Original Review Article

GLOBALIZATION OF HEALTHCARE A BANE OR BOON WITH RESPECT TO INDIAN HEALTHCARE AND INTERNATIONAL PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT: The author in this article discussed the impact of globalization of healthcare and the arrivals of International Patients to countries other than their origin and also some other aspects. Globalization is a boon compared to than a bane because it has more positive aspects in terms of technological advancement, increasing healthcare professionals efficiency, improvement of healthcare facilities on par with developed nations in developing countries.   In addition a universal understanding of healthcare and also the causes of ailments / discomfort in various countries that has become a universal problem due to global transportation and communication.   The present covid-19 Pandemic that has its origin in China but worrying globally, is one such incident which can be resolved because of globalization.   Universal Pooling of resources, [both Physical and Monetary], Intelligentsia and research etc.   In this regard India became a favoured Nation in producing vaccine for this pandemic Covid -19 and serve the entire globe.

Keywords: Globalization, Healthcare, Pandemic, Covid-19, Global Transportation, Communication.

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1.INTRODUCTION

With the opening up of the economy, Globalization and increased participation from the private sector, both from National and International players, there is a see saw change in the healthcare sector. Off late, healthcare sector has become an Industry as well as a service sector. People are becoming more conscious of health and Introduction of Technology into healthcare has brought, once service oriented sector to become a major player not only improving the health but also a

foreign exchange earner in developing countries more so Asian countries like India, Singapore, Malaysia etc. Globalization policies are being aggressively perceived with structural changes and introduction of highly sophisticated technological advances in healthcare sector, easy access, no loss of time personalized services in developing countries like India, attracting International Patients even from developed countries.   It is inaccurate to describe globalization of healthcare with respect to Indian Healthcare Sector is a bane or boon.   However, for any change there may be positive and negative effects and we have to take into consideration whether Globalization is, how far boon and how far bane?   To analyze this one has to go deep into every section and every function of the healthcare to assess how far it is boon and how far it is bane? The success of socio economic transformation in any country has to be evaluated in terms of opportunities and benefits available to an ordinary individual.   For an individual, health, life security free from illness / ailments and a reasonable life span are necessary.   Healthcare is also declared as a human right under Article 25 of the universal declaration of Human Rights.   Good health means declining incidents of morbidity, mortality, disability which contributes to the economic growth, high productivity etc., that is why health promotion assures the role of vital public good and basic human rights. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13].

<u>Globalization and Healthcare</u>: With the opening up of the economy and participation of private players in all the sectors including health at both National and International level, India is becoming the favoured healthcare destination and confirmed by the study, conducted by Confederation of Indian Industry [CII] – Mckinscy, mentioned that India is a Global Health Destination.   In this regard Globalization is a boon to developing nations like India in healthcare sector to attract International Patients. Globalization has an overall positive impact on people's health due to the fact, Global Transportation and Communication has revolutionized the healthcare sector so that today healthcare professionals are in a position to make healthcare decisions Globally without any loss of time. Health gains are boon if it makes an impact on the economic front of a country. Globalization brought the people to cross border healthcare for better healthcare facilities at a reasonably low cost without loss of time and with the same facilities and procedures that are available in the developed countries. However it is having its own problems such as, communicable diseases, imbalance in healthcare facilities [who pays more will be given more preference] and regional disparities etc. The present Covid-19 or Coronovirus that has spread from China to the entire World is an example of pandemic spreading. Modern Transportation System means, infection can potentially move around the world within a few hours; at the same type modern technology and healthcare procedures potentially enable the health community to respond quickly to such emergencies.   For example the entire world is coming together to fight the Covid-19 epidemic that is presently endangering the entire World.   Also, exporting of hydroxychloroquine medicine by India to US is an example of Globalization of health in the present scenario.

Healthcare Travel Boon or Bane: India is all set to touch $9 billion dollar mark by 2020 with respect to healthcare travel and has become second largest foreign exchange earner. Healthcare Travel has seen a growth of 55% in India and has occupied the 3rd place in Healthcare destination of the Globe. People from Africa, Middle East, South East Asian Countries and even Europe and developed countries like US, UK and Germany are coming for affordable healthcare procedures that are available in India and comparable to procedures available in developed countries at a much affordable cost with no loss of time [Boon]. As an Example the cost of healthcare procedures in India is just 50% that of developed nations. World Class healthcare professionals and expertise are available in Indian Healthcare facilities [Hospitals] that are on par with World Standards and some are having JCI and NABH accreditations. As far as latest technology is concerned, Indian Healthcare Professionals have achieved major healthcare procedural breakthrough in areas like [21] [22]

