Chapter-3  
Research Methodology

Introduction
In modern time, an average person is surrounded by multi-stimuli. He constantly remains under stress. He least cares about his health and hygiene. He suffers from numberless physical as well as mental diseases. He really needs qualitative treatment for his illnesses. Corporate hospitals provide the treatment in the form of healthcare services. Therefore, the study of the marketing of healthcare services provided by corporate hospitals is nevertheless important. Marketing is essential for any type of business. Without marketing any individual, firm or company cannot stand in the market. Corporate hospitals are not exception to this. The present study explains how corporate hospitals do marketing of healthcare services and which tools of marketing they use. The study tells how these hospitals use marketing mix. The study also clarifies the concepts of marketing and services marketing.

The researcher has worded the topic of the study as “Marketing of Healthcare Services: A study of Corporate Hospitals in Gujarat”. Total ten corporate hospitals of Gujarat state have been selected for the purpose of study. Out of ten, six corporate hospitals have been chosen from Ahmedabad city. From the remaining four hospitals, two are in Baroda, and one from Rajkot and Bhavnagar. Three corporate hospitals from the selected ones are cardiac hospitals. One is orthopedic hospital. The remaining six provide all sorts of healthcare services to the patients.

Significance of the topic
The researcher has done the cryptic study of the marketing of healthcare services by referring the preliminary sources connected to it. He found that very few have attempted to do research work in this area. The researcher felt that the topic mentioned above is a potential one. He has delimited the topic by selecting only some corporate hospitals that provide healthcare services to the patients. These hospitals are in Gujarat state. The topic selected bears practical value because it is useful to those corporate companies who launch the enterprise of running the corporate hospital. Moreover, the present topic
opens up new avenues of marketing of healthcare services. The topic also increases our knowledge regarding corporate hospitals, their functions, services provided to the patients and so on. The topic is very useful to the officers and executives working in the field of marketing of healthcare services.

**Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the present study are as under:

1. To study the existing marketing mix of corporate hospitals
2. To study the existing marketing strategy of corporate hospitals
3. To study the level of awareness of corporate hospitals for marketing of services
4. To suggest suitable marketing strategy for corporate hospitals
5. To find out the reasons for using corporate health care services
6. To analyze the effects of various promotional tools

Marketing mix is a new concept prevalent in the world of commerce and trade. It consists of several components like product, price, place, promotion, physical distribution, process and people. All these components together make marketing mix. Marketing mix bears prime importance in both public and private sector. The development of any commercial firm is not possible without proper marketing mix. The above observations are also applicable to corporate hospitals providing healthcare services. Corporate hospitals provide healthcare services and so they do the marketing of their services. Unlike product marketing, service marketing includes total seven components. Those who run corporate hospitals not only take into consideration marketing mix but also give priority to it. The present study includes the study of the existing marketing mix of selected corporate hospitals of Gujarat. The researcher intends to know all the details connected to these hospitals. The knowledge of the marketing mix of corporate hospitals will help a lot to understand the functions of the hospitals and their contribution to the society.

Different corporate hospitals adopt different strategies for the marketing of their services. The researcher aims at studying all these strategies. Some hospitals focus only a particular component of marketing mix. It would be interesting to see which hospital stresses which component. The purpose of emphasizing a specific component is to draw the attention of the patients
towards it and thereby to differ from other hospitals. Strategies of marketing are, in fact, tricks, devices or techniques used by the marketing team of the corporate hospital. The researcher through the study of the existing strategies of marketing of corporate hospitals has tried to find out which strategy is most successful for a particular corporate hospital.

Now a day’s people as customers have become very conscious regarding the product or the services, which they use. They have become smarter than the customers of the past had been perhaps because they check whether they spend their money properly or not. In reference to the healthcare services of corporate hospitals also, people have become fully aware of them. They get information about services in advance before visiting the hospitals. The level of awareness of people regarding the services increases through various sources of information like advertisement, pamphlets and leaflets, brochures, hoardings, friends and relatives, family doctors, newspapers etc. The researcher has tried to measure the level of awareness of the people.

It is true that all the corporate hospitals adopt different marketing strategies as per their needs. However, some marketing strategies tend to be common among them. The researcher could help by giving some suggestions regarding the marketing strategies to be adopted by corporate hospitals in future. For example, all corporate hospitals should adopt patient-centered strategies considering better treatment of the patients. They should give less importance to monetary gain. Moreover, all corporate hospitals should fully exploit the promotional tool of advertisement for the marketing of the hospital services. Optimal use of advertisement will make the hospital popular among people. All hospitals should aim at providing quality services to the patients and thereby patients’ satisfaction should be obtained. The hospital staff should not perform it duty mechanically but it should work with a sense of commitment.

