

# Chapter VIII

## Analysis of Subscriber Choices and Preferences

### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter is the logical continuation of the previous chapter and analyses the choices and preferences of newspaper subscribers. The subscribers' distinctive choices and tendencies, reading preferences, opinions upon usefulness of newspaper and supplements to different target audiences and ranking of Tamil and English newspapers are put to analysis in depth. Here the qualitative aspects of subscriber attitude in relation to newspapers are given emphasis in a bare and plain manner. Therefore reliance upon complicated statistical tools, which take many assumptions and leave huge error margins, is dispensed with. Thus instead of focussing on showing statistical prowess, the intricacies about subscriber choices and preferences in the study area gain precedence.

### 8.2. Tools of Analysis

This chapter attempts to analyse the attitude of subscribers towards the newspapers of their choice and knowledge. The analysis is of descriptive and qualitative nature. However, it is strengthened by many quantitative tools so that the derived conclusions and assertions are validated or negated by those tools. Description of such statistical tools is presented below.

### 8.2.1. Regression and Correlation

It is a statistical procedure, applied to determine

- The linear statistical relationship between two data sets of different variables
- Nature, strength and degree of relationship

A numeric value called the *coefficient of determination* is got using appropriate steps. Its magnitude gives qualitative information about the relationship. In general, the coefficient of determination will be between 0 and +1, however, based on the nature/behaviour of the sample data a negative value may occur which indicates inverse relationship. That is, the dependent variable decreases with the increase in the independent variable and vice versa. Here, the greater the value the stronger the correlation between the two data sets and vice versa. For example, if the coefficient comes around 0.25, one can say that the strength of relationship between the two data sets is weaker, and the correlation is not good. On the other hand, it can be said stronger, for example, if the coefficient is around 0.91.

The coefficient of determination is symbolically represented as  $r^2$  whereas its square root  $r$  is called as the *correlation coefficient*. They shall be determined using the formulae mentioned below.

$$r^2 = \frac{a\sum y + b\sum xy - n\bar{y}^2}{\sum y^2 - n\bar{y}^2}$$

$$a = \bar{y} - b\bar{x}$$

$$b = \frac{\sum xy - n\bar{x}\bar{y}}{\sum x^2 - n\bar{x}^2}$$

1.  $x$  is the independent variable which is already known. It may be a

factor such as the *educational qualification* of newspaper subscribers.

2.  $y$  is the dependent variable whose strength of relationship is to be found out with  $x$ . It may be a factor such as the *choice of newspaper* of the subscriber.
3. Any symbol with a bar on it represents average of the corresponding variable.
4. The symbol  $\Sigma$  represents the sum of the variables inside it. It can be either sum of individual  $x$ 's or  $y$ 's or their product etc.
5. For one independent and one dependent variable namely  $x$  and  $y$ , the regression equation is  $y = a + bx$ , which is the equation of a straight line where  $a$  is the  $y$  intercept and  $b$  is the slope of that line. The same  $a$  and  $b$  have been used in both lower and upper cases. In mathematical notations the straight line equation will be often referred to as  $y = mx + c$ . However, the multiple regression models have more than one B-value, according to the number of independent variables. Here the regression equation will be of the form,  $y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + \dots + b_ix_i$  where  $i$  is the number of independent variables.

### 8.2.2. Rank Correlation based Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is used to conclude on certain property of a data set based on the analysis of a sample taken from it. It begins with an assumption

about any parameter like mean, standard deviation or proportion of the data set. This assumption is called a hypothesis. To test the validity of the assumption, samples are gathered and calculations are made to set lower and/or upper limits under the desired significance level. Normally, hypothesis tests are performed at 95% significance level to leave 5% error margin. The higher the significance level, the more accurate the test becomes. The sample value corresponding to the parameter is tested against the limits. If the value is within the limits, the test is not significant and the hypothesis is accepted. If the sample value lies outside the limits, the test is significant and the hypothesis is rejected.

Rank correlation and hypothesis testing based on that are non-parametric tests, which do not consider the population be normally distributed. It is rather concerned about individual ranks than the value of a given population parameter. This method effects a correlation analysis when the data are not available to use in numerical form but when information is sufficient to rank the data. This test does not require to make any assumption about the population parameter's distribution. First, the rank correlation is worked out by the following formula.

$$\text{Ranking Correlation } r_s = 1 - [(6\sum d^2)/(n(n^2-1))]$$

Where  $n$  = number of paired observations

$d$  = difference between the ranks for each pair of observation.

Then, null hypothesis is framed such that there is no correlation in the ranked data. In this research, as the value of  $n$  is less than 30, a statistical table

named ‘Spearman’s Rank Correlation Values for Combined Areas’ is used. The Limit of Acceptance, that is the value beyond which the null hypothesis is rejected, is calculated from this table. It is checked for conformity within limits with the rank correlation value. Acceptance or rejection of null hypothesis is effected and inferences are drawn accordingly. If the value of n happens to be greater than 30, it is treated like a normal distribution curve and the limits are set after calculating the standard error by appropriate formulae.

### 8.2.3. *Chi Square Test*

Chi-square Test is used to test hypotheses in which two or more sample proportions are to be analysed for dependence. Here, therefore, the hypothesis will remain analogous irrespective of the problem. That is, the hypothesis always attempts to find if the sample proportions are equal (independent) or unequal (dependent).

In Chi Square Test, data is subjected to basic arithmetic operations to find out two types of frequencies namely Observed and Expected frequencies. Observed frequencies are original sample values of the data sets and Expected frequencies are the ratios of the multiplication of corresponding row and column totals of a data value to the grand total (that is, the total number of observations) of the data sets. The chi-square statistic is calculated by the following formula.

$$\chi^2 = \sum [(f_0 - f_e)^2 / f_e] \text{ where } f_0 \text{ and } f_e \text{ are respectively Observed and Expected frequencies}$$

A Chi Square Statistic of 20 would indicate substantial difference between the Observed and Expected frequencies. Conversely, a Chi Square Statistic of zero indicates that the observed frequencies exactly match the expected frequencies. However, the Chi Square Statistic is checked against a table value called Chi Square Value for conformity. The Chi Square Value serves as the acceptance limit of the hypothesis. It is got from the Chi Square Distribution table based on appropriate Degrees of Freedom. The Degrees of Freedom, in this regard, is calculated using the formula below.

$$\text{Degrees of freedom} = (\text{No. of rows} - 1) \times (\text{No. of columns} - 1)$$

Thus, based on the place of Chi Square Statistic in relation to Chi Square Value, the test is adjudged significant or insignificant. If the Chi Square Statistic is less than the Chi Square Value, the test is not significant and the hypothesis is accepted. It shows the data sets are independent of each other and any interrelation among them is only by chance. On the contrary, if the Chi Square Statistic is greater than the Chi Square Value, the test is significant and the hypothesis is rejected. It shows the data sets are dependent of each other and hence influence one another.

### **8.3. Distinctive Choices and Tendencies**

The distinctive choices made by the subscribers with respect to the newspaper of their taste and various kinds of their association with that newspaper are examined in this section. In this regard, the newspaper of regular reading, reasons for reading the newspaper, nature of acquiring the newspaper,

edition of newspaper he or she prefers to read, mode of buying effected, satisfaction with the quality of the newspaper of choice, time spent to read the newspaper and the impact by the newspaper upon the reader are analysed.

### ***8.3.1. Newspaper of Regular Reading***

The percentage of subscribers who regularly read a newspaper in the study area is a crucial aspect. This choice is the near-ultimate element that credits or discredits a newspaper. If the numbers are representative of a whole population, it shows the most and least attractive newspapers in the geographical area. It also shows the comparative position of the in-between newspapers in relation to the best and worst ones. Thus, this data helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a newspaper. Moreover inputs from readers and agents in this regard help the newspaper publisher to enhance the newspaper to the preferences of subscribers. This, if implemented properly, increases circulation and advertisement revenue. Table 8.1 has details of the most and least read newspaper listed against the respective language.

Table 8.1

## Newspaper of Regular Reading

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>No. of Subscribers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Tamil:</b>		
1. Dhinakaran	86	31.62
2. Dhina Thanthi	96	35.29
3. Dhina Malar	63	23.16
4. Dhina Mani	13	4.78
5. Dhina Poomi	3	1.10
6. Malai Murasu	4	1.47
7. Tamil Murasu	4	1.47
8. Local Newspaper	3	1.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>English:</b>		
1. The Times of India	6	3.92
2. The New Indian Express	27	17.65
3. The Hindu	80	52.29
4. The Deccan Chronicle	3	1.96
5. The Business Line	34	22.22
6. The Financial Express	3	1.96
7. Any other	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

The table shows a noticeable difference between the subscribing patterns of Tamil and English newspapers. In Tamil, the choice is more widespread, but three newspapers namely *Dhinakaran*, *Dhina Thanthi* and *Dhina Malar* altogether have a lion's share of subscribers. Difference among their percentage is not that much substantial. In English however the reader's choice is much

restricted. More than 74 percent of the subscribers prefer newspapers from *Kasturi & Sons Ltd.*, namely *The Hindu* and *The Business Line*. Belated news, hard language, unattractive layout and monotonous coverage are some reasons that keep the respondents away from *The New Indian Express*. Therefore, as per the sample, its subscriber base is only a third of *The Hindu*. The Indian Express group's business newspaper *The Financial Express* is not at all competitive to its counterpart from *The Hindu* group, *The Business Line*. *The Times of India*, although India's most prominent newspaper, has relatively poor subscriber percentage. It is due to its very limited availability. In Tamil every one of the newspapers has its own minimal subscriber base, and even local newspapers have carved a niche market out for them.

It is therefore evident that *Dhina Thanthi* with 35.29 percent and *The Hindu* with 52.29 percent shine as the single most newspapers of regular reading in Tamil and English respectively.

### **8.3.2. *Reasons for Reading Newspaper***

Ten reasons were identified that serve a man or woman to subscribe or read a newspaper. These reasons are based on both the pilot study and inputs from experts. The first nine are logical reasons. The tenth reason 'Any other' refers to vague inclinations that induce a reader to subscribe or read a newspaper. He or she does not follow any of the nine reasons but follows his or her undefinable mentality to subscribe or read a newspaper. The ten reasons are listed against the number of respondents in Table 8.2. The table will have more

respondents than the sample size itself as many respondents will have a combination of reasons to read a newspaper. Thus, selecting more than one reason increases the instances of response of the 300 respondents. For example, even if half of the 300 respondents have two reasons, the total will be 450.

Table 8.2

Reasons for Reading the Newspaper

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Reasons for Reading Newspaper</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Comprehensive coverage	32	7.53
2.	Personal interest	143	33.65
3.	Available in the workplace itself	19	4.47
4.	Distinctive purpose	60	14.12
5.	News items of govt., legal, business importance	32	7.53
6.	Language development	65	15.29
7.	Educational purpose	46	10.82
8.	Employment purpose	14	3.29
9.	Competitive examination purpose	5	1.18
10.	Any other	9	2.12
<b>Total</b>		<b>425</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Although a reader has many reasons to read newspaper, one reason will be dominant and precedes all others. In this sample, 'Personal interest' is the dominant reason. Nearly half of the respondents have chosen this. It emphasises the fact that newspaper reading has become one of the indispensable activities in many households. Every morning it gets along with toothbrushing, coffee and other daily chores. 'Language development' and closely thereafter

“Distinctive purpose’ share a relatively distant second and third positions. About one in five respondents prefer these two categories. Importance given to English is understood here. Also, newspaper has become more integrated into the activities of many respondents. More clearly, newspapers serve the respondent’s particular purpose in any needed area, be it education, employment profession or recreation. ‘Educational purpose’ is the fourth compelling reason with 46 responses. This number is consistent with the number of respondents at lower age-groups which contain mostly students. Another notable aspect is that all ten reasons have a certain number of respondents. It shows the diversified interests of readers when it comes to newspaper reading.

Therefore it is observed that ‘Personal interest’ is the most prominent reason for reading a newspaper with 33.65 percent of opinions in favour of it.

### ***8.3.3. Nature of Acquiring Newspaper***

The reader has the possibility of getting newspaper from many sources. He or she may purchase regularly after the morning walk. Or, may want to have it dropped in the doorstep by the newsboy. Also there are many readers who habitually visit teashops for reading and critically analysing newspapers. Therefore, study of the nature of acquiring newspaper by the subscribers helps in logistical planning. If for example the logistical process of delivering newspapers to every reseller is costly and ineffective, a more robust way must be found out. Also, practical difficulties involving direct purchase shall be

looked into. To mention a case, it is impossible for a subscriber to go to the shop in an extreme rainy day. Hence, if there are many readers in a particular locality who are direct purchasers, sales will be severely affected during rainy days. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the publisher and agent to make alternative arrangements. More than that, they are obliged to devise an optimum strategy for reaching out to the subscriber. Table 8.3 summarises the responses with regard to the nature of acquiring newspaper.

Table 8.3

Acquiring Nature

S. No.	Acquiring Nature	No. of Respondents		Percentage	
		Tamil	English	Tamil	English
1.	Teashop	39	1	14.34	0.65
2.	Neighbour	14	7	5.15	4.58
3.	Library	13	33	4.78	21.57
4.	Own purchase	206	112	75.74	73.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>272</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

The choice of language significantly differs when the nature of acquiring newspaper is considered between teashop and library. In teashops the choice is predominantly Tamil and in libraries it is English. More than that, the acquiring nature is completely inverse in these two places. That is, the least acquirement of Tamil newspapers is in library and that of English is in teashop. It reveals the fact that teashops have become strong advertising mediums for Tamil newspapers. Likewise, libraries have become the instruments of promotion for

English newspapers. However, the percentage of Tamil and English language newspapers remain closely the same when they are acquired from the neighbourhood or by own purchase. Notwithstanding, own purchase is the strongest choice in Tamil and English.

It is evident that 'Own purchase' is the most preferred nature of acquiring a newspaper both in Tamil and English language with respectively 75.74 and 73.2 percents of respondents opting for them.

#### ***8.3.4. Edition of Newspaper***

Many newspapers now come in two forms. One is the traditional printed paper form and another is electronic form. This electronic form is the exact soft copy of the newspaper formatted and uploaded onto the Internet. Anyone with Internet connection can read that online newspaper with their desktop or laptop computer. Either it needs a subscription fee or available free of cost, based on the policies of the newspaper publisher. Nowadays, many professionals, officials and executives, especially those travelling extensively, read only e-newspapers on their laptops. The e-newspaper is more beautiful and also it saves time. Moreover, additional information management features such as quick find, archiving, tabbed browsing, magnification and bookmarking could be used. Therefore, this form is attracting more and more readers everyday. The respondents provided another important information. They read only any one of the forms, not both. If a reader has got used to e-newspaper, he or she does not prefer to read the printed paper. Hence, here the category 'Both' is avoided.

Table 8.4 shows the respondents' preferences of the form.

