IMPORTANCE OF CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS IN INDIA DESPITE HAVING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Dissertation Submitted to

The IIHMR University, Jaipur

for partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

In

Hospital and Health Management

By

Abhisikta Biswas

Under the supervision and guidance of

Dr Anoop Khanna

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled Importance of Crowdfunding Platforms in India Despite Having Universal Health Coverage is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Abhisikta Biswas

Abhisikta Biswas

Date: - 30/06/2021

ImpactGuru.com

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

Date: 01-07-2021

This is to certify that **Abhisikta Biswas** has successfully completed her tenure as a Business Development Consultant from 1st April 2021 to 30th June 2021 at Impact Guru Technology Ventures Pvt. Ltd. Her performance during the tenure was found to be good.

We wish her all the very best for her future endeavors.

Regards,

Sandeep Kumar Tripathy
(Senior VP Business Development)
Impact Guru Technology Ventures Pvt. Ltd

Impact Guru Technology Ventures Private Limited
101, Jai Singh Business Center, 119, Sahar Rd, Andheri East, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400099

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled Importance of "***Crowdfunding Platforms in India Despite Having Universal Health Coverage***" is a record of the research work undertaken by Miss Abhisikta Biswas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of MBA Health and Hospital Management from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and her approach to the research has been sincere, scientific and analytical.

Faculty Guide	School Dean
IIHMR University, Jaipur	IIHMR University, Jaipur
Date	Date

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ABSTRACT

Introduction- Over time, with advancements made in the field of medicine and healthcare, the cost of accessing healthcare has also increased a great deal. Services like hospital beds, medicine, surgery, post-operative care, chemotherapy etc, you name it and its cost is increasing day by day. There is a divide in between both private and public hospitals in terms of both the prices and service deliverance.

The government has made many provisions and schemes to help improve the affordability of healthcare for people. People in India still contribute by using out of pocket expenditure. According to the report of WHO, more than 60 percent of the Indian population is derived towards below poverty level due to one hospitalisation. Further, less than 8 percent of the population are have insurance.

Hence, people need more and more options for funding their treatments and they turn to money lenders, mortgage properties etc.

Crowdfunding platforms are at a rise in the country, because people aren't able to fund their own treatments as they would like to. Individuals incur huge losses, exhaust all their savings, mortgage property and have to make payments with interest against their loans. Crowdfunding platforms provide no payback liability and they work towards reaching a wider audience.

In the recent times, many crowdfunding platforms such as Impact Guru, Milaap, Ketto and Give India has become popular among people.

Objectives: -The purpose of the study is to understand the cause of recent increase in the popularity of crowdfunding platforms in India despite having Universal Health Coverage, health insurances and coverages

Methodology: -This study was conducted to examine the kinds of diseases people seek crowdfunding for & the amount they fundraise for. This helped in understanding what are the gaps and the diseases which are not covered by Universal Health Coverage.

The study was conducted by collecting 500 campaigns which were running on the crowdfunding platform within the period of three months i. e. April to June. The campaigns were analysed in terms of the disease the patient is suffering from, the goal amount asked for and the types of expense the campaigners are looking for covering through crowdfunding.

Findings: -

The study showed that critical illness like cancer (20.2%), respiratory disorder (14 %), covid-19 (22%) and other transplant cases are the diseases for which people seek crowdfunding for. Almost most of the people have some sort of insurance or health coverage in place and yet in times of crisis, people turn to other alternate ways for raising funds like crowdfunding. This is due to expensive health care costs and gap in service deliverance.

Conclusion: - The study proves that even with the existence of government initiated coverage and health insurance, people need more funds to opt for expensive treatment. Critical illnesses require constant care and treatment for which a huge amount of corpus. funding for such treatment alone on salary and insurance is unimaginable. Hence people have turned to crowdfunding platforms as they help in tapping into the social networks to raise funds without a payback liability.

Keywords: - Crowdfunding, payback liability, 80G tax Benefits, Critical Illness, SMA, rare disease

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Chapter I: Introduction

India has made extensive efforts in the field of healthcare, be it investing in the country's health infrastructure to making policies and making conscious efforts to reduce disease burden and health disparity which is prevalent in India. India is one of the countries which has sworn to provide Universal Health Coverage in the country which would facilitate access to health facility to the needy.

According to the WHO Report of 2019 on Global Health spending, there is reduction in out -of-pocket expenditure on Health and an increase in public spending globally by 60 % from 2000-2017 but still half of the population of the world still does not have full coverage on essential Health services. In India more than half of the population are pushed towards below poverty line post one hospitalization. Thus, is of utmost importance that individuals should be protected from the financial risks of using Health Services. The inception of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) aims at achieving this by the year 2030.

The provision of Universal Health Coverage has been a landmark decision, but universal coverage does not necessarily guarantee accessibility. There exists a gap in the providence of health services by the government and the actual accessibility of health services. Over 600 million people in India alone has either sparse or no access to healthcare.

