STUDY DESIGN
Chapter Two

SUB CHAPTER - 1

STUDY DESIGN

2.1. Research Problem

The study in the area of media performance immediately draws attention to aspects which are critically associated with the success or failure of media products and media organisations. These are aspects of interconnection, mutual influence, chain effects and support role which go in fashioning the behaviour of media organisations (MO) and manifest in media products and product related activities. Few of these aspects are of representative nature, such as audience.

For any media product, audience represents the public, a term by which the governments identify members of the society. While governments consider it as an aggregate term, MOs discover their target segments of population in terms of socio-linguistic-demographic-economic status. They cater to them with communication packages which try to satisfy their private and public wants and needs. As they cater satisfactorily, the audience, as a collectivity becomes an asset to transact in economic terms with advertisers who need to reach the same collectivity as purchasers of commodity or users of service. So the audience of media product represents the citizen-consumer duality. Consideration of this duality even leads MO to present content which creates awareness about commodity and service.

The other aspect is of financing the product by the MO. The financing in media includes investment on long term and short term. It daily requires huge sum to keep the production and delivery continuing. Return on investment in media is
dependent on a host of factors including technology. However as the level playing condition in technology arrives, this factor loses importance. So there is a trend of one upmanship in acquiring technology which turns into a factor for enhancing investment. Advertisement and creative thrust in communication package as well as delivery are directly influencing return on investment. The compulsion that every edition must be an improvement over the previous demands that the investment on talents (the creative people with innovative bent of mind) should be given priority. Competition for advertisement booty brings every MO to the marketplace of advertising where all MOs of all media vie for advertisement revenue. In the continuum of competitors, strong are those which can attract the audience excellently through any or all the media. MOs are putting a host of products across media types for becoming automatic choices. Therefore, wooing the audience so that the race is won (reflected in space or time and economic performance) is common for MOs. The extreme ways to win audience are payment to source for coughing up interesting information in one side and free delivery of the product to the audience on the other side.

As the scramble for advertisement pie continues unabatedely, the media functions are undergoing ramifications too. Increasingly media are trying to perfect derivative functions. For example, educative function of newspapers through content is now extending to packaging the content in permanent forms such as books, cassettes and compact discs. Moreover media are becoming classrooms of distant mode. It is the quest for enhancing utility of resources for additional financial gain that scope of derivative functions are being taken.

The other side of this quest is reflected in deliberate efforts to bring down cost in MOs. As media business normally takes a longer time to break even under given conditions, any unfavourable change in the market condition or regulation calls for a shift from deliberate strategy to unintended strategy. Under the rapid
pace of change in media, MOs devote a substantial portion of the organisational energy and time to this aspect. Day to day or even hour to hour implementation of MO’s communication strategy with improvement urge calls for a sound management with adequate control and room for creativity within the MO structure.

The interconnectivity, mutual influence, chain effect and support role of various factors of the media operation therefore needs appraisal to make the case of media performance clear. The present study is an effort for the same.

2.2 Aim

TO STUDY COMMUNICATION PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AS INTEGRATED EXPRESSION OF MEDIA FUNCTIONS IN TERMS OF LINKAGE AMONG STRUCTURE, CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE IN CALCUTTA MEDIA INDUSTRY SETTING.

An explanation of its key terms

The media organisational context of media performance presented at the beginning of this chapter hints at the media industry trend on various aspects which influence, help, shape and manifest in performance. With this forming the backdrop of the study, the aim stated above indicates the purpose for which the study is undertaken.

Performance in media industry (considering the unique characters of media) is the attainment of audience and economic goals for media product or an MO. As the study has a limited purpose of understanding parameters of media performance in MO or its product, this definition of performance suits the purpose. Audience goal of an MO is to reach them with a communication product that satisfies and excites them. The goal is to convert this satisfying relationship into a long term
The goal is to increase the audience share till it remains within the economies of scale. This implication of economic operation on communication operation and the implication of communication operation for economic prospect of the MO demand the study to look on both communication and economic parameters of performance.

The study would try to understand how media functions are being expressed in communication performance and economic performance. The institution of media has four constituencies to serve. Whether it is functional for the owners can be known from economic parameters and the media power it confers on them (as considered by them). The audience may feel satisfied if they are able to get high quality communication product or service at a low cost and with ease. So parameters of communication and delivery can help assessing the functionality of the product for audience. Advertisers would be happy if the MO provides them access to target audience at a low price and with high quality of service. This function of media can be assessed through both communication and financial yardsticks. Lastly media employees’ expectation of good treatment, fair compensation, good working condition, and psychic rewards for their labour are related to the health and organisational culture of the MO. To understand this one has to turn his attention to the structural aspects of the MO and the economic indicators. Therefore only through an integrated approach which observes media function through relevant indicators in communication and economic operation and outcome, the performance assessment would be realistic.

The operational efficiency of an MO depends on two aspects critically. The durable arrangement for performing tasks which includes distribution of authority and onus, reporting relationships, control mechanisms and flexibility for creative works ensures right environment for media operation. This structural aspect is now more and more influenced by the decisions of management to introduce automation.
and networking. The management decisions with regard to product, pricing and response to competitors (collectively known as conduct aspect) set the limit within which the MO can operate and its professionals can apply their creative faculty and innovative ideas. The structure and the conduct therefore have interconnections with the product quality and market reach. Therefore the nature of interconnections among structure, conduct and performance and the linking aspects therein are concern of this study. It can be said that the study, to bring out parameters which influence, shape, express and limit media performance, would look into three levels- the structure, the conduct and the performance.

Objectives

Objective number one: To delineate media market structure including organisational structure pattern prevalent in Calcutta media industry.

Objective number two: To delineate conduct in media organisations in Calcutta media industry.

Objective number three: To observe performance in terms of expression of managerial and operational tasks.

2.3 Nature of the Study

This study is exploratory; it has tried to explore how the media performance is shaped at various levels within the MO in response to the market dynamics under pressure of convergence and integration. It has also tried to understand in qualitative manner the linkage among various levels in the success or failure of media products and consequently of MO. The study has been an attempt to bring out factors and aspects of performance in MOs across media types from relevant survey in Calcutta MOs. The findings may be tested later on in other media industry locations.
2.4 Methodology

The study is formulative in the subject area of media performance. It has followed various methods to explore factors shaping performance and indicators of performance. Such studies for discovery of facts and insights to clarify related concepts and formulating research hypothesis in media performance from the approach stated earlier are absent. This study happens to be a primary stage research in the area.

In consonance to the aim, a flexible research design has been evolved to enable to consider diverse aspects and factors leading to and manifest in communication and economic outcomes in media operation.

A. Sampling Design

Universe: Media industry in Calcutta, oldest media centre in India is the universe. This universe contains numerous media firms operating in separate media types as well as across media types. Latest technologies were introduced and are still being introduced in MOs. Existence of MOs with products within and across media types, presence of boundary spanning organisations and entry of MOs over last few years along with expansion of MOs originating in Calcutta to other places have weighed in the favour of Calcutta media industry’s selection as universe.

Sampling: For the sampling purpose, MOs operating in press, radio and TV were considered as reliable audience patronage figures were available for these only. Among press MOs only the organisations having at least one daily news paper were considered as strategies and operation can be observed in all details in such organisations only.

