

STATUS OF SELECTED PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES IN THANE DISTRICT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to provide an in-depth insight about the availability and disparity prevailing in health facilities such as availability of beds and doctors per 25000 of the population in different talukas of Thane district of Maharashtra during 2008-09 to 2018-19. The research reveals the presence of huge disparity concerning said infrastructural facilities in the district during the given period. The research analysis indicates that Ulhasnagar taluka in the district had the highest availability of hospital beds per 25000 of the population in government hospitals while Kalyan taluka witnessed the lowest availability. Talking about the doctors' availability in the district, Ulhasnagar and Murbad taluka noted the highest availability while Ambarnath witnessed taluka's lowest availability during the study period. The present study is based on secondary data, collected through various published sources. The data has been analysed using simple statistical tools such as tables and graphs. The average has been calculated to rank the position of the taluka in the availability of selected health infrastructural facilities in the district.

Keywords: Health Facility, Disparity, Beds availability, Government Expenditure, Doctors availability



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Introduction:

Health facilities are to be considered as public goods and hence its price cannot be left alone to the market forces of demand and supply.¹ Government health services play a vital role in people's life. It not only protects people from various diseases but also adds significantly to labour's productivity. The health services especially the public in the country has been neglected and criticized over a long period and it requires serious policy measures.² Public health facilities have come under strain after the spread of a new pandemic called covid 19.³ One way to out of the problem is to decide our priorities and allocate sufficient funds for the

health services.⁴ Public health services along with better utilisation of capacity can be proved to be crucial in the current scenario for tackling the problem of covid-19.⁵

Public health and hospitals being a State subject, the prime responsibility to ensure the availability of public health facilities lies with the State Governments. Maharashtra is one of the leading states in witnessing healthcare development in India. The healthcare services in the state are being rendered by government, private and voluntary sectors. Government health facilities intend to provide consistent, reliable, satisfactory and qualitative health care to those who are economically weaker. Public health services are also provided bearing in mind the local needs, mainly tribal and rural populations. 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages is an important goal of Sustainable Development.'⁶

The government of Maharashtra has shaped three-tier health infrastructure to cater for the health needs of the people. Health services at different tiers are in the state are extended through Sub-centres (SC), Primary Health Centres (PHC) and Community Health Centres (CHC). The sub-district and district hospitals are the components of secondary tier health services whereas, well equipped medical colleges and super-speciality hospitals situated in cities are at tertiary level.⁷

Objectives

1. To study taluka wise availability of Beds in Government-run hospitals of Thane district.
2. To study talukas wise availability of Doctors and Physicians at public health centres in the Thane district.
3. To identify the prevailing disparities among health facilities in government in government-run hospitals of Thane district.

Data Sources and Methodology

The present study examines the availability and extent of disparities present in government-administered health services across the various talukas of Thane district during 2008-09 to 2018-19 using the descriptive methodology. The researcher, to examine the disparity, has considered the availability of beds and doctors/physicians per 25000 populations in government-run hospitals of Thane district. The researcher has computed the availability of the facilities considering the population of census 2001 till 2010-11 while 2011 thereafter. The data for the study has been collected through the government's official publications such as District Socio-Economic Review, (Thane) Economic Survey of Maharashtra, research papers, journals and so on. Collected data has been analysed using tables and graphs. A simple mean

has been calculated to study the availability and presence of disparity in health facilities in the district during the above said period.

Study Area

Thane district is an important district of Maharashtra, having total land area of 4290 km² which is nearly 1.37% of total state's land area. The district has seven talukas in total like Thane, Bhiwandi, Shahapur, Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Ambernath and Murbad. The table given below provides brief information about the demography of the Thane district.⁸

Table No.1 : Thane District at Glance (2011)

Taluka	Total Area (sq. km)	Talukawise Population	Taluka share to total Pop. (%)	Taluka wise Lit.
Thane	339.56	3787036	47%	89.7
Bhiwandi	694.83	1141386	14%	79.3
Shahapur	1628.64	314103	4%	75.9
Kalyan	309.81	1565417	19%	90.2
Ulhasnagar	13	506098	6%	87.4
Ambernath	319.48	565340	7%	87
Murbad	985.08	190652	2%	76.17
Total	4290.4	8070032	100%	83.14

