ROLE OF EFFECTIVE MONETARY BENEFITS IN ACCESSIBILITY OF QUALITY WORKFORCE IN RURAL HEALTH CARE SECTOR

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ABSTRACT
In today’s world, efficacy of Human Resource Management has definitely proved to be a contributory factor in enhancing organizational performance. Not to mention, the performance of the health care system largely depends on the quality & motivation of its health care personnel. For many reasons, accessing good quality health care workforce can be incredibly arduous for the organizations operating in rural & tribal areas. The present study examines the contributory role of effective monetary benefits determined by the hospital owners which may lead to the easy accessibility of quality oriented workforce in rural health care sector. The study is based on primary data being collected in the form of questionnaires & interview surveys from various specialized private hospitals in Shipur Taluka (Dist- Dhule). The collected data were analyzed by using suitable statistical techniques. The major inferences have drawn from the above mentioned study states: ineffective financial management which led to unsatisfactory monetary policies for staff thus resulting to unavailability of quality health care workers. Lastly, we conclude that it is necessary for the top management (including the hospital owners & hospital administrators) to primarily focus on an effective financial management system in the hospital organization which will result in proper distribution of funds and establishing effective remuneration policies for the staff. This will definitely help the rural health care sector to cope up with the challenge of accessing quality health care personnel from inside and outside the rural sector.

KEYWORDS: Rural healthcare sector, Monetary benefits, Accessibility, Quality workforce.

INTRODUCTION:
In today’s world, efficacy of Human Resource Management has definitely proved to be a contributory factor in enhancing organizational performance. Not to mention, the performance of the health care system largely depends on the quality & motivation of its health care personnel. The importance of effective management of human resources in hospitals plays a vital role to the accomplishment of the goals of health care sector. Health care sector in India comprises of those ‘Health Work Force’ which directly shapes the growth, development and performance of kind of
services provided by them. Human resources for health are defined as, ‘the stock of all individuals engaged in the promotion, protection or improvement of population health’\(^1\). These health workers comprises of not only specialists doctors, general physicians, nurses and assistant doctors but people like hospital in-charges, policy makers, administrative staff, cleaners, pharmacists, pathologists, etc\(^2\). In context to a country like India, where the majority of the population serves with agriculture & agro based services as their basic profession, lies in the rural areas of the country. For many reasons, accessing good quality health care workforce can be incredibly arduous for the organizations operating in rural & tribal areas.

**Health Sector in India**: Indian health care service sector is majorly divided into two groups – Public health care sector and Private health care sector. Survey indicates that the private health care sector is the dominant one in Indian health care system. Private health sector is further divided into ‘Not-for-profit and the for-profit’ health sector. The former comprises of various Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charitable institutions, missions, trusts, etc and the later consists of various types of General Practitioners to super specialists, Consultants, Nurses, Paramedics, Licentiates, Registered/ Rural Medical Practitioners and various other under and un-qualified persons commonly known as local medicine men/women, traditional birth attendants, faith healers, etc\(^3\).

**OBJECTIVE:**
The present study examines the role of effective monetary benefits in terms of remuneration and compensation determined by the rural hospital owners for its staff. Further, the study aims to identify the significance of financial management by the rural hospital owners and administrators which may lead to easy accessibility of quality oriented healthcare workforce in rural sector. Thus, the study is designed to show the significant role of financial benefits for attracting healthcare professionals towards rural sector.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:**
Our study is based on one of the rural area of Maharashtra state (India), known as ‘Shirpur taluka, District – Dhule. The study is based on hardcore primary data. Samples have been collected in the form of questionnaires & interview surveys from the various specialized private hospitals in Shirpur Taluka which are owned by the Doctors themselves. The collected data were analyzed using suitable statistical techniques with the help of Pie charts & Bar diagrams.

**OBSERVATIONS & RESULTS:**
The following study is an attempt to explain the significant role of financial motivation which acts as a stimulating factor in attracting and retaining quality employees in rural healthcare sector. Further, it lays a key impact in improving the performance of the existing employees.

(i) As depicted in Fig no 1; there is a less availability of trained and specialized paramedical staff in the region. Majority of the local health care staff (nurses, compounders) available in this rural area are not professionally trained & possess the qualification in between 10-12\(^{th}\) standard.
Fig no 1: Qualification of existing staff.

(ii) As depicted in Fig no 2; there is a huge need of healthcare experts by the rural hospitals, but generally, the requirements are satisfied in the form of inviting ‘visiting doctors’. There is a lack of accessibility of these experts in the form of regular employee.

Fig no 2: Need for Visiting Doctors/ Experts/ Specialists.

(iii) As depicted in Fig no 3; Majority of the hospital owners agree that remuneration plays an important role in accessing healthcare personnel.
Fig no 3: Criteria for attracting healthcare personnel.