(a) Robotic Cardiac Surgery

(b) Robotic Liver Transplant

(c) Fractional Flow Reserve

(d) Cyberknife Radio Surgery for Cancer Treatment

(e) Conscious Cardiac Bypass Surgery [Beating Heart Surgery – only Indian Healthcare professionals are pioneers]

(f) Birmingham Knee Surfacing [except UK and India none others have this procedure]

All these facilities and technology is recognized worldwide as they are at par with International Standards and are trusted Worldwide for their professional efficiency. In addition Indian Healthcare facilities have an excellent post operative survival rate [1.4, compared to 1.9 in US]. Living and Travelling expenses for the International patient and the accomplice are very marginal in India compared to other developed nations. These factors will have economic growth in the country. However, there are some negative aspects also. Since, Healthcare Providers [Hospitals] are more concentrating on International Patients because of the income derived from them there is always possibility of local people [Patients] are relegated to second position. In addition these technological advanced healthcare procedures are costly and local people may not be in a position to afford them and get that type of treatment which is being offered to International Patients [Bane]. Finally healthcare travel to India is only a boon from the following perspective

It has opened doors to Indian Healthcare facilities to Worldwide Audience [International Patients] Indian Healthcare Facilities and Professionals will now horn their professional skills to match global standards.

To sum up healthcare travel to India is always a Boon to both the country and the Globe.

Dependence on Private Healthcare in India [Boon or Bane] [15]:

Compared to developed countries India's healthcare sector is dominated by private players [due to globalization] in the ratio of 80 : 20. Healthcare Industry is growing so fast and is expected to reach

around $170 billion dollars in another 5 to 6 years according to one study.   The average healthcare spending Worldwide is 9.1% of GDP, whereas India spends only 1.4% of GDP.   India is predominantly affected by weather related diseases, rising from air pollution, non availability of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to one and all, are the major issues that are connected with health.   According to estimates by UNICEF less than 45% of the India's population has access to safe drinking water.   Noble Laureate Amartya Sen while addressing 11th Kolkata group workshop organized by Pratichi [India] Trust, Harword Global Equity Initiative and UNICEF India said that, **"India's health sector is in a dismal condition.   He also cautioned against over-reliance on the private health sector in a country where basic health services are minimal; and believes that this situation is causing exploitation of vulnerable and underprivileged patients"**

However, healthcare experts, policy makers and social activists believe that private healthcare should exist but not at the cost of public health. Globally any country cannot bring drastic healthcare transformation without the help of governments. The need of hour is financial allocations to the healthcare sector independent of other functional areas. In this regard India can take inspiration from developed nations and Asian Countries like Thailand, Singapore, China. From this it can be said that dependence of private healthcare in India is 50/50 with respect to boon or bane.

Public Private Participation in health sector at the Global Level[24]:

Since, there is a long gap between demand and supply in health services the public private participation in healthcare sector has come into, play a vital role to minimize the gap. Many developing nations have adapted Private Financial initiative and economic cooperation and development, wherein private healthcare sector is responsible for providing necessary infrastructure including highly sophisticated and well equipped healthcare facilities and the core of health services are to be rendered by public sector / government. In an healthcare sector, not only the infrastructure and updated sophisticated equipment but also lack of healthcare professionals will determine the growth of healthcare sector; These two factors complement each other for better healthcare. Globalization has paved the way to ensure healthcare in India to come up to the present international status.   Many Multinational Companies and Healthcare Facilities are coming forward to join hands with developing countries in the healthcare sector to give an impetus to healthcare.   In a way this gives boost to the economy of both the countries. However, Governments of the respective countries have a pivotal role in framing health policies and programs specific to the requirement of each country. Globalization has shown the path for the private sector to act as a catalyst to deliver the healthcare services to the people by way of greater efficiency, better management skills and strategic and stronger resources in terms of monetary and human resources. The Government of India has initiated number of steps to take advantage of emerging situation in healthcare, making significant investments to improve the infrastructure and delivering mechanism not only to improve healthcare in rural and urban areas but also to make the sector a foreign exchange earner. In healthcare

consistent quality is a test to meet the healthcare goals and in addition certain restrictions opted by the Government of India in healthcare sector are, Accountability, Environmental Regulations, Disparity among the citizens and International Patients in regard to providing healthcare procedures and facilities.   As MITCHEL pointed out,

"one has to prioritize and conduct a proper cost benefit analysis to provide universal access to healthcare."

