freely in the way of compilation of their responsibilities.

Most of the patients of government hospitals complained about the autocratic and bureaucratic culture prevailed there in which turns the environment of these hospitals unfriendly for the patients. On the other side most of the patients of private hospitals appreciated their friendly organisation culture.

II. Satisfaction of Patients from the Point of View of Attitude of Hospital Administrator

Hospital administrator is the person who determines the policies of the healthcare unit. In the present globalize environment, hospitals have grown both in size and services provided by them. It becomes the task of hospital administrators more complicated.

Moreover, these people are indirectly concerned with the controlling of all the activities of the healthcare unit and ultimately the image of hospital.

Although number of people work in a hospital but hospital is mostly recognized by the name of its administrators. This is the reason that the patients and their attendants are willing to make personal contact with the hospital administrator firstly for their satisfaction and secondly for the removal of any problem faced by them in the hospital. It is true that it is not possible by hospital administrator to look after each and every patient admitted in their healthcare unit but he is supposed to create such a positive environment in the hospital through delegation of authorities to their subordinates that every employee of hospital are in position to resolve the problem of patients at their end.

The following table presents the Status of Patients' Satisfaction in respect of attitude of administrators of hospital.

The study of the above table reveals the facts that almost all the patients of private hospitals felt the hardcore commercial attitude of administrators of these hospitals directly.

Only few educated and resourceful patients of government hospitals opined that the administrative authorities of these hospitals were easily approachable while in private sector hospitals two third of patients were remained successful in having a personal meeting with the administrator of the hospital.

The patients of both the hospitals unanimously uttered that most of the terms and conditions of hospital were not explained to them at the time of entry of hospital. When researcher queried its reason with the managerial personnel of the hospitals, they said that patients approached the hospital in the stage of emergency and at that time the emergency treatment of patient was on priority and it was not possible to discuss detailed terms and conditions of the hospital.

The response of administrators of private hospitals was declared more sympathetic at the time of any complaint by the patients in comparison to the response of administrators of government hospitals.

In the compliance of all government programmes, government hospitals were found continuously attached with the task of spreading healthcare education to the people of their assigned

areas. In the contrary only one third patients of private sector hospitals noticed few efforts of their hospital for providing healthcare education to the society.

Table No. 3
Status of Patients' Satisfaction regarding attitude of administrators of hospital

Particulars	No. of Samples	Government Hospitals		Private Hospitals	
		Positive Reply	Negative Reply	Positive Reply	Negative Reply
		In Percentage		In Percentage	
• Do you find the approach of hospital convenient?	100 from Each Category of Hospitals	88	12	91	9
• Do you find the environment of hospital free from the different types of pollution?		44	56	87	13
• Do you find all the required departments in the hospital?		82	18	76	24
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• Do you find the organizational culture of hospital patients' friendly?		NIL	100	71	29

Source: Personal interview through a questionnaire.

Almost all the patients of private hospitals remained witness of heavy use of computers in private hospitals while government hospitals were still found engaged in paper working.

III. Satisfaction of Patients from the Point of View of Behavioural Approach of Hospital Staff

Another important facet of patients' satisfaction is the healthy staff-patient relationship which normally depends upon the positive behavioural approach of hospital staff. When a patient comes to the hospital, naturally he is in a miserable condition

and behaves abnormally, at that time the patience, competence and behaviour of hospital staff makes him comfortable. This ultimately leads to the patients' satisfaction.

The following table presents the Status of Patients' Satisfaction in respect of behavioural approach of hospital staff.

The above table explains the fact that most of the patients of government hospitals were found dissatisfied with the behaviour of hospital staff. Most of them complained about the negative attitude of registration clerk and sweepers and only few patients

appreciated the services of nursing staff to some extent. The patients of these hospitals were also not found

satisfied with the services rendered to them by the doctors.

Table No. 4
Status of Patients' Satisfaction regarding Behavioural Approach of Hospital Staff

Particulars	No. of Samples	Government Hospitals		Private Hospitals	
		Positive Reply	Negative Reply	Positive Reply	Negative Reply
		In Percentage		In Percentage	
• Did you find the behaviour of Registration clerk/ Receptionist polite and cordial?	100 from Each Category of Hospitals	12	88	96	4
• Did you find the behaviour of Matron/ Nursing Staff/Supporting Staff polite and cordial?		41	59	91	9
• Did you find the behaviour of attendant/ Sweepers polite and cordial?		19	81	98	2
• Did you get 24 hours prompt nursing service in the hospital?		17	83	100	NIL
• Did you receive the medicines through your nurse most of the time?		NIL	100	100	NIL
• Did the visit of doctors remain prompt?		22	78	100	NIL
• Did you find overall behavioral approach of staff members of the ward satisfactory?		NIL	100	100	NIL

Source: Personal interview through a questionnaire.

