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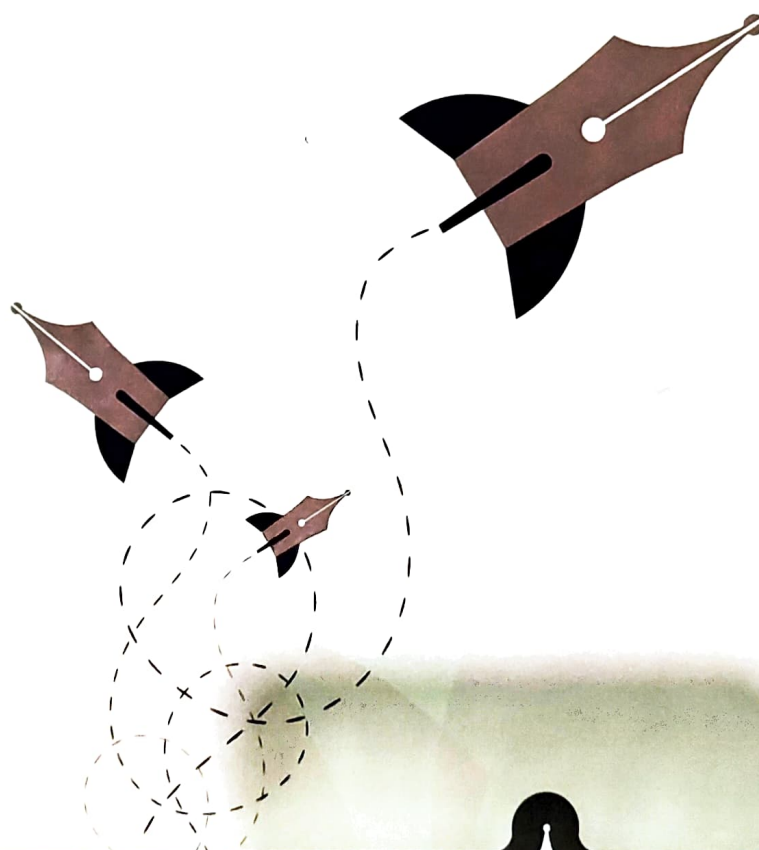
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PATIENTS' OPINION OF QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN RURAL ASSAM

□ Rimakhi Borah*

ABSTRACT

Availability and accessibility of quality healthcare is an important concern, as healthy population is essential for economic growth and social welfare. In the recent period, determining the quality of care from patients' viewpoint or patients' opinion has been found to be an essential factor in healthcare. The present study tries to find out patients' viewpoint or opinion of the healthcare service quality provided by rural health-centers of Biswanath district of Assam. A total of 120 patients from 12 PHCs and 58 SCs of Gohpur health block were interviewed from January to March 2020, among 5 patients/beneficiaries from each of the health-centers. Patients' viewpoint or opinion of quality of healthcare services were measured by using 23-items or parameters and the data were analyzed using SPSS 20. According to the viewpoint of researcher, the healthcare service providers should continuously evaluate as well as consider patients opinion on the quality of care provided to recognize which service has not been provided adequately over time and take steps accordingly.

Keywords: Healthcare centers, Clients opinion, Service quality, Biswanath district, Assam.

INTRODUCTION

Health is widely acknowledged as a vital component of human development. It is also regarded as an essential component for the development of the country as health and socio-economic development are inter-linked and dependent on each other. Therefore, it has become necessary for a nation to have provision for sound healthcare facilities in urban as well as in rural areas. Expanding healthcare services availability in the rural parts of the country is a crucial priority. India being a nation of villages where majority of the populations live in rural areas requires an intensive approach towards rural health infrastructure (Garg N., 2015). Public health infrastructure in rural areas consist of three-tier structure i.e., Sub-Centers (SCs), Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs) based on pre-determined norms so as to serve the people of the community efficiently (Verma G. and Moinuddin, 2015). The first and second tier commonly known as the primary tier which comprises SCs and PHCs has been

developed particularly to fulfill the basic healthcare needs of the people of rural areas. Although in India, substantial improvements have been made in health sector during the last 60 years after independence, but the health results still lacks the desired status. (Reddy S.K.et.al.,2011).

Development in the service quality provided by primary healthcare apart from increasing availability and affordability has become an important concern for developing countries like India in the past few years (Sharma J.K. and Narang R.,2011). Studies have brought to light, patients' satisfaction as an important indicator for determining the healthcare and medical-care quality. Although the service quality and effectiveness depends to a large extent on the standard of the performance of medical staff's but in the last few years patients' viewpoint or opinion on services have also been taken into consideration in determining quality (Chand B.B. et.al,2018).

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