

ABSTRACT

In India, healthcare services are delivered through both public and private hospitals, each facing distinct challenges. Public hospitals, despite substantial investment in infrastructure and free medical services, cater primarily to individuals with lower socio-economic status. However, issues such as resource mismanagement and staff lethargy have contributed to a declining reputation and diminished public trust. Conversely, private hospitals in India are rapidly growing, offering high-quality medical services aligned with international standards. While these facilities attract foreign patients and deliver superior care, their high costs remain inaccessible to lower-income groups. Additionally, concerns about ethical practices in some private hospitals further complicate public perception.

This study investigates the dimensions of service quality in public and private hospitals, focusing on core, modern, and problematic service qualities. The findings reveal significant gaps between patient expectations and perceptions of service quality in both sectors. Public hospitals exhibit the largest gaps, particularly in meeting expectations for core and modern services. While private hospitals perform better, their service quality still falls short of patient expectations in certain areas.

The analysis underscores that while service quality significantly influences patient satisfaction, it does not necessarily translate into patient loyalty. This indicates a critical need for both public and private hospitals to address these gaps to enhance patient satisfaction and foster long-term trust. The study provides valuable insights for healthcare administrators and policymakers to improve service delivery, balance accessibility and quality, and uphold ethical standards across India's healthcare system.