(iv) As depicted in Fig no 4; Majority of the hospital owners agree that strategy of adequate remuneration grabs the major area for holding and retaining quality employees in their organization.

Fig no: 4: Strategies to be applied for retaining specialized staff in hospitals for a longer period of time.

(v) As depicted in Fig no 5; Majority of the hospital owners pointed out that, 50%-75% of the performance level and accessibility of healthcare workforce is influenced by monetary benefits (like remuneration, increments, incentives, bonus, etc.) given to them.
As depicted in Fig no 6; majority of funds are allocated to the development of medical infrastructure & equipments. Although, these expenditures are long term investment and needs maintenance within a long frame of time. Least importance has been given to ‘remuneration of employees’.

Challenges towards accessibility of quality health care workforce:
(i) Unavailability of specialized healthcare workforce:-
As depicted in Fig no 7; maximum numbers of the Doctors/ hospital in-charges pointed out that rural area suffers a lack of skilled and technically qualified medical personnel.
Fig no: 7: Observations related unavailability of technically skilled health workers in rural areas.
(vii) As depicted in Fig no 8; Majority of the hospital owners agree to the point that rural healthcare sector suffers with the drawback of less financial benefits in comparison to more risk and responsibilities.

Fig no: 8: Observations regarding rural health care sector comprises of ‘more risk & responsibilities with less financial benefits’.

DISCUSSION:
The intention of this research is to encourage the top level management of rural health care organizations to apply the concept of effective financial management system and to focus on building strategic monetary policies for the staff in a pathway to improve their job satisfaction level and availability and retention of quality workforce. This will definitely help in improving
the quality of health services being provided by the hospitals for the benefit of community at large.

The above cited charts (Fig. 1 & 2) clearly show:

(i) There is a scope of appointing new and specialized paramedical staff in rural healthcare sector.

(ii) Simultaneously, instead of calling visiting experts from outside areas, the hospitals may appoint them as regular employees. This will definitely help in improving the overall performance of the services offered.

The charts (Fig. 3, 4 & 5) reveal that monetary benefits play the major role in attracting & retaining quality workforce & also in improving their performance level. Establishing strategic monetary policies can be made possible by developing effective financial management system. Ineffective financial policies in an organization; which includes the monetary and non-monetary benefits to employees, can be due to the reason of improper utilization of available funds/income. Fig. 6 states that majority of the hospitals are using maximum of their funds in establishing medical infrastructure and equipments, though these kind of expenditures are known as ‘Capital expenditures’ which are generally one time expenditure and for long term investment. Despite of the fact that the daily expenses of these hospitals are comparatively low still there are no proper provisions of forming an effective monetary policies for motivating the existing work force and attracting skilled and trained health workers from outside the rural area. The initiation for building up proper monetary policies should be taken into consideration by the top level management of the hospitals, i.e., the hospital-owners, hospital in-charges, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

According to MetLife 9th Annual Study of Employee Benefits Trends, 58% of employers say that financial “illness” contributes to employee absences at their companies, and an amazing 78% agree that worry about personal financial problems while at work distracts employees to the point that they are less productive ⁵. According to Board on Health care Services (HCS), ‘Many quality improvement efforts have been undertaken, but their success has been limited by current payment systems. Fundamental changes in approaches to health care payment are necessary to remove impediments to and create incentives for significant quality improvement. New payment incentives must be created to encourage the redesign of structures and processes of care to promote higher value.’ ⁶.

The present study intends to specify the role of effective monetary benefits for the easy accessibility of health care experts in rural sector. Building strategic monetary policies can be done with the help of establishing a good financial management system by the top level management of rural healthcare organizations. Authors recommend some suitable considerations in a view to develop proper financial management system by the rural hospitals.

(i) Majority of the hospital owners are medical professionals, thus lack business and managerial expertise. A provision of knowledge of theory & practical concepts of financial management can be inculcated in the medical discipline, especially for health care entrepreneurs.
(ii) ‘Survival is considered important than growth’. Lack of competition in rural healthcare market in relevance to quality working style is due to (Fig.8) ‘more risk and responsibilities with less financial benefits’. Thus quality hampers and the focus is on continuity. This approach of top level management needs to be changed.

(iii) Due to rural sector and small scale hospitals, financial audits are not considered as mandatory. Financial records are not publicized and kept confidential. Maintaining proper records regarding revenues and expenditures, preparing budget accordingly and effective distribution of funds to various resources (including human resources, infrastructure & equipments).

(iv) Initiations to be taken by the top level management of hospitals to eliminate the casual approach of neglecting the requirement of effective remuneration policies.

Lastly, authors states that application of effective financial management system by the rural hospital administrators will help in enhancing the monetary benefits of employees which will lead to improve their job satisfaction level as well as it will aid to the accessibility of quality healthcare workforce.

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