Table 8.4

Edition of Newspaper

S. No.	Edition	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	E-edition	73	24.33
2.	Hard Copy	227	75.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Close to a quarter of the respondents read e-edition. It shows the quite substantial reach of the Internet. Yet, 76 percent of the respondents, irrespective of computers and the Internet, still prefer paper form. As per the respondents, the tangible physical newspaper at their hands gives them satisfaction. One can not get the feel of it in the e-form. The newspaper can be put on shelf and accessed any time, they asserted. Further, there is no worry about malfunction, disconnection, power outage, data corruption and other disturbances associated with the electronic media. Above all, they cherish that the refreshing habit associated with its reading could never be compensated by e-newspapers. Owing to these advantages, many respondents still like to have the hard copy of the newspaper.

Hence, it is observable that more than three quarters of the respondents, that is 75.67 percent, prefer to read the hard copy of a newspaper.

### 8.3.5. Mode of Buying

For the subscriber, mode of buying the newspaper is a matter of convenience. However, for agents, it helps in their logistical activities. If studied

in detail, it provides valuable information to optimise distance and coverage for each mode of delivery. In addition, it contributes to calculating buffer stocks to avoid both shortage and surplus. Table 8.5 has details on mode of buying of newspapers.

Table 8.5

Mode of Buying

S. No.	Mode of Buying	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Door delivery	263	87.67
2.	Purchasing in shop	37	12.33
<i>Total</i>		<i>300</i>	<i>100</i>

(Source: Primary Data)

The ratio of ‘Door delivery’ to ‘Purchasing in shop’ is around 7 : 1. That is, only one in eight respondents purchase newspapers in shops and the remaining prefer it be dropped in their doorsteps. Apart from convenience, many other factors contribute to ‘Door delivery’. They are, hurrying life, noise and dust, pollution, accidents, crime and diseases. These factors are preventing people from happily going out for a purchase. Moreover, this ratio will further increase in favour of ‘Door delivery’ in the future because of deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and the overbearing influence of other news and communication mediums such as the Internet, Direct to Home (DTH) Television and Cellular based Hand-held Devices. Hence, it is the responsibility of the agents to plan accordingly.

Here therefore it is inferred that about 87.67 percent of the respondents prefer to have their newspaper of choice delivered at home.

### 8.3.6. Satisfaction with Quality of Newspaper

In this subsection, satisfaction of respondents with their present newspaper is analysed. The satisfaction level reveals their intention to change over their choice. The higher the satisfaction, the lower the probability to changeover. Moreover, if satisfaction is studied in combination with associated reasons, it will help to identify areas of improvement. Thus, factors unravelled should help to retain customers if grey areas are addressed properly. Table 8.6 has relevant details.

Table 8.6

#### Satisfaction with Newspaper Quality

S. No.	Satisfaction Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Good	240	80.00
2.	Fair	51	17.00
3.	Not good	9	3.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Exactly 80 percent of the respondents regard their newspaper is of good quality. It shows that not only have they already known to differentiate between available newspapers, but also have settled with their current one. Another 17 percent of the respondents take the median position. Their experience with the newspaper of choice is neither good nor bad. They are on the process of settling in. Therefore, they may change over if they wish, or when they find out better quality in another newspaper. Only the remaining 3 percent of respondents opine negatively about their newspaper quality. The content and presentation of

the newspaper should be contradicting with their values and attitudes. In addition, its approach and news coverage in social, economic and political arenas shall not be compatible with the qualities of the respondent in terms of age, religion, race, economic status and political affiliation. These dissatisfied respondents, either by self-initiative or after some persuasion, will readily effect a switchover. It has a guidance for new entrants into the newspaper industry. Only the median and dissatisfied categories which comprise only 20 percent of the respondents are approachable for market development.

Therefore it is inferred that for 80 percent of the respondents the newspaper they subscribe is of good quality.

#### ***8.3.7. Time Spent to Read Newspaper***

Analysis of this aspect helps to reorient news items so as to extend the duration of reading. For, news items like tenders, classifieds and opportunities should sufficiently get readers' attention for the newspaper to retain its advertisement revenue. If advertisers come to know that response for its advertisements is very little or none in a newspaper, then there is no justification to patronise the newspaper. Here, it is the obligation of the newspaper to identify areas of improvement. It may be in layout, presentation, emphasis, or the like and once identified, the newspaper must do the needful at once. In this regard, time taken by the respondents to read their newspaper of choice is presented in the table.

Table 8.7

## Time Spent to Read Newspaper

S. No.	Time Spent	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	½ an hour	134	44.67
2.	½ - 1 hour	139	46.33
3.	1 - 1½ hours	13	4.33
4.	1½ - 2 hours	9	3
5.	Above 2 hours	5	1.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

The table reveals that 91 percent of respondents restrict their reading time to not more than an hour a day. Respondents spending half an hour are almost equal to those spending up to one hour. Thereafter, the duration turns inversely proportional to the number of respondents. Only 5 respondents, which is about 1.7 percent, take pain to read newspaper for 2 hours or more. It clearly establishes the trend of indifference among readers to allocate time for newspaper reading. According to the respondents, other news mediums such as the Internet, television, radio, i-phone and cellphone provide news in a more versatile and swift manner. Here, newspapers too are to blame for their part. While in other mediums the reader has the possibility to switch off the medium or change to another channel or web page, here in newspapers the reader has to accept it as it is once purchased or subscribed. Moreover the scope for reader opinions and feedbacks is much restricted in newspapers. Back to the blame on their part, they lay emphasis on many irrelevant issues and superficial news

items. Apart from bias and commercialisation, they glorify cinema industry, give importance to sensational and iniquitous happenings, provide useless expert opinions and interview wrong persons for a subject matter. Above all, they are suspected to be colluding with ruling and business elites to distort about every news item for mind control purpose. Suppressing much needed news from the society or revealing a news, which ought to have been suppressed, for the sake of kindling hatred are their major failures. If the newspaper industry prefers to address these issues, their contribution towards society-building will be exemplary.

Therefore it is clear that readers spending between 30 minutes and one hour to read their newspaper constitute the majority with 46.33 percent.

#### ***8.3.8. Impact by the Newspaper***

After reading the newspaper, a subscriber possibly gets impacted by certain news items. This impact stems from many standpoints of his perception. Some possible standpoints are the news item's future utility, disagreement over the content, comparison for veracity, need for reminiscence, and the like. This impact varies from reader to reader. Although this aspect may not enhance sales and advertisement revenue, it promotes or belittles the newspaper's name and prominence. Here, as respondents are free to tick more than one aspect, the total exceeds the sample size. Table 8.8 has details.

Table 8.8

## Impact by the Newspaper

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Impact by the Newspaper</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Cut and retain important news	129	33.25
2.	Discuss and critically analyse	97	25.00
3.	Write feedback to editor	9	2.32
4.	Use in presentation, thesis and speech	37	9.54
5.	Compare with TV and radio news	116	29.90
<b>Total</b>		<b>388</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Table confirms that impact varies from reader to reader. Moreover, personal qualities and requirements determine the type of impact. In this sample of respondents, highest number of them opt for cutting and retaining important news. This impact shall be seen partially in conjunction with 'Use in presentation, thesis and speech'. as readers are likely to cut and retain news items for their academic, research and professional works. 'Compare with TV and radio news' is the second highest impact. This impact too should be seen in conjunction with 'Discuss and critically analyse' for the reason that readers compare news items that draw their attention with those of other mediums for the sake of discussion and criticism. Hence, impacts 2 and 5 are interrelated the same way impacts 1 and 4 are. If overlapping and cross-ticking is allowed, the combined weight of impacts 2 and 5 outnumber that of impacts 1 and 4. This shows that newspapers serve as a medium of social evaluation for events and happenings. Only 9 respondents, which is the lowest among impacts, prefer

writing feedback to the editor.

It is thus established that majority of the respondents with a category percent of 33.25, cut and retain important news items for future use.

#### **8.4. Reading Preferences**

This section is devoted to the study of reader preferences. News items of regular reading, most preferred aspects in the newspaper of choice, aspects disliked and factors that oblige a respondent both to stop reading a newspaper and effect a switchover to another newspaper are put to in-depth rankings. Thus, it attempts to bring out the existing conditions of relationship between with the newspaper industry and the subscribers in a general manner.

##### ***8.4.1. News Items of Regular Reading***

A newspaper consists of various news items. Organisation of the same is determined by publisher's priorities, advertisers' conditions and subscribers' preferences. It is ever-changing with regard to social and business environment. For example, in the time of economic boom, the Opportunities column ran well into more than 10 pages. Now, as everyone sees, it is hardly 2 pages. Elections and festivals also temporarily change the facade of newspaper. Study of this aspect helps to reorganise the newspaper layout to some extent. For, identifying the most and least read news items shows areas that need highest and lowest emphasis. Thus, deficient and redundant news items could be set right. In addition, marketing activities shall be enhanced to fill the gap found in the most preferred news items. Table 8.9 has respondents' opinion of the news items they

read regularly. The categories in the table are presented in descending order in order to get hold of the relative position (rank) of individual items easily.

Table 8.9

News Items Read Regularly

<b>S. No./ Rank</b>	<b>News Items Read Regularly</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Politics	143	19.86
2.	Educational Materials	115	15.97
3.	Sports	115	15.97
4.	Regional	106	14.72
5.	Opportunities	69	9.58
6.	Cinema	51	7.08
7.	Magazines and supplements	46	6.39
8.	Tenders, business offers and classified	32	4.44
9.	Bullion and stock market	19	2.64
10.	Any other	14	1.94
11.	Matrimonial	10	1.39
<b>Total</b>		<b>720</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Among the eleven, politics is the most regularly read news item. As more than 70 percent of voters in Tamilnadu are loyal to any of the political parties, importance to politics is indisputable. Educational and sports news items share second place with exactly the same number of responses. While importance given to educational news is welcome, similar importance to sports is a cause for concern. For, not every sport is given equal media attention. Only cricket is glorified and news thereof is made to flame the senses of readers. Zeal for sport activities is a healthy phenomenon, but idolising one and

conspicuously neglecting all others is entirely ruinous to the reader. Fourth importance is given to regional news items. Many respondents opined that they were eager to know what had happened around in their geographical area. The above four news items together constitute about two-third of the responses (66.53 percent). The remaining seven news items share the remaining percentage. Opportunities comes fifth, yet the number of responses is low compared to any of the first four items. Cinema is the median news item with 51 responses. All others stand in their slots with matrimonial being the least read news item.

It is hence observed that politics is the most widely read among the eleven news items with 19.86 of respondents preferring it.

Pursuant to their crude opinions on news items of regular reading, the respondents were further required to rank the eleven news items. The ranks were assigned weights on a eleven-point scale starting from 1.1 with a gap of 0.1. Thus, the first rank  $R_1$  gets 1.1 and the last rank  $R_{11}$  gets 0.1. For every news item, the number of respondents who have opted for a particular rank must be multiplied with the corresponding weight. Sum of these eleven multiplications is the rank coefficient for that particular news item. More clearly,

$R_i$  - Rank whereas  $i = 1$  to  $11$

$W_i$  - Weight for  $i$ -th rank whereas  $1.1 \geq W_i \geq 0.1$

$N_i$  - Number of Respondents who opted for  $R_i$  whereas  $i = 1$  to  $11$

Rank Coefficient =  $\sum(N_i W_i)$

Density of responses in a particular area of the 11-point scale determines the relative position of a news item. If most of the responses are concentrated within the first five rankings, that news item will get very high weight and vice versa. If they are distributed throughout, it will get almost a median value. Here, the results should be consistent with the previous analysis of most regularly read news items. Table 8.10 presents the ranking details.

Table 8.10

Ranking of News Items

Rank	News Item	No. of Respondents who ranked the news item as											Coef.
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	
1.	Politics	102	79	45	9	32	9	14	5	5	0	0	<b>277.2</b>
2.	Educational materials	55	37	37	88	37	9	9	5	5	4	14	<b>242.7</b>
3.	Regional	69	23	65	29	37	18	14	4	28	9	4	<b>236.5</b>
4.	Sports	9	46	60	42	29	18	50	27	5	14	0	<b>214.7</b>
5.	Opportunities	19	32	14	32	37	28	37	23	9	55	14	<b>176.6</b>
6.	Cinema	14	32	23	32	18	28	23	14	46	42	28	<b>165.2</b>
7.	Tenders, business, classified	9	18	18	18	18	42	51	28	14	42	42	<b>149.8</b>
8.	Magazines, supplements	5	9	5	18	32	37	51	51	69	14	9	<b>148.3</b>
9.	Bullion, stock market	9	10	23	23	18	42	5	78	18	32	42	<b>146.5</b>
10.	Matrimonial	9	5	5	9	23	46	14	14	23	74	78	<b>112.4</b>
11.	Any other	0	9	5	0	19	23	32	51	78	14	69	<b>110.1</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Results above are not fully consistent with the responses in the most regularly read news items. While five news items retain same places, remaining six news items swap their places in pairs. A mix of consistency and inequality shows the inadequacy of registering just the responses on most regularly read news items. Only the detailed rankings of the eleven news items disclose the

intricate news preference pattern of respondents. Table 8.11 shows a comparison of the two aspects in question. News items that have swapped position are shaded.

Table 8.11

Comparison of News Item Rankings

<b>News Item</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>News Item</b>	<b>Weight Coefficient</b>
Politics	143	Politics	277.2
Educational materials	115	Educational materials	242.7
Regional	115	Sports	236.5
Sports	106	Regional	214.7
Opportunities	69	Opportunities	176.6
Cinema	51	Cinema	165.2
Tenders, business, classified	46	Magazines, supplements	149.8
Magazines, supplements	32	Tenders, business, classified	148.3
Bullion, stock market	19	Bullion, stock market	146.5
Matrimonial	14	Any other	112.4
Any other	10	Matrimonial	110.1

‘Politics’ and ‘Educational materials’ retain their first and second ranks in both the analyses. However, third and fourth news items reverse positions. They are ‘Regional’ and ‘Sports’. More respondents had selected ‘Regional’ as the most regularly read news item than ‘Sports’. However, ‘Sports’ has got higher points than ‘Regional’ in the weighted ranking. It shows that respondents have assigned higher rankings for ‘Sports’ than ‘Regional’ to a greater extent on the eleven-point scale. More clearly, the news item ‘Regional’ is likely to have got more first ranks than ‘Sports’. However, it has failed to get as many second, third, fourth and fifth positions as ‘Sports’. Hence, its overall

score has decreased. Logically it means that while 'Regional' is the third best news item for a certain number of respondents, it is not as good as 'Sports' for the entire base of respondents. This is true for the rest of the news items. 'Opportunities' and 'Cinema' retain their fifth and sixth ranks. However, 'Tenders, business, classified' and 'Magazines, supplements' swap seventh and eighth positions. Following that, 'Bullion, stock market' retain the ninth position. Yet, 'Matrimonial' and 'Any other' swap the last two ranks.

