

Critical Review of Trends, Drivers, Issues, and Challenges of Primary Healthcare Services in India

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Abstract

The Indian health care system is typical in nature and the Government has invested in building a strong public healthcare infrastructure. The pivotal role is played by the evolution of foremost non-public sector facilities created by the Government as healthcare emerges as the priority sector of the Government of India. However, with a population of virtually 1.35 Billion, with a majority living within the rural hinterlands, there is a scope to enhance the healthcare facilities to improve the health of individuals. It is noteworthy to mention that approximately about 70 per cent of the disbursement on health expenditure is borne by the individual, a steep value that pushes several families into debt. The recently proclaimed “Ayushman Bharat” scheme in India, that will cover a minimum of 40 per cent of the population, envisages a holistic approach. It seeks to deal with the inherent issues of accessibility and affordability and supply an all-around answer to healthcare needs for the masses. The bottom line of the scheme entails enhancing accessibility, and providing cost-effective insurance to the people at the bottom of pyramid. It leverages the strengths of the general public sector and private players to redefine the health care delivery system. An attempt is made in this research article to review in brief the current status of healthcare in India and components of healthcare sector. This article also provides brief discussion on the challenges and opportunities faced by India's Healthcare sector in delivering healthcare services.

Key Words: *Healthcare, Primary Healthcare Service, Healthcare Innovations, Healthcare Entrepreneurs*

Introduction:

Healthcare is a consideration of systematic arrangement pertaining to medical care of individuals or a community at large (<https://www.merriam-webster.com>). According to Philip Kotler, a service is an act of performance and its production may or may not be tied to a physical product (Kotler, Philip., Armstrong, Gary, 2016).

Primary health care means providing basic health

facilities to the general public at minimum cost. The primary health care concept which was given by the World Health Organization focusing more on community Engagements by identifying people's needs. The motto of the Primary Health Care Centres (PHCs) revolves around the central theme of cost-effective medical services to the rural masses. This can be achieved by the collaborative effort of the Government and the private sector (<https://cccclinic.com/low-income-clinics/importance-benefits-primary-health-care/>).

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The effective implementation of Primary Healthcare Service delivery, the innovative approach is required by an entrepreneur that calls for developing sustainable healthcare models by collaborating with Government action plans.

The affordability of Healthcare Services plays an important role but, at the same time considering the economic reality of Indian rural households it is a challenging task to offer cheaper drugs, cost effective infrastructure facilities and availability of generic medicines at the Bottom-of-Pyramid (BOP) markets. This necessitates the role of modern entrepreneur to initiate start-up ventures to fulfill the unmet healthcare needs of rural households by offering affordable healthcare services specifically to the vulnerable sections of the society. In order to motivate entrepreneurs, the Government needs to rethink their role to encourage the “Techno-Entrepreneurs” to start with Medium and Small Enterprises that creates innovative opportunities in healthcare sector.

The entrepreneurial ecosystems need to be cultivated on the foundation of economic model of growth for introducing break through ideas to ensure “health for all” in India. To ensure this there is a need to increase spending on research and development in Healthcare, providing monetary incentives to entrepreneurs, improving ease of doing Business, and encouraging patenting in healthcare sector.

A Brief Review Of Literature:

Cueto (2004) had opined that PHCs play a vital role in providing the healthy environment and inculcates healthy lifestyle attitude provided by the healthcare professionals.

Barbara (2011) had examined the contribution of PHC as advancement towards proper health care services beyond the customary and regular health

care system which is focus on implementing health care delivery strategies.

Bangdiwala, et al (2012) had stated that there must be proper framework and policies required for strengthen the public health sector. Public Health Education is also playing a vital role for improving medical facilities in India.

Bhuputra Panda, et al (2012) had examined the existing public health nutrition initiatives in the selected states of India and opined that the healthcare facilities in India need a major revamp.

Alma Pentescu, et al (2013) had stated the primary health care centers play a key role in providing cost effective treatment to the rural population. But, the problem is effective marketing strategy has to be used to position the primary health centers in comparison with private players.

Anitha and Navitha Thimmai (2013) identified the key dimensions of primary health centers such as doctor's availability, quality of treatment, and cleanliness. These services play a major role in determining the patients' satisfaction.

Muniraju (2013) had studied and concluded that the state of health care in India is at a tipping point. Ahmad, Siraj, and Maqbool, Adeel (2013) had opined the systems approach is required to bring about a change in the healthcare facilities in the rural India.

Doke, et al (2014) has given a meaningful insight into the role of Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) for leveraging the existing health care facilities.

White (2015) had studied that the PHCs and public health measures go hand in hand as they are interwoven.

