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## **QUALITY OF HEALTH SERVICES IN INDIA - A PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

Public healthcare organisations are viewed as complex entities, given their contextual conditions such as interdependent networks, political influence, and bureaucratic structure. This complexity is a critical determinant for selecting the proper mechanism by which the improvement can be achieved. Berwick stated that quality improvement is a “system property” that requires changing the system to achieve better results. This means that a system-wide implementation of improvement initiatives needs to be considered in relation to the whole context of healthcare organisations to ensure successful and sustainable improvement. Within healthcare there is no universally accepted definition of ‘quality’, but those commonly used pick up on this multi-dimensionality. The following popular definition, from the US Institute of Medicine and also used by the World Health Organization, describes quality as ‘the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge’. The present paper tries to probe into present the role quality health system in a healthcare industry , factors affecting the healthcare quality.

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### **Introduction :**

#### **Definition of Key Terms**

- **Quality:** Is a perception based on the individual value system for the person. It heavily depends on the expectations for each individual, culture, and life experiences
- **Total quality management:** Defines the culture, organization, and attitude of any company or association, which tries to offer these consumers with the required products and services that meet and fulfill their need (Daqar & Milan, 2020)

The World Health Organization defines the following health care quality improvement factors (WHO, 1993):

- Patients’ satisfaction
- The final positive effect on the level of the patient's health
- The reduction of risk for patients
- The efficient use of available resources
- The high level of professionalism (Brinia & Mallakeli, 2017)

Improving the health outcome of the population is crucial for the public health care system (Coles, Anderson, Maxwell, et al., 2020). Implementing good quality health care can improve health outcomes; thus, health and the quality and safety of health care are considered priorities for governments, healthcare workers, and the public (Hill, Stephani, Sapple & Clegg, 2020). These brought a need for formalisation of the commitment by governments to improve the quality of the health care system around the globe (Nkhwashu et al. 2021).

Public healthcare organisations are viewed as complex entities, given their contextual conditions such as interdependent networks, political influence, and bureaucratic structure. This complexity is a critical determinant for selecting the proper mechanism by which the improvement can be achieved. Berwick stated that quality improvement is a “system property” that requires changing the system to achieve better results. This means that a system-wide implementation of improvement initiatives needs to be considered in relation to the whole context of healthcare organisations to ensure successful and sustainable improvement (Almari et al. 2021).

Healthcare leaders have already adopted the concept of TQM, which has its background in industrial production. In the healthcare, the philosophy of TQM is based on management and leadership practices that commit to continuous improvement of the quality. It can provide energy and motivation for improvement of service delivery in the healthcare (Aburayya et al. 2020)

Maintaining quality and safety in health care sector is of paramount importance as this will reduce the cost of care, prevent adverse healthcare outcomes, enhance overall quality of care provided to the patient and maintain public confidence in the health sector. Quality of Health Care is the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increased the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge (Somatunga et al. 2015)

## Role of the Quality System in a Healthcare Facility

The primary role of any quality system is to provide effective means to assuring that the customer (patient) requirements are met fully. Some of the key elements/components of quality that accomplish the patient requirements are patient's safety, staff behavior toward the patients, correct and timely treatment, compliance to treatment protocols, seeking patient feedback, and adequate response to it, complete record keeping, acceptable quality care at affordable prices, clear communication to the patients with respect to the services, best practices for fixing appointment and service delivery, reliable diagnostic and laboratory support, reliable support services like canteen, ambulance, pharmacy, etc. safe and pleasant environment, technical competence, courtesy, and attitude of staff (Sharma, 2012).

**Table 1: Factors influencing the quality of healthcare**

Sl.No.	Category	Themes
1.	Patient related factors	Patient socio-demographic variables Patient cooperation Type of patient illness
2.	Provider related factors	Provider socio-demographic variables Provider competency Provider motivation and satisfaction
3.	Environmental factors	Healthcare system Resources and facilities Leadership and management Collaboration and partnership development

Source: Ali Mohammad Mosadeghrad, 2014

Within healthcare there is no universally accepted definition of 'quality', but those commonly used pick up on this multi-dimensionality. The following popular definition, from the US Institute of Medicine and also used by the World Health Organization, describes quality as 'the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge'.<sup>2</sup> It identifies six dimensions of quality, stating that healthcare must be:

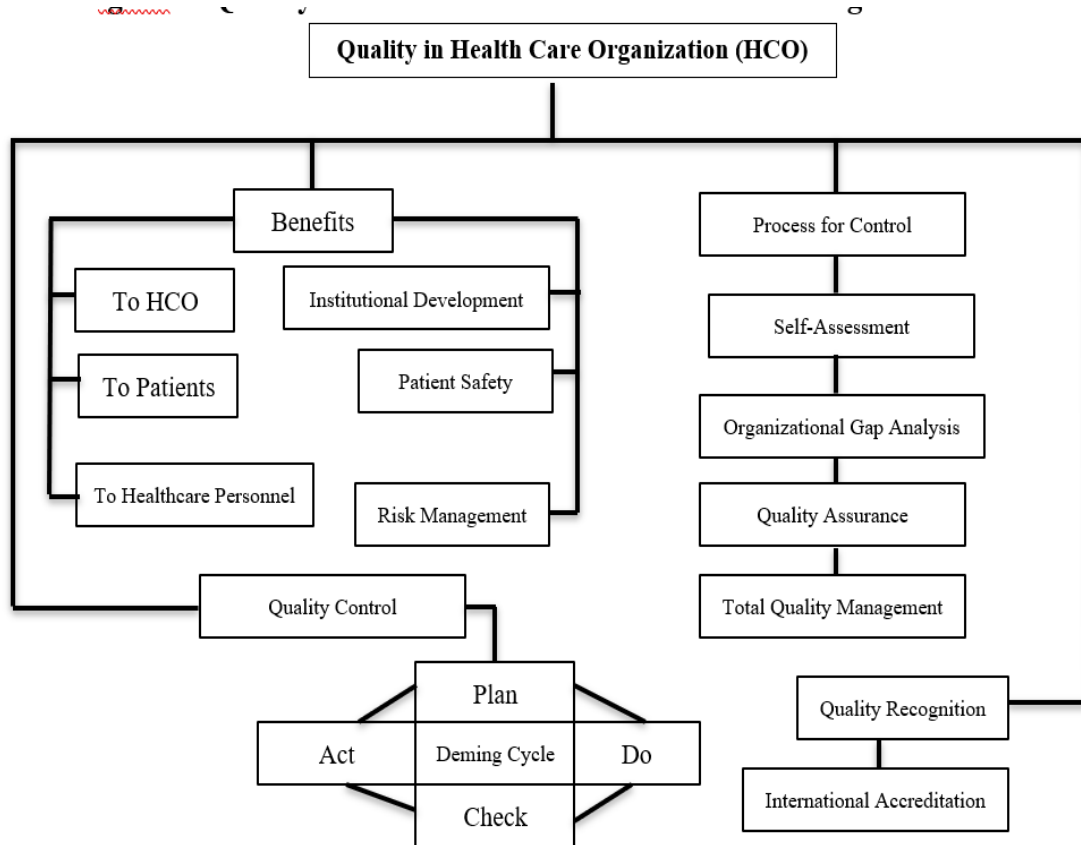
- **Safe:** Minimizing risk and harm to service users, including avoiding preventable injuries and reducing medical errors;
- **Effective:** Providing services based on scientific knowledge and evidence-based guidelines;
- **Patient-centred:** Providing care that responds to individual preferences, needs and values;
- **Timely:** Reducing (sometimes harmful) delays in providing and receiving health care;
- **Efficient:** Maximizing the benefit of available resources and avoiding waste;
- **Equitable:** Care that does not differ in quality according to personal characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, geographical location or socioeconomic status (Russ et al. 2023).

## Importance of Quality in Healthcare

Maintaining high quality standards is very important for health care facilities. The healthcare facilities should appoint an office to be responsible for ensuring quality of care in hospitals, ambulatory surgical treatment centers and nursing homes. The office should license and certify the types of health care facilities available. The office should conduct surveys annually for participation in the Medicare program and should be responsible for investigating all facility complaints received from patients. It is important to maintain quality because if the customers' needs are not satisfied, they may share their opinions and criticism through the social networking sites like twitter and Facebook which may damage the organization's reputation and publicity. Accreditation enables the health care to gain new customers by providing confirmation to their prospective customers of the medical facility's ability to provide quality services (Faloudah et al/. 2015).