Source: DSER, 2016

Talukawise availability of Beds at Public Health Care-centres in Thane:

Total beds at the public health centre in the district in 2008-09 were 8386 which declined drastically to 1343 (84%) in 2018-19. Talking about the taluka wise share in 2008-09, it was 62.2 percent for Thane, 15 percent for Bhiwandi, 1.9 percent for Shahapur, 5.7 percent for Kalyan, 11.1 percent for Ulhasnagar, 1.8 percent for Ambernath and 1.1 percent for Murbad. Talukawise share in the district in 2018-19 changed to 25 percent for Thane, 17.2 percent for Bhiwandi, 18 percent for Shahapur, 5.1 percent for Kalyan, 18.7 percent for Ulhasnagar, 5.8 percent for Ambernath and 10.2 percent for Murbad.

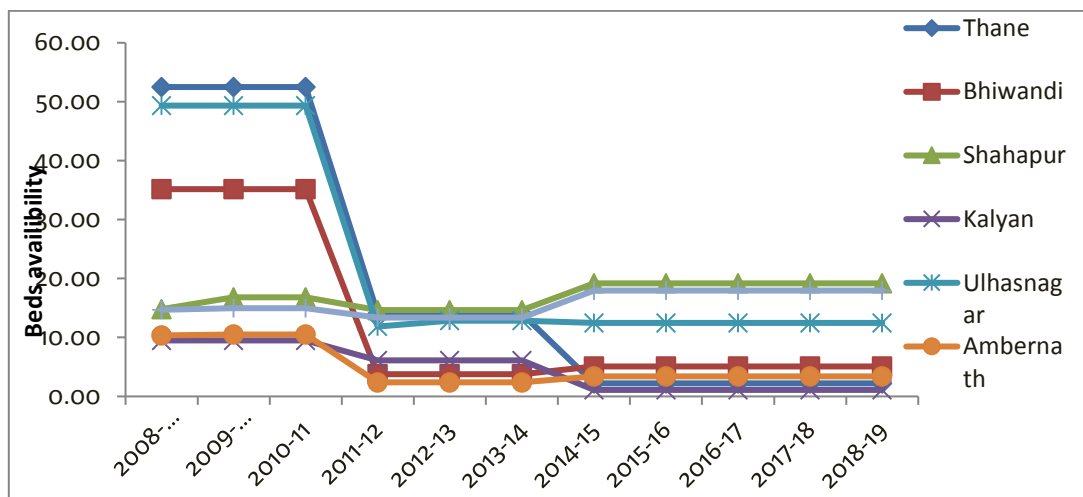
Table 2: Talukawise Availability of Beds at Public Health Centre in Thane District (in %)

Taluka	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Thane	62.27	62.08	62.08	65.20	64.80	64.80	25.02	25.02	25.02	25.02	25.02
Bhiwandi	15.86	15.81	15.81	5.27	5.24	5.24	17.20	17.20	17.20	17.20	17.20
Shahapur	1.93	2.19	2.19	5.64	5.60	5.60	17.94	17.94	17.94	17.94	17.94
Kalyan	5.78	5.77	5.77	11.76	11.69	11.69	5.14	5.14	5.14	5.14	5.14
Ulhasnagar	11.15	11.12	11.12	7.35	7.92	7.92	18.76	18.76	18.76	18.76	18.76
Ambernath	1.81	1.83	1.83	1.65	1.64	1.64	5.73	5.73	5.73	5.73	5.73
Murbad	1.19	1.21	1.21	3.13	3.11	3.11	10.20	10.20	10.20	10.20	10.20

Source: Author Calculation based on DSER, Thane

Availability of Beds at Public Health Centres in Thane District:

Fig.1: Availability of Beds per 25000 Populations in Thane



Source: DSER, Thane

The availability of beds per 25000 of the population at public health centres in Thane district as can be seen in fig. 1 were reported to be 35 in 2008-09. Thane (52.4), Bhiwandi (35.1), Ulhasnagar (49.3) witnessed availability above the district's total, while Shahapur (14.8), Kalyan (9.5), Ambernath (10.3) and Murbad (14.6) witnessed availability below the district's total.

