Chapter - VI
Summary and Conclusion

Decades just before and after the turn of the 20th century have witnessed a drastic change in the profile of Indian newspapers. Now, Indian newspapers have better design almost meeting international standards. Today's newspapers of India accommodate conspicuous illustrations—colorful photographs, making the pages attractive; graphical presentations, making the news more exhaustive and vibrant colours in and out the text. Newspaper organizations now pay hefty amounts to world famous designers to design the type face of the letters used. Moreover, the quality of newsprint used is superior; there is salmon-pink shade in financial newspapers. In the beginning years of 1990s when newspapers started a metamorphosis first through colour and then through design, this endeavour was much criticized by the journalists of old school. There was a perpetual question—while newspaper is meant for reading why to add design and colour? Simple, drab black and white letters printed on white sheet may serve the purpose for which newspapers were ever first printed in eighteenth century.

Conceivably, these staunch critics of color and design in printed news pages could not gauge the changes occurred in the mindset of the new generation of readers and the entire environment of information and entertainment.

To comprehend the entire perspective well we have to refer a headline “TV viewing adds to newspaper readers: Study” published in Sunday Times of India, New Delhi edition, July 27, 2003 on the top of page 8. In a study conducted by the New Delhi based Centre for Media Studies (CMS) it was found that in 60 percent or more TV viewers, the time spent by them on newspaper reading was more. According to the study all ‘reader-viewers’ polled attributed it to viewing TV news earlier in the day or the previous night. Thus, watching news on TV has an “appetizer effect” on viewers
who later buy newspapers. Also, the more one watches news on TV the more one tends to read a daily.

By 90s TV was supposed to be more interactive media than that of newspaper. Earlier, in 1980s, when television registered widespread presence all through the nation, it was highly being apprehended that television would kill newspapers. Then, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting sponsored seminars countrywide to organize discussions over the future of print media after the advent of television. Only within a decade, the fear proved futile.

It was because print media, particularly newspapers strove hard for their survival. They were compelled to bring a drastic change in their form and content to make the pages more interactive. All the mainstream dailies started announcing the change in their appearance and content. It was apparent in the headline of Hindustan Times of June 2, 2006,” A Bigger, Better and brighter Hindustan Times”. The newspaper, under the headline declared several ‘innovations’ like ‘reader friendly’ pages, easy to navigate Hindustan Times, addition of Q&A and news2use, sport section with more visuals, revamped edit page with more space for letters and most important of all ‘bolder and brighter’ Sunday Magazine ‘Brunch’. The news also includes “To a large extent these additions are a result of your feedback to us. They recognize your changing aspirations and requirements.” The newspaper also makes an appeal to its readers in the news “Do keep sending your feedback, and we’ll keep giving you paper that is simply the best in news, in writing and in relevance.”

Consequently, these changes in the face of newspapers, on the one hand, made them more interactive and on the other hand retained the effectiveness of print media.

Another study in this regard has been revealed under the headline “Print still the most effective medium”( Hindustan Times, New Delhi, and October 10, 2007). The study
conducted by IMRB and INS manifest that 'despite the rise of television, print media remains the most effective medium'. The study entitled 'Impact Multiplier measured how print and television work on the basis of the impact multiplier theory and concluded that, print –especially when combined with the electronic medium – creates the highest brand salience and TOM (top of mind) effect. The study further declares that print medium has great significance and is irreplaceable in the communication mix.

This was only the augmented interactivity on the part of newspapers that could bind the reader with it –either on the conscious or sub conscious level. Here, higher interactivity is higher active participation or involvement of the reader in the newspaper. It is not certainly the 'Feedback', though the feedback is also one aspect of interactivity.

After the advent of Internet or New Media, newspapers started taking the full mileage of the greater scope of interactivity available in it. Most of the newspapers extended themselves on net either through websites or through e newspaper or through both. Obviously new media proved extremely interactive; hence the web editions of newspapers started enjoying greater interactivity. It was the enlargement of the efforts that they made on newsprint. Now, there is a paradigm shift. This new phenomenon started with the advent of Internet as a new medium of disseminating news. Within a short span, it turned into a popular mass medium. It handed over immense power in the hands of the reader. Ever first, the modest reader became the centre of all activity. There is no more a passive flow of information and news to the reader from the newspaper. The new media has established live contact between the news giver and the news receiver. Reader is not mere a receiver now, rather he or she is a participant. Osgood’s model of communication has proved true here. The reader has suddenly
become an active player, an active partner in the news affair. These characteristics of new media were also shifted, in due course, in mainstream print media.

