CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter presents Data Analysis and Interpretation. This chapter concludes the study. First the findings of the study are discussed briefly followed by conclusion, limitations and recommendations.

5.1. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study aims to compare the performance of services provided in selected public and private hospitals in the state of Chhattisgarh and to find out the respondents perception and expectation of the service quality, reputation, and service performance of selected public and private hospitals. Meeting the objectives of the study required collection of primary data from three sources, namely public, Patients and doctors & staff. Accordingly total three questionnaires were designed to collect the primary data from the field. The first questionnaire assessed opinion and perception of the patients. In this questionnaire total eleven constructs were used. Ten constructs were consistent with SERVQUAL method whereas the eleventh construct was consistent with “patients’ satisfaction” scale suggested by Andaleeb (2001).

The ten constructs of SERVQUAL method measured respondents’ “expectations” and “perceptions” in context of five dimensions of service quality namely empathy, reliability, assurance, tangibles, and responsiveness. To measure these constructs the scale suggested by Butt and Run (2010) and Andaleeb (2001) were used. Five-point Likert scale was used for measurement.

The second questionnaire assessed perception of public towards reputation of hospitals. In this customer-based corporate reputation scale suggested by Walsh et al.
(2009) was used. The third questionnaire attempted to measure perception of service provided from the perspective of the doctors and hospital staff. It also explored the opinion of the doctors and hospital staff to improve services.

For the purpose of this study primary as well as secondary data were collected. The secondary data were collected from published literature such as journals, e-newsletter, magazines, reports, books, internet, newspaper and websites etc. Secondary data was collected to find out the range of services provided by selected hospitals across public and private sector.

The data collected from the field were analyzed using statistical techniques such as The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measurement of sampling adequacy, The Bartlett’s sphere test, Factor analysis using varimax rotation, mean and ANOVA.

It was found from secondary data that Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Hospital, Raipur provides maximum number of services amongst the selected public and private sector hospitals in the state of Chhattisgarh. Further selected public sector hospitals provides specialised services related to community medicine, forensic medicine and pharmacology which is not present in private sector hospital. Further Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Hospital Raipur has distinct treatment facilities related with oncopathology which is not present in any other selected public or private sector hospital. The selected private sector hospital has similar range of services and no hospital provides any distinct service which is not present in the other selected hospital.

Further following findings were drawn on the basis of primary data collected from three sources, namely public, Patients and doctors & staff of selected hospitals and tested hypotheses using constructs of SERVQUAL method, “patients’ satisfaction scale” suggested by Andaleeb (2001) and “customer-based corporate reputation scale” suggested by Walsh et al. (2009).
In the research the service gap scores were calculated by subtracting the perception of patients from the selected hospital with expectations of patients from the selected hospitals (E- P) based on the service quality model given by Brahmbhatt et. al (2011). It was found that the selected hospitals in the study has witnessed maximum service gaps like up to date facilities with respect to tangibility parameters, consistent performance with respect to reliability parameters, readiness to provide service with respect to responsiveness, instilling confidence with respect to assurance parameter and understanding specific needs with respect to empathy parameter while comparing expectations and perception of respondents with regards to service quality dimensions respectively.

It was further found that private hospitals are better performers with respect to service quality dimension of tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy as their service gap score was lesser than public sector hospitals.

The following findings were based on data collected from general public related with “customer-based corporate reputation scale” suggested by Walsh et al. (2009). The scale comprises of five parameters namely Customer satisfaction, Good Employer, Reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality and social and environment responsibility. In the research the parameters of customer orientation, product and service quality and social and environmental responsibility were selected on the basis of result obtained during pilot testing and the parameters which were not significant and not reliable were removed.

The findings of the study reveals that there were significant differences in the perceptions of general public about Customer Orientation between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. It was also found that there is highly significant difference of opinion of respondents with respect to hospital personnel treating patients courteously regarding customer orientation parameter of reputation.

It was further found that that there were significant differences in perceptions of general public about Service Quality parameter of public and private hospitals in
Chhattisgarh. It was further found that there was highest difference in opinion with respect to usage of latest medical technologies in private and public sector hospitals.

Further it was found that that there were significant differences in perceptions of general public about Social and Environmental Responsibility between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. It was further found that there was difference in opinion with respect to appropriate disposal of wastages by selected hospitals.

In the research the expectations and perceptions of patients from the selected hospital were judged on the basis of parameters studied by “patients’ satisfaction scale” suggested by Andaleeb (2001) based on the parameters of tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy. The hypothesis drawn on selected parameters were tested on the basis of ANOVA.