Medical crowdfunding has paved its way in this as a utilitarian platform to provide financial assistance to people in need to avail certain health services. Even after having universal coverage, there is an unmet health care needs due to the financial load due to expensive costs of such services and certain experimental therapies which are not covered through insurance. The aim of the study is to explore the various diseases for which people opt for crowd funding in India and to also analyse the various unmet needs which these crowdfunding platforms help in fulfilling.

Medical crowdfunding: The rise in India.

Crowdfunding is a concept which has been in practice for centuries now. Simply put, crowdfunding can be described as an exercise to finance a particular project, business or personal issues like health and education by raising money from a large number of people wherein the individual contribution is comparatively small. Over the years, it has taken various forms. Crowdfunding can be categorized into the following types: -

Reward based crowdfunding is when people usually contribute to a particular cause but in exchange of certain incentives or non-monetary rewards.

Equity based crowdfunding is usually opted for in the field of business wherein, businesses and startups acquire funding in exchange of the company's security as collateral.

Debt based crowdfunding deals with raising funds for a particular cause form a number of individuals in return of interest. Debt based crowdfunding is synonymous to crowd lending practices.

Lastly, ***Donation based crowdfunding*** is collective effort of individuals to help other in need of financial assistance. Donation based crowdfunding is mostly run on individual's altruistic characteristics as there is no reward attached to donating.

Over the years, Donation based crowdfunding has gained traction among people, and one of the most promising and increasingly growing type is medical crowdfunding.

Medical crowdfunding has gained prominence due to the various reasons like lack of insurance, service gaps, lack of good quality services in public hospitals and poverty. People turn to medical crowdfunding as healthcare is exorbitantly high and it is difficult to pay such large amount of hospital bills which are incurred at even a simple hospitalization. Raising funds via crowdfunding acts as a parachute for people who look for quick solutions to their financial distress.

Medical Crowdfunding has become a boon to people belonging to middle class and lower middle class sections of the community. The major reason behind this is because as a nation it is difficult to achieve Universal Health coverage, even in the countries where public healthcare is free, there are numerous people opting for medical crowdfunding. One of the major reason as to why medical crowdfunding is gaining traction in India is because of the quality of care that is being offered in private hospitals as compared to public hospitals.

Public Hospitals lack the quality of care and the range of medical services available to the people is extremely limited. This may not be an issue in term of minor ailments but when it comes to treating critical illnesses and rare genetic disorders which require world class treatment facilities and services, private hospitals are the solution to it. Private hospitalization would mean exorbitantly high daily expenses. Hence, people turn to crowdfunding platforms for arranging the funds.

Another reason for popularity of medical crowdfunding is the fact that these options offer no payback liability to the campaigner and certain tax benefits to the donors as well. Medical expenditure is skyrocketing day by day and insurance schemes in India can only offer an average coverage of Rs 50 lakhs to an individual. Needless to say, insurance and loans comes with certain payback liability and interest rates. Crowdfunding is an easy solution to it as all funds raised are due to the donations of large number of people who voluntarily donate without any expectations of return. Also, as per the government norms, tax payers get a certain amount of tax exemption upon donating to charitable causes hence, creating an incentive for the donors and in exchange promoting the behavior of charity among people.

Rare illnesses like Spinal Muscular Atrophy, MPS-1, Guacher's disease require a great deal of medical interventions like bone marrow transplant, gene therapy and long physiotherapy sessions. Funding for these treatment is expensive and unimaginable. Crowdfunding for the same has become an indispensable option. Recently, crowdfunding has made possible the procurement of a 16 crore drug zolgensma, for treating SMA. This has given hope to people and ever since then is a rise in the campaigns asking for funds for rare illnesses as well.

In India, there are numerous crowdfunding platforms like Impact Guru, Ketto and Milaap. All over the world, medical crowdfunding has seen a rise upto 27 % and in India is a booming industry where Impact Guru since its inception in 2014 has catered to around 5,00,00 + individuals and generated about 1500+ crores of funds.

One of the major pre-requisites of running a successful crowdfunding campaign are as follows: -

- The campaigners should have a comprehension about the social media and network
- The campaigners or someone in the close association of the campaigner should use social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook etc.
- The campaigners should either belong to middle class background for better understanding of the crowdfunding concept.

The purpose of the dissertation is to help understand that even after India having Universal health coverage and numerous health insurance companies to help people in times of health crisis and provide the much required financial distress, crowdfunding platforms continue to gain momentum and popularity among the general public.

The study also intends on exploring the reasons why crowdfunding is the alternative that is being accepted as an added financial tool for medical expenses and the various kind of disease people usually turn to crowdfunding for.

Research question

What is the importance and reason for increase in the usage of Medical Crowdfunding despite having Universal Health coverage in India?

Research objectives

General objectives: -

To understand the increase in the usage in medical crowdfunding in India, even when India has made efforts to provide Universal Health coverage to its people.

Specific objectives: -

- To assess the various diseases which are not covered by health insurance schemes by the government under Universal coverage scheme.
- To assess the various health care services and unmet needs which are funded by medical crowdfunding.

Chapter II: Literature review

- To understand the impact of medical crowdfunding, it is necessary to study the different research papers which have been done so far on the different financial burden the exorbitantly high health services charge and the gap that still exists on service deliverance on the part of the government in providing Universal Health coverage.

