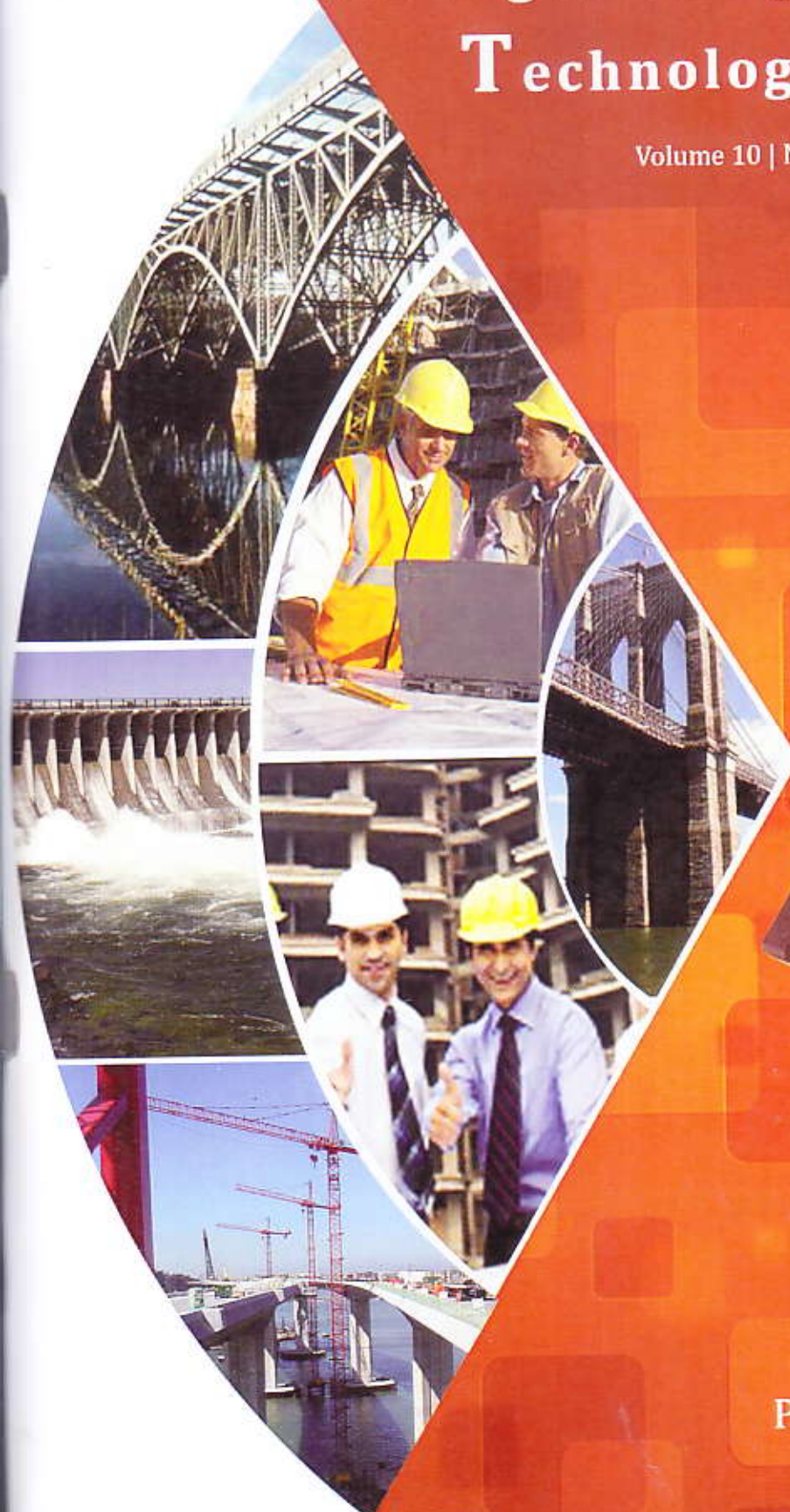




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# An Overview of Service Quality in Health Care Sector of Tamil Nadu

S. Tamil Selvi and Dr.M. Palanivel Rajan

*Abstract—* The service quality is a very big issue and challenges in the Government sector hospitals in Tamil Nadu But the majority of private multi specialty corporate sector hospitals are function as ISO certified institution in this state. The percentage of health care services of these corporate hospitals to the overall health care services in this state is below 10 percent. In addition to it, majority of private hospitals are not also as a quality certified institution. So services quality in the health care sector is in the initial stage. In addition to it, the stages of implementation of services quality process is vary from hospital to hospital in Tamil Nadu.

