

Complaint Handling Management at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital

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Abstract

Hospital patients can respond to meet the expectations and realities of the health service they received. If it does not meet their expectations, there will be dissatisfaction. Consumer dissatisfaction is conveyed in the form of criticism and complaints, so good complaint management is required to provide an early warning system to anticipate serious safety incidents resulting in patient dissatisfaction. This includes complaints at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara, where most patients complained about the completeness of inpatient and outpatient services, resulting in a review of the Management of Complaint Handling in Health Services at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital. This research was conducted on internal management and external patients at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara using qualitative descriptive method with observation and interview with public relations division and patients who have been treated at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital. The results showed that the management of complaint handling at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital has not implemented a tiered line of responsibility for complaints. The Public Relations Department often has a role as a complaint resolution party, even though its main function is as a mediator between customers and related units in the management of complaint handling at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital. Supervision and documentation of complaints at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital has not developed a Hospital Complaint Management Information System for the effectiveness of complaint resolution control. Patient evaluations showed that they were quite satisfied with the service and follow up on the complaints they have submitted, but there were some service facilities that they think still lacking.

Keywords

complaint management; hospital services; implementation flow of health service complaints



I. Introduction

Hospital is an institution that provides health services to improve community health status. In carrying out its function as a public health service, the main service of the hospital is to provide health services in the form of inpatient, outpatient, and emergency services. Patients can respond directly to the health services that have been received in accordance with the expectations or not yet appropriate. If it is not suitable to the expectations, there will be dissatisfaction. Consumer dissatisfaction will be conveyed in the form of criticism or advice and subsequently ask for compensation called complaints. Complaints submitted to the hospital can provide an early warning system that if followed up can prevent serious safety incidents (Kroening, 2015).

Complaints that are not managed appropriately and quickly can trigger public distrust of the credibility of the Hospital. In addition, it will have an impact on the level of consumer (patients) visits and decrease the performance of the hospital. Consumers will

spread negative information about the hospital so that the hospital can be difficult to cope with. Therefore, a systematic and integrated complaint management system is required. Patient complaints indicate that the patient provides the hospital with the opportunity to provide them with satisfaction. Complaints submitted by consumers must be managed properly so as not to spread negative information that can damage the image of the hospital.

Complaints that occurred at the General Hospital during 2019 in East Nusa Tenggara could be explained if the number of complaints was volatile and not the same as the total number of 40 complaints recorded and the average complaint was 3 complaints per month, the highest was in May 2019 which complaints reached 6 simultaneously with the moment of Eid Mubarak. The number of these complaints may not be very big and almost all of them are actionable. However, not all complaints were documented or recorded and well disposed of. The more modern the hospital today, it is necessary to provide modern and recorded services so that if one day needed can be found a reference as a long-term solution.

St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital is one of the hospitals located in Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The Public Relations Department of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital received a complaint with a high value. Therefore, the description of complaint management at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital needs to be understood. The impact of poor handling of complaints will make the hospital's image worse and the patients will be looking for a better hospital with better services. Complaint handling management becomes more important not only because it can be feedback in improving the quality of health services but also can increase public trust in hospitals as well as decreased malpractice demands (Humas RSU St. Rafael Cancar, 2017). Data in 2020 showed the type of service completeness is the most type of complaint. Complaints of the type of service completeness were in settlement status due to the completion of facilities or repairs.

SOP (Standard Operational Procedure) related to the handling of complaints from service users of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital already exists. However, the handling of complaint at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital looks less than optimal. There is a lack of understanding and training of staff and medical personnel, when there are patients who complained seriously. In addition, the level of patient visits for treatment is also continues to decline, although this is suspected due to the recent COVID-19 Pandemic. However, it is feared that this condition is caused by the complaints that are not handled properly and correctly, so it can result in a decrease in patient satisfaction, so it is necessary to conduct research that aims to identify the management process of complaint handling and what types of complaints are commonly submitted by patients at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital.

Complaints are defined as the behavior of patients or their representatives who feel dissatisfaction with medical services, nursing services, and treatment through the delivery media or contacting the Hospital directly. The purpose of these actions is to criticize the Hospital and demand compensation (Jiang, 2014).