- In one such research paper named ***Producing a worthy illness: Personal crowdfunding amidst financial crisis*** **(Berliner, 2017),** the author elaborated that the how patients and their relatives try to make a compelling case regarding their health issues to try and acquire the most funds out of these crowdfunding platforms, this results in stealing focus from the acute and dire cases and there exists reliance in these platform even after the existence of government based financial assistance schemes. The author also states that crowdfunding has gained traction and recognition due to which the gaps in healthcare funding and service providence through government is getting more evident.
- Another study ***Crowdfunding in Healthcare*** **(Basani, 2019)** was published in the Journal of technology transfer supports the theory that countries with low investment and expenditure on healthcare are the ones in which the crowdfunding has gained more popularity. The study also highlights that the success of a crowdfunding platform is more where the projects are not investment based and only related to healthcare projects or programmes.
- A study named ***crowdfunding our health: economic risk and benefits*** **(J, 2016)** aimed at determining the economic viability and feasibility of the establishment of crowdfunding is discussed. The study does point out certain economic uncertainties like issues related accountability, transparency and fraud and money laundering, the author has listed out the benefits of crowdfunding. The study concluded that the campaigns should be identified and mitigated by analysing the risks of it.
- Another study done **(J., 2019)** in a study population of USA was done in which the people suffering from cancer were taken as the cohort of the study. The author took a cohort of 20 oncology patients and analysed the cohort’s highest expenses in terms of medical bills, medicines etc. the patients were all insured under the Affordable

Care Act but not all the expenses were covered through that the patients ended up in debt, mortgaging their houses etc. the study showed that there is a strong affinity and increases in the usage of medical crowdfunding due to the above stated reasons and all this highlights the gaps in the healthcare system and the fact that crowdfunding helps in easing away the financial stress to certain extent.

- A study **(Lublóy, 2020)** was carried out in Germany which evaluated 380 medical crowdfunding cases on leetchi.com. the cases were evaluated by text mining for certain key words and looked to identify the reasons or health conditions for which people generally opt for crowdfunding and the amount and the type of health related expenses which prompts people to opt for crowdfunding. The study concluded that the most frequent causes or medical reasons which prompt people to opt for crowdfunding are rare and critical illnesses like cancer, lipoedema and genetic disorders. Crowdfunding has become an axillary and additional source to fund for the diseases even though Germany had universal coverage.
- Another study **(L, 2017)**which was conducted upon the European states specifically looked into the perception of unmet needs of healthcare among the people. The study was conducted by carrying out multilevel logistical regression models were carried out on the data of European social survey candidates. They were analysed on whether or not the respondents were given medical attention in the last 12 months, and these responses were categorised upon into three categories namely accessibility, affordability and availability of healthcare. The study showed that financial stress was a major reason for unmet needs in healthcare along with long waits and lack of appointments. Thus the study proves that the even with healthcare coverage in most of the European countries, there is an evident financial strain occurring due to the accessibility of healthcare.
- Another study **(Yi-Lee, 2015)** done on the Korean population where 9163 respondents. The study showed that there was at least once that they were not receive medical attention that they wanted because of lack of funds or financial stability. Around 22.9 % of the people who were interviewed faced difficulties in accessing health facilities due to financial incapability.
- A study conducted in USA on 37344 cancer campaigns on crowdfunding campaigns and reviewed 1057 cases. The studies showed that all the campaigners had pre-exiting

insurances as well as they were covered under Affordable Care Act of USA but still needed funds for treatment. The cancer patients needed financial assistance and opted for crowdfunding.

Chapter III: - METHODOLOGY

The study is exploratory in nature by collecting data of all the people putting up campaigns in medical crowdfunding platforms like Impact Guru, these crowdfunding platforms serve various causes like financial stress due to medical issues, funding for organisation and implementation of programmes. This study analysied all the campaigners seeking financial aid for health ailments and medical services.

Sample Design: - Exploratory study design

Sample Size: - 500

Sources of Data: - Impact Guru Data website

Study period- The study covers a period from April to June 2021.

Data analysis- The collected data has been analyzed by using Descriptive Statistics.

These medical campaigners are judged on the basis of two aspects namely: -

I. Type of diseases or services the campaigners opt for crowdfunding: -

The study is conducted to assess the disease burden and the kind of medical services for which people opt for crowdfunding in India. This helps in analysing the extent of financial coverage given by the government and the evident pitfalls it has due to which people turn towards crowdfunding.

II. Types of financial coverage the campaigners are looking for: -

This part of the study analyses the kind of financial help the campaigners are mostly concerned with and hence are looking for assistance. The wide range of expenses and costs which are related to healthcare costs will be medicines, surgery, therapy, accommodation and treatment related travel etc.