It was found in the present study that the print newspapers in India have a common policy towards interactive elements. They try a number of elements to increase interactive level of the paper. These interactive elements attract the readers also and help the newspapers to maintain their readership in changing demographic dynamics. In this way practice of interactive elements became a regular part and necessity.

The Times of India and Navbharat Times presents this new trend effectively and on the basis of analysis of their contents we can say that newspapers very seriously practice interactive elements. Though all interactive elements do not provide ideal two way interaction but in their limits they give a desired level of interactivity that is very important for survival of print newspapers.

Some of its trends are very effective and reader friendly. For example giving link of the content provider encourage readers to participate and dialogue with reporter and in this way a level of interactivity is achieved. This trend should be followed by other newspapers also. Overlapping photographs are another effective non-conventional interactive tool which establishes a new relation of newspaper with their readers.

While we study interactivity in print media, a two way perspective study is required. One, the perspective of media itself and another, the perspective of media users or the audience. In the experience survey, audience's behavioral pattern, tendency of media usage, level of interactivity, there varying behavior of interactivity with varied media category, etc. have been monitored.

Totally, during the survey, sixty questions were asked with the respondents to screen their interactive behaviour with media. Sample size remained around four hundred. Delhi and NCR also accommodates plentiful less educated slum dwellers who are
also active participants in the development process but since their use of media is limited to only electronic media, they were not included in the sample.

In the sample survey some findings proved extremely vital for the research. It was found that two segments of age groups ranging between 21 to 40 years are more concerned about interactivity in the newspapers they read. Delhi is a progressive township having least male-female discrimination, yet it was found than women are less inclined to interact through print media than male. Similarly, students, job seekers and corporate professionals are more conscious about two way communication even in print media. Demand of interactivity is maximum among dependants whose income level is zero. It was stated earlier that those people yearn more for interactivity who need greater exchange of information and the youth still dependant on their parents, obviously need more information for their adequate placement. Curiously, meager yearning for interactivity was observed either in the very high income group or very low income group. Geographically, there is a uniform distribution of interactivity prone people in all the parts of Delhi. A myth that higher is the education higher is the longing for interactivity was absolutely rejected by this survey. While considerable number of students of professional education and undergraduate, postgraduate classes has concern about it, research scholars were found nonchalant to seek two way communications in print media.

A Modern daily newspaper is not mere a ‘news’ paper rather it is ‘multi masala package’ of news, views, infotainment, life style, etc. On the turn of the century, newspapers turned colour and they devoured the content of magazine. Due to this reason when the program preference on television was asked most of the newspaper readers responded for entertainment or news.
Next set of questions were focused over radio listening habit. Over 65 lakh cars ply on the roads of Delhi and NCR everyday and the entire car commuters certainly switch on their inbuilt radio set while they are moving from their home to office. In addition around 15 lakh travellers commute on metro train every day. In addition lakhs of commuters prefer DTC for their commuting. In Delhi, it is a common feature to see the bus and metro commuters having fixed their earphones to their ears for listening FM radio. Though most of them are music listeners, Delhites and the residents of NCR are radio listeners in large number.

As far as watching cinema and theatre going habit of newspaper readers is concerned, most of them are not very frequent visitors of cinema halls. Next in the number are those who visit cinema once a month.

Another query was about the internet usage pattern of respondents. It was found that most of them are net users and they use net either in cyber café or in their offices or colleges. Next in the percentage are the net users on their mobile handsets. While most of them use internet only for one to two hours daily, most of them also prefer sit in front of computer screen for net surfing on Weekends. Most of the net users prefer information oriented sites and social networking.

Last and most significant is the question about their newspaper reading habits. Obviously, cent percent of them are newspaper readers that are why they have been asked other questions. Most of the readers have a preference for a particular newspaper because of its content and presentation. They are highly satisfied with the design and make up of their subscribed newspaper. Still most of the readers prefer the newspaper printed on the newsprint rather than the e newspaper, do not respond through letter to editor, hardly comment on e story and less frequently participate in
polls. Thus it was found that despite the availability of the scope of interactivity, they
don’t exploit the opportunity and passively interact rather than actively.

