CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION INTO ONLINE JOURNALISM
AND PUBLISHING NEWS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the Nineties, online technologies in general and the World Wide Web in particular which was developed by CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) captured America with an unimaginable intensity. These were validated through an array of statements about major societal transformations, like the creation of virtual communities and therefore returning of a new economy. In a book on the virtual communication Howard Rheingold argued that “whenever (computer mediated communication) technology becomes available to people anywhere, they inevitably build virtual communities with it, Just as microorganisms inevitably create colonies” (Rheingold, 1994, p. 6). According to Carlson, (2001) the first American Online newspaper was the Chicago Online, launched by the Chicago Tribune in the United States (Carlson, 2001). As of April 2001, U.S. based Editor & Publisher Interactive found in their database 12,878 records of online news media (ibid), defined these journalistic ventures as: “All media with a Web presence”.

Not only number of websites was occurring by thousands of news media in these ten years while quite few of them have closed these operations again. Internet was used as an outlet for their news by millions of users or special interest groups even if such sites were not archived in databases like E & P’s. Since 1993, an incredible growth of online news organizations was observed at an exceptional rate. Right from the beginning of the twenty-first century there was a sharp upsurge in the scores of
traditional news organizations migrating online despite the emergence of a number of non-traditional news providers. As far as the Indian media was concerned in the past few years the scenario in the Indian media have been comparatively depressing. There were only a few prominent media houses in the country that not only manipulated the news from the print version moreover they were also being monitored either by big corporate houses or political parties. Several times, owing to their vested interest these mainstream media does not address a number of critical or socially relevant news. At times, the regional issues were not covered comprehensively as well as it is mentioned only in tickers. Occasionally, stories were also stopped at the press at the final moment due to the pressure from the higher authorities and lobbyists. These kinds of activities debar people to know the true stories or news that might influence their lives. A growing form of journalism called the Citizen journalism, also called the public or participatory journalism was yet one more form of User Generated Content and was fast becoming the popular media along with the growth of the internet.

As a citizen of a nation once any common man in his capability takes up the initiative to report things or articulate his thoughts relating to the happenings around him then the footages was widely referred to as citizen journalism or participatory journalism. Citizen Journalists do not follow the same norms of the earlier traditional term of a journalist. Irrespective of the educational or professional background they took up initiatives to convey their thoughts.

In a certain way this rapidly growing form of journalism is ensuring a scenario of breaking free from media bias in addition to taking local news on a global platform. In such a circumstance, the online audiences have been budding together in size and substance. On the whole, it can be told that the internet has reached or was reaching the status of a mainstream news medium.
1.2 Online Journalism

“Networked Publics,” University of Southern California, provides the following definition of Online Journalism,

*Online journalism refers to news content produced and/or distributed via the Internet, particularly material created by journalists who work for mainstream market driven news organizations. While blogs and other emerging forms of online news communication are widely acknowledged as significantly influencing mainstream news content both on and offline, they are considered here a distinct phenomenon and treated under the category of alternative media.*

Wikipedia defines online journalism as the reporting of facts when produced and distributed via the Internet. As reported by Wikipedia an early leader in online journalism was The News & Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina. Steve Yelvington in the Poynter Institute wrote concerning Nando, owned by The N & O, by saying *"Nando evolved into the first serious, professional news site on the World Wide Web".* It evolved in the early 1990s as "Nand O Land". Online news sources began to flourish within the 1990s. Salon, founded in 1995, was a pioneer in reporting online news. In 2001 the American Journalism Review called Salon the Internet's "preeminent independent venue for journalism."

As of 2009, audiences for online journalism still grow. The year 2008 was the beginning for a lot of Americans to obtain their national and international news from the internet, as an alternate to the newspapers. According to the PEW Research Center report young people aged 18 to 29 primarily get their news via the Internet. Before 2008, the industry had hoped that publishing news online would prove remunerative enough to fund the costs of typical traditional newsgathering. The Pew Project for
Excellence in Journalism describes its 2008 report on the State of the News Media, as its bleakest ever. Despite the uncertain conditions, online newsrooms expanded. The Newsrooms still consider advertisements as the best source of revenue to run the news organization.

The impact of journalism and journalist’ working practices have changed enormously in this new media world. While it requires a journalist to be able to produce work across a number of media and proficient in those media, the public were able to access more information which had led to the public becoming better informed and engaged in thinking about, discussing and participating in the public affairs and the democratic process. In tandem to this change a new model for online users was proposed by Mark Deauz. According to (Deauz, 1999) the content-connectivity domain with vertical axis the participatory communication domain, in which the news site certainly consists of a variety of options intended for users and producers in order to interact, discuss, up- or download, for the purpose of communicating in a participatory way. A concise note has to be made in relation to the notion of “content”, as – in Web designer terms the whole thing was content online, including banner ads, chat-rooms, research papers and what not. Editorial content was defined at this point as texts whether written or spoken word, images moving and still, solely produced and or edited by journalists. Andrew Odlyzko, (2001) calls public connectivity as “standard point – to – point” communication, to which one might add the notion of ‘public’ communication devoid of formal barrier of entry such as an editing or moderation process.

These journalism can be located on a continuum ranging from purely editorial content to public connectivity-based Web sites (see Model I, developed by Mark Deauz 2001):
Model 1: Online Journalism

Closed Participatory Communication

Open participatory Communication

The level of participator communication offered through a news site was represented in the vertical axis: a site can be considered “open” if it lets the users to contribute and share files, posts and comments i.e. content without moderating or filtering intervention (Deaux, 2001). In contrast, if the participating user’s communicative acts were subject to strict editorial control then the participator communication can be defined as “closed”. On the other hand, “closed” participator communication can be defined as site when users may participate but their communicative acts were subjected to strict editorial control.

1.3 Forms of Online Journalism

Within these two dimensions of closed and open online journalism various types can primarily be located.
1.3.1 Main Stream News sites

The mainstream news site was the most extensive form of news media production online, in general it offers a selection of editorial content either be it shoveled from a linked medium or originally created for the Web and a minimal, often considered as a moderated form of participatory communication. Examples were the much acclaimed sites of CNN, the BBC and MSNBC. The majority of online newspapers fall into this category as well.

This kind of news site cannot be considered to be different in its approach to journalistic storytelling, news values and relationship with audiences basically from journalism since it was practiced in print and broadcasting media.

1.3.2 Index and Category Sites

A second type of online journalism was least found within the mainstream media organizations, whereas it was frequently attributed to a number of search engines like Yahoo or Altavista, marketing research firms like Moreover or Newsindex an agency, and sometimes even popular individuals such as Paperboy.

