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HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF PEOPLE AND ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN KOLKATA CITY

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Statement of the Problem: People of every society face problems during health care access. The purpose of this study is finding the healthcare perception and accessibility pattern in West Bengal among people of different socio-economic strata by analyzing health-care seeking behavior. This study explores the causes of particular health seeking behavior and tries to suggest solution to improve healthcare delivery system to have optimum health accessibility. Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This is descriptive study based on semi structured interview, observation and focus group discussion with case studies. The people of five different wards from different parts of Kolkata Municipal Corporation are taken as respondents. All the wards and respondents from each ward are selected through random sampling method. Social Model of Health and social capital framework are utilized to obtain the interaction between health care delivery system and health seeking behavior of people. Findings: All respondents wish to avoid public healthcare sector due to various barriers rather prefer individual private or charitable doctors and the lower income group of people avail public healthcare service having no other way but affordable people avail private hospitals. People from both the category are dissatisfied with healthcare system. Conclusion & Significance: Healthcare seeking behavior depends upon availability, affordability, accessibility and the quality of health care delivery system. It depends upon political, cultural, administrative, economic, technological and ethical environment of respective society. Recommendations: Health care system should be accountable, professionally managed and motivated to deliver service efficiently with humanitarian touch encouraging Community participation.

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