CHAPTER 3
3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research in the field of marketing is not only needed to have the accurate and scientific results but it also help the researcher to direct as well as to reduce the uncertainty in that field. The more the researcher goes in the depth of the particular study, the more beneficial it is to take the decisions in certain situations. The use of certain set methods/techniques makes the researcher scientific in his research

In designing, planning and executing a research project, it is essential to anticipate the steps which should be undertaken. For successful completion of the project, these steps which are collectively referred the as research methodology, are often dependent on one another.

3.2 COMPONENTS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology consists of four steps/components namely: research design, data collection, sample design and data analysis. The researcher has discussed these four components under separate headings.

3.3 Research design: - A research design is the specification of the method and procedures for acquiring the information needed, or we say it is the plan or framework for a study i.e. use a guide in collecting and analysing the data. It help the researcher to conduct study with economical procedures and to research out the maximum facts related with the study at the minimum cost.

Research design can be broadly classified into three categories:

1. Exploratory research design.
2. Descriptive research design.

3. Casual research design.

These three research design are not mutually exclusive but they are rather complementary to each other. The selection of a research design depends upon the objectives of the present study.

(i) Exploratory Research:

The name of the research is itself explanatory. The said research is used mainly to explore the mere facts and infer some results, which add to the existing and past studies on the same topic and field. Exploratory research is usually introduced to generate ideas and hypothesis. Hypotheses state what we are searching for.

(ii) Descriptive Research

It is a sort of fact-finding operation with adequate interpretations. In descriptive studies some would like to include (a) exploratory or formulative studies designed to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new inputs into it, often in order to formulate a more precise research problem or to develop a hypothesis, (b) studies designed specially to portray accurately the characteristics of some phenomena, groups, individuals or organisations, (c) Studies designed to determine the frequency of occurrences of an event so as to minimise bias and to maximise reliability. A bulk of secondary data is used in the descriptive research, to support the study.

(iii) Casual Research

A casual research shows the relationship between the cause and effect of the phenomena. The casual research in mainly based on
experimental on's. The experimental results are inferred through the controlled groups as well as experimental groups.

The methodology used in the present study is an exploratory research, as it unfolds certain new vistas about the marketing of professional accounting services. What is orientation of professional accountants towards marketing, stage of marketing in case of professional accounting services, nature of service product offerings, promotional methods employed for practice development, study of professional accountant selection criteria and type of marketing activities carried out in case of the professional accounting services field need to be explored. To a limited extent study can also be called descriptive one to get some facts related with the study.

3.4 SAMPLE DESIGN

Enumeration is almost practically impossible until and unless the universe is very small and there is ample time with the researcher. The economy factor is also the major hindrance for the researcher to go for the enumeration, so the sampling is the more suggestive and rational way of knowing the whole universe. A sample is the representation of universe. Larger the size of the sample better it is, as the chances of sampling error are minimized.
Sample Design can be classified as follows:

**SAMPLE DESIGN**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Probability Sample</th>
<th>Probability Sample</th>
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<tr>
<td>(i) Convenience Sample</td>
<td>(i) Simple Random Sample</td>
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<td>(ii) Judgement Sample</td>
<td>(ii) Stratified Sample</td>
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<td>(iii) Quota Sample</td>
<td>(a) Proportionate Sample</td>
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<td>(iv) Accidental Sample</td>
<td>(b) Disproportionate Sample</td>
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In probability sampling, the selection of the units is determined purely on chance, using random devices.

In non-probability sampling the selection decision is not left to chance but, the selection of the research subjects is made consciously considering personal convenience, expert judgement, or any other type of conscious researcher selection.

For the present study both kinds of sampling techniques i.e. probability as-well-as non-probability sampling has been resorted to. While choosing the Chartered Accountants for study simple random sampling was used. While choosing clients/organisational clients for client survey, the selection was made based on personal judgement and convenience of the researcher within Delhi area, thus, non probability sampling was used.
Sample Selection Size & Characteristics

A random sample of 150 practicing Chartered Accountants enrolled for their practice in Delhi was selected. A list of members of Chartered Accountants updated till 1/4/1988 was made available and from that list, a list of chartered accountants in practice was prepared, and then from that list of 5000 practicing CA's enrolled in Delhi, a random sample of 150 CAs was selected covering the entire Delhi area.