Healthcare quality management involves overseeing the implementation of system designs, policies, and processes that aim to minimize or eliminate damage, while simultaneously maximizing patient care and outcomes. The primary goal of quality management is to guarantee the consistent fulfillment of the stated purpose of a certain product, service, or organization (AlHarshan et al ., 2023)

Figure 1: Quality Control Flow Chart in Health Care Organization.

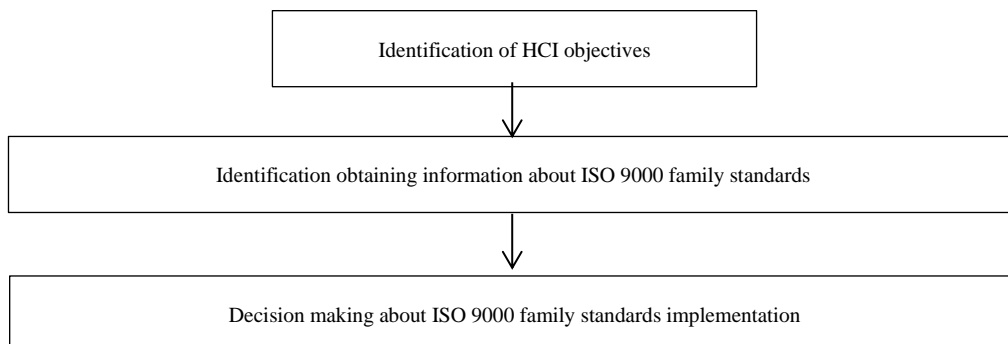


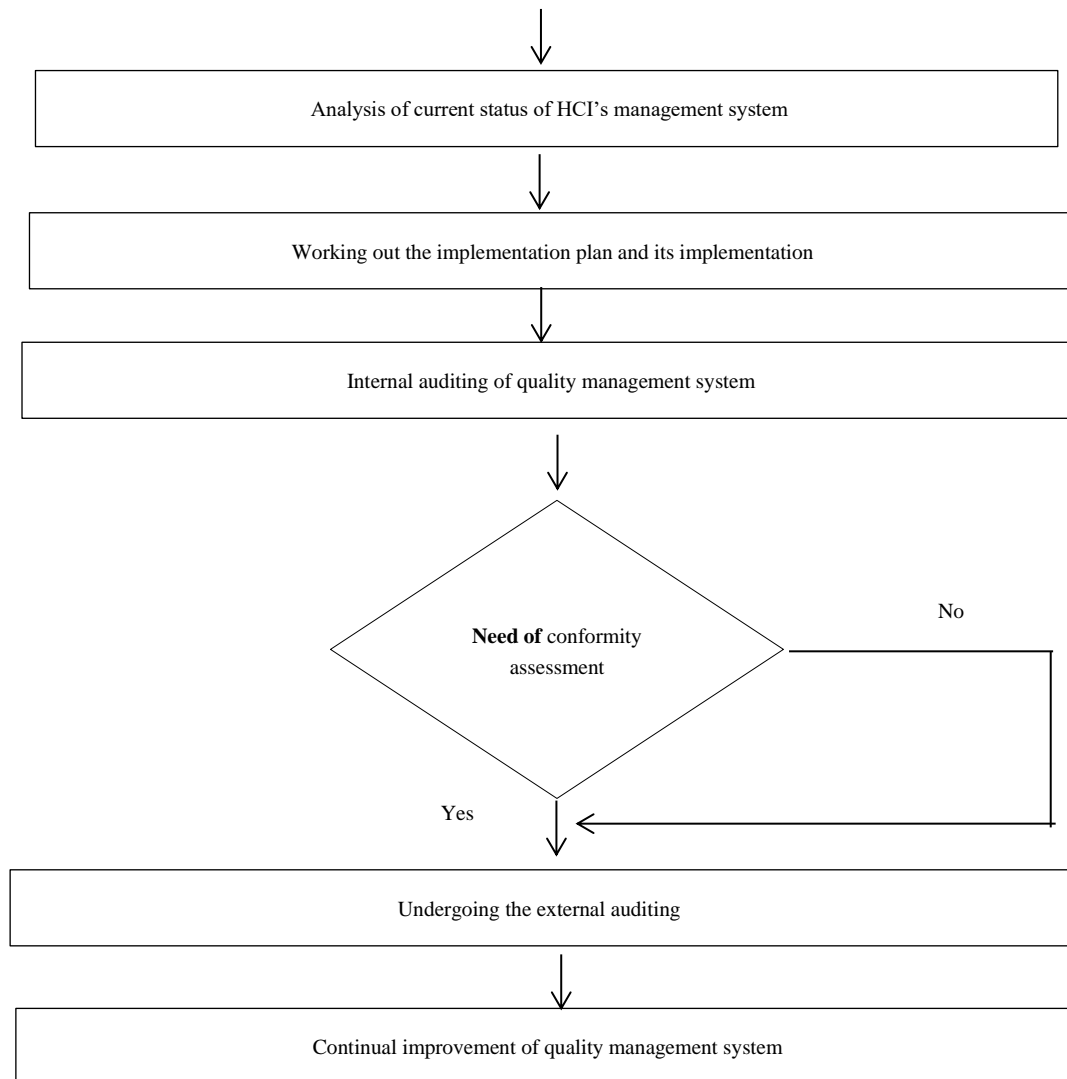
Source: Anubha Agarwal, 2018

### Healthcare Quality Key Components

The components of a healthcare system that help provide quality care to patients include Secure systems that treat all patient medical conditions. This component further demonstrates that security standards should not be lowered on holidays or at night. Relevant information should only be taken once by medical personnel and must be treated with the utmost confidentiality. None of the information shared by a customer should be heard by any other person other than to whom it was also shared. A well-organized healthcare system is associated with efficient and effective healthcare delivery to its customers. The medical care provided depends on the information provided, which then determines the types of health care, tests, and procedures that are appropriate for the client and will result in good outcomes. A patient-centered health care system consists of respect for the client's needs, desires, and values, teamwork in the delivery of care; timely and appropriate information, education, and communication; physical health; emotional stability; and, allowing the client's friends and family to get involved. Medical care quality is what is provided at the right time. A good healthcare system should use the available resources as much as possible to achieve the best value for money and thus be efficient. Finally, a health care system must be non-discriminatory. That is, it must offer the same services to all customers regardless of their race, gender, and social status. These characteristics of a customer are not related to the patient's current state of health and should therefore not be a criterion for the provision of the service (Asma & Barnawi 2022).