Some of the important aspects of globalization of healthcare with respect to International Patients:

A. Cashless Hospitalization Boon or Bane[25]:   This is one aspect wherein International Patients will be happy and relieved of their stress if the Insurance Companies follow cashless hospitalization policy.   However presently some Insurance Companies have withdrawn this facilities because lack of transparency on the part of healthcare providers [Hospitals] However some foreign insurance companies who are having joint ventureship / understanding have some limited access for cashless hospitalizations in some Multispecialty and Super Specialty Hospitals certified by JCI and NABH.   Another problem arising is, many Insurance Companies, dishonor bills submitted by international patients through the respective Healthcare Providers for the settlement of claim, because, they say Hospitals / Healthcare Providers often overcharge when they learn that the patient is having insurance cover.   However, in the eye of healthcare providers, according to Dr. Sugit Chatarjee, gynecologist and CEO of Dr. L H Hiranadani Hospital, Powai, Bombay,

"this is only an allegation, not a fact.   If the insurance guys have a grouse, they should settle it through dialogue.   All hospitals cannot be painted with the same brush.   A vast majority of transparent billing system."

According to S. Jagani, Insurance Advisor for the last 25 years expressed that, **"insurance settling through cashless policy has been a hassle for both the company and the patient. It is a complicated and roundabout way of settling the claim, leading to trouble for the insured party."**

However, this facility will take care of patients hospitalized without paying on the spot if the above facility is available, it will be easier to have healthcare procedures, without worry.

B. Patients and Electronic Health Records [EHR][29]: Globalization of healthcare and International Patients arrivals has changed the system of maintaining Healthcare Records.   Since, International Patients are coming from different countries and some are having their own Healthcare Records in their own language it has become necessary to have electronic health records and translators to pass on the information from the country of origin of the patient to the country of choice of the patient where he / she intends to have healthcare procedures.   This electronic health records that are maintained by the healthcare providers will have the access to the patient so that the patient is in a position to have full knowledge of his/ her, nature / cause of

ailment / discomfort.   It also gives full information to the healthcare professionals in deciding the type of procedure that is required because the past and present health position of the patient is available in a documented form.

C. <u>Advanced Technology and Machine Interventions in Healthcare</u>[26]:   Advanced Technology and Sophisticated Equipment such as Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Computer programmed complicated surgeries, Birmingham knee surfacing, Multiple Organ Transplantation etc., has brought see saw change in healthcare procedures to the advantage of the patients in minimizing surgery time, loss of blood, recovery time drastically.   This has happened because of Globalization of Healthcare and participation of many Healthcare Providers coming together to make healthcare, highly skilled and technologically advanced sector.   The recent phenomena of implementing the idea of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare has brought unimaginable potential.   The day is not far of that Artificial Intelligence will revolutionize Healthcare Sector. Healthcare is increasingly turning towards cloud technology.   According to researchers from Global Markets Insights, the north American healthcare cloud – computing market, surpassed $ 8.5 billion in 2008 and by 2025 Global Cloud Market exceeds $ 55 billion

Artificial Intelligence Scientist Sebistian Thrun, demonstrated at Stan Ford University that,

"deep learning, algorithm was capable enough to diagnose potentially cancerous skin lesions as accurately as a board certified Dermatologist."

This and such other reports submitted offering an early glimpse with a new era where software to diagnose diseases as accurately if not more as a qualified Doctor. Artificial Intelligence [AI] can definitely guide healthcare professionals in diagnosis of diseases if not compete with them. According to researchers at Frost and Sullivan, AI systems would generate $ 6.7 billion in Global Revenue in Healthcare Sector by 2021.

The impact of AI on Healthcare, could completely redesign the present Healthcare System, Healthcare Professionals in designing procedures, plans and can find best suited procedure for each patient.

D. <u>Globalization – Digital Transformation – Boon or Bane to International Patients</u>[27]: Globalization of Healthcare has brought-in several changes and one among them is Digitization or Digital Transformation, but it has its own positive and negative aspects. However digitization has proved more positive in Healthcare Sector.   Digitization can improve <u>quality of patient's care</u> by adopting Digital Technology and process.   The healthcare providers not only just adapt the new technology but they must have a **<u>clear digital strategy</u>** in their entire organization and IT infrastructure.   For any Healthcare Facility to become Digital Hospital, the entire process should be streamlined and re-engineered to create paperless automated digital work flow.   One such aspect is introduction of Electronic Health Records [EHR]. Digital Medical Imaging System is quickening the process of reviewing Medical Image by Healthcare Professionals.

