INTRODUCTION
1.1 MEDIA PERFORMANCE - MANY PERCEPTIONS

The expression Media performance brings many meanings to people of diverse media interests*. This combined word is much in vogue now-a-days. Few days back, a group of Kharagpur Indian Institute of Technology (near Calcutta) students lamented about the performance of media, “It is full of politics which does not cater to our needs. It is all rubbish that the media persons feed to us.” In a seminar on Media and Development, media pundits criticised, “Media have grossly neglected mass of the country, who are mostly poor.”

A middle level print journalist observed, “Advertising people are ascending, we have to play second fiddle”. Director of a news channel quipped, “We are competing in coverage and package - both”. A daily newspaper editor proclaimed, “Newspaper has lost on immediacy point. As a result, thrust must change”.

Chief Executive of a media firm retorted, “My performance is as good as are my products”. His firm has presence in print, television and internet. An Advertisement manager told, “I have started joint advertisement regime for our products - if you advertise in our TV news we offer abysmally low rates in our print products and internet edition provides you an added advantage.”

A veteran editor narrated, “When my owner withdrew from another newspaper, I requested him for the channel business.” An young media entrepreneur observed, “My friendship with audience and technology is increasing rapidly. I am looking forward for those days, when our market would be completely open.”

The situation perplexes a performance researcher per se. The audience squarely blame the journalist, media pundits discover mass being ignored in media, journalist perceives marketing domination, editor realises change as inevitable and prefers going to another media and owner considers products in various media as equal for performance followed by advertisement manager’s decision to jointly market media.

The perceptions of persons about the performance of media presented here is based on numerous interactions of the researcher with them.
products. The young entrepreneur is organising his unit with technology for the future. Amidst these divergent viewpoints, is there any basic unity?

Audience and pundits are talking about media as a whole, owners and professionals are discussing about products. Meanwhile the government tries to regulate the functioning of the industry through various means.

TV programmes and newspaper products are going into internet, another media. All these raise a serious issue—whose performance is this? Is this of the technological medium, is this of the journalists? Is that of the marketing people, is that of a product in media or that of a media firm or industry as a whole?

At this juncture, the reply should come out from the logic of media functions in the changing context. The context change has been influencing operation of firms, mass communication professionals, governmental regulations, media economy and marketing.

1.2 An Approach Towards Media Performance

Media performance, when looked dispassionately at a time approaching a century of more informationist proclivity, points to some trends:

1. Sheer increase in volume of media output: more kinds of media, more channels; more words, pictures, images produced and distributed at an exponential rate (even if not proportionately more consumed) (Denis Mcquail 1992).

2. Media industries becoming integrated: newspaper owners venturing into electronic media and vice-versa, media owners going transborder; communication mix becoming internationally uniform graduating from local, regional and national systems.

3. Bolstering belief in free market operation: commercialisation as a consequence of increasing privatisation, dependency on advertising and sponsorship; diminishing separation between public communication strategy and populist consumer maximising strategy.

4. Consequential conflicts of media focus: between citizen and consumer, freedom and democracy, market driven journalism and social equity-equality issues, cultural diversity and uniformity of state requisites, and ethnocentrism and globalism.

5. Technological advances: stimulating a shift from allocutory media form

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(centre - periphery mass dissemination media) to consultative and interactive types of communication relationship and information flow (Bordewijk and Van Kaam 1986; Mcquail 1986).

These trends, while delineate the recent media industry profile worldwide, signal that:

1. Watertight compartmentalisation of media industry on the basis of type of media and performance appraisal on that basis would gradually become ineffective in understanding any part of the industry for the purpose of policy formulation by organisations, industry and the state.

2. Understanding implications of technology vis-a-vis human resources, role of technology vis-a-vis creativity, and visualising future changes in technology front in terms of media market compulsions would become sine-qua-non for better media performance.

3. Shift in media forms, while making it more vulnerable in the hands of few, also generates more expectation about its contribution towards shaping agenda, if not changes in the spheres of society, state and international community.

4. Media organisational conduct would have to be more orchestrated (in every aspect of attaining organisational goal in synergy with social expectations) with creativity and utilitarian technology.

5. Better media performance would demand strategic planning for future in quest of both economic expansion as a business and extension as a public communication channel.

Media performance, at this juncture of great quantitative and qualitative changes in the communication front is to be clearly defined. Without redefining media that can not be done. Going by the market trends it can be said that media houses, sensing commonness, are venturing into various segments of communication development as if these are parts of the media industry as such.

In general ‘media’ - plural of ‘medium’, ways of conveying meaning through symbols to one another are basic to human civilisation. Presently the word is used for “those communication instruments which deliver an identical message to a potentially unlimited audience, who don’t have to gather at one place and at one time” (Johan
One important aspect of media until now was the virtual inbuilt limitation of one way communication. Multimedia, information superhighway and many other inventions have already started to compensate for this limitation. Alongside, these have necessitated another transformation in defining media in order to address potential prospects and problems posed to the state and international community. Minimum restrictions upon new communication products, in order to see that freedom does not turn into licentiousness urgently requires a broad umbrella definition of media.

Public communication is the mainstay for all sorts of media. Whether or not a media product aims at agenda of public interest or community service, the nature of the product dictates the same to be in the product. Even entertainment serves a purpose for the people. This uniqueness is at the core of all debates related to media performance—whether public interest should be the yardstick or economic soundness of the organisation. This uniqueness also ensures availability of means of communication for “the existence and activity of interacting citizens who share and pursue objectives and interests, especially in respect of forming opinion and advocating policy” (Blumler 1939).

Ferguson (1990) defined the term public communication as “those processes of information and cultural exchange between media institutions, products and publics which are socially shared, widely available and communal in character”. This definition covers to a great extent traditional mass media and many new publicly available data and communication services. Moreover, it hints at complex of informational, cultural and social advantages the media provides to the wider society extending beyond the sender and the receiver. Public communication is supposed to have some qualities - free expression, multiple voice, clarity, objectivity, etc. which are subjects of much deliberations.

While media industry ensures plurality of voice with presence of many operators (monopoly tendency is almost routinely criticised), operators must ascertain stability and growth in the market so that the voice can be heard. This validates the point that economic good health is absolutely essential for desired public communication too.