The availability of beds per 25000 of the population in the district in 2018-19 declined to 4. Bhiwandi (5), Shahapur (19.1), Ulhasnagar (12.4), Murbad (18) witnessed availability of beds above the district's total while Thane (2.2), Kalyan (1) and Ambernath (3.4) had witnessed below district's total.

Talukawise availability of Doctors at Public Health Care-centres in Thane:

The number of doctors at the public health centre in the Thane district in 2008-09 was 489 which declined considerably to 160 (159%) in 2018-19. Talking about the talukawise share per centage in 2008-09, it was 50.1 for Thane, 7.5 for Bhiwandi, 5.1 for Shahapur, 13.2 for Kalyan, 16.5 for Ulhasnagar, 3.2 for Ambernath and 4.0 for Murbad. Talukawise share in the district in 2018-19 changed to 24.3 for Thane, 11.2 for Bhiwandi, 13.7 for Shahapur, 3.7 for Kalyan, 28.1 for Ulhasnagar, 5.6 for Ambernath and 13.1 for Murbad.

Table 3 Talukawise Availability of Doctors at Public Health Centre in Thane District (in %)

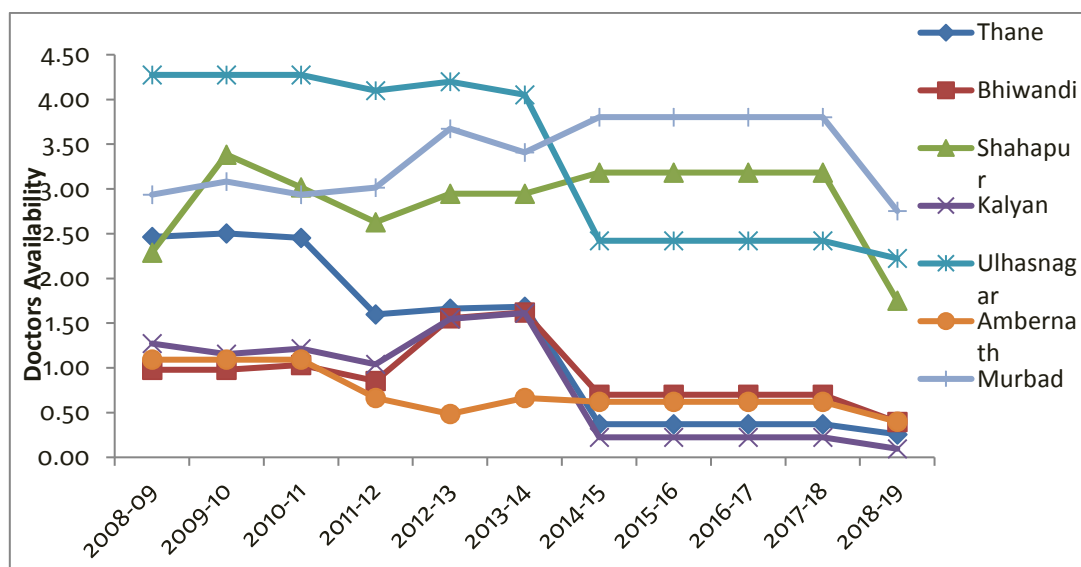
Taluka	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Thane	50.10	49.80	49.29	48.40	43.37	43.22	23.93	23.93	23.93	23.93	24.38
Bhiwandi	7.57	7.40	7.88	7.80	12.22	12.54	13.68	13.68	13.68	13.68	11.25
Shahapur	5.11	7.40	6.67	6.60	6.37	6.27	17.09	17.09	17.09	17.09	13.75
Kalyan	13.29	11.80	12.53	13.00	16.70	17.12	5.98	5.98	5.98	5.98	3.75
Ulhasnagar	16.56	16.20	16.36	16.60	14.63	13.90	20.94	20.94	20.94	20.94	28.13
Ambernath	3.27	3.20	3.23	3.00	1.89	2.54	5.98	5.98	5.98	5.98	5.63
Murbad	4.09	4.20	4.04	4.60	4.82	4.41	12.39	12.39	12.39	12.39	13.13