At this juncture online journalists provide deep links to existing news sites elsewhere on the World Wide Web, which links were ever so often classified into categories and even annotated by editorial teams.

In general much editorial content were not offered by such sites on their own, whereas occasionally they do offer forum for chat or exchanging news, tips and links by the general public such as maintaining some kind of bulletin board system. An eminent example thereof was the option that most search engines provide to a “add a site” such site will then be subjected to editorial scrutiny.
On a critical note one may perhaps argue that sites which offer some editorial content and in addition which provides annotated links to content elsewhere on the Web such as the Australian Arts & Letters Daily, Bosnian Mario Profaca’s news site or the infamous Drudge Report by Matt Drudge fall into this category.

What was sometimes labeled as “new online journalism” was the phenomenon of the Weblog or “Blog” an often highly personal daily diary by an individual, not in the least by a journalist, narrating stories regarding experiences online and offering readers link with comments found while surfing the Web.

These sorts of individual journalism “user generated content sites” were able to be found sandwiched between index and comment sites, since they have a tendency to offer limited participatory communication frequently it was mere one person speaking his or her mind regarding curtail issues, whereas offer ample content and comment on content.

1.3.3 Meta and Comment sites

The third category of news sites was sites regarding news media and media issues in general; at times intended index as well as category site.

A number of journalists often produce the editorial content and typically discuss other content found anywhere on the Internet. Thus the content discussed becomes part of the media production process. In particular “journalism about journalism” or meta-journalism adorn online journalism.

On the whole, in this aspect the internet have contributed further to the professionalization of journalism, since the capability and willingness to reflect
publicly on itself and be self-critical was commonly observed as one of the significant characteristics of a profession.

1.3.4 Share and Discussion Sites

Odlyzko (2001) particularly claims that the first and foremost reasons for success of new media technologies like the Internet and the World Wide Web was the fact that people want to connect with other people on a boundless global level. In other words; it was “just” a communication infrastructure.

As a fourth type of journalism, online journalism makes use of this potential of the Internet in that it mainly provides platforms for the exchange of ideas, stories and so on, at times focused on a certain theme for instance world-wide anti globalization activism or computer news.

For connectivity purpose a number of sites have opted to take advantage of this public demand commercially, by means of organizing more or less with the intention of discussing the content elsewhere on the Net.

This type of online journalism have also been described as “group weblogs”, which offers personal accounts of a more or less limitless individual regarding their experiences on the Internet.

1.4 Characteristics of online news

All the four identified types of online journalism, to some extent make use of the key characteristics of the networked computer environment in which they operate in: such as hypertextuality, multimediaility and interactivity which operates in its own paradigms and own types in its current status.
1.4.1 Hypertextuality

Ted Nelson, one of the founding fathers of hypertext writes, the problem with hypertext was that it creates “a delivery system for separate closed units a system which allows only embedded links pointing outward”. At this point one has to comprehend that the texts interconnected through links hyperlinks can refer internally to other texts within the text’s domain or externally to texts located elsewhere on the Internet. These were relatively two different types of hypertextuality, as new content opened by one; the other one indeed leads to a spiraling down of content.

1.4.2 Multimodality

As early as 1995 Web designer Tim Guay has written regarding the inherent pitfalls of applying multimedia contents to Web Sites: “if multimedia is used with no thought as to the reasons why it is being used, or it has poor layout or content it can result in a pointless aesthetic fiasco that needlessly hogs bandwidth” (Guay, 1995).

Multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach that recognizes communication and representation to be more than concerning language. It had been developed over the past decade to methodically address much-debated questions about changes in society, for example in relation to new media and technologies. Multimodal approaches have supplied concepts, methods and a framework for the compilation and analysis of visual, aural, personified, and spatial aspects of interaction and their environment, and the relationships between these.

Although only a few web sites were indeed making use of multimedia, the majority of the news sites that do, do so from convergent perspective CNN and BBC were good examples.
Those who were clearly divergent were often the products outside of the mainstream. Numerous media critics have put across doubts regarding the industry’s drive to media convergence stating that it could be merely an alternative way of producing more content with less number of news people, or that the executive producers of news embrace the new technology whereas not its potential “democratizing” features like making use of cameras and microphones would, but also sample voices reflects the almost “dual” nature of the multimedia advancements, in contrast the impact of these technologies on the culture of online journalism. Possibly these two strands of thought supposed to be convergence before divergence turn out to be a feasible option for news sites.

1.4.3 Interactivity

Three categories of interactivity options on Web sites were classified as: navigational interactivity via “Next Page” and “Back to Top” buttons or scrolling menu bars, functional interactivity via direct mail to: links, Bulletin or adaptive inter activity the third form of interactivity as coined by Mark Deauz

By means of scrutinizing several interactive options in news sites, a number of scholars have noted its dearth, or rather the fact that most sites do not develop interactivity beyond functional and navigational level.

Guay (1995) argues that the most sophisticated level of interactivity in adaptive, meaning that it allows the Web site to adapt itself ideally in media consumption, research by (Shyam Sundar, 2002) reveals that the more interactive opportunities given by the websites to users, the more involved the users will feel about the website. According to (Outing, 2002), comments would work even though the surfers really do
not use all these interactive "Bells and Whistles". This suggest a fourth, overall level of interactivity: the perceived interactivity of a site.

1.5 History of Online News in India

Indian online journalism had taken different shapes and rhythm in different online projects. In August 1995, full-scale Internet service began in India intended for public access by means of the Videsh Sanchar Nigam, India’s overseas communications agency. This paved way to rapid diffusion of Internet communication nationwide (estimated 150 million Internet users in 2009, as reported in Online and Upcoming: The Internets Impact on India). In spite of a yawning digital divide, modern communication systems in Indian cities co-exist with abysmal connectivity in the isolated villages, where a majority of India’s population lives.

Mobile phones have become the dominant mode for telephony in rural areas compared to traditional landline phones, mobile phones. In rural areas fewer people own phones and it was easy to link distant villages with cost-efficient installation of mobile infrastructure. Also to the urban consumers mobiles phones provide similar flexibility and convenience. India had the world’s fastest growing mobile phone market. India plans to double its phone subscriber base to 700 million users by 2012, which covers almost 70 percent of the country’s population.

The number of phone users or India’s teledensity for every 100 individuals stands 13% in rural areas and 72% in urban areas. The national average was 32%. In October 2008, out of 364 million telephone subscribers 326 million were mobile phone users.

India adopted the third generation (3G) mobile technology in 2009, which provides users access to high-end data applications, including high speed interactive gaming.
and access, to internet video conferencing and streaming and other multimedia features on the phone.

In recent times, due to the abominable growth of the internet in India it had caused a spurt in online journalism which includes news web sites, crowd-sourced citizen journalism, blogs and even wikis that had permeated the national consciousness. Since 2000, India’s online journalism has exposed a variety of issues such as political corruption as in the case of Thehelka, misuse of state funds and match-fixing in professional cricket, India’s favorite pastime.

A large segment of the Indian news audience habitually access web sites of mainstream media, Twitter, constantly use photo and video sharing sites, and regularly blog for breaking news and commentary. During the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, in India and abroad more than nine million people accessed the web site of The Times of India, one of India’s largest English-language newspaper. On November 27, 2008, page views on the Times of India web site saw a fourfold increase from 4.5 million, the day following the attacks, to an additional 17 million the next day. Breaking news regarding the terrorist attacks was featured on blogs and Twitter messages.

India’s mushrooming blogging community, which comprises of more than 150,000 blogs, covers topics like politics, social issues, Cinema Celebrities, Indian culture, and technology trends. Mirroring the success and influence of the Indian language media, Indian bloggers symbolize the rich diversity of regional languages and local issues.

In order to reach a global audience together in India and abroad a considerable number of Indian bloggers communicate in English. Due to the imminent convergence of information, communication and entertainment media, India plans to
implement Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), a digital television service delivered through an Internet network infrastructure. IPTV offers viewers with a new visual digital experience enhanced by innumerable value-added interactive services that meld infotainment and e-commerce. With such plans there was a raising demand for broadband connectivity in India.

1.6 The Web as a mainstream news medium

The internet presents itself as a medium for expression of news not only in the form of network technologies, or as a storehouse of myriad information, or as a way of different formats of communication, besides it acts as a cultural space having its own rituals and norms. It gratifies to the different cultures and values inscribed in it (Trench and Quinn 2010).

The accessibility issues were not wiped away by internet between the journalism producers and the journalism consumers, and were exclusively positioned to serve as an informational medium for the jarring explosion of information.

The robustness of those practices and values refuse to accept the kind of paternalistic, top-down communication that has described the professional culture of journalism as well as it was turned to the audience for computed based media forms.

Before several years the news organizations which were present had seen the potential of the Internet as a publishing and income-generating medium, whereas academic and other communities had been utilizing it to distribute and exchange what they called news.

As per the estimation by the early 1990’s the number of “newsgroups” on the internet was over 10,000. For serious scholars, political activists, hobbyists, rumor mongers
and the idly curious people these pen access services were available. They developed
their own norms for the methods for setting up new groups and for the manner of
posting items and responding to those already posted. A new public space, defined by
freedom of expression, was established by means of the alternate newsgroups.

The majority of the newsgroups were text-only whereas as the means of digitizing
images and compressing those digital files were extensively available, several
newsgroups were also employed to distribute images. Not for the first or last time,
fans of pornography were at the forefront in expanding the scope of the technologies.

In everyday’s communication ‘News” was used in two ways. As in the informal
opening, “What News?” can mean to something that has happened to individuals. It
can also signify the information regarding the important events on the public stage.
These two meanings intersected on the internet in the newsgroups.

For online “virtual” communities news of these two kinds became the noteworthy
cause, a number of them brought in together and made persistent by a sense of social
solidarity for which the traditional media were not taken into account as a suitable or
available channel.

The rest were driven by prejudice, intolerance and hatred, for which the traditional
media quite understandably did not wish to be a channel. Newsgroups in addition
were utilized for the quick propagation of information that conformed to traditional
media criteria of news whereas the traditional media, for some reason could not or
would not distribute.

Matt Drudge, whose, muck-raking Drudge Report represents one recognizable type of
Internet journalism – began his publishing activities posting news of Hollywood on
newsgroups and a list of mail ID’s. On the influence of these actions, “the ensuing Web site practically launched itself” (Hiscock, 2000). The important characteristic of this news practice, despite its actual and potential abuse, had been that it represented a mainly “horizontal” communication among peers, on the other hand traditional news an essentially “vertical” communication from authoritative sources, via the media, to the public.

**Figure 1.1 : Traditional Top-down News**

![Diagram](image)

**1.7 Changing landscape of online news**

The information ecology within which news was produced and consumed online was considerably distinct from that in print and broadcasting and it keeps on changing within the new media. Several sources which were utilized in journalism were themselves active as direct publishers. A number of individuals within the public addressed by journalism were active as information-seekers, besides several as information-providers. Possibly the ‘audience’ have access to the source material employed in generating the news reports from Television, Radio and also those published in the newspapers and magazines. “Journalism has serious competition with other sources of information” (Houston, 2000). Apart from that, it confronts the possibility of being exposed.
Various governments as well as commercial organizations which were among the prevailingly used sources of news; publish their statements vide the Internet simultaneously as they release them to the media. Not only do the net users view the material released to the media but also it they aspire can view the materials by the publishers, therefore were able to compare the published news stories with the original stories published on the net, they can, and do, redistribute the original material and the ensuing reports, inviting comment and discussion. More active Net users were able to work their way through ministers’ speeches, official records, parliamentary reports, and in order to build their own versions of the story.

According to (Hall, 2001), “the relationship between reader and author undergoes a shift that inverts traditional understandings of the construction of meaning and reshapes some of the values that underpin it. He argues that an “impossible objectivity” was replaced by “reasoned subjectivity”, within which “readers will be able to make up their minds for themselves” (ibid.).

The space provided for the producers to add context and explanation was, intended for all practical purposes, unlimited. Due to the hyper linking capability of the Web it offers the means to provide additional information alongside a “best-available”
version of the latest development. Debatably, the Web removes or relaxes the constraint of audience ability or expectation frequently quoted by news professionals in defense of established practices. Possibly the material can be presented in a manners which permits users to work different routes by means of it, in accordance to the possession of their previous knowledge of the topic.

Even though if all of these facilities were not used in any given example of online news publishing, it was obvious that the notion of a bounded relationship in between the author or producer, at one side, and reader, consumer, audience or user, at the other side was no longer very accommodating. In addition the relationship shifts because of the possibilities the Web provides for users to contact authors or publishers of the material displayed, in order to post queries or comments to the originators of the information on which it was based, or raise issues for other users so as to respond to.

The media that amalgamates the Web 2.0 has vested its concern in the so called “citizen journalism” as well as the user-generated news content. This new form of communication was showed the way to a parallel practice in journalism amongst those charged with facilitating amateur news production.

With the help of user-generated content, independent online initiatives as well as established news organizations have fruitfully experimented, whereas the layers of professional supervision and coordination were often hidden from view in key debates.

Only some of the online mainstream news sites thrive on the information produced by the so called citizen journalist. Furthermore there were sites which have been started by the citizens for eg. The “Ohmy News” “Digg” and the “Daily me”.
Formerly, journalists were desperate for feedback when the letter to the editor was the only form of user-generated content with no feedback publishing a news story, as the historian Robert Darnton recalls in his brilliant journalistic retrospective- be it from peers, superiors news sources, friends or even mom – could be “like dropping a stone in a bottomless pit; you wait and wait, but you never hear the splash” (Darnton 1975:185”).

1.8 Evolution of participatory journalism

Participation has been a fundamental component of the Internet since its inception. Formerly, mailing lists, Newsgroups, and bulletin boards were the cousins to the forums, whereas these days’ weblogs and collaborative communities were booming. Those early forms were flourishing even now, a testament to our necessity to stay connected to our social networks. In social media participatory journalism encourages - the interpersonal communication that happen through email, chat, message boards, and forums - and in collaborative media - hybrid types of news, discussion and community.

This section categorizes the forms in which participatory journalism takes shape. In this section the forms in which participatory journalism takes shape was categorized. A few of these forms continue to evolve and merge and therefore overlap. The list, while generalized, was intended to describe the outlines of that participation and the communities where it resides. Considering the "publish, and then filter" mode (Shirky, 2002) that most of these forms follow, here it was defined for each form's self-correcting or filtering mechanism. In all, the end goal of filtering was the same - to amplify the signal-to-noise ratio, the meaning information was segregated from the chatter.
1.9 Forms of participatory journalism

1.9.1 Discussion groups

The oldest and the most popular forms for participation even now was online discussion. Discussion groups run the gamut from bulletin boards and forums to mailing lists and chat rooms. In order to answer tech support questions participants might engage a discussion group, to trade stock-trading tips, for arguing about a favorite sports players, to share occurrences about a health care issue, or to connect to a collaborative work project.

The methods of asynchronous communication were mailing lists, newsgroups, bulletin boards, and forums, means that in order to communicate all the participants do not have to be online at the same time. Sometimes this leads to more solicitous contributions, as participants have ample time to refine their responses. On the other hand, chat rooms were asynchronous, where at the same time all the participants should be online to communicate. Since this had the benefit of providing immediacy it can be used efficiently for business services such as customer support. But predominantly, chat rooms were more like virtual cafes or hangouts, with live, unfiltered discussion. To the average Internet user forum discussions were perhaps the most familiar discussion group form. Forums were typically arranged into threads in which an initial message or post appears at the beginning of a discussion and responses were attached in a branching manner. It's easy to recognize the branching of conversation that occurs when forums were viewed in threads, few of which might not be completely related to the original post.

By a number of means several forums let the audience to sort messages - popularity, date, and ranking. Various forums were archived, converting them into a searchable
knowledge base of community conversation. In the past few years numerous online media outlets have abandoned discussion forums, stating legal problems and lack of sufficient staff to moderate and maintain forums. Eventually, a few media outlets think forums offer little value to the audience and to the bottom line (ROI) (Powazek, 2002). For effective advertising on these pages one of the hindrances was the lack of content control by either the advertiser or publisher.

1.9.2 User-generated content

Several news sites offer a vehicle -through Web-based forms or email - designed in order to collect content from the audience and redistribute it. This vehicle could gather full-length articles, suggestions, journals, reviews, calendar events, helpful links, photos videos and more. Generally the content was text-based, whereas progressively the audience with their smart phones increased their contribution of audio, video and photographs. The content appears online with or without editorial review after submission, which depends on the nature of the content and the host policy. Ranking was one more widespread and easy way for the audience to participate Examples included rating a story, a reporter and other users. When a sufficient number of users have participated, ranking systems usually provide the best benefit, for example, "4,202 readers grade a particular movie 4 out of 5 stars." Internet users also supply content through feedback systems, for instance polls or mini-forums attached to news story pages. Polls sometimes also support comment submissions.

1.9.3 Weblogs

Weblog was one of the newest forms of participatory journalism to gain popularity. A weblog was nothing but a web page generally made up of short, frequently updated
text block or entries that were arranged in reverse chronological order (most recent to oldest).

The content and purpose of weblogs vary to a great extent, ranging from personal diary to journalistic community news to collaborative discussion groups in a corporate setting.

Weblogs could provide links and commentary about content on other Web sites. They can either be a form of "latest news" page or they can be a storehouse of, photos, poetry, mini-essays, or any important report updates or even fictions. The quick, short posts on weblogs have been likened to "instant messages to the Web". The content does not exist on the other weblogs, such as excerpts from a research paper underway, with the author in quest of comment from peers.

Weblogs fall into the one-to-many (individual blogs) or many-to-many (group blogs) model of media, among some allows no or little discussion by users and others generate robust reader responses. In both the ways, certainly weblogs become part of what was now called the "blogosphere". Blogosphere refers to the intercast of weblogs - the linking to and discussion of what others have written or linked to, on the whole a distributed discussion.

By means of a number of technologies blogosphere was facilitated. First, it was supported by TrackBack - a mechanism that determines automatically other comments about a blog post on a weblog, as well as offers excerpts and links to the comments alongside the post. It was similar to have an editorial page of commentary on the Web, which was generated automatically to appear alongside a story.
Second, the blogosphere was fueled by meta-sites such as Daypop, MIT's Blogdex, Technorati and others. These sites trace what items weblogs were linking to and talking about – news stories, weblog posts, new products (movies, books, software), or whatever subject which was catching their attention. Meta-sites provide a popularity ranking of the most linked-to items, and then index all links to those items.

XML or RSS syndication were a third technology which supports the blogosphere with the help of this weblogs can syndicate their content to anyone using "news reader," which was a downloadable program that creates a peer-to-peer distribution model.

It was easy to comprehend what others in the peer group were talking about, since the content was exchanged with ease. At that point Weblogs were a powerful draw since they permit the individual participant to play several roles at the same time - publisher, commentator, moderator, writer, and documentarian. Weblogs were in fact found to be the most effective tool for collaborative communication tool. They in fact help small groups and in certain cases large groups to communicate easily rather than the email lists and discussion forums.

For instance, a weblog can be collaboratively produced by a project team, where a number of individuals can post information (related files, Web site links, quotes, or commentary) that might be helpful or appealing to the group or to let some others to know outside the group. In-fact a collaborative weblog allows the group to be together in the loop.
1.9.4 Collaborative publishing

The technology behind several online communities was open source and free. More than that, it had become easier to install, deploy and manage Web publishing tools and content management systems. For this reason, in the past five years thousands of Web-based collaborative publishing communities have emerged. Due to the emergence of the open-source tools for forums, weblogs and content management systems (CMS), they have begun to blur into each other. This had showed the way to the development of groupware, Web- or desktop-based applications which were designed for the collaborative creation and distribution of news and information, file sharing and communication. Since the weblogs can be collaboratively created they were considered to be groupware. In this section, systems that were fairly more complex were addressed. In order to enable a group of participants (large or small) to take part in a number of roles: such as content creators, advertisers, editors, moderators, and readers a collaborative publishing environment was designed. An individual creator or host organization might own the environment, whereas the objective of these systems was distributed ownership and deep involvement from its community of users. Mailing lists, forums and weblogs were definitely effective collaborative publishing environments. However what makes these groups distinguished from other forms were the self-correcting process and the rules that govern participation. Moderators and community feedback were used in forums.

In general Weblogs have a feedback feature or, more frequently, link back other weblogs and discuss posts. But, the self-correcting processes were more akin to peer review, in complex collaborative publishing environments, traditional editing oversight and meta-moderators, individuals who keep watch over moderators to ensure the conversation doesn't get skewed or diluted. Slashdot.org was the most
well-known of these environments, which resembles a cross between a collaborative weblog and a large-scale forum. A combination of editorial oversight by its owners drives Slashdot, user submissions, and the community of users does the moderation and meta-moderation. Every month the site attracts 10 million and above unique readers, with more or less a half million audience members (5 percent) participating by submitting articles, also moderating, ranking and posting comments.

An editorial oversight was approved on to its members by Kuro5hin.org, to extend the Slashdot model in a different direction. Every story was written by a member and then submitted for peer review. Subsequently, the story was edited, discussed as well as ranked prior to its appearance on the site. Finally, the audience reacts, comments and extends the story. Scoop, was a "collaborative media application" according to its creator, Rusty Foster, which was the open-source technology that runs Kuro5hin. "It empowers your visitors to be the producers of the site, to contribute news and discussion, and to make sure the signal remains high."(Foster, not known).

Google News comprise Slashdot and Kuro5hin as two of the 4,500 sources for its news search index, which can be considered as one measure of these two collaboration systems. Wiki model was a less-structured approach to collaborative publishing to some extent. Wiki technology, which depends on how it was deployed, was used for storage, discussion, writing, email and collaboration.

Wikipedia was an international, open content, collaboratively developed encyclopedia. It has amassed more than 120,000 articles in English as well as more than 75,000 articles in other languages in just over two years. At first sight, a Wiki seems to be chaotic to some extent, which provides the ability to any member to create public domain articles and edit almost any piece of text within the environment.
With the help of the central component every change can be tracked, and can be reviewed, challenged or restored — an omnipotent version history. Now there were experiments in Wiki-style weblogs as evidence to the ever-blurring lines of these forms.

Zaplet technology was one more remarkable example of a collaborative publishing, where inside the dynamic emails, discussion forums, polling and group decision-making tools were exchanged. Groove was one of the most advanced and ambitious groupware desktop applications, created by Ray Ozzie. He also created Lotus Notes, which was one of the eminent collaboration tools.

Groove was a peer-to-peer program allowing large or small groups to collaboratively write, surf, exchange files, chat, create forums and invite outsiders to participate. It supports even voice-over-IP communications.

1.9.5 Peer-to-Peer

Peer-to-peer (P2P) describes applications in which the internet can be used by people in order to communicate or share and distribute digital files with each other directly or by means of a mediating Web server. P2P communication: The most pervasive forms of users send instant messages daily.

AOL, one among the most renowned instant messaging providers, every day peer-to-peer communication was Instant Messaging (IM) and Short Message Service (SMS). These forms constitute different types of social media, where personal, casual conversation occurs in a "one-to-one" or "one-to-few" model. On the other hand it’s hard to categorize or analyze the content of IM and SMS, whereas as a communication medium its appeal and usefulness was unquestionable. The Pew
Internet and American Life Project surveys reveal that above 50 million Americans (about 46 percent of all Internet users) send instant messages, and around 7 million (11 percent) of all these transmits about 1.4 billion instant messages. In Europe and Asia, SMS, short text messages that were sent between cell phones was pervasive. Whereas in the United States still it has not gained traction because of the lack of support for a key industry technology (GSM).

Since American culture has adapted mobile technologies in the past decade, instant messaging has turn out to be a powerful means of distributing news and information to computers, cell phones, pagers and PDAs. Nowadays by means of instant messages or SMS mobile devices directly receive everything from current news headlines, sports updates, stock quotes, and airline flight schedules on a regular basis.

Also, parents remain in closer contact with their teen children by means of IM. With an ActiveBuddy tool, Reuters explored the business prospects for the purpose of instant messaging of news, sports and financial information. Audience members who have added this intelligent news agent as an IM buddy may perhaps ask for news on demand on the basis of keywords.

In Hong Kong, the Chinese government sent a blanket of 6 million SMS messages for the purpose of spreading the word and averts panic regarding the outbreak of the SARS respiratory illness. Since digital camera technology was integrated in cell phones and mobile devices, now instant messaging was growing outside of text communications to include still photography and video.

Already this was being used in a peer-to-peer fashion among friends or colleagues; furthermore it was being used as a vehicle to submit photography and video directly to a Web site or weblog. At the time of worldwide protests against the war in Iraq, the
readers of BBCNews.com were asked to submit the photos from their digital cameras and cell phones.

In peer-to-peer communication, Microsoft’s Three Degrees application was an interesting experiment. With the help of this software participants were able to form groups to chat, share pictures and music to the group, without sharing the files permanently. Music and images were streamed to the group members on the fly.

**P2P Distribution:** If it comes to the distribution and dissemination of digital files, Peer-to-peer forms excel, which may carry valuable news and information. In the middle of a conversation, instant messaging users were able to exchange digital files on the fly.

However the key to P2P file sharing was born with Napster, which was a controversial desktop software program, which allows the participants to share any digital music file on their hard drives. At its zenith, 70 million users were dealing with 2.7 billion files per month.

Due to the shutdown of Napster, other file-sharing programs (called Gnutella clients) such as Morpheus and Kazaa have stepped in, allowing billions of ebooks, movies, songs and other digital files to be exchanged among the masse.

From the perspective of participatory journalism, P2P has massive potential to distribute the content created by digital amateurs. The emergence of P2P photo-sharing software programs in recent times was an example. With the help of these programs you can define a list of friends and mark photos that you would like to share with them. The program keeps an eye on your friends to log on and subsequently makes the images automatically available for downloading or real-time viewing.
1.9.6 XML Syndication

The content on many of these forms, mainly blogs and collaborative systems, can be syndicated by means of the use of an XML specification known as RSS, meaning Rich Site Summary.

