

A Study of Patient Perception and Reasons for Choosing Chhanda (Kalebabu) Narayani Eye Hospital, Nepal

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Abstract: A hospital's service quality plays an important role in determining a person's perception during the selection of health care service. Patient expectations refer to their needs, wants, preferences, cost of service and demands. This study aims to identify the different factors that influence the patient's perception and reason for choosing this hospital for eye care service. The study has focused on a personal profile, general information, and Patient satisfaction regarding service quality (Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, Responsiveness, Timeliness, and Equality) to know patients' perception. In order to accomplish this, SERVQUAL (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Barry 1988) model questionnaires are used. Health care providers must conduct this type of research to find out their organization's drawbacks; this method will enable them to position themselves in the prevailing competitive market.

Keywords–Service Quality, Perception, Eye Care Service, NNJS, SERVQUAL,

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of care is determined by how likely it is for individuals and populations to achieve desired health outcomes. The quality of health care services are determined by multiple elements. The quality health care should be effective, safe, people-centered, timely, equitable, integrated and efficient.¹ These elements should always be centered on the organization's needs by service providers. Besides these, patients' perception of choosing a hospital is also affected by various other factors like low cost, staff behavior, general behavior of doctors, registration and other formalities, caring staff, quality outcomes after treatment, etc.

There's no doubt that the quality of care plays a vital role for the sustainability of the program as well as for the competitive advantage among competitors. The quality of health care delivered and the outcomes of treatment are intimately connected to patient satisfaction.

The study was conducted in an eye care provider hospital of Nepal to know the perception and reason behind choosing this hospital. Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (NNJS) is a non-governmental, non-profit social organization representing and supporting the

Nepal Government and the Social Welfare Council of Nepal in the Eye Care Service. NNJS has more than 20 eye hospitals and 126 primary eye care centers. Chhanda (Kalebabu) Narayani Eye Hospital is also under Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (NNJS), which is governed by the Eye Health Program- Rapti & Bahadurgunj. It is located in the southern part of Nepal in the Kapilbalbastu District, close to the Indian border (Barhni District of Uttar Pradesh). About 65% to 72% of patients come from a different part of Uttar Pradesh, India. Similarly, 83% of the patients who had successful cataract surgery were from India.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Patients have access to all service quality, cost, and treatment information because of advancements in technology. It is now easy for them to access health care facilities as a result of the enhancement of easy access to transportation. Many researchers have studied the patient perspective of selecting health care facilities from time to time.

During 1970's to 1980's

Researchers William A Flexner and Eric N Berkowitz (1979) found the most important factors for consumers when choosing a hospital are location (cost, quality of care, range of specialties), Services (attitude, reputation, and cleanliness), and facility (appearance and décor). (1) Joe Bascarino and Steven R. Stelber (1981) indicate that people's choices for general health care are

¹Who.int. 2022. *Fact sheet: Quality health services*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/quality-health-services>> [Accessed 19 March 2022].

influenced by several factors: convenience, using or recommending doctors, past experience with a facility, knowledge or liking of staff, quality of facility, cost-effectiveness.(2)

During 1990's to 2000's

Researchers K Davis, K. Collins, C. Schoen et al. (1995) have focused in their research paper "Choice Matters - enrollments views of their health plan" on issues such as the purchase of the health plan, quality of service, choice of physician, access to specialty care, availability of emergency care, waiting time for appointments, premium paid for the plan, and out of pocket costs. (3). According to JOSEPH A. BOSCARINO (1996), there needs to be better marketing, a better staff and technology, better community reputations, and more productive and qualified physicians as well as improving patient satisfaction and patient accommodations to attract patients.(4). Khalid Saad Bin Saeed's study "Factors affecting patients' choice of hospital" (1998) indicates that the choice of hospital is influenced by socio demographic factors as well as by hospital attributes. An efficient appointment system, convenient appointment system, simple admission process, convenient visiting hours, regular hours of the hospital clinics, good hospital administration, recommendation from friends and relatives, good hospital reputation, convenient hospital location, presence of female doctors in most clinics, and a convenient location.(5)

During 2001's to 2010's

A. H. Al-Doghaither, B. M. Abdelrhman, et al. (2003) describe various factors of patient choice in their research paper. The availability of medical services, accessibility, administrative services, reputation, environmental factors, and accessories are major factors affecting patients' choices (6). Among the major elements of public relations, D.Tengilimoglu, M. Yesiltas, A. Kisa, et al. (2008) have focused on reputation and image of hospitals, logos and slogans of hospitals, behavior and attitude of personnel, designing hospitals, and sponsorship that play a major part in consumer decision making(7).