Likewise, Real Time Location System [RTLS] is used to locate equipment, patients and staff. Growing competition and lessoning margins, the Doctor-to-patient ratio is pathetically low, Healthcare Providers are bound to adopt Healthcare Digital Transformation. In addition, the Digital Transformation reduces loss of time, critical information like drug allergy, current medication, blood group, last Medical Health Check and so on so forth.   If this information is not readily available treatment of the patient is difficult. Due to rapid technological development there are many platforms available to accurately capture information / data from various sources such as EMRs, warables, Clinical Information Systems Mobile Devices and so on. Putting together the entire health data of a patient on a device that is accessible to both the patient and healthcare professional can give desired care. The future is digital and all the Healthcare Providers to adopt it.

E.   <u>Globalization – Price Capping – boon or bane to health innovations</u>[28]: The decision of Government of India to put a cap on the prices of certain medical equipment has its positive and negative signs.   For example, the decision to cap the price of cardiac stents was made by following the release of data by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority [NPPA], showing that profit margins from the manufacturer to the patient is as high as 1000%; because from import or manufacturer to the patient, there are number of middle men who increases the real cost because of their percentages.   However, this increase is to be borne by the patient.   On the other hand some people argue that the price cap could stifle innovation and flood the market with Chinese cheaper imports.   Healthcare equipments are more sensitive and to be 100% perfect as they are being used in humans.   However the price cap on medical devices did not give much relief to the patient according to some Doctors and hospitals.   Some Healthcare Providers are increasing cost of surgery to make up the loss incurred due to price capping and some hospitals have taken to other measures to cut costs, such as reusing catheters and guide wires and if proper sanitization protocols are not followed this could result in contamination and at times it could be lethal. According to the information available high burden of Hospital Acquired Infections will become alarming possibility.

<u>Role of private healthcare sector towards universal health coverage in India:</u>[31]

Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation said,

"It is health that is persons' real wealth but not a piece of gold and silver"

As mentioned in Vedas,

"<u>PranayamaatPustihiGotrasyaStejoYashobalam</u>"

The meaning of the above caption is with Pranayama body gets strength, vigor and concentration.   If these things are developed by Pranayama the diseases or ailments are afraid of coming nearer to you.

DrussenaSaradaamSatam

SunyamaSaradaamSatam

PrabravamaSaradaamSatam

AdhinaaSyamaSaradaahSatam

BhuyamaSaradaahSatam

Means,

"one has to live for Hundred years"

How?

With good habits like See Good, Hear Good, Speak Good and Live with Integrity

"**A healthy body is the dweller of sound mind**"

Universal Health Coverage [UHC]; is about ensuring all individuals and communities could have access to the healthcare.   It does not mean healthcare is free for all but the out of pocket payments do not prevent or dissuade people from using health services and that people are shielded from catastrophic health expenditure.   The present covid crisis which has no distinction between rich, middle class, and poor, the Universal Health Coverage is felt like never before.   The present condition forced India to increase their public health expenditure.   Universal Health Coverage cannot be achieved without the participation and contribution from Private Healthcare Sector and it has a key role to play.   Over 70% of healthcare services in India are provided by the private sector only.

According to a study only 5% to 10% of India's private healthcare sector and labs are Accredited and these are institutions of Universal Excellence and on par with International Standards like NABH, JCI, NABL etc., These institutions put the Indian Healthcare System to a top 3 destination for healthcare travel globally and created an export market of nearly USD 9 Billion in 2020 due to strict adherence of global standards of process, procedures, protocols and innovations. The present health financing in India is from supply to demand and there is great opportunity for adoption of standards, a minimum eligibility criteria for empanelment by large insurance companies. As an Example, India is the World's largest producer of vaccine, it is obligatory on the part of both private and government to grab the opportunity and show the world that we are none to second in raising our head in Global Healthcare Emergency such as the present Covid situation.   Many countries are looking at India for Covid Vaccine to save millions of people from the Coronavirus Pandemic.

2. CONCLUSION

Globalization of Healthcare has given an opportunity to developing nations like India, to raise to the occasion and develop themselves in different fields of healthcare to International Standards. Access to instant procedures of International Standards is one of the main features for International Patients that attracts India.   Globalization made it possible to Indian Healthcare Sector, that critical surgical procedures are accomplished successfully. Finally, Indian Healthcare Sector offers World

Class Healthcare procedures and Care with the aid of Advanced Technology and Equipment, in addition Rehabilitation and Recuperation facilities after the procedure.   Also, Alternative system of Therapies like Ayurveda, Yoga, Siddha, Unani, Naturopathy, Homeopathy are available for certain chronic diseases where there is no cure in allopathy.   A rational view of Globalization of Healthcare promises much boon to the developing nations and it is a bless in disguise in this pandemic situation that is worrying globally.

ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Not applicable.

HUMAN AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

No Animals/Humans were used for studies that are base of this research.

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

Not applicable.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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