Source: DSER, Thane

Availability of Doctors/physicians at Public Health Centres in Thane District:

The availability of doctors and physicians per 25000 of the population at public health centres in Thane district as can be seen in fig. 2 were reported to be 2.04 in 2008-09. Thane (2.4), Shahapur (2.2), Ulhasnagar (4.2) and Murbad (3) witnessed availability above the district's total, while Bhiwandi (0.9), Kalyan (1.2) and Ambernath (1.0) witnessed availability below the district's total.

Figure 2: Talukawise availability of Doctors at Public Health Care-centres in Thane:



Source: DSER, Thane

The availability of doctors and physicians per 25000 of the population in the district in 2018-19 declined below one (0.5). Shahapur (1.7), Ulhasnagar (2.2) and Murbad (2.7) witnessed the availability of doctors above the district's total while Thane (0.2), Bhiwandi (0.3) and Kalyan (0.1) had witnessed below district's total.

Research Findings:

Table 4: Taluka Ranking in Availability of Selected Health public Infrastructures in Thane

Variables	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7
Availability of Beds	Ulhasnagar	Thane	Shahapur	Murbad	Bhiwandi	Ambernath	Kalyan
Availability of doctors and Physicians	Ulhasnagar	Murbad	Shahapur	Thane	Bhiwandi	Kalyan	Ambernath

It has been found that Ulhasnagar talukas in the district witnessed taluka best access to selected health infrastructures per 25000 of the population during the study period 2008-09 to 2016-17 in the district. Thane taluka occupied the second top position, while Shahapur occupied the third top position in the availability of hospital beds per 25000 population. Murbad, Bhiwnadi, Ambernath, Kalyan talukas shared fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh rank respectively.

Coming to the availability of doctors per 25000 of the population in the district during the study period, Ulhasnagar taluka was found to be at the top in the district taluka in the availability of doctors at government health centres during the study period 2008-09 to 2016-17. Murbad and Shahapur shared second and third ranks in the district. taluka occupied the second top position, while Shahapur occupied the third top position in the availability of hospital beds per 25000 population. Thane, Bhiwnadi, Kalyan and Ambernath occupied fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh rank respectively.⁹

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The district has observed disparity in the availability of selected public health care facilities during the study period 2008-09 to 2016-17. Talukas like Thane Bhiwandi, Kalyan, and Ulhasnagar have witnessed a catastrophic fall in the availability of said health infrastructures during the study period. Talking specifically about the beds availability per 25000 population in public hospitals, Thane, Bhiwandi, Ulhasnagar were in a comparatively good position as they succeeded in marking availability above the district total till 2010-11 but availability started collapsing thereafter. Talking about the doctors availability per 25000 population, the ratio is not satisfactory seeing the burden of the patient per hospital. The health facilities in the district deteriorated on the account of the government's negligence and falling expenditure on health and allied facilities. The district general expenditure on public health declined from Rs 1638.8 lakh in 2008-09 to 1216 lakh in the next consecutive year District marked remarkable growth in the expenditure on general health to more than 4153 lakh in 2013-14 but fell to nearly half in the next consecutive year and even became worst during 2016-17 and 2017-18 where it came down to Rs 1081 lakh and 1128 lakh which is even well below 2008-09. and. The district noted negative compound annual growth of minus 3 percent during the study period. There is a need for serious efforts in the direction of health sectors not only in the region chosen under the study but in the country as well considering the current pandemic. There is need for increased expenditure on public health from both central and state governments along with quality monitoring to deal with the current pandemic.

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