During 2011s to 2020s

For better health care establishment, researchers M. Azam, M. Qureshi, et al (2015) examined quality parameters such as Burden of Diseases, Knowledge Management, Core Qualities, and Associated Supportive Qualities, Priority Area Management, Clinical Governance, Patients expectation, and Patients perception (8). Keeping in mind the very specific factors that men and women find important when picking hospitals, Kumar Sanjay (2015) pointed out that doctors, easy accessibility to facilities,

low cost service, as well as recommendation by friends and relatives are all factors that bear consideration when choosing a hospital (9). There is no doubt that free drugs, easy access to doctors, and belief in staff and doctors are a few of the factors that will affect the perception of patients, as elaborated by H. E. Mohammad, A. A. Mohammad, et al (2016) in their research paper (10). Several factors contribute to patients' choice, like facilities and physical assets, physicians and employees, location, price, and promotion, according to Badhadori, Mohammadkarim, Teymourzadeh, Ehsan, Ravangard, Ramin et al (2016) (11).P. Pemula (2017) in his research paper states that the patient perception of a hospital is influenced by the availability of services and the quality, and the costs and characteristics of the patients. In addition to the free services, users are most likely attracted to hospitals if they are less expensive and provide free services(12). According to the study by S. Al-Balushi, M. Khan et al. (2017), the factors influencing the choice of a hospital were directly associated between the quality of service and cost associated with the hospital. Cost of the hospital has a direct impact on the choice of the hospital. The reason why patients prefer private hospitals is precisely because they are more qualified staffs working in the hospital, have prompt service, well-response and helpful staff, and are equipped with modern technology (13). C. Cui, X.Zuo, Y. Wang, et al. (2000) have justified that patients choose a cooperative hospital for better treatment, medical insurance facilities, and quick service.(14)

III. OBJECTIVE

Primary Objective

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions and reasons behind the patients' choice to seek eye care at Chhanda (Kalebabu)Narayani Eye Hospital in Nepal.

Specific Objective

- To find various levels of patients based on their socio-economic status.
- To identify the reasons for choosing this eye hospital.
- To find the patients satisfaction regarding service quality.
- To advise hospital management teams in order to improve the quality of their services.
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IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research approaches are incorporated into a descriptive research design to

study the topic in depth. Direct interview with five-point Likert scales was used to obtain the respondents' responses in accordance with Parasuraman et al. (1998)'s SERVQUAL model. Five different Likert scales were used: 1= Highly Satisfied, 2= Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 4=Dissatisfied, and 5=Highly Dissatisfied. It has been included in the study a question associated with a respondent's socio-demographic characteristics.

1. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A total of 100 Indian patients are included in the study who have visited Chhanda Kalebabu Narayani Eye Hospital in different dates between October 2021 and December 2021. In this study, a random sample of patients between the ages of 18 and 61 has been collected.

2. RESEARCH TOOLS

Three tools were used for the study. The first part of the form contains a personal profile, the second part contains general information, and the third part is a SERVQUAL questionnaire to assess the satisfaction of the patients.

3. DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected by direct interview with a structured questionnaire. An interview technique and method were taught to two volunteers for better collection of data. In order to obtain an effective response from patients, the questions were translated from the English language to Nepali in order to get an effective response.

4. LIMITATION OF STUDY

The study has limitations in the following areas:

- 1) The study was conducted solely on Indian patients.
- 2) Nepalese patients are excluded.

5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

SPSS software was used to calculate the percentages and frequencies of data in order to assess the outcome of the study.