It was found that there were no significant differences in patient expectations of tangibles between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. It was further found that there were no significant differences in patient expectations of reliability between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. It was further found that there were no significant differences in patient expectations of responsiveness between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. Further it was found that there were no significant differences in patient expectations of assurance between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. Further it was found that there were no significant differences in patient expectations of empathy between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. It can be interpreted from the study that patients of both public and private sector hospitals had similar expectations with respect to service quality dimensions of tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy across the selected hospitals.

In the research with respect to perception of patients regarding selected hospitals parameters studied by “patients’ satisfaction scale” suggested by Andaleeb (2001) based on the parameters of tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy was again used. The hypothesis drawn on selected parameters was
tested on the basis of ANOVA. It was found that there were significant differences in patient’s perceptions of tangibles between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. The highest difference in opinion was seen with respect to up to date facilities of selected hospitals.

Further it was found that there were significant differences in patient perceptions of reliability between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. The highest difference of opinion was seen with respect to parameter of doing something by the hospital in promised time.

Further it was found that there were significant differences in patient perceptions of responsiveness between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. The highest difference of opinion was seen with respect to parameter, hospital personnel are never too busy to respond to patient’s request.

Further it was found that there were significant differences in patient perceptions of assurance between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. The highest difference of opinion was seen with respect to parameter, safety while visiting the hospital.

Further it was found that that there were significant differences in patient perceptions of empathy between public and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh. The highest difference of opinion was seen with respect to parameter, hospital has my best interest in heart.

The data was collected from primary source with respect improvement of service performance of selected hospitals was analysed on the basis of Factor Analysis. The results of factor analysis provided improvement with respect to three distinct factors layers of service benefits bundle namely: core services, actual services and augmented services. The patients opined that consultation by physiotherapist and dieticians and availability of specialist doctors by tie ups must
be added to core service layer of the bundle of service benefits. Further availability of ambulance, hygienic canteen, blood banks and reduction of discharge time must be added to actual service layer of bundle of service benefit. The augmented service layer of bundle of service benefit must include online appointment facilities, listings of hospital in recommended hospital list of government, corporate and insurance companies list, online follow up reminders and availability of generic medicines in hospital pharmacy.

Further the opinion of Doctors and staff were analysed with respect to services of hospital based on Parasuraman et al., (1988). The data collected was analysed using mean score and ANOVA. It was found that in reference to tangibility dimension of service quality the selected respondents gave highest preference to modern looking equipment in the hospital. In case of reliability dimension of service quality the respondents gave highest preference to consistent performance of hospital. In case of responsiveness dimension highest preference was given to providing prompt services. Further in case of empathy dimension of service quality feeling of safety while visiting hospital was given highest preference. In case of empathy parameter the selected respondents gave highest preference to keeping best interest of patients in mind.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

It can be concluded from the study that the range of services are similar in public and private sector hospitals. Further public hospitals have more services and facilities in comparison to private hospitals in the state of Chhattisgarh as it is funded by government therefore they have more funding and are better equipped to deal with serious and critical illness like cancer. Further the doctor patient ratio is higher in government hospitals therefore more specialized services like forensic medicine and community medicine is also provided by government hospitals.
It can be concluded from the study that the selected hospitals across public and private sector have good reputation on the parameters of customer orientation, quality of products and services and environmental friendliness of hospitals. The safer clinical environment provided these hospitals over the years have added to reputation of these selected hospitals as the reported cases of clinical errors in these hospitals has been less over the years. The selected public and private hospitals have drawn a balance between quality and value of services and have tried to make it available to almost all social classes of patients though government policies like smart cards. Further there is a proper waste disposable management in these hospitals which have provided good reputation to these hospitals.

It can be concluded from the study that highest service gap was related with responsiveness amongst the selected public sector hospital and lowest service gap was related with empathy parameter of service quality amongst the selected public sector hospital. Further it can be concluded that the highest service gap amongst selected private sector hospital was related with responsiveness parameter and lowest service gap was related with tangibility parameter in selected public sector hospitals. Therefore the public and private sector hospitals should devise training programs to train doctors in interpersonal relationship skills to enhance the doctor-patient relationship and improve their responsiveness towards patients.

It can be concluded from the study that patients across the selected public and private sector hospitals had similar expectations from the hospitals. Expectations from hospitals are the mirroring of outcomes a patient associates with the health service encounter. The expectations of the patients need to be addressed properly as it will increase the efficiency of the hospitals and decrease the liability on part of the hospitals. The government of Chhattisgarh has started health programs like smart cards which has provided access of health services to all social class of patients in public as well as private hospitals therefore the expectations of patients are similar in both the classes of hospitals. Further health services are unique in nature as the
patients are completely dependent on information given by specialist to understand the medical information which is difficult to decipher by people who are not of medical backgrounds and the interpretations of these medical information are an important source of developing expectations which is usually reference based and similar in nature.