Research Gap:

The researcher has reviewed the existing literature available in the area of healthcare which is an outcome of researcher's viewpoint and the purpose of research. Each research activity covers different dimensions and represents the status of healthcare relevant to chosen dimension of healthcare. The researcher has critically reviewed the literature to identify and related with current status of healthcare. Healthcare organization, service providers keep changing which is evolutionary and adaptive. Each change possesses opportunities and challenges for healthcare administrators. Through this critical review presented in this paper the researcher has highlighted and suggested how to move forward through changes and what are the areas that need attention of healthcare administrators and policy makers. Review of literature by the authors' focus on need for continued attention to enhancing the quality of healthcare services.

Though the existing body of knowledge offers suggestions for improvement in healthcare practices, the government health requires kind of insightful study that provides health officers with proper information which deals with the current threats, issues and challenges available at a given point of time that is addressed by the authors of this research study. The authors' have critically analyzed the available information and made an attempt to highlight the issues and challenges of Primary Health Centers (PHCs) which may be considered as a base for filling the current gaps related with implementation of healthcare services and improve delivery of healthcare services.

At a given purpose of your time the requirement arises to review the problems and challenges in attention sector because the gap between analysis and public health priorities may be a challenge for researchers and policymakers. This study assumes

importance as it specifically addresses the aspects of Delivery of Quality of services in healthcare services. This research paper aims to serve as a building block by ingraining the Marketing of Services concept for beneficiaries of healthcare services.

Objectives Of The Study:

In the following section, the researchers have outlined the objectives of the study:

- To understand the current Status of Healthcare Services in India, as well as to highlight the major Challenges and Opportunities faced by the India's Healthcare Sector in delivering Medical Services in India.
- To comprehend the key linkages between the Healthcare Services and Sustainable Development of the rural India.
- To suggest the potentiality of introducing Public Private Partnership models through entrepreneurs who can build innovative business model for healthcare service delivery especially for the rural communities.

Research Methodology:

This study is an outcome of exploratory research considering secondary data sources viz., journals, magazines, articles and media reports. In this research paper the review of literature was conducted using the available secondary data viz., news articles, Books and Websites relevant to the subject under study.

This study aims to identify and review the current state of healthcare services in India; Challenges and Opportunities of healthcare services and its delivery with a view to developing an understanding about the critical aspects that need to be addressed for developing a citizen-centric approach in healthcare delivery in India. An attempt has been made to raise the issues and

challenges of various aspects related to the Indian Healthcare Sector. The researcher made an attempt to make the link the potential of introducing public private partnership model through rural entrepreneurs.

Review Of Current Status Of Healthcare Services In India:

The Government endeavors to fortify coverage of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) by setting up healthcare infrastructure in the rural areas and the Budget Allocation of the Government is also promising. The healthcare sector in India is expected to grow at Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) OF 16.28 % by the end of the year 2022.

This sector is growing at an unprecedented rate and is declared as a priority sector of the Government of India. The private players are also making investment by joining hands with the Government projects and action plans aimed at improving the healthcare infrastructure of India.

The healthcare expenditure in India is growing and the factors responsible for the growth can be attributed to rising disposable income, ease of access, entry of private players, and growing concern of people towards health and hygiene. Contrary to this the fact is the rural communities in India still face health issues mainly due to lack of awareness, alcoholism, poor diet and poor hygiene and sanitation facilities in the rural areas. The fact is even qualified doctors do not wish to set up their medical practice in the rural areas. It is worth mentioning that many schemes and programs for alleviating the health of rural communities are institutionalized but the impact assessment of these schemes and projects which are in force remains a major concern.

Telemedicine is an emerging practice which can be

leveraged to bridge the rural urban divide and various health care players viz., Apollo, AIIMS and Narayana Hrudalaya have ventured into it. They are also foraying into Public Private Partnership (PPP) models to offer safe and cost effective health care services in rural areas (<https://www.ibef.org/download/Healthcare>).

Components Of Primary Health Care:

The authors' of the research paper have outlined the components of Primary Healthcare Services in brief as follows:

Public Education:

The task of educating the people for creating awareness regarding health and hygiene is a herculean task especially when it is in a rural setting. The participation of rural communities along with the Government machinery will play a formidable role.

Clean Water and Sanitation:

The availability of water and sanitation in rural areas will play a determining role in ensuring health and hygiene. It is needless to say that poor sanitation and lack of waste management will lead to spreading of diseases.

Maternal and kid Health Care:

The maternal care and the health of kids in rural areas is the most important element as several diseases if cured at an early stage can prevent kids as well as mothers from life threatening diseases. Several schemes and programs for improving the health of pregnant as well as expectant mothers are laid out by the Government.