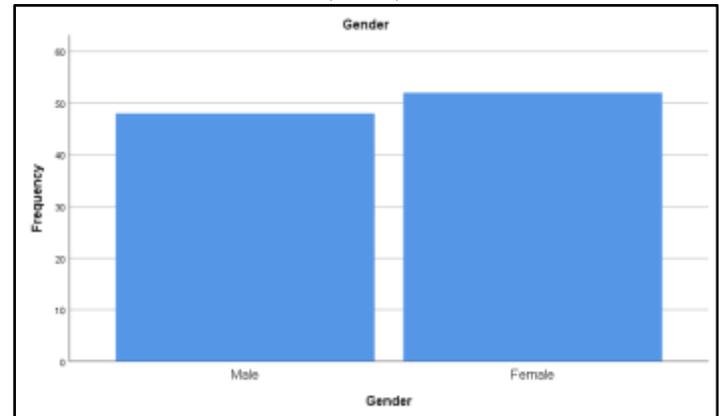
V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In total 100 respondents, male are 48% and Female are 52%.

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	48	48.0	48.0	48.0
	Female	52	52.0	52.0	100.0

Total	100	100.0	100.0
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(Table 1)

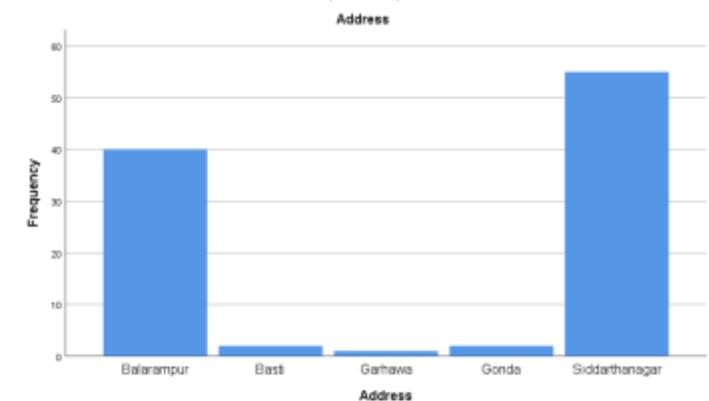


(Graph-1)

The percentage of patients from Siddarthanagar District is 55%, and the percentage from Balarampur District is 40%. The percentage of patients from Basti and Gonda Districts is only 2%. This has meant that patients from Balarampur and Siddarthanagar districts have easier access to hospitals. This has meant that patients from Balarampur and Siddarthanagar districts have easier access to hospitals.

Address of the respondents					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Balarampur	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Basti	2	2.0	2.0	42.0
	Garhawa	1	1.0	1.0	43.0
	Gonda	2	2.0	2.0	45.0
	Siddarthanagar	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table-2)

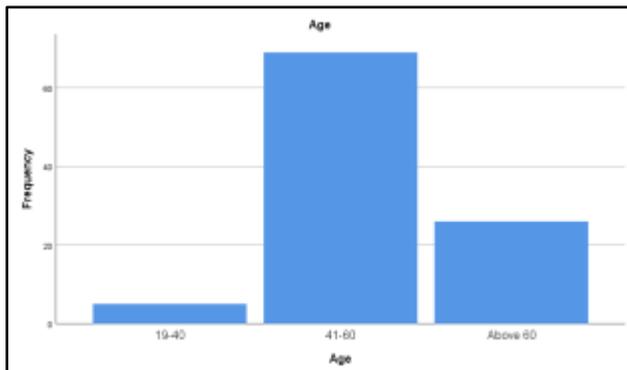


(Graph-2)

As shown in Table 3, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 41 and 60 (69%). The second highest number of respondents were above age 60 (26%). Only 5% of patients were aged 19 to 40.

