CHAPTER 9

Findings of the Study
Findings:
Of late, the concept of managing hospitals professionally has gained momentum all over the world.

The management of a non-profit organisation, no doubt, complicates the task of boardrooms and the hospital managers in many ways. On the one hand, they need to offer world class healthcare services to the patients while on the other hand they are not expected to charge anything even a cost based fee. The costs of inputs used in offering the services are increasing and they need to practice two-fold measures—first exploring the avenues for generating revenues and making the social costs proportionate or optimal to the potentials of the hospitals or healthcare organisations.

For successful marketing of services, it is necessary that hospitals are professionally sound. This helps hospitals in many ways, such as an increase in the organisational potentials to meet the social costs, use of internationally accepted quality inputs in the process of generating the health-care services and availability of smooth ways for modernization, expansion and time-honoured development. Here, we find advocacy in favour of practicing marketing principles in the hospitals or healthcare organizations.

The following facts testify the rationale behind such an application:

1. To keep users satisfied: We are well aware of the fact that the main purpose in the process of offering quality services is to satisfy the users and to go ahead with the process without gap. Like other non-profit making organisations, the hospitals are also required to satisfy the customers and the principles of marketing may help them substantially in the process. If the doctors and the nurses are soft, sympathetic, decent and show empathy, the users would be satisfied. Of course, the quality of medical aid made available to them is actually significant but we cannot devalue the instrumentality of behavioural dimension in activating the process of satisfying the users. In the Indian perspective, the hospitals and healthcare organisations plan and act with this realization that core services are the only thing that they need to offer; but,
this is not the only thing the users expect from them. By conceptualising marketing in a right fashion, they should build a strong foundation for both, viz., they offer quality medical aid and show personal-touch in service. Thus with the fulfillment of their expectations, the users feel satisfied with the hospital personnel in general.

2. Time-honoured services: In the hospitals and healthcare organizations particularly, we find time management much more impact generating as this influences the success rate of treatment-plans. With the passage of time, a number of developments have taken place in the medical sciences based on the contributions of new generation of bio-medical equipment and apparatus. Sophisticated equipment and machines have virtually transformed the whole process on medicare management. The diagnostic and treatment devices have completely changed. We call them inputs which play a contributory role in the process of qualitative transformation. Generally, the hospitals find it difficult to install new generation of expensive bio-medical equipment due mainly to financial constraint. In the government hospitals, the results are very disappointing because they have not only failed in replacing technology but also in maintaining and managing the new generation of sophisticated technologies. No one can expect quality services mix from the poor, substandard, traditional equipment and apparatus. This makes it clear that hospitals have to give due weightage to the time bound development plans to cater to the changing requirements and expectations of users.

The principles of hospital marketing focus on setting the fee structure in such a way that Hospitals are in a position to improve the quality of inputs. Not only this, the principles of Social marketing make it essential that different profit-making organizations help hospitals in solving, the financial problem so that they rationalize the fee structure and open new vistas for
the generation and mobilisation of financial resources from different sources till now partially tapped or even untapped. All these developments, help hospitals in improving their services profile. It is also against this background that it is essential to practice the modern principles of marketing techniques in the hospitals and healthcare organisations.

3. **Inculcating mass awareness**: The hospitals and healthcare organizations should play a positive role in creating mass awareness since the Indian society has a low rate of literacy that complicates the task. A majority of the population are unaware of the food-borne, water-borne, pollution-borne, vector-borne and communicable diseases. To be more specific, the masses living in the rural areas are innocent, illiterate, taking least interest in the healthcare devices. The principles of social marketing are needed to make hospitals and healthcare organizations accept the responsibility of making the healthcare education or communications more creative with the support of audio-visuals and creative advertisement and publicity measures. The hospitals are not only responsible to offer the curative services but they also have to give an overriding priority to the preventive services. They should enlighten potential users or users about the impact of food, water and healthy living conditions on the disease profile. The hospitals with the support of professionally sound managers, can succeed in inculcating mass awareness which would minimise the pressure on the hospitals. Then, there will be a sharp fall in the number of patients coming to the hospitals. Unlike other profit making organisations, the success rate of hospitals depends upon their contributions to bring down the number of its users.

4. **Identifying the thrust areas**: When marketing principles assign due weightage to the innovative measures in tune with the changing requirements, the identification of vulnerable areas is possible. In context of medical services, viral diseases, communicable diseases, child care, women care, drug
addiction are to influence the disease profile. In the Indian perspective, it is pertinent that we have a special task force to resolve the sensitive issues. We need to activate child immunisation, vaccination, pre and post- maternity care, immunization, a crash programme for eradication of malaria, cholera, leprosy, typhoid and so on.