Another sample of 400 clients which included both individual clients and organisations and professionals was selected based on judgement and convenience from Delhi area only. Attempt was made to cover entire Delhi-North, South, East, West and Central Part.

Two type of samples were chosen because the nature of the study was such as divided in to two parts (<1> covering the marketing of professional accounting services, <2> Second part, the client survey to uncover various aspects of selection criteria, need for professional accountants, etc.

The number of respondents in the later case was kept high to 400 so as to make this segment of people/organisations/professionals more representative of the over all Universe. The sample distribution was like:

1. Chartered Accountants = 150
2. Users of CA's firm = 200
3. Non-Users (Non-Clients) = 200

But potential clients total = 550 Respondents.
3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Collection of the data is the next step after the sample has been chosen. The interpretation and the analysis of the data is based on the data collected. So there is a correlation between data collection procedure and the data interpretation for meaningful results. Various methods of data collection are:

1) Interviews:
   (a) Structured Disguised Un-disguised
       (b) Non-structured Disguised Un-disguised

2) Observations:
   (a) Disguised
   (b) Non-disguised

Since, it was not possible to adopt the observation methods, because the subjects were not indulged in the direct action of purchasing any commodity, so the researcher adopted the interviewing method for collecting the data. The undisguised-structured form of questionnaire was used by the researcher to get desired responses from the respondents in both parts of the study. Most of the questions were in the form of multiple choice or dichotomous questions and there were few open-ended questions, also.

A pilot study was undertaken before the commencement of the main survey. It was done with a view to assess the validity of each question. The idea was to know whether the respondents understand the language, working and the intended meaning correctly. The questionnaire was administered to 15 practicing CA's and 15 clients for clients part of the survey. As a result of the experience gained...
from the pilot study an improved version of the research instrument was framed for the main survey. The data collection was done personally in view of the importance of the subject and the fact that the respondents were unlikely to be as responsive to the other investigators, as well as to have the first hand observations which also forms an important part of the study. Having easily understood the nature and significance of the study, data were provided by the respondents with great promptitude and reliability.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS: The collected data from the respondents, Chartered Accountants, clients and non-users with the help of Research Instrument i.e. the questionnaire, were tabulated, analysed and interpreted. Data analysis involved converting a series of the recorded observations in proper descriptive statements and inferences were drawn.

Most of the inferences were drawn on the basis of percentages, averages, weights, ranks, correlation techniques and liberal use of other statistical methods to make the study more comprehensive. Better presentation of the study has been facilitated by making use of bar charts and diagrams.

3.8 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

"Designing Questionnaire is still an art and not a Science", so much care is needed while designing it.

Questions should be clear and questionnaire should be complete in respect of information wanted. The questionnaire used for the present study was highly structured. It was given a final shape after conducting a pilot study. Every care was taken to arrange the questions in
sequence as well as in a logical way. Attempts were also made to avoid the misleading and ambiguous questions.

Three questionnaires were developed to infer the responses from practicing accountants, clients and non-users of accountancy services.

Chartered Accountants questionnaire was divided in two broad categories: experimental data and personal data.

The questionnaire begins with an appeal to the chartered accountants, to extend their free and frank opinions regarding various marketing practices adopted in their profession, they were also assured that the information given by them shall be treated as confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

The first question was related with the experience in the Accountancy Profession. It was presumed that the experience of the Chartered Accountant had a great impact on the perception of choosing the chartered accountants, and to see if there is some relationship as to experience and income of the chartered accountants concerned.

The second question, "what is the major area of your practice" was asked with the objective that in what area, most of the Chartered Accountant were practicing and what areas were potential for the chartered Accountants. This was also to be observed whether the CA consider themselves as specialists in a particular area or opt for General Practitioner and cover all areas of practice i.e. Generalist v/s specialist approach.

The third question was related with the different cases dealt with by the chartered accountants in their specialized area.
Because the most dealt cases indicated the most potential field within the specialized area of practice. This could give us a clear-cut idea of the potential service product offering in our case.

The fourth question "Are the type of client groups to be served being defined ......." was asked with the objective to see if segmentation approaches were used by them, or all were welcomed. It was also to be observed from its (b) part what were the specific clients for their service offerings to find out the variety of clientele that constitute the market for Chartered Accountants.