Age of Respondent					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19-40	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	41-60	69	69.0	69.0	74.0
	Above 60	26	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table-3)

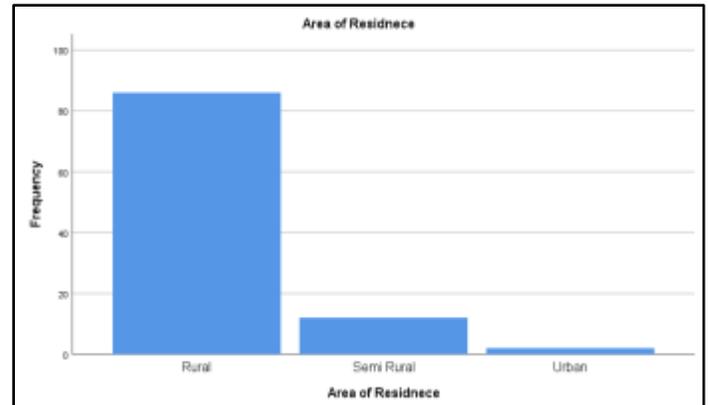


(Graph-3)

A large proportion of the patients who come to the hospital originate from rural areas (86%). Followed by 12 % of respondents from the Semi-Rural and 2% from the Urban areas. (Table 4)

Residence of Respondent					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	86	86.0	86.0	86.0
	Semi Rural	12	12.0	12.0	98.0
	Urban	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table- 4)

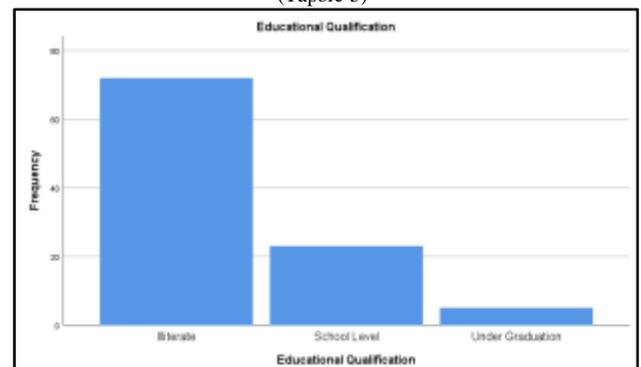


(Graph-4)

Illiterate patients comprised 72% of the total patients, school-level patients 23 percent, and undergraduates 5 percent. The importance of education is one of the most important requirements for good patient communication, active participation of the patient in the treatment process, and the cooperation between the patient and the provider during the delivery of eye care services.

Education of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent age	Valid Percent age	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Illiterate	72	72.0	72.0	72.0
	School Level	23	23.0	23.0	95.0
	Under Graduation	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Tapble-5)

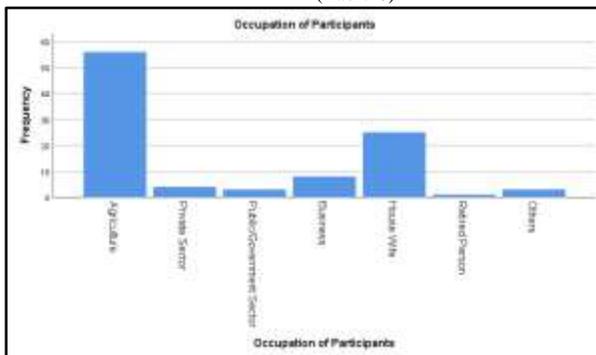


(Graph-5)

Among eye care service recipients, the occupation of the patients varied. The table shows that 56% of respondents were engaged in agriculture, 25% were housewives, 8% were in business, and 4% were in private sector employment. Only 3% were involved in public or government sector job.

Occupation of the Respondent					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Agriculture field	56	56.0	56.0	56.0
	Private Sector job	4	4.0	4.0	60.0
	Public/Government Sector job	3	3.0	3.0	63.0
	Business sector	8	8.0	8.0	71.0
	House-Wife	25	25.0	25.0	96.0
	Retired	1	1.0	1.0	97.0
	Others sector	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table-6)

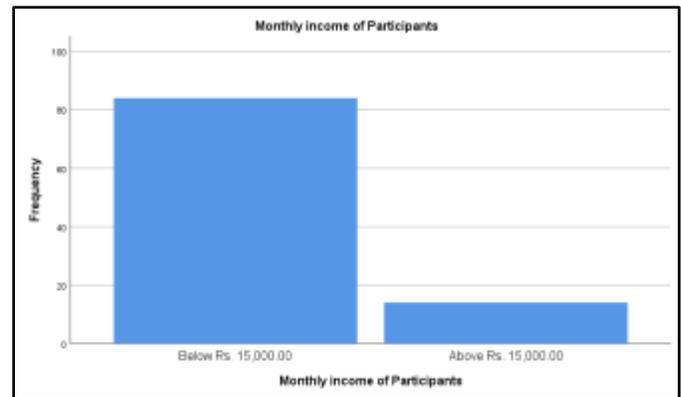


(Graph-6)

The income of selected patients is shown in Table-7. There are 85.7% of patients earning less than Rs 15,000.00 per month, and 14.3% earning more. It also showed that most of these patients come from lower-income families.

