

## Patient Centric Views on Private Healthcare with Special Reference to Tirunelveli City

**Surya.A**

Research Scholar (Part-Time) & Assistant Professor of Commerce, Rani Anna Government College for Women, Tirunelveli-8 Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli-627 012, India

### Abstract

Health is multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is both an end means of development strategy .It is said that, “The greatest wealth is health”- Virgil. By marketing of healthcare services we mean making available the healthcare or medical services to the different categories of users in such a way that they get quality health services, at a reasonable fees structure, on the right time and in a decent way. Thus, hospitality becomes an essential part of hospital marketing. **Objectives:** i) To examine the factors influencing the respondents to choose private hospitals. ii) To analyze the problems faced by respondents in getting healthcare service. **Methodology:** 120 respondents from various private hospitals in Tirunelveli city are selected as sample by adopting non probability sampling. Both primary and secondary data have used to study the objectives of this research. **Problem of the study:** This study is thus undertaken to know the patients’ attitudes towards healthcare services and find out the problems that are being faced by the respondents. **Conclusion:** Since ‘Health is wealth’, it is the first and foremost duty of each and every one to give prime importance to their health. If the factors included in the study for choosing the best health care services, are taken into consideration, there is no ground for ill health among the citizens of India.

**KEYWORDS:** Healthcare, private hospitals, Patient attitude

### 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.

Health is multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is both an end means of development strategy. A nation with good health tends to be productive and that productivity leads to the upliftment of economic and social development. This development in turn, tends to improve the indicators of health status and quality of life. If the quality of human capital is not good, physical capital and natural resources cannot be properly utilized and growth can neither be sustained nor be qualitative. Health is one of the major segments of human capital. In an over populated country like India, where a majority of the population is found below the poverty line, hospitals and healthcare centres are responsible for the well-being of the rural populace.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It is said that, “The greatest wealth is health”- Virgil. 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 City. 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..

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To understand the socio-economic profile of respondents.
- To examine the factors influencing the respondents to choose private hospitals.
- To analyze the problems faced by respondents in getting healthcare service.

**METHODOLOGY**

120 respondents from various private hospitals in Tirunelveli city are selected as sample by adopting non probability sampling. Both primary and secondary data have used to study the objectives of this research. The primary data are collected with the help of interview schedule. Secondary data are collected from journals and websites. The statistical tools like mean, factor analysis, Garrett ranking are used to analyse the data collected with the help of interview schedule.

**SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

The present study confines the variables into age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation, monthly family income, area of residence, type of family, family size. Table 1 shows the socio economic profile of the respondents.

**Table 1**  
**SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Sl. No.	Variables		Private Hospital	Percentage
1	<b>Age group (in Years)</b>	Below 25 years	25	20.83
2		25-35 years	23	19.17
3		36-45 years	27	22.5
4		46-55 years	28	23.33
5		Above 55 years	17	14.17
		<b>Total</b>	120	100
<b>1</b>	Gender	Male	55	45.83
<b>2</b>		Female	65	54.17

		<b>Total</b>	120	100
<b>1</b>	Marital Status	Married	92	76.67
<b>2</b>		Unmarried	28	23.33
		<b>Total</b>	120	100
	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	23	19.17
<b>1</b>		Primary	21	17.5
<b>2</b>		SSLC	11	9.17
<b>3</b>		Higher Secondary	7	5.83
<b>4</b>		Diploma	8	6.67
<b>5</b>		Under Graduate	29	24.17
<b>6</b>		Post Graduate	15	12.5
<b>7</b>		Professionals	6	5
		<b>Total</b>	120	100
<b>1</b>		Student	12	10
<b>2</b>		Home maker	25	20.83
<b>3</b>	Unorganized Worker	10	8.33	
<b>4</b>	Agriculturist	20	16.67	
<b>5</b>	Private employee	23	19.17	
<b>6</b>	Government employee	14	11.67	
<b>7</b>	Businessmen	8	6.67	
<b>8</b>	Professionals	8	6.67	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Monthly Family Income</b>	Below 5,000	15	12.5
<b>2</b>		5,000 – 10,000	36	30
<b>3</b>		10,001 – 15000	22	18.3

<b>4</b>		15,001- 20000	28	23.3
<b>5</b>		20001 – 25000	9	7.5
<b>6</b>		Above 25,00	10	8.3
		<b>Total</b>	120	100
<b>1</b>	<b>Residential Status</b>	Rural	40	33.3
<b>2</b>		Urban	80	66.7
		<b>Total</b>	120	100.0
	<b>Family Size</b>	Small (2 to 4)	62	51.7
		Medium (5 to 6)	47	39.2
		Large level (above 6)	11	9.2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Primary Data.

### **PATIENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR CHOICE OF HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS**

In order to study the patients’ attitude towards the factors influencing the choice of health service providers, fifteen variables are taken into account. KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measures of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity determine the factorability of the correlation matrix. Table 2 shows the findings of the KMO and Bartlett’s test for patient choosing private hospitals.

**Table 2**  
**RESULTS OF KMO AND BARTLETT’S TEST**

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</b>		0.794
<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>	643.818
	<b>Df</b>	105
	<b>Sig.</b>	.000

It reveals that the factor analysis can be rightly employed in this context as evidenced through a higher KMO measure (0.794) and a significant Bartlett’s test result. Hence, factor analysis is attempted.

