3.1 SAMPLING

A content analysis of the Indian and western online newspapers was employed so that a systematic, objective and quantitative study could be done, especially in the area of interactivity. At the same time, content analysis could shed light onto how Indian and Western newspapers give options of participation. This was required to the level of participation of readers.

A qualitative analysis has been done to know the nature of participation of readers. Because every reader analysis news from different point of view. To fulfil this objective, qualitative analysis has been carried.

As the objective of this study is to look at and compare the web newspapers of India and western countries, the population hence comprised of those newspapers having fully online editions. Five western newspapers were selected from Australia, Britain, New Zealand, Canada and United States of America. Web editions were identified from the major net search engines, as well as database compilations of online newspapers (Massey and Levy et al., 1999).

The final data set included 10 newspapers from six countries. The newspaper titles that would be used as the data set for this study, these were: The Times of India, The Hindu, Hindustan Times, The telegraph, Deccan Chronicle from India. Other newspapers were: The Wall Street Journal from
USA, The Sun from Britain, Toronto star from Canada, The Australian from Australia, The New Zealand herald from New Zealand.

The ten newspapers were selected as a sample because of the following reasons. Firstly, these newspapers have full online version and allow comparison to be made for the purpose of this study. Some newspapers in India do not yet have fully online versions.

Secondly, these newspapers are significant in terms of their readership figures. The newspapers were chosen on the basis of their readership. Top five newspapers of India were selected according to the IRS (Indian readership Survey, 2102) findings. In 2012, Times of India newspaper had a readership figure of 7,653,000. Hindustan Times newspaper had the second largest figure as of 3,786,000. The Hindu, The Telegraph, Deccan Chronicle had readership figure of 2,258,000, 1,254,000, and 1,051,000 respectively. All western newspapers were also top in their readership.

English newspapers were selected. Because English is consider major language in India after Hindi. It is typically used among a nation’s educated class and expatriate community; and second because newspapers that publish in this shared language often are among a nation’s most influential (Massey and Levy, 1999et al.). Other language newspapers were not selected for study, because it was not possible to acquire an accurately translated version of the newspaper. And other language newspaper was not suitable for comparison with western English newspapers.

Most of the studies done in the west found that online newspapers did not differ much from their print parent in terms of content (Khoo Giak Lian, 2001). However, the researchers did not actually compare the online newspapers of India and west to reach this conclusion. Most of the studies look
at how online newspapers make use of the potential of the Internet, but did not directly compare the participation level of readers.

3.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis, the method used for examining content of the print and electronic media, is one of the important techniques of media analysis. Barellson had defined it as a method of studying and analysing communications in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner to measure variables.

To obtain a quantitative and fruitful comparison between the Indian and western newspapers, content analysis were done. Bonfadelli observes that the appropriate method to analyze the production of media programmes is content analysis (Heiner Meulemann & Jorg hagenah et al. 2009).

Content analysis may be defined as a methodology by which the researchers seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken or published communications by systematic, objective and quantitative analysis (Zito.1975, as cited in Arya, U. 2007). Content analysis is a research technique making replicable and valid interferences from data to their context. It is a specific research approach used frequently in all areas of the media (Solanki, Manisha 2008).

Krippendorf (1980) defined it as a research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their context. Kerlinger (1986) states that content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables (Dominick & Wimmer, 2000).

Content analysis is quantitative. The goal of content analysis is the accurate representation of a body or a message. Quantification is important in
fulfilling that objective, because it aids researchers in the quest for precision. Additionally quantification allows researchers to summarize the results and to report them succinctly. If measurements are to be made over intervals of time, comparisons of numerical data from one time period to another can help simplify and standardize the evaluation procedure. Finally, quantification gives researchers additional statistical tools that can aid in interpretation and analysis.

By comparing the Indian and western editions of the same day, the participation level of both Indian and western editions were measured. The content analysis for this research study was done for a period of seven continuous days. The literature suggests that most content analysis of online newspapers has been done over a period of two days to three months, although some researchers did not specify the number of days they content analyzed (Lian, K.G., 2001).

Sample Selection- Due to some limitations like manpower and time, seven continuous days over a period of one month, February 2013, were used for this study. This month was selected as it was close to the time when the study was conducted. Continuous samples from 19th February, 2013 to 25th February, 2013 have been included. I had chosen fifty news items every day, five from each newspaper. So, the sample comprises of total 350 news items.

A fix time was not chosen for data collection, because every country has different time zones. So to avoid any biasness in results, days were divided into three parts. These were: 9:00am – 1:00pm, 1:00pm – 5:00 pm and 5:00 pm – 9:00pm. Data was collected in this series every day. I had selected news item with exposure of minimum three hours. The Wall Street Journal’s Indian edition was chosen for the study, because American edition was not available at the time of study. That was a paid version.
Unit of analysis- In terms of online newspaper, the unit of analysis was the top five news stories per day, from each newspaper at home page. It resulted total 350 news items in seven days.

