

Survey research method

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ABSTRACT

Social science methodology largely depends upon survey methods in its research endeavor as it has the advantage of to have a great deal of information from a larger population. It can also be adapted to obtain personal and social facts, beliefs and attitudes. It is also said that survey research method is an inappropriate tool for the study of multitude Survey research method is a descriptive research used for the collection of data from the representative sample of the target population.

This paper deals with the concept, phases, key characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of survey research. Methodology of survey research, right from the statement of problem to writing report, has also been elaborated in great detail in this paper. Emphasis has also been laid on different methods viz: interview, questionnaire, panel survey, observation and telephone interview used for data collection in survey research. A serious thought has been given to the merits and demerits of each of the methods used for data collection in survey research.

The word 'survey', as per Merriam Webster Dictionary is derived from Anglo-French word 'surveer' which means to look over. Further, according to the dictionary, survey means (a) to examine as to condition, situation, or value-appraise; (b) to query (someone) in order to collect data for the analysis of some aspect of a group or area; (c) to determine and delineate the form, extent, and position of (as a tract of land) by taking linear and angular measurements and by applying the principles of geometry and trigonometry; (d) to view or consider comprehensively; and (e) to inspect, scrutinize. Herbert Mc. Closky (1969) defined survey "as any procedure in which data

are systematically collected from a population or a sample thereof through some form or direct solicitation, such as face to face interviews, telephone interviews or mail questionnaires". Survey research is also defined as a method of descriptive research used for collecting primary data based on verbal or written communication with a representative sample of individuals or respondents from the target population.

Kerlinger (1973) considered survey research as social scientific research and focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour. It has been further clarified by Parten (1950) that the social scientific nature of the survey research is revealed by the nature of its variables which can be classified as sociological facts, opinions and attitudes. Sociological facts are attributes of individuals that spring from their membership in social groups : sex, income, political and religious affiliation, socio-economic status, education, age, living expenses, occupation, race, and so on. The second type of variable is psychological and includes opinions and attitudes, on the one hand, and behaviour, on the other. The survey researcher is not interested primarily in the sociological variable as

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such. He is primarily interested in what people think and what they do. The survey research was invented by Lazarsfeld, Gallup and Cantril.

Phases of survey research

While going through the history of survey research method, one can find at least three significant phases in its development as a method of research viz. (i) just collection of data was considered survey in the first phase which lasted till 1930; (ii) descriptive studies based on survey data were known as survey method in the second phase which continued from 1930 to the second world war; and (iii) the explanation part of the data was considered as more important in the survey methods after the second world war in the third phase.

Methodology

Survey researchers normally adopt a flow plan or chart to outline the design and subsequent implementation of a survey, Campbell and Katona (1953). The flow plan begins with the objectives of the survey, lists each step to be taken and ends with the final report. The subsequent steps are as discussed below:

Statement of the problem : It is not always possible for a researcher to formulate his problem simply, clearly, and completely. He may often have only a general, diffused notion of the problem. This is in the nature of the complexity of scientific research. It may even take the investigator years of exploration, thought, and research before he can clearly say what questions he has been asking. Nevertheless, adequate statement of the research problem is one of the most important parts of research. That it may be difficult or impossible to state a research problem satisfactorily at a given time should not allow us to lose sight of the ultimate desirability and necessity of doing so. Nor should the difficulty be used as a rationalization to

avoid stating the problem. Bearing this difficulty in mind, a fundamental principle can be stated: If one wants to solve a problem, one must generally know what the problem is. It can be said that a large part of the solution lies in knowing what one is trying to do. Another part lies in knowing what a problem is and especially what a scientific problem is. What is a good problem statement? Although research problems differ greatly, and although there is no one “right” way to state one, certain characteristics of problems and problem statements can be learned and used to good advantage. There are at least three criteria of good problems and problem statements. Firstly, the problem should express a relation between two or more variables. Secondly, the problem should be stated clearly and unambiguously in question form. Thirdly, the problem and the problem statement should be such as to imply possibilities of empirical testing, Kerlinger (1973).

Sample and the Sampling Plan : Selecting the universe in the field of study and choosing the sample from the universe are the second crucial steps in survey research. The universe to be sampled and studied must be defined. In sampling, normally we collect limited data from a population and after studying the limited data we try to infer certain conclusions about the characteristics or parameters of the population. Therefore, the sample design must result in a truly representative sample; sample design must be such which results in a minimum sampling error; sample design must be viable in the context of funds availability; sample design must be such that the systematic bias can be controlled easily and sample should be such so that the result of the sample study can be applied, in general, for the universe with a reasonable level of confidence, Kothari, (2005).

Development of Instruments for Data

Collection : This is a laborious and difficult business. Interview schedules and questionnaire methods are often used for data collection in social science research. The instruments have to be carefully developed with regard to the type of questions to be asked, the degree of probing, the sequence of questions etc. Details of the interviews and construction of questionnaire are given below.

Data Collection : Interviewers are oriented, trained, and sent out with complete instructions as to whom to interview and how the interview is to be handled. In the best surveys, interviewers are allowed no latitude as to whom to interview. They must interview those individuals and only those individuals designated, generally by random devices. Some latitude may be allowed in the actual interviewing and use of the schedule, but not much. The work of interviewers is also systematically checked in some manner. For example, every tenth interview may be checked by sending another interviewer to the same respondent. Interview schedules are also studied for signs of spurious answering and reporting. Various methods used for data collection in survey research are described in subsequent pages.

Coding and Coding Frame : Coding refers to an analytical process in which data, often from interview transcripts or questionnaires, are categorized to facilitate analysis. It is a set of rules that translate answers into numbers and vice-versa. Coding refers to the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes. Such classes should be appropriate to the research problem under consideration. They must also possess the characteristics of exhaustiveness and exclusiveness which means a specific answer can be placed in one and only one cell in a given category set. Another rule

to be observed is that of unidimensionality by which every class is defined in terms of only one concept, Kothari (2005). Coding should be unambiguous so as to minimize errors during analysis. If we have a reasonably focused and specific question to the point and if coding categories are conceptually clear, we can expect high reliability of the data. It is ideal that the researcher should have adequate knowledge about coding. Equally important is data entry which will have to be carefully checked to ensure the reliability of the data.

A coding frame relates to a single question. In cases where there are only a few possible answers to the question the preparation of the frame raises no problems. The questions: 'Have you smoked any cigarettes today?' admits only the answers of 'Yes' and 'No' together with 'Don't remember', 'Refuse to answer', 'Not applicable', so that the frame decides itself. Where the frame does not determine itself automatically, it is a matter of deciding how detailed a grouping to allow for in the coding, which in turn, depends on how the answers are expected to be distributed and what analysis is being planned, Rao and Yadagiri (1984).

For example :

If respondent lived in a house.

What kind of house is it?

- Whole thatched house (5)
- Whole semi-thatched house (6)
- Whole terrace house (7)
- Whole self-contained flat (8)
- Other (give details) (9)
- Not applicable (Y)

It is assumed that these represent the main alternative answers and that it will be useful to keep them distinct. Codes 5, 6 and 7 might have been

combined to constitute a 'whole house' code, but the difference between the three types here is of interest.

Grouping and Tabulation of Data : It is cumbersome to study or interpret large data without grouping it, even if it is arranged sequentially. For this, the data are usually organized into groups called classes and presented in a table which gives the frequency in each group. