

PATIENTS' SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN ALIPURDUAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Satisfaction of patients is considered as one of the valid parameters to measure the quality of healthcare services. Satisfaction is defined as a complicated phenomenon that is closely linked with socio-demographic and personal aspects. This study aims to analyze the level of patients' satisfaction with health care services provided by two Community Health Centers (CHCs) of Alipurduar district with a focus on the socio-demographic correlates. To conduct this study, required data have been collected from primary sources where the sample size is 500, aged between 15 to 80 years. Net Promoter Score has been applied in this study with a scale of 1 to 10 point to get satisfaction index. Results indicate that people of the study area are not satisfied with existing health care services of CHCs. The extent of satisfaction is found to be associated with patients' psychological and personal characteristics and their experience and expectation from health care services. It has also been revealed that socio-demographic variables, like age, sex, education, income etc. are more correlated with the satisfaction of patients apart from their psychological and personal aspects.

Keywords: Healthcare Service, Satisfaction, Socio-Demographic Variables

1. INTRODUCTION

Healthcare aims to provide curative and preventive treatments to improve the status of health as well as to enhance the satisfaction of patients. Patient satisfaction is defined as a healthcare recipient's reaction to salient aspects of the context, process, and result of their service experiences.¹ Satisfaction has become one of the reliable indicators, most frequently used to assess the desired outcome of health care services.

AAHHC Standards have included patients' satisfaction as a driver of organizational improvement.² Patients' views towards healthcare services and identification of dissatisfied

patients is one of the important steps to improve the flaws of health care and its quality. The extent to which patients satisfied, will not always remain loyal and equal to the provided healthcare services.³ Though the types of care, received at health care centers have always been similar but are not able to deliver the same quality of care. Nearly 70 % of healthcare in India is provided through private sectors, one of the important outcomes of dissatisfaction with the public healthcare system.

Patients' expectation as well as knowledge, behavior, psychology of patients towards this healthcare system is positively associated with the level of satisfaction, varies among different socio-demographic groups. This paper aims to discuss the pattern of patients' satisfaction along with their socio-demographic correlates in Alipurduar district, geographically one of the disadvantaged regions in West Bengal, with a huge number of tribal populations who have their own societal attitude about health care.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the flaws of provided healthcare services.
- To discuss about socio-demographic correlates of patients' satisfaction.
- To determine the level of satisfaction in this study area.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study mainly focuses on the pattern of patients' satisfaction with health care facilities, received at two CHCs in Alipurduar district. After identifying the problems related to health care services, healthcare centers have been chosen on the basis of their geographical location where major work of this study depends on primary sources and this study has been conducted among different socio-demographic groups.⁴ The respondents are randomly selected among those visiting these health centers during the survey with age between 15 to 80 years and the sample size is 500.

To measure the level of satisfaction, Net Promoter Score has been applied⁵ with a scale of 1 to 10 point. On the basis of the point, this scale has three parts:

- **Detractor:** Less than 6 – not satisfied
- **Passive:** 7 to 8 – moderately satisfied
- **Promoter:** 9 to 10 – highly satisfied

The following formula has been used to get Satisfaction Index:

$$\% \text{ of Promoter} - \% \text{ of Detractor}$$

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Satisfaction with Health Care Delivery: Health Care delivery constitutes with a wide range of services to improve its structural quality to an optimal level. The degree of effectiveness of delivery is determined by the consumers’ satisfaction with the services provided.⁶

Table 1: Satisfaction with Health Care Delivery Related Service

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Waiting Time	Listen with Patience	Explain Patient Problem	Explain Reason for Medical Treatment	Answer Question	Follow up Appointment	Check Previous Health Status	Explain if Referred	Equality of Check-up	Privacy During Treatment
Age (years)	15-29	4.14	4.21	4.02	4.02	3.78	4.21	4.12	4.55	8.63	5.50
	30-49	6.02	6.62	6.14	5.88	5.03	5.29	4.59	4.86	8.96	7.76
	50-80	7.35	8.13	7.55	7.36	7.12	7.01	6.56	7.02	9.56	9.35
Gender	Male	6.68	7.29	7.69	7.59	7.45	6.59	6.26	5.11	8.98	9.26
	Female	4.99	5.36	4.11	3.91	3.18	4.41	3.92	5.84	9.12	5.81
Caste	S.C.	5.62	7.34	6.3	6.59	6.23	4.62	4.33	5.91	9.57	7.13
	S.T.	6.10	4.02	3.99	3.75	3.32	6.12	5.63	3.89	8.29	8.56
	Others	5.78	7.62	7.41	6.41	5.89	5.75	5.31	6.13	9.26	6.85
Marital Status	Previous Married	5.45	5.44	5.06	4.34	4.01	4.05	3.96	3.12	9.33	5.62
	Married	5.56	6.18	5.96	5.21	5.03	5.11	4.63	5.20	8.73	8.64
	Single	6.49	7.36	6.69	7.71	6.89	7.33	6.68	8.11	9.09	9.02
Education	Illiterate	8.45	9.42	4.18	4.02	3.52	7.62	7.33	4.01	9.33	9.55
	up to VIII	6.68	7.03	5.29	5.16	4.85	3.99	5.55	4.32	9.26	8.61
	IX to XII	4.95	4.86	6.48	6.55	5.72	3.45	3.78	6.71	8.89	7.53
	Upper Education	3.26	3.75	7.64	7.28	7.15	3.19	3.71	6.87	8.72	4.45
Occupation	Service	3.86	4.24	6.38	6.22	6.32	3.82	3.56	6.12	9.31	4.06
	Business	6.56	6.95	5.84	5.59	5.19	5.68	5.13	4.98	9.03	8.52
	Laborer	8.02	8.23	4.99	4.71	4.18	6.44	7.41	4.76	8.56	9.42
	Student	3.78	5.65	6.14	6.18	5.89	5.09	4.38	5.53	9.06	6.31
	Unemployed	6.96	5.53	6.16	6.05	4.98	5.52	4.99	5.99	9.28	9.35
Monthly Income	< 5000	7.21	8.51	5.38	5.12	4.56	7.33	5.23	4.86	9.45	8.28
	5000-8000	6.63	6.63	5.24	5.02	4.47	5.21	5.12	5.13	9.26	7.89
	8000-12000	5.65	5.86	6.39	6.56	5.95	4.58	5.05	5.89	8.79	7.09
	> 12000	3.86	4.29	6.59	6.31	6.27	4.13	4.96	6.02	8.69	6.89

Source: Compiled by Author

From Table 1, it seems to be understood that the level of satisfaction is not equal with delivered health care services among different groups. Most of the patients are not likely to satisfy with these services. Answering patients' questions, one of the important parameters, where patients' satisfaction score is 5.31, the most unsatisfied service. Providers' behavior and attitude, especially respect and politeness, is as much important as the technical competence of the service.⁷ But, table 1 shows that in these healthcare centers these facilities are not able to satisfy patients. Patients from the tribal community are lesser satisfied with provider's behavior because they have faced problem to communicate with them as they are shy in nature and for their linguistic restrictions.⁸ Quality during treatment, the most satisfied service is scored higher 9.05. In this health centers, patients' satisfaction with privacy during treatment is scored moderate to higher value, but young age group (15-29), female, educated and service holders are not satisfied with these services. In addition, patients have to wait more time for getting treatment as they found to be unsatisfied, indicating the lesser quality of healthcare delivery.

4.2 Satisfaction with Health Infrastructural Services: Infrastructural care may be considered the first step of services and to enhance the satisfaction of visiting patients and their attendants. Health infrastructure is a structural element of health care systems which covers major components from organizational services to assets of health care.⁹

Table 2: Satisfaction with Health Infrastructure Related Service

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Sitting Chair	Waiting Area	Toilet	Clean ness	Drinking Water	Quality of Food	Status of Bed	Discipline	Efficiency During Admission	Efficiency During Discharge
Age (years)	15-29	7.40	4.56	3.56	4.01	6.36	3.96	4.60	4.02	4.25	7.39
	30-49	7.36	7.28	4.62	5.96	8.13	6.03	5.12	5.12	5.96	8.25
	50-80	5.94	8.51	7.32	6.93	9.41	8.51	4.02	6.64	7.26	9.31
Gender	Male	8.62	7.78	6.39	7.18	9.09	8.19	5.51	6.59	5.45	7.55
	Female	5.31	5.78	3.95	4.10	6.83	4.14	3.66	3.91	6.19	9.08
Caste	S.C.	6.88	6.98	5.21	5.53	8.18	6.23	4.44	5.36	5.89	8.28
	S.T.	7.21	7.26	6.11	6.23	8.59	6.69	4.75	5.88	6.55	9.12
	Others	6.48	6.12	4.17	5.13	7.13	5.59	4.56	4.51	5.02	7.53
Marital Status	Previous Married	5.69	5.32	4.31	4.65	7.46	3.76	3.39	3.56	3.96	9.14
	Married	6.78	6.68	4.99	5.58	7.73	6.41	4.77	5.39	5.11	7.55
	Single	8.18	8.05	6.19	6.68	8.69	8.32	5.60	6.81	8.39	8.25
Education	Illiterate	8.38	8.35	6.97	7.12	8.39	7.00	5.77	7.15	6.65	9.15
	up to VIII	8.09	8.13	6.65	7.03	8.26	6.23	5.16	7.01	6.12	9.01
	IX to XII	5.88	5.55	3.82	4.26	7.79	5.99	4.18	3.59	5.38	8.09
	Upper Education	5.21	5.08	3.19	4.11	7.44	5.45	3.22	3.26	5.14	7.02
Occupation	Service	5.41	5.02	4.29	3.98	7.18	5.96	3.62	3.26	3.88	7.26
	Business	6.93	6.82	5.51	5.56	8.22	6.52	4.48	5.59	6.18	8.28
	Laborer	7.77	8.21	5.91	7.29	8.56	6.69	5.49	7.10	7.14	9.16
	Student	6.81	6.45	4.21	5.23	7.39	5.65	4.12	5.13	5.69	8.02
	Unemployed	7.49	7.41	5.92	6.13	8.46	6.03	5.19	5.19	6.22	8.85
Monthly Income	< 5000	8.31	8.33	6.03	7.28	8.69	7.96	5.19	6.73	6.36	9.06
	5000-8000	7.12	7.11	5.68	6.15	8.36	6.88	5.02	5.68	6.41	9.12
	8000-12000	6.62	6.69	4.61	5.21	7.50	5.65	4.12	5.01	5.35	8.05
	> 12000	5.51	5.01	4.35	3.90	7.32	4.18	4.01	3.58	5.16	7.03

Source: Compiled by Author

As table 2 presents, the level of satisfaction of most of the patients is moderate. People are lesser satisfied with services like toilet, cleanness of hospitals and provided bedding facilities. These services are as much as important as other facilities in health care system because bed indicates the capacity of inpatient services¹⁰ and cleanness is associated with lower the chances of MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) infections.¹¹ In addition, disciplines in these centers are not at a satisfactory level. Clients are more satisfied with the efficiency of providers during discharge compare with during admission time. Old age people are more likely to satisfy but this table shows they are lesser satisfied with sitting chair (5.94) and bedding facilities (4.02) as in most of the cases they are physically weak and they need these services more. Clients seem to be more satisfied with drinking water facilities but still young and female groups are lesser satisfied (6.36 & 6.83).

4.3 Satisfaction with Medical Tests and Other Facilities: The Medical test is an integral part of the healthcare system, consists of all steps between the time when a doctor thinks about the test to results of the testing.¹² Patients’ satisfaction with the existing system of medical test and other facilities indicates the level of efficiency of these services.

Table 3: Satisfaction with Medical Test and Ancillary Facilities

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Availability of Medical Test	Waiting Time for Test	Behavior of Medical Examiner	Medical Test Result	Kindness of Nurse	Ambulatory Facility	Drug Facility	Behavior of Pharmacist	Health Education Material	Emergency Facility
Age (years)	15-29	5.01	4.02	3.85	4.84	4.73	9.56	3.91	4.09	9.12	5.72
	30-49	6.25	6.02	5.13	6.90	6.56	8.45	5.92	5.36	9.02	7.45
	50-80	7.66	6.79	6.62	7.91	7.39	9.00	6.89	7.01	8.87	6.95
Gender	Male	7.11	7.11	6.53	8.19	7.85	9.56	6.96	6.98	9.13	8.22
	Female	5.51	4.12	3.91	4.91	4.60	8.45	4.18	3.99	8.88	5.19
Caste	S.C.	6.28	5.71	5.25	6.54	7.00	9.53	5.65	6.45	9.26	6.79
	S.T.	6.37	6.10	4.21	6.89	4.41	8.02	5.52	3.78	8.55	7.29
	Others	6.26	5.02	6.15	6.23	7.25	9.45	5.54	6.21	9.21	6.03
Marital Status	Previous Married	5.46	4.92	4.49	5.86	5.15	9.47	5.11	4.25	9.12	5.82
	Married	6.33	5.4	4.92	6.54	6.05	8.01	5.22	5.48	8.89	6.77
	Single	7.12	6.51	6.24	7.25	7.46	9.52	6.39	6.71	9.01	7.52
Education	Illiterate	4.76	7.38	3.71	7.86	7.01	9.10	7.21	6.22	8.00	8.21
	up to VIII	5.58	6.47	4.30	7.15	7.17	9.02	6.25	6.11	8.73	7.49
	IX to XII	7.75	4.59	6.89	5.96	5.16	8.98	5.01	4.82	9.65	6.01
	Upper Education	7.12	4.02	6.01	5.25	5.54	8.91	3.81	4.78	9.63	5.11
Occupation	Service	4.91	4.05	4.03	5.42	6.19	9.12	3.75	6.24	9.45	4.81
	Business	6.59	5.89	5.85	7.12	6.33	8.90	5.45	5.68	8.59	6.55
	Laborer	7.62	6.91	6.56	7.65	5.42	8.78	6.78	4.29	8.78	8.11
	Student	5.86	5.26	4.55	6.07	6.18	9.29	5.55	5.39	9.06	6.15
	Unemployed	6.54	5.84	5.01	6.53	6.98	8.91	6.35	5.83	9.12	7.86
Monthly Income	< 5000	7.41	7.25	6.65	7.61	5.89	8.56	7.49	4.96	8.69	8.25
	5000-8000	6.85	6.03	5.33	7.12	5.51	8.96	6.56	4.89	8.74	7.12
	8000-12000	6.03	5.16	5.01	6.01	6.59	9.26	4.55	6.23	9.25	6.25
	> 12000	4.92	4.00	3.81	5.47	6.89	9.24	3.72	5.85	9.32	5.21

Source: Compiled by Author

Table 3 shows that in these health centers availability of medical test is not in a good state as most of the patients are moderately satisfied with this facilities. Clients are worst satisfied with the behavior of medical examiner and availability of drugs facility (5.20 & 5.57). Ambulatory facility and providing material for health education satisfied the clients but married patients are lesser satisfied with ambulatory facilities (8.01). In addition, tribal people have tended to be

more satisfied with providing facilities except for the behavior of examiner, kindness of nurse, and behavior of pharmacist because they are feeling discriminate and insecure during treatment.¹³ Uneducated patients are lesser satisfy with medical test facilities, the behavior of medical examiner and material provided for health education (4.76, 3.71 and 8.00) as sometimes they are not able to evaluate the quality of care due to their limited knowledge.¹⁴

4.4 Socio-Demographic Factors and Satisfaction: The level of satisfaction is not always related to the quality of healthcare services. Socio-demographic factors play an important role in the perception as well as psychological and expectation of patients which is related to their pattern of satisfaction. Due to this importance, socio-demographic variables are most frequently studied in relation to satisfaction.¹⁵

Table 4: Satisfaction and Socio-demographic Variables

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Level of Satisfaction			Percentage of Scale Value		
		Healthcare Delivery Related Services	Healthcare Infrastructure Related Services	Medical Test and Ancillary Facilities	Detractor	Passive	Promoter
Age (years)	15-29	4.72	4.97	5.49	86.67	6.67	6.66
	30-49	6.12	6.26	6.71	60	30	10
	50-80	7.70	7.55	7.51	30	43.33	26.67
Gender	Male	7.29	7.24	7.76	16.67	60	23.33
	Female	5.07	5.29	5.37	83.34	3.33	13.33
Caste	S.C.	6.69	6.29	6.85	53.33	30	16.67
	S.T.	5.04	6.84	6.11	60	23.33	16.67
	Others	6.64	5.62	6.74	66.67	23.33	10
Marital Status	Previous Married	5.04	5.12	5.97	83.34	3.33	13.33
	Married	6.03	6.09	6.37	40	30	30
	Single	7.54	7.52	7.36	16.67	50	33.33
Education	Illiterate	6.74	7.49	7.32	23.34	53.33	23.33
	up to VIII	6.07	7.17	6.82	43.33	40	16.67
	IX to XII	5.89	5.45	6.32	66.67	23.33	10
	Upper Education	5.60	4.91	5.81	66.67	23.33	10
Occupation	Service	5.39	4.99	5.79	83.33	6.67	10
	Business	6.35	6.41	6.69	53.33	26.67	20
	Laborer	6.67	7.33	7.09	26.67	53.33	20
	Student	5.80	5.87	6.34	76.67	13.33	10
	Unemployed	6.48	6.69	6.89	63.33	20	16.67
Monthl	< 5000	6.59	7.39	7.28	30	46.67	23.33