On the contrary the patients of private hospitals appreciated the professional approach of all staff members of these hospitals i.e. receptionist, doctors, nurses, supporting staff etc. They also explained that hospital administration of these hospitals invariably collected the feedback from patients in respect of the behaviour of their staff members.

IV. Satisfaction of Patients from the Point of View of Quality of Services Provided by the Hospital

It is a well known fact that during last few decades a large number of developments have taken place in the medical science which change the nature and character of services provided by the modern hospitals. The advancement in medical science enables

the process of diagnosis and treatment more authentic. This raises the expectations of patients moving upward.

Basically patients' satisfaction depends upon quality of services provided by the hospital. Ultimately patients paid for the quality. The following table presents the Status of Patients' Satisfaction in respect of quality of services provided by the hospital.

Above table reveals the facts that only one third patients of government hospitals were satisfied with the medicare services provided by the hospitals while the percentage of satisfied patients of private hospitals reached to 88 percent at this issue.

ICU services of government hospitals could not provide satisfaction to their patients due to awful maintenance and unavailability of required machines

while these facilities of private hospitals were very much praised by their customers.

In the same way the doctors of government

hospitals could not please the patients through their prompt services. Most of the patients of private sector hospitals appreciated the regular medicare services provided to them by the healthcare unit.

Table No. 5

Status of Patients' Satisfaction regarding Quality of Services Provided by the Hospital

Particulars	No. of Samples	Government Hospitals		Private Hospitals	
		Positive Reply	Negative Reply	Positive Reply	Negative Reply
		In Percentage		In Percentage	
• Did you feel satisfied with the emergency medicare services provided by the hospital?	100 from Each Category of Hospitals	36	64	88	12
• Did you feel satisfied with the facilities available in the ICU of the hospital?		21	79	93	7
• Did you feel satisfied with the regular medicare services provided by the hospital?		29	71	98	2
• Did you feel satisfied with the nursing services provided by the hospital?		37	63	98	2
• Did you feel satisfied with the laboratory services provided by the hospital?		31	69	67	33
• Did you feel satisfied with the dietary services provided by the hospital?		17	83	72	28
• Did you feel satisfied with the laundry services provided by the hospital?		17	83	96	4
• Did you feel satisfied with the other in house services provided by the hospital?		NIL	100	80	20

Source: Personal interview through a questionnaire.

The quality of nursing services was observed far better in private hospitals in comparison to government hospitals. Here it is important to note that the nursing services of government hospitals were praised by the maximum number of patients in comparison to other services provided by these healthcare units.

Only one third patients of government hospitals felt satisfaction with the laboratory services available in the healthcare unit while one third patients of private

hospitals were found dissatisfied with the laboratory services of their hospitals.

Dietary services of government hospitals could not attract their patients while maximum number of patients of private hospitals were found satisfied with the quality and hygiene of food provided to them.

The status of satisfaction of patients in respect of laundry services provided by government hospitals and private hospitals remained almost same.

V. Satisfaction of Patients from the Point of View of Quality of Facilities Provided by the Hospital

In general facilities refer to those services which are not supposed to offer by the healthcare unit in normal course. But in the present competitive environment of healthcare market of country, private sector hospitals are providing numbers of facilities like banking, postal, courier, shopping, transportation,

entertainment etc. to attract the patients towards their healthcare unit. The concept of modern hospital marketing is to present itself distinct to others by introducing innovative facilities to the public and private hospitals are following this approach with heart and soul.

The following table presents the Status of Patients' Satisfaction in respect of quality of facilities provided by the hospital –

Table No. 6
Status of Patients' Satisfaction regarding Quality of facilities Provided by the Hospital

Particulars	No. of Samples	Government Hospitals		Private Hospitals	
		Positive Reply	Negative Reply	Positive Reply	Negative Reply
		In Percentage		In Percentage	
• Did the water supply of the hospital regular and hygienic?	100 from Each Category of Hospitals	66	34	97	3
• Did you feel the canteen facility available in the hospital economic?		72	28	53	47
• Did you find a well equipped pathology lab in the hospital?		11	89	36	64
• Did you observe blood bank facility in the hospital?		58	42	14	86
• Was the internal medical store of hospital perfect and economic?		NA	NA	48	62
• Did you find banking or postal services facilities in the hospital?		NA	NA	NA	NA
• Did hospital occupy proper parking place?		100	NIL	79	21

Source: Personal interview through a questionnaire.