*Keywords—* Quality in Health Care, Service Quality, Inherent Characteristics, Barriers of Health Care.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The health care Service is an act or performance that doctors and employees of health care sector such as nurses, lab technicians, various kinds of scanning and other personals can offer to patient and other general public that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product for aiming to solve the health relate issues and improving the healthiness of same. The services elements constitute a total serves offer. The total offer is a bundle of tangibles such as drugs and medicines and intangibles such as doctors consultation, nursing services and etc which constitute service product. These kinds of medical services have been branded as public brand offered by government health care department, Corporate brands offered from Corporate and private hospital and NGO brand offered from NGOs and charitable trust.

## II. HEALTH CARE SERVICES OF CORPORATE HOSPITALS IN TAMIL NADU

The characteristics and quality perspectives of health care services are becoming more and more complex. The inhabitant system of health care services of our Tamil Nadu is Sidha Medicine which is prepared from available herbals from the various places of this state. But the English system of Medicine (Allopathic Medicine) is followed in majority of health care services. The state government Multispecialty hospitals, District head hospitals, Government hospitals, Dispensaries, Primary health centre, Sub primary health centre and mobile Medical units have been established and restructured by the state government throughout the state as per the need and density of population. These services are provided at cost free basis. On the other hand, the corporate culture is relevant to serve the medical assistance at multi specialty dimension in a single roof. The Appollo Hospital limited is one of the pioneer and founder to upgrade the medical services in to corporate level in Tamil Nadu. The multi specialty hospital are established either as companies with accumulating the funds from public or as a trust/ society. The corporate health care services consists of Consultation, Diagnosing, Testing through the scan and laboratory, surgery, transplantation of human organs, blood bank, Nutritional support, hospitality, transport and other services.

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The health care services at corporate level spreads in major cities of Tamil Nadu. The well famous hospitals such as Appollo in Chennai, PSG, KG and GEM hospitals in Coimbatore, Meenakshi Mission and Aravind eye hospital in Madurai, Vinayaka Missions in Salem are established in Tamil Nadu for providing world class medical services. These organizations are having tie up with other national and international level hospitals for exchanging these services. These hospitals are also earning the foreign exchange by providing their services to foreigners. Both the private and NGO' hospitals are run as either registered or un registered basis. (Table -1)

Table 1: Distribution of Hospitals in Tamil Nadu

SI no	Nature of Hospital	No's of Hospitals
I	Government	
	1. Hospital	346
	2. Dispensaries	238
	3. Primary health centre	1747
	4. Sub Primary Health centre	3706
	5. Mobile medical units	416
II	Private sector Hospital(Registered)	11928
III	NGO Hospitals (Registered)	18
	Total	18399

(Source: Government of Tamil Nadu; Health care department policy note – 2017-18)

### III.SERVICES QUALITY

The service quality in health care sector can be defined as the extent to which the medical services and facilities fulfils the needs or expectations of the patients or conceptualized it as the overall impression of patients as regards the weakness or excellence of the medical service.

Table 2: Nature of Service Quality in Health care Sector

Sl. No	Nature of Service Quality in Health Care Sector	Description
I	Elements of Service Quality in Health Care Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Senior Management and Doctors Commitment</li> <li>❖ Improvement Orientation</li> <li>❖ Patients focus</li> <li>❖ Hospital and its department or specialization wise improvement</li> <li>❖ Commitment to Training and education for services quality to the front and back workers in hospital in all cadre</li> <li>❖ Emphasis on measurement and review</li> <li>❖ Collective and Team work</li> </ul>
II	Principles of Services Quality in Health care sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management promotes the approach of Services quality</li> <li>• Services quality method is for prevention of defects and problems and for detection of defects</li> <li>• The prime objective of services quality is total patients satisfaction</li> <li>• The cost of services quality must be measured</li> <li>• Standard for each services is given priority</li> <li>• Scope of services quality is committed</li> <li>• Theme of services quality is as continuous improvement.</li> <li>• The services rendering ability must be improved from time to time through training and development</li> <li>• Adequate communication, Team work and co-operation regarding services quality have be established</li> <li>• Reward for quality services must be provide</li> </ul>
III	Four Pillars of Services Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Patient satisfaction</li> <li>➤ Standardized health care system and process as ISO 9000</li> <li>➤ Committed and well trained services personnel</li> <li>➤ Continuous services improvement</li> </ul>