Immunization:

Early immunization can lead to better health and prevention of diseases such as leprosy, polio and other ailments particularly in kids at infancy stage.

Drug Provision:

Availability of medicines to people in remote is a critical element. It decreases the probability for spreading of infectious diseases (<https://pocketsense.com/8-components-of-primary-health-care-12378089.html>).

Notable Trends In The Indian Healthcare Sector:

In this section, the authors' have given a brief discussion on the notable trends in the Indian Healthcare Sector:

There is a shift from communicable diseases to life style diseases and this has created a demand for specialised care. The lifestyle diseases are burgeoening in urban setting and the factors responsible are obesity, high blood presure and pollution. Further, the mobile based health care delivery system aims to impart education to females regarding the family planning in rural areas. Currently, there are over twenty mobile health service mechanisms for education concerning birth control and alternative ailments.

Technology will be the buzzword to create a paradigm shift in the way the health care services are produced and consumed in 'Modern Bharat'. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure will decrease the prices and ensure effectively management. It would be imperative to deploy management information system (MIS) that will lead to fewer deaths of patients and give comprehensive care as the time and distance will no longer serve as a barrier (<https://www.wipro.com>).

To standardize the standard of service delivery, management value and enhance patient engagement, health care suppliers are specializing in the technological facet of health care delivery. All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)

to convert all its payment group action cashless as a part of Digital India Drive (Report IBEF, 2017).

Luxury offering:

A new trend is rising as luxury offerings within the care sector. over essential necessities, care suppliers are creating offerings of luxurious services. For example: choose and drop services for the patient by personal helicopters and splendid arrangements for guests to a patient within the hospital (Report IBEF, 2017).

Entrepreneurship And Innovation In The Healthcare Service Delivery: The Need Of The Hour:

Based on the review of literature conducted in the area of healthcare service delivery it is revealed that there is a dire need to implement the innovative yet cost effective ways and means for the improvement in the healthcare service delivery systems particularly in the rural areas. This can be implemented by developing Public Private Partnership [PPP] models by identifying the rural entrepreneurs who can lead the India's growth story by developing sustainable and scalable business models at the grass root level to bring a paradigm shift in the healthcare service delivery.

This demands the use of Information Technology [IT] enabled services viz., telemedicine, advanced diagnostics, leveraging social media to improve patient experience, bio-sensors and trackers, convenient care centers and tele-health to mitigate the bottlenecks and hurdles in implementation and delivery of healthcare services.

This will support the efforts aimed at enhancing the awareness, availability, accessibility, and affordability of healthcare service delivery in primary healthcare centers. The rural entrepreneurs' particularly rural youth need an

impetus by the Government to develop start-ups under the Public Private Partnership [PPP] models to develop the quality of healthcare facilities for the rural communities.

Health Care Sector Of India- Challenges And Opportunities:

The India's healthcare sector is a promising sector serving huge populace and by creating employment opportunities in the nation it plays a catalytic role in growth and development of the economy. Health care system consists of framework comprises of hospitals, emergency clinics, therapeutic gadgets and frameworks, clinical preliminaries, restorative examination, telemedicine, therapeutic business undertaking, protection, and medicinal instrumentation. The healthcare care framework in this country is one in all the quickest growing industries with expanding inclusion of sicknesses and coverage of diseases, services and increasing expenditure by the general public and offer benefits and expanding use by the overall population (<https://www.firstpost.com>).

Major problems faced by the India's health sector are discussed briefly as follows:

Expenditure on Insurance:

The health care expenditure for each individual in India is lower compared with expenditure incurred in the other countries of the world due to contribution by the Government of India against insurance is roughly figured out as 32 percent which is low when compared with expenditure in the United Kingdom.

Rural-urban disparity:

The infrastructure of health care in rural India consists of three layers which cover the rural healthcare sub- centres, rooms with basic facilities for treatment and Community Health Centres (CHCs). Though there are catalysts available in India to improve standard of care, the Primary Healthcare centres in India needs services of more than 3000 doctors exhibits the shortage over more than 200 percent (ibid).

Allocation of Budget for Healthcare:

The Health and Family Welfare Ministry of India's allocated Budget is shown in the table number 01.