Complaint handling is part of TQM or total quality management. Total quality management is a management approach for an organization focused on quality. The goal of TQM is to realize the organization's long-term success through the support of organizational components and consumer satisfaction (Besterfield, 2011). The tools used in total quality management are daily management, policy management, cross-functional management, and quality control and complaints (Oliver, 2004).

Customer satisfaction is the purpose of complaint management. Customer satisfaction is a customer whose desire is achieved or complain is responded by providers of goods and services (Gale, 2010). Patient satisfaction is a level of feeling arising from the performance of health services obtained by comparing what is expected (Pohan, 2006). Quality aspects that can be used as indicators of quality assessment of a hospital's services, namely: a) professionalism in the Hospital (clinical aspects), b) efficiency and effectiveness of health care implementation based on the use of resources, c) aspects of safety, aspects of safety and aspects of patient comfort and d) aspects of patient satisfaction who get health services (Chriswardani, 2006). According to Fadhillah (2021) Customer satisfaction means the comparison between what consumers expect and what consumers feel when using the product. When consumers feel the product's performance equals or exceeds their expectations, it means they are satisfied. Conversely, if the product's performance is less than expectations, it means they are not satisfied.

Effective complaint handling can overcome consumer complaints by providing optimal satisfaction to consumers and ultimately provide benefits to both parties. (Kaihatu, 2015) stated that Complaint handling can be divided into 5 stages:

Stage 1: Listening and Understanding

Listening is a basic attitude in capturing what consumers are dissatisfied with and what consumers need. "Listening" in this case depends on the media conveying the complaint.

Stage 2: Clarification and Equalization of Perception

The hospital represented by front line employees and customer service division has had a perception about the complaint submitted, this perception should be clarified to the consumer who filed the complaint. Clarification and equalization of perception serve to prevent hospital errors in the handling of complaints.

Stage 3: Explanation and Apology

The hospital provides an explanation of the cause of consumer dissatisfaction from the point of view of the Hospital. This process requires clear and diplomatic discussion. The process of explaining the cause of consumer dissatisfaction should not blame the Hospital, the Hospital system, other related divisions, nor the costumer itself.

Stage 4: Solutions and Taking Action

Solutions in handling complaints related to the SOP applicable in the Hospital. When a complaint is submitted, understood, and clarified with the consumer concerned, usually the complaint will be categorized. This category of complaints varies depending on the policy of the Hospital. Categorization of complaints in hospitals starts from complaints with a mild level, moderate levels and up to severe complaints.

Stage 5: Follow-up

The follow-up stage is a stage that is often ignored or deliberately forgotten by the hospital because the hospital must once again deal with consumers who submitted complaints, even though the complaint has been handled.

II. Research Methods

This research is a qualitative descriptive case study by conducting a search to explore and understand a problem. The research was conducted by interviewing the research subjects in accordance with the following theoretical frameworks:

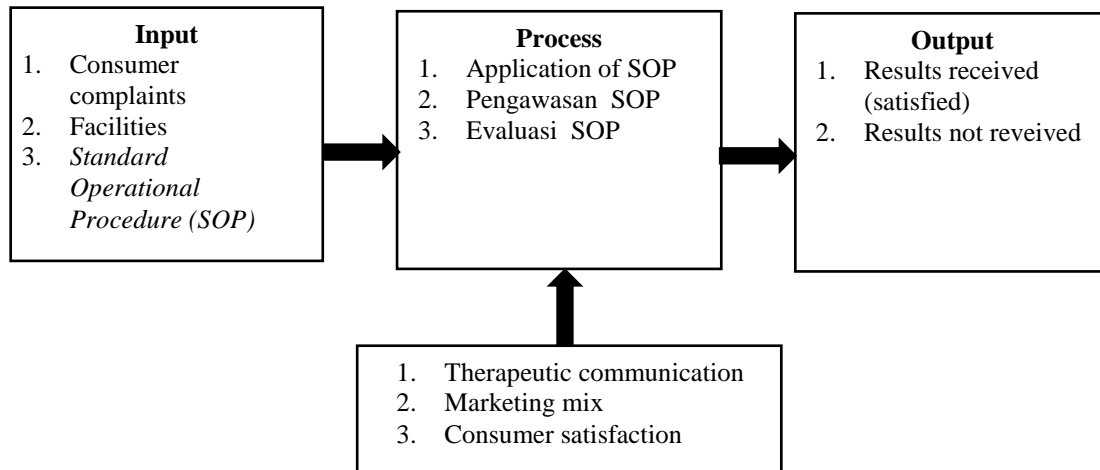


Figure 1. *Theoretical Frameworks* (Besterfield, 2011; Kaihatu, 2015)

The research "Complaint Management in Health Services at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital" was conducted in the Public Relations Department of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital and patients who had complaints about the services of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital were willing to be interviewed on February 22, 2021 – February 26, 2021.

Informants were chosen to provide information based on the principles: appropriateness and adequacy. Resource persons have knowledge and directly involved in handling complaints. Researchers conducted detailed interviews with internal and external components of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital. Internal Interviews of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital were conducted to staff who are directly related in the implementation of complaint handling: 1) Head of Public Relations, 2) Outpatient Person in Charge and 3) Inpatient Person in Charge. External interviews of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital were conducted to patients of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital with purposive sampling technique, for instance, patients with certain conditions, age over 17 years old or married and had been treated at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital.

Instruments or tools used for research were interview guidelines, document studies and supporting tools to conduct interviews activities with informants and data observation such as recording equipment and stationery. Validity of data were performed by testing the suitability of data from data credibility through triangulation of sources, methods, and times as well as testing of transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Data processing was done by collecting data from all sources, transferring interview results into transcript and documents, reducing the data obtained and transcribed, combining detailed interview results data presented in the form of matrices, conducting in-depth assessments of the results of research on handling patient complaints and drawing conclusions.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

This study used primary data sourced from in-depth interviews with three informants and external patients. The characteristics of internal informants are as follows:

Table 1. Characteristics of Informan

No.	Position	Gender	Education	Working Period	Tenure
1.	Head of Public Relations	Female	S1 Economic Management	15 years	3 years
2.	Inpatient Person in Charge	Female	D3 Nursing	6 years	2 years
3.	Outpatient Person in Charge	Female	D3 Nursing	16 years	2 years

3.2 Discussion

a. Application of SOP for Handling Complaint

1. Complaints Identification

If the customer contacts the hospital to ask questions or complaints, it is important that the first contact (Costumer Service) is handled properly. In order for Costumer Service to respond confidently to complaints, they need to: a. understand why; b. listen effectively and ask the right questions; c. communicate respectfully, politely, impartially, and honestly; d. express empathy; e. have insight into their own reactions and responses to complaints; f. do not take the anger or frustration of whistleblowers personally; g. provide comprehensive and clear information on how to handle complaints, as well as the results and reasons for these results (New South Wales Ombudsman, 2017).

Hospitals have a wide range of health services that can be excelled to maintain patient loyalty. Efforts to improve the quality of hospital services in organizing health services aims to gain the trust of consumers in quality and effective health services. Marketing mix consists of 7P (product, price, place promotion, people, process and physic) are components that can be controlled by hospitals to improve the quality of service and maintain patient loyalty (Kusumo, 2016). Type of health care facilities that need to be improved is the quality of service at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital, i.e. inpatient and outpatient services.

The marketing mix that has a significant impact on customer loyalty in hospitals is the service process (Kusumo, 2016). The level of comfort provided by the hospital as a service provider greatly affects the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of consumers to the process of service received. Therefore, the process of health services by the hospital is expected to meet the needs and satisfaction of consumers.

2. Documentation of Complaint

Implementation of documentation of the complaint is done by writing or recording the complaint manually. Each complaint received by the Hospital will be documented and used as evaluation for the relevant task force in a monthly meeting with the board of directors. There is a complaint form that must be filled in by the officer and a complaint register book. Some patients who submit complaints want to provide their identity or do not want to fill out the complaint form that has been provided. The results of complaint

documentation from all units are captured by the Public Relations Department and made in the form of monthly reports. The report will be submitted to the Head of Public Relations.