Economic good health arises from efficient operation of the business. Every
operation has a structure behind it. According to Busterna (1988) and Scherer (1980) organisational structure has three key features: market structure — the essential features of finance, control, market - dynamics and constraints; conduct — the most common types of organisational behaviour, and performance - the main factors relevant for assessing the output of a firm. Organisational structure of a media house determines its place and success in the industry.

At this cross road of media industry development, changing media conditions should be studied as part of linkage analysis of the complex web of structure, conduct and economic - public communication performance. For this purpose, media performance may be considered as an integrated expression of media functions - both managerial and operational in the state, economic and social setting.

So far almost opposing camps of researchers have tried to investigate either editorial autonomy for the media product (supposing that only then media would be serving public interest) or economic determinism of media product (supposing that the money rules the roost) oblivious of the realities of the complex society where interaction of operators with other members of the society, state imperatives and reversal of roles are nonetheless important.

A holistic approach where quantitative and normative methodologies mingle with action research may provide the answer of media performance which is of utmost importance for both the industry and the society.

1.3 Towards redefining media

Going by market trends, it can be said that media houses are including many media products in their medium repertory, placing the same products in multiple technological media and diversifying into products in different media. Enhancing media power of such houses by virtual breaking of media limitations on firms have put governments in trouble. Suddenly, press laws have become ineffective to deal with these houses. Regulations framed for electronic media few years back are becoming obsolete in the face of internet foray into media scene.

Traditionally, the term media can include such different means of communication as face-to-face communication and a fax machine or the internet. Due to historical and technological developments in the traditional media sector, a few specific media
means of communication became dominant. \(^2\) From Gutenberg’s time print media with books, newspapers and magazines was dominant in industrialised world. In the twentieth century radio and television became important media. Whatever might be the efforts to make these media forms interactive, these are still dominant means of one way communication due to technological limitations. Their audience access news, information and entertainment programmes at different places and at separate time. They are still unfortunate for the inability to reply or react using the same medium conveying the message.

Thus media, in this sense is closely linked to mass communication. Once the meaning of media was changed from conveying symbols between one another to meaning specific mass media which convey an identical message to a large audience. The latest development towards Information Superhighway and consequent fall out on the traditional mass media, regulatory environment, and citizens necessitate rethinking the term media in the new light.

The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University Survey (1991 to 1993) on impact of new technology on the newsroom demonstrated how communication products were greatly changed by new technology. New media products are emerging that are increasingly becoming computer based, non linear (e.g. hypertext), multimedia (combining text, data, audio and video) and user controlled (in form, function and time). More such products are reaching the end user in real time via on-line and satellite technology.

Thus consultative and interactive types of communication relationships and information flow are visible. As the traditional distinctions between print and broadcast media technologies rapidly vanish, we are witnessing the emergence of “a united states of media”, concludes Everette E. Dennis. \(^3\) Media audience, as a result of the shift would be having more choice and control over media content in real time, space, format and delivery. As the control is changing hands from media firm to audience, it raises several issues. So far governments regulated firms in separate segments of the industry through distinct regulatory regimes for print, radio and television. Now blurring of distinction in many key tasks among various media, firms going transborder, and

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\(^3\) Pavlik J.V., New Media Technology Cultural And Commercial Perspectives, Preface Xiii, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1996.
breaking media separations demand the states to create new regulations for media efficiency. The audience ascendancy necessitates rules to ensure access equity and quality. Here the integration in media consumption habit is to be taken into consideration.

Media owners and managers are already taking congnisance of "phenomenal synergy between hardware technologies, sophisticated software, and new applications, with each feeding into and from the other." Telecom, TV and computer technology convergence has already ushered into media convergence such as in the merger of AOL and Time-Warner, the tie-up between AT & T and TCI and many more world wide. Cheaper cable modems and other technological advances would enable the simple, inexpensive and user friendly cable TV systems to be used for internet access.

Receiving TV programmes (WEB TV) and streaming audio and video on the Net are becoming common place along with on-line newspapers. Naturally content creation would become increasingly common whereas medium specific packaging would be improved to exploit the audience. For media operators, the threat and opportunity of the new development poses business and creativity challenges. However such complexities are increasing the evasiveness in the area of public interest by demolishing walls of traditional media compartments.

In 1999, an errant Marwari youngman went on spreading content with malice towards the Bengalees through Net. The Calcutta Police nabbed the man after much protest from citizens but could not take action. The reason for the same was inadequacy of law of India to deal with such type of offences in emerging frontiers of media. The Net could not be brought under the purview of existing definition of media in the case.

Another issue of serious nature is that of fixing responsibility for content. With the trend of media convergence, impact of content would be enhanced. Houses having presence of products in converging areas would gain but what about ensuring propriety and standard of the content? More utilisation of common content by different media makes the issue of content ownership elusive. Whether any defamatory item circulated

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via off-line newspaper and on-line newspaper would attract action on the printed newspaper or on the Net newspaper or on both? A simplistic reply may be that as the Net newspaper is the edition of the printed original, the print version should be taken into consideration. Inadequacy of this notion becomes clear as we observe that more and more Net newspapers are offering elaborate and customised content than the printed version and through change of format acquire the look of new Web products. Further the effect of having a Net edition on revenue of the original print product also draws attention of economic regulators. Whether for taxation, the burden would be levied on print newspaper only or treating as a separate Net business, a rate, different for different category of media products would be levied on the on-line newspaper.

Whether or not these ticklish issues are redressed, already there is much concern about public communication aspects in the changing media environment. Whether common content orientation hampers multiple voice in society by restricting content diversity or common delivery regime effects audience interest adversely are two areas where nations and international fora have to act in citizens’ and global interest. As media are changing irreversibly, limitations of existing media regulations for ordering public communication based on the earlier realities are becoming evident. The basis of earlier regulations was the media whose types never coalesced with respect to technology, main tasks and public expectation. However in “united states of media” the ground reality is changing apace.

An umbrella definition of media is warranted at this juncture to facilitate operational efficiency of media firms in a liberalised media environment and to serve public and national interest. The chance is no less that in search of redefinition the media horizon may be enlarged to such diverse activities that the utilitarian purpose may be lost from sight. In all probability, in such cases the redefined term may not be more than loose assemblage denoting diverse informational products or services.

One such effort at redefining media considered a shift from mass media to all information related industries. This definition includes content providers such as traditional newspapers as well as retailers, banks and travel agencies; hardware providers such as computer producers, network suppliers; and service providers like
access providers to the internet, packagers etc. and so forth.

This tendency may be partially true following Marshall McLuhan’s “medium is the message” saying. This extension of media horizon is partly true in the context of looking to media as an institution. Yet, to include such diverse activities and instruments within the umbrella term media, an analysis of media traits and the presence or absence of such traits in each of the activities or institutions is undertaken.

First trait, utilising communication instruments is value neutral. Whoever owns the instruments may create media products or services. In the changing environment of technology many of the instruments are capable of being utilised for combining so far separately existing communication modes into a multimedia product or service experience. Various technologies are increasingly dictating commonness in the sphere of information sourcing and processing for various segments of the industry.

Formatting and packaging is giving separate look to media-type specific products. The distribution enhances the scope of content reaching to more people by creating more customer segments. Thus any media operator having the power in content would normally try to deliver the content in separate formats and packages utilising various communication instruments. Hence separation of media only for different delivery instruments would prove to be inviting inefficiency in regulating the converging industry. Demolishing barriers would also help strategy and operational efficiency in the part of more and more operators.

Thus the new definition of media may be tried keeping communication instrument as a feature but not according it the status of overarching component. This leads us to another important component - message which provides the value for media with reference to the public and private needs.

Message is the utilitarian component of media. It is assumed that people should be provided with important information in relevant areas of the society such as politics, sports, economy, culture, religion, science, technology and so on. Message refers to the content, actual information received by the user ultimately. It includes news, views, advertising, entertainment programmes and numerical data too. While the message in single medium may vary addressing different target groups, the same content may be addressed to target groups through different media as a matter of expediency.

Even in the same medium efforts to customise the message through variations and format changes are evident. On the other hand use of same message by products in various media under control of the same operator with or without format change is also frequent. Therefore a rethought on the saying “medium is the message” is necessitated.

An irreversible trend of content ascending in importance is discernible. “Content is the king” - this comment can safely be extended now as “the content which is more and more utilitarian for expanding population of users is the king of all media where it resides”. This brings into sharp focus the criticality of the message component in defining media and the shift of stress from instruments to message. The new qualities of message originating in the lap of convergence are acquiring importance as are creating additional user values. The convergence of telecom and broadcast technologies, printing and satellite technologies, broadcast and Net technologies are not only breaking the limitations of one way communication but for the first time truly democratising the message creation and presentation.

Digital technology in all media types is going to help users choosing content of their likings and even creating own content packages too. Virtually the time of soft presentation is arriving when customisation would be at its extreme. So the mass media is proceeding to change into interactive niche media. Niches may be small or big, the signs in the industry show. Governments, therefore have to consider regulations on content which can clearly fix onus for the content irrespective of type of communication instruments used to deliver the same. It warrants defining media in such a way that the industry, the governments and international organisations have a consensus on the issue. The scope of the definition should be such that the message aspect is reflected without any ambiguity.

Message is for the audience. Ideally they are unlimited. In reality the traditional media have diseconomies in scale of operation depending on the audience, advertising revenue and technology platform mismatch. As the traditional media are acquiring their new media avatars (incarnations) and utilising technologies for interactivity, targeting audience becomes crucial for success. Right targeting in search of audience value creation is reflected in several areas - the message sourcing and processing,
tuning delivery to audience need, formatting for audience segments and so on. Hence media audience targeting is shifting from general to niche, where unique value creation can ensure success, so crucial for such a heavy investment industry. The diversification of media product portfolio by operators reflects the same. Governments can not remain disinterested to such changes as niching and segmenting complicate the media content market. The public service inherent in media institution is bound to suffer in such cases. The government has the logic to regulate distribution for enforcing a state of balance under such cases. Where to regulate and where not would be justified when the limit of the media is clearly demarcated.

On the basis of the above discussion, an idea emerges about the media. Communication instrument is not the media but it is the vehicle used by the media. Message enlivens the communication instrument and is transformed in the process of reaching a real target audience. An effort to assess the value for claims of diverse activities and institutions to be considered as media may be undertaken on the basis of discussion on various aspects of these components.

Table 1.1: Presentation of Tasks in Media and Their Position in Diverse Activities Claiming as Media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Service</th>
<th>Sourcing</th>
<th>Processing Content</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Newspaper/Magazine/Book</td>
<td>Discovering interesting stories/news</td>
<td>Collection, selection, editing &amp; printing preparation</td>
<td>Innumerable hard copies Distributed as commodity</td>
<td>Targeted readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line Newspaper</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Formatting customised newspapers, Transferring to Net</td>
<td>Serfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Channel</td>
<td>&quot; entertainment programmes&quot;</td>
<td>Collection, selection, editing &amp; audio version preparation</td>
<td>Wave transmission to receiver sets</td>
<td>Programme-time bound listeners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web Radio</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Transferring to Net</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listening serfers at will</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Channel</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Collection, Selection, Editing &amp; Audio-video version preparation</td>
<td>Terrestrial, Satellite, Cable, DTH etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Programme-time bound viewers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web TV</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Transferred to Net</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Serfing Viewers at will</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie / Video</td>
<td>Creating stories of appeal</td>
<td>Scripting, shooting &amp; editing, Master copy preparation</td>
<td>Numerous hard copies on reel or disc</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Viewer at exhibition venue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassette/CDs</td>
<td>Creating songs, dramas, skit, discussion etc. for entertainment mainly</td>
<td>Scripting, Arranging, editing &amp; Master copy Preparation</td>
<td>Numerous cassettes/CDs available through retailers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listeners and viewers at will</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Discovering interesting information</td>
<td>Developing site, Formatting Content editing, updating.</td>
<td>Positioning in Net</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Serfers at will</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailers/ Bank / travel agency</td>
<td>Information providing, commodity/ service provision</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Display, transaction, supply, service</td>
<td>Public at large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware &amp; software providers</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Supply to media operators etc.</td>
<td>Media firms etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet service providers</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Facilitating navigation through sites</td>
<td>Serfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packagers</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Packaging content for delivery</td>
<td>Media firms etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table it is evident that retailer, travel agency, bank, hardware and software providers, packagers and ISPs may deal with information but content processing, the key to media is absent in their activities. In the system of media starting from information sourcing through content processing to delivery in the form of media-specific message to the target audience, the transformation of information into knowledge for the public in steps is clear. Knowledge lodges in man and man is the way to have it. Media mediate human experience sharing and facilitate knowledge transfer. For these acts, multiple instruments are used from sourcing to delivery stage. So in the system, the instruments basically are the support devices. “Social construction of reality” in news, entertainment and views that the media incorporate in message is search of it’s raison-d-etre. The effort of the media to reach the audience in their terms is the zeitgeist of this period.

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Considering all these media may be envisaged as an institution for transforming information into knowledge for the audience by creation and enlargement of message through instruments of process and delivery.

In this effort to define the media, the contradiction among different technical media (which are based on difference in instruments mainly) as seen in traditional division is resolved. The solution is emerging through acceptance of criticality of the message component, which has been undervalued earlier for defining purpose.

Dynamism in society depends much on information exchange, opinion formation and knowledge development and sharing. Quantum jump in media content has been instrumental to bring one way communication to its peak. The qualitative change to interactivity is gradually eliminating the loss in message content in one way flow. The message would never be the same again as the scope of enlargement is going to be in-built in content programming. The effort in defining media accepted this critical component.

The message enlargement continues from the stage of content processing, formatting, delivery to consumption. As technology is mediating in all these stages and determines media product or service packaging to a great extent, the definition takes cognisance of the same.

The definition looks to media as an institution rather than communication instruments. Every institution in the society evolves with purpose. The evolution of media in the quest of creation and spread of knowledge from apparently disparate binary bits or bits of information attests its institutionalisation. David Bollier and Charles M. Firestone opine that new media technologies are creating a knowledge hierarchy. To them, datum is the elemental form of knowledge. A step up is information, where data are organised and defined in some intangible fashion. True knowledge emerges when information is interpreted and synthesised, reflecting certain values. Wisdom is the summit. It is the knowledge that carries spiritually profound, transhistorical insight.

It is the evolutionary urge of media that dictated media technology upgradation over many centuries. Each time upgraded technology necessitated new organisational structure. However the “social construction of reality” remains in the domain of social wisdom manifest in activities of information gathering and content creation. As an all

7. Pavlik J.V. quoted them in P. 314 of New Media Technology Cultural And Commercial Perspectives.
pervasive institution the media is at the centrestage of state attention. The question of language vehicle (especially for people of minority languages worldwide) and the cultural preference in content (when transborder broadcasts have the technological capability to homogenise with bias towards the dominating culture) are two such issues to be dealt by states. The proposed definition is the recognition of this reality too.

Within the scope of this definition, a common media regulation can be enforced by states for various media forms. The confusion of assigning media status to many support industry and information sector activities such as banking would be over. In an unified media regulatory regime the prospect of media products will be more taking scope of simplified procedures and integrative impulse. Governments can face the challenge of changing media situation in a better way as several problems pertaining to many media are accepted as different problems within the same legal provision.

The definition, while solving many problems arising out of new developments in information sector, hints at the group of core activities woven around the social existence in the backdrop of state, culture and economy. The conventions for execution of core activities followed in media firms accord media the status of an institution. These conventions span over all thinking and actions that facilitate knowledge building from bits of information. Potentially information knows no limit but it is limited by the reality of limited capability of human resource to sieve out the angle of interest within it as well as by the decision of the firm to put its scarce resource in few chosen information areas. Within this limit, firms try to spell success by discovering audience match.

Therefore, the definition offers a frame of reference for understanding the media in action too.

1.4 Review Of Media Performance Research Trend

Analysis of the research trend in the field of media performance shows two aspects. First aspect is the meaning of media performance. It is seen that the meaning changes as the context and the frame of research change.

This media performance perception influences second aspect - the search for method and parameters of media performance.

Denis Mcquail tried to look into the research tradition in media performance. He
wrote about a tradition of communication theory and research woven around the public interest onus of communication media, from newspapers to electronic data services. The research tradition (identified as media performance assessment) is a broad and loosely constructed one. 8

Media performance assessment can mean any of the following:
1. The self assessment by the industry with regard to economic, product or audience goals;
2. Evaluation of working of media policies of governments;
3. Critical evaluation of many possible aspects or cases of the work of media; 9
4. Evaluation of the success of campaigns in media with reference to the aim.

Logically, methods and parameters for each of the assessments would vary and cannot suit for all purposes. A review of the major approaches and traditions by Denis Mcquail is presented here in tabular form which explains main elements of chosen options. (Table - 1.2 in next page)

Denis Mcquail found those traditions of enquiry inadequate to assess performance of media vis-a-vis public interest. To him 'media performance assessment' is a hybrid of the social responsibility and the empiricist schools of criticism. It compounds two elements 'administrative' (i.e. media organisational) and the 'critical' which were opposite to each other as Lazarsfeld showed in 1941. Denis Mcquail tried to forge a 'union' by linking a set of normative principles with a set of research procedures.

The origin of social responsibility tradition can be traced back to the American Commission on Freedom of the Press (Hutchinson 1947). The commission sought to frame criteria of quality of performance appropriate to 'socially responsible' print media. Though the commission did not embark on empirical work, it inspired many empirical studies later on performance assessment. 'Administrative Critical Research', as Mcquail prefers to call this 'union' assess media in 'the public interest'. This research is designed to meet the typical need of public policy debate, formulation and evaluation. But its basic premise of public interest demands a second thought in the changing media environment.