There were two types of population in the universe which were relevant for understanding objectives mentioned earlier. For objective No. 1 (to delineate media
market structure etc.) all MOs of importance constituted the population. This selection was based on various reports from the industry and the Government. No separate sample was drawn for understanding media market structure as the entire population was required to be studied. However for the purpose of making the study of market structure meaningful only MOs with substantial audience share or patronage were considered. It may be questioned why economic performance was not considered to understand market presence. The researcher avoided the same as several new MOs entered the industry recently who are doing well in audience front but are still unable to garner much advertising revenue. The nature of the industry is such that transforming audience patronage into advertising revenue demands reasonable time. But most of these new entrants have deep pocket and these are competitors to reckon. This is why the audience share or patronage was taken as selection criterion. **Any MO showing more than one percent of audience share or patronage was considered as an MO of reckon in media market in Calcutta.**

For delineating various facets of MOs’ organisational structure and their role in performance, the sampling was done as follows. At the first step MOs were categorised on the basis of audience share and product portfolio position. From each category, adequate representative MOs were selected. However considering the secretive trend of MOs in responding to queries alternatives were kept so that the sampling remained adequate even in case of reluctance on the part of few MOs. In the second step, in response to method of collection of data, chief operating officers (they may be the owner/managing director/director/executive director or chief editor cum publisher etc.) of selected MOs were included as respondents.

**For fulfillment of the objective no. 2** (delineating conduct in media organisations) the same sample MOs were considered. However for understanding few attributes alternative MOs from the same category replaced few original
samples the reason being absence of such attributes in them. Respondents were chief operating officers, programme/news heads and marketing heads. It was ensured that experience survey could be conducted in adequate and representative MOs. In six MOs the researcher observed strategy discussions.

For fulfilling the objective no. 3 (to observe performance in terms of expression of managerial and operational tasks) six organisations were considered where non participant observation was undertaken. Experience survey of media managers in these and many more organisations was conducted. It was ensured that samples were representative and adequate.

B. Observational Design: Industry reports and surveys related to Calcutta media Industry as well as state and central Govt. reports were consulted for part fulfilment of objective no.1. Questionnaire responses were collected from six COOs beside detailed discussions with eight COOs for understanding organisational structure pattern. Prior to this a pretesting of questionnaire with 10% of COO population was undertaken. According to their suggestions the questionnaire was partially modified. COOs were from MOs having products in print or electronic media or in both.

For fulfilment of objective no.2, three separate questionnaires were finalised after pretesting with COOs, News/Programme head and Marketing boss. These were sent to all MOs of reckon (having more than 1% of the audience share). Many MOs pleaded for more time while few refused to divulge managerial and operational experience pleading confidentiality. However adequate responses ensured sampling adequacy and representativeness. In six organisations, over a period of 60 days, the researcher observed conduct from chambers of COOs, news/Programme head and the marketing boss. Schedule was constructed as aid in observing conduct. A schedule was constructed as aid in conducting interviews.
with decision making authorities. Thus multiple sourcing on same issue and non participant observation ensured reliability of information and opinions. (Appendix IV)

For fulfilment of objective no.3, non participant observation was undertaken. An observation schedule was aiding the process. For this objective performance related questions were included in questionnaire and it was pretested too. Interview schedule was also prepared. Moreover, information divulged were tested for reliability from industry reports (Appendix-V).

Therefore the observation design followed was basically experience survey of top level media managers through questionnaire and interview method supplemented with observation and industry reports. Care was taken to ensure pretesting instruments with 10% of the population and operationalising observation through all methods in 30% of MOs of reckon. The employment of this design is justified by nature of the objectives. Triangulation using multiple data sources and multiple methods ensured reliability and validity of the data kept for use.

C. Analytical design

Presenting data: it was done by suitable table, line diagram and other graphical presentations and narratives.

Logical Ordering of data: Here, as per requirement of the study interpretation or explanation or specification has been resorted to.

As the study in basically an experience survey of top most professionals of media industry to understand what they feel about media performance, what they consider as attributes of performance at product and MO levels, how they consider the structure and conduct as shaping causes of outcome, the questionnaires were logically comprising of many open ended questons. It was done not to direct them,
but to bring out the fruit of their experience in the media industry. The industry reports were considered to cross check the validity of their opinions with respect to the outcome of managerial and operational tasks in their organisations.

For such a predominantly qualitative exercise to reach a logical end with regard to formulating media performance factors and parameters, the steps taken by the researcher before resorting to analysis proper were as follow –

A. Clarifying what were really desired from the materials collected.

B. Studying the filled up questionnaires and schedules carefully to eliminate information found inadequate or inappropriate from triangulation.

C. Working out classes and the indicators of the classes. As the respondents used own expressions in questionnaires and interviews they did not fall into neatly arranged classes. So both classes and cues, comments or phrases which could be accepted as equivalent expression were worked out.

D. Fitting data to classes: During this process the quantity of unclassifiable responses were brought down to the minimum by ordering few new indicators as the preliminary classification could not accommodate all relevant data. As a result, the unclassifiable information became too less to affect the conclusion to any important degree.

E. Codifying all answers: To eliminate that not merely impressionistic comments of top professionals served as basis of interpretation, coding of one respondent was tested against that of the same category as well as that of another respondent from the same MO for equivalent questions. In case of contradiction with regard to quantitative information about an MO, the information was tried to be verified from official documents. Contradictory opinions were checked with other sources too.
2.5 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

**Organisational Structure**: It is the durable arrangement in an organisation for performing tasks defined by its strategy. It includes distribution of authority and onus, reporting relationship etc.

**Conduct**: It is policy making and operationalisation with regard to product/service, price and competitors.

**Media Product**: It is an entity in any technological medium that satisfies bundle of cultural, informational and entertainment needs of media audience.

**Boundary Spanning Organisation (BSO)**: The organisation which is not a part of MO but undertakes a part of its tasks on payment of fee or commission etc. It is free to serve as many MOs as possible.

**Media Performance**: It is the achievement of audience and economic goals for a media product and MO. Further it can be defined as the integrated expression of managerial and operational functions in media manifest at the outcome level in communication and economic spheres.

**Media Market**: Group of producers, sellers and buyers involved in exchange centred around product/services in the media industry.

2.6 Broad Areas of Attributes

1.a. **Media Market Structure**.

1.a.1. Number of Producers.

1.a.2. Market Share and Concentration

1.a.3. Concentration of Ownership.
1.a.4. Integration.

1.a.5. Product Diversity.

1.a.6. Barriers to Entry.

1.a.7. Cost Structure

1.a.8. MO Financing Pattern.

1.a.9. Labour

1.a.10. Border Spanning Organisations (BSO)

1.b. Organisational Structure Pattern

1.b.1. Task Span.

1.b.2. Technology Platform.

1.b.3. Ownership Influence.

1.b.4. Authority Sphere.

1.b.5. Empowerment.