Usually an RSS file contains a list of headlines, summaries and links that were published by a given site in recent times. Web readers can browse these RSS files, sorting by means of large amounts of news content at a rapid rate by using news reader applications such as NewzCrawler, AmphetaDesk or NetNewsWire. When an item of interest was found by a reader, she clicks on the headline and it routes her to the story on the source’s site.

In a number of ways RSS syndication seems to be creating an impact. Content creators, right from mainstream media to the average blogger, can syndicate their content with ease to RSS reader applications, thereby creating a peer-to-peer distribution model.

In several cases the user has to do nothing. Dave Winner says, "It's all part of the democratization effect of the Web," (Winner, 1999) who incorporated an early version of RSS in Userland blogging software in 1999.

On the basis of a time schedule, news readers can be trained to go out and refresh content. This facilitates readers to be up to date on their own without having to search for current news.

Tim Bray co-editor of the World Wide Web Consortium’, in his Where next for RSS writes, "Most people, once they start using RSS to check the news, just don't go back (to surfing Web pages)," According to columnist J.D. Lasica, this virtue can motivate
users into an immediate online dialogue, whether through e-mails, discussion boards or blog entries. "Interactivity was much more vibrant when the news was fresh" (Lasica, 2012).

1.9.7 Web Environment - Open vs. closed

The scale of these forms, technology which was behind them and the occurrence of the type of participation fluctuates to a great extent. On the other hand, the nature of participation that can be affected by one more key factor that has to be taken into account: Was the environment public or private?

1. **Open Communal**: was in which there was a single host, facilitator of the community, almost all activity within it - which includes membership, editing, changing, filtering, moderation, content contribution, etc. - was managed and directed by the community it serves.

2. **Open Exclusive**: A group of privileged members, the owners of the site in general, was permitted to post primary content to the site, whereas through commentary the audience creates secondary content. This was typical of weblogs. Occasionally, to the audience members exclusivity can be assigned. For instance, the number of new members joining every day was limited by MetaFilter.

3. **Closed**: A group of privileged members can only read, post, edit and comment on content. The system, which takes the form a weblog or forum, exists in a private Web environment, for example intranet of a company. Since instant messaging and email were private they were closed.

4. **Partially Closed**: A portion of the information produced by a closed community was exposed to a public Web space in this case.
1.10 Function of participation

In this section the researcher classifies participatory journalism in respect to the role and function of the audience

1.10.1 Commentary

The most all-encompassing, and perhaps fundamental, level of participation was commentary. In the past 30 years, forums, newsgroups, chat rooms and instant messaging have facilitated online discussion on just about any subject imaginable that interests the audience.

A vivid example was as reported by the Pew Research which noted that in the days that followed the Sept. 11 attacks, almost one-third of all American Internet users "read or posted material in chat rooms, bulletin boards or online forums."

In the recent past the Weblogs have increased commenting and discussion with some promoting the blog form as the next generation of newspaper.

According to Glenn Reynolds, a law professor at the University of Tennessee and author of the popular web log InstaPundit "Though webloggers do actual reporting from time to time, most of what they bring to the table was opinion and analysis - punditry."

1.10.2 Filtering and editing

With the abundance of availability of information, and competing demands of media attention, a new alternative form of editing - filtering, sorting, ranking and linking was opening up. This process was similar to editing as in the editorial judgment and selection.
The online participants help their community, immaterial of how big the community was to valued news and information. Filtering and ranking was influenced both by singular or collective participation.

For example, Gizmodo, "the Gadgets Weblog," was a well-edited, "best-of" list of links to news and information about cutting-edge consumer electronics.

Gizmodo was created by one person. The search engine Daypop, was also being run by an individual, which has a collection of the top 40 most linked-to news and information Web pages within the blogging community.

Several news sites, such as MSNBC.com and CNN.com, make use of a similar "Most Read Top 10," where all site visitors' choices were accumulated into a popularity ranking.

Other interesting examples of filtering systems include Google's Page Rank algorithms, Yahoo's Buzz - based on popular searches - and The New York Times' "most e-mailed stories."

On the other hand, filtering doesn’t have to come from explicit activities, such as connecting or favorite lists. It can also have inherent origins, such as Amazon's well-known "People who bought this item also bought ..." feature.

It can be considered as an example of collaborative filtering, in which Amazon utilizes information in relation to previous sales and browsing in order to suggest potentially relevant products to returning customers.
1.10.3 Fact-checking

The verification action was a frequent activity in discussion forums and weblogs. In either form the initial post begins with a link to a story, followed by a statement which questions the validity of certain facts. The result was a community effort to reveal the truth.

For the purpose of revealing the truth in traditional media, occasionally journalists enter the dispute. A good example of this occurred when the Slashdot community and an Associated Press reporter uncovered a fraudulent ad campaign by Microsoft as noted in Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, "Grassroots reporting breaks MS ad fraud," Hypergene MediaBlog.

1.11 Citizen Journalism and User Generated Content

The abundance and proliferation of virtual communities and collaboration environments provide the opportunity for anyone to play just about any role in the journalistic process. The audiences have taken on the roles of publisher, broadcaster, editor, content creator (writer, photographer, videographer, and cartoonist), commentator, documentarian, knowledge manager (librarian), journaler and advertiser (buyer and seller). For media organizations and businesses to understand how to engage their empowered audience, the media must consider what motivates the audience to take on their new roles and what kinds of rules yield the most fruitful participation. The most common roles the audiences now have taken were that of the citizen journalist.

Bowman and Willis (2003) define, “Citizen Journalism as the act of citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating
news and information”. They said, “The intent of this participation was to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires.”

1.12 What is citizen journalism?

This was not an easily answerable question and on the basis of understanding one would probably get a variety of answers. Few have called it networked journalism, open source journalism and citizen media. With the emergence of the internet communication has changed to a great extent as discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Due to the Internet, citizens were able to contribute to journalism without any sort of professional training.

Mark Glasser, a longtime freelance journalist who often writes on the issues on new media, gets to the heart of it: The idea behind citizen journalism was that people even without professional journalism training be able to use the tools of modern technology as well as the global distribution of the Internet in order to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or with others collaboration.

For instance, the audience was allowed to write about a local governing body meeting in an online forum or in their blog. Or could fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and indicate factual errors or bias on their blog. Or it could be a snapshot, a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in their town and post it online. Or one may perhaps videotape a similar event and post it on a site such as You Tube.
When the First Amendment “freedom of the press” was adopted, it referred to the freedom to publish by means of a printing press, more than the freedom of organized entities who were engaged in the publishing business.

In 1775 the printers did not publish newspapers exclusively; instead to financially survive they dedicated the majority of their efforts in printing materials in order to pay for clients.