Another trend in media performance research looks at financial performance of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Ethics</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Bread Criteria</th>
<th>Basic Premise</th>
<th>Unity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Research</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Assessing on performance and citizen</td>
<td>Preventive measures of structure</td>
<td>Negativity towards media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Cost-Benefit Analytical</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Assessing on performance and citizen</td>
<td>Preventive measures of structure</td>
<td>Negativity towards media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Media Cultural</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Assessing on performance and citizen</td>
<td>Preventive measures of structure</td>
<td>Negativity towards media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marxian - Critical</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Assessing on performance and citizen</td>
<td>Preventive measures of structure</td>
<td>Negativity towards media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Media Effect</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Assessing on performance and citizen</td>
<td>Preventive measures of structure</td>
<td>Negativity towards media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Organizational</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Assessing on performance and citizen</td>
<td>Preventive measures of structure</td>
<td>Negativity towards media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2: Media Performance Assessment Research Traditions
communication only. It has only been in recent years that a more specialised scholarly and applied literature on the financial performance and capital markets for media companies has developed.\textsuperscript{10} Methods for analysing media company performance and value was the area of study of Wolpert and Wolpert.\textsuperscript{11} Since 1980s, as a sequel to growing commercialisation of media system worldwide, the communication performance assessment in economic terms has become a craze for media organisations. The tangible and intangible worth of content and package and the contribution of creativity in endearing the media product or service to audience have received low status than the advertising. The result is more stress on packaging rather than the quality of content. The preponderance of sex, violence and crime in all sorts of media content shows how the media organisations raise business by disserving the public interest and pampering the basic instinct.

The changing media market place is marked by profound commercial and cultural risks for owners, audience and the state. Media business forecasting method, with tools from the financial analysis is trying to predict prospect of media industry by analysing the past performance. Kendrick Noble (1994) suggested that reliable forecast for media industry would be possible, at least under limited circumstances. In developing a methodology for conducting business forecast for the media industry, he based his study on accurate historical time-series data. He predicted that any forecast would be valid for not more than one third of the time frame of the original data. He examined the data for a variety of media and communication fields including newspapers, magazines, cable TV and telephony for much of the twentieth century. Noble took help of growth curves based on mathematical models for describing growth rates among biological organisms. He opined that Logistic (Pearl) and Gompertz growth curves are effective for forecasting new media performance.\textsuperscript{12}

Others have used such Biological models in describing media growth patterns, including studies of media specialisation and niche publishing. However this performance prediction takes less cognisance of message. As a parameter of performance, message is very important. Taking it as a constant is denying the media reality of dynamism of content with change in demography and medium.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, P.92.
\textsuperscript{12} Pavlik J.V, New Media Technology Cultural and Commercial Perspectives, P.380, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1996.
Review of research in India from 1980 onwards shows that media performance research were few. Method wise the researches were constrained mostly by the limitations of content analysis, survey and historical method. Very few doctoral studies took any aspect of media performance as topic. D.V. Jahagirdar (1982) worked on economics of newspaper industry in Vidarbha since 1960. The study took economic performance and growth of the newspaper industry in Nagpur region of Maharashtra into consideration and outlined its’ main trends. An overview of the newspaper industry in Assam since 1947 was observed by K.C. Roy (1984). It was a critical study. During this period B. Kalita (1989) studied the Assam Tribune, the foremost English daily from the North Eastern India in historical perspective from 1939. The study looked into the performance of the newspaper in the socio-political context during the period through the phases in the growth of the newspaper.

However the changes that swept the Indian media industry initially from the beginning of 1980 (Print industry started modernising rapidly in all sense) and performance of media amidst such changes were not attracting Indian media scholars mostly. During that period newspapers tended increasingly to become readers’ papers from the editor’s paper that most of the Indian dailies had been earlier.

Tara S. Nair (1995) observed “... No mechanism exists in India to systematically record data relating to the press sector. This has rendered the industry some what ‘dubious’, a situation which has so far helped it evade any kind of social and economic auditing. The changes, that have come over the press scene in the country due to advent of new technologies, growth in the advertising industry, sudden spurt in the growth of multiple media institutions and systems, and above all the structural changes in the overall economic scenario demand more focussed studies on the media industry in the Indian context.”

Nair’s observation at the end of her doctoral study for understanding the growth, performance and ownership of the modern Indian press shows the secretive nature of media in general and the press in particular in India. However changes in the industry are forcing openness which is bound to result into better understanding of media performance in the new century. H.K. Meriswami’s doctoral study (1998-99) on credibil

ity of Indian Press tried to understand the credibility of press media as social institution and communication channel. However, the methodological limitation restricted the outcome.

Public service broadcasters of India—both All India Radio and Doordarshan started changing for better coverage in news, entertainment and better prospect in media commercialisation. Indian media industry went for a big leap forward with opening of Indian sky to satellite channels. As the print media started losing on immediacy ground and advertisement revenue but gaining on audience share the media field started hotting up. Though scholarly research mostly could not catch the essence of change, the industry itself did not waste time in understanding changes and organising the industry efficiently to accept the challenge of deregulation, liberalisation and opening up of Indian economy.

The FICCI - Arthur Anderson report comments, “An industry only a decade old boasts connectivity of approximately 24 million viewers and is expected to reach over 46 million viewers by the end of the year 2000. With ‘Information Technology’ the buzzword of the century, the country’s dream of cabling the nation could be an attainable goal. Add to this the potential advertisement revenues and its unique position to facilitate ‘convergence’ and we may be looking at an industry with tremendous potential.”

The need for performance parameters of the media products and services which would be accepted by one and all without much doubt drew the organisations and media users together to commission industry researches for establishing clear cut audience measurement procedures.

Joint Industry body (JIB) - an association of all major advertising agencies represented by AAA of I, the Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA), and major broadcasters including Doordarshan went for financing a project to be worked out by IMRB - Nielsen for reliable TV audience measurement (1997). However the delay of the project gave ORG - MARG the opportunity to build on its People Meter, that went operational in April 1995. Its People Meter Division, Indian National Television Audience Measurement (INTAM) is covering all TV homes since August’ 97. Television Audience Meas

urement (TAM) of IMRB - Nielsen has been covering all TV house holds by April 1999. Basically their reliability depend of People Meter systems and statistical utility in prediciting ratings for a market and the aggregate. This aspect remains to be examined. Meanwhile both systems have helped media planning to a great extent by providing data on terrestrial, cable and satellite TV viewership.