Monthly income of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Below ICRs. 15,000.00	84	84.0	85.7	85.7
	Above ICRs. 15,000.00	14	14.0	14.3	100.0
	Total	98	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.0		
Total		100	100.0		

(Table-7)

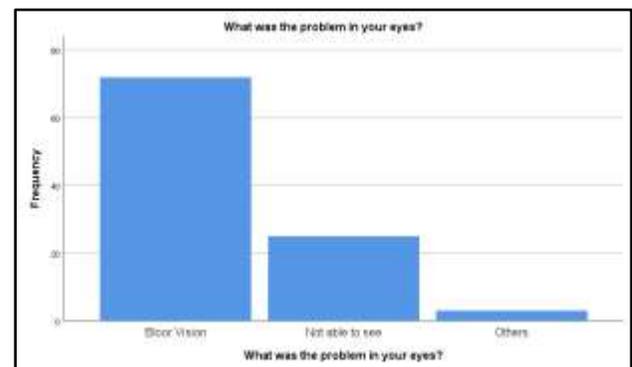


(Graph-7)

In a survey of 100 patients, 72 percent had Bloor Vision problems, and 25 percent were unable to see clearly. This indicates that the needy people from India have good access to this hospital.

Problem in the eyes?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Bloor Vision	72	72.0	72.0	72.0
	Not able to see	25	25.0	25.0	97.0
	Others	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table-8)

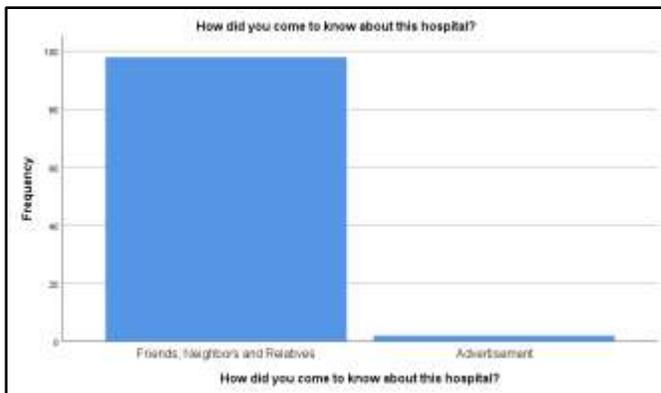


(Graph-8)

The table below shows how patients learned about this Hospital. A majority of people (98%) learned about this hospital from friends, neighbours, and relatives, followed by 2% from advertisements. According to this, the hospital has a positive impact on many people.

How you know about this Hospital?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Friends, Neighbors and Relatives	98	98.0	98.0	98.0
	Advertisement	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table-9)

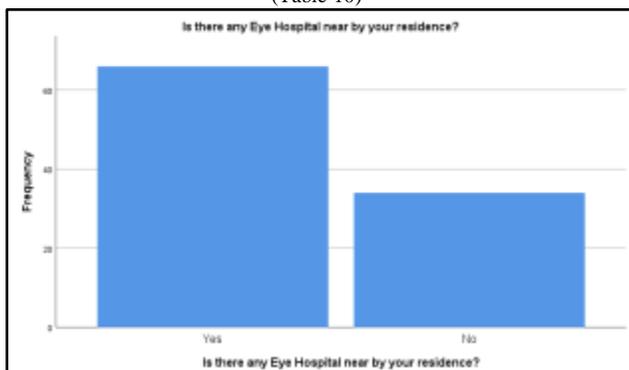


(Graph-9)

In the survey of 100 patients, 66% of them had an Eye Hospital situated nearby their place of residence. 34% of them had no access to this type of facility.