There are ample of reasons for using corporate healthcare services rather than that of government hospitals or private hospitals. The services of corporate hospitals are far better than the services of other hospitals in much respect. The corporate hospitals are competent enough to provide quality services to the patients. Besides, they are equipped with latest equipments and modern infrastructure. They provide quick services when the patient is in
critical condition. They try their level best to satisfy the needs of the patients. They offer the services that are not in the outreach of the patients. All sorts of healthcare services are available at one place and at a time in the corporate hospitals. Thus, the researcher has tried to find out the various reasons for using corporate healthcare services.

The researcher has given a little thought to each promotional tool and its effects on the marketing of corporate hospitals. All the promotional tools are, in fact, the parts of marketing mix. The researcher has tried to see the importance of a particular tool in the hospital, its utility, benefits and overall effect on the patients. The researcher has adopted analytical approach while talking about the effects of various promotional tools. The researcher has also tried to find out which promotional tool is obligatory to the doctors as well as patients.

The researcher has done a lot of spadework before selecting the topic for the study. He has gone through internet surfing, the concern websites. The researcher has felt that the topic of healthcare services is undoubtedly a potential one to bear the burden of the Ph.D. thesis. The researcher has accumulated the scholarly articles on health care services to know about the nature of these services and to know the providers of these services. The researcher found that the area of marketing of health care services is a virgin ground as well as fertile one. The researcher visited the corporate hospitals of Gujarat and thereby used the method of personal visit for data collection. He has also interviewed the authorities of the corporate hospitals as well as the members of the marketing team of the corporate hospitals. The use of the interview technique proved obligatory to the researcher. The researcher prepared the tool of a questionnaire divided in two formats. The one was patient oriented and another meant for the members of the marketing team and its superiors. The subject expert standardized the questions included in the two forms. The researcher collected printed materials from corporate hospitals in the form of brochures, pamphlets, leaflets etc. to know about the marketing of health care services, about the facilities, infrastructure, equipments, and departments of these hospitals. The researcher also used internet, the most powerful media of communication, to collect the data.
Majority of the articles on health care services were downloaded from the internet in order to do review of the literature.

**Data collection**

The researcher has done the data collection for the present study at two levels. He has referred three different sources to collect information about marketing of healthcare services provided by corporate hospitals.

**Primary**

After the selection of the topic, he visited the selected corporate hospitals in person and interviewed the concerned hospital’s staff to get information regarding the mechanism of corporate hospitals and their strategies for marketing their healthcare services. The researcher prepared the questionnaire for the purpose of data collection.

**Secondary**

The researcher went through various informative articles on marketing of healthcare services as well as corporate hospitals. Writers of these articles are eminent scholars of concerned fields. The content of these articles helped a lot for literature review of the topic selected. The views and opinions of these writers about particular hospital proved fruitful to the researcher. These articles provided certain parameters of the marketing of healthcare services. These articles were obtained from various sources like internet, books and journals. The researcher accumulated all the details related to corporate hospitals of Gujarat. He obtained these details in printed form. He has downloaded some information from the internet. The researcher gathered brochures, pamphlets, leaflets, magazines and souvenirs of all the selected corporate hospitals.

**Methods of data collection**

The researcher adopted various methods for data collection. He also used the tool of the questionnaire for the same.

**Observation**

The researcher has fully exploited the observation method for data collection. He has observed minute details of corporate hospitals with his keen eyes. He has done observation in a neutral way and noted down the points to be used in the present study. During the personal visit to the corporate hospitals, he observed all the activities of the hospitals staff, actions and reactions of
doctors and patients, positive responses and grudges of the patients, medical equipments installed in the hospitals, facilities provided to the patients and so on. He has also witnessed the marketing of healthcare services done by the marketing team of the corporate hospitals.

**Personal visits**
The researcher visited all the corporate hospitals and his personal visit proved fruitful for his study. He gathered more details regarding corporate hospitals through personal visit than from the printed materials. Personal visits provided supplementary information about the corporate hospitals. Perhaps, the personal visit is the method through which the researcher got first hand information. The objective of personal visit was to verify the printed details of the hospitals. It also helped for comparison among the corporate hospitals.