1.b.6. Span of Structure

2. Conduct in Media Organisations

2.1 Product Portfolio

2.2. Communication Package Policy.

2.3. BSO Contribution Strategy

2.4. Audience Measurement.
2.5. Product Quality Control Strategy


2.7. Distribution Strategy.


2.10. Task Linkage.

2.11. Promotional Strategy.


3. **Performance as expression of Managerial and Operational Tasks**

3.1. Understanding Audience.

3.2. Communication Package (CP) Creation.

3.3. Operationalisation of CP.

3.4. Product Differentiation.

3.5. Distribution Edge.

3.6. Advertising Edge.

3.7. Understanding Economic Health.
-2.7. **Limitations of the Study**

The study was constrained by certain limitations during field work phase. As a result the findings and conclusions are to be seen within these limitations.

1. The samples are limited to print, radio and TV MOs as these MOs have mostly shown tendency to grow within and crossing their original medium. Further reliable information is possible to be gathered on them to a great extent as these broad segments are organised.

2. The non response from many MOs thwarted collection of more information which might have contributed to a far better understanding of the topic.

3. The extremely busy schedule of COOs, programme/news heads and marketing bosses prevented many of them from responding. Though a total of thirty eight of them interacted on relevant matters, discussions with many more might have provided scope for better understanding of the topic.

4. Respondents wanted assurance of keeping confidential the names of their MOs in findings. As a result their names were kept confidential. Wherever they did not object, the names were incorporated. However the request of anonymity of MOs did not come in the way of bringing out media performance parameters as the study did not concentrate on assessing performance of any particular MO. (the sampling requirement dictated this).

5. The study was undertaken for the period 1997-2000. However for comparison with earlier condition of Calcutta media industry 1995 was taken as the year of comparison. 1995 condition was mentioned where
ever necessary. The collection of data and interviews for seeking opinion of media managers were conducted from 1998 to December 2000. Thus the study has been limited within this time frame.

6. As no pre-set choice could mostly be offered to media managers to ensure gaining from their experience, such absence of choice has a restrictive effect in analysis.

-2.8. Presentation of Report

The report was presented chapter wise. First chapter was devoted to the meaning of media performance and the changing context of media operation. In this chapter review of media performance research world wide was attempted. The rationale of the present study was developed there. Second chapter discussed in details the study design and then presented a description of Calcutta media industry, universe of the study. Third chapter, termed as “Exploration Fruition” presented findings from Calcutta media industry. Here findings were organised in such a manner that these fulfilled three objectives of the study. Fourth chapter, termed as “Exploration to Elaboration” was an effort to elaborate on findings to fulfil the aim of the study. Here a framework of parameters of media performance was arrived at and the linkage among structure, conduct and performance was shown. Fifth chapter was the chapter on conclusion from findings. Here while concluding with an eye towards fulfilment of aim, line diagrams of MO course to success were drawn. From conclusion the researcher proposed two tools for media performance prediction and suggested for further research in the field of media performance. In the sixth chapter abstract of the study was presented. It was followed by appendices and bibliography.
SUB CHAPTER - II

Universe of the Study

Calcutta Media Industry

More Than 300 years ago a city was established in the East by the British. Taking grant from Sabarno Roy Choudhuries of Sakher bazar, Job Charnok, the representative of British East-India Company established Calcutta comprising three villages-Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Dihi Kolkata. The purpose initially was purely commercial, exporting goods from Bengal to the West. Calcutta, being on the river Hooghly near Bay of Bengal and having connection to most of the business centres of Northern and Eastern India by navigable river routes, caught the British fancy immediately. Then Calcutta had population in thousands only.

More than 220 years ago, James Augustus Hickey, a “disgruntled” employee of the Company published two pages of 12 inches by 8 inches full of writings against Company authorities in Calcutta. This weekly publication named the Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser, though shortlived, created an impact on the authority of the company and the English literate people of Calcutta. Hickey by choice of newspaper’s name and by selection of matter to be published provided clues about function of a newspaper. Since then Calcutta never had dearth of newspapers. Press in India 1998 mentioned existence of 1898 newspapers in Calcutta.

First ever Indian language newspaper, the Samachar Darpan in Bengali was printed first in 1818 near Calcutta by Serampore Baptist missionaries. It was for the evangelical purpose that William Carey and Marshman took the effort. It was followed by numerous Bengali newspapers within a short period. Raja Rammohan Roy, the pioneer in Bengal Renaissance took to Bengali Journalism during this period.
First Hindi Newspaper, Udant Martand weekly was started in Calcutta. Calcutta, still now is a flourishing centre for Hindi newspapers. So much so that two more Hindi dailies from two media organisations (which are not originally from Calcutta) are shortly coming out from Calcutta.

Calcutta is the birthplace of Urdu journalism in India. Pandit Harihar Dutt and Lala Sadasukh brought out first Urdu Journal the Jame Juhan Numa from here in 1822. This weekly clashed with the company. Till independence, Urdu Press of Calcutta carried on this anti-British tradition. Now five dailies are coming out from the city.

Calcutta has its long tradition in other language press too. Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib, a leading freedom fighter and a close associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose started a Punjabi daily from Calcutta in 1939. This daily, the Desh Darpan is still published. Another Punjabi daily is in circulation in Calcutta.

Calcutta has Chinese residents in the eastern periphery of the city. They have two dailies published for many years. These Chinese dailies have increased combined circulation by 2700 over last twenty five years. This is, considering their population, a good achievement by the Chinese Press of Calcutta.

The multi language spectrum of Calcutta press is enviable by any standard of linguistic and cultural diversity available in any media industry hub for more than 100 years. However the process of industry development propelled by market forces and journalistic mission has been a comparatively recent phenomenon here. The capital requirement could have been met considering the prosperity that Calcutta enjoyed as the foremost commercial and political centre of India, and the presence of rich trading class for a long time. However the lead for newspapering came from the class of Bengalee intellectuals, who were at the forefront of the protracted struggle against the British. For them media was a weapon for advancing
the cause of the subjugated Indians. On the other hand, the British owned press in Calcutta was led by The Statesman. It had the preparedness for better professional management. However it preferred to lead the English newspapers in India by its impeccable English and journalistic standard. It was a business though the management looked into it as a public interest service first.

The press activities taking the proportion of an industry in Calcutta was first clearly visible only after India won independence (1947). By that time some MOs, by virtue of their long existence with few products were strong enough to lead toward industry development. The mission of journalism had to adjust to the new reality where the British as the enemy did not exist at all. Rather some of the newspapers suddenly found their owners at the helm of affairs of the state of West Bengal. The state was much traumatised as a sequel of the famine (1942-44), the partition of Bengal causing resource shrinkage but burden increase, and flight of capital from Bengal to western part of India mostly. Naturally, the direction of journalism was changing. The decision of British owners to leave India by selling some of the world standard dailies and the consequent activities by jute barons for owning these for media power and pelf got the condition ripe for initiating into industry formation.

In Calcutta, from 1927, radio has been the parallel medium. The broadcast since then never has any adverse impact on newspaper and periodical audience. Rather Calcutta radio centre (All India Radio owned) published their own periodical the Betar Jagat for many years which became very popular and sensitised the radio audience here. All Calcutta newspapers have served the purpose of radio audience through radio programme review tradition.