Percentage of every data element, i.e. news item, corresponding to its category total is plotted on a bar chart for the two analyses. This will facilitate better understanding.

Moreover, for statistically proving the consistency of rankings, Hypothesis Testing based on Spearman's Rank Correlation is performed. Ranks of the eleven news items in the two rankings are compared and the difference therein if any is found out. Finally, the Coefficient of Rank Correlation is obtained using the formula. The calculations leading to the hypothesis test are presented in Table 8.12.

Table 8.12

## Calculation of Rank Coefficient

S. No.	News Item	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank Difference	Squared
1.	Politics	1	1	0	0
2.	Educational Materials	2	2	0	0
3.	Sports	3	4	-1	1
4.	Regional	4	3	1	1
5.	Opportunities	5	5	0	0
6.	Cinema	6	6	0	0
7.	Magazines and supplements	7	8	-1	1
8.	Tenders, business offers, classified	8	7	1	1
9.	Bullion and stock market	9	9	0	0
10.	Any other	10	11	-1	1
11.	Matrimonial	11	10	1	1
<b>Sum of Squares</b>					<b>6</b>
<b>Rank Coefficient</b>					<b>0.97</b>

The correlation coefficient of 0.97 suggests a very strong positive association between the first and second rankings by the respondents of news items they regularly read. At 0.01 level of significance, that is to have 99 percent accuracy, the hypothesis test is done in Table 8.13.

Table 8.13

## News Item Rankings - Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Significance Level	Rank Coefficient	T Value (Acceptance Limit)	Result
<p><b>Null (H<sub>0</sub>):</b> There is no rank correlation. Respondents' first and second rankings of news items are not the same.</p> <p><b>Alternative (H<sub>1</sub>):</b> There is rank correlation. Respondents have purposely ranked the news items in the same manner in the two rankings.</p>	$\alpha = 0.01$ (99%)	0.97	0.7455 for n = 11	Reject H <sub>0</sub> . The test is highly significant. Respondents did not rank in a random manner.

The test shows that the first crude ranking of the eleven news items is entirely similar to the second purposeful ranking of those news items. Thus, the respondents fully associate the first ranking with the second one. Not only does every respondent single out the news item(s) he or she regularly read, but also rank the eleven ones in a genuine and consistent way in relation to his or her preferences and requirements. Therefore, the two rankings are exceedingly similar and homogeneous across the entire base of sample respondents. It qualitatively shows that every respondent has his or her own clear and distinctive purpose served by the newspaper of choice.

#### 8.4.2. *Most Preferred Aspects in the Newspaper of Choice*

Every newspaper has its own quality attributes. These attributes show up

in its distinctive layout, language, news scope, supplements and coverage pattern. They differentiate a newspaper from all others. For the reader, if many of these qualities are consistent with his or her values and attitudes, he or she will stick to that newspaper. Thereafter, it will be quite difficult to persuade him or her for a switchover to another. These aspects form the bedrock for a newspaper to retain its subscriber base. Also, a reader may get used to the newspaper's quality and layout aspects. Over a period, he or she ought have tailored his or her preferences to suit those aspects. It is a complex process when choices are many. These elements have been analysed in this subsection. Listed below in Table 8.14 are respondents' viewpoints on the most preferred aspects in their newspaper of choice. Here too, as the respondents tick more than one aspect, the total will be higher than the sample size.

Table 8.14

## Most Preferred Aspects

S. No.	Aspect	No. of Responses	Percentage
1.	Traditional and age old inclination	30	4.88
2.	Importance to local, business & cinema news	45	7.32
3.	Timely and updated news presentation	180	29.27
4.	Accurate and unbiased information	65	10.57
5.	Attractive language	95	15.45
6.	Excellent coverage	65	10.57
7.	Lesser Price	35	5.69
8.	Color pictures	35	5.69
9.	Many supplements	40	6.50
10.	Free offers	10	1.63
11.	Any other	15	2.44
<b>Total</b>		<b>615</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

‘Timely and updated news presentation’ is the single largest aspect with 180 responses. As the most preferred aspect for majority of the respondents, it conveys two things. First, subscribers do not prefer dailies that provide news already amply covered by other mediums, or news items that are not contemporary, or the news that is now cold. Second, the newspaper they read at present is satisfying in this respect. Readers know that the Internet, television and radio are more timely and updated than newspapers. The same can not be expected of newspapers as they come in a time gap of 24 hours. Here, by saying ‘Timely and updated news presentation’ the reader means different things. They evaluate the ability of newspapers to comprehensively present various news

items within its singular form during the course of events.

‘Attractive language’ is the second most preferred aspect with 95 respondents. Lucid language, coherence, courteous wordings and truthfulness constitute ‘Attractive language’. In rare cases, it depends on the taste of the subscriber. For example, few subscribers opined that they enjoyed reading jargons, colloquialism and vulgar slangs.

Third position is shared by ‘Accurate and unbiased information’ and ‘Excellent coverage’ with 65 responses each. As there are many alternatives, one is able to readily compare the veracity and comprehensiveness of news items. As most newspapers favour one or the other social entity such as a political party, caste, religion or race, subscribers prepare themselves for such a bias when choosing the newspaper. Subscribers further opined that they waited until the morning to see their newspaper for actual happenings if important events emerged in-between.

The above four aspects together have 405 responses, which is 65.85 percent. Therefore timeliness, language, coverage and news integrity are the keywords in this era of information and knowledge. A newspaper lacking the four aspects will not survive. More clearly, a newspaper deficient in this respect will never reach about 70 percent of the audience. Other quality attributes such as ‘Traditional inclination’, ‘Colour pictures’, ‘Many supplements’, ‘Lesser price’ and ‘Coverage of local news’ have registered quite some responses. They are, however, only additives to the above said four primary ones.

Therefore it is clear that ‘Timely and updated news presentation’ is the most preferred aspect for majority of the respondents with a category percent of 29.27.

#### **8.4.3. *Aspects Disliked***

It is not possible for a newspaper to satisfy its subscribers in every respect. However, it is up to the newspaper to set scope for aberration in its news items. More clearly, the dislike of the reader engendered from controversial news items should be within tolerable limits. It must not go unrestrained, at which stage, the reader is sure to switch over. Also, the dissatisfied reader will tell everyone around him or her about this thereby possibly damaging the image of the newspaper. Here an important thing is that a biased news itself may not be sufficient to make the reader change his or her newspaper. Only a planned ceaseless attempt to unduly exalt or downgrade any individual, group or associated values will make the newspaper vulnerable. As everyone has biased mindset in one or the other way, the intensity does matter here. In this regard, possible reasons are compiled based on reader inputs that make subscribers dislike the newspaper and possibly effect a switchover. Table 8.15 has the details.

Table 8.15

## Aspects Disliked

Aspect	Subtotal	No. of Responses	Percentage
1. Biased news			
1.1. Politically	97		
1.2. Communally/religiously	92		
1.3. Racially	78		
1.4. Any other	28	295	50.34
2. Inferior news coverage		37	6.31
3. Unattractive layout		32	5.46
4. Annoying and boring language			
4.1. Difficult to understand	32		
4.2. Unnecessary jargons, idioms, metaphors	14		
4.3. Too colloquial and use of vulgar slangs	18		
4.4. Any other	14	78	13.31
5. Poor paper quality		88	15.02
6. Relatively lower supplements		14	2.39
7. Inequitably higher cost		23	3.92
8. Not easily available		19	3.24
9. Any other		0	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

‘Biased news’ is the most disliked aspect in newspapers. It affects virtually everyone. Only 5 out of the 300 respondents have chosen not to dislike a newspaper for its biased news. The subcategories within it are also individually important, because for any form of biased news, be it political, religious, communal or racial, there is a substantial number of displeased respondents. Here except the ‘Any other’ subcategory, all the remaining three subcategories have their numbers almost equal. The subcategory ‘Any other’

too nevertheless has 28 respondents. It shows that respondents are antagonised by newspapers in many ways, not only by the first three subcategories. That is, the scope of biased news stretches beyond political, religious, communal and racial realms. Hence, it is inferred that news items divide people more than uniting them wherein political affiliation, caste, religion, race and geography are major divisive forces.