From the fifth question, it was to be observed by the researcher, that once the clientele had been defined for the practicing accountants, whether there is any review of the said clientele on their part and if yes, then for what specific purpose, for which its (b) part an open-ended question was asked.

Sixth question was related with the sources of clientele. The major objective behind this question was to find out the existing sources and their importance in contributing to the work performed, as well as to explore some new sources of clientele.

"What is the importance of Referrals" was the seventh question. According to the researcher belief "Interpersonal network (Referrals) is a vital source of business for many professional services, including the services of Chartered Accountants", and this was to be confirmed, for which seventh question was asked.

Later parts (b) and (c) of the said question were asked because, although the chartered accountants may consider Referrals as a vital source of business, but all too many fail to trace the source of such referrals, fail to acknowledge them, and fail to market them.
This position was to be made clear from here, as to whether any formal recognition of these Referrals as a vital source of business was there in the case of CA's or not.

Eighth question was asked with the objective to find out the most prevalent tools used by the Chartered Accountants to attract the clients. The Accountants were asked to rate the different tools on a three point scale i.e. very essential and not at all essential, to bring out the relative importance of each.

Ways most commonly used by CA's for maintaining contact with the potential clients was to be explored for which question number nine was asked.

Tenth question was asked with the objective to find out from the practicing chartered accountants, if they are severely constrained by the mandatory or voluntary rules governing standards of practice or ethics, and by whom. What in their opinion marketing is i.e. the first impression that comes in their mind when they hear the word "Marketing", just to find out whether they are opposed/not opposed to the idea of marketing i.e. their top-of-mind attitude towards "Marketing".

Advertising is prohibited in the profession of Chartered Accountants; and if used by any professional it is called a "dirty practice ". But it was to be seen by the researcher, that as time has changed, competition is on the increase, and other factors are there; whether still practicing professional CA's are opposed/accept this tool of marketing, for which eleventh question was asked in which the Chartered Accountants were asked to scale the given statements agree, strongly agree, and not agree.
Although many professionals including chartered accountants reject tools of marketing as they are seen to be incompatible with their self-image, nevertheless, some methods of promotion-personal and non-personal, public relations are used by them in auditing their activities and improving their image before clients; and to bring out those empirically, question number 12 was asked from CA’s.

Thirteenth question was put in the questionnaire with the objective to know the opinion of the Chartered Accountants whether the professional ethics were being followed by their counterparts.

Fourteenth question was asked with the objective whether the "satisfaction of client" was the prime goal of the practicing accountants. Its (b) part was an open ended question to learn from the CA’s themselves as to what factors generally make the clients satisfied.

"To what extent the chartered accountant feel satisfied with their practice, and to learn what steps they have taken to develop their practice over period of their stay in practice and to what new areas they want to diversify (open ended question), question no. 15 (a), (b), (c) were asked. This was with the objective, to see if because of disdain in the practicing scene, the chartered accountants feel morally disturbed and thus wants to diversify to what newer areas where they feel no competition (i.e. changing market place).

Sixteen question was asked to practically find out whether all or few of the practicing CA firms were totally/partially committed to the overall concept of marketing for which the chartered accounting firms were asked to indicate their responses in the form of "Yes" or "No", with each of the Marketing Practices listed.
in the question divided into six parts: (i) service offerings, (ii) communications, (iii) location, (iv) fee structure, (v) market research, and (vi) marketing orientation.

Seventeenth question was asked from the CA's firm to find out if they gradually feel any changes in their practicing environment and market place, and if "Yes", then in what form. This was with the objective that if changes are being felt by them, then whether they feel motivated to respond to those changes by adopting some different approach, may be marketing approach.

Eighteenth question was asked with the objective to find out from the CA's firm themselves, the factors they perceive their clients to be using while selecting them; because they ultimately interact with their clients and should have considerable information on the bases by which they were being selected.

Nineteenth question was asked to incorporate the suggestions of CA that they could give to improve the accountancy services. The second objective behind this open ended question was that whether the suggestions were client-oriented or profession oriented or Institution oriented.

