Human Resource Challenges for Health Sector in India

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ABSTRACT

India is now recognized as health destination attracting medical tourism due to the cost advantage derived from available large pool of well-trained medical professionals at low cost. Many private hospitals have excellent reputation for creating a world-class integrated healthcare delivery system that is known to provide finest medical skills and compassionate patient care.

The topic patient satisfaction level in Private and Public hospitals has become increasingly acknowledged over the last few years, and many organizations desire to work for the betterment in health services. The scope of the study is to know & compare the operational efficiency of human resource management towards the health practices in various public & private sector hospitals, to identify the issues and highlight recommendations which can be implemented with or without any major changes in the current system.

There are various studies that cover the importance of HRM and the indispensable role and effectiveness of human resource management in general and the impact of HRM on the quality of healthcare services. The efficient and effective management of human resources is a vital component of a high performing health system and can highly influence the success or failure of health sector reform and different organizations or institutions. This study aims to study the most prominent factors affecting the health care services in public and private hospitals and how human resource management can bridge the gap between the two.

Keywords

Patients Satisfaction, Health Care Services, Human Resource Management

INTRODUCTION

In a developing country like India, healthcare is a serious concern and a point to consider for working professionals, researchers and government officials. A variety of steps have been taken by government of India and management of hospitals to improve the quality of patient care in hospitals. India is now recognized as health destination attracting medical tourism due to the cost advantage derived from available large pool of well-trained medical professionals at low cost. Many private hospitals have excellent reputation for creating a world-class integrated healthcare delivery system that is known to provide finest medical skills and compassionate patient care.

Like domestic patients, many medical tourists too have uncertainties whether to be admitted to a private hospital or a public hospital. While, the services provided by public and private hospitals have few things in common, where as some key differences set them apart.

Public hospitals are much larger in number than private hospitals, due to which, private hospitals can offer more one to one care and treatment to patients. Public hospitals are funded by the government and so are bound to attend the patients. Conversely, private hospitals can refuse treatment; however, both by law should treat an emergency case.

It is a general perception that public sector hospitals can not provide good health care facilities and are always struggling to meet the expectations and requirements of patients both in terms of quality and quantity. So, the primary aim of this study is on measurement of health care workforce in public & private hospitals and the challenges faced by the industry on whole, with special reference to patient’s satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

- To study the current health care system in India
- To find the existence of human resource management in the current health care industry
- The scope of human resource management in Hospital Administration
HEALTH SECTOR IN INDIA

The constitution of India makes health in India the responsibility of the governments, rather than the central federal government, it makes every state responsible for "raising the level of nutrition and the living standard of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties". The National Health Policy was endorsed by the Parliament of India in 1983 and updated in 2002. The National Health Policy is being worked upon further in 2017 and a draft for public consultation has been released. There are great inequalities in health between states. According to World Bank, the total expenditure on healthcare as a proportion of GDP in 2014 was 4.7%, which is lower than even many developing countries.

Health care has become one of India’s largest sectors—both in terms of revenue and employment. Healthcare comprises hospitals, medical devices, telemedicine, medical tourism, health insurance and medical equipments. The Indian health care sector is growing at a fast rate due to strengthening coverage, services and increasing expenditure by public as well as private players.

Indian healthcare delivery system is broadly divided into two major components—public and private. Hospitals services market is more than 70% of the healthcare industry. The health care market is dominated by private sector accounting for nearly 70% of the healthcare market, while public expenditure accounts for 30%. India also has shortfall of Infrastructure and manpower. People from high income level choose private hospitals as they can afford medical expenses. While people who belongs to lower income group prefer public sector hospitals, as treatment is given free of cost or on nominal charges.

HR CHALLENGES IN HEALTH SECTOR

According to IBEF, Indian Brand Equity Foundation, The overall Indian healthcare market today is US$100 Billion and is expected to grow to US$280 Billion by 2020, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.9 percent. Healthcare delivery system which includes hospitals, nursing homes, diagnostics centers and pharmaceuticals, constitutes 65 percent of the entire market.