Chapter IV. FINDINGS

Table 1: Medical conditions for which people seek medical crowdfunding

Sr No	Name of the Disease	Count(N= 500)	Percentage
1	Cancer	101	20.2
2	Respiratory distress	70	14
3	Liver Failure	36	7.2
4	Kidney failure	52	10
5	Cardiac Issues	45	9
6	Road Traffic Accidents	16	2
7	Multiple organ failures	27	4.6
8	Covid-19	110	22
9	Genetic disorders	11	3.2
10	Burn accidents and acid attacks	5	1
11	Black fungus / mucormyosis	23	4.6
12	Preterm Birth complications	13	2.6

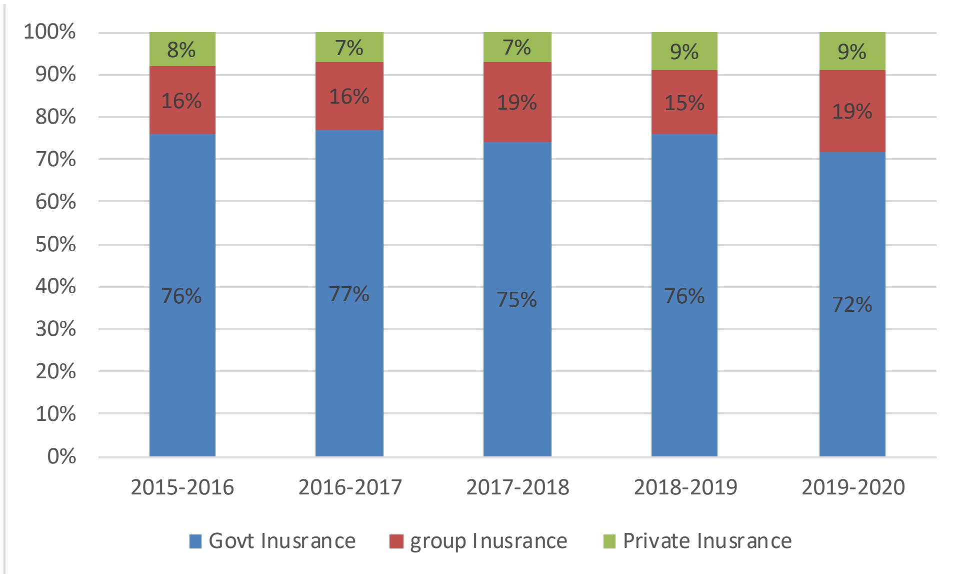
Table 1 depicts the various medical reasons for which people seek crowdfunding solutions to fund their treatments. The data which has been presented shows that people suffering from critical illnesses like cancer tend to seek financial assistance more than any other disease. This can be attributed to the exorbitantly high costs of treatment which entails regular chemo and radiation sessions, medicines, lab testing, radiological test and surgical interventions. On an average, chemo sessions and radiation therapy could cost around Rs 75,000 (depending upon the hospital and area) and around Rs 30,000-50,000 per sitting respectively. So, it is safe to say that cancer treatment requires constant and rigorous therapy sessions for a prolonged time period which can be financially draining thus, it is difficult for insurance and universal health coverage to sufficiently fund for the same. Hence, people turn to alternative options for seeking funds.

Another major medical causes which is frequently crowdfunded for according to the data are Respiratory distress, Liver and lung failures, cardiac issues like cardiac myopathy and cardiac failure and RTAs. In most of the above mentioned illnesses, the cost to treatment itself is excruciatingly high. The cost to organ transplant like liver, kidney, lung and heart would cost around 20-50 Lakhs depending upon the hospital. Other than surgery, there is a constant expense of hospital stay, medicines, tests and post-operative care and rehabilitation. In India, there exists a great deal of discrepancy in terms of service deliverance between the public and private hospitals. Private hospitals will no doubt provide world class service and technology but that comes with a hefty bill. Even for an individual belonging to a middle class background with a good job will face difficulties in undergoing treatment.

Numerous fatalities and morbidities occur each day due to road traffic accidents in India. RTAs require immediate medical response and treatment. Hence the cost of hospitalization, running tests, surgeries and post-operative care and rehabilitation require a lot of expenses to be covered at a short period of time. Crowdfunding for such road traffic accidents has become common among both below poverty line and middle class people.

Another medical condition for which people are seeking crowdfunding in the country is treating neo natal and pre term birth complications. As the community is becoming more and more aware of alternate medium for fund collection like crowdfunding platforms, it is becoming an indispensable medium. Since, insurance and health benefits do not usually cover many health incidences and outcomes and while providing coverage the insurance schemes has a maximum bracket of Rs 50 Lakhs for an individual. In such scenarios, it becomes prudent to arrange funds from other sources. Neo- natal acre and pre term birth complications require the babies to be hospitalized for numerous days at a stretch, incubator support, medicines etc. Thus, people who have sufficient amount of knowledge and social network tend to seek aid through these crowdfunding platforms to raise funds for their children's treatment. One of the most attractive aspects of crowdfunding platforms is it's no payback liability, wider reach and immediate fund transfer facilities after checking the creditability of the cause and KYC of the campaigner.

The trend of various lives covered under Health Insurance and crowdfunding in India



*Sorce: IRDAI report 2018

As per the recent report of 2018, IRDAI, it is evident that there is a considerable chunk of population who have invested in health insurance. Although health insurance is mostly bought by people belonging to stable and financially strong backgrounds like middle class and the upper middle class sections, a large number of government schemes and insurance policies are present which cater to the lower sections of the community who cannot afford expensive heath care services.

