

Chapter IX

Recent Trends and Concluding Discussions

9.1. Introduction

Importance of newspapers and their role in the fast moving lives of people across continents is a well known fact. Since the issue of the very first newspaper, societies have witnessed many progressive changes that have propelled them to new levels of enlightenment. By bringing news from all over the globe, a newspaper acts as an window to the external world. More than anything, newspapers are instrumental in bridging the communication gap between people in different regions as it contributes to the air of awareness in a society. In addition, newspaper printing, circulation, advertising and other related activities remain one of the significant contributors to the growth and development of any society in the modern world. Furthermore the industry facilitates socioeconomic and industrial development through the mobilisation and distribution of people and resources. It shows the arts of local resources management, choices of income generation activities, opportunities of job and work, ideas and concepts of innovative entrepreneurship and success or failure stories of venture development that either encourage or caution people. Thus it plays a significant role in shaping the structure of economy and possibly elevates it to higher levels.

Indian newspaper industry is a leading press arena in the world.

Hundreds of newspapers reach out in enormous numbers every morning to the people of this vast country. Newspaper is as if the staple diet for an information-hungry Indian and is the order of the morning for the eager reader. In India, its tremendous influence upon people from all walks of life is proved by the more than three times increase in circulation of Dailies against their global counterparts (The Financial Express, February 2007). This affirms both the charm they still hold in today's world and the popularity they still have with the common people. In order to reach this status, it has passed various stages of evolution, which were enumerated in the previous chapters. This chapter summarises the entire work and in addition touches upon the recent developments and trends in the newspaper industry and the media in general. Thus along with the summary of findings and suggestions, this chapter provides discussions that depict existing conditions with regard to newspapers and media thereby letting readers and subscribers deduce the direction in which the industry and society are heading.

9.2. Recent Trends

Recent trends refer to the developments that take place currently with regard to newspaper industry at the internal and external levels. The internal functions and operations within the newspaper industry on one side and the influence of macro social, economic, technological and political environment upon it on the other are analysed in this section. As most aspects are overlapping, they are presented under broad subjects such as administration,

information technology, circulation growth, governmental departmental newsletters and newspapers and issues of regulation and control.

9.2.1. Administration

Rapid technological advancement after the 1980's, especially in the arena of Information Technology and Computers, has brought down the production cost of newspapers. Big newspaper companies have started various editions to have complete control over printed news. In the name of innovation, many changes are being subtly and gradually introduced in content, layout, presentation and news coverage to grab market share. At the same time, small and medium newspapers are fighting for survival and are beginning to fall in the competition with big players. While rapacious takeovers have obliterated quite a section of small and medium news companies, others are fighting back. In this regard, they are enhancing printing technology, attempting cost effectiveness, introducing scientific management and developing professionalism in administration. This has enabled them to successfully retain their subscriber base and advertisers. Moreover, publishers have shed their conservative and protectionist mindset and looked to expand their subscriber base in otherwise non-traditional markets and secure new avenues for marketing. This ultimately has helped readers in the form of quality newsprint, localised approach and updated coverage.

9.2.2. Information Technology

Information Technology has remained instrumental in changing the

facade of the newspaper industry. It facilitated faster and easier exchange of bulk data and brought the world closer. In particular, Digitisation, Scanning, Internet and Mobile Communication helped newspapers to be instant and updated in their news coverage and presentation.

On the flip side however, it has created various challenges in the sense that importance of bare news gave way to sensation, subtle bias and mind control. To add to that, globalisation also created challenges before newspapers cutting across all languages. The importance of English lead to the gradual domination of American and Northern European values and culture and has forced regional newspapers to adjust to that. Visible changes have been made in readership composition, layout, distribution pattern, marketing policies, editorial strategies, news features and information mix. Colorful, pictorial and entertaining news, mostly on sensuous topics such as food, travel, sex, cinema and crime, have outweighed and prevailed over the importance of traditional political and social news.

Thus, technology and globalisation have created before indigenous newspapers numerous challenges to meet, many situations to overcome and multitude of constraints to adjust to, notwithstanding the enhancements in content and context. Further the proliferation of digital platforms is posing a major challenge to the print media today to be relevant, interesting and true to its core values and cardinal principles. This challenge takes a toll right from the headlines to the classified advertisements.

9.2.3. Circulation Growth

In most parts of the world, the age old newspaper industry is fighting a losing battle against online news sources, and largely surrendering to it. It is an industry that is slowly but steadily headed for a defunct status in the United States and other developed nations. Researchers equate this condition of newspapers to the state of threatened species. However in India, which is home to about 1.2 billion people, newspapers are thriving. Not only is the press in robust health here, but also registering an astonishing growth rate. For example, The Hindu is witnessing a steady growth of over two percent. Moreover it is the only newspaper that has added 50,000 new readers as per the IRS Survey of Q1 and Q2 (first and second quarters) in 2012-13 ((Advertisement on The Hindu, Saturday 16 and Friday 22, February 2013). Furthermore, from 2005 to 2010, more than 2,100 publications debuted in India, adding to the 60,000 circulating ones. The rush to join this vulnerable industry in India is due to an expanding middle class and a booming economy. More clearly, increased income of the middle class has led to enhanced lifestyle wherein seeking of more knowledge and information remains the most important characteristic. This has fueled an explosion in consumer spending and advertising. This obviously has brought down the illiteracy rate of many States.

Another reason is that Internet penetration remains marginal notwithstanding India's reputation as an Information Technology (IT) powerhouse. This is due to a combination of factors, of which punishingly

higher Internet tariff is the most important one. Compared to many other nations, in India, only a fraction of the population, mostly from urban and semi-urban areas, could afford computers and high-speed Internet access. Therefore, newspapers come as an apt and alternative source of information. As the single copy price of a newspaper rarely exceeds three rupees, which is equivalent to a paltry six US cents, it helps enormously to keep the circulation figures. On the other hand, although the price war has suppressed prices, surge in advertising revenues saw newspapers not to be out of the race. In this regard, according to official data from the Registrar for Newspapers in India, only six out of more than 62,000 publications ceased their operations between 2005 and 2010, which is negligible percentage wise.

However, whether this growth trend is sustainable remains to be seen as many socioeconomic indicators have shown negative patterns after 2008. More clearly, decline in industrial production, slowdown of economic activities, sluggish export and import and uncertain geopolitical conditions are sure to lead the Indian newspaper industry to a saturation point. It is also possible that the saturation point could have been reached already. Steady penetration of the Internet news sharing also adds to the problem. However, whether the fate of newspapers in America and Europe befall their counterparts in India remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, the advantage and success of newspaper or any other print media can not be measured in subscription and ratings alone. Even if a

newspaper's subscription is less in number, the readership always goes high. This is due to the fact that in a country like India where a substantial percentage of people are illiterate and poor, sharing of one newspaper by many in common places and spreading of that information by oral forms take the news to unimaginable reaching points. Hence the power of the Press is a revolution on its own and its imperiousness is made even intense by technology. India stands as the second largest Internet user in Asia. Therefore, to adapt to these changes, more and more newspapers and magazines are going online. Thus, now more than spreading information, they have evolved to shape public opinion and bend common culture.

9.2.4. Government Departmental Newsletters and Newspapers

Realising the importance of news media, various state government departments are planning to start newspapers or newsletters. The Police Department of Tamilnadu has already started a newsletter, first being implemented in Chennai, the State capital. The newsletter is a fortnightly publication that contains information regarding police activities in the four police zones under Chennai. It has a Joint Commissioner at its editor, two district level police officials as associate editors and many station level police officers as reporters. The newsletter will also have a native photographer. It is a first of its kind initiative in the history of newspapers. It will have articles on the solving of sensational crimes, traffic management and diversions, crime prevention measures, awareness initiatives, programmes of the Police Boys'

Club and other information related to the Department. As of this time the newsletter is circulated among city and state police officers, police stations and media persons. The government and the police department have not yet decided upon making it available to the general public.

9.2.5. Issues of Regulation and Control

The Press Council of India (PCI) is the only statutory regulator for newspapers in India. It was established for the purpose of preserving the freedom of the Press and of maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. However it does not have punitive powers but only have powers to admonish newspapers. Therefore many newspaper companies and individual journalists do not care much about the PCI. Even worse, many journalists in the past have not even responded to the notices issued by the PCI as they know the latter has not powers to suspend publication licences. Above all, the electronic media is out of the ambit of the PCI. A section of this very media violates all norms of journalism to corrupt the people to the core, Moreover consistent efforts of the news media to sensationalise news, spawn paid news, attempt mass mind control, bend public opinion, create social and communal divisions, vilify self-created, self-proclaimed enemies and glorify those of their clan cause unimaginable damage to social, economic, cultural and political order of the country. It is ultimately to bring anarchy and catastrophe upon the nation.

In this regard, judges, scholars, bureaucrats, statesmen and many others

in public and private arenas have felt the need for a regulatory authority with penalising power to punish erring media houses and journalists. However the media and even most members of the PCI have so far succeeded in unequivocally refusing and preemptively thwarting any development in this regard under the guise of freedom of expression and speech and under the folly of self-regulation. Notwithstanding, an urgent need is felt in line with the current scenario to make amendment to the Press Council Act, 1978 for giving more powers to this regulator. Chairman of the PCI, Justice Markandey Katju, is in the forefront of this endeavour. Of late in this connection, he is actively taking up a fight to set up a statutory regulator with punitive powers. That will be a 48-member statutory body with 40 members equally represented from the print and electronic media. The members are to be elected much like the representatives to the Bar Council of India are elected by lawyers.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) came to know that certain media houses have ownership and control in all forms of media including print, television and radio. This ownership and control lead to horizontal integration of undue proportions with unrestrained Corporate power and reach. At another side TRAI came to know of a growing number of undesirable developments in the print and electronic media wherein builders and politicians have begun to acquire media interests. Although TRAI has no problem with the Corporates and others investing in or owning media houses for profits, the latter's abusive inclination to control the media and pursuant

actions that project a coloured point of view of happenings for vested interests lead to conflict of interest.

In order to maintain the democratic functioning of the media and the nation as a whole TRAI is contemplating two aspects. First TRAI has decided to put in place a two out of three rule whereby a media house could have interests in any two of three mediums of print, television and radio. This, if implemented, will help to check unrestrained horizontal integration of media houses that has ulterior motives of power consolidation and information control. TRAI does this to restrict cross-media ownership in line with practices in most other established democracies.

Second, TRAI is working on a mechanism for the creation of an institutional buffer between corporate owners and newspaper management. It will recommend the same to the government for implementation after getting it ready. In this regard TRAI proposes a special organisational structure in which the corporate owner of a newspaper will have only a financial interest in it. More clearly, the corporate control is restricted to merely owning of shares, and the editorial operations are to be done under a different structure where the corporate owner has little or no control. TRAI's recommendations are based on the principle that corporate ownership of media must be separated from editorial management as the media serves public interest. This therefore applies to corporate entities that have multifarious business interests.

As the regulator of the broadcasting industry TRAI does this as a

reactionary task which is aimed at ensuring the independence and impartiality of the print and electronic media besides a free and fair editorial policy. As usual media houses claim that such restrictions will violate the right to freedom of speech under Article 19 of the Constitution. However TRAI has categorically rejected these objections by the defence that this is absolutely necessary to maintain the plurality and diversity of media. TRAI also points out that all robust democracies worldwide have restrictions on cross-media ownership.

9.3. Findings

Findings are provided under three major headings namely Indian Newspaper Industry, The Tamil Press and Subscriber Attitude towards Newspapers. The third heading is further divided into six subheadings.

9.3.1. Indian Newspaper Industry

1. There were newsletters during the Mogul dynasty in the 16th century India. The first ever printing press was established in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1674. Madras (Chennai) and Calcutta (Kolkatta) had the press respectively in 1711 and 1779. In 1780 India got its first official newspaper namely Bengal Gazette published by James Augustus Hickey from Calcutta.
2. As James Augustus Hicky's Bengal Gazette was consistently anti-establishment, the British East India Company jailed him and forcefully seized his movable types in the jail. For his fight, suffering and endurance against the government James Augustus Hicky is still

acclaimed as the Father of the Indian Press. In his memory, January 29 of every year, the day he founded Bengal Gazette, is celebrated as Journalism Day in India.

3. In the British India, Governor Generals enforced rigid press control. Lord Wellesley and Lord Warren Hastings were more stringent in this regard. Moreover newspapers of that time were only in English, as almost all the readers were British. News items too were limited to British activities in India. The local population was not the target audience and its problems and issues were out of the purview of news coverage.
4. The Indian side lacked technology, infrastructure, political influence, and administrative skills needed to run a newsprint. Therefore, either indigenous efforts with regard to press depended on foreign expertise or attempts to venture into newsprint business by own measures proved a failure. Yet, of the Indians, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar succeeded to some extent in printing.
5. The Press in India in the early 1930's consisted of more than 300 daily newspapers with an aggregate circulation of 45,00,000 copies. Moreover Indian Newspapers formed their own cooperative news agency in 1948 under the name, Press Trust of India Ltd.
6. In the pursuant decades, the press became more popular and remained as a much needed power tool for information and education

to the people in their freedom struggle. During the time of Independence, many leaders fought for the freedom of the press also. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the front runner among them. He was called the father of the press industry revolution.

7. First newspaper by an Indian was another Bengal Gazette, published by Gangadhar Bhattacharya. Many other newspapers by Indians such as Bande Mataram, Kesari, Maratha, Free Press Journal, Madras Standard and Bombay Chronicle came out. They had direct association with freedom fighters including Gandhiji and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. These papers, besides being greatly successful, created waves of influence among nationalist movements.
8. In the post Independence period, as States were created according to languages, local or regional language gained priority over Hindi and English. Moreover, changes were made in content and presentation in accordance with the preferences and requirements of the target audience. Thus political journalism was gradually replaced by mass journalism.
9. Views Papers of the pre-Independence era that had the purpose of freedom fight, education or social mobilisation gave way to News Papers that focussed on equality, democracy and development. This condition existed until the liberalisation drive of the early 1990's. Thereafter until now, newspapers have become a business

proposition. They are now instrument of mass conditioning, tool of socioeconomic influence, weapon of power, proponent of particular agenda and source of easy profit. Large corporate houses and political outfits have invested heavily in the news and media industry.

10. Indian newspaper industry has witnessed impressive annual growth up to the year 2007. It is the latest period until which authoritative figures are available with the Press Council of India and the Registrar of Newspapers for India. The growth in the industry has been much beyond global trend. Even more it is higher than the overall growth of Indian economy. This trend of continued buoyancy in the newspaper scene is likely to continue for some time.

11. Owing to the dynamism of environment, facts and figures related to newspaper industry sharply contrast between 2005 and 2011. Similarly the growth in number of newspapers has not resulted in the proportionate increase in readership or circulation. However rural and urban areas grew evenly. Additionally the male and female ratio as regards readership remains static with females consistently lower in readership percentage.

12. In India, news media is categorised into print, television and radio segments. The Internet platform is evolving rapidly, but it is yet to be fully brought under government control. Due to diversity of mediums, various bodies oversee their functioning. In that the Press

Council of India and the Registrar of Newspapers for India oversee the print media and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) oversees the television, cable and Direct to Home (DTH) arenas.

9.3.2. *The Tamil Press*

1. The Press in Tamilnadu grew in four major stages namely Missionary Press, Sectional Press, Dravidian Press and Nationalist Press. Yet, the chronological development, social evolution, range of activities, technical growth and stated mission and objectives of the four offshoots had many overlapping and interdependent aspects. Any difference of objectives or issue between them did not break the social fabric but served as a bargaining agent for social equality.
2. The sustained printing endeavours by Catholic and Protestant Missionaries marked the beginning and growth of printing in Tamilnadu. The missionaries regarded the press as one of their primary vehicles for spreading the Christian faith. They set Goa and Tamilnadu as their most important bases of activity and introduced many printed materials in Tamil for religious teachings. Their contribution was both unparalleled and unsurpassed.
3. In 1679, the Portuguese printed the Tamil-Portuguese Dictionary at their press at Ambalkad near Trichur in Kerala. However the first newspaper appeared in Tamilnadu only in the latter part of the

eighteenth century. It was Madras Courier founded by Richard Johnson on 12 October, 1785. After six years its editor Hugh Boyd started an independent paper, the Hircarrah in 1791. Another newspaper, Madras Gazette, was published in 1795 by Robert William. Also during that period the Government Gazette was introduced in Madras.

4. Various sections of society observed that the press served as an effective medium in the hands of Christian Missionaries. Social mobilisation and consolidation achieved by the missionaries obliged the enthusiasts of other religions to act upon in defending their religious faith. Therefore these sections based on trade, race, caste, religion and community began to start newspapers. Not only did they use these newspapers to voice their grievances, but also to consolidate their groups or communities on similar lines.
5. Initial Tamil newspapers and journals were apolitical in the beginning. The first Tamil monthly magazine was Tamil Patrika published by the Religious Tract Society in 1831. Similarly, Gazulu Lakshmanarasu Chetty launched the Crescent in 1844 for Hindu merchants, which defended the rights and privileges of Hindu community. Viveka Vilasam, promoted by non-Christian Tamil intellectuals, appeared in 1865 with the objective of counteracting the missionary propaganda.

6. At that time Englishmen started newspapers to defend British rule in India. Notable papers were Madras Times (1860), Madras Mail (1868), the Spectator (1836) and The Anglo Indian (c.1840). These newspapers attempted safeguarding commercial interests of Europeans and Anglo Indians and supporting the British government's policy. Obviously these newspapers wielded considerable influence on the administration and the intelligentsia.
7. The Hindu was the first mainstream newspaper owned by Indians. Established on September 20, 1878 by G. Subramania Iyer and five others in Madras, it was published initially as a Weekly, The Hindu represented the opinions and grievances of educated upper class Indians. As most of its editors were Anglophiles in the beginning, The Hindu acted as a buffer between the readers and the British rulers as it softened the readers' passions against the British. However it went into the hands of nationalist forces, and thereafter became anti establishment.
8. There was not one Tamil newspaper to serve the needs of Tamils. G. Subramania Iyer of The Hindu therefore established the first newspaper in Tamil, the Swadesamitran in 1882. Swadesamitran enjoyed popularity among the people of Tamilnadu. Like Hicky's Bengal Gazette, the Swadesamitran was a major journalistic development in the history of Tamil newspapers. Some other Tamil

newspapers came out at that time namely Desabhaktan, Swarajya and Tamil Nadu. Yet, they failed to provide a sustained competition to the Swadesamitran and The Hindu.

9. Swadesamitran became even popular when the evergreen Tamil poet C. Subramania Bharati joined as a Sub Editor in 1904. He and some others like V. V. S. Iyer were writing incisive articles and radical opinions against the British rule. However, Subramania Bharati left Swadesamitran in 1906 and started his own weekly, India, published from Pondicherry. He also edited another newspaper, Chakravarthini. However, he was to rejoin Swadesamitran later in 1920 and work for it until his death in 1921.
10. Bharati was the pioneer of cartoons in Tamil. He employed them a good deal in his newspaper, India. Bharati's cartoons were themed on the exploitation of India by the British. Even more, his cartoons disparaged the Moderates, who held soft viewpoint about the British. His traditional lore drew from ancient Tamil proverbs, Hindu mythology, Pancharatna Tales and Aesop's Fables. Bharati had more than one cartoonist to bring out his ideas. However, Bharati's journal exclusively for cartoons named Chitraveli did not take off.
11. Muslims for their part started newspapers to defend their communal and religious interests. Live-ul-Islam and Saiphul Islam were the two most prominent Muslim newspapers. These two newspapers

exercised considerable influence upon the Tamil speaking Muslims. The third newspaper Quami Report edited by M.A. Majid Sharar was more nationalistic in character. It catered to the needs of the Urdu speaking Muslims in Madras.

12. Leaders of the non-Brahmin communities organised the Justice Party in the Madras Presidency. The origin of the Dravidian press was closely connected with this. As the support of the British administration was essential for the realisation of its aims, the Justice Party adopted a pro-British attitude. The party published three newspapers namely The Justice (in English), Non-Brahman and the Dravidan. These papers remained the chief organs of the Justice Party and its Non-Brahmin Movement. However their atheist propaganda offended many people cutting across all religions.

13. Rise of the nationalist press led to the diminishment of the sectional press. Nationalism was forced upon the public above any other interest. The common man was not at all in despair to be liberated from the British as it was made out to believe. Contrarily the elite wanted themselves and their activities freed from the British purview and hence were badly in need of mass mobilisation as their shield. A number of newspapers carried on this propaganda. Even some newspapers of the sectional press like Desabakthan changed their old path to become nationalist in character.