(Source: Compiled from the book Total Quality Management (2009) "Margham Publication, Chennai)

#### IV. DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE SECTOR

Table 3: Steps to Health Service Quality Improvement Process

Sl no	Steps	Description
1	Hospital Administrative Commitment	The Tamil nadu state government and private Management's commitment towards the health care services quality should be clear to all health department and hospitals and patients
2	Setting up of Quality improvement Team both hospital basis and Geographical areas basis	Creation of quality improvement teams with senior personals and Experts in all area of hospital administration and other government authorities for Government hospital and Creation of Quality team with senior doctors and Quality experts for private sector hospital
3	Measuring the health care services activities	Continuous measurement of health care services processes in all areas from the reception and registration of patients to discharges of them to determine current and potential issues related to quality. The various techniques such as SERVQUAL scale and other techniques are adopted for this purpose. In this context empathy, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, tangibility are measured
4	Calculation of cost of Quality	Ascertainment of cost of poor quality and better quality at each services units or each services
5	Quality awareness programmes	Quality awareness has to be conducted for Doctors, nurses and other technicians working in hospitals. It is also conducted among the patients and public.
6	Correction of defective Health care services	Corrective actions should be taken to address quality issues.
7	Creation of Zero defective health care committee	Establishment of a Zero Defect committee to monitor the progress of quality improvement in the health care services provide both at Government and private sector hospital
8	Training programme for Service quality improvement	Health care services Quality improvement training to all the employees.
9	Zero defect health care services days	Organize "zero defects" days in the Hospital
10	Reward for better service Quality	Each services personnel should be encouraged to set their own quality improvement goals.
11	Elimination of Obstacles and Barriers in services quality	Obstacles to quality should be discussed with each cadre of services personnel of health care process in an open communication.
12	Recognition of Effort and effectiveness of services personnel	Participants' efforts should be recognized.
13	Creation of Quality councils	Health care Quality councils should be created.
14	Services Quality improvement	Health care services' Quality improvement is a continuous process. It keeps going.

(Source: Compiled on the base of Crosby quality improvement Principles)

The service quality is a very big issue and challenges in the Government sector hospitals in Tamil Nadu But the majority of private multi specialty corporate sector hospitals are function as ISO certified institution in this state. The percentage of health care services of these corporate hospitals to the overall health care services in this state is below 10 percent.. In addition to it, majority of private hospitals are not also as a quality certified institution. So services quality in the health care sector is in the initial stage. In addition to it, the stages of implementation of services quality process is vary from hospital to hospital in Tamil Nadu.



## V. INHERENT CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTH SERVICES QUALITY

The services quality consist of Doctors consultancy, nursing services, distribution of medicines, nutrition care and Etc (Table: 4) All the element should be treated as equal importance on order to achieve the service quality goal.

Table 4: Inherent Characteristics of Health services quality

Sl.No	Element of Services Quality
1	Doctors Consultancy
2	Nursing Services
3	Scan and its services
4	Laboratory and its services
5	Ambulance services
6	Reception, Registration and Appointment
7	Nature of Pharmacy
8	Operation theatres' services
9	Surgery
10	Inpatients Rooms Facilities
11	Out patients Queue and waiting time
12	Pre surgery services
13	Post surgery patient care
14	Nutrition Care
15	Diagnosing of patient issues
16	Medical Social Services
17	Implementation of medical Insurances
18	I.C.U. services
19	Cost of Health care services
20	Duration of Health care services
21	Quality of medicines
22	Physical, occupational, and/or speech therapy.

(Source: Compiled on the Secondary data of this study)

## VI. PROBLEMS AND BARRIERS OF HEALTH CARE SERVICE IN TAMIL NADU

The problems in providing better health care services in hospital services industries consist of Balancing the supply of health care services with demand, Lack of scheduling of services facilities, Existences of insufficient human resources such as doctors, nurses and other technical persons in peak time, Improper diagnosing the Patients, Wrong scan and lab reports, Lack of Fixation of Standard Work Level and prescribing Wrong medicines.

The barriers in implementing the service quality consist of lack of proper service quality planning, lack of management commitment, inability to change present hospital working culture and etc.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The health care service sector is considered as a very essential services sector to human community. In this context, the state government should take necessary actions to ensure the optimum quality services in right time to the lakhs and lakhs peoples of Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, the cost of services quality of private hospitals are affordable and to revise at optimum level.

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