‘Poor paper quality’ is the second most disliked aspect. According to the respondents, paper quality is associated with three ingredient values. They are readability value, utility value and recycling value. These three values in combination give ‘Poor paper quality’ enormous weight. It even affects a newspaper’s subscription volume considerably. As far as the readability value is concerned, pleasant reading experience starts with better paper quality. The paper media should withstand acceptable levels of tampering such as rough handling, spilling of liquids and wear and tear. In addition, it should also have longer shelf life. Secondly, utility value corresponds to the newspaper’s secondary purposes. In addition to being a newspaper, it is used for packing, wrapping, spreading and cleaning. Therefore, respondents dislike a newspaper with poor paper quality if the utility value matters more to them. Thirdly, recycling value refers to the newspaper’s worthiness after the primary and secondary purposes are fulfilled. Its constituent aspects are worthiness for reuse, resale and biodegradability. As people nowadays are economically more sensitive, ‘Poor paper quality’ precedes in importance to ‘Annoying and boring

language'. Thus, newspapers have become part of one's daily life with many uses. However, whether it is limited to this sample of respondents is to be left for further research.

The third most important aspect of dislike is 'Annoying and boring language'. Respondents, especially learned elders, opined that written and oral forms should differ properly. A written news item with unrestrained use of colloquial forms is as absurd as speaking with strict adherence to grammatical order. Further, a newspaper is there to provide news, not to show off the prowess of the columnist or author. Hence, it is worthless to read a newspaper if the reader takes much effort to understand even what the news item is all about. Here, the respondents further stated that they were talking about the proportional difficulty of a news item with respect to their knowledge of the tongue. More clearly, a reader with an undergraduate degree may not understand a scholarly article in an English newspaper. Hence, the reader knows his level and expects only an acceptable degree of difficulty from news items meant for target audiences like him or her. As far as the subcategories are concerned, every subcategory is important because each has considerable number of respondents. Of them, 'Difficult to understand' is the single largest subcategory with 32 responses. It should be noted that this number is greater than those registered even in five other major aspects of dislike. This reveals the fact that many readers expect the language be simple, lucid and cogent. 'Use of colloquial language and vulgar slang' is the second most disliked aspect. It has

registered 18 responses. Thus, respondents prefer the newspaper to maintain a prosing standard. Further, the news items ought to be free of vernacular phrasings. Finally two subcategories, with equal number of responses of 14 each, come third. They are 'Unnecessary jargons, idioms, metaphors' and 'Any other'. Here, the subcategory 'Any other' has 14 respondents, which is about 18 percent. It shows that there are other elements of dislike than the three listed ones. According to the respondents, diction, presentation and emphasis are those elements in addition to the three.

The aforementioned three aspects of dislike have altogether recorded 78.67 percent of the responses. Therefore, if they are addressed properly, a newspaper is sure to satisfy more than three quarters of its readers. Thereafter, focussing on the remaining 21.33 percent should be easier. Therefore, the three aspects shall be regarded as primary aspects of dislike and the remaining six shall be regarded as secondary ones.

As far as the secondary aspects of dislike are concerned, 'Inferior news coverage' and 'Unattractive layout' are the important ones with 37 and 32 responses respectively. Dislike attributable to such factors as higher cost, lack of supplements and unavailability registered very minimum number of responses. The category 'Any other' has not recorded any responses. It shows that the set of aspects framed here is comprehensive.

Finally, the disliked aspects are ranked in Table 8.16. This is not to find out the most disliked aspect. Instead, it is to sort individual aspects on the basis

of their intensity in causing switchover. Thus, in addition to being disliked, an aspect must result in the rejection of newspaper by the reader. Here, combination of aspects is not sought since it will unnecessarily complicate the analysis. For, always there is one core aspect of dislike which causes the reader to switch over. This core aspect leads the reader to search out for further elements of dislike until he has convinced himself or herself enough to put an end to the newspaper. Hence to repeat, at the core, there exists only a singular aspect of dislike. In this regard, the table lists individual aspects that impel the reader to stop subscription. The results must be consistent with the previous responses.

Table 8.16

Ranking of Aspects Causing Switchover

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Biased news	127	42.33
2	Poor paper quality	79	26.33
3	Annoying language	73	24.33
4	Inferior news coverage	14	4.67
5	Higher cost	7	2.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Overall, the rankings are consistent with the responses in Table 8.26. Only exception is that many minor aspects of dislike, which got responses in the previous analysis, find no place here. Especially, of the six minor aspects of dislike, only two have rankings here. It shows the interrelationship between responses and their rankings. That is, to find a place in the rankings, an aspect

of dislike should satisfy two things. First, an aspect of dislike itself is not adequate to give up a newspaper. Contrarily, when the same is felt by many respondents, discontent grows within the subscriber base against the newspaper and becomes universal. It thereafter renders stronger chances for switchover. Secondly, when the number of responses is very high for a disliked aspect, it is surely a factor for switchover. In this sample, number of responses for a disliked aspect should be as high as 30. However, 'Higher cost' remains an exception. It got only 23 responses in the previous table but manages to find a place here with 7 respondents. It is due to the fact that a newspaper offering pleasant reading experience negates cost elements. However, if its aspects of dislike outweigh its merits, cost becomes an exceeding burden for the reader. Therefore, 'Higher cost' defies logic in this instance. In short, factors such as bias, paper quality, language, coverage and cost are sure factors of switchover and the others are not. Collective weight of switchover factors shall be so enormous that it will even bring down the newspaper.

It is thus evident that 'Biased news' is the most disliked aspect that shall cause 42.33 percent of the respondents to make a switchover to another newspaper.

### **8.5. Usefulness of Newspaper and Supplements to Target Audiences**

In this section, usefulness of newspapers and their supplements to various target audiences is analysed. Four categories of target audience were identified namely elders, women, younger folk and children. They are tested for

dependence against five usefulness states that range from 'More useful' to 'Waste'. Thus, whether subscribers perceive usefulness in a same way irrespective of their personal qualities including age, education and marital status shall be ascertained. In addition, the extent of variation across the categories of target audiences could also be determined. This will help the newspapers to reorient their strategies with respect to news items, presentation and coverage. These aspects are common for the readers of both Tamil and English newspapers.

#### **8.5.1. Problem Construction**

The problem has three data variables namely 'Target audiences', 'Usefulness' and 'Newspaper component'. The first variable 'Target audiences' has four categories namely 'Elders', 'Women', 'Younger folk' and 'Children'. The second variable 'Usefulness' is rated on a five-point scale that ranges from 'More useful' to 'Waste'. The third variable 'Newspaper component' is common to both the analyses. It has two elements namely 'Main newspaper' and 'Supplements'. Here, the problem works out to finding whether there is significant difference between data attributes of these variables. In this regard, two tests of independence are performed and their hypotheses are given below.