Is there any Eye Hospital near by your residence?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	66	66.0	66.0	66.0
	No	34	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

(Table-10)

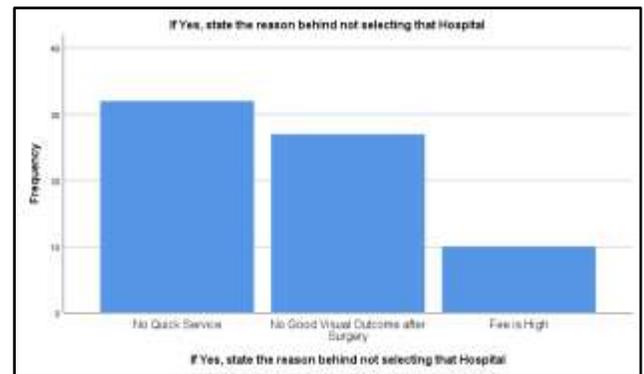


(Graph-10)

46.4% of the patients responded negatively to the fact that they did not receive quick service, 39.1% of them responded negatively to the fact they did not receive a successful surgical outcome and 10% of them reacted to the high fees.

If Yes, state the reason behind not selecting that Hospital					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	No Quick Service	32	32.0	46.4	46.4
	No Good Visual Outcome after Surgery	27	27.0	39.1	85.5
	Fee is High	10	10.0	14.5	100.0
	Total	69	69.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	31	31.0	
Total		100	100.0		

(Table-11)

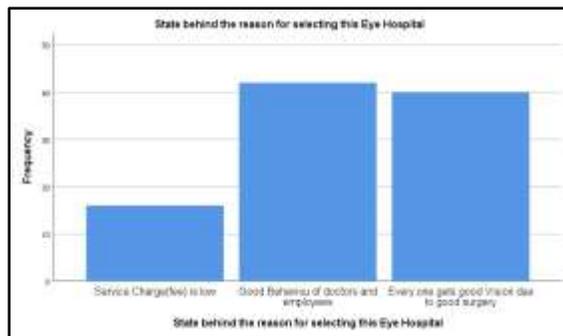


(Graph-11)

Respondents gave good feedback on the doctors and other hospital staff (42.9%), getting good vision after surgery (40.8%), and low service charges (16.3%) as their reasons for choosing this hospital.

Reason behind the selecting this hospital					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Service Charge(fee) is low	16	16.0	16.3	16.3
	Good Behaviour of doctors and employees	42	42.0	42.9	59.2
	Every one gets good Vision due to good surgery	40	40.0	40.8	100.0
	Total	98	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.0		
Total		100	100.0		

(Table-12)



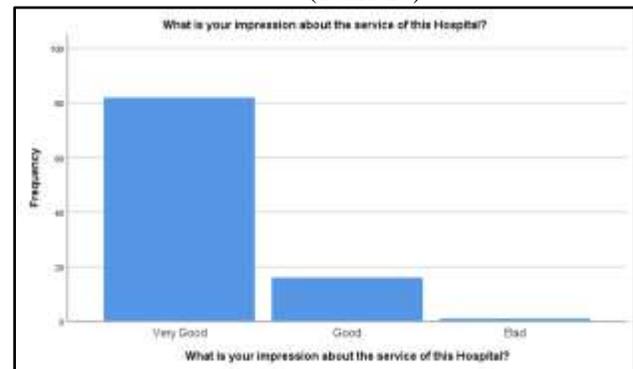
(Graph-12)

82.8% patients had very good impression, 16.2% had good impression towards the service of this hospital. But 1% had bad impression toward the service of this hospital. Overall, the impression of the patients is very good.

Your impression about this hospital?				
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	82	82.0	82.8	82.8
	16	16.0	16.2	99.0
	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Missing	System	1	1.0	
Total		100	100.0	

Valid	Very Good	82	82.0	82.8	82.8
	Good	16	16.0	16.2	99.0
	Bad	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		

(Table-13)



(Graph-13)

Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction.