While JIB was thinking about combined viewership rating system (1995), National Readership Studies Council was established by AAAI, Indian Newspaper Society (INS) and Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) with specific purpose to provide the Indian marketing and advertising Industry an accurate, reliable and credible database for media planning and marketing, and development of products and brands (1995). NRS i.e. National Readership Survey, with reliable methodology and acceptance of dynamics of audience having integrated media habit has become a valid source for understanding audience reach and quality. The NRS round 2000 1+2, by presenting demographics of rural India and urban India, the life-style of Indians with selected product usage indicators, readership, TV ownership, channel penetration, channel shares, TV- Radio- Cinema- Internet viewship from a representative and adequate sample size have rightly reflected the convergence and integration in the media industry from the audience angle.

The SESAME crosstab software with the capability of arriving at parameters, which NRSC has made available for subscribers has improved the capacity of NRS to be utilised for audience targeting by media products (2000).

The review of working of India's public service broadcasting corporation, Prasar Bharati by Shunu Sen Committee (2000) provided a stimulating insight about performance orientation in media organisation. The report framed the mission of the
broadcaster as "Prasar Bharati will aim to provide, in the most efficient manner possible, media content of the highest quality that will empower and enlighten the citizens of India, and audiences outside the country, through original and relevant programmes which inform, educate and entertain whilst ensuring a sizeable audience and reach". 17

Thus the media industry in India, sensing the convergence and integrationist tendency in various components of the market has been active to evolve performance yardsticks in some areas of crucial importance. The research agencies are striving hard. However empirical research is still few and far between. For the media industry and the state, who would be users of the information beside the advertising and marketing industry, the quality of fact and span of information horizon are important. Appropriate research designs to bring out and track performance parameters in changing media in changing socio-cultural-economic context, and in emerging techno-organisational context are yet to be developed.

1.5 IDENTIFYING GREY AREAS IN MEDIA PERFORMANCE RESEARCH

The need for understanding performance parameters of the media is felt by everyone. But how far the research methods adopted during a period of marked difference in media reality than which is unfurling now would be capable to aid in the pursuit is doubtful. As methods evolve in the quest for understanding the field, these are fashioned by the realistic demands of the field. Therefore, prior to search for methodological propriety, the changing nature of the field and its implication on research should be well comprehended.

Media now is an all pervasive institution that transforms information into knowledge for the audience. Anthony Smith opines that the advance of information technology is redefining the society globally as it forces redefining media. He argues that just as Gutenberg's invention of movable type five centuries ago coincided with the rise of modern nation state, the digital revolution is transforming the concept of nationhood. 18 With digitisation there emerged a new unit of knowledge. Digitisation

heralded new way of knowing things and also of organising both physical and intellectual processes. It insisted upon procedural rather than inspirational thinking. “Television today, extended by video recorders, cable, satellite, and teletext, has become the principal instruments of our citizenship .... But it is the graveyard of subtlety, the executioner of taste, the mangler of passion”Anthony Smith comments.

The emergence of virtual communities also has important implications for traditional media and media support institutions such as public relations or advertising. The nature of traditional media retards the process of mobilizing a public from latent to aware stage. The virtual public can be mobilized electronically around an issue raised by a single computer user in a matter of minutes or even seconds. Further more than six thousand latent, virtual publics already exist in the form of user groups, bulletin boards and newsnets, which exist on a variety of topics and subjects ranging from the environment to health care. Along with this, the availability of content of traditional media in Net in a format which suits the selection, choice and control need of the public in real time and space is bound to alter the public irrevocably. The Integrated habit of media experiencing by the public where newspaper guides for TV programmes and radio programmes, or listening to radio news or viewing the TV news creates an interest to look into next days newspaper for elaborate coverage, in conjunction with the new media opportunities calls for a new perception about the public and the public interest. In the new media, the virtual public have the control of what they want to see and when. In traditional media the real public is yet to experience a high degree of interactivity. And the same people may double up as public for both media. This is exactly happening. Transborder media penetration into homes with substantial purchasing capacity is also influencing the taste, preference and outlook of the public. Under such circumstances public interest, which never had been a totally uniform concept is undergoing metamorphosis internationally and raises “issues of order and culture, equality of access, and issues of freedom and democracy”. As a result of change in context of media operation new issues like bridging information

20. Pavlik J. V., New Media Technology Cultural and Commercial Perspectives, P. 314.
21. Ibid.
and cultural gaps, securing political involvement, maintaining creativity, ensuring independence and protecting diversity are overshadowing issues of yester years like universal provision of basic services, mass manipulation, mass culture etc. Under such circumstances the states have to rewrite regulations but ultimately the media organisations in the liberalised era will be bound to be more free to decide the content in interaction with the audience. Therefore, the public interest would ultimately boil down to a simple formula of audience preference. The trend from mass communicators 'guess of and ordaining the content to mass communicators being ordered for audience-tailored content where they would increasingly become initiators of debates or the formatting people for presenting issues raised by individuals is seen world wide. The risk of such a huge investment business is bound to compel owners and managers to search for methods which can spell out audience in terms of their taste, liking, preference, private needs and public demands. As audience segmentation is a natural outcome of this and more media power would mean clutch over more segments irrespective of delivery mode, the public interest aspect in the new avatar will get its due place as a performance parameter for product and media organisation.

This is an area where the research is still speculative in nature mostly. The quality statements on public interest are mostly individual or group perceptions based on discovery of tendency in content through analyzing frequency of presence of value-loaded words or the time or space devoted to specific items. The government regulations based on perceived threats to public interest have experienced negative consequences through increase in forbidden content mostly. A reason of failure of such regulations may be found in failure of research efforts to understand problems with reasons of their origin and proliferation. The other reason may be failure of weighing the advantage against disadvantage in terms of serving the interest vis a vis the public expenses involved. Another possible reason may be lack of appreciation of alternatives to achieve the same goal and their efficiency consideration. These originate in failure to employ appropriate research methods and machinery.

In the new era, the state has a graver challenge to face on issues of security,
culture and prosperity. An intelligent research orientation of law making institutions to ensure minimum regulations with maximum return for the state is the need of democratic countries.