According to Li (1998), the page design of the Internet newspapers tend to be relatively stable and remains unchanged over a period of time. This provides an opportunity for researcher to reliably study the features of the Web newspaper with the small sample sizes, or numbers of visits.

Also, when doing content analysis, Chen (1999) found several online newspapers changed their web pages during the study period. She advised that future study should be done in a short time lap. Based on the above findings and advises, the coding duration was over seven continuous days.

A continuous week was constructed so that the data yielded would not be biased by any news events. Selecting too long period may be wasteful. And if we select a very short period, it may result in unreliable data and invalid results. A continuous sampling plan (CSP) is a plan of sampling inspection for a product consisting for individual units that are manufactured in quantity by an essentially continuous process (Guayjarernpanishk, P. & Mayureesawan, T. 2012).

The concept of continuous sampling planning originated in 1943 by Dodge. Known as CSP-1, continuous sampling is used where product flow is continuous and not easily grouped in lots (Kyle Muir, 2006).

So, these studies show that continuous sampling is a good option to study the topic related to online media.
3.3: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

To obtain a qualitative and fruitful comparison between Indian and Western newspapers, qualitative research methods were used. Because qualitative research allows the subjects being studied to give much ‘richer’ answers to questions put to them by the researcher, and may give valuable insights which might have been missed by any other method. Not only does it provide valuable information to certain research questions in its own right but there is a strong case for using it to complement quantitative research methods.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible. It tends to focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples which are seen as being interesting or illuminating, and aims to achieve ‘depth’ rather than ‘breadth’.

Qualitative research method has much strength. Because of close researcher involvement, the researcher gains an insider's view of the field. This allows the researcher to find issues that are often missed (such as subtleties and complexities) by the scientific, more positivistic enquiries.

Qualitative descriptions can play an important role of suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects and dynamic processes. Because statistics is not used, but rather qualitative research uses a more descriptive, narrative style, this research might be of particular benefit to the practitioner as she or he could turn to qualitative reports in order to examine forms of knowledge that might otherwise be unavailable, thereby gaining new insight. Qualitative research adds flesh and blood to social analysis. Because of these things, it was decided to analyze the data in terms of quality.
Unit of analysis for qualitative data-

Due to some limitations like man power and time, one day sample is taken for qualitative study. This sample includes total reader’s comments, facebook sharing and twitter sharing of total 50 news items. All these news items are critically analyzed in terms of reader’s participation. Qualitative research is harder, more stressful and more time consuming than other types. That is why one day sample is taken. Qualitative study is done to find the reader’s participation in day to day news items.

I have sent the letter to the editors of all newspapers. It was important to know the editor’s opinion in terms of reader’s participation, whether editors consider the readers views or suggestions to improve further news stories.

3.4: Variable Operationalization and Terminology

In terms of online newspaper, the unit of analysis was the top five news stories per day, from each newspaper at home page. It resulted total 350 news items in seven days. Each news item was coded as presence or absence of the variable. These variables and terminologies defined as:

The dimension ‘interactivity’ refers to the degree to which users can add information and the degree to which the newspapers facilitate interpersonal communication (Heeter, 1989). The interactivity of online newspapers was measured by three variables: the number of comments by readers, number of facebook sharing by readers and number of tweets by readers. These variables measure the degree to which readers interact and participate in latest news stories.
‘Immediacy potential’ refers to the ability of online newspapers to provide news to readers as soon as possible. The faster update speed, the more success it will achieve.

“Home-page” is defined as a newspaper’s initial, or opening, screen on the web. It provides information both directly and via links to other files of the same publication or to files on other computers located on remote networks. The front page can be accessed through the home page or itself can serve as the newspaper’s initial web screen, and it is recognised by its similarity in appearance to a print newspaper front page.

Each website is coded for the participation of readers in terms of comments, Facebook sharing and Twitter sharing.

Extent of comments, Facebook sharing and Twitter sharing is conducted in terms of their frequency in newspapers. Data analysis is conducted by percentage representation. Relationship between newspapers and other variables is measured by cross-tabulation of newspapers with other variables.

The data is fed into SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) and analyzed for frequency distribution percentage analysis and mean method.

3.5: Basics of Comparison

The online newspapers of Indian and Western countries are basically a same medium of communication. They have the same ways of providing news and services to readers. They also interact with their readers in almost same ways. For example, online newspapers interact with their readers via telephone, faxes, e-mail or through many other interactive options.

For online newspapers, interactivity has a wider spectrum. They provide e-mail addresses for readers to reach the respective departments and reporters.
At the same time, readers can also interact with each other or with the newsroom via chat rooms or electronic bulletin board.

The same ways of operating due to technology does not mean that there is no basis for compare and contrast the two media. However the differences and similarities between the two kinds of papers need to be quantified and described. Hence, the different measures were used to take into account these differences.

Despite of so many similarities, basis of comparison was the difference of participation level. With this study, it is being trying to find out the difference between Indian and Western online English newspapers. How many readers participate in news debate?