	Factors	Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD
TANGIBILITY						
1	Infrastructure (Building of the Hospital)	64(64.6%)	35(35.5%)			
2	Convenient means of transportation to reach Hospital	36(36.7%)	47(48%)	13(13.3%)	2(2%)	
3	Canteen Facilities for patients and visitors	7(7%)	18(18%)	46(46%)	25(25%)	4(4%)
4	Pharmacy and Spectacle service	40(40.4%)	44(44.4%)	14(14.1%)	1(1%)	
5	Citizen Charter	17(17.3%)	11(11.2%)	7(7.1%)	8(8.2%)	55(55.6%)

	(information board), Service Charge (Rate List) placed in public place provided lots of information.					(%)		are professional and well trained	(%)	%	(%)		
5	Safe and Safety for the Patients							86(86%)	14(14%)				
6	Visual Outcome after surgery							79(79%)	17(17%)	3(3%)	1(1%)		
6	Cleanliness of Hospital and Surrounding	77(77%)	23(23%)					(Table-15)					
7	Cleanliness of Toilet/Patient ward	70(70%)	29(29%)	1(1%)				84 % of patients are highly satisfied with the facilities, 78 % with prompt and quick service, 77.8% with Employees being professional and well trained, and 86 % with safety and security and visual outcome after surgery (79%). But 52% of the patients are highly dissatisfied (unknown) with the rate list, the service charge, placed in a public place.(Table-15)					
8	Cleanliness of Patient Bed	73(74.5%)	25(25.5%)					(Table-14)					

As far as tangibility of service is concerned, highly satisfied patients rank higher than others. The Citizen Charter was designed to familiarize the patients with the service facilities, service rate, and various departments, but 55.6% of patients didn't know about these facilities. (Table-14)

Factors		Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD
DEPENDABILITY						
1	No Extra Charge or hidden Charge of service fee	84(84%)	15(15%)		1(1%)	
2	Service Charge (Rate List) Placed in public place	21(21%)	10(10%)	6(6%)	11(11%)	52(52%)
3	Prompt and quick service	78(78%)	21(21%)		1(1%)	
4	Employee	77(77.8)	21(21.2)	1(1)		

Factors		Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD
CONFIDENCE						
1	Doctors' availability in all time	83(83%)	17(17%)			
2	Doctor good behaviour and politeness toward patients	84(84%)	16(16%)			
3	Staff attitude and friendly behaviour	84(84%)	16(16%)			
4	Doctor giving more time while examining the patients	79(79.8%)	20(20.2%)			

As can be seen from the table above (Table-16), the hospital has provided highly satisfactory assurance to the patients. A Survey carried out among the patients showed their high satisfaction level for Doctor's availability (83%), Doctor's good behavior (84%), Hospital staff's attitude and friendliness (84%) Doctor's willingness to give more time (79.8%).

S.No		Fact ors		Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD		
EMPATHY								
1	Poor patients	55(55.6%)	7(7.1%)	10(10.1%)	6(6.1%)	21(21.2%)		

	treated with free of cost					
2	Patients gets discount on fee if short of money	55(55.6%)	7(7.1%)	7(7.1%)	8(8.1%)	22(22.1%)
3	Counselling before surgery	83(83%)	17(17%)			
4	Counselling before discharge	86(86%)	14(14%)			
5	Staff willingness to help the patient	86(86%)	13(13%)	1(1%)		

(Table-17)

The majority of patients are highly satisfied with the support provided for poor patients and the discount offered when money is short, while 22 percent are highly dissatisfied. Over 83% of patients are satisfied with the patient counselling before and after surgery. Over 86% of patients are satisfied with the support from the staff. (Table-17)

S.No	Factors	Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD
RESPONSE						
1	Friendly and Fair behaviour of Reception/Registration counter	80(80%)	20(20%)			
2	Provide information required by the patients	83(83%)	17(17%)			
3	Staff/Doctors listen the problem of each patients	84(84%)	16(16%)			

(Table-18)

Regarding responsiveness (Table-18), patients are highly satisfied with the friendly and fair behavior of the registration counter, 83% with getting the information they need, and 84% with doctors and staff listening.