1. Skilled workforce- the number of health Professionals available in a country is a key indicator of that country’s strength to provide delivery and interventions. Health workforce includes all those people engaged in actions whose primary motive is to enhance health. Competent, motivated and committed health workforce forms the base of an effective and efficient health system. the most prominent of the health system inputs, the performance and the benefits the system can render depend largely upon the knowledge, skills and motivation of those individuals responsible for delivering health services.
Around 70% Indians live in remote villages, often outside the catchment area of government hospitals. A country of more than 6,00,000 villages has a little more than 23,109 single-physician clinics serving it with not more than 4.6 beds each.

Shortage of qualified medical professionals is one of the key challenges facing the Indian healthcare industry. Deloitte’s Healthcare Outlook Report 2015 says India’s ratio of 0.7 doctors and 1.5 nurses per 1000 people is lower than the WHO average of 2.5 doctors and nurses per 1000 people. The report estimates that the industry needs an additional 1.54 million doctors and 2.4 million nurses to match the global average. There are 387 medical colleges in the country- 181 in government and 206 in private sector. Health ministry claims that there are about 600000 to 6,50000 doctors available but India would need about 400000 more by 2020 to maintain the required ratio of one doctor per 1000 people. (Kumar 2013)

World Health Report 2006 identified India among the 57 countries facing severe shortage of health workforce. Since then, India, by the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and other innovative programmes, has made significant growth by improving the availability of doctors, nurses and midwives. However, the availability of skilled health workforce continues to be the biggest challenge in many rural and remote parts of the country. The challenges include insufficient numbers, and uneven distribution in rural and urban India and in public and private sector. The 12th Five Year Plan of India has identified lot many policy options to improve the health workforce situation to attain global health coverage, including strengthening of governance and regulatory mechanisms.

2. Workforce training is another important issue. Training of health care workers are needed to ensure that the workforce is aware of and ready to meet a particular country's present and future needs. A well trained and competent workforce is essential to any successful health care system.

3. The migration of health care workers is an issue, and India is not an exception in this case. Qualified and trained professionals are moving out of their place in search of better salary and growth opportunities. Since many health workers in developing countries are underpaid, less motivated and highly dissatisfied, the migration of health workers is an important human resources issue that must be carefully measured and monitored.

4. Infrastructure: India is now recognized as health destination attracting medical tourism due to the cost advantage derived from available large pool of well-trained medical professionals at low cost and this leads to further requirement of medical professionals to cater the demand. India requires 600000-700000 additional beds in the next five to six years, creating an investment opportunity of US$ 25-30 billion.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Singh and Badaya (2014):** This paper clearly expressed that nearly 86% of the total medical visit in India, are made by rural population with majority still travelling more than 100 km to get health care facilities of which 70-80% is born out of pocket landing them in poverty. Government succeeded in generating infrastructures in urban area but fail to do so in rural. Rural India is still struggling in the area of medical advancement.

**Sivakumaran (2013):** This article reports that inspire of all the technical advancement; the role of human resource management cannot be denied. It is an indispensable part of any organization.

**Khanchitpol Yousapronpaiboon (2013)**The poor service quality delivered to patients by public hospitals as compared to the private hospitals are due to five elements of service quality including: responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibles, and assurance, respectively.

**HavvaÇaha (2010)** found that the Patients preferred private hospitals due to their strong perception that private hospitals provide qualitative health service in Turkey. On the other hand, a large number of patients complain about services given by private hospitals. The complaints were mainly about the time duration that they had to wait for treatment and the consultation time given to them. As a result, this study concluded that satisfaction of the patients seem to be the most important factor for the private health care provider.

**Lee (2001)** explained that the effective implementation of health services requires adequate cooperation from health professionals. Such behavior instigates the concern towards patients, their relatives, peers and other health service providers. It facilitates team working and strengthens team functioning in organizations. The cooperative behavior is an outcome of professional and organizational commitment.