Radio broadcasting emerged around 1920 with the establishment of stations on the medium wavelength (Frequencies around 550 to 1500 kilohertz known as AM now-a-days). Calcutta, by 1927 had its’ own privately owned radio
station. Govt. of India took over the private transmitter in 1930. Indian Broadcasting Service was formed with two stations in Calcutta and Bombay. In 1936 the public broadcaster was renamed All India Radio. After independence it adopted the name Akashvani, once being mentioned by the noble laureate poet Rabindra Nath Tagore with reference to broadcasting much before India’s independence. AIR, Calcutta has contributed commendably to the cultural life of West Bengal through discovering talents in spoken words, drama, song and literature. It patronised artists in those days when the recognition of an artist remained incomplete without participating in radio programmes. After suffering a massive setback in competition with TV from 1980 to mid nineties, the Calcutta AIR, with its attractive FM service Round the clock has again grown high in popularity. Mark Tully’s cable radio experiment during this period along with few private FM Service providers sharing 25% chunk of AIR FM saw heightened activities in the radio medium in Calcutta.

Recorded music, book publishing and film production units have long been parts of the Calcutta media. Very few units in recorded music segment have substantial turnover. Due to technological changes in this segment of activity and entry of big players, the recorded music segment is witnessing changes in business operation.

Though Calcutta has numerous book publishing concerns, this segment still now is predominantly having tiny units. Few small and fewer medium units cater mainly to the academic and pleasure reading needs of a dwindling Bengali book readers. Few originally newspaper units have diversified to this segment successfully. However the book publishing segment is facing tough competition from units originating outside in areas where growth potential is very high.

The film industry in Bengal with Calcutta as its production centre had a roaring business before partition. With elaborate studio system, a long chain of
distributors spread over entire Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Bihar and Orissa, and the seventh largest linguistic population of the world (Bengalees), the film financiers were enthusiastic about investment in Bengali films. After partition, the market in East Bengal was lost. With better technology and gloss, films from Bombay, Madras and Hyderabad have eroded much of the audience market in Assam, Tripura and even in West Bengal. The small market of Bengali films have made investors cautious and miserly. Little has been done for technological improvement. Studios remain partly equipped, laboratory remains underequipped and circumstances of distribution automatically check the expansion. Sometimes there are efforts to go for Bangladesh-West Bengal joint productions in search of market. The tendency to eke out a living by pandering into popular taste of illiterate and literate population is prevalent.

Television in Calcutta was started by the public service broadcaster, Doordarshan in 1975 with its single channel telecast. Its programmes till 1984 were of few hours duration. The development of TV segment in Calcutta really started from 1984 when the Govt. of India abolished radio and TV licenses. The industry got its much needed push in 1990 when cable networking in Calcutta (coinciding with opening of sky ) presented new business opportunities. Doordarshan started changing its operation with more attention to commercial side. For news and entertainment programmes, several private TV organisations came up. Few print MOs began TV programme production wings. By 1997, two signal providers with much financial might altered the TV segment through controlling the band positioning of channels in Calcutta cable & satellite households. Few channels by local entrepreneurs came up while big media houses from outside started exclusive Bengali channels from Calcutta.

From 1998, Calcutta has been fascinated by the media possibilities of internet. In 1997, only 3 Calcutta dailies went on-line. Since 1998, almost all
dailies with substantial audience base have gone on-line. User specific web sites are mushrooming in the city, with venture capital from MOs, other business and information technology companies. Dot.com seems to be the destination of media for interactivity, customisation and user control. However how many of these investments would be successful is doubtful as it is more hunches than the methodical forecasting that has stimulated jumping into the bandwagon.

The media industry in Calcutta, with so much of dynamism is changing fast. At this juncture, an industry mapping in Calcutta may help the understanding of the universe. For the same MOs with substantial presence in the audience market are considered.

**MEDIA ORGANISATIONS IN CALCUTTA**

Constituent units in Calcutta media can be divided into two groups—originating units of Calcutta, and units originating outside but having production centres and product from Calcutta. Originating units can be divided on the basis of operation centre—whether exclusively Calcutta based or reaching out through other production centres. The table below sums up several aspects of MOs having substantial market presence.

**Table 2.1 : Constituent Units of Calcutta Media (August 2000 A.D.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Unit name</th>
<th>Place of origin</th>
<th>Places of proliferation</th>
<th>Product by No. &amp; Type</th>
<th>Allied Interest</th>
<th>Year of establishment in Cal.</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ananda Bazar Patrika Limited</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Delhi (1950s)</td>
<td>Ananda Bazar Patrika (HD), The Telegraph (ED), Desh (BFN), Ananda Mela (BFN), Ananda Lok (BFN), Saasada (BW), Business World (BW), Probashi Ananda Bazar (B), On-line editions of dailies.</td>
<td>ABP TV-Programme production unit, Book publishing unit.</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Majority stake by A K Sarkar and relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl. No</td>
<td>Unit name</td>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>Places of proliferation</td>
<td>Product by No &amp; Type</td>
<td>Allied Interest</td>
<td>Year of estab/entry in Cal.</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aajkal Publishers Limited</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Asansol (1982) but later discontinued</td>
<td>Aajkal (BD), Sandhya Aajkal (BD), Khela (BFN), Sustha (BM), Safar (BM)</td>
<td>TV News production, Export import pickles etc.</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Bengalese exporter importer and few journalists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Protidin Prokashani Pvt. Ltd.</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Sambad Protidin (BD), Bikaler Protidin (BD), Parmshuno (BM)</td>
<td>Shipping, Iron and steel scrap etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Swapan Sadhan Bose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Media Asia Pvt. Ltd. and Franchisee - Asian Age (Eastern India) Publishers Ltd.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Calcutta and other metros.</td>
<td>Asian Age (ED), On line edition too</td>
<td>HCL Asian Age Dot.com collaboration- Asian Age is the content provider, Brewaries etc.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>M.J.Akbar (Media Asia), Vijay Malia (Franchisee Company) and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ganashakti (P) Ltd. of CPI (M) State Committee W.B.</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Ganashakti (BD), Nandan (JLM), Swadhinata (HW)</td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Political Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl. No</td>
<td>Unit name</td>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>Places of proliferation</td>
<td>Product by No &amp; Type</td>
<td>Allied Interest</td>
<td>Year of estab/entry in Cal.</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sammarg Pvt Ltd</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sammarg (IID)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Gupta, Khattan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vishwamitra Karyalaya</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dainik Vishwamitra (HD)</td>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Mawari Businessman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Swarnaksar Prokashani</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Karnakshetra (BW) Bhraman (BM)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Anupam Adhikary and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Business Standard Limited</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Other metros</td>
<td>Business Standard (ED), Internet edition too.</td>
<td>BS TV-business 1V, Finance etc.</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Kotak Mahindra group company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Hindustan Times Ltd</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Calcutta and some other state capitals.</td>
<td>Hindustan Times (ED), Internet edition too.</td>
<td>Other media, car, cement, sugar etc.</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Birla group company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>All India Radio Calcutta</td>
<td>Calcutta and Mumbai</td>
<td>Calcutta and other cities and towns</td>
<td>Kolkata A channel, Kolkata B channel, Kolkata C channel, Bengali External Broadcast channel, Kolkata FM channel and Kolkata Yuvabani FM channel.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Prasarg Bharati Corporation-Govt of India public service Broadcasting company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Doordarshan Kendra Calcutta</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Calcutta and other cities.</td>
<td>DD-7 (Bengali Regional channel)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Prasarg Bharati Corporation-Govt of India public service Broadcasting company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl. No</td>
<td>Unit name</td>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>Places of proliferation</td>
<td>Product by No. &amp; Type</td>
<td>Allied Interest</td>
<td>Year of estab/entry in Cal.</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>SITI Cable</td>
<td>Hissar/Delhi</td>
<td>Calcutta and other metros.</td>
<td>SITI cable channel (BC), signal provider for cable operators</td>
<td>Other TV channels etc</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Subash Chandra-Rupert Murdoch joint venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Zee Networks Ltd.</td>
<td>Hissar/Delhi</td>
<td>Calcutta and other metros.</td>
<td>Alpha Bangla (BC)</td>
<td>Other TV channels, Amusement Business, distribution and signal provider company</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Subash Chandra-majority stake holder, a company enlisted in the stock market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>RPG Netcom Ltd.</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cable signal provider, cable radio.</td>
<td>Music records, websites, electricity generation and distribution etc.</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>R P Goenka’s family are major stake holders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. Abbreviations used B = Bengali, C = channel, D = Daily newspaper, E = English, FN = Fortnightly, H = Hindi, M = Monthly, W = Weekly.

2. Serial no. 13 and 14 are included in listing MOs of reckon despite having no daily newspaper due to very strong presence in respective segments for many years. However these MOs are not included in the sampling frame.
From the table it is clear that among 25 units with substantial market share in media products, 17 are originating units out of which 4 have their media business centres outside Calcutta too. Two other newspaper establishments are also on the way to expand outside Calcutta. However the Calcutta media giant Amritabazar-Jugantar group, which had a very great presence in Northern India ceased its operation from Calcutta in 1996 due to management related trade union unrest and other problems.

**INVESTMENT PATTERN**

The Investors profile reveals that in Calcutta media, industry development has been made possible by coming together of capital from professionals having entrepreneurial zeal, big industrial houses and wealthy traders for media power and pelf, finance companies (mostly chit funds), government and political parties. The following table shows related situation prevailing in Calcutta media industry-

Table 2.2: Promotion of Calcutta originating MOs (28* units)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By (in numbers)</th>
<th>Media professionals</th>
<th>Finance and Investment Company</th>
<th>Industry House</th>
<th>Traders</th>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>Raising Share Capital from market</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- MOs having at least a TV channel/Radio channel/Daily newspaper/many magazines are included in the table. In Few cases promotion is due to coming together of investors from at least two categories. Therefore number of units in the table does not tally with category wise divisions.

28 units belong to MOs in all types of media. In 19 cases media professionals started the enterprises. 4 such units, which began ventures much before independence have evolved into mature units with tendency of diversifying into related fields, products and intergrating activities without going to the public for financing new operations. In such organisations, over generations, the tendency
to prepare next generations for better business operation have paid dividend. As a result, 3 out of these 4 MOs have kept their market leads over last few decades or increased the lead both in audience and economic sides in their respective segments. The 4 th, a pre-independence Hindi daily gradually declined in market share as the new generation of the owning family went on to siphon off fund from the daily to property and other interests to the detriment of the MO’s health. Business houses from other fields have shown interest in owning MOs in 6 cases. Out of them 3 have interest in multiple media.

Formation of limited company, till now is limited to one case where broad basing the equity base has been effected. In the new media sector, few MOs are preparing for the same.

Few MOs are promoted by the businessmen in various trades. In such cases a group of energetic professionals with experience in media has worked as co-promoters. Such MOs are developing well in general.

Since 1980s private finance and investment companies (known as chit funds) have shown interest in media business. This trend is visible all over India. Chit fund owners find that media products in circulation create confidence in audience and the amount of profit generated in this business may help in ascertaining promised return to small investors in long run. More over media power helps in the main business in other ways too. While 2 such investors have gained, two others collapsed after good start as the owners were convicted in 1994 for defrauding investors.

In Calcutta Media Industry, even newspaper owned by political party is run in commercial line. There are three dailies promoted by parties for ideological reasons few decades back. One of these three has now come in the category of big dailies and has two periodicals in two languages flanking it. The party doesn’t see
any incongruency in running media organs commercially without compromising its political ideology.

It is interesting to note that beside commercial newspapers run by parties, few influential political leaders have patronised efforts to start media business, even going to the extent of finding out probable investors. During 1990s two such efforts failed while few others are continuing till date.

Another aspect is the entrepreneurial zeal of media professionals who mostly belong to Bengali middle class. Their journalistic acumen searched for liberation through MO building. The result is seen in the content where public interest of the target audience is clearly having edge over other interests. Even owners after much success are continuing their journalistic practice, albeit at the level of opinionating and analysing.

Now that big media companies have their operational interests in Calcutta and they are spending on promotion a lot, the pitched battle for gaining ground and retaining ground between outside MOs and local MOs is on the offing. With higher capital base, most of the outside MOs are ready to continue for long to win over
Bengal audience. Their advantage of news gathering and programming at all India level coupled with the ability to become advertising channels with all India offering are real challenges for Calcutta originating MOs. On their side is the reality of yester years where the locals demonstrated their one-upmanship against much wealthy groups from outside.

In the press sector, during last five years, there were price wars that broke the industry norm for the first time by originating MOs. In TV sector, the difference creeping in audience rating by Television Audience Measurement and Indian Television Audience Measurement casts doubt in the performance ratings shown about various channels. The advertisement rate variations along with undercuts creates an unhealthy competition in the market.

The local channels’ narrowcast with focused programming and low rate of advertisement through cable in and around the city has created advantages for them. Outside MOs with deep pockets may erode their advantages by continuing over a long period with gradual audience tuning. They are spending lavishly on news and entertainment programmes in an industrial and trade environment where originating corporate spenders are almost absent and the trade mostly doesn’t have the capacity to spend at high advertisement rates. Moreover the trend of reaching target through other avenues is gaining popularity which is bound to take away fund from the media advertising as such.

Bengali is the seventh largest language by population in the world and is spread mostly in South Asia. Calcutta as the centre of Bengalee culture and centre of attraction for artistic and literary talents draws attention of satellite channels as talent base. Is it the advertising spend assessment of this centre in futuristic term or the compulsion of tapping the Bengalees for a greater single consumer market that all the feasts are arranged ? This is an area in which the industry is going to be party to interesting developments.
EVOLUTION OF THE INDUSTRY

A look into few indicators with regard to Calcutta media industry reveals the evolution of the industry.

Table 2.3: Evolution of Calcutta Media Industry (1868-2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Calcutta originating MOs established</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Ownership change</th>
<th>Sector of MOs in 2000</th>
<th>Closure/Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868-1900</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Press</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Press, internet book</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1947</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Press, radio 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Press, internet, book, radio, and TV news</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1960</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Press</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Press</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1970</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Press</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Press</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Press, TV 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Press, TV</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Press, TV and radio 1 each</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Press, radio, TV, internet, recorded music</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: With regard to the period before 1956, reliable audience data are difficult to be obtained. The India Year Book of Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd. provided data on newspaper circulation for that period from which limited information was collated. Effort was taken to make the table representing only those ventures where MO formation as commercial enterprise was distinct and continued after independence.

Before nineteenth century, the formation of MO was very few though number of newspapers coming out were not less. After Sepoy Mutiny (1857) Bengalee intelligentsia became very vocal. Several associations were formed and thoughts were required to be shared with the literate people. At the same time, the Queen’s administrators in the country should be kept apprised about the lapses, thought few valiant intelligentsia members. Harish Chandra Mukherjee, editor of “the Hindu Patriot” set the standard of adversary role of Indian journalism favouring the cause of ‘Indigo Revolt’. Most of the people took to journalism as a mission and not as a primary source of income.
then. Only a handful of media persons thought of sustaining it as business and profession so that the outlet for expression of public interest matters remained viable and acquired strength to prevent the suppressive designs of the British regime. Now defunct Amrita Bazar Patrika took the lead from Amrita Bazar, a village of Jessore district of undivided Bengal (1868). By 1870, about 90 Bengali newspapers from all over the province irred the British Government by criticising them on valid grounds. Most of these died as the Vernacular Press Act 1878 effected control over content and forced errants to stop publication.

By converting itself into an English newspaper overnight that the Amrita Bazar Patrika avoided such a fate. By that time, Ghoses of Amrita Bazar shifted their enterprise to Calcutta. Calcutta then was the capital of British India and the foremost economic centre too. By 1891, the Amrita Bazar Patrika was converted into a daily newspaper. Sisir Kumar Ghose enthralled a large section of middle class educated Bangalees by making it an organ of popular movements. By 1937, Bengali daily Jugantar was started by Amrita Bazar-Jugantar Ltd. The MO expanded its operation to Northern India and Bihar. While this effort can be seen as formation of business venture in media by a Bengalee middle class family for the first time, the establishment of the Statesman in 1875 by its first editor Robert Knight can be seen as first MO formation effort from Englishmen interested to deliberate on Indian affairs for the Britishers in India as well as in Britain. The advantage of the British domination of India, reflected in press laws of that period aided the process. The excellence of the Statesman as the most prominent advertising channel for the industry and trade contributed a lot in the laying of solid foundation for the most professional MO of pre-independence India.

First half of twentieth century saw the rise of MOs in Hindi, Punjabi and Bengali press, and the parallel medium radio. Patriotic middle class people, with patronisation from Indian trading communities started these MOs in press sector.
The new entrepreneurs managed the seed capital from their own earnings or landed property. All these MOs became very successful in establishing their products in market. However the private radio transmission was taken over by state which gave rise to the first ever public broadcaster in the Indian Peninsula.

At the dawn of independence, the socio-political-economic context of Calcutta media changed. Newspapers in every language had to shift their focus in coverage and news presentation.

The ownership interest in industry started changing with industrial capitalists taking more interest in gaining media power. This was more so in English press and Hindi press. In Bengali press, the reign was in the hand of media capitalists only.

From 1980s Bengali media, in search of a bigger capital base either went for loans or investment from chit funds or trading people. This helped a lot in improving the standard and variety in Bengali media coverage and packaging in two ways – by updating or introduction of improved technology; and by increasing efficiency in coverage and programming. For Bengali media, Calcutta sets the standard in every matter. Calcutta newspapers go where ever Bengalees reside in India. Agartalla (capital of Tripura)and Silchar (the main city of Bengalee majority Barak Valley in Assam) are coming up with independent Bengali dailies. The growth is going to be of limited nature due to lowly developed economic base and the geographic insularity in low concentration population zone. This in no way can threaten Calcutta newspapers. Siliguri, the main city in North Bengal is already in the expansion priority of Calcutta MOs. So there is very little chance of emergence of an alternative Bengali media centre (except being satellite centre) to erode the strong audience and advertisement base.
In case of Hindi and English media, the two other prominent language sectors in Calcutta media, the cases are different. Exclusively Calcutta based dailies in these two sectors are already facing competition from dailies originally from other metropolitan centres in India. Such MOs have already established their production centres in many cities all over India. It is for covering the single Indian advertisement market and audience market that they want to have an operation base in Calcutta. With higher capital base and audience reach, their foray into the Calcutta media is going to change so many things in coming years.

The same trend is discernible in TV market. TV MOs with higher capital base have included Calcutta in their operation strategy as a part of an all-India market. Therefore the trend of emergence of an all India Industry with transformation of regional MOs into national level MOs is going to influence local MOs in several ways. It may be possible that the national level MOs with a broad marketing base and balanced mix of regional, national and international content would be eliminating the local advantage.

In 1990s, MO formation has gained much momentum for two reasons. A vacuum was created by closer of ABP-Jugantar Ltd. in Calcutta. At the same time media entrepreneurs realised that the development process in Rural Bengal over many years increased purchasing power and political awareness of people.

The transition from village to town formation gained momentum in West Bengal during 80s and 90s. It created a favourable situation for distributive efficiency of print products as concentration of population within small territory increased manyfold. The increase of literate population along with the improved road, transport and telecommunication links created an expanded audience market conducive for expansion of existing MOs and formation of new enterprises to take the scope. During 90s, most of the MOs have tried to win the district audience by
increasing number of district items in coverage, bringing out special pull outs, and by reaching district audience at the earliest.

MO formation as well as the expansion by existing MOs in electronic media has reasons. The establishment of Doordarshan centres all over India during last two decades stimulated formation of BSOs in programme production. In 1990, the spread of cable network in Calcutta and towns began. People have been fascinated by the variety and quality of programmes dished out to cable & satellite (C & S) households from various channels. However the absence of channels in Bengali provided scope for new channel business in Calcutta. Within two years (1995 to 1997) two big companies started providing programme signals through numerous small, neighbourhood based cable operators. SITI Cable started a channel in 1995. RPG group formed RPG Netcom in 1997 with the core business of providing band signal connectivity to Calcutta C & S house holds through numerous cable operators. As satellite channel creation is a very big money affair, that was not possible by local entrepreneurs who had small capital base. But taking the scope of C & S house holds, exclusive channels for Calcutta were started by programme producing Calcutta MOs. The existing repertory of programme under their copy right provided advantage. 2 Calcutta MOs with basic interest in press started TV programme production. The scope of getting chunk in FM channel activated many MOs out of which few were Calcutta bred. The experience of FM operation has been utilised by RPG Netcom to create their own cable radio channel. 3 outside MOs have started their Calcutta based Bengali channels during 1999-2000. Meanwhile a Calcutta based recorded music company has started its subsidiary based in UK and has planned to float another subsidiary in USA by 2000 end.

This decade has seen 5 failures leading to shut down in MOs and 2 ownership changes in Calcutta. The reasons of such failures range from
management related labour problems to siphoning the fund bleeding the main business.

TECHNOLOGY IN CALCUTTA MEDIA INDUSTRY

Technology adoption and improvement in Calcutta media MOs have taken 2 courses from 1980. Old MOs with big structure have treaded the path of technology improvement in a phased manner with aim of quality leadership maintenance. Organisational reengineering in these MOs have experienced several hiccups. The issue of human resource adjustment to the improved technology as well as the problem of redundancy loomed larger before managements more than any other issue.

Most of the new MOs in every type of media, on the other side, have started with new technology. With decrease in average age of employees and with their skill in new technology, these MOs are in advantageous positions.

By 1997 all the Calcutta dailies were printed in offset press. Big dailies were on web offset while small newspapers were printed on sheetfed offset. In 1979, ABP Ltd. installed photo type setting equipments for the first time in Calcutta. By 1980 end Bengali PTS was created in which Fiona Ross, an English lady contributed much. Aajkal started with PTS and offset in 1981. Ananda Bazar Patrika followed in 1982. By 1984 Bartaman came out in offset. Other dailies gradually went to offset printing.

Ananda Bazar Patrika started 4 colour printing in 1983 from negative plate. Before that prints were mostly done by making blocks. This was an important step that helped the growth of magazine segment. While ABP Ltd. started two glossies Sananda and Anandalok, Ityadi Prokashani publication- Paribartan set new standard for Bengali magazine journalism taking the scope of new technology.
In the second half of 1980s, many trade houses came up specialising in typesetting and various aspects of graphic reproduction, colour separation, films for plate making, and plate making for offset press. Magazine publishing, as a result was easier for existing MOs as well as entrepreneurs. The efforts in city magazine section initiated by Calcutta Skyline and followed by City Catch with glossy printing and much improved composing and graphics petered out after initial euphoria in this decade.

The easy foreign currency, lower import duty and liberal import policy followed by the government helped Indian press sector to be a part of and a beneficiary of the world wide industry restructuring in media. Calcutta media was in the forefront of this restructuring in India. The much improved newspaper and magazine get up showed the importance of design in the press. Combined page make up by artists, journalists and advertising sections started in Calcutta during this decade.

During 1980s Calcutta media industry witnessed a trend in BSO formation in the technology front. Instead of the publisher setting up an offset unit with all expensive equipments (PTS, colour scanners, automatic platemakers, printing machine etc.) the establishment of several specialised units in PTS or DTP system or colour scanning brought down the capital requirement in establishing MOs. It took away much of uncertainty of the media business by ensuring a low cost involvement. It became possible to set offset printing units in small scale sector. Printers were able to replace letter press by offset machine. By 1990, in Calcutta media, specialisation existed in both trade house BSOs and printer BSOs. Former had specialisation in designing, colour separation, and plate making. The latter had specialisation in magazine production (existing MOs became big clients with already created circulation base aiding the product diversification) and book
production (MOs again were the clients beside others) along with other types of printings.

By the beginning of 1990s new entrepreneurs were emboldened to start MOs. The composing and printing technology improvement inspired them.

In content processing area, the computerisation has been slowly accepted by few MOs while others still use old methods. The Statesman started the process many years back while the Asian Age started with a wholly computerised reporting-editing setup in local Area Network (LAN) with connection to other cities by satellite. Lay out and design is computerised using Quark-X-Press, a pagination software. The Asian Age started with few staffs by setting up an electronic newsroom (1995), and the need of keeping good number of graphic artists did not arise. By 1997, ABP Ltd. converted the manual newsroom into an electronic newsroom with every subeditor and reporter working on computers in LAN environment. However, only by 1999 that electronic pagination was introduced in its flagship, the Ananda Bazar Patrika. The Sambad Protidin went for computerised lay out and design in 2000 only. Other newspapers in Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi still continue with the earlier ways of editing and lay out.

Electronic pagination has been introduced to streamline production and reduce cost. However such a move has consequences. Editors have found themselves learning a new technical system and taking the responsibility of page designer. Editing is to be given less time as designing would appropriate much of their time. Due to shifting of this operation from backroom to front room, already the MOs are getting rid of many of their design artists. The journalist has to do the composing job too as the job is integrated into electronic editing. While the newspapers with PTS and editing separation have many compositors for PTS, in totally electronic newsrooms this tribe is going to vanish, the trend in Calcutta media industry shows. Many MOs have already resorted to electronic photo
collection and storage system for both black & white and colour photographs. Paribartan Publications, a small MO started three years back has state of the art computers with TV turner cards and MOSS drive facilitating direct access to monitored photos even. Photo shop has the update of photos necessary for the tabloid daily, the flagship of the MO. Data bank updating is done directly in computer on regular basis. With Zip drive, its computer set up helps to save Rs. 10,000 on cost of cover of its magazines every month. It helps to avoid the tracing of cover on computer and directly setting it in image setter. The facilities are also helping choosing from numerous alternative designs for magazines, which aid quality improvement of the products.

The MOs which have already ventured into TV programmes from print media tried to use best technology available. When Sandhya Aajkal evening news on SITI cable began, it used improved techniques to draw viewer attention. ABP TV, at 2000 is utilising state of the art production technologies. Server based news production is resorted to.

The audio visual media has undergone drastic changes in technology front. All India Radio, Calcutta augmented its technical quality in programme creation, presentation and transmission by 1999. Digitalisation of the same was undertaken. Compact disc players were introduced. Satellite networking with other centres for relay and exchange of national and regional programmes enhanced the variety of programmes transmitted by AIR, Calcutta. Taking the scope of improved technical quality of Frequency Modulation (FM) broadcaster, Yuvavani channel has been shifted to FM mode. The quality of audio programmes improved immensely on three counts- interactivity increase due to dial out facilities, voice mail recordings, and AIR research wing developed computer based audio recording and automatic play back system in which listeners’ requests are processed and transmitted on air through FM transmitter. Change in format of bulletin to make news listener-friendly
and technological changes in preparation, editing and broadcasting to cut down production to transmission time gap as well as inclusion of last minute developments in the bulletin in server based studio automation lead to much improved news programming. Creation of modernised AIR archive with 48000 tapes and programme exchange unit in Delhi with 8100 tapes of music and spoken words, along with a huge library of popular songs on hard disc in which every song is given a response code number for easy retrieval on demand has improved quality and variety of music and spoken word programmes of AIR Calcutta.

In 1975, the first TV centre in Calcutta used 16mm film, hand graphics and anchor for the news. Multi camera operation for other programmes was unbelievable. By 1993, DDK, Calcutta started colour transmission. No other local channel was there. By 1995, SITI cable entered the scene. Later on, from 1998, few channels with latest technology entered the field. Now DDK, Calcutta is fast improving in news sourcing to post production technologies. From 16mm B & W camera to VHS to Super VHS to eumatic low to eumatic high to betacem to digital DVC PRO – this journey from 1975 to 2000 is the route map for TV development in Calcutta. Round the clock election analysis (1999) using matrox for online post production graphics facility is an instance how the DD is prepared for utilising technology and most advanced software for quality programmes.

Broadcast Worldwide started its Bengali channel in 2000 with every operation, right from preproduction to transmission on digital platform. The technical qualities such as luminance, colour (chroma) and sound are set in very high standard with arrangement for excellent standard monitoring. Networked management information system in this MO is providing the scope of workplace flexibility too. Now that the MO plans to start first interactive TV channel in Calcutta by 2001, it is going to set up four video studios open to public who either want to air grievance or opinionate. Manouvering of existing technology for the
first participatory channel (as proposed by the MO) creation is going to be an experiment of pro-people content creation too. Fibre optic connectivity along with making available the distribution boxes to all head end operators for better channel visibility is a priority for the MO. Its channel TARA has been in hyperband, which is a disadvantage to be overcome.

CCCN channel, the channel business of one of the oldest programme producing MOs of Calcutta has taken up a one crore rupees ambitious digitalisation programme while just two years back it started multi camera operation.

Alpha Bangla, the Calcutta based Bengali channel of Zee group, started in September 1999 is trying to make use of its distribution capacity all over the world. Uplinked from Singapore to the Asiasat 3, this channel is targeting Bangladesh audience too.

ETV- Bangla, while establishing a production centre in Calcutta is taking scope of the state of the art technical facilities for production, post production and distribution from Hyderabad.

A segment of Calcutta media, the recorded music segment has grown taking scope of internet and CD. The CD has replaced old categories of RPM records and cassettes to a great extent. RPG group owned Gramophone Company of India Ltd. (GCIL) website Hamaracd.com offers online booking facility for customised music. Already it is offering benefits of making personalised CDs in which music lovers can design their own CD cover, and make an exact combination of numbers. An integrated portal for music is also on the anvil. Retail kiosks are going to be opened in major cities and towns where the customers can order in Net and get CDs delivered by courier service. A fully computerised facility in Madras produces customised CDs.
Sourcing content is the area where the technology has effected such changes over years that the content has undergone a qualitative as well as quantitative transformation. In 1970, just before Bangladesh attained freedom from Pakistan, Ananda Bazar Patrika interviewed Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman in London from Calcutta over phone. It seemed to be an exceptional effort in news gathering. For last few years, even smaller dailies are scoring high in covering important events abroad. The way news sourcing has improved in Calcutta media industry is reflected in promptness of presentation and detailed account of events available within very short time after the happening.

Many media products from Calcutta are produced with modern sourcing technologies providing the base. Online data, computerised visual supply and graphics repertory are utilised by both print and electronic media. Mobile phones are common place for reporters of many MOs. Telexing has become almost obsolete with satellite content transmission becoming more advantageous. Fax as a medium of information carriage is used more and more by MOs in both print and electronic media. The capacity of referencing has enormously increased due to microfilming and hard disc storage of information. The content package has become livelier with computerised photo preservation techniques enabling ready use of varied and matching photos. Digital camera is already used in many MOs. Tape recorder is used for all types of media content sourcing. One trend in Calcutta press is that of reporters becoming more camera savvy. With the emergence of TV media in Calcutta, newspapers are unable to compete on immediacy ground. Therefore reporters are also awakened to the reality of ascendancy of featurised news and features. At least one MO is considering providing reporters with small camcorders so that they may take live visuals for attesting events or incidents of importance. Sourcing content is the area where technological convergence among different media types is discernible in Calcutta media industry.
CONTENT RACE IN CALCUTTA MEDIA INDUSTRY

In July 2000 there was a massacre of common people at Nanur in far flung district of Birbhum. As many as 10 Calcutta MOs deputed their representatives for few days to cover the ghastly incident. This was quite normal. However one MO, due to some problems, could not send its representative. But in its evening daily, the news was covered well. It was by auto monitored TV bulletins and the TV photo along with chat with the state police headquarter in Calcutta that the MO could manage the situation. The computer aided report and photo monitoring has ensured that with creativity in abundance, MOs can go for competing in coverage even from a lower budgetary provision for reporters’ overhead. Many content sourcing agencies are facilitating this manoeuvrability of MOs further.

In fact, a Calcutta newspaper, with its small reporting network and with very few journalists in sports desk scored over other dailies in Bengali in covering the World Cup Cricket 1998 in Britain. This success was reflected in its increased number of advertisements during that period. The print, outdoor and TV publicity campaign launched by the MO prior to and during the event demonstrates the able support that the news department got from other departments. During the event, distributors’ demands for copies also rose high. Like wise, a Calcutta based channel, despite lacking in sophisticated technology compared to other channels started by outside MOs in Calcutta recently is sitting strong based on content. Highly local interactive components are compensating for the technological backwardness of the MO. The revenue generated by creating and showing such contents have provided the MO with strength to invest for higher technology platform.

Day by day, the race for content superiority is accelerating. The nature of communication packages of various media products is changing a lot. The changes are discernible more in format, treatment and homogenisation tendency in contents.
Every MO tries to make format of presentation of items and the treatment of the content unique points for each of its products. However the demand of the changing economic and social environment forces to go for more homogenisation of content in all media.

The variety and quantity of content has increased in the face of competition for offering increased volume of space or time in media products. This in turn has given rise to another trend-ascendancy of business related content riding on the back of revenue earning possibility. Earlier, annual reports of companies were not taken seriously for news coverage. Rather these were accepted only as advertisement insertions. Now the importance of such matters as a source of news is obvious from the treatment and space these get in news pages. More and more business activities are appearing in news pages, which by the earlier standard of journalism could have been construed as a deviation from the norm. This tendency serves two purposes- the search for content becomes easier and less costly, and the promotion of the media product as an advertisement outlet is aided. A close look to media products over a short span of period shows that the advertisement and the news of the same business organisation are appearing in the same newspaper in an interval of few days, either news appearing ahead of advertisement or vice versa.

Except for special interest media products, ascendancy of sports as news and programme genre is dictated by two reasons of late. Sports fill up much of the space or time with less opportunity cost. It, by filling up much of the enhanced time or space gives the product a bulky appearance which is important to attract the audience. The ethnocentric value related to sports is exploited very much by media products in Calcutta in a bid to attract advertisers too. It is so much so that a Bengali daily, Aajkal devotes most of the first page to sports in times of big sporting events. It, during the Kargil war period which coincided with the World
Cup Cricket Tournament in Britain (1998) gave more space to the cricket event. This is an extreme case.

Often entertainment sector coverage gets prominent display in all media in addition to earmarked segments for such coverages.

Politics, the staple of media still retains its prominent coverage position here. However, rather than politics, the coverage hovers around personalities growing out of it to a great extent. Their personal life is under more scrutiny now than in any other period in Calcutta media. The interview genre has got a shot in arms for the same too.

The sphere of public interest is increasing enormously, coverages in Calcutta media attest. Raising of public issues is very common. Creating agenda out of hidden needs and aspirations of segments of people is common too.

However the content race is acquiring an altogether different dimension in Calcutta media industry with reference to the extent of interactivity as a component. In all media, the effort is to create more and more interactive formats to attract the audience. Print media is taking help of even the internet to inspire audience into interaction besides organising events. Electronic media too has gone to internet for the same and getting more audience. The proportion of programmes, where audience are actively participating is increasing. The CCCN channel even went for road shows before others. As an extreme case so far, Broadcast World Wide has decided to start an interactive channel by 2001 for which preparations are going on. (Appendix – VI for more information on MOs.)

Calcutta population is 1,10,21,918 and West Bengal population is 6,80,78,000 (census 1991). The industry has to go long for exploiting the potential of such a population with improving living standard.