y Income	5000-8000	6.06	6.75	6.71	46.67	36.67	16.66
	8000-12000	6.18	5.88	6.43	66.67	23.33	10
	> 12000	5.80	5.01	5.84	73.33	16.67	10

Source: Compiled by Author

- From Table 4, it is understood that the degree to which patient satisfied is not equal among different age groups. Age group from 15-29 year have tended to be less satisfied as 86.67% young clients are giving negative reply than those of elderly people. With the increase of age, the probability of a patients' satisfaction is increased along with to decrease of expectation.¹⁶
- Male patients found to be more satisfied and the mean of their satisfaction is 7.29, 7.24 and 7.76. The pattern of satisfaction is discriminate among gender groups as human psychology, perception, and expectation of people is varied among male and female.
- From table 4, it is understood that racial groups are not significantly correlated with the pattern of satisfaction as all groups share almost similar satisfaction level. As Hall said, the racial characteristic is one of the most inconsistent parameters than other socio-demographic variables.
- Patients from previous marriage group are seemed to be lesser satisfied with providing health care services, nearly 83.34% of patients from this group give detractor reply as most of them belong to young group. Single patients are more satisfied with these services for their lesser expectation.¹⁷
- This table shows patients who are lesser educated have tended to be more satisfied and their satisfaction score is 6.74, 7.49 and 7.32 and educated people are more conscious about health and consumer right¹⁸, results they tended to be unsatisfied.
- Service holders and students are unsatisfied as most of them are from educated group. In addition, table 4 shows that 63.33% unemployed and 53.33% patients doing business are giving detractor reply about satisfaction. Most of the laborers are moderate to highly satisfy because they belong from the lower class group.
- Income is one of the important parameters to improve the standard of living. Patients from the lower income group are found to be more satisfied than those people whose monthly income is higher. Consumers' expectation has grown proportionately with the rising of wealth¹⁹, affecting their level of satisfaction.

4.5 Level of Overall Satisfaction: Satisfaction is the outcome of functional quality of healthcare system and indicates the level of success to which providers can able to fulfill the expectation of patients.

Table 5: Level of Satisfaction with Health Care Services

Satisfaction with Healthcare Delivery Related Services	-36.189
Satisfaction with Healthcare Infrastructure Related Services	-36.629
Satisfaction with Medical Test and Ancillary Facilities	-35.657

Source: Compiled by Author

From Table 5 it seems that patients are unsatisfied with health care services providing from these Community Healthcare Centers. The value of overall satisfaction with health care delivery is - **36.18** indicating danger zone of this service. Likewise previous one, patients are not satisfied with infrastructural (-**36.629**) and medical test related services (-**35.657**). Scoring these negative value indicates the quality and availability of services are not in a good situation, as consequence it unable to satisfy people. But the efficiency of services does not always influence the pattern of satisfaction. Psychological, perception and expectation of people among different socio-demographic groups influence their way of thinking about satisfaction. Studies imply that patients cannot really be considered good judge of quality²⁰ because their psychological factors are varied among different socio-demographic groups.²¹

5. CONCLUSION

Satisfaction will be the indicator of good services as satisfied patients are more likely to avail of those particular facilities. This study reveals the facilities provided by CHCs of Alipurduar district is unable to satisfy its clients indicating a lower level of healthcare services. But the pattern of satisfaction is not always done in a systematic way and is not always related to the quality of healthcare as this study shows the level of satisfaction is varied among different socio-demographic groups. In addition, some socio-demographic variables, like age, sex, education, income etc. are more consistent and correlated aspects with the satisfaction of patients.

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