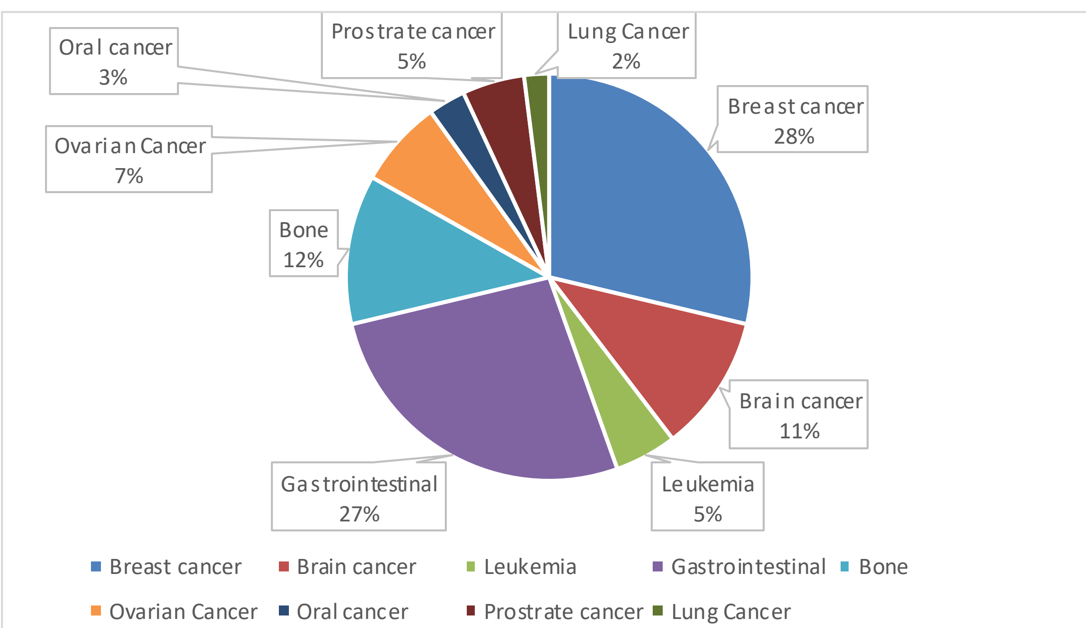
Almost 72% of the tapped in population opt for government sanctioned insurance policies in the year 2019-2020. Followed by 19 % population insured by group insurances schemes and a mere 9 % percent have personal health insurances done on their respective names. even after a substantial percentage of population having some kind of insurance done crowdfunding businesses have a growth rate of 16% CAGR globally and India is only in its nascent stage of the crowdfunding business.

Cancer: The most crowdfunded medical reason

As already discussed, Cancer is the most crowdfunded medical cause for which people seek financial assistance for. Cancer is a chronic condition which require continuous treatment and care. Not only does it take a toll on the health of the patient but it also drains the families of the patients, emotionally and financially. It is of utmost importance that the treatment does not discontinue due to the lack of funds. Cancer treatment entails regular medicines, chemo sessions, radiotherapy, surgery if required, immune therapy and so on. On an average cancer treatment costs around Rs 1-2 lakhs per in a private hospital and around Rs 70,000-80,000 per year in a government hospital. The annual gross income of people belonging to lower middle class and below poverty level would be less than 5 lakhs in India and in such situations financing cancer treatment can be cumber some and hard on the family.

Graph 1.1 shows a detailed description of types of cancer which are most crowdfunded for. The most common forms of cancer related campaigns are breast cancer, gastrointestinal and bone cancers. In terms of gastrointestinal cancer, colon and rectal cancers are the most common.

All this shows us that people tend to opt for crowdfunding when the ailment is critical and also has significant correlation with the disease burden of the country.



Graph 1.1: Pie chart showing types of Cancer treatment people seek crowdfunding

Covid-19: Impact of pandemic on the country

One year since Covid-19 hit us, India is still struggling to get back on its feet. With the second wave of covid-19 India saw around 2.67 lakhs of cases as a daily average and there was a grave shortage of resources all over the country. So much so that people turned to social media to arrange for covid resources like oxygen concentrators, cylinders, pulse oximeter, essential medicines etc. Numerous people lost lives due to scarcity in hospital beds and suitable treatment.

Over the pandemic, India's GDP went down, jobs were slashed, daily wage migrants were forced to go back to their villages due to lack of money to sustain themselves. People who were impacted by covid or whose family member suffered from covid, could not afford to fund their own treatments. Expensive medicines like Remdesivir injections, daily oxygen and ventilator support, hospital stay expenses etc added to overall cost to treatment and the hospital bills shot up tremendously. Hence, there was a rise in the number of campaigns on crowdfunding platform which intended to raise funds for covid-19 or post covid complications. According to table 1, it can be clearly interpreted that over the past few months there were numerous covid related campaigns which surpassed even liver and cardiac causes.

