

## **A Review of Patient Satisfaction Questionnaires in India: Insights and Limitations**

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**Abstract-** As the population expands and Healthcare demands escalate, Hospitals are experiencing heightened pressure. Despite improvements in financial aspects, there is an increasing demand to address the needs of both hospital and hospitality, especially in private Institutions. Numerous hospital gathers patient Feedback using Questionnaires, some adhering to worldwide patterns, while other employ proprietary formats. Nonetheless, a standardised feedback questionnaire is absent. This study examines the literature on Patient satisfaction questionnaires in India, providing insights into healthcare and hospitality dimensions while flagging potential deficiencies in present procedures.

**Keyword-** Healthcare, Hospitals, Hospitality, Feedback, Questionnaire, Patient satisfaction

### **Introduction-**

India's population as of March 1st, 2011, is 1.21 billion<sup>1</sup>. As the population increases so does the health needs. Individuals with varying financial position approach the fulfillment of their health needs differently. Individuals with greater financial resources desire superior services.

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The procurement of healthcare services imposes a strain on both healthcare practitioners and hospital administrators. The strain is experienced by private hospitals, as people recognize that government hospitals provide services at no cost.

On the other hand, government policies like “The National Health Policy 2017”<sup>2</sup> aims to achieve the highest possible level of health and well-being, to be fulfilled by like Ayushman Bharat yojana and others. Under such schemes, Healthcare establishments have to attend to patients on subsidized rates and face higher pressure to deliver better and more timely services, while also keeping lower costs.

Hospital personnel comprise Physicians (including Surgeons and Non-clinical doctors), Nursing staff, support staff, Physiotherapists, Technicians, Dietitians, and hospital administrators, with their support staff. Hospital care providers are trained and appointed following the acquisition of sufficient information and certifications. The specific technological expertise possessed by service providers is not accessible or recognized by patients attending hospitals. This deficiency of technical understanding in decision-making induces ambiguity in individual brains.

Healthcare providers give prime importance to the patient, as they are the end beneficiaries<sup>3</sup>. Former ensure quality care to the later as often guided by three key principles Patient empowerment, patient participation, and patient-centeredness.<sup>4</sup>

Patients as customers think differently on attending the hospital. Each visit gives them an experience for service utilization. The patient may get satisfied or dissatisfied with the experience.

Patient satisfaction depends upon two things, one is the health condition with its treatment. And the other is the overall facilities available at the hospital. To attain this Patient/customer satisfaction, narrowing the difference between expectations and quality of experience becomes a requisite. To fulfill this, healthcare providers try to maintain a standard quality of care for a better experience, but patient expectations may vary.<sup>5</sup>

In service industries, providing standard quality care has an impact on consumer satisfaction and in turn their purchase intention or hospital attendance. So, it becomes obvious and imperative to provide standard quality care. <sup>6</sup>

When a patient needs healthcare they seek a hospital, initiating their search through referrals, prior experiences, or online enquires. Patient satisfaction Questionnaires play an informative role for management and on publically displaying it provides a feedback for other patients.

Further study is planned with a review to observe studies on patient satisfaction questionnaire, and their research gaps.

## **Review of Literature-**

### **Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction**

Healthcare service quality has a significant positive impact on patient satisfaction.<sup>7,8,9</sup> Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction <sup>10</sup>. As patients are the end customers of the hospital service industry, their satisfaction is of utmost importance<sup>4</sup>. It is based on their level of satisfaction that hospitals are graded by patients or customers which can help other customers in choosing which hospital to attend.

### **Previous studies done on Patient Questionnaire in India-**

Studies from India, searched on Scopus, Pubmed, Scholar. The keyword used are patient satisfaction survey, satisfaction survey, Indian studies.

1. Sriram et al (1991) <sup>11</sup> aimed to assess the experiences and opinions of health service users regarding informed consent in India. The study emphasizes the need for better communication and improved policies to ensure ethical consent practices. The study focus on Informed Consent taken from patients.

2. Rani et al (2021) <sup>12</sup> study provides insights into the experiences of patients in a rural area of India with a particular focus on nursing services and physical infrastructure of a tertiary care hospital. The study assesses the knowledge and satisfaction regarding nursing services and physical infrastructure among indoor patients.

3. Singh et al (2013) <sup>13</sup> Study provides insights into the quality of care and customer satisfaction in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBG) department of a government medical college hospital. The study highlights key factors affecting patient experiences, including service efficiency, infrastructure, and doctor-patient communication. The study focusses on and is limited to Obstetrics and Gynaecology department.

