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## Opinion

# Healthcare Delivery System in India – My Reflections

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Today I am paranoid, scared, and terrified to go to a hospital myself seeing the attitude of some doctors, who have no concern for the patients. I, as a common man, worry about where to take my children in case of a medical problem. My rights as a citizen of India to get a decent medical care seem to be under siege.

Should I always be running around for a second opinion? How should I trust my doctor? Of course medicine is not an exact science and there are 4-5 different ways of treatment for the same ailment. But whom to trust?

I am not against doctors making money, but the “corporate culture” of making money illicitly in the name of healthcare and driving society into grief stricken poverty is what I oppose. One can deal with poverty and still be happy. But they would be devastated when pushed into poverty and grief through daylight robbery by the people in whose hands they entrust the life of their loved ones.

All doctors are not bad, but there are some black sheeps who dance to the tunes of their corporate bosses, who are bringing a bad name to the whole of Indian doctors.

There needs to be a check on the operation of these corporate hospitals. They are spending crores of rupees on equipment and feeding patients to these in the name of quality healthcare. The Government has given licenses to them to serve the community and not to loot it.

Government should impose that a percentage of their investment is spent on maintaining a universal patient data system and let government hospital doctors be given extra duty of monitoring the treatment if a patient calls a helpline and complains about malpractice. All the history of the patient and the treatment given should be chronologically entered into the system, so that it is easily accessible to patients and other doctors. This would make them more transparent and the

common man will have trust and faith in their doctors.

Already the doctor is reduced to a salesperson selling his services and has lost the image of a well wisher of the community. This has to change and this change can only be brought by proper steps taken by the Government to bring about transparency in the system. The government doesn't have to build hospitals and compete with private hospitals, but bring reforms that would plug all the loopholes that allow malpractice thus turning these slaughter houses into temples where people are happy to go and willingly pay any amount of cost incurred.

Yes, the Government tried to bring some reforms recently by tabling the KPME Amendment act, which was fiercely opposed by the medical fraternity. That bill tried to impose sanctions on money-making policies of these hospitals by bringing price caps on consultations and procedures. Reforms are necessary not to target the earning of the doctor/hospitals but the ethics of principles followed.

A doctor is an artist. There are good artists and there are not so good artists. They make money according to their talent and the quality of service the hospital provides. But I am talking about the con artists in the medical fraternity who are not bothered about the community and are giving shoddy, unethical treatment to the public in the name of healthcare and looting them. These con artists need to be eliminated or put in check.

Reforms are needed to protect the good artists and deal with an iron hand with the con artists. The common man cannot fight them alone, the Government has to step in and set up a transparent system of maintaining a universal health record system, linked to Aadhaar, which can be accessible anywhere. All the treatment given in the hospitals should be uploaded here so that it becomes easier for the patient to get a second opinion and for the court, in cases of negligence, to provide quick relief to the victim instead of him doing all the circus himself to get justice.

The government should at least provide this, if they are not providing good government hospitals. If this facility is available then, it will put indirect pressure on all the hospitals to provide the right and cost effective care to the patients and will treat them well, because they have to retain them to make money and be in business.

I want to feel safe entrusting the life of my loved ones in the hands of doctors. Money is not the question here. Getting quality health care, ensuring the well being of the patients by following ethical principles of medical care viz, -- 1) Principle of respect for autonomy, 2) Principle of nonmaleficence, 3) Principle of beneficence, and 4) Principle of justice.

This is the need of the hour, and not getting financially and emotionally drained by visiting these hospitals.