Therefore the public interest component in media performance warrants liberation from the restrictive effect of the research traditions which won't be able to sense the changed media. "We can no longer rely so much on research into the content of main national media channels to tell us about the quality of informational and cultural experience in a society, looked at from the point of view of the public interest. The problem has become, first of all, one of scale and complexity; secondly one of assigning relative significance to the multiplicity of media supply." 22

The technology and politics of distribution have grown in importance for understanding media performance, reason being the existence of public interest only in the content which can ultimately be able to reach the public. Hence delivery becomes the hallmark of any media product in quest of audience. In essence, performance assessment without an assessment of delivery capability of any media organisation would fail to provide a fair picture of its product performance and organisational power. So far this component has been neglected in assessment of performance, taking as if it is constant. With signs that whatever may be the media type, delivery is a variable for success, the research is bound to cognize it. It shows that the study of media performance should enter the domain of physics application and behavioural science to some extent and find out appropriate methods for the same. The understanding of importance of bandwidth in distribution, of eye ball movement in assessing viewer patronage and of the colour chemistry in understanding design implications on audience are the areas which demand attention of media performance research.

The multiplication of radio, TV, Websites, cassettes, CDs and print products, often crossing national borders is eroding domination of few national media in households. The sharing of media time among various media was never so important.

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a factor for most of the organisations. “Much media content will still consist largely of packaged products of news, information, entertainment, and advertising manufactured by highly centralised media organisations, but tomorrow’s media will increasingly target in real time the demands, tastes, and preferences of even more specialised niche audiences spread over diverse geographic regions. The new media system will not rigidly divide along the traditional lines of delivery such as print, broadcast, and cable...”, 23 observes John V. Pavlik.

New ways of production and delivery-reception have forced the mass distribution model out dated. Denis Mcquail opines, “A further implication of change is that it makes less sense to treat one medium at a time, except for purposes of a particular case study. Multi media analysis of content and reception is now needed more than ever.”24

The methods in use till now are suited to one medium or the other. Performance research tradition, originating in the print culture, where “the ways of thinking about research are shaped by rational informational models appropriate to ‘linear’ print media” is not transformed yet to reply performance questions of audiovisual media or non-linear hypertext communication in digital media. This demands different methods of analysis. ......Without progress on this performance assessment will, increasingly, have a ritual character and be irrelevant to key features of public experience.”25

Multi Media performance analysis should start from the reality of media experience. The contexts of changing structure and audience reception irrespective of media types should be perceived properly as these are the defining conditions for emergence and continuation of appropriate message functions.

This is more so as the media organisations, understanding commonness of many main tasks, are expanding in to many media with different or differentiated products and utilising the power achieved from earlier media operations. Further, media organisations are bound to exploit products crossing frontiers as that would only ensure

23. Pavlik J. V., New Media Technology Cultural and Commercial Perspectives, P. 314.
utilisation of distribution capacity optimally and economic prospect meaningfully. As a result, the content homogenisation across media types and frontiers is a possibility. The media performance research has to take account of this media industry reality. Till now “it has also often been unduly directed, or limited, by what conventional methods of media research (especially content analysis) allow.”

The performance research felt the crippling effect of an unnatural division between the economic or industry research and the communication research so long. The logic of information economics would hopefully change this unnatural division rooted probably in the notion of superiority nurtured by researchers of each field. The media performance research should look at confluence of both economic and communication performance.

Bruce M. Owen observed that the survival of the fittest in the media world may not be solely determined by the technological superiority. Economics and public policy are two determining factors for the outcome. Media economics judges the financial performance on the basis of efficiency of resource mobilisation, allocation and turnover; on the basis of equity-sharing of prospect by stakeholders; and on the basis of externalities created for the society and the state going beyond the audience. The public policy with regard to resource procurement, allocation, equity norm and the societal advantage or disadvantage needs to be framed on the basis of performance understanding. The externality aspect of economic performance is the link where the societal interest meets the organisational interest, whether intended or not in the operation of the media product of the organisation. The inbuilt societal aspects of media products govern the communication package offered by each product. While a common orientation in package is discernible in same category of products, the fine tuning of special points in content and presentation ensures survival and growth of socially befitting media products.

This meeting ground of communication and economic performance needs to be

discovered in all details through performance research. This is still now a grey area breaking which requires an approach that accommodates methods to decipher performance indicators from both sides and their interface. It is normally believed in media circles that the public interest and media business interest are conflicting. But in this period of audience targeting in niches, the public for each media product is getting increasingly defined and showing a pro-active role in message reception and participating in message transformation. This reality should be reflected in media performance research.

Denis Mcquail presented the difference between the old and the new media assessment model which helps in comprehension of the changing performance assessment contexts and needs.

OLD MODEL

Limited Supply ------Homogeneous content------Passive------Undifferentiated
mass reception /
audience effect

NEW MODEL

Many different------ Diverse channels--------Fragmented-----Varied
sources and contents and active and unpredictable
audience/ able reception/
users effect

The new model shows that the area of media performance inquiry is changing. The need for regulating monopoly or enforcing presence of several media products to ensure multiple voice has gone down in priority for the government as taking the scope of new technology, capital accumulation and financing, many organisations have come up or diversified into different types of media. On the otherside, multitude of content cannot be monitored by the state effectively. The content would also tend to become culturally and demographically fashioned rather than by the state system. So the government intervention through policy formulation and enforcement would partially yield place for media industry's self regulation. The audience would demand
tailor made programmes and even interact for content transformation. The media firms, under such conditions have to deliver or perish.

Hence in the new era, media performance research is bound to shift the balance from state to industry and organisations. Individual products from any media organisation would basically be seen as content performance for fragmented and active audience. Media product portfolio of a firm would normally have more products in a bid to optimally use resources of sourcing, content processing, production and distribution. The market structure and the organisational structure would come into sharp focus as influencing and shaping factors.

It is obvious that the old methods won't be able to reply performance related research questions properly. However how the content in different media can be compared on same or comparable parameter? Would it utilise genre separation with formatting as medium specific means to reach more audience with same or like content as the basis of comparison? Would it assess the delivery performance from medium specific reach? As the integrating trend in many main tasks of media irrespective of medium is really opening the possibility of an unified performance assessment to a great extent, the methods of observation, analysis and interpretation may emerge on common basis.