The newspapers and pamphlets of the American Revolutionary era were predominantly partisan and became even more so through the turn of the century. Hardly they engaged in newsgathering and instead were predominantly vehicles for opinion.

The term “journalism” came into widespread usage in the 1830s occurred at approximately the same time that newspapers, by means of high-speed rotary steam presses, made a start of mass circulation all through the eastern United States. By the use of the printing press, newspapers possibly will distribute a large number of exact copies to readers at a low incremental cost.

Also, the rapidly growing demand to advertise for brand-name products stimulated the creation of publications subsidized in major part by advertising revenue. Till the late nineteenth century it was not that the concept of the “press” morphed into a description of individuals as well as companies engaged in a competitive commercial media enterprise frequently. On the other hand, what has changed was that with today’s technology even an average person can capture news and distribute it globally.
As Rocha Benkler had noted, “the capacity to make meaning – to encode and decode humanly meaningful statements – and the capacity to communicate one’s meaning to the world, were held by, or readily available to, at least many hundreds of millions of users around the globe.”

### 1.13 Who does citizen journalism?

According to Jay Rosen (1999), citizen journalists “the people once known as the audience, who were on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another - and who today were not in a situation like that at all. The people formerly known as the audience were simply the public made realer, less fictional, more able, and less predictable.”

“Doing citizen journalism right means crafting a crew of correspondents who were typically excluded from or misrepresented by local television news: low-income women, minorities and youth - the very demographic and lifestyle groups who have little access to the media and that advertisers don't want,” says Robert Huesca (2010), an associate professor of communication at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Nowadays Public Journalism was being explored through new media such as the usage of mobile phones.

Mobile phones have the capability to transform reporting and put in the power of reporting in the hands of the public. For the people to set up news operations mobile telephony offers low-cost options. Jasmine News in Sri Lanka was a small organization that provides mobile news and explores public journalism.
In 2004, in Indonesia when the 9.1-magnitude underwater earthquake caused a huge tsunami, footage of a person who experienced the tsunami was broadcasted in almost all TV channels.

1.14 Citizen Journalism in India

Currently in India there were around 60,000 titles registered as newspapers; among that 7,000 of these were operating as regular publications. Also there were some 100 national television channels and hundreds of additional local channels, and a number of private radio stations particularly in the larger cities.

Against this, trends were emerging yet in the new media environment (Internet and mobile services); several conventional players have begun by now in order to develop their own online and mobile offerings, however there remains a race to define new media rules and conventions.

Besides the conventional journalism industry, there were Merinews.com, Sulekha.com and Rediff.com. In the overall Indian economy Indian media have outperformed; they were expected to reach over US$18.6 billion by 2010.

There were around 216 million readers for printed papers and information from the newspapers, some 600 million book readers, some 100 million television households some 60 million Internet users, and some 185 million mobile phone subscribers (expected to grow to 462 million by 2011).

In the country literacy stands at around 67%, and government policy was shifting progressively towards further literacy education beyond basic print literacy itself - and already, technology adoption and adaptation was occurring very rapidly amongst the educated classes.
Internet (especially broadband) and mobile access was key here and blogs, news portals were gradually becoming popular and even used by conventional media operators. In these developments there was a sense that conventional media have been left behind.

Few decades ago, the media were an indicator and predictor of the nation’s pulse; today, it has become clear that the conventional media have failed time and again to predict political and other trends accurately which was witnessed in the 2004 general elections. The exit and opinion polls in India have not been successful in predicting the election verdict and this had occurred primarily because it was difficult for the surveyors to discover the real sentiments of the Indian voters. The Indian voters have in fact outwitted the exit and opinion pollsters.

The mainstream media’s professed opinions were a reflection of their political or commercial affiliations, and a number of media groups were beholden to newly cashed-up business groups with dubious connections. Moreover, style was overshadowing content; in particular in a few of the more recently introduced media outlets, stories were inadequately contextualized, and the necessity to serve advertisers and other business connections was overwhelming professional news practice.

As a final point, there was a number of self-assurance; media operators style themselves as a Fourth Estate which knows what’s best for the people, whereas they were increasingly disconnected from the people themselves. In opposition to this, a number of citizens have begun to express their disenchantment with the quality of Indian news media.
There was a sense that news media were obsessed with covering the political horse-
race and various other standard topics such as crises and violence, whereas they do so
with insufficient intellectual dynamism and insight, and overall remain obliged to
corporate or political interests.

Already Indians have been awakened to the fact of blogging, with people from all
around the country voicing their opinion on various issues. During the 2004 tsunami
crisis, blogs like tsunamihelp.blogspot.com assisted in generating participatory stories
from the country on the issue. By means of this blog many reported, regarding their
near-death experiences and the aftermath of the disaster that were not covered by the
mainstream media.

1.15 The beginning of Citizen Journalism in India

In several ways conventional media players have experimented in citizen journalism
by providing ‘letters to the editor’ pages. In recent times, for a number of news
channels in India, getting viewers to engage actively in the collating and presenting of
news on television was turning into a standard feature.

CNN-IBN was one of the first news channels in India to use the concept of "citizen
journalist," whereby any individual can send in a report that was aired in a separate
section. The 24x7 English-language channel CNN-IBN invites viewers to be a ‘citizen
journalist’ in the news enterprise on public hoardings. ‘You see it. You report it’, was
how one of their advertisements phrases it.

On local issues, viewers with well-documented stories send in video reports and
images, or on local consequences of national issues to their Citizen Journalism
account on the channel’s website IBNlive.com.
On the news channel NDTV, the audiences’ text messages are the forcing courts to re-open long-standing unresolved criminal cases and speed up the delivery of justice. Every evening at prime-time, the news and analysis programmes India 360° and Face the Nation on CNN-IBN ask for the public opinion on an important issue of the day, and the audience obligate with a steady stream of text messages.

In a lively discussion when a programme anchor engages along with the commentators, the viewers are able to read opinions ‘sms-ed’ by a nation-wide public at the bottom of the screen.

*Merinews* was a good initiative in the new media space. It was India’s first citizen journalism news portal. It was a people’s news platform of the people, by the people, for the people, providing power to the people and empowers democracy.

In 2007, the prestigious Webby Award was won by the site, which likened to the Oscars of the web. The CEO and Editor-in-Chief of merinews.com, Vipulkant Upadhyay was keen to make this medium further more powerful, therefore meaningful by expanding citizen’s participation in the political process. For next 60 years, Merinews has launched a campaign, Citizen’s Manifesto – 2006/7.

