

# The transformation

Prasad Nagool, CEO, ITShastra, talks about the evolution of IT in India and the company's growth plans



**What are the changes you see in the healthcare industry since last 15 years, especially with the introduction of IT in hospitals?**

India has seen a lot of changes since the introduction of medical transcription and data entry services in the healthcare industry. Today, hospitals are increasingly relying on data from the multitude of sources from EMR and health information exchanges to wearable gadgets that transmit patient health data. These gadgets now run the gamut in goals, from managing chronic disease to optimising fitness program. Some devices allow medical providers to monitor a patient's disorder, in the hopes that doctors can intervene earlier and patients can avoid complications. Other devices can remind patients the time to take their medications.

Wearable devices provide output and connect to the web in various ways. Earlier doctors used to know the complete medical history of the patients, like his medical history, family history, allergies etc. But with the growing population and increase in life-style diseases the numbers of patients have increased and it is difficult for the doctors to remember minute details. This is where IT comes in picture. Doctors are able to see the medical sheet of a patient while prescribing a drug. IT also helps them see the history of all his investigation in a single screen/dashboard which helps him to take quick decision and prescribe faster treatment.

IT has provided immense transparencies in the way hospitals function today and the extensive available information on the Internet are empowering patients to make more informed decisions about their own healthcare and seek best possible treatment within their own resources and constraints. IT has enabled patients to question expensive treatments and persuades healthcare providers to look for cheaper yet more affordable solution. Today, patients login to their patient portals, get access to personal health information anytime, anywhere. They can see their vitals, investigation reports, prescriptions, book online appointments, access image documents and messages. With the use of IT, hospitals are making healthcare a pleasant experience as all the required medical data is readily available.



Today the electronic medical record (EMR) not only stores information but it also provides information on 'best practices'. EMR module has time-saving features for doctors like quick prescriptions, notes writer, drug details and patient medical profiling. The clinical part of this module will act as a data-mine to support medical analysis. Today's healthcare industry is completely data driven.

#### **How has web based solutions helped in the daily functioning of the hospitals?**

Every hospital is unique and has a different way of functioning. The ways of working for each hospital depends completely on the patient flow and how the doctor wants to operate on a daily basis. Web-based solution has helped the doctors to get easy access to patient records anytime and anywhere and enables them to take quick decisions. Patients can also view their medical records, test results, images and reports anywhere and anytime on the secured patient portal. The physicians can access the patient records, images of X-ray, CT scan, MRI quickly which helps in reducing the time and cost. However, no standard process can be applied as each hospital needs customised solutions. There are many products in the market which are standard and minimum customisation is allowed. These software's take a long time to get implemented and loses its essence. Hence, it is advisable to implement customised web-based solutions for hospitals today.

#### **What have been ITShastra's achievements in the past five years?**

There have been many awards and accolades for the company since last few years. ITShastra won the Quality Council India's 'DL Shah National Award on Economics of Quality'. It is an ISO 9001:2008 and 27001:2005 certified company.

ITShastra has also received the CMMI Level III certification recently. We also earned the Brands Academy Business Excellence Award in the year 2011. Apart from these, I consider our customer's confidence and faith in us as our biggest achievement.

#### **What's the scenario in Government hospitals in India?**

The government healthcare sector, which used to be free earlier, now charges nominal amount for high-end investigations like CT/MRI. The government had introduced several health insurance schemes like Rajiv Gandhi Jeevodaya Yojana, Rashtriya Swastha Bima Yojana (RSBY) etc. to help the Below poverty Line (BPL) patients. The technology boom has brought a major change in government hospitals too. For instance, ISRO through its telemedicine projects, has successfully linked hospitals and healthcare centres in remote rural areas with specialty hospitals in cities through INSAT satellites. Thus, connectivity between patients at remote end and the specialist doctors at urban centres has been effectively established to provide quality health care to rural population. An IT-enabled solution should be introduced at government hospitals as it can help erase distance barriers, help in development of central health database through acquisition, storage and retrieval of the information that can resolve a patient's need at the crisis moment. Patient's health records can help in swift diagnosis and treatment. IT can also enable telemedicine, tele-pathology, tele-radiology, and tele-consultation facilities for patients located in remote areas saving immense time and money.

#### **What has been your work strategy while working with more than 200 hospitals in India?**

ITShastra is a company with a strong focus

on customer satisfaction. The process driven approach and 'customer comes first' philosophy makes ITShastra stand apart in the IT Industry. ITShastra professionals can staff the help desk, systems support and maintenance teams, whilst providing the advanced IT skills required for complex project initiatives. The key to success is the system of working in close co-ordination with clients and designing a flexible staffing plan. This plan complements the core staff of the client with the best experts from ITShastra on a requirement - oriented basis. This structure has a proven track record of excellent results.

#### **What are your futures plans for the company?**

ITShastra has more than 200 clients in the private sector. Our future plans include seamless integration with medical devices, mobility gadgets, integration with real-time patient data. Our key focus areas are use of IT in e-governance, regulatory compliances and data analytics. We want to make the hospitals paperless and help them to drive go-green initiative. We are also working closely with government hospitals and healthcare centres to provide swift and stress-free service to the administration as well as patients.

We are also planning to expand our operations abroad as we have some potential customers in Gulf countries and Africa. We are taking slow and steady steps as we believe in quality and not the quantity of service.

#### **About Prasad Nagool**

Prasad Nagool joined the group in 2005 and has been heading the India operations of ITShastra and IndiSoft Consultancy services as the chief executive officer. He has previously worked with TAL ( erstwhile TATA Motors-MTD) for 15 years in various capacities and work areas. His major achievement includes developing the standard machines and establishing TAL as a strong player at the national level. Prasad has played the key role in the development and marketing of the products in the Indian healthcare sector. The RxOffice®, Hospital Management suite, The retail Pharmacy stores POS and the clinical Systems are the main products enjoying market acceptance.

He has been involved in the Asha Foundation activities and monitors the philanthropic activities of the group. Prasad is a BE mechanical and post graduate diploma in management from Pune.