Personal data was included with the purpose to find out the effect of various factors like type of the firm, number of partners, turnover/income on the practice scene and other factors.
Questionaries for users/non-users

(Client Survey)

This questionnaire was also divided into two parts. The first part was "Personal Data", while the second part was "Experimental data".

Personal data was included to find out the type of client user or non-users, its specific type, and their income range to see their effect later, on various factors explored in experimental data part.

The first question was related with finding out the types of cases for which the professional CAs were hired by clients. The question, "nature of services for which hired", the respondents were asked to mention the nature of services for which they have hired the service of CA firm.

Second question was asked to know particularly from these clients using CA services, their specific accounting services needs in the various categories identified as satisfying their one-time needs; official business needs; personal well being needs; real property needs; misc. needs; any other (to be specified).

Question third was asked to look at some sources of information on the basis of which a choice of a CA firm is made. Question third was asked with this objective, to trace out from the clients the important sources of information from where they came to know of CA/firm. These sources of information were divided into five categories as 1. official organisation source, 2. personal source, 3. promotional source, 4. daily contacts, and 5. referrals sources; and the respondents were asked to tick the sources of information based on which they made their decision.
Question fourth: "Did you select a CA firm randomly?"

was related with psychology of the client. It was to be ascertained from the clients whether they had some pre-determined idea about selecting a CA firm or they select the CA firm as they just went to the place of work, like taxation office/other offices. After knowing from the clients that they have pre-decision in mind, then the attributes considered important in selecting a CA firm were to be found out for which Q5 was asked.

Fifth question was related with the professional accountants selection criteria. Various attributes of accountant were listed and the clients user and non-users were asked to rate those factors on a three points scale spanned from very important to not important; The major objective of this question was to 1 determine what criteria clients have used to select CA firm.
2 What criteria non-users or (non-clients) will use in their selection process. 3 Determine how important these criteria should be in the selection process. 4. And comparison of user and non-users criteria they rate as important.

Question no. 6th was related with the perception of the necessity of professional accountants in different cases. These answers were also rated on a three point scale of most important to not important. The same question was asked to be rated by the non-users also.

The objective behind this question was whether there was difference between the perceptions of users and non-users of the necessity of the accountant in different cases.

Question no. 7th was asked with the objective to find out "degree of satisfaction" of the clients with CAs/firms with regard to
four attributes of CA listed as: A) Their A. Behaviour, B. Service provided, C. Personal appearance, and D) fourth fees charged. The "satisfaction" is the "Deciding factor" which indicates whether the client will go for repeat purchase i.e. come to same CA for getting the same kind of service or he will switch on to other practicing accountant in the field.

Question last i.e. 8th question was asked with the purpose whether the respondents (Clients only) would choose the same CA/firm or shift to the others, if in future need for such service arises.
Limitations of the present study:

This study is by no mean an exhaustive one, as it has been carried out with many constraints, some of them arising out of human element, an essential part of marketing. Following are the limitations and constraints of the study, under which the researcher had to work.

Time and Money Constraints.

The scope of this study had to be limited to the study of one class of professionals i.e. CAs due to shortage of time and money available with the researcher. The present study was carried out along with the regular job of teaching and other assignment of university job, those putting further time constraints on carrying the research.

(2) Non-Availability of secondary data:

The hitherto non-availability of secondary data as a bench-mark for comparison, limits the analysis to a purely cross-sectional one. Because of this, the researcher had to start from the grass root level. If some published data would have been available, it may perhaps had helped in making the study still better.

(3) Possibility of bias in respondents answers:

The fact that professional-Chartered accountants are apt to go by their prejudices, particularly when word 'marketing' is
involved (as professionals are opposed to the idea of marketing) was a further constraint within which a study of this nature had to operate.

(4) Non-use of depth interviewing:

Merely asking questions and recording them may not always elicit the actual information sought.

(5) Non-generalization of the results:

The study was confined to Delhi and its finding may not be applicable to other areas. Also, only one profession was covered so the results are not equally applicable to other professional services (further area of research). Cross-study could have brought more meaningful insights into this new venture.

(6) Limitations of sampling:

Limitations and biasness of sampling techniques i.e., convenience sampling used in this study, in case of selection of client and non-user/potential client, may have influenced the finding of the study. Because of the economical constraints, convenience and judgment sampling was resorted to in case of client/non-users.