Creating a roadmap for the nation’s future was the objective. For India’s next 60 years it was running a campaign to create a citizens’ manifesto - a blueprint for the future of the nation - which was also meant to reinvigorate citizens’ participation in the political process. For this project *Merinews* has managed to generate a noteworthy level of contributions, which also includes participation from some politicians and senior bureaucrats.
There also exists some other startups (or have failed by now) - for example, *Instablogs.com*, in which the content was mainly sourced from the AP newswire, or *Purdaphash.com*. Also towards Community Radio there was a growing trend where common people get a platform for expressing their unheard voice. Therefore, now public opinion finds simple and instantaneous expression in the form of citizen journalism.

### 1.16 From Citizen journalism to User Comments

As citizen journalism was becoming the need of the hour simultaneously, media users are now invited to take part in the news process (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001; Deuze, *et al.*, 2007). Undoubtedly, compared to many citizen journalism projects that have emerged in recent years as seen in the above section - the online presences of traditional media organisations usually offer only a limited range of participatory features (Domingo, *et al.*, 2008; Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Thurman, 2008). However, there are conclusively much more opportunities for user participation than in their offline outlets.

A very common feature in the online news forums was comment sections, where users were invited to post a comment on the piece of news they have just read. Indeed, user comments can be seen on the websites of both electronic and print media, and also predominantly found in Western and Eastern, media organisations, such as *CNN, The New York Times, The Guardian, The Sun, BILD, Times of India, The Hindu, The Indian Express*. Some threads include thousands of posts. Although there is often some form of moderation to avoid offensive or otherwise inappropriate posts (e.g. Thurman, 2008), there is less need for editorial selection since the online space available for comments is in principle unrestricted. Thus, comments sections offer an
open platform where a large number of media users could voice their views on the news. Unlike, other forms of audience feedback such as letters to the editor, user comments appear right away and are directly attached to the story they engage with, attributing them a certain prominence and facilitating attention. Moreover, reader comments constitute ‘a novel variety of asynchronous computer-mediated communication’ (Abdul-Mageeb, 2008: 59) since they could also be used for communication between users. Therefore, comment sections can be regarded as hybrid constructs, supporting both vertical (user-to-article) and horizontal (user-to-user) communication.

1.17 Online User Comments as Media Stimulated Interpersonal Communication

Much had changed since writing letters to the editor; nowadays many news organizations allow their user to publish online comments in the immediate context of the related news item and audience takes advantage of this feature (Reich 2011, Singer 2009). A variety of interesting ripples are created by those comments in the newsroom. In addition to providing real-time feedback and direct feedback to the audience, these comments show the user interest in the article constitute unique discussion chains within their environment and potentially reach a large audience (Singer 2009).

When internet users comment on and discuss the news online, the interpersonal communication and mass communication process becomes structurally integrated. Leung (2009) describes the situation a power shift in the relationship between the mass media and the users, in the publicly accepted user postings in the immediate
context of the mass media content providing an independent voice to viewpoints of the users.

However little was known of why and under what circumstances users comment on online news and about how these activities can be scientifically described (Lee and Jang 2010). It has been observed the quantity and quality of the user comments vary between and within a Website and also some researcher have noted that the comments and the commenting pattern vary form one story to another. However, most recent research concentrates on analyzing either the users’ motives to publish comments or characteristics of the messages. With the ramped growth of technology and open source journalism and as internet users engage more actively in content production and alternative journalism practices, an increasing number of researchers focus on the implications of citizen journalism and the effects of user-generated content production on established journalistic practices.

Nevertheless, most of those studies focus solely on the availability of features for audience participation or examine user generated content in terms of a power struggle between journalists and users (Milioni et al. 2011); so far, only a few attempts have been made to study the actual content produced by the users and its implications on the processes by which mass media shape public opinion. This research aims at exploring the ways in which the content of online mass media was modified by users’ contributions in media websites.

1.18 Chapterization

The research is organised into five parts In Chapter I deals with the synopsis of online medium, discussions of online newspapers, online news use and its characteristics. The chapter provides information of the evolution of online newspaper and includes
discussion of current issues and problems. The chapter also looks into the fact that the earlier model of top –down communication has changed to provide a new characteristic of news practice, represented by a “horizontal” communication in which the journalist and users can react from one to one or one to many whereas, the traditional model of Communication was “Vertical” in the sense that communication took place from the authoritative sources, through the media, to the publics.

In Chapter II the researcher reviewed and discussed the landscape of the production of news and the changing environment where the online news is now an open forum. The literature review encompassed all areas of interactive journalism and the gatekeeping and agenda building process in the era of collaborative journalism. The literature review specifically focused on the areas of user generated content and user comments and the changes it caused in the news production process.

In Chapter III the Methodology adapted for the study was discussed. The aim of the research is to study the role of user comments as Agenda Builders and to identify the nature of user comments and how the space provided to the users is utilized by the readers. It also investigates the pattern and nature of comments and its influence on the journalist. For this Purpose a mixed method (Triangulation) was adapted. The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research had two parts Identifying the role of users as Agenda Builders: - Semi structured interviews with journalists was conducted. Questions that explored the attitude and opinions of journalists to user comments especially as a tool to agenda building were the main focus. To give a holistic approach the study adapted a survey method of which 200 samples was short listed from a population of people who read online news. The samples were selected using purposive sampling techniques since people who do not read online news papers were not the focus of the study, yet to know the reasons for
not going online 30 respondents apart from the 200 online users who did not use the online portals for news were also interrogated. The third method applied was content analysis on five online news papers which had a good circulation in the printed editions. The online newspapers for the study were, the Hindusthan Times, Times of India, The Hindu, The Deccan Chronicle and The Indian Express. Thus the samples were drawn from multiple sources instead of single website.

In the IV chapter, the researcher analysed the data collected applying a multi method (both qualitative and quantitative) following are the three methods adopted for the study. The data were analysed using simple percentage, chi square t test and f test. The researcher also applied cluster analysis for studying the usage pattern of the users.

Chapter V summarizes and concludes the study with recommendation for future studies. The researcher found a shift in the way people have begun to perceive online news. As Borchuluun Yadamsuren, a post-doctoral fellow at the Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) in the University of Missouri School of Journalism (2012) says that while some people still have the perception of news as tied to traditional media, others now hold a much broader perception of news that goes beyond what is reported by professional journalists and attributes this to the wide array of information available online. And online comment systems will only continue to evolve. Further the research has found that even with audience participation, journalist tends to retain control on the published content (Domingo et al. (2008), Hermida and Thurman (2008); Orenibring (2008). The user comments will continue to evolve and user comments on news sites, while key to interactive storytelling in the digital age, frequently read like scribbling on a bathroom stall: anonymous, offensive and full of hate and it is the journalist who has to adopt and shield themselves to the new challenges of participatory journalism.