14. The Transition Period refers to the period immediately before and after the Independence, taken roughly as between 1930 and 1960. Important newspapers of that period were Dinamani, Dina Thanthi and Dinamalar. They introduced many innovative changes in content, coverage and presentation like photographic coverage, sensationalism and targeting of semi-literate people. They gained immediate popularity and caused the demise of old newspapers like Swadesamitran.
15. Nearly all newspapers in Tamilnadu promoted the interests of their respective communities. The Anglo-Indian press was an exception. It always remained pro-government until 1947, and enjoyed official patronage. It opposed any newspaper that criticised the policy or action of the government. The Dravidian Press joined hands with the Anglo-Indian Press to oppose Brahmin dominated Congress and the nationalist papers' attempt to create a public opinion against the British rule.
16. The Vernacular Press Act (1878), The Press Acts (1908 and 1910) and Assumed Emergency Powers during the Great War (1914-1918) helped the British control anti-government writings in the Press. Newspapers that did not give much difficulty to the Government of Madras until 1885 began to attack the British rule with much vigour after the rise of nationalism. They attacked the pro-government

newspapers too. Therefore the British did not pursue a permissive or soft policy towards the Press. Yet, the press very often disregarded censorship. However the Anglo-Indian and the Dravidian Presses helped the administration to weaken the political polarisation against them.

9.3.3. Analysis of Subscribers

9.3.3.1. Personal and Socioeconomic Attributes

1. Subscribers in the lowest and highest age groups constituted a very small percentage. '30-40' was the largest category with close to one third of the respondents. Therefore news variety that caters to almost every age group is the essential element for newspapers.
2. Male subscribers outnumbered females by about 12 percent. While men read newspapers in many other places than their house, women confine their newspaper reading to home and possibly workplace. It shows the social practices that define the forthcoming nature of women have not yet matured.
3. Married subscribers constituted the largest category of respondents whom predominantly had planned family. Also many families were nuclear with school going children or babies.
4. Distribution of subscribers based on Education was more like a normal distribution. Persons of the least and highest learning constituted a comparatively small percentage. The median category

‘Degree Holder’ was the largest group. Therefore unless it is for a targeted audience, a newspaper should not polarise news items towards a particular category.

5. Distribution of subscribers based on religion and community was in conformity with the demographic structure of the study area. As religion and community affect the choice of information a subscriber prefers to take in, it is desirable that the composition of regional news items are fine tuned towards the needs and preferences of Backward Community without neglecting others altogether.
6. Distribution of subscribers with regard to occupation showed that education had not resulted in the corresponding occupation. Respondents instead went to family business, entrepreneurship, public service or private employment. Among the seven categories, ‘Govt. employee’ alone had 43 percent of respondents. It shows that the priority of subscribers, irrespective of education, is dominantly inclined toward government job.
7. As regards monthly family income, an inverse proportion was observed between income category and no. of respondents. It showed the conservative mindset, typical of Indian population, in disclosing income.

9.3.3.2. Reading Characteristics

1. Self obligation was the most important influence factor to buy

newspaper. Desire to read and to know what happened around was crucial to the subscribers.

2. Subscribers with 10-20 years of reading experience constituted the largest category with 30 percent. Leaving that, all categories were fairly evenly distributed. It showed that the choice of newspaper for subscribers in the less experienced categories was a near-voluntary decision with possible guidance from elders.
3. Majority of the subscribers had settled with their newspapers and their preferences had formed already. They were content with what they read now and were not likely to make a switchover to another newspaper as of then. Moreover, respondents were reluctant to be identified as obsessive news chasers.
4. Many subscribers had discredited any external inspirational source. Easy availability, inexpensiveness, necessity to read and luring advertisements worked together to weaken the need for an inspirational source. Thus, traditional inspirers such as parents, teachers and friends play an insignificant role here. Hence, individual-directed approach is the best for a newspaper to win over the readers.
5. Seven out of ten subscribers read only general newspapers. However, those reading both general and business newspapers was unexpectedly high at 29.33 percent. It shows that the combined

weight of professionals and private concern employees has pushed up this category.

6. Yearning for English was established with the sample as more than half of the respondents gave importance to English language newspapers irrespective of their personal qualities. Moreover, about one-tenth of respondents did not prefer reading their native language newspaper. Most respondents believed that English newspapers covered political, business and international news better.

9.3.3.3. Distinctive Choices and Tendencies

1. The study showed a noticeable difference between the subscribing patterns of Tamil and English newspapers. While in Tamil the reader's choice was more widespread, in English it was much restricted. Moreover every newspaper including local ones had carved its niche market out with minimal subscriber base.
2. When it came to the reasons for newspaper reading, the research showed the diversified interests of subscribers. In that, 'Personal interest' was the dominant reason for newspaper reading. 'Language development' and 'Educational purpose' were other compelling reasons. Thus, newspaper reading has become one of the indispensable activities of today's life.
3. 'Own purchase' was the strongest choice for nature of acquiring Tamil and English newspapers. Yet the choice of language

significantly differed when the nature of acquiring newspaper was considered between teashop and library. It reveals that teashops have become strong advertising mediums for Tamil newspapers and libraries have become the instruments of promotion for English newspapers.

4. While three quarters of the subscribers read hard copy, the remaining quarter of them read e-edition. Although it shows the reach of the Internet, tangible physical newspaper at hands is still the preferred form that gives satisfaction to the subscribers.
5. Only one in eight subscribers purchased newspapers in shops and the remaining preferred it be dropped in their doorsteps. This ratio will further increase in favour of 'Door delivery' in the future because of deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and the overbearing influence of other communication mediums.
6. Eighty percent of the subscribers were well satisfied with the quality of the newspaper they read/subscribed. Not only had they known to differentiate between available newspapers, but also had settled with their current one. Yet for another 3 percent of subscribers the newspaper of their choice contradicted their social, economic and political values and attitudes.
7. Nine out of 10 subscribers restricted their reading time to not more than an hour a day. It establishes that people nowadays are indifferent

about newspapers. For them, Internet, television, radio, i-phone and cellphone provide news in a more versatile and swift manner with scope for feedback and choice control.

8. Impact by the newspaper varied from reader to reader. Personal qualities and requirements determined the type of impact. Highest percentage of subscribers opted for cutting and retaining important news. Following that, a substantial section of the respondents compared news items with that of television and radio. Thus, newspapers serve as a medium of social evaluation for events and happenings.

9.3.3.4. Reading Preferences

1. Politics was the most regularly read among the eleven types of news items. After that, educational and sports news shared the second and third places. Regional news items was the fourth most important news item. These four news items together constituted about two third of the responses. Rankings and hypothesis testing too confirmed the reader preferences in this regard.
2. 'Timely and updated news presentation' was the most preferred aspect in any newspaper. After that, 'Attractive language' was the second most preferred aspect. 'Accurate and unbiased information' and 'Excellent coverage' shared the third position. It was strange that subscribers gave more importance to 'Attractive language' than

‘Accurate and unbiased information’. These four aspects were the primary ones and the remaining seven were only additives.

3. ‘Biased news’ was the most disliked aspect in any newspaper. ‘Poor paper quality’ came next, which the subscribers associated with readability, utility and recycling values. ‘Annoying and boring language’ came third as subscribers regarded that written and oral forms should differ properly. These three aspects of dislike altogether recorded 78.67 percent of the responses. Other aspects of dislike including ‘Inferior news coverage’ and ‘Unattractive layout’ registered minimum number of responses.
4. Again ‘Biased news’ was the most disliked aspect that would cause nearly half of the subscribers to make a switchover. Yet rankings showed that an aspect of dislike itself was not adequate to give up a newspaper. The discontent should grow and become universal within the subscriber base. Collective weight of the factors like bias, paper quality, language, coverage and cost would be so enormous that it might bring down the newspaper.

9.3.3.5. Usefulness of Newspaper and Supplements to Target Audiences

1. Usefulness of a newspaper meant differently to different target audiences. Perception, age and pursuing generation gap played a larger role in interpreting usefulness. The tests showed that many subscribers had weighed the worthiness of the newspaper of their

choice already and stayed with that.

2. While elder respondents saw rationale in rating superficial, sensual and sexually deviant news items as useless or waste, some male, many female and almost all younger respondents did not see anything aberrant or abhorrent in such news items. This had substantially and unduly pushed up the dependence factor.
3. Moreover, although many respondents regarded newspaper a waste of time, they continued to subscribe it. This had become a social compulsion and a reflexive practice. In addition, negligible cost, educational requirements and employment opportunities offset the negative aspects.
4. Reader category and usefulness of supplements were independent of each other. Respondents' viewpoints towards supplements did not change with their age. It showed that as supplements were not worth much to the target audiences, the subscribers were indifferent and homogeneous in their opinion. Hence correlation between age and usefulness of supplements was very weak which made the hypothesis fail the significance test.

9.3.3.6. Ranking of Tamil and English Newspapers

1. About one third of the respondents gave Dhina Thanthi first rank. It was followed by Dhina Malar and Dhinakaran. These three newspapers had majority of subscribers within the first four ranks.

2. Dinkaran was an exception in the sense that one-fifth of respondents had ranked it to be the worst. Only local newspapers had got more worst ranks than Dhinakaran. While quite a section of the respondents might be forced to purchase Dhinakaran for some reason, it was otherwise unacceptable to many others.
3. After the three dominant ones, Dhinamani was the most preferred choice. Evenly distributed responses across the eight ranks showed that Dhinamani was a good alternative and centrist newspaper without much polarisation in its news items.
4. Dhina Poomi, Malai Murasu and Tamil Murasu had their own preferred reader bases and corresponding rankings. Likewise, no one had put Local Newspapers in the first or second rank.
5. Assigning weights caused some disarray to the observed rankings. Dhina Malar got the topmost spot with a very marginally higher score than Dhina Thanthi. Tamil Murasu, owing to concentration of its ranks in second and third quartiles, secured higher weight than Dhina Mani.
6. The difference of points between a newspaper and its follower showed Dhinakaran and Tamil Murasu as odd entities.
7. In the ranking of English newspapers, The Hindu was the most preferred one. Respondents had not ranked it below the third place. It was followed by New Indian Express. Times of India too had its

satisfied subscribers. These three newspapers did not get sixth and seventh ranks at all. It proved that the three newspapers were held in high esteem by their readers.