Table No. 01: Budget Allocation made by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Time Period	Budget Allocation by Ministry from Government of India (In Rs crore)	Total Allocation of Budget Central Government (In Rs crore)	The total Central Budget Share (In percent)
2014-15	33121.42	1794891.96	1.8
2015-16	30626.39	1777477.04	1.7
2016-17	37671.3	1978060.45	1.9
2017-18*	51550.85	2146734.78	2.4
2018-19**	52800	2442213.3	2.1

Source: Union Budgets; Revised estimates, Budget estimate 2018-19

Market Size Of Indian Health Industry:

The health business in India stood at US\$ 61.79 Billion within the year 2017 and is predicted to

achieve US\$ 132.84 Billion by the year 2023. It's hyperbolic by four folds in India from US\$ 133.44 Billion by 2022. India is predicted to own 22 % to 25 % of the expansion in tourism for medical

purpose and results into multiplying business size by this year i.e. US\$ 3 Billion to US\$ 6 Billion by the tip of the year 2018.

Rationale Of The Proposed Research Study:

According to one estimate India would reach at the level of first three ranks by the year 2020 in terms of the growth of healthcare market. Indian health care sector is fast growing industry and is predicted to reach Compound Annual Growth Rate of 26.31 % from the year 2016–2020 to achieve USD 280 Billion by the year 2020. There is a high probability and scope for reaching new benchmarks for penetration of health care services in India that also presents a chance for the rise of large number of health care business. The reasons for growing future demand for health care in India include increase in financial gains, the growing awareness about healthcare amongst the masses, and the continuous rising demand for preventive health care. The lower and affordable price of health care and medical services leads to exceedingly rise of commercial enterprise for medical purpose, and fetching patients from across the country.

Considering the Asian economy, India has achieved success in reaching a position to establish itself and become a 'Hub of Healthcare market'. The doctor-to-patient magnitude relation in India, as per the Medical Council of India, stands at 1:1674. There is a sturdy demand mirrored within the undeniable fact that Health care revenue in India is about to achieve USD 280 Billion by the year 2020; expenditure is probably going to expand at a CAGR of 17% over the years 2011–2020.

Thus, this research study made an attempt to highlight the importance of the Primary Health Care Centres (PHCs) which shall continue to play a vital role in the rural areas and their service delivery mechanism needs to be taken into account. Although, the government is spending huge

amount in the improvement of the healthcare facilities in India, the impact assessment of the various schemes and projects needs to be re-examined. In this research paper the authors aim to review the key issues and challenges faced in the operationalization of the delivery of primary healthcare services.

Road Ahead For Healthcare Services In India:

The Indian Government aimed at extending support for healthcare through extending expenditure on health to 2.5 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the year 2025. The participation of the non-public sector is incredibly important for the health care sector. The Government ought to come back up with investor-friendly policies within the health sector to promote flow of investments. In terms of rules and regulations, the Government officers ought to build solid action plans to develop the health care infrastructure. The Health care law needs to be amended and institutionalized make a homogeneous, consistent approach to compliance within the current changing scenario.

Scope Of Future Research Study:

This research study is an outcome of review of research studies conducted in the domain of healthcare service delivery. There is further scope of conducting empirical research taking into account different geographic and demographic variables across different locations which might add value from different perspectives to the existing body of knowledge relevant to the healthcare service delivery system.

This research paper may serve as a base for practitioners, policy makers and government for not only studying the existing scenario but also to leverage the state of affairs of the primary healthcare service delivery.

Limitations of The Research Study:

This research paper is based on secondary data and the issues and challenges highlighted are the outcome of only selected literature reviewed by the researchers. There may be probability of not taking into consideration the other research study in the field of primary healthcare service delivery.

The policy reforms and plan of action of government may be in the process of implementation but it might not be incorporated in this research.

Conclusion:

India has perpetually had a robust primary service system. Upgrading of primary health centres into best centres for health facilities, as a part of Ayushman Bharat, can cause higher health outcomes in terms of wellness and curing of diseases. India is set to play an even more integral role with the government integrating Ayurvedic, Naturopathy, and Yoga and, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) with the steps like recording the data of vaidyas (Ayurveda practitioners) and certifying yoga institutes can lend them a lot of quality. But there are several samples of facility management contracts from primary health centres to specialty hospitals; and outsourcing of clinical and non-clinical services. Strategic management through demand-side funding instruments (vouchers), and insurance schemes e.g. social insurance schemes in states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, and also the national level insurance schemes are a number of the examples wherever non-public sector engagement is inevitable (<http://www.freepressjournal.in> and <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com>).

Thus, the strategic role of Government is of prime importance in the delivery of primary health care services especially to the people of the bottom of pyramid residing in rural communities. The

innovation and collaboration will play a key role in engaging the stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of health care services to the masses in the rural India. This can lead in developing an Indian Model of Healthcare Services that will ensure inclusive growth and development.

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