5.1 Introduction:

For introducing any new service, the consent or approval of the competent authorities is very essential. But the approval is granted only if the authorities concerned are convinced about the need and benefits of such services. The perception of the concerned authorities matters a lot in granting necessary approval. The views or perception of majority of the persons at the helm of affairs prevail. The hospitals are no exception to it.

The hospital authorities comprise of the Director, Deputy Director, Dean, Medical Superintendent and Heads of various Units or Departments within the hospital management system. Their designations or nomenclature can be different, but these officers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the hospital services. Their collective wisdom prevails in taking the policy decisions, making budget proposals and implementing the same. Of course, the Director is the Head of the organisation/hospital, who acts as the Chief Coordinator. He is primarily responsible for getting sanctions from the Board of Governors/Board of Management/Government concerned, after arguing, if necessary. He can do so only if he himself is convinced about that. His colleagues assist him in this regard. As such the views or perception of his senior colleagues also matter a lot.

In the absence of the Director, his duties are performed by the Deputy Director of the hospital. There could be delegation of certain powers to the Deputy Director for the purpose of efficiency and time saving. Certain hospitals have the positions of Joint Director and/or Assistant Director also, depending upon the need and decision of the Board of Governors/Board of
Management. The duties are distributed accordingly. But the Director remains the Head of the hospital concerned for all practical purposes. He is responsible for the upliftment or failure of the institute. It is the Director who can make or mar the organisation. His role is very significant. Hence, his perception is of paramount importance for any decision concerning the hospital services and their efficiency.

The hospitals attached to the teaching programmes or imparting practical training to the budding medical professionals have faculty, headed by the Dean, who is responsible for academic affairs of the hospital concerned. He is a senior faculty member of the rank of a professor. His role is also very important and as such his perception also matters a lot.

Each and every hospital has a Medical Superintendent, who is responsible for management of various types of medical services in the hospital. He is a medical professional and well versed in the hospital management. He is responsible for efficient medical services within the hospital concerned. Hence, the importance of his perception about any service in the hospital concerned.

Since there are a large number of units or departments within the hospital, each one of these is headed by a senior medical professional or faculty, who is designated as Head of the Department. To name a few Departments within the hospital, we can mention Cardiology, Nephrology, Pediatrics, Ophthalmology, Neurology, Psychiatry, Oncology, Orthopedic, Dentistry, Gynecology, Surgery, E.N.T. (Ear, Nose & Throat), Radiology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Pharmacology etc. etc. The Heads of these departments are responsible for the smooth functioning of their respective departments. They are always keen to improve the services in their departments, introduce better diagnostic techniques, provide best possible treatment and make the patients of their departments most comfortable during their stay in the hospital. As such the views of the Heads of the departments
within the hospital are also very important, more practical and extremely useful in the decision making process.

In view of the role of various officers in the hospital, as explained above, their perception matter a lot in the process of decision making. The library services to the hospitalised patients are significant from the point of view of the hospitalised patients. But the views of the Hospital Authorities are much more important in this regard.

In order to ascertain the perception of the Hospital Authorities regarding library services to the hospitalised patients, the investigator of the present study met and interviewed the Directors, Deputy Directors, Deans, Medical Superintendents and Heads of various Departments of the following hospitals in Chandigarh and Delhi (as specified in the universe of study for the present work). Their views were ascertained with the help of a structured “Interview Schedule”, explained below appropriately:

(i) Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh;
(ii) Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Chandigarh;
(iii) Government Multi-Speciality Hospital (GMSH), Chandigarh; and
(iv) All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

5.2 Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh:

5.2.1 Director (PGIMER):

The administration of the Institute and its associated Nehru Hospital is carried out by the Director, from the administrative block, known as “Kairon Block”. The Director is responsible to Governing and Institute Bodies for its day-to-day functioning and overall Incharge of the administration of the Institute. The Director is assisted in the formulation and organisation of the
Institute by the staff council, comprising of all the professors of several departments of the Institute. The Director is the Chief Executive of the hospital.

Prof. K.K. Talwar is heading the Institute as Director and also as Head of the department of Cardiology. He has sound knowledge of the affairs of the hospitalised patients. He takes keen interest in the services to the hospitalised patients. Despite his very busy schedule, he also visits the ward and meets the patients personally to know their problems in the wards. He also holds the meeting with different officials of the Institute. The investigator of the present study interviewed him and discussed about the library services to the hospitalised patients.

According to him, the main purpose of the library for hospitalised patients should be based on the following points:

(i) To engage the hospitalised patients during their idle time;
(ii) To help orient the individual patients to a new and strange world (hospital);
(iii) To provide a constructive means to escape the stress of their illness;
(iv) To build a bridge over (through books) which the patient will be back into normal life and activity; and
(v) To help the patient ease their discomfort.

The Director showed very keen interest in the proposed library services to the hospitalised patients of the Nehru Hospital, attached to the PGIMER. He very much appreciated the proposal and extended his full support. He told that at present there is no provision for providing any library service to the patients admitted to various wards of the PGIMER. Since the Nehru Hospital (PGIMER) is spread in large area, covering many wings, many buildings and many floors, he opined that each floor (in each wing/building) should have a “Library Room” for the hospitalised patients. But, according to him, such a library should be looked after by “Mobile Library Service” of the Central State
Library, Chandigarh. He was also in favour of involvement of NGOs to achieve the goal of providing library services to the indoor patients regularly.

5.2.2 Deputy Director Administration (PGIMER):

Deputy Director Administration is also responsible for the Institute’s administration. He frequently holds meetings with senior officials of the hospital. Presently Mr. Anil Kumar Gupta is the Deputy Director Administration of the Institute.

According to him, library services are very important for the hospitalised patients and they should not be deprived of such facilities. He opined that idle time of the hospitalised patients can be utilised usefully by reading literature of their interests. He stated that it will not only solve the problem of boredom inside the hospital but will also serve the purpose of education and knowledge about the world outside the hospital.

He suggested that in addition to the general books, popular magazines and newspapers; books on vocations should also be provided to the hospitalised patients because, sometime, they are unable to undertake the present occupation and can select another profession of their choice, as their health permits. Interestingly, he also assured that the matter regarding library services to the hospitalised patients shall be taken up with the higher authorities in due course of time and that he would strongly plead the case for providing library services to the admitted patients, availing the services of local public libraries and NGOs.

5.2.3 Dean (PGIMER):

The Dean is responsible for all work in connection with teaching of Post-Graduate courses and inter-departmental coordination of research. During the absence of the Director, the charge of acting Director is given to the Dean.
The present Dean of PGIMER is Prof. V. Sakhuja who is also Head of the Nephrology Department.

According to him, this is a very good proposal and should be implemented for the welfare of the patients, which will work as “Bibliotherapy”. He also gave the following suggestions:

(i) General books, self-explanatory books, biographical books, spiritual books and health information books should be provided to the hospitalised patients;

(ii) Book trolley service to bed side of the patients should be a regular feature;

(iii) Mobile library services should be provided in guarded manner as the recovery of books could be a problem;

(iv) Local public libraries should provide the books; and

(v) The services of the NGOs should be availed for the purpose.

5.2.4 Medical Superintendent (PGIMER):

The day-to-day administration of the Nehru Hospital, PGIMER is vested with the Medical Superintendent who is responsible to the Director. He daily visits all the wards and personally, contacts the patients in order to ascertain their difficulties in the hospital. Prof. A.K. Gupta is the present Medical Superintendent of the hospital. He was extremely happy to know about the proposal for the library services to the hospitalised patients in PGIMER. He strongly agreed to the proposal. He stated that the books will create social harmony amongst the admitted patients. He suggested that the books on religions, biographies, comics, novels, story books and picture books should be provided to the indoor patients. Since the patients come from various regions of the country, he stressed that the books should be in simple English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu languages. Some popular magazines and daily newspapers in these languages were also recommended by him.
He was optimistic in saying that the library services will help the patients to get rid of stress and pass their free time. They can also know about the detailed information concerning their diseases, if they so desire. With regard to the operational aspect, he was of the opinion that local public libraries should make available the reading material through their mobile library services, at least thrice a week. He also stressed the involvement of NGOs and volunteers to assist in distributing and reading books to the needy patients. But he did not agree that the hospital itself should own and manage the library meant for the hospitalised patients.

5.2.5 Heads of the Departments (PGIMER):

Almost all the Heads of the Departments in the PGIMER opined that library services to the indoor patients will go a long way in helping the patients to pass their idle time, release their stress and ascertain information about their diseases. The only exceptions noticed were as under:

(i) Pediatrics wards should be provided more of picture books, comics, popular magazines, story books and even toys. Volunteers should read to the small children and those who cannot hold the reading materials;

(ii) Critically ill patients should not be provided such services in any of the wards;

(iii) In the Ophthalmology ward, the patients should not be allowed to read by themselves. Volunteers should read to them, but not very loudly;

(iv) Most of the Heads of the Departments opined that it would be much better if the volunteers undertake this responsibility to read out to the indoor patients, where so required;

(v) They emphatically stated that prior permission of the doctors concerned or at least the nurses concerned should invariably be obtained, in each individual case, before providing the library service; and

(vi) Most of them even suggested that the library services should also be made available to the attendants of the patients as they also find it difficult to pass their time, which is full of stress.
Interestingly, they were not concerned as to who should provide the reading material for the purpose. Most of them were of the views that a small room on each floor and in each ward should be earmarked for keeping reading materials for the hospitalised patients, under proper guard of the Ward-in-Charge/Nursing staff/Volunteers from NGOs.

5.3 Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Chandigarh:

5.3.1 Director-Principal (GMCH):

The administration of this hospital is run by the Director-Principal. He is assisted in the formulation of policies, planning and organisation of the hospital by different committees. Additional Director (Admn.), Medical Superintendent and many other officials of the hospital. Prof. H.M. Swami is present Director-Principal of the Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh.

He fully agreed with the idea of providing library services to the indoor patients which are not at all being provided to the hospitalised patients in GMCH. But he had his reservations in providing these services to the admitted patients through the existing library of the hospital, which is catering to the needs of the medical students and faculty members. He was of the firm view that the hospitalised patients should be provided reading materials by the local public libraries through their mobile vans. He also suggested that the work of distribution of books and reading the same to the needy patients should be undertaken by NGOs and volunteers. However, he was willing to consider the arrangement of small room for keeping such books in the wards of the hospital.

The Director-Principal was of the view that general books, story books, fictions, religious books, popular magazines and daily newspapers in English, Hindi and Punjabi should be made available to the patients. At the end, he stated that if the proposed project works well and found feasible, he would recommend to the Chandigarh Administration (U.T. Government) to sanction
necessary funds for the required staff and infrastructure for a separate library in the hospital, exclusively meant for the hospitalised patients.

5.3.2 Additional Director Administration (GMCH):

At present Sh. R.S. Verma has been assigned the responsibility of Additional Director (Administration) in the Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh. During the interview, he agreed that there is dire need of library services for the hospitalised patients, which are lacking at the moment.

He suggested separate budget provision for the library services to the indoor patients. According to him, some books should be acquired by the hospital and kept in the “Patient’s Library” under the charge of a librarian. This basic collection should be supplemented by reading material to be provided by the local public libraries, on loan basis, from time to time. The reading materials could be popular magazines, comics, picture books, story books, fictions, biographies and newspapers in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu languages. He also suggested that religious books can be provided on demand from the patients.

Role of NGOs and volunteers was also impressed upon by the Additional Director (Administration). Since there are so many wards and a large number of indoor patients, he emphasised the needs of a large number of volunteers who can undertake the work of issue and return of reading materials to the hospitalised patients. According to him, these volunteers from NGOs can help the needy indoor patients to read out the books/magazines/newspapers to them as per their convenience and feasibility.

5.3.3 Assistant Registrar (GMCH):

Presently Sh. V.K. Sharma is the Assistant Registrar (Academics) of the Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh. He is responsible for the academic affairs of the Medical College. When asked about his views
regarding providing library services to the hospitalised patients, he instantly agreed that this service is very-very essential and should be started at the earliest as it would help the admitted patients to pass the idle time and keep occupied, paving way for redressal of their tension prevailing due to their illness.

He proposed picture books and comics for the children and light fictions, story books, religious books and popular magazines in vernacular languages for other patients. He was of the opinion that such reading materials can be provided by the Central State Library, through its Mobile Vans. For distribution, collection and reading out to the needy patients, the role of volunteers was proposed. But, according to him, the approval of Director-Principal is essential for starting such innovative service in the hospital.

5.3.4 Medical Superintendent (GMCH):

Hospital Administration of the Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh is looked after by the Medical Superintendent. He daily gives information of hospital administration to the Director-Principal. All the wards of the hospital comes under his direct supervision. He visits the wards and instructs the concerned officials when any discrepancy is found in their work. Prof. Harsh Mohan is the present Medical Superintendent of GMCH.

When asked about his views regarding providing library services to the hospitalised patients, he replied in affirmative. According to him, such services would go a long way to help in cultivation and stimulation of morale of the indoor patients. He said that books would help them to overcome the strain and stress due to their diseases. He was of the view that the books would serve the patients as “Bibliotherapy” for recovery from their illness.

With regard to the type of reading materials for the admitted patients, he strongly recommended popular magazines, newspapers, story books, novels and biographies. He also suggested that certain patients could be provided with
religious books also, depending upon their belief and need. He also stated that the reading materials should be in the regional languages.

So far as the management aspect of this service is concerned, he was very clear that it would not be possible for the Government Medical College and Hospital to provide this service. He suggested that local public libraries, volunteers and NGOs can come together to achieve this goal. He, however, promised that he would do his best to provide necessary accommodation for keeping the reading materials in the wards, obtain approval of the competent authorities and make the proposal functional on regular basis.

5.3.5 Heads of the Departments (GMCH):

As usual, there are many Departments or Units in the Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh, each one headed by a senior doctor. Almost all of them were contacted and interviewed to ascertain their views regarding need of library services to the hospitalised patients. Surprisingly, the views of some of them vary. The Heads of the Departments of Surgery, Cardiology, Gynecology, Pediatrics and Ophthalmology were of the opinion that there is hardly any need of library services to the patients admitted to their wards because their stay in the hospital is for very short period during which they require extensive medical attention. The Heads of all the other Departments, however, strongly agreed to introduce library services to the indoor patients, which would be of great help to them to pass their idle time, stay away from stress and get the relevant information about their ailments.

With regard to the type of reading materials to be provided to the indoor patients, in addition to the fictions, story books, religious books, humorous books, comics, popular magazines and newspapers in regional languages, some of them also opined to provide cassettes, CDs, DVDs etc. of light music in the private wards. In case “Head Phone” facilities are available, then such light music can also be made available to other patients, subject to the permission of
the attending doctor. According to them, light music can also have soothing effect on the patients, which is in addition to constructive use of idle time of the hospitalised patients.

The Heads of the Departments were not concerned about the management aspect of such libraries. They opined that it would be better if reading material is kept in some area within the ward, under proper guard. For the source of acquiring these documents, they stated that it is for the Director to decide. They, however, underlined the role of the volunteers and NGOs to spare time to read out to the needy patients admitted in the hospital.

5.4 Government Multi-Speciality Hospital (GMSH), Chandigarh:

5.4.1 Director Health Services-cum-Principal Medical Officer (GMSH):

The General Hospital Sector-16, Chandigarh has been renamed as Government Multi Speciality Hospital and is headed by the Director Health Services-cum-Principal Medical Officer. The present Director Health Services-cum-Principal Medical Officer is Dr. Mrs. Inderjit Kaur Walia. She pointed out that inmates of the hospital have lot of free time with them. This time can be utilised fruitfully by providing them better library services. Since they are free most of the time, in order to keep them busy and away from tension, library services are required in the hospital. The views of the Director Health Services-cum-Principal Medical Officer of the Government Multi-Speciality Hospital, Chandigarh regarding library services to the hospitalised patients are as under:

(i) At present no library services are being provided to the patients admitted in the GMSH;

(ii) Library services to the hospitalised patients should be provided by the public libraries (mobile libraries) and not by the hospital;

(iii) Social workers, who are attached to NGOs, should read the books and magazines etc to the illiterate and neo literate and visually impaired hospitalised patients.
(iv) For routine reading or current information, newspapers should be provided in English, Hindi and Punjabi;

(v) Reading materials should be provided to the indoor patients by the Sister-in-Charge of the ward concerned in a systematic order, by making entry in the loan register; and

(vi) Before issuing the books to the patients, prior permission of the doctor concerned should be obtained, who should specify the type of reading material to be issued, the duration for which the patient can read at a stretch or if the patient requires the assistance of social workers/volunteers for the purpose. She was, however, non-committal on the issue of financial liability on the part of the Hospital Authorities or the Government for the above mentioned services.

5.4.2 Medical Superintendent-cum-Joint Director Health Services-cum-Joint Principal Medical Officer (GMSH):

At present the post of Medical Superintendent-cum-Joint Director Health Services-cum-Joint Principal Medical Officer (GMSH) of Government Multi-Speciality Hospital, Chandigarh is held by Dr. (Mrs.) Usha Vishnoi. When interviewed by the investigator of the present study, she admitted that for the time being, there are no facilities for providing library services to the hospitalised patients at all. She fully agreed about the need of such services in the hospital. She stated that she would send the proposal for providing library services to the hospitalised patients, in due course of time.

She was of the opinion that a small room in each ward of the hospital should be earmarked for keeping reading materials meant for the admitted patients. These documents should be under the charge of some Nursing Sister and should be issued systematically. These should comprise of light reading material like newspapers, magazines, comics, picture books, religious books, fiction, story books and light music sources. She also stated that mobile vans of the Central State Library should provide these reading material on loan basis, from time to time. She also highlighted the role of social workers and volunteers in this connection. She fully agreed that the library services to the indoor patients shall be very rewarding and beneficial for the patients, if served under the advice of the attending doctors.

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5.4.3 Deputy Medical Superintendent (GMSH):

The post of Deputy Medical Superintendent in the Government Multi-Speciality Hospital, Chandigarh is presently held by Dr. G. Dewan, who assists the “Director Health Services-cum-Principal Medical Officer” and the “Medical Superintendent-cum-Joint Director Health Services-cum-Joint Principal Medical Officer” in the said hospital. When contacted by the investigator of the present study, he was very glad to know the project in hand. He told that library services to the hospitalised patients are very common in the developed countries since long. He stated that these are urgently needed to be introduced in the hospitals in India too.

Regarding the type of reading material to be provided to the indoor patients, he stated that almost all type of light and interesting reading material in English as well as the regional languages could be considered. For children he suggested the inclusion of toys, games, picture books, comics etc. Religious books could also be provided to such patients who ask for these. In case of psychiatric patients, neurological patients and those in trauma ward should be provided library services only in consultation with their attending doctors. It goes without saying, he stated, that library services should not be provided to the patients admitted in the “Emergency Wards”, “Intensive Care Units” and seriously sick patients in other wards of the hospital.

He emphasized the role of NGOs, social workers and volunteers to assist the hospital authorities in this noble cause. He also suggested their role for reading the books to the patients who are illiterate, neo-literate, visually impaired, bed-ridden, handicapped and those who require their assistance in this connection. He was very sure that the library services to the hospitalised patients should be provided by the local public libraries, through their mobile vans meant for the purpose. According to him, the hospital authorities should provide only space (rooms) and limited infrastructure concerned therewith. At the end, he enumerated a large number benefits which the indoor patients can
get through library services, such as, gainful utilisation of idle time, relaxation, entertainment, knowledge, current awareness, information about their ailments and relief from stress.

5.4.4 **Heads of the Departments (GMSH):**

The Government Multi-speciality Hospital, Chandigarh has almost all the Departments in the field of medical sciences. Each Department is headed by a senior medical professional. All of them were contacted by the investigator of the present study in order to ascertain their views regarding need of library services to the hospitalised patients. All of them entirely agreed that there is a dire need of introducing library services to the indoor patients, but with certain cautions. They stated that each patient needs certain type of reading material and has to avoid certain types of documents, depending upon his age, nature of ailment, severity of illness, physical and mental conditions. Hence, these services should be provided under the advice of the doctor concerned.

Some of the Heads of Departments were in favour of providing such service even to the attendants of the patients, in order to avoid unnecessary noise, movement and disturbance in the wards. Library services help the patients as well as their attendants to fruitfully utilise their free time. It helps the patients to relax, remove stress and know details about their diseases. They recommended the library services to the patients as “Bibliotherapy”.