Test 1: To ascertain whether usefulness of newspaper expressed on a five-point scale and four categories of target audiences are independent. In other words, to find out if the target audiences significantly differ in their opinion about usefulness of

newspaper so that their views are not attributable to chance.

Test 2: To ascertain whether usefulness of supplements expressed on a five-point scale and four categories of target audiences are independent. In other words, to find out if the target audiences significantly differ in their opinion about usefulness of supplements so that their views are not attributable to chance.

### 8.5.2. Usefulness of Newspaper

Responses are summarised in Table 8.17 along with the calculated general association value called, ‘Chi-square Statistic’.

Table 8.17

Usefulness of Newspaper - Chi-square Statistic

	More useful	Useful	Neither	Useless	Waste	Total
<b>Elders</b>	101	134	23	37	5	<b>300</b>
<b>Women</b>	74	92	42	78	14	<b>300</b>
<b>Younger folk</b>	74	115	18	88	5	<b>300</b>
<b>Children</b>	80	96	44	48	32	<b>300</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1200</b>
<b>Chi-square Statistic: <math>\chi^2(12) = 95.25</math> with <math>p = 0.0000</math></b>						

Although a ‘Chi-square Statistic’ of 20 indicates stronger dependence, it is necessary to confirm the same with hypothesis testing. Now, based on two statistical parameters namely ‘Degrees of Freedom’ and ‘Significance Level’, a table value called ‘Chi-square Value’ is obtained. It is the upper limit of the test. It is compared against the ‘Chi-square statistic’ for confirmation within limits. The ‘Degrees of Freedom’ here is  $(4 - 1) \times (5 - 1) = 12$ . Further, the test

is performed at 0.01 ‘Significance Level’ to get 99 percent accuracy. Table 8.18 provides the required hypothesis testing.

Table 8.18

Usefulness of Newspaper - Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Chi-square statistic	Degrees of freedom	Chi-square value	Result
<p><b>Null hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> :</b> Reader category and usefulness are independent. Any difference between them is merely by chance.</p> <p><b>Alternative hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> :</b> Usefulness of newspaper has strong dependence to reader category.</p>	95.25	12	26.21 at $\alpha=99\%$	‘Chi-square statistic’ is higher than ‘Chi-square value’. It lies beyond the upper limit of the acceptance region. The test is highly significant. Therefore, ‘Alternative hypothesis’ is accepted. Usefulness of newspaper differs among the four target audiences namely Elders, Women, Younger folk and Children. In other words, usefulness has strong dependence to reader category.

The tests lead to the following inferences. Firstly, usefulness means differently to different target audiences. No two respondents see usefulness the same way. Thus, age and pursuing generation gap plays a larger role in interpreting usefulness. Hence, reader category is an important contributory factor to weigh the usefulness of newspaper. This has led to the chi-square statistic being much higher at 95.25.

To elaborate the above point, parents wanting their children to become more worldly and shrewd will regard a particular newspaper’s approach useful

even if it is not at all child-friendly. Likewise, a person with revolutionary ideas and values which are against family bindings and chastity shall be glorifying a newspaper promoting similar values. Moreover, an elderly man who finds no or very little emphasis on political, regional or religious news regards that newspaper utter waste. Hence, usefulness predominantly hinges on the perception of reader in a particular age category.

The data attributes 'More useful' and 'Useful' have recorded higher percentage of responses compared to others. This shows that many respondents have already chosen and stayed with their newspapers after evaluation. This has resulted in very low difference between observed and expected frequencies in these data attributes. Therefore, the final value leading to 'Chi-square statistic' is much lower for these data attributes. Yet, combined force of the other three data attributes push 'Chi-square statistic' higher. If the sample group had many respondents who were already settled with their newspapers, the dependence factor would have got reduced substantially. This might have lead to very low 'Chi-square statistic', which in turn could have even rendered the hypothesis test 'Not significant'.

Number of responses for data attributes 'Useless' and 'Waste' is nearly equal among all categories except Elders. Elder respondents opined that news items have much changed during the recent times. It has become worse, they lamented. Instead of being informative and constructive, newspapers emphasise on trivial, sensual and deviant news items and make issues out of non issues.

Also, lack of control under the pretext of freedom of expression is another reason for respondents, especially elders, to regard it useless or waste. Contrarily, some male, many female and almost all younger respondents do not see anything aberrant and/or abhorrent in news items. This has unduly pushed up the dependence factor.

Finally, although many respondents regard newspaper a waste of time, they continue subscribing or reading the newspaper. It has become a social compulsion and a reflexive practice. Moreover, negligible cost, educational requirements and employment opportunities offset the negative aspects.

### 8.5.3. *Usefulness of Supplements*

Like newspapers, supplements are also put to similar hypothesis test. Responses are summarised in Table 8.19. along with the calculated general association value called, ‘Chi-square Statistic’.

Table 8.19

Usefulness of Supplements - Chi-square Statistic

	<b>More useful</b>	<b>Useful</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Useless</b>	<b>Waste</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Elders</b>	92	125	55	14	14	<b>300</b>
<b>Women</b>	83	124	42	23	28	<b>300</b>
<b>Younger folk</b>	88	125	46	32	9	<b>300</b>
<b>Children</b>	78	143	42	19	18	<b>300</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1200</b>
<b>Chi-square Statistic: <math>\chi^2(12) = 24.89</math> with <math>p = 0.0153</math></b>						

Here also the ‘Degrees of freedom’ is 12 as number of rows and columns remain unchanged. Hypothesis testing is performed below.

Table 8.20

## Usefulness of Supplements - Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Chi-square statistic	Degrees of freedom	Chi-square value	Result
<p><b>Null hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> :</b> Reader category and usefulness are independent. Any difference between them is merely by chance.</p> <p><b>Alternative hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> :</b> Usefulness of supplements has strong dependence to reader category.</p>	24.89	12	26.21 at $\alpha=99\%$	<p>‘Chi-square statistic’ is lower than ‘Chi-square value’. It lies within the upper limit of the acceptance region. The test is not significant. Therefore, ‘Null hypothesis’ is accepted. Usefulness of supplements do not differ among the four target audiences namely Elders, Women, Younger folk and Children. In other words, usefulness and reader category are independent.</p>

The test reveals that reader category and usefulness of supplements are independent of each other. More clearly, respondents’ viewpoints towards supplements do not change with their age. It shows that supplements are not worth much to the target audiences. Hence, correlation between age and usefulness of supplements is very weak. The source data itself gives clues in this regard. Therein, ratio of a column element to the total number of respondents does not significantly differ across the four reader categories. More clearly, percentage of respondents preferring a particular usefulness attribute remains fairly equal in all the four reader categories. Maximum standard

deviation for these percentages is 3.06. Hence, the variation among reader categories is easily absorbed by the 1 percent error margin in the hypothesis test. This means that respondents are indifferent and homogeneous in their opinion, which caused their tendency inclined towards positive rating. Therefore, the hypothesis has failed the significance test.

### **8.6. Ranking of Tamil and English Newspapers**

Existing Tamil and English newspaper publications are ranked based on respondent opinions. Response was sought from all the 300 respondents irrespective of their subscribing or reading nature. Here, in-depth analysis is forgone for two reasons. Firstly, this ranking is based on inputs from 300 sample respondents, which is minimal compared to the total subscriber base. Hence, its veracity could be easily disputed. Secondly, results shall exalt or belittle a particular newspaper. If so, it is likely to offend newspapers which happen to get lower rankings. They may regard it harmful to their business. Therefore, a shallow analysis is done that is not to serve as a yardstick. Here, Tamil and English newspapers are ranked separately. First, ranking of Tamil newspapers is done in Table 8.21.