It can be concluded that there was significant difference with respect to perception of patients regarding the quality of services provided by selected public and private sector hospitals as they differ in their chosen means of communicating with prospective patients. Further the professional knowledge, skills and ability of doctors and staff also differ in public and private sector hospitals. Further the patient reported behaviour depends on their service encounters and duration of stay which also causes the difference in perception of selected respondents.

It can be concluded from the study that the demands of patients have changed according to changing environment. The patients want that hospitals should increase their customer engagement by using internet as the use of information technology has grown in leaps and bounds in recent times and is easily available. Further the customer want all allied medical services under one roof of hospital that will increase the value of bundle of services and reduce their inconvenience of finding ambulance, blood banks outside hospitals.

It can be concluded from the study that the quality of services can be improved by using modern equipments, consistent performance, prompt services as services are basically intangible in nature and the ambience and staff behaviour provides shape to the service experience. Further the feeling of security and belief that the hospital has best interest of patient in heart will help in developing trust and confidence in the hospital which will lead to more service encounters and better word of mouth publicity.
5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the major limitations of the study:

There are 520 hospitals in the state of Chhattisgarh according to National Informatics Centre, Chhattisgarh State, out of which 249 are private and 271 are public hospitals. The data was collected from only three public and three private hospitals with respect to patients, doctor and staff. So the findings of the study are limited to these hospitals in particular and all the hospitals of the state in general.

The data with respect to opinion of general public about services provided by selected hospitals was collected from city of Durg, Bilaspur, Jagdalpur and Raipur, so the generalisations of the findings are limited to general public of these cities in particular and all the public residing in the state of Chhattisgarh in general.

According to Seth, Deshmukh and Brat (2005) there were nineteen service quality models and service quality outcome and measurement is dependent on type of service setting situations and needs of consumers which are changing with competitive environment and increase in number of service encounters. Thus present study is based on SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman and generalisation of findings are subject to service setting situations, changing needs of respondents and their service encounters with the selected hospitals.

For the purpose of the study data was collected from only 305 patients, 53 doctors, 97 staff and 168 general public, so the generalisation of the findings depends on truthfulness of the respondents.

Interpretations of the findings are based on the haunches and experiences of the researcher, so the generalisations of the findings are limited to the limit of haunches and experiences of the researcher.
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based upon the findings following are the recommendations to future researchers, academicians and hospitals.

5.4.1 Recommendations to Future Researchers

Present study was confined to study range of services, perception and expectation of patients about services of selected hospitals, opinion of patients for improvement of hospital services and opinion of doctor and staff about services provided by selected hospitals. Future researchers may include some more dimensions to compare the services of public and private hospitals.

As this study was confined only to three public and three private hospitals in the state of Chhattisgarh, the future researcher may include more public and private hospitals from different cities of Chhattisgarh to compare their range of services, satisfaction of patients with their services and reputation of hospitals.

The study is based mainly on SERVEQUAL model to find out expectation of patients, perception of patients and service quality of selected hospitals. Future researchers may include service quality model proposed by other researchers in their study.

The present study was confined only to the hospitals located in urban areas. So future researchers may include in their study the hospitals located in rural areas and compare them.

Future study may be conducted to cover more number of hospitals and preferably from more number of cities across India.

1.4.1 Recommendations to Academicians

The finding of the study is helpful to the academicians in order to understand the perception and expectation of hospital services by respondent so that they may
deeply understand and may make comparison of service performance of selected hospitals in Chhattisgarh.

Academician can understand underlying reasons behind similarity and differences on the parts of patient’s expectation, perception, and quality of services of selected hospitals and may explain to future researchers.

They can correlate findings of the study with existing theories and may motivate future researcher to conduct similar kind of the study, considering same variables or by incorporating some more variables after extensive literature review, in the state of Chhattisgarh or outside Chhattisgarh

1.4.2 Recommendations to Hospitals

Hospitals will be able to understand the perception and expectation of patients and perception about service provided in the hospitals to remove gap in service delivery, improve their services and image of the hospitals.

The hospitals should provide in-house trainings for doctors and staff to increase their responsiveness towards the patients as both public and private sector hospitals had high service gaps in responsiveness parameters. The image of service organizations especially health services is dependent upon the knowledge, skill and ability of doctors and staff to diagnose illness and encounter emergencies. The training regarding new diagnostic treatments and facilities will reduce the service gaps. Further the hospitals should add and publicize online appointment facilities and online review check-up appointment reminders in their websites and sms alerts for patients to increase patient’s engagement.