Figure 2: Basic steps during quality management system implementation in HCI





Source: Zgodavova

### Approaches to implementing good quality in health sector

- **Need based-** To ensure good quality of the service, it should be based on the need of the patient or the individual of any healthcare industry. Need assessment not only provides a direction about managing quality control in the hospital, it will also provide the number of resources required to achieve better standards of quality and this will manage patient's satisfaction level and meeting their expectations.
- **Enquiring and Introspection-** Self-observation is required from the perspectives of both healthcare industry and patients to meet a common point of goal attainment. The healthcare industry may enquire the consumer's needs and respond immediately to maintain and sustain its name and fame.
- **Honesty with familiarity-** The healthcare services should be focused on performance with honesty so as to gain the ultimate point of satisfaction from the patients and it should be familiar towards their needs.
- **Feedback-** Feedback is not only required from patients, but it should be taken from peers, other healthcare industry in the market. It will also highlight those aspects which requires improvement and make a healthcare service more 3 consumer oriented (Upma & Mudgal, 2023 )

### Conclusion

TQM is a process, a management philosophy or culture with eight essential characteristics, namely culture change; top management; continuous improvement; customer focus and satisfaction; employee involvement; teamwork; systems and processes; and training'. After defining TQM for healthcare, the literature review of this research highlighted the benefits of TQM implementation in the hospital environment. The benefits of a successful implementation of TQM in the hospital include holistic quality, cost reductions, prevention of mistakes, employee satisfaction, and patient satisfaction. Although these benefits sound very positive, it will only occur if TQM is implemented in the right way in the hospital. This can be achieved by designing easy to understand implementation frameworks that include essential factors of TQM.

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