Designing of performance indicators at this juncture, calls for creativity as well as wisdom from media industry managers. Many of the problems, as are seen earlier, may be approached qualitatively through multiple methods while for many problems quantitative assessment is a distinct possibility. The challenge lies in creating a media assessment regime which would manoeuvre both to provide a dependable instrument to the media industry and the regulatory authority.

1.6 RATIONALE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study is a logical out come of the gaps found out in media performance assessment, as narrated earlier. This is an effort to explore performance parameters at the time of great media changes-both qualitative and quantitative. Such changes have called for fine tuning of media performance research to the need of the industry
and the state and incorporation of emerging reality within the ambit of research.

The logic for choosing Calcutta media industry as the field for exploring parameters of Media Performance is a part of the rationale of the study. The wind of change that is blowing in the media world in the area of technology and economic liberalisation has been slow yet present in Calcutta, the oldest media centre of India from the beginning of 1980s. By the midnineties, the velocity increased to a great extent. Over last three years, it has taken the proportion of a storm in which the media industry in Calcutta is changing like anything.

The press, the oldest constituent of Calcutta media (from 1780) has started its move towards corporatisation in structure and expanding online too. For the first time, Media Organisations (MO) rooted in Calcutta are establishing production centres in other places of West Bengal and Assam for exploring the untapped audience and trade advertisers. On the other hand, English dailies of national stature, hitherto published mainly from New Delhi, the capital of India have started production centres in Calcutta in a bid to compete for the eastern and north-eastern pie with Calcutta English dailies. The multilingual press of Calcutta (Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi as well as two small circulation Chinese niche dailies beside many magazines) beside English press is unmatched in India, and most probably in the world too. Many of these language press products have their internet editions too. Few of the originally press MOs have ventured into electronic media and are multi product companies.

Radio in Calcutta is the oldest in the country and a fore runner in radio experiments. FM radio and cable radio are established as popular media in Calcutta. This is a segment where public sector and private enterprises are competing. Number of radio channels are operating from Calcutta. TV medium in Calcutta has seen proliferation of channels at the behest of local entrepreneurs, media tycoons from other parts of India and multi national media companies, beside the exclusive Bengali channel from DoorDarshan. Few are venturing into Web TV too.

Calcutta has originating MOs who are operating in cassette, signal providing, cable radio and other media interests. The film segment is very old and a decadent one, while Web media is the burgeoning sector in the industry. Virtually all
MOs are looking for share in this sector with customised services, while first generation media operators are venturing into this segment.

Calcutta, always being in the forefront of public awareness and public movement, is seen as a city of public consciousness in India. Calcutta has witnessed path breaking experiments in journalism and media management, which are emulated widely in India.

With its supporting border spanning organisations (BSO) such as programme producers, hot shops, news agencies, advertising and distribution agencies Calcutta media industry is the miniature of a full-fledged media horizon under the spell of integration and convergence. Therefore for understanding media performance, the Calcutta media industry seems to be ideal and representative. Denis Mcquail commented on case study in media performance research as follows:

It may now be time to discriminate in favour of case studies. Broad generalisation, like universal attention to media supply, is an increasingly unrealistic goal, given the scale of task and the multiplicity of media experience. Only case studies can deal with the complexities involved in looking at structure, content and audience together.  

As the study is mainly based on experience survey of media managers, their insight is of critical importance. As the Calcutta media industry is witness to the dynamism in the field and is rich in experiments, it may be assumed that the media managers there would be open to the realities of the changing field and changing perception about how to comprehend media performance. Multiplicity of media experience on their part in such a hot bed of media, in all probability, would be conducive in demarcating the contour of media performance on the part of MOs and the industry.

Present study, taking cue from media reality, is trying to understand which parameters are perceived by media managers as of great importance in media performance. No separation among media is assumed for the purpose of experience survey as it is the wisdom of media managers which is in right position to reply.

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whether such dividing lines are still serving industry purpose. So the study, avoiding media products in different media as units of probe, has taken professional managers of MOs for the experience survey. As MOs of stature are diversifying product range within and across media types, it is within the capacity of media managers to understand what type of parameters they need for performance assessment. Once the Media Performance (MF) researchers get the clue, they would be in a position to understand whether common yardsticks for assessment needs to be drawn and what would be method for the same. As MF research has to consider the consequences of convergence and integrationist tendency on performance, which acts through altering structure and operation in search of efficiency, the structure level draws attention in the present study. As market forces and government acts along with socio-cultural-demographic background are tried to be responded in MO’s behaviour through manifestation in product and its marketing, the conduct of MOs is important for MF assessment.

Performance per see is content or message performance and economic performance arising out of operation. But only when the reach is ensured, the message can have impact on the public and the prospect of MOs. So, delivery aspect is nonetheless critical in MF.

Economic performance and communication performance are till now looked separately. However, contrary to the traditional thinking these two aspects are complimentary to each other. In the technology savvy media world, continuous pouring of fund on technology acquiring and upgradation ensures progressive message performance. This again ensures plough back of money to the MO. Investment on talent and the knowledge generated by the talent are two important dimensions in media industry as this industry’s prime task is to transform information into knowledge by the time it catches fancy of the audience. Return on investment for a MO would be higher as the return on talent (ratio of knowledge generated versus investment on talent ) increases. The new media environment is already hinting a talent resourcing by MOs with this realisation. In such situation, the study would look into the aspect of economic and communication performance interface.

29. Based on Management Guru Subir Choudhury’s Concept of Return on Talent.
In the prevalent media scenario, communication performance and economic performance - both aspects are to be functional with respect to the role that media is expected to fulfill. Is it not so that the basic functions of informing, educating and entertaining find expression directly in a successful communication package and the successful functioning of package reflects in the good health of the MO? Is it not so that the communication professionals also measure their success through economic yardstick and business managers in MOs ultimately depend on improving communication performance edition after edition of the product in search of an audience market to be sold to advertisers? The study is a look to this inherent integration between the economic and communication performance from the wisdom of the industry.