9.4. Suggestions

Influence of newspapers upon the society is imperious. Moreover people are not homogeneous and their attitudes and values cannot be changed overnight. Truth cannot be obscured forever either. Hence the suggestions provided below are what regulators and prominent persons including scholars, judges, administrators and politicians have felt over the years. Also they are mild in the sense that self initiated obligations and changes are the best cure for all.

1. The print media in India has a glorious tradition of about two and a half centuries. Despite various aberrations in its functioning, it is indisputably a formidable strength for Indian democracy. The need for the hour is serious introspection and resolute determination by the print media itself to play the role of fourth estate in the true spirit. To achieve this, the role of regulatory body is also equally important. Unfortunately, the Press Council of India, the only statutory regulatory authority for the print media, does not possess the punishing authority necessary to enforce its adjudicatory directions. The proposed amendments to the Press Council of India Act have been pending for long. It is high time that such amendments are

effected without any further delay.

2. Notwithstanding the lack of appropriate power to enforce their adjudications, regulatory bodies receive many complaints, which keep on increasing. This indicates the fact that the general public, public sector undertakings and the bureaucracy have confidence in these bodies and long for their intervention in complaints. The confidence in the adjudicatory functions of these bodies is however bound to be eroded very soon if they are not vested with suitable power to make their adjudications effective and binding.
3. When the Press Council of India was constituted in 1966, the electronic media was not in existence in the country with the exception of broadcasting that came under the sole authority of the government. Therefore, the Parliament had no occasion to consider for regulation of electronic media. This media however has come in a very big way and has very hard impact upon news and entertainment communication. The problem is that many prominent and powerful newspapers have electronic media interests. Therefore it has become an extremely powerful source of information and mind control. Therefore the electronic media needs proper regulation without any delay. The Press Council of India has been proposing for years to be converted as Media Council of India by a constitutional amendment. It will provide for appropriate representation of electronic media,

besides regulation and control. Sooner such an integrated regulation is made the better for the country.

4. Financial autonomy of the regulatory bodies is necessary for their functioning as independent autonomous bodies. Media Fund of India could be created by appropriate one time budgetary allocation coupled with possible restructure of levy on media houses. This will help to expand and enhance the administrative, infrastructure, research, supervisory and financial functions of the bodies.
5. The focus of the newspapers, and the print media as a whole, should turn towards the field of rural reporting, which is hitherto neglected altogether. Only rural reporting reflects the real social and economic conditions of the people. Now rural reporting is carried out by small newspapers operating in remote corners of the country. They need guidance and financial assistance for better functioning. Therefore their revenue could be augmented through liberal advertisements by the government, public sector undertakings and large commercial establishments.
6. The elements of journalism need improvement. In addition all activities surrounding that require considerable infrastructure and funding. Very important endeavours in this regard are improved service conditions of the journalists, facilities of training of journalists particularly in rural areas, holding of workshops for the

journalists across the country, appropriate sensitisation of journalists in coverage and reporting and finally setting up of media academy in every State under active supervision of Press Council of India.

7. Ultimately people in a society have the final say. Whatever powerful the governments or the medias, it is the people who have the sovereign power to deliberate, substantiate, analyse and at last accept or refuse. There is a saying, 'The giver gives only when the receiver is willing to receive'. Therefore if the readers, both individually and collectively, decide to stand for the truth and goodness, no newspaper or government can stand in their way. They ought to read between the words and lines of the newspaper of their choice and understand the hidden or ulterior meanings and messages if any. Thus it is in their hands to get true enlightenment or be deceived.

9.5. Directions for Further Research

The following directions are provided by the researcher for further research.

1. Male and female subscribers shall be studied separately and compared.
2. Attitudinal difference with respect to geographic region if any shall be analysed.
3. Role of agents in pushing and promoting individual newspapers shall be ascertained.

4. Distribution channels and production and printing process shall be studied in detail.

In a nutshell, increased sample size, stratified subscriber base, geographical segregation and inputs from newspaper publishers should enhance the study further in a possible future scenario.

9.6. Concluding Remarks and Epilogue

The news media are the common carriers of public discussion. That is why they have special privileges. They should always have the discipline of verification, maintain independence from those they cover, serve as an independent monitor of power, and provide a forum for public criticism and compromise. Thus they serve society when presenting truth and fact but corrupt when attempting prejudice and supposition. Also they should fairly represent varied viewpoints and interests in society.

Thus a newspaper is different from a consumer product in the sense that despite its private ownership, it is a public institution dealing with the public sphere for a common good. Moreover readers are not passive recipients of manufactured news. They are active participants who expect truthful and credible information delivered to them in a trustworthy manner. They apply many critical parameters to weigh the deservedness of a newspaper before deciding upon subscription. This very reason provides the rationale for a publication to behave as a social entity.

For readers a newspaper is simultaneously a mirror and a window. As a

mirror it should reflect the happenings without distortions and as a window it should give an overall picture of the broad social landscape. If a newspaper fails in this regard, readers will not hesitate migrating to another newspaper. At least they simply stop subscribing the newspaper thereby undermining the paper's status as a public asset. Therefore their views, criticisms and commendations should not be taken lightly. but absorbed in the real sense and acted upon by reorienting news policies.