**Interview**
During the personal visit of corporate hospitals, the researcher also played the role of an interviewer. He interviewed the doctors, the members of the marketing team, the medical officers and the patients also. He asked them questions related to hospital services, their marketing, satisfaction and complaints. The researcher got different responses from the different respondents. Their answers provided useful clues to understand the functions of the corporate hospitals. Some answers revealed drawbacks of corporate hospitals. Some respondents were hesitant in responding the questions frankly. The purpose of using the interview technique was to obtain quick as well as true responses from the concern people regarding hospital services.

**Questionnaire**
With the purpose of obtaining data of healthcare services provided by corporate hospitals in Gujarat, the researcher developed the tool of questionnaire. He divided the question in two forms. One form was patient-centered and the other took into consideration the members of the marketing team. The researcher framed all the questions of the questionnaire carefully. After the completion of framing the questions, the researcher got the questionnaire approved by the subject experts. The researcher wanted to know about the patient satisfaction, views, opinions, and responses of the patients about healthcare services and facilities of corporate hospitals through the patient-centered questionnaire. Indirectly the researcher intended to know
about the mode or manner of the marketing of healthcare services of corporate hospitals through the patient-centered questionnaire. He wanted to know about the marketing strategies, use of promotional tools, types of marketing, and problems of marketing through the form meant for the members of the marketing team. During the personal visit of the corporate hospitals, the researcher handed over the printed questionnaire form to the concerned and got them filled properly under his supervision. He collected the filled up forms. The data of these two forms were used for analysis purpose. The researcher tried to compare the selected corporate hospitals with the help of the data obtained through the questionnaire.

The comparative method

The researcher has used the comparative method in the present study. He has compared the obtained data of the corporate hospitals and thereby estimated the importance of corporate hospitals in the healthcare field. The comparative method helped the researcher a lot to find out which corporate hospital does the best marketing of what. Through the comparative method, the researcher has taken into consideration various aspects of corporate hospitals like services, facilities, equipments, and infrastructure.

Sampling design

The researcher gave thirty-five forms of the questionnaire to the members of marketing teams of the corporate hospitals to be filled up. He has given the forms to the majority of the total number of the member of the marketing team. The researcher gave one hundred and fifty forms to the patients of the selected corporate hospitals of Gujarat. Thus, the sample size was 35 for marketing staff members and 150 for patients. Researcher has relied on non-probability convenient sampling method.

Data Analysis

The researcher has analyzed the collected data without using any statistical tool or test. However, the obtained data were in the form of figures. These figures have been shown in the form of tables and pie charts. Later on, percentage has been used to describe the figures of tables and charts. The researcher has projected value based as well as percentage-based pie charts in the thesis. The multiple details obtained in response to the questions given are mentioned in the form of column charts. All statistical data have been
shown based on percentage. The present study is a thematic study and so, a
descriptive one, therefore any other standard statistical tool have not been
used.

**Limitations of this study**

The researcher has tried his level best to check all the aspects connected to
the marketing of healthcare services provided by the corporate hospitals of
Gujarat. However, the present study is not altogether devoid of certain
limitations of its own. The researcher has selected only ten corporate
hospitals of Gujarat and left the remaining. There is no genuine reason behind
the selection. Through the cryptic survey of the corporate hospitals of Gujarat,
the researcher did convenient selection of the famous ten hospitals of Gujarat.
The researcher felt that he might not be able to cope up with all the hospitals
of Gujarat within the limited scope of his study.
The researcher gave limited number of questionnaire forms to the patients as
well as members of the marketing team. Perhaps, it was neither feasible not
practical to get all the concerned to fill up the forms. The target group of the
respondents is also selected through convenient sampling.
The present study over looked the doctor-patient relationship. This aspect
does not fall within the scope of the study because the focus is only on the
marketing of healthcare services provided by corporate hospitals of Gujarat.

**Further research**

The present study will definitely open up new avenues for further research. It
offers many implications. Some of the topics emerging from the present study
are as follows:

1. Doctor-patient relationship in corporate hospitals
2. Administration of corporate hospitals
3. Financial position and performance of corporate hospitals
4. Social responsibilities of corporate hospitals
5. Comparative study of government hospitals and corporate hospitals
6. Patient satisfaction in corporate hospitals
7. Hurdles and problems of corporate hospitals