3. Search for Solutions

Search for solutions to complaints received by hospitals is conducted by public relations officers in coordination with the relevant units. Time required for a solution depends on the level of complaints and the facilities used at the time of submitting the complaint. Many patients complain in a good and polite manner. There are also customers who complain emotionally because of poor communication between officers and customers that raises misunderstandings on both sides. Complaints submitted by customers basically aim to find solutions to customer dissatisfaction.

Implementation on the search for complaint solutions at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital has been found by requiring each officer to give the customer the opportunity to submit a complaint in detail before providing a solution to the problem. Furthermore, the coordination process has been carried out if the desired solution was not found

Skills with effective communication are the key to success in complaint handling management. The hospital showed its credibility by trying to provide explanation and accountability for complaints received from customers. This is very important because the explanation and accountability from the company can build the credibility of the organization, thus potentially increasing customer satisfaction for the response received (Skar, 2018). In the process of finding a solution, hospital representatives should be able to show a serious attitude and pay close attention to each complaint submitted by the customer (Gruber, 2009).

4. Submission of Solutions

Officers who are responsible for the process of resolving complaints, need to know and apply the way of delivery of a good and appropriate solution to the customer who submitted the complaint so that the customer can understand the solution provided. The officer serves as a mediator between the units related to the costumer. Based on the interview it is known that the way the officer in delivering the complaint solution to the customer was clear and accurate. The officer thanked and gave the customer a chance whether he/she was satisfied with the solution or there were still complaints about other things.

5. Feedback

Some cases of complaints in the implementation were still not implemented in accordance with the flow of complaint handling. Every time there's a complaint the decision-maker is the Head of Public Relations. St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital has never obtained and handled complaints involving the legal domain so the problem of complaints is directly handled by the Head of Public Relations.

b. Internal Evaluation

- 1) Evaluation of the follow-up of complaints needs to be considered. The hospital's steps in providing solutions to complaints given by customers have been appropriate. However, the results of such actions have not been fully felt by the patient. This is evident that hospital has received lack of information from the suggestion box, although St Cancar General Hospital always evaluates every complaint that comes in. Further follow up of any complaints were reported to the Board of Directors.

- 2) Implementation on the internal evaluation of the application of SOP complaints management showed the evaluation has been done effectively in accordance with the SOP, i.e. from the unit to the Board of Directors. However, the lack of effectiveness of evaluation were still looked the same as the application of SOP, i.e. on the unstated and development of the company's Complaint Management Information System related to the control of complaint resolution on SOP, because human resources and facilities have not been built. In addition, the information board related to the settlement of complaints also does not exist.
- 3) Overall evaluation on the process of applying SOP complaint management, especially in the implementation of less tiered, where each complaint is often resolved by public relations. The negative impact of implementing a non-tiered complaint management SOP is the decentralization of conflict handling, so that the dependency of conflict resolution is only from certain parties. This will lead to uneven load sharing. Complaint handling should start from the lowest level in the unit, then to public relations and up to the top level, specifically the board of directors by involving all related units.
- 4) In accordance with the evidence based on observations and interviews to the internal hospital, the existing complaint management is actually quite qualified, it is only necessary to integrate follow-up evaluation. Complaint handling in service can be categorized into three levels of handling, i.e. (New South Wales Ombudsman, 2017):
 - a. Handling level 1
Officers who receive complaints from the customers can respond well and resolved as early as possible. This includes authorisation, proper delegation, training and supervision. In this study, the handling of complaints included in level 1 is the completeness of the type of inpatient and outpatient services, the friendliness of officers in providing services, administration and waiting times of service.
 - b. Handling level 2
Handling level 2 is the handling of complaints that need to be reviewed internally and done when consumers are not satisfied with the process or results. At this level, it is possible to have an alternative solution to a serious or complex complaint. The implementation of level 2 treatment in the hospital involves the Head of Public Relations and related units.
 - c. Handling level 3
Handling level 3 is the handling of complaints that need to get a review from external parties. External reviews will be conducted when the problem cannot be resolved within an organization. An issue can be referred for alternative resolution of the problem or through an appropriate external organization. The implementation of level 3 treatment in the hospital involves legal institutions that have cooperated with the Hospital.