The above table reveals the facts that two third patients of government hospitals were satisfied with the purified water supply provided by the hospitals while almost all the patients of private hospitals appreciated the drinking water facility provide by their healthcare unit.

72 percent patients of the government hospitals found the canteen facility available in the hospital economic but they also complained about the cleanliness. 47 percent visitors of private hospitals felt the charges of canteen of the hospital high.

Pathology labs of government hospitals could not qualify the expectations of patients due to their limited resources and unfriendly behaviour of working staff. On the other hand most of the private hospitals are observed to be tied up with any pathology labs for providing the regular services of medical tests to their patients. The representative of contracted lab is available in the hospital most of the time and collects the required sample for medical test on payment basis. After that samples are sent to pathology labs for testing and test reports are delivered to patient with in 24 hours or at the time of need.

Government hospitals maintain the facility of blood bank in their prime unit of the district while private hospitals avail this facility through outsourcing too.

More than 60 percent of patients of private hospitals complained that internal medical stores of the hospital charge more in comparison to medical stores of outer side. Moreover, the most of the medicines prescribed by the private hospitals were available to these medical stores only. This fact is revealed during survey that most of the private hospitals makes annual contract with the proprietor of internal medical store and charge heavy amount for the same. This results that the patients are bound to purchase the prescribed medicine at printed price. This may be treated as the hidden cost of private hospitals.

The banking and postal services are not provided by the hospitals of area of study to their patients directly but private hospitals provide space to banks for ATMs machines and allow the agents of courier services to collect and deliver the posts of patients.

Government hospitals are found keeping more Parking spaces in comparison to private hospitals but the management of parking facility is observed more systematic in private hospitals.

VI. Satisfaction of Patients from the Point of View of Charges Taken by the Hospital

This is ultimately the fee structure and charges of the hospital which has direct linkage with the satisfaction of patients. The fee structure and charges of hospitals' services are not in the priority list of patients or their attendants at the emergency time of admission of patients but if these charges are unreasonably high, the patients bear the same helplessly and curse the deadly commercial and unethical attitude of private hospitals at the same time.

The following table presents the Status of Patients' Satisfaction in respect of charges taken by the hospital –

Table No. 7
Status of Patients' Satisfaction Regarding Charges Taken by the Hospital

Particulars	No. of Samples	Government Hospitals		Private Hospitals	
		Positive Reply	Negative Reply	Positive Reply	Negative Reply
		In Percentage		In Percentage	
• Did you find the medico fee structure of hospital satisfactory?	100 from Each Category of Hospitals	NA	NA	17	83
• Did you find the room charges and charges for other facilities provided by the hospital satisfactory?		NA	NA	5	95
• Did you notice any hidden cost realized by the hospital in your bill?		77	23	12	88
• Did any employee expect any undue monetary benefit from you?		NA	NA	100	NIL
• Was the billing system and cash counter facility of hospital in proper mode?		13	87	96	4
• Did the hospital provide you proper support in the compilation of your mediclaim papers?		NA	NA	82	18
• Did you find the overall charges of hospital genuine?		NA	NA	17	83

Source: Personal interview through a questionnaire.

Though the government hospitals do not charge any fee from patients except the registration fee i.e. Re. 1. These hospitals are financed by the state government completely, yet most of patients of these hospitals complained that the employees of these hospitals, from doctor to sweeper, expect some undue monetary consideration for providing genuine medicare to the patients.

Fee structure of private hospitals of area of study is considered by the patients of these hospitals unreasonably high. They also said that they are bound to come here due to the limited and unreliable healthcare services of government hospitals. The management and quality of healthcare services provided by the private hospitals undoubtedly are of high standard but these hospitals work purely as

commercial units ignoring the social concern of their profession.

3. CONCLUSION

At last it may be concluded that government hospitals of Ghaziabad district are not satisfying the expectations of their patients due to scarcity of resources, unfriendly attitude of employees and corruption prevailed their in. On the other hand private hospitals are providing the standard healthcare services with smile but only those patients who have a capacity to bear their charges. Here, sufferer is only the common man of the society who hardly manages the two times meal for his family and entirely depends on the government hospitals for his healthcare problems.

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