There were two kinds of campaigns running related to covid-19 namely, personal covid-19 campaigns and campaigns run by NGOs and other originations for procuring and dissemination of covid resources like oxygen concentrators and cylinders.

Many organizations like Khalsa Aid, ACT Grants and IHW council turned to crowdfunding platforms to procure adequate funds for the facilitating oxygen concentrators and cylinders for the general public. There were around 800 campaigns set up and around 15 + crores of funds accumulated by NGOs and other organization for the cause. The funds raised were raised were utilized by these organizations not only to facilitate the procurement of such resources but also the to provide the necessary logistics so that they reach even the remote areas.

These campaigns were run for various reasons like providing essential goods, medicines, help for all the frontline workers and covid warriors etc. The people most affected by covid in the country are the below poverty line, migrant workers, healthcare professional etc. Due to economic downfall in the country the poor have become poorer. Hence, they are the ones who need to be looked after in these times.

Rare diseases & crowdfunding: A new Horizon for people

Another medical condition for which has led to the increase in the popularity and traction of crowdfunding platforms in the country is rare diseases. There are around 5000-8000 kinds of rare diseases prevalent in and around the world, mostly genetic based. One ion every fifteen people is suffering from some kind of rare disorders. Hence, it is safe tom say that our own country has billions of people suffering from the same but they require prolonged and lifelong treatment and rehabilitation so lead a normal life.

Rare disease usually requires gene therapy, immune therapy and bone marrow transplant for the patient to survive. All these treatments are extremely expensive and undergoing these frequently could mean a great deal of economic burden for the family.

Recently the crowdfunding platform Impact Guru had been in the limelight due to three such cases wherein, the campaigners raised around 16 crore of fund to treat spinal muscular atrophy. For any family spending 16 crore is unimaginable and crowdfunding has made its possible not just once but thrice. This has led to many individuals and families suffering from various other rare and genetic diseases to come up and seek help for their respective treatments. This has led to a rise in the campaigns which are to seek funds for such ailments.

The website has seen many other rare ailments like MSP type 1, Dystrophy muscular disease, pompe disease etc. All these diseases require a huge amount of corpus to be expended on a regular basis for a prolonged time period. This is not possible by any individual even with health insurance and other health benefits.

Almost all the campaigns running on the website, are mostly by middle class individuals. These individuals have preexisting insurance policies as well as other health coverage schemes. Alas, even having a stable salary, insurances and others funding methods it is evident that there are certain ailments aren’t insured or covered by government facilities. Hence, the only option left is turning to money lenders, loans from banks, friends and family for assistance. But these methods will always require the individuals to payback the loaned amount with interest after a certain period of time.

The existence of crowdfunding platforms has come as a boon to these people wherein they can opt to these platforms for their crowdfunding solutions to fund their treatments.

Funding Need

Table 2: Range of amount crowdfunded in the platform

Sr No	Range of Amount Crowdfunded	No of Campaigns
1	Below 1 Lakhs	110
2	1lakhs-20 lakhs	121
3	21 lakhs- 40 lakhs	49
4	41 Lakhs- 60 Lakhs	54
5	61 lakhs - 80 Lakhs	69
6	81 Lakhs-1 CR	77
7	More than 1 CR	20

If we look into table 2, we can understand the amount of funds for which people usually crowdfund for in such platforms. It depicts the information regarding what is the range and how many people crowdfund for what amount. Maximum number of campaigns which were running in the platform had an asking amount less than **1 Lakh rupees.** Most of these campaigns were due to the pandemic and the campaigners needed the amount for ventilator support, medicines, hospitalization or ECMO support. Another most crowdfunded amount on the platform is in the range of **₹1- 20 lakhs.** These campaigns were mostly for treating respiratory distress, yearly cancer treatment, covid-19 and post covid complications like black and yellow fungus.

Around ₹20- 50 lakhs are usually required to treat ailment like cancer, transplant cases like liver, lung and kidneys. Bone marrow transplants for treating leukemia, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, thalassemia etc cost a hefty ₹60-80 lakhs at least. This is because treating these ailments require prolonged sessions of chemo, surgery, medication and post-operative treatment.

Rare and genetic diseases like MPS, SMA require a great deal of funds which can mount up to **₹1- 16** crores of rupees. Arranging such a huge amount of fund is next to impossible for any individual, be it out pf pocket or through insurance, money lenders etc. Crowdfunding does not of course guarantee the arrangement of such a huge corpus by it is not impossible as recently three back to back campaigns regarding SMA with a requirement of 16 crores was raised through crowdfunding.