c. Implementation Flow of Health Service

1. Complaint Handling

According to New South Wales Ombudsman (2017) Complaint handling at Costumer Service has a responsibility to: a. Register and document every complaint received; b. Provide information about the policies and procedures of handling hospital complaints; c. Resolve the complaint, if possible; d. Refer the consumer and complaint to the relevant party; e. Refer the complaint for a level 2 review if it is serious or

complex f. Inform each complainant about the decision made about their complaint, the reason for the decision, and their right to request a review of the decision.

When the complaint is received, the details of the complaint must be documented in accordance with the Hospital's policies and procedures. The retained document contains all follow-up plans taken in connection with the complaint and copies of the relevant material (e.g. correspondence and evidence). In addition, it requires recording of the receipt, handling and results of each complaint. Where possible, the complaint documents should be able to identify: a. Contact details of the individual who filed the complaint b. Problem c. Search results d. Other information necessary to properly respond to the problem e. Any additional support that may be required by the complaining consumer. f. If the complaint is resolved at the first contact, an explanation of the settlement is submitted in the form of information provided or a referral made.

2. Acknowledge the Complaint

Acceptance of each complaint must be followed up immediately. Hospitals need to consider the point of view of the Hospital and consumers who submit complaints in determining follow-up plans. The officer responsible for the complaint needs to use the appropriate media to communicate. A copy of the complaint submission correspondence must be kept in the archive.

3. Planning an Investigation

Although many complaints can be resolved by the Costumer Service, serious or complex complaints should be referred to the second level. Level 2 involves:

a) An internal review

More senior officer or officer with a particular specialty will review the costumer service's complaint handling decision to confirm the initial decision and take corrective action.

b) Alternative problem solving of more senior officers helps facilitate discussions between costumer service complaint handlers and consumers, or can be referred to a mediator (Head of Public Relations). The Head of Public Relations helped both sides to clarify the problem so as to reach a solution through the discussion process.

c) Investigation Sometimes an investigation is required to determine a follow-up plan that must be implemented when a more serious complaint is submitted and involves the relevant external party.

Investigations usually involve: searching for answers to identified questions, gathering information reliable enough to enable decision-making, impartial fact-finding, reporting findings and making recommendations. The approach to investigation can be 'results-focused' or 'evidence-focused'. Results-focused investigations are the right strategy for less serious problems and problems regarding hospital policies, procedures and practices. This procedure aims to identify and fix problems quickly. The investigative approach does not require an in-depth analysis of all available evidence. In addition, the investigative approach can conclude the problem must be fixed through workplace training, policies, system changes and apologies (mediation).

4. Obtaining, Storing, and Reviewing Evidence

During the investigation process, it is important to gather detailed information so that findings and recommendations can be made. The source of evidence is divided into three categories, namely: a. People who are expert witnesses and the subject of investigation; b. Documents in the form of laws, policies, electronics and other records;

c. Other physical evidence, such as site and object inspection. The inquiry needs to determine who may have relevant information and documents relating to the complaint being investigated.

5. Make Findings

After all relevant evidence is collected and reviewed, an investigative report needs to be prepared. An investigative report is an official document used to make decisions on issues as well as determine follow-up plans in response to complaints received. Investigative reports should include analysis of relevant materials/evidence and detailed and logical documents attached.

6. Resolving Complaints

The resolution of complaints should focus on the results. The scope of action taken for the resolution of the complaint will depend on the circumstances of the complaint, the issues complained about, the parties involved and the possible outcome. Factors that can achieve a fair result and resolve complaints or correct losses resulting from proven problems include: a. Communication Two-way process of listening, discussing, explaining and negotiating; b. Improvements Take corrective action to change the decisions, practices or systems that caused the initial problem; c. Mitigation beyond improvement. This involves taking corrective action on the cause of the problem, as well as taking action to mitigate the adverse consequences of the initial problem; d. Satisfaction Taking action for parties who have suffered losses through non-material means. Satisfaction can include symbolic actions, such as apologizing on behalf of an organization or making an effort (public or private) to take action; e. Compensation For financial compensation for losses suffered directly or indirectly as a result of the initial problem.

