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Engaging Private Sector Partners (PSPs) for Radiology Services in Patna District, Bihar: An `Un` Sustainable Model of Health Services Delivery

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Abstract

Involvement of Private sector partners (PSPs) in service provisioning gained momentum in many states in many states in India. National rural health mission (NRHM) announced in 2005, institutionalise the PPPs through its strategy to achieve health goals in the country. Since its implementation in Bihar, a large number of PSPs engaged with the state to provide clinical and non-clinical services. One of the reasons behind multiple partnerships in the health sector in Bihar is the inadequate public sector. Radiology services are one of them, which was started in 2006-07 and continued till date. There are multiple private actors engaged with the government to provide radiology services from public health facilities across Bihar.

The paper highlighted different models adopted by the government to engage PSPs for radiology services. Moreover, the article attempted to identify several challenges and opportunities of engaging PSPs in a particular context. The study adopted qualitative research design and data was collected in four health facilities of Patna district in the year 2012-13, revisited by the researcher in 2015-16. The study adopted purposive sampling. The primary data accessed through open-ended semi-structured indepth interviews conducted with health administrators. Secondary data were also used extensively to substantiate the primary data. Some major findings of the study include local contracting is more effective in comparison to centralised contracting. The other important findings of the study weak public sector have an opportunity to utilise National Health Mission (NHM) resources to strengthen its position against the private sector. Finally, weak monitoring and regulation of PSPs weaken the objectives underlined in the contractual agreement. A pragmatic approach needed in the engagement of PSPs to take care of needs of the public sector and its population.

Author Keywords

Public-private partnership (PPP), Private sector partners (PSPs), National rural health mission (NRHM), National health mission (NHM)

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