In fact colour and design affects the subconscious of the readers therefore most of the
readers are not aware about colour and presentation of design. A high percentage of
the readers visit online versions also it means they are more exposed to interactivity.
Most of them also like the presentation pattern of online newspaper. It was found that
e newspaper is more attractive for them. They also admit that there is more scope of
expression, response, participation and comment in e newspaper. They find e
newspaper more convenient because of comfortable reading. They can have an easy
access to the content they want to open. Multimediality, hypertextuality and
interactivity all are the factors that attribute to the attraction of the readers towards e
newspaper. Though a few of them use audio facility, a large number of respondents
come across video facility provided in the newspaper on net. It was also found that
large illustrations, mobile/internet links also helps enhance interactivity among the
newspaper readers. Surprisingly most of them do not want to stop the subscription of
newsprint newspaper despite the easy availability and access of e newspaper or the
web newspaper, yet they are reluctant to pay for e newspaper while they happily pay
for paper subscription. India is a traditional country. In traditional countries there is
an inherent reluctance for the change, hence, the readers still don’t want to replace e
newspaper by printed version while they like to get exposed with both.

When asked about the future prospects of e newspaper, they agreed that e newspaper
is more eco friendly, more gen-next, yet print is more authentic in their opinion.

Major parameters adopted for the study were feedback, control, productivity,
creativity, communication; adaptation and participation. There were several factors in
newspaper like colour scheme, graphic design, photographs, lay out, supplements and changed content responsible for enhanced interactivity.

As the maxim says, "need is the mother of innovation", the need of survival compelled the newspapers to change themselves. It is being observed that the pace of change is very fast. News editor is not responsible now for the layout of the front page. A professional designer is deployed in every newspaper to decide the design of the face of the newspaper. Moreover, changes in the presentation and content have become more frequent. It can be expected that future newspaper will be more reader friendly, easy to browse, and effective to augment more and more participation of the reader.
SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Though in the present study efforts have been done to put in depth analysis and response of interactivity in print media, the study is not complete in itself. Always the scope and potential for further studies remains in the domain of a particular discipline of study.

In the present study only two dailies, one Hindi and other English of Times of India publication were taken for analysis. It can be suggested that in the further studies, the monitoring may be extended to more mainstream newspapers. Moreover, in last two decades, there was a phenomenal growth in the circulation and readership of regional newspapers. After globalization and privatization process, adverts of automobile, FMCGs, consumer durables etc. items turned towards rural and semi rural market of India. They found the regional language newspapers the best vehicle to communicate about their product and thus to woo and exploit rural, semirural market. The phenomenon of interactivity, observed in regional newspapers of 21st century is remarkable. This interactivity strive is considerably different from newspapers with urban orientation. Since the target audience, their behavioral pattern, their usage pattern is widely different from that of urban audience; a separate study is still required to understand the interactivity system developed by language newspaper.

In addition, this study was confined to newspapers only while the domain of print media is very wide. In the further studies, newsmagazines, specialized magazines, tabloids may also be included. Tabloids and eveningers are very well known for a long time for their high level of interactivity as usually they try to sensationalize the stories. Bigger pictures on the cover page, extraordinarily big type sized headlines, visible blurbs, and flagrant use of colors are some of the distinguishing characteristics of tabloids.
As far as readers' perspective is concerned, still there is a wide potential of study to understand factors of interactivity. Readers may be asked to respond about their taste of color, their choice of content and the ways they would like to respond over the material catered to them on printed pages. Again, this study was focused in national capital region where the profile of audience is very different from rest of the nation. In fact, this audience does not represent the entire nation. A separate survey may be conducted in small townships or the rural areas catered with newspapers for the appraisal of the level of interactivity through the newspapers they read. There is a scope of astonishing findings that may further help determine the marketing strategy to newspaper groups as well as advertisers.

Any specific study has its own limitations as it is not humanly possible to undertake all possible areas of study within a single work. The present study is also limited only to one Hindi and one English newspaper of one of the highest circulation and readership in Delhi, NCR area. There may be other unexplored areas of study, geographically, demographically, psycographically, apart from that mentioned above.