Majority of the Heads of the Departments did not comment as to who should provide the books and where these should be kept. According to them, it is an administrative decision or policy decision to be taken by the higher authorities or the Government. But the urgent need of the library services to the hospitalised patients was opined by all of them.
5.5 All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi:

5.5.1 Director (AIIMS):

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi is one of the pioneer Institute in the field of Health Sciences in the Country. It is the biggest hospital in New Delhi, the national capital. In addition to the Out Patient Departments, Teaching & Research programmes, it has all the Departments in the field of Medical Sciences. Thousands of patients are admitted in various wards for treatment of their diseases. This prestigious institute is presently headed by its Director, Dr. P. Venugopal. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, he takes keen interest in the welfare of the patients and their comforts.

When contacted by the investigator of the present study in his office (with prior appointment), he was very graceful and kind to appreciate the theme of my project in hand. He fully agreed that library services are very much required for the hospitalised patients, which are not at all being provided in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi: Fully exposed to the hospital environments in the Western Countries, he strongly felt that library services should be provided to the indoor as well as outdoor patients in the hospitals, as in prevalent in the developed countries of the world. He stated that even in the waiting areas of Out Patients Departments (OPDs), sufficient reading materials should be kept, which can be used by the patients as well as their attendants, while waiting for their turn to go to the doctor for consultation.

He opined that each and every ward in the hospital should have a common room where reading materials should be kept for use by the patients and their attendants. The Sister-in-Charge of the ward should be responsible for keeping record of these documents. The reading material should be allowed to be taken to the bed of the patients, after making necessary note in the "Borrow Register". The handicapped, visually impaired, bed ridden and illiterate patients should be assisted by the Social Workers or Volunteers to read to
them, as per time table approved by the hospital authorities and notified to the Social Workers and patients well in advance.

According to the Director of the AIIMS, the reading materials for the hospitalised patients should include current popular magazines, newspapers, picture books, comics, fictions, story books, religious books and biographies. Light music cassettes could also be provided in the private wards, if possible.

According to the Director, library services would help the patients to gainfully utilise their idle time, remain free from boredom, ease their stress, remain informed, get confidence and think positive. They can also get information about their diseases and become mentally prepared to face the reality. He was all out for the library services to the hospitalised patients.

Due to administrative problems, scarcity of manpower and paucity of funds, he did not find it feasible to establish the Institute sponsored “Patients Library”. Rather he opined that library services to the indoor patients should be provided by the “Delhi Public Library System”, through their “Mobile Library Service”, regularly. He also emphasised the need of involvement of NGOs in this regard so that the Social Workers and Volunteers can help the patients to read out, if so required, depending upon the physical condition of the patients. According to him, this needs appropriate plans of Delhi Public Library, management, time table, approval of the hospital authorities and convenience of the volunteers for the purpose.

5.5.2 Deputy Director Administration (AIIMS):

The Deputy Director Administration of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi also plays an important role in the administration of the Institute. The said position is presently being occupied by Dr. Debashish Pandaiaas. When he was contacted to ascertain his views about the need of library services to the hospitalised patients, he emphasised the need thereof. He expressed his willingness to take up the case with the higher authorities. He
was of the opinion that separate budget should be provided for collection
development and appointment of the Librarians, exclusively for the “Patient
Library”, which should be separate from the main library of the AIIMS which
is meant for doctors, students and the faculty.

According to him the “Patient Library” should have some basic
collection of religious books, novels, story books, biographies, picture books
etc. It should also subscribe some popular magazines and newspapers in
English, Hindi and Urdu languages, which can be used by the hospitalised
patients in the Institute. He also opined that Delhi Public Library should make
arrangement to provide similar books for the said library on loan basis, from
time to time, through its mobile library service so that these can be provided to
the interested indoor patients.

For assisting the illiterate, visually impaired and bed ridden patients in
this connection, he suggested that services of the volunteers from NGOs should
be availed. He agreed that proper policy decision, planning and management is
required to provide the efficient library services to the patients admitted in the
Institute (AIIMS).