4. Sing et al (2003) <sup>14</sup> study using a structured questionnaire to collect data from patients who had received care in the psychiatric unit of a hospital in India. Feedback taken regarding satisfaction with attitude and behavior of healthcare providers, the cleanliness of the hospital, and the availability and accessibility of healthcare services. The study is limited to Psychiatry cases only.

5. Babu et al. (2019) <sup>15</sup> provides a comprehensive analysis of patient experiences and health system responsiveness among internal migrants in 13 Indian cities. Migrants reported difficulties in accessing healthcare services due to a lack of awareness, high costs, and poor quality of care. The study also identified several factors that influenced patient satisfaction, including the attitude and behaviour of healthcare providers, the cleanliness of the hospital, and the availability and accessibility of healthcare services. The study measures percentage in facilities provided like display, information system, telemedicine, transfer of patient, grievance solution etc

6. Montagu et al. (2019) <sup>16</sup> examines the experiences of women during delivery in public health facilities in Uttar Pradesh, India. The study is limited to in Obstetrics and gynecology patients.

7. Kovai et al. (2010) <sup>17</sup> aimed to compare patient satisfaction with the services provided at vision centres in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh, India.

Authors developed a structured questionnaire to assess patient satisfaction, which included questions on various aspects of the services provided, such as waiting time, staff behaviour, cleanliness, availability of medicines, and quality of care. The study is limited to ophthalmology patients

8. Jawahar (2007) <sup>18</sup> aimed to assess outpatient satisfaction at a super specialty hospital in India. The questionnaire included questions on various aspects of the outpatient experience, such as the waiting time, consultation time, quality of care, staff behaviour, and overall satisfaction. The study involved Out Patient department patients.

9. Chakraborty (2016) <sup>19</sup> study evaluates patient satisfaction with the services provided at an urban healthcare centre in Darjeeling, West Bengal, India. The study employed a cross-sectional design, and data were collected using a pretested and structured questionnaire that assessed patient satisfaction with various aspects of healthcare delivery, including accessibility, communication, medical treatment, staff behaviour, and overall satisfaction. The study focussed on urban health centre and used PSQ18 questionnaire.

10. Chander et al. (2011) <sup>20</sup> aimed to assess the medical outcomes and patient satisfaction among HIV/AIDS patients attending an antiretroviral therapy (ART) centre at Zonal Hospital, Hamirpur. The study employed the Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ-18) to assess patients' satisfaction with the ART centre. The study focused on patient suffering from HIV disease and used PSQ 18 questionnaire.

11. Sharma et al. (2011) <sup>21</sup> conducted a study to assess patient satisfaction at a multispecialty tertiary level hospital in India, PGIMER, Chandigarh. The study was conducted using a structured Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ) which consisted of 50 questions in Out Patient Department patients.

12. Goel et al (2014) <sup>22</sup> North India Outpatient Department Satisfaction Scale (NIOPDSS) was developed based on a Delphi consensus among experts and was further validated through a study conducted among outpatients attending health centres in North Indian cities. The questionnaire consisted of 31 items,

covering different aspects of patient satisfaction, such as waiting time, communication, courtesy, cleanliness, and overall satisfaction.

13. Chahal and Kumari (2010)<sup>23</sup> aimed to develop a multidimensional scale for measuring healthcare service quality (HCSQ) in the Indian context. Data collected in study from indoor patients of 5 departments.

The current study found gap in the available literature that there is an absence of a standardized feedback form applicable across various hospitals for assessing service quality.

1. Most of the questionnaires are for general practitioners
2. A part of Studies published are done in single or limited number of hospital departments, indicating a deficiency in thorough assessment.
3. Majority studies focus on the communication between healthcare providers and patients, consent processes and the hospital environment.

Nevertheless, there is an absence of research that integrates all dimensions of patient satisfaction within a singular questionnaire.

## **Conclusion-**

The research on patient satisfaction undertaken in India underscore several critical areas of emphasis, however they are predominantly constrained in scope. Most studies focus on particular elements such as informed consent, nursing services, physical infrastructure, or specific departments like Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Psychiatry, or Ophthalmology. A comprehensive strategy to assessing patient satisfaction is necessary, integrating a broader spectrum of parameters within a cohesive framework.

## Further Studies

To address this issue, there is a necessity for development of questionnaire that can assess the care delivered at different hospital establishments in India, comprehending the needs of Indian patients. This may ultimately lead to improvements in the quality of care provided at private hospitals, benefitting both patients and healthcare providers.

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**Conflicts of interest**

There are no conflicts of interest