



## Customer Perception Towards Private Hospital in Kalaburagi District, Karnataka

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### ABSTRACT

The present health care system in India is characterized by mixed ownership patterns and diverse kinds of providers who practice different system of medicine. Most popular category is the private health sector. Healthcare after all is not merely about process or even outcomes, but ultimately about satisfaction human needs. In the era of Privatization Private Hospital have to play an important role in the health care services. In a competitive situation, some of the private hospital, which are not managed properly, are likely to vanish. In the light of this background, this paper is an endeavor towards knowing the more about private hospital. This paper basically deals with the customer perception towards the private hospital in Kalaburagi and it helps to find out the suitable competitive strategies for promotion of private hospital, So that private hospital can survive in the competitive situations of the market.

**KEYWORDS** : Healthcare, Human Needs, Private hospital, Customer Perception, Competitive strategies.

### Introduction

Customer perception is an important component of relationship with the customers. Perceptions vary from person to person. Different people perceive different things about the same situation. But more than that, we assign different meanings to what we perceive. And the meanings might change for a certain person. One might change one's perspective or simply make things mean something else. The concept of customer perception does not only relate to individual customers in consumer markets. It is also valid in business to business situations.

For example, a competitor benchmarking survey of a large industrial supplier revealed that the market leader, although recognized for excellent quality and service and known to be highly innovative, was perceived as arrogant in some regions. If we take into consideration that there are about four other large players with a similar level of quality and innovative ideas, this perceived arrogance could develop into a serious problem. Customers here are well aware the main characteristics of all the offerings available at the market are largely comparable. So they might use the development of a new product generation of their own to switch to a supplier that can serve them not better or worse, but with more responsiveness and understanding.

Development of any country is depending upon the efficient manpower of the country, and the generation of efficient manpower is depending on the health of the manpower. So healthcare system is the backbone for the development of any country. Despite 64 years of independence we have been able to provide health care to all citizens. Government hospitals not fulfill the actual requirement of the patients in any aspects, because there are inadequate funds, under staffing, lack of medicines, overcrowding of patients. So as compared to government hospitals private hospital offer more facilities and these private spread all over the India and becomes major part of the Indian Health Care System.

#### • Finding about patient perception towards Kalaburagi Private Hospitals

All patients expect that doctor should first examine them thoroughly and then explain them in detail in regard to their disease, cost of treatment, duration and success rate of treatment etc. The doctor should disclose every detail without hiding any fact. They wanted to know all these detail before start of treatment enabling them to take appropriate decision.

All patients were highly sensitive that their service provider should not insist on buying medicines from a particular outlet. Because they anticipate that mostly doctors and chemists relations

underplay behind such insistence and reap undue benefits from it.

Service users expect that service provider's place should not lack hygiene and it must be neat and clean. Most of them were found well aware of advantages of hygiene and they reacted sharply in favour of high class hygiene in private nursing homes. All patients desire that X-Ray, scanning and path tests should be done at modern and latest Equipment. They also expect that skilled and trained staff should perform it. They wanted that lab Diagnosis pat should be performed in a much professional way.

No service user wants to wait for doctor; even they get irritated when they see long queues for doctor, X-Ray, Scanning and path tests. But on the other side they agreed that they do not expect quality services are available promptly.

Majority of services users agreed that they are price sensitive but many of them are ready to pay appropriate price for quality healthcare. Few even claimed that they are not bothered for price of service.

A large number of service users are well aware of Consumer Protection Act (CPA). But they told they generally wanted to avoid it unless some big problem is there.

Service users in backward areas visit to quacks for day to day treatment. These quacks claim big and quick results by using banned drugs/steroids etc. Service users believe in them due to lack of awareness. They want similar type of results from Allopathic service providers, which is impossible due to proper, follow up of treatment procedure. So all service providers said that it was not possible to complete with quacks until and unless some authority check is there and patients are fully aware.

Majority of service providers feel those now days, service users/patients are less price sensitive if they are properly convinced. They are ready to high prices for quality services. Still some of the patients are highly sensitive towards service charges.

#### • Outcome of the study

• Now a day's Doctors do not hesitate to offer cuts, commissions and appoint public relations agencies to look after their image. Pathology tests and scans are the areas wherein practitioner's references are directly related with maximum commissions. It is the patients who becomes a guinea pig in all these exercises and also shell out the additional amount being passed around by all

players in this merry go round. Such unethical malpractices have to be controlled and be phased out. A fresh new image has to be created in the minds of patients to promote the private healthcare sector.

For patients who cannot afford the staggering expenses of treatment, the new management mantra is to reduce the average length of stay of patients. Therefore a strategy may be used to reduce average length of stay is by conducting the required investigations before the patient is admitted. Patient can be advised to come for follow-ups, and even some times home delivery nursing can be provided.

- Indian Private Healthcare system must operate more transparently and reassure the public that they are getting the best value for their money. It is many times reported that experimental treatments are often touted as the latest technology from abroad and local private practitioners sometimes use new technologies for unproven indications.
- India is a home to reliable alternate medicine system. But our Government and society has been giving thrust to Allopathic medicine system only. Developed countries are experimenting and successively adopting integrated healthcare system, which is yet in infancy stage in the country of their origin. If large number of private medical doctors takes part in integrated healthcare system. It is a real incentive for them as well as for society.
- The private healthcare system should not lose sight of their primary reason for their existence; they must remain the focus of healthcare services. Private Nursing Homes must have the compassionate and dedicated professionals. More importantly there should be nurses and paramedical staff that should be able to provide tender loving care unlike many developed countries. It has been proven that a well treated patient in both ways medically and behaviorally, recovers much faster.
- New efficient and effective programs should be chalked out for specific disease eradication, elimination and reduction by involving Indian Private Healthcare. For this purpose government can use its technical resources to focus on specific disease targets that are feasible.
- Considering the present position and environment the healthcare sector should be given 'Industry Status'. All the general principles of management like planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, controlling and budgeting etc. can be successfully applied to healthcare sector.

All these above suggestions are the suitable competitive strategies for promotion of private nursing homes.

### Conclusion

From the study it has emerged that given the large size of private healthcare sector the expectations of service users are big. Though most of the service users expect a proper reception at the time of admission to private nursing home with the help of a proper receptionist and guide regarding formalities and procedures. This has emerged out as their biggest fear as the educated service users has also supported this expectation. They wanted that the doctors should not indulge into malpractice by misguiding the service users. Service providers should stress upon hygiene and modernization of nursing homes, scanning facilities, pathological test laboratories etc. Service users do not like high prices of services, long queues, long waiting period but for the sake of quality and professional's treatment they are ready to bear.

- Service users do not want to be indulged into legal proceedings against service providers reported they had to waste a lot of time and money on compliance of formalities laid out by state government departments regulating the private healthcare

sector. They are unable to use their potential to the fullest because of fear of Consumer Protection Act.

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