**Gilles Dussault (1999)** as per the study there is One factor which is more directly linked to the success of the reform process because of its prompt impact on the organization and on the provision of services: it is the correct utilization of the health workforce. The results of how the workforce is utilized are defined as its performance The importance of human resource management in healthcare lies in the fact that a well-managed human resource department is
vital for the delivery of efficient and quality healthcare services

**DISCUSSION**

There are various studies and researches that cover the topic of HRM and the role and effectiveness of human resource management in general and the impact of HRM on the quality of healthcare services. In addition to that many studies discussed the functions of HRM such as planning, recruitment, training, performance assessment, incentives and rewards for human resource.

The efficient and effective management of human resources is an essential part of a high performing health system and can decide the success or failure of health sector reform. In a way that employees counts as key component to the delivery of health services and any health program. Well structured management makes a positive difference in effectiveness, efficiency and longevity of health services and a positive difference in health sector reform. But the most critical problems the health care system has been facing is due to neglecting the place and the leveraged position of the HRM in recent years.

In Odisha, a man slung his wife’s body over his shoulder and lift it 10kms after being denied an ambulance on August 24, 2016.

In Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, a man’s sick son died after being denied admission to a Kanpur hospital on August 29, 2016.

Such cases come to limelight when they get social media and television attention, but many more cannot access India’s overburdened hospitals and deficient medical facilities, a crisis illustrated by the fact that India is lacking of nearly 500000 doctors, based on the World Health Organization (WHO) norm of 1:1,000 population, as per an India Spend analysis of government data.

Even after more than 740000 working doctors by the end of 2014, a claimed doctor-patient population ratio of 1:1,674, poor than Vietnam, Algeria and Pakistan -- the shortage of doctors was one of the health-management failures showed by this report of a parliamentary committee on health and family welfare, which exhibited its findings to both houses of Parliament on March 8, 2016.

A global survey in the six regions of the World Health Organization (Leadership Summit IHF-2003) reveals:

1) Public sector hospitals in developing countries like India lacks funds, understaffed, poorly managed in developing countries and relatively true even in developed country.

2) Human Resource Management in areas like skill development, competencies and accountability are far from satisfactory not only in developing nations but also in economically advanced countries.

Because of the ever-stronger emphasis on cost containment, changing consumer behavior, and tough competition, many of the successful hospitals of the next decade will prove themselves as “high-quality” health care providers. In order to survive, even those hospitals that do not want a high-quality position will find it compulsory to define, monitor, and improve the quality of the services they provide.

Technological advancement alone, however, will not lead to increased revenues and facility utilization but hospital need to provide patient’s satisfaction to compete in the industry. Communication between service providers and patients needs to get better. Along with that, the availability and appearance of the physical facilities, modern and advanced equipments of the hospitals leads to higher customer satisfaction. Cost is perceived as the least important factor influencing patients’ satisfaction. That reflects that their first priority is excellent service from private hospitals for which they are ready to pay fair price.

Through NRHM, India has recruited additional 160000 health workforce (doctors, nurses and midwives) and nearly 900000 community health workers called Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) to facilitate interface between the communities and health system. Currently, India gets 51800 doctors and 24000 specialists annually from 387 medical colleges. It currently has a capacity of giving 279000 nurses/midwives annually from 7401 institutions.

**CONCLUSION**

Management of hospitals should take innovative measures for the betterment of the overall service quality of patient care and hospital administration. Regular feedback from patients must be taken and rules should be made as per the expectations and requirements of patients. It is absolutely necessary to improve the service quality of both public and private sector hospitals. If hospital staff is trained and can understand the wants of the patients then it will be possible for them to satisfy vast number of patients. Other than this, hospitals should also counsel their staff as per patients’ requirements. A team or management should be formed and developed in the hospitals that keep a look on each and every activity of the staff and in case of any negligence or carelessness towards patients’ care, report it to higher authorities. In this way, staff can feel the sense of responsibility and fulfill their duties properly. Quality management practices should be properly introduced in public sector hospitals.
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