5.5.3 Dean (AIIMS):

At present, Dr. R.C. Deka, Head of the E.N.T. Department, is Dean in
the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. He is Incharge of the
academic matters of the Institute and looks after the teaching and research
programmes of AIIMS. He was contacted personally by the investigator of the
present study and was requested to give his views regarding library services to
the hospitalised patients. His spontaneous reply was that it is already being
provided in the developed countries and should be provided in the Indian
hospitals also. According to him, library services will help the indoor patients
to divert their attention from the illness and relieve them from tension. They
will be able to pass their free time appropriately with good results. Certain
religious books (as per faith of the patient concerned) can help them to have solace and piece of mind. They can also read details about their diseases and prepare themselves mentally to face the situation, take precautions or know the next line of action. They can also read about occupation, education or just recreation.

He explained that the library services to the indoor patients can not be provided from the research library of the Institute, which is meant for students, doctors, researchers and the faculty. As such the local public libraries, especially Delhi Public Library can participate in the venture to provide general books to the Institute on loan basis, regularly. He also suggested provision of the common rooms in each ward, where such reading material can be kept for use by the admitted patients.

Dr. Deka also opined that Social workers and Volunteers can be approached to assist in reading out to the blind, weak, incapacitated bed ridden and the illiterate patients admitted in various wards of the Institute. Of course, he stated some mechanism will have to be evolved to stream line the process. The proposal requires the approval of the Director/Hospital Authorities to work out the library services to the indoor patients of AIIMS and to implement the same effectively.

5.5.4 Medical Superintendent (AIIMS):

The Medical Superintendent looks after the hospital administration and keeps a liaison with all the Heads of the Departments, semi-professional staff and nursing staff. At present, Dr. D. K. Sharma is holding this position. After taking appointment, the investigator of the present study met him in his office in order to ascertain his views about need of library services for the hospitalised patients. He was very nice and positive. He told that for the time being, such services are not being provided to the hospitalised patients in
AIIMS. But he fully agreed that these are required and should be provided, if possible.

According to him, reading materials can keep the indoor patients busy and occupied. They can utilise their idle time and forget the worries of the disease temporarily. Library services would help them to ease tension and feel comfortable. With regard to the types of documents which should be provided to the patients, he favoured toys, picture books and comics for the children. For visually impaired patients, he suggested some light music, cassettes of religious discourses and Braille Literature. For elders, he proposed religious books, biographies and newspapers. For young patients he suggested current popular magazines, novels, story books, vocational books and such documents which can provide information about their ailment. He had his reservations if library services to the patients could be provided by the hospital/Institute from its own resources. He stated that Delhi Public Library System can come forward to provide such books on loan basis through their mobile vans. But, according to him, these should be handled and taken care of by some NGOs or Social Workers, who can receive the books from the mobile vans, distribute to the patients, read out to the needy patients and then take these back. The NGOs will have to chalk out a well-defined programme for this purpose. He further pointed out that the proposed library services to the hospitalised patients would require the prior approval of the Director, for which he promised to extent full support.

5.5.5 Heads of the Departments (AIIMS):

There are a large number of Departments or Units, covering all the branches of Health Sciences. Each Department is headed by a senior faculty member, who is primarily responsible for teaching and research in the respective discipline. These Heads are also responsible for treatment of the patients in the Out Patients Department as well as admitted patients. Thus, they also visit the patients in the wards of the hospital. Since they are not
always available at one fixed place in the hospital, the investigator of the present study had to make many efforts to have access to them.

When contacted for the interview, they were helpful and responsive. All of them were of the opinion that reading materials should be made available to the admitted patients provided their stay is reasonably long i.e. more than 4-5 days. They stated that this service should be provided in limited manners and not just in unlimited way. Reading material should be provided to the indoor patients, only if they ask for it. Moreover, it should be provided as per their requirements only and not arbitrary or as a routine. Most of them were of the views that reading material should be supplied to the individual patients in consultation with their attending doctor for obvious reason because certain patients are not to be provided certain types of books.

They suggested that talking books i.e. audio cassettes can be supplied to the patients in the Ophthalmology (eyes) Department, provided that the earphone is also provided. The patients in the Psychiatry Department should be provided humorous books rather than those explaining the family problems or social tensions. Similarly, the patients in the Pediatrics (children) Department should be provided toys to the small children picture books and games to little grown ups ones, comics, story books, biographies etc. to the older children. Text books can also be supplied to those children who ask for the same. The elderly patients might prefer religious books, as per their faith. Popular magazines and daily newspapers could also be kept in the common room of the ward for those patients who may need these. Of course, they opined that the language of these documents should be generally English and Hindi. But the materials in other regional languages could also be considered, if feasible.