Expenses which are covered by Medical Crowdfunding

All the medical expenses for which people usually seek crowdfunding are as follows: -

- ***Hospital bills:*** **-** An average stay at hospitalization in the country for any ailment is almost around for 10-11 days, and per day cost at a private hospital is around **₹30,000** mounting up to **₹3** lakhs in two weeks. In public hospitals, a day's stay is will be costing around 4000-5000. This makes the cost of staying in a private hospital around ₹40,000 for two weeks.
- ***Surgery:*** **-** Surgery cost is different for different ailments like a cardiac surgery or transplant surgery will cost around ₹25-50 lakhs in a private hospital. The cost of dialysis is around ₹6000. The cost of CABG will be around ₹3.5-5 Lakhs in private hospital. The post-operative care is also including in the hospital daily bed costs.
- ***Cost for medicines:*** **-**The cost of medicines per person per year is estimated to be around ₹60,000-80,000.
- ***ICU per day cost:*** **-** The cost of ICU and ventilator charges per day is around ₹15,000- 20,000. Hence, a person hospitalized for at least 10 days will be estimated to pay around ₹2 Lakhs in private hospital**.**
- ***Ventilator and other equipment:*** **-** The cost of ventilator support per day is estimated to be around ₹15,000-25,000 in private hospitals.
- ***Oxygen concentrators:*** **-** The cost per day for oxygen support is approximately ₹30,000-60,000
- ***Ambulatory services:*** **-** The cost of ambulatory services will cost an individual would be around **20,000.**
- ***Chemotherapy:*** **-** Chemotherapy sessions are expensive and each session would cost around ₹5000 per day. The chemo sessions need to be taken at a stretch for 3 months to 6 months at least depending upon the severity of the case. This is shoot up the cost to ₹75,000 to ₹80,000.
- ***Radiation Therapy:*** **-**Even radiation therapy is quite expensive with around 35,000-40,000 per sitting.

Chapter V: - DISCUSSION

We can make certain deductions based on the findings regarding the perception of people towards crowdfunding platforms and how people are turning towards these platforms increasingly as an additional financial support to fund their and their family's treatments.

To better understand the psyche of the people, we need to analyse certain aspects of the current scenario of health, healthcare systems and processes in the country. Healthcare industry in India has progressed leaps and bounds no doubt, but there exist gaps in accessibility, availability and affordability of healthcare in almost all parts of the country. This can be due to the following reasons: -

- Lack of newer and better technology and services in the public hospitals.
- Inability and difficulty to access healthcare at remote areas
- Exorbitant prices of healthcare
- Various vendors for healthcare services like disgnostics and radiological tests
- India still has a greater percentage of outbof pocket expenditure for accessing health
- Gaps or pitfalls in governemnet schemes to reach the general public due to corruption etc.
- Rural india still opts for treatmebtr from RMCs and quarks

All these factors cause certain level of hindernace in uniformity in accesing health for all. The cost of treating even the simplest of ailments are extremely high in private hospitals. Inability to pay for treatment would lead to discontinuation of treatemnt, hence people are left with no other but to turn to insurances, health coverage etc.

Even after the governments initiative for achieveing Universal Helath Coverage in the country, there are many people who are still uninsured and do not have any safety net when it comes to finanacing medical outcomes. Universal health Coverage does not include many serious and critical illneses and only covers primary care. Almost more than 50 % of the population is pushed to below poverty line after one hospitalisation in india, and adding to the misery the pandemic has pushed many people towards poverty within one year.

In such conditions taking insurance, money lenders etc will add to the misery of the family. Thus, people have started to turn to crowdfunding platforms as an safety net and to tap in all the resources they can get in times of a healthcare crisis.

Disease Burden and Crowdfunding

While assessing all the campaigns in the platform, the cases that were running were mostly non- communicable and critical in nature. Thus, we can correlate all this disease burden of the country. With the advancement in technology and medicine, people's life spans have increased, there has been a shift from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases due to improvement in hygiene and sanitation. Most of the cases on the crowdfunding platform are critical and rare diseases which require immediate and continuous management and therapy.

Ever since the pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of covid-19 cases and other communicable diseases like black fungus, yellow fungus etc.

Attractiveness of Crowdfunding

The reasons for increase in the popularity for these crowdfunding platforms are the follows: -

- These crowdfunding platforms provide personal relationship manager who help the campaigner and the family through the entire process.
- They provide content writer, photoshoots and all the necessary guidance for the campaign to tab out their network as much as possible
- Counselling is provided by the platform to help in accessing the possible ways the campaign can reach multiple people effectively.
- Donors get 80 G tax benefits upon donating which hep the donors to get tax exemptions.
- The funds collected are easily transferred to the hospital accounts to make it a hassle free experience for the campaigner.
- The biggest advantage is there is no payback liability.

Other than medical reasons, there various other reasons for which people seek crowdfunding. These reasons vary from arranging funds for establishing business and start-ups to funding for educations etc.

Reasons for crowdfunding

Other than medical reasons, there various other reasons for which people seek crowdfunding. These reasons vary from arranging funds for establishing business and start-ups to funding for educations etc.

- Medical reasons: - People seek crowdfunding to treat a variety of critical diseases like cancer, liver transplant, respiratory distress, rare diseases etc.
- NGO: - Many people seek crowdfunding options to arrange funds for their businesses and other expansion plans.
- Personal cause: - They vary from causes like funding for education, Post treatment costs, daily expenses etc.
- Creative idea: - People also seek funds for creative ideas like opening up schools for the poor, providing medicines and groceries to rural and affected people in the pandemic.

Checking Fraudulent Activity

These crowdfunding platforms have strict guidelines and policies under which they evaluate each and every campaigner. This is done to keep a check on any kind of fraudulent behaviour and to maintain the credibility of the platform.