In order to interpret the variables adequately, it is necessary to rotate factor matrices. There are several methods available for analyzing the factors. The principal

factor method Varimax rotation is the widely used one. It is minimizes the number of variables with high loadings on a factor, thereby enhancing the interpretability of the factors. The number of factors retained for rotation is restricted to those principal components that have Eigen values greater than unity. Analysis of factors influencing the patients to select a private hospitals in Tirunelveli City are made through rotated factor matrix which reveals that there are four major factors responsible for selecting hospitals. The findings of the rotated factor analysis on the factors influencing the patients to select particular private hospitals in Tirunelveli District are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PATIENTS TO SELECT PRIVATE HOSPITALS**

Sl. No	Variables	Component				Communality (h <sup>2</sup> )
		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
	<b>Eigen Value</b>	<b>5.0555</b>	<b>1.916</b>	<b>1.169</b>	<b>1.038</b>	
	<b>Per cent of variance</b>	<b>18.628</b>	<b>15.028</b>	<b>14.711</b>	<b>12.824</b>	
	<b>Cumulative per cent of Variance</b>	<b>18.628</b>	<b>33.656</b>	<b>48.366</b>	<b>61.191</b>	

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

Table 3 exhibits the rotated factor loading for the fifteen variables for the 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.

### PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS

By and large, the patients somehow face problems in availing medical service from the private hospitals. Table 4 depicts the problems that are being faced by the patients of private hospitals along with their men scores and ranks.

**Table 4**  
**PROBLEMS IN AVAILING HEALTH SERVICES FROM PRIVATE HOSPITALS**

Sl. No.	Problems	Garrett Mean Score	Rank
1	High fees	75.88	<b>I</b>
2	Long waiting time	71.80	<b>II</b>
3	Poor hygienic conditions	24.22	<b>VIII</b>
4	No operation theatre	37.18	<b>V</b>
5	Poor relationship with patients	34.28	<b>VI</b>
6	Poor pre consultancy services	28.68	<b>VII</b>
7	Lack of new technology and equipment's and lab facilities	52.64	<b>IV</b>

8	Discrimination in fixing fees	11.98	<b>X</b>
9	Discrimination in providing quality services	19.68	<b>IX</b>
10	Lack of canteen facilities and ambulance services	54.68	<b>III</b>

Source: Primary Data

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.

### SUGGESTIONS

- The problem of 'High Fees' can be overcome by charging the affordable fees taking into consideration the socio economic position of the respondents.
- 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 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.
- The hospital must provide quality treatment at affordable price in order to enhance medical tourism.
- As prevention is better than cure and since many diseases and disorders can be prevented by the common public through proper sanitation facilities, adequate nutrition, regular exercise, periodic vaccinations, ethical behavior and positive thinking, it is suggested that the common public has to follow the above mentioned measures.

### CONCLUSION

The researcher feels that the study has served the purposes for which it was carried out. As the study is a novel one, humble and first attempt has been made by the researcher to explore the avenues as to fulfill the objectives of the study. Sincere efforts have been made by the researcher to study the patient centric views on private hospitals in the study area. The researcher 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 and also by the providers of the health services, 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.

## REFERENCES

- Arunkmar, Meenkshi, N., 2006. Marketing management Comprehensive Text, Best practices, Corporate Insights, vikas publishing House Pvt. Ltd. First Edition, New Delhi.
- Balaji, B., 2006. Service Marketing and Management, Second Revised Edition, S. Chand Company Ltd. New Delhi.
- Bibllap S. Bose, 2007. Marketing management, First Edition, Himalaya Publishing House, Mubai.
- Chunawalla, S.A., 2005. Commentary on Consumer Behaviour, Himalaya Publishing House, Second Revised Edition, Delhi.
- George Joseph, John Desrochers, Mariammakalathil, 1978. Healthcare in India, centre for Social Action, Bangalore. GovindAptc, 2004. Service Marketing, Oxford University Press, NewD
- Gabriel A Okwandau ,”Marketing Strategies of Hospital Service Organization in Nigeria:” 2002vol.13pp.2-3.
- RajanMadhok. Bhopal , “Quality of hospital service: A study of comparing ‘Asian’ and ‘Non-Asian”1992, vol.4 pp.18-22.
- McCoy D, Bennett S, Witter S, Pond B, Baker B, Gow J, et al. Salaries and incomes of health workers in sub-Saharan Africa. Lancet. 2008;371:675-81
- Henderson LN, Tulloch J. Incentives for retaining and motivating health workers in Pacific and Asian countries. Hum Resour Health. 2008;6:18.
- Udin S. The no-nonsense guide to world health. Oxford; New Internationalist; 2007.
- Willis-Shattuck M, Bidwell P, Thomas S, Wyness L, Blaauw D, Ditlopo P. Motivation and retention of health workers in developing countries: a systematic review. BMC Health Services Research. 2008;8:247.

## Theses

- Babitha, R. 2007. A Descriptive study of Health Care Industry in Kanyakumari District, Research centre in commerce, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli.
- Dr.C. Eugene Franco, Marketing professional service with particular reference to hospitals in Kanyakumari District, 2008.

## Journals, Magazines and Newspapers

- AnglaM.Rushton and David J.Carson, 2011. The marketing of services: Managing of intangibles, European Journal of Marketing.
- Babu T.D Jayabal , G. “Health care India” Oppurnities and Challenges”, Business and Economy, Facts of you, April 2004, Vol.24, No.7.

## Websites

- [www.insead.edu](http://www.insead.edu)
- [www.mohfw.nic.in](http://www.mohfw.nic.in)
- [www.tn.gov.in](http://www.tn.gov.in)
- [www.expresshealthcaremanagement.com](http://www.expresshealthcaremanagement.com)
- [www.tnhealth.org](http://www.tnhealth.org)