Table 8.21

## Ranking of Tamil Newspapers

Newspaper	No. of Respondents Ranked the Newspaper as							
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Dhinakaran	65	74	46	18	18	5	14	60
Dhina Thanthi	92	74	51	32	9	19	5	18
Dhina Malar	83	46	69	78	5	5	5	9
Dhina Mani	18	19	37	51	18	46	79	32
Dhina Poomi	5	4	65	18	46	51	65	46
Malai Murasu	4	23	28	18	70	46	88	23
Tamil Murseru	0	5	97	55	32	55	19	37
Local Newspaper	0	0	65	9	88	9	37	92

(Source: Primary Data)

About one third of respondents, which is the highest, give Dhina Thanthi first rank. It is followed by Dhina Malar and Dhinakaran. In addition, these three newspapers have majority of respondents within the first four ranks. Hence, these three newspapers should have been pivotal news providers among Tamil subscribers in the study area. Here, Dinkaran is an exception in one respect. One fifth of respondents have ranked it to be the worst. Only local newspapers have got more worst ranks than Dhinakaran. It could mean that Dhinakaran's business practices and news item priorities are a divisive factor for the respondents. More clearly, relentless advertisements, rapacious competitiveness, freebies and prizes, extreme bias in political or social arena and major flaw in news item choices are possible elements of divisiveness. While quite a section of respondents may be forced to purchase Dhinakaran for

some reason, it is otherwise unacceptable to many others. Therefore, while respondents have confined their rankings within the first four places for Dhina Thanthi and Dhina Malar, they seem to have waited to assign Dinkaran the worst rank.

After the three dominant ones, Dhinamani is the most preferred choice. For that, responses are almost evenly distributed across the eight ranks without much deviation. It shows that it is a good alternative and centrist newspaper. More clearly, it is possibly perceived as a balanced, impartial and unbiased newspaper by quite a section of the subscribers. According to the respondents, its news elements show some degree of restraint without much polarisation. After that, Dhina Poomi and Malai Murasu have their own preferred reader base and corresponding rankings. Finally, Tamil Murasu has not got first rank at all. Likewise, no one has put Local Newspapers in first and second ranks.

A simple ranking is done here to facilitate understanding. As there are eight newspapers with eight ranks, first rank gets eight points, second rank gets 7 points and so on. Thus, last rank gets one point. Number of responses in a particular rank is multiplied with corresponding points to get a summation. Newspapers are ranked in descending order based on this weight. It is presented in Table 8.22.

Table 8.22

## Summation of Ranking Points

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Points</b>
1.	Dhina Malar	1844
2.	Dhina Thanthi	1841
3.	Dhinakaran	1579
4.	Tamil Murseru	1260
5.	Dhina Mani	1154
6.	Malai Murasu	1068
7.	Dhina Poomi	1061
8.	Local Newspaper	980

Assigning weights causes disarray to the observed rankings. Dhina Malar gets the topmost spot and its points are very marginally higher than Dhina Thanthi. Logically however, this difference is of no value, because given the sample size, polarisation of respondents towards a particular newspaper is natural. In addition, ranking errors caused by omission and negligence should be taken into consideration. Secondly, Tamil Murasu, which has not got any first rank, secures higher weight than Dhina Mani owing to concentration of its ranks in second and third quartiles. Its preferred reader base should regard it a good alternative to the three dominant newspapers. To be precise, for the readers of Tamil Murasu, it shall not be the best newspaper out there, but a good alternative to the dominant ones in many respects. Finally, Dhinakaran's exception is proved here again. The difference of points between a newspaper and its follower shows Dhinakaran and Tamil Murasu as odd entities. More clearly, points difference between Dhina Thanthi and Dhinakaran is 262 and

that of Dhinakaran and Tamil Murasu is 319. The latter case can be disregarded as Tamil Murasu is not one of the three dominant newspapers. Hence, its points difference against a dominant newspaper is not a matter of concern. But, points difference between Dhina Thanthi and Dhinakaran is unduly higher compared to others. If the sample is representative of its population, Dhinakaran should be very odd among the newspapers.

Ranking is done herewith for English newspapers. Here, only a very minimum number of respondents have registered their responses. Of the 153 respondents reading English newspapers, only 34 have taken part in ranking. Respondents said that ranking did not apply to English newspapers for two reasons. First, the choice is very limited. Vast majority of them choose between The Hindu and New Indian Express. Secondly, unlike Tamil newspapers, English newspapers are valued on different parameters. More clearly, bias factors, aspects of dislike, utility and news expectation significantly differ between English and Tamil newspapers. Therefore, for almost everyone, what they read is the best and ranking is meaningless. Moreover, the row total, which ought to have been equal to the number of respondents differs across the newspapers. It shows that respondents are very apathetic to ranking the English newspapers. Yet, for the sake of completeness, it is presented in Table 8.23.

Table 8.23

## Ranking of English Newspapers

Newspaper	No. of Respondents Ranked the Newspaper as						
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
Times of India	4	6	11	2	2	0	0
New Indian Express	7	14	6	2	1	0	0
The Hindu	28	5	1	0	0	0	0
Deccan Chronicle	0	3	2	7	4	1	0
Business Line	0	4	2	5	6	1	0
Financial Express	0	0	0	1	1	7	2
Any other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(Source: Primary Data)

As from the table, The Hindu remains the most preferred newspaper for the sample respondents. It is followed by New Indian Express. Times of India too has its satisfied subscribers. These three newspapers do not get sixth and seventh ranks at all. Even more, the Hindu is not ranked below the third place. It proves that the three newspapers are held in high esteem by their readers. All the remaining newspapers have insignificant number of respondents and rankings.

### 8.7. Conclusion

This chapter analysed many aspects pertaining to newspaper subscribers' choices and preferences. As far as the subscribers' distinctive choices and tendencies were concerned, a noticeable difference between the subscribing patterns of Tamil and English newspapers was observed. In addition, newspaper reading had become one of the indispensable personal interest activities in

many households. Moreover the choice of language significantly differed when the nature of acquiring newspaper was considered between different procurement points. Yet, door delivery was the most preferred mode of buying of newspapers. The analysis further showed that the inexorable reach of Internet made nearly a quarter of the respondents to read only e-edition of newspapers. Further, the subscribers had already known to differentiate between the quality of available newspapers, with a reinforced preference for their current one. Furthermore, more than nine out of ten respondents restricted their reading time to not more than an hour a day. However the impact of news and newspaper varied from reader to reader, as personal qualities and requirements determined the type of impact.

As far as reading preferences were concerned, politics was the most regularly read news item. In this regard, subscribers ranked the eleven news items in a genuine and consistent order in relation to their preferences and requirements. While most respondents expected their newspaper to present news in a timely and updated manner, they held biased news as their most disliked aspect. Usefulness of newspapers meant differently to different target audiences as age and pursuing generation gap played a larger role in interpreting usefulness. Contrarily, when considering the usefulness of supplements, it revealed that subscribers' viewpoint towards supplements did not change with their age, as the supplements were not worth much to the target audiences. Finally in the ranking of newspapers, Dhina Malar and Dhina

Thanthi were the most prominent Tamil newspapers, but in English, it was The Hindu with others far behind.

Before closing, it is to be emphasised that the analysis was so broad that it could not be summarised in one or two paragraphs. Hence the overall summary of the analyses is presented under 'Findings' in the next chapter. Moreover the respondents remained genuine in registering their responses as at no place the analysis produced weird or inverse results. Therefore setting aside errors of any kind, this analysis should serve as a conceptual guide for future studies in this regard.