The marketing principles accord an overriding priority to the thrust areas so that the possibilities of breaking out of disease are minimized. The principles of social marketing advocate in favour of a transcendental priority to this segment of the catchment area which would simplify the process of making the services effective. An indepth study of catchment areas, a survey and research into different diseases profile will make it possible to learn about the thrust areas, and vulnerable regions. This also supports the application of marketing principles in the hospitals.

It is important to implement effectively disease control programme in the thrust areas.

5. Identifying the vulnerable segment: From the point of health-care services, we find some of the segments of vulnerable nature necessitating special medical aid and care. The backward villages, urban slums, rural women and children, population close to the industrial towns and cities are considered to be the vulnerable zone. To make available the best possible medical aid to them, it is essential that we have detailed information regarding the nature and character of the problems. This draws our attention to the development of an information network so that hospitals get the news related to the required medical care. Earlier we have talked about the management of information system and we find marketing information system an essential part of marketing activities in the healthcare organizations. The societal marketing principles favour a transcendental priority to this segment of the population and the modern hospitals assign due weightage to the development of information technology.
6. **Behavioural dimension would be given due weightage** : There are justifications for conceptualizing marketing in the healthcare services because the behavioural dimension is an essential part of marketing management. To be more specific in a majority of the government hospitals, there is no place for behavioural dimension. In the syllabi for medical education, the behavioural dimension is neglected. The application of marketing principle opens avenues for behavioural studies even in the healthcare sectors. The hospital personnel are required to understand the changing behavioural profile of patients and attendants and they should be held responsible for decent, polite sweet, sympathetic treatment.

9 **Cost-effectiveness is made possible** : Of late, we find almost all the organizations assigning weightage to cost economy which is based on making the process of managing the services cost-effective so that the services are pocket-friendly or affordable. The Marketing principles explore avenues for bringing down the costs on generating and distributing the services to the end users. The management of hospital materials, stores, human resources and finance became significant for cost economy. Here, we find almost all the hospitals making sincere and honest efforts to maintain cost-effectiveness. It is essential that a hospital manager is able to get the right quality of hospital inputs, bought at a reasonable price and generating right quality of outputs. Therefore hospital marketing is being practiced.

8. **A Rational fee structure is possible** : With the application of marketing principles, it is possible to make the fee structure rational. The principles of societal marketing show’s that the benefits of scientific developments and advancements should also be harnessed by weaker sections
of the society. It is essential that the hospitals or healthcare organizations resort to a fee strategy that is acceptable to the masses. When we talk about pocket-friendly fee strategy, our focus is on subserving the interests of weaker sections on a priority basis. Income-wise, setting of a fee structure can be a judicious approach to improve the financial health of hospitals. It is an important managerial problem requiring due attention of the hospitals policy makers. Shrinking financial avenues stressed that the hospital personnel make innovative efforts to generate and mobilize necessary finance.

9. **Motivating Personnel**: The slogan of quality in totality cannot be translated into meaningful purposes unless the hospital personnel offer world-class services. Promotion in the services is an important factor of motivation instrumental in influencing the different echelons of management. Showing empathy, personal touch in service, decency in behaviour etc, are substantially based on the motivational plans or schemes. The marketing principles argue for a plan which is linked to efficiency. When para medical or medical personnel setup a camp in the rural areas in case of epidemics the hospital manager is required to set up a camp with necessary precautions as per the required norms.

In view of this, it is right to mention that the process of application of marketing principles in the hospitals and healthcare organizations should be simplified, if the policy makers of government and private hospitals are really interested. We consider a hospital as a social institution. The hospital capable of personnel should be made aware of the organizational goals to make sincere efforts to succeed. Besides the question of survival is a major problem of growth and prosperity. Hence, hospitals and healthcare organizations are a social institution, it is important to give due weightage to public interests. Marketing principles help in professionalizing the services in tune with the defined goals and targets. Thus the hospitals can generate their own financial resources.
Indian perspective, the public are not in a position to afford the expensive services of private hospitals. Unless we allow the government hospitals to mobilize financial resources from the internal sources, the problem of financial crunch will not be solved.

The marketing principles can help a manager in understanding the changing behavioural profile of the patients and attendants. A study of the behavioural profile is an essential part of marketing. Satisfying the customers/users/patients is the main objective of management of marketing.

The hospitals and healthcare organizations thus need to give due weightage to the application of marketing principles. By conceptualising modern marketing and analysing the problem in the face of societal or social marketing, a hospital manager succeeds in solving a number of problems. It is against this background that we strongly advocate the application of marketing principles in the healthcare organizations. Even in private hospitals, marketing is essential as in the case of the government hospitals.

By conceptualizing marketing, we normally mean charging more or abnormal fees and earning profits but our focus in a true sense is on improving the quality of services, understanding the expectations of patients and attendants and thus processing the services in such a fashion that makes the task of satisfying the users easier. We find some of the leading private hospitals practicing the same and hope that others would also promote such efforts. We do feel that even the government hospitals should implement and thus there needs to be an attitudinal change in the policy makers.