The most significant outcome of interaction between readers and newspaper is the creation of a mutual learning system. The newspaper gets to know the changing demands and expectations of the readers and the readers learn to accept the way the newspaper reports or comments on crucial issues. At a deeper level this exercise helps to establish the primacy of principles and to contain or check the influence of other exigencies.

In this context, newspapers should try to preserve the space for liberty, plurality, homogeneity, heterogeneity and diversity. Homogeneity should be maintained in moral and ethical values, heterogeneity should be maintained in social, economic, political and cultural values, and diversity should be maintained in news presentation and coverage. In addition newspapers have another great obligation of helping the readers to make informed choices on a range of issues, from domestic politics to international relations, from social affiliations to economic prudence, from sports to arts and literature and from judicial structures to institutional arrangements.

Apart from that the fundamental objective of newspapers is to serve the people with news, views, comments and information on matters of public interest in a fair, accurate, unbiased and decent manner and language. However as newspapers have grown in power over a period of time, they today do not remain satisfied as the Fourth Estate. On the other hand they have assumed foremost importance in society and governance. Newspaper's influence and impact on the society is today so all pervasive and all powerful that it can make or unmake any individual, institution or any thought. With so much power and strength, it cannot loose sight of its privileges, duties and obligations.

To enjoy these privileges, however, newspapers are mandated to follow certain ethics and balance in collecting and disseminating the information. They ought to ensure authenticity of the news, use restrained and socially acceptable language, maintain objectivity and fairness in reporting and above all keep in mind the cascading effect of the news or otherwise on individuals and institutions concerned as well as the society at large. Thus the freedom of the press has to be preserved and protected not only from outside interference but equally from those within. An internal mechanism for adherence to guidelines is to be ensured through feedback and control measures such as Letters to the Editor, Internal Ombudsman, Media Council of Peers and Media Watch Groups. They should serve to focus the wrongs committed by media persons, journalists or the management. Readers for their part ought to learn to differentiate between deception and truth. As emphasised by the men of

wisdom they should not get swayed away by sensationalism or polarisation of any kind. Thus conscience of the media person on one side and vigilant readership on the other makes building a near Utopian society possible.

The above points, in combination with the discussions provided in the previous chapters, should let newspapers and readers alike see where they stand individually and collectively in relation to age old morals and social values, and act upon that with courage and determination. Every one of them ought to learn to differentiate truth from deception and put things in a proper perspective without preconceived notions and preformed opinions. In this way any one may not offer himself or herself to be fitted in the slot wishfully created by evil puppet masters or any other ulterior power centres.

References

1. A. Tuchman, "Making News", The Free Press, New York, 1978.
2. Martin Vogelmann, "The Readers View: Optimizing Front Pages", ESOMAR, Publishing, November 1995.
3. A. Brooks, "Interaction and Intensity: The More Interactive the Editorial, the More Intense the Relationship with the Reader", ESOMAR, Strategic Publishing, Milan, October 1999.
4. A. Randal Beam, "Size of Corporate Parent Drives Market Orientation", News Paper Research Journal, No. 2/3 (Spring/Summer), 2002. Pp. 46-63.
5. A. Randal Beam, "Content Differences Between Daily Newspapers with Strong and Weak Market Orientations", Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Vol. 80 (2) Summer, 2003. Pp. 368-390.
6. Anurag Batra, Role of Indian Newspaper, Foreword to Express Press Release, Impact on Net, New Delhi, May 2006. Pp. 2-3.
7. Arun Prabhudesai, The Indian Newspaper Industry is Booming, Business, Growth and Trends, W3.Org, May 2007.
8. Shakuntala Rao and Navjit Singh Johal, "Ethics and News Making in the Changing Indian Mediascape", Journal of Mass Media Ethics, Vol. 21(4), 2007. Pp. 286-303.
9. Stuart Allan and Einar Thorsen, "Citizen Journalism - Global Perspectives", Peter Lang Publishers, New York, 2009.

10. Norms of Journalistic Conduct, Edition 2010, Press Council of India, New Delhi, 2010.
11. Justice G.N. Ray, Chairman, Press Council of India, Foreword to Annual Report 2010-11, New Delhi, 2011.
12. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, “Ten Years that Shook the Media World.”, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, October, 2012.
13. “Katju Wants Media Regulator with Punitive Powers”, The Hindu, December 6, 2012.
14. “How Media Companies are Innovating and Investing in Cross-Platform Opportunities”, Digital Publishing Survey 2012, Alliance for Audited Media, December 2012.
15. “The Demographics of Mobile News”, Pew Research Center, December 2012. (<http://www.pewresearch.org/>)
16. A.S. Panneerselvam, “Contextualise, not conflate - From the Reader’s Editor”, The Hindu, February 11, 2013.
17. Petlee Peter, ‘A newsletter of the police, by the police and for the police’, The Hindu, Madurai Edition, Friday, February 15, 2013.
18. A.S. Panneerselvan, “You are invited - From the Readers’ Editor”, The Hindu, Monday, June 17, 2013.
19. “TRAI set to regulate corporate control of media”, The Hindu, Wednesday, June 19, 2013.