Majority of the Heads of the Departments did not spell out as to who should manage the library. But some of them stated that services of mobile vans of Delhi Public Library could be availed for the hospitalised patients. Although all of them were in favour of providing reading materials to the
hospitalised patients, yet they stated that it is an administrative matter, which should be considered and decided by the Director, Deputy Director and Medical Superintendent of the Institute.

5.6 Conclusion:

An appraisal of the preceding pages reveals that at present no library services of any type are being provided to the patients admitted in various wards of the hospitals in Chandigarh and Delhi (within the periphery of the study in hand). This confirms our Hypothesis No. VII that “Presently, no library services of any type are being provided to the patients admitted in various hospitals in Chandigarh and Delhi.” All of them enumerated numerous benefits from these services, which the indoor patients will derive directly and indirectly. However, there were different views about the extent of such services to be provided, types of patients to be covered or excluded and also whether to provide these services in anticipation of demand or only on demand.

There was no unanimity of opinions as to how the library services should be provided to the hospitalised patients. But none of the hospital authorities opined that the Medical Libraries attached to their hospitals should provide library services to the in-door patients. In fact, according to them, it is not feasible either. As per policy of these hospitals, the Medical Libraries are exclusively meant for the medical professionals doctors, faculty members, medical students and the researchers. This confirms our Hypothesis No. VIII that “the Medical Libraries attached to the hospitals in Chandigarh and Delhi do not provide the library services to the hospitalised patients”.

Some of them were, however, in favour of establishing a small base-library in the hospital premises, which can be called “Patient Library” and it can be looked after by one Librarian and one Library Restorer. But an overwhelming majority thereof opined that major part of the reading material should be made available by the Public Libraries of the city concerned, on loan
basis, through their Mobile Library Service (Mobile Vans), on regular basis. This confirms our hypothesis No. IX that “The Hospital Authorities think that the library services to the Hospitalised Patients should be provided by the Public Libraries through their mobile libraries.”

With regard to the type of reading material to be provided to the indoor patients, there were different perceptions, keeping in view the age of the patients, their educational background, their status, nature of their ailments, length of their probable stay in the hospital and physical conditions of the patients. The consensus were for reading materials like daily newspapers, popular magazines, fictions, story books, biographies, humorous books, comics, picture books, toys, games and talking books (audio-cassettes). Some of them even opined that the information about the diseases of the patients should also be provided, but only on specific demand from the patients concerned. There was, however, complete unanimity among them that the reading materials to be provided to the hospitalised patients should be in English, Hindi and the regional language/s.

The role of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Volunteers and Social Workers was stressed by each one of them without exception. They perceived that the Volunteers and Social Workers should help the indoor patients to read books to them or provide related assistance to them, if so required. They suggested a fool-proof, pre-decided and pre-notified programme or time-table, for each ward, for the purpose. In fact, they emphasised a symbiosis between Library Authorities, NGOs and Public Libraries in this connection. Some of them even opined that the Sister-in-Charge of the wards can also be involved for the purpose. A few of them also proposed that each ward in the hospital should have a common room where Television, newspapers, popular magazines and some common books are kept for use by the needy patients as well as their attendants.
Financial constraints, paucity of manpower and management problems were also highlighted by some of them. But these are only teething problems and matter of details. If there is a will, there is way. Library services to the hospitalised patients are already being provided in the developed countries since long. Their benefits are immense. The Hospital Authorities are convinced and in favour of introducing such services in the hospitals. There is a need to take initiative, make efforts, coordinate with local public libraries and NGOs, draft the proposal include in the agenda and discuss with the competent authorities with complete data. The perception of the hospital authorities in this regard can be put into practice, provided there is a zeal to do. It is need of the time and should be introduced at the earliest, in all the hospitals in the country. There is an urgent need to take initiative, take up with the competent authorities, take a decision and implement the library services to the hospitalised patients.