S.No	Factors	Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD

TIMELINESS						
1	Service provided without any delay	83(83%)	15(15%)			
2	Surgery is done on same day	85(85%)	15(15%)			
3	Doctors/Staffs are punctual on their service	86(86%)	14(14%)			
4	Services in Lab report in time/delivery of spectacles	84(84%)	16(16%)			

(Table-19)

According to the timeliness of hospital service (Table-19), most patients are highly satisfied with service delivery without delay (83%), surgery done on the same day (85%), doctor and staff punctuality (86%), as well as reports from the lab and delivery of spectacles (84%).

S.No	Factors	Frequency/Percent				
		HS	S	N	D	HD
EQUITABILITY						
1	No Discrimination on the basis of the Nationality.	89(89%)	11(11%)			
2	No Discrimination on the basis of language	88(88%)	12(12%)			
3	No Discrimination on the basis of race and religion	88(88%)	12(12%)			
4	Equal Service opportunity	88(88%)	12(12%)			

(Table-20)

Regarding equality, a high percentage of patients are satisfied with no discrimination based on nationality (89%), language (88%), race and religion (88%), and Equal service opportunity (88%).

VI. CONCLUSION

Among 100 participants, 52 percent of female participants and 48 percent of male participants were actively involved in the survey. According to the research, the majority of patients who came to this hospital from Siddhartha nagar district (55%) and the second largest portion of patients came from Balrampur district (40%) of Uttar Pradesh, India. It was found that the majority of patients (86%) came to the hospital from rural areas. The majority of those treated were illiterate (72%). Additionally, it was found that 56% of the patients were from farming backgrounds and had low levels of income (85.7%). This shows that people from rural areas with

low incomes have good access to this hospital.

In the study, 66 percent of the patients had an eye hospital close to their home, but though many of them could have chosen a local eye hospital, they choose Chhanda (Kalebabu) Naryani Eye Hospital in Nepal because they have a positive experience (good behaviour) with the doctors (42.8%) and they have good vision after the surgery (40.8%). Among the reasons for not choosing a nearby hospital, there was a lack of quick service (48.4%) and dissatisfaction with the visual outcome (39.1%).

The vast majority of patients (98%) come to this hospital with a recommendation from friends and families. The overall impression of the patients (82.8%) was a very positive experience.

Regarding patients' satisfaction with service quality, this study focused on factors such as tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, responsiveness, timeliness, and equality. A citizen charter that was designed to inform the general public was not properly displayed in public areas. According to the survey results, 55.6% of the patients were highly unsatisfied with the location where the citizen charter was placed. In the same way, 52% of patients were also highly dissatisfied with the place in which the rate list was placed. Among those surveyed, 21.2% did not know what facilities were available for poor patients, and 22.1% did not know about subsidies.

There were 25% of respondents who were dissatisfied with the canteen facilities. Hospital management should pay close attention to all the drawbacks of the hospital.

VII. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The management team and the hospital staff members will be able to understand the drawbacks and plan ideas for enhancing more effective eye care services. Moreover, the study will facilitate further investigations and comparisons of patient satisfaction levels in the future.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

1. A study of this type should be carried out in a similar type of hospital located close to the Indian border.
2. The study will help in identifying the drawbacks of the hospital service and also patients' perceptions and expectations when choosing a hospital.
3. The management should consider putting the information board (Citizen Charter) at an appropriate place where people can easily find it, so that general patients will have easy access to it.

4. Canteen services in the hospital are provided to patients as part of hospital services. It is equally important to manage them the same way as other hospital services. Therefore, the management ought to consider making improvements to the canteen facilities.
5. It would be helpful if hospital management conveyed a message or placed information in a proper place regarding how the hospital supports poor patients so that no one is excluded from eye care. It is one of the best examples of humanitarianism as it contributes to reducing blindness.
6. It is also important for the management to think about how to make it easier for patients to access the hospital.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank the Chief Medical Director, Medical Superintendent, and Administrative Officer for granting my request to conduct research. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to all staff as well as the volunteers and patients who have assisted me to complete this research. Last but not least I thank my supervisor, Pro Dr. Kapil Khattar, for mentoring me and Meena Thapa Magar, for helping me to enter data in SPSS software.

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