Strict KYC verification of the campaigner with scanned medical records and a letter form the doctor is taken. The campaigners official email address, contact information, aadhar, pan card etc is taken. In cases where the campaigner is a NGO or an organisation, the KYC details of the organisation, official letter on organisation letter head, 80 G tax certificate and other details are taken prior to activation of the campaign on the website.

These crowdfunding platforms refrain from transferring funds to any personal account and only transfers the raised funds on the hospital's account. The donors are given regular updates as to how the fundraiser is fairing and the status of the beneficiary.

Donors are also given utilisation report which states the usage of each and every penny that is spend so that donors can also feel secure and happy that their donations are utilisied for the cause they wanted.

Additional funds left if any, after settling bills are either transferred for diagnostic purposes or for covering post-operative costs. Sometimes campaigners agree to donate the excess funds to any other cause or campaign running on the platform as they understand the seriousness of the situation and sympathise with other campaigners.

Chapter VI: - CONCLUSION

With the advancement of technology and social media, crowdfunding platforms are more and more gaining traction and popularity. These crowdfunding platforms have served as a guarantee and additional source for arranging funds for individuals. Be it communicable diseases like covid-19, or non-communicable diseases like cancer, thalassemia, NHL etc, the cost to treatment is extremely high. Other than just the cost to treatment, there are a lot of additional expenses like medicines, hospital stay, test etc. hence crowdfunding platforms are slowly penetrating the market and marking its place in healthcare sector alongside the likes of insurance companies and health coverage packages

The reasons for people opting for crowdfunding these days even after having health coverage can be culminated in the following manner: -

- Out of all the campaigns that were running in the crowdfunding platform, maximum causes for these campaigns are for medical reasons. Similar trends and patterns are seen in almost all of the crowdfunding platforms seen in India. This indicates that while faced with a medical adversity, people will try to opt as many resources as possible.
- The campaigners on these platforms mostly belong from good financial background or belong to middle class backgrounds with stable jobs. These individual have an understanding about how social media works which is detrimental for the campaigns to spread wide and raise adequate funds.
- Maximum all the cases so far on these platforms have preexisting insurance, loans and money that has been taken from money lenders. This helps in understanding that even after tapping into their own savings, insurances and health coverages, there is a shortage of funds for the on-going treatment.
- All the campaigns which are running are mostly for critical illnesses like cancer treatment, liver and kidney failure, RTAs, NHL etc. these diseases require continuous therapy, treatment and rehabilitation which require enormous amount of funds.
- There has been a rise in covid-19 cases on the platform. This is due to the second wave of pandemic which has hit us has left us with a serious crunch in medical resources like hospital beds, medicines and oxygen. Securing a hospital bed and getting the necessary treatment has been expensive due to rise in prices. Almost all

the patients required ventilator support and oxygen. Thus, arranging for these services cost the families heavily.

- Due to the recent success of accumulation of massive amount of funds for rare and genetic disorders has brought these campaigns in the media's notice and coverage. This has led to many people who are affected by such diseases like Pompe's disease, Gaucher disease, MPS 1 etc. have also started to approach crowdfunding platforms for funding their treatments.
- This is because genetic disorder requires a life time of therapy and rehabilitation and some require extensive stem cell, bone marrow surgeries etc. Monthly blood transfusion and enzyme replacement therapy cost exorbitantly high. It is difficult for any family to afford continuous treatment without taking any external help. This help is provided by axillary insurances, loans and health coverages. additionally, crowdfunding has made it possible for people to raise funds without payback liability.
- Crowdfunding platform market these campaigns extensively on all social media platforms to increase reach, this is not possible of a single individual to achieve.
- Donors also look for contributing to the cause of their liking, while doing that they receive tax benefits which acts like an added incentive for them to contribute.
- Campaigners have nothing to lose as they are not charged for campaigning their cause and instead they get to tap into their tertiary networks and ultimately reach out to strangers for much needed help.

Overall, the attractiveness of crowdfunding platforms is in the basis that to treat rare and critical illnesses, just savings, insurances, health coverage aren't enough. With rising prices of healthcare services, it has become detrimental for such platforms to gain popularity among people. Crowdfunding platforms have so far penetrated less than 10 % and are expected to penetrate more in the market in the coming years. It should be understood that people even though have third party insurances and coverage, it may not cover many health outcomes or will have certain limitations to it. In those conditions, people need to arrange funds for their on-going treatment. But other aspects will require payback or mortgage. In those conditions, these crowdfunding platforms are the only way out for these people

Many people belonging to below poverty line are also creating campaigns in these website. Needless to say, poor people require more financial assistance even after having help from the government.

Many times government run schemes and universal coverage do not reach these people or are time consuming. Since people need faster means of fund raising, crowdfunding platforms are the means for them.

Thus, it can be effectively said that crowdfunding platforms will continue to gain popularity as people need all the resources they can tap into in times of distress. Hence, despite having health coverage, there might be a scenario where there will a need of co-existence of both universal health coverage and crowdfunding.

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