Introduction

The last few years have seen a spectacular development in the health and hospital consciousness of the Indian public. The general people are now more alert to their health and are accepting the role of hospitals in their daily life. People have gradually rid themselves of their old prejudices. Patients today enter the hospitals willingly with confidence and with hope of improved health and longer life.

The recent Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is about customer care and business strategy and the use of IT tools such as data mining to achieve the objective of profitability through enhanced customer relations.

According to Keen (2009), organizations are on the threshold of a shift from a transaction-based economy to a relationship-based economy. The challenge over the next few years will be for Marketers, Business Unit executives to work closely with IT Professionals within the Company in order to understand the emerging CRM/eCRM methods and to see how it can be used to increase the profitability of the business.

CRM is an important issue in healthcare service especially when there is a potential for healthcare providers to build ongoing relationships with patients. In the competitive, healthcare environment, many of the healthcare providers are now focusing on CRM with the help of information systems to deliver value over price.

According to Oliver (2008), the value of CRM is to create and maintain good and long term relationships with customers. Customer loyalty is a critical criterion for CRM. Loyalty refer to the repeated use of certain product and services by customers and even changes in business scenarios will not affect the purchase patterns or willingness to continue to use those products or services. Therefore, the core of the CRM in healthcare service is to satisfy patients’ interest and needs to increase the patient loyalty level.

A healthcare system over-wrought with inconsistencies and errors can prevent even the best organization from developing strong relationships with its patients. Customer relationship
management (CRM) for the healthcare industry sounds simple enough. In fact, experts are of the view that the concept of CRM is implicit in the practice of healthcare.

There are few relationships as important as the one-to-one relationship between a patient and his or her healthcare provider. When patients select hospitals, they believe that those hospitals to have accurate and complete information about their health. Patients no longer tolerate the excuse that errors and inconsistencies in their medical information are just an unfortunate side effect of dealing with large amounts of data.

The industry has begun to take notice and patients are pushing back at provider systems for accuracy, comprehensive record-keeping and stronger programs. The healthcare industry is in desperate need of a "patient service" overhaul to help organizations manage their customer relationships." Springe et. al. (2009).

Patient relationship management (PRM) is an overarching strategy (not just a technology) for identifying and anticipating diverse patient and clinician needs and preferences in order to tailor communications and programs accordingly. The currency for these transactions is patient data. The resulting benefits typically include improved customer service; reduce medical error, better productivity, cost savings and improved health outcomes to name a few.

Today, despite medical, technological, and communication advances that minimize professional isolation, transient and discrete healthcare encounters are common in an age of myriad health care organizations and savvy, mobile ‘customers’ (a.k.a. patients) seeking optimal and immediate care for complicated conditions.

Healthcare is characterized by complexity and fragmentation, with discrete containers of information often controlled by separate entities, with the patient left adrift, feeling frustrated and dissatisfied, and providers lacking a comprehensive clinical picture of the patient. In essence, this milieu of fragmentation has rendered unwieldy data the elusive ‘ghost in the machine,’ despite best efforts in the past to leverage technology as a panacea for streamlining healthcare Russell et. al. (2009).
As outlined in Bates et al. (2010) previous World View report on business intelligence in healthcare, these concerns are now being addressed with improved methods for integrating and analyzing data, transforming analysis from retrospection to prediction and ‘real-time’ processing in order to help organizations adopt best practices.

It is nearly impossible to go a week without seeing a news story about alarming rise in the rates of chronic diseases, or about the need to prevent oneself from such chronic diseases. As much as hospitals want to assist in proactively addressing the overall well-being of their patients, silos of electronic information stored in multiple systems or even cumbersome paper-based records hinder them. Young (2010)

Increased pressure to cut costs has put an even greater strain on under-funded healthcare information technology (IT) budgets, putting large-scale system maintenance and repairs out of reach for most healthcare organizations. Many, healthcare and IT professionals are looking for software that can integrate with current systems to make significant incremental improvements in patient care and satisfaction.

A CRM system can help doctors, paramedical staff to view patient’s demographic information, history of the patient. Using CRM they can also standardize and streamline processes. It also helps them to enable proactive communications. In short it helps them to improve their patients' overall health. Additionally, this indirectly will satisfy the patient as they receive additional services, which increases the likelihood they will make regular preventative healthcare an ongoing priority Hagland (2009).

The application infrastructure included load balancing and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) off-loading for the provider's Siebel deployment, but it had evolved into a cobbled together combination of products from multiple vendors. Cisco Local Directors were combined with an SSL off-loads product and a software-based front-end load balancer, both from other
vendors. Managing the products became very cumbersome. The Siebel deployment at this company included Siebel 7.7 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) enterprise software. This mission-critical application supported the daily work of more than four thousand (4000) customer service representatives supporting more than 8 million customers. Potentially, all of the representatives could be accessing the Siebel applications, making it critical that servers could meet and exceed this load for current and future demand. The provider's requirements were not solely focused on the performance of the Siebel applications. Given the large number of support issues surrounding the provider's previous solution, manageability of the application infrastructure was a priority. The provider also wanted to be able to address application scalability easily, without a complex server load balancing and SSL offloading solution.