7. Reviewing

Reviewing consumer complaints that submit complaints should be informed about their complaint review process. If a consumer requests a review of a complaint submitted, a more experienced officer or Head of Public Relations reviews the original decision and takes corrective action. Generally, the Head of Public Relations authorized to review the management of complaints should have a wide delegation to cancel the previous decision and implement the repair process.

d. External Evaluation

First, the patient's response related to how to submit a complaint to the General Hospital of St. Rafael Cancar. The patient had a different way to submit the ir complaints, such as directly conveyed to the officer who was on the phone, through the officer on duty and reported directly to the office of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital Services. Second, how was the attitude of the officer / nurse in responding to the complaint submitted. The patient agreed if the officer received the complaint in friendly and polite manner. Third, related to the level of satisfaction with the follow-up complaints submitted to the General Hospital of St. Rafael Cancar. Patients gave a satisfied answer / quite satisfied with the follow-up handling of complaints they submitted. Regarding the service they received as patients. The customer also agreed to continue using St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital as a place of treatment because it is close from their house, it is common to subscribe to medicine and because St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital is a referral hospital from health facility level I so that it will remain treated at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital.

The implementation of the external evaluation showed that some patients were sufficient and satisfied with the handling of complaints at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital, although some argued that they did not understand the SOP due to the lack of publication on the bulletin board. One of the steps to create effective complaint management is to evaluate the application of complaint management by evaluating customer satisfaction (Faed, 2014). To know customer satisfaction with the handling of complaints, it is necessary to take an approach to customers who submit complaints through communication with patients in a targeted and measurable manner.

Therapeutic communication is professional communication related to therapeutic relationship between health workers and patients in providing health services. This communication technique is designed to facilitate therapeutic objectives in improving optimal and effective healing. Therapeutic communication applied in the complaint handling process can help patients to clarify and reduce the burden of feelings and thoughts. In addition, therapeutic communication can identify and examine problems and evaluate actions taken by health workers. The application of therapeutic communication in health services has 4 stages, i.e.: a) pre-interaction stage, b) orientation stage, c) working stage and d) termination stage. Therapeutic communication has an important role in the implementation of the complaint handling process at the stage (Kusumo, 2017):

- a. Orientation stage is the stage of meeting between health workers and patients marked by the introduction. The process of introducing yourself to the patient will give a comfortable and open impression in the submission of complaints. The orientation stage serves to foster trust, acceptance and understanding of open communication. The main thing that needs to be reviewed is the reason why the patient submitted a complaint.
- b. The work stage is the stage to implement the complaint handling plan that has been prepared at the orientation stage and confirms the important things in the handling of patient complaints. Good communication creates an atmosphere that enhances patient integrity by minimizing fear, distrust, anxiety and pressure on patients. The work stage will give the patient the opportunity to ask questions and submit complaints. The officer in charge of complaint handling will support the patient in submitting to the complaint and analyzing the patient's condition through verbal and non verbal communication. Officers will define the dissatisfaction and problems facing patients. Furthermore, the officer will find a solution to the problem.

Termination stage is the final stage in running the complaint handling process. The officer will evaluate the results of the activities that have been carried out as the basis for the follow-up of complaints received. Patients are asked to give an assessment and review the services they have received.

IV. Conclusion

This research showed Identification on the implementation of complaint handling management of St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital has not implemented a tiered complaint responsibility flow. Supervision and documentation of complaints at St. Rafael Cancar General Hospital has not developed a Hospital Complaint Management Information System for the effectiveness of complaint resolution control. Internal evaluation showed that the evaluation control of SOP is good, but requires alignment in the process. While the external evaluation of patients who have complaints at that time showed that they are quite satisfied with the service and follow-up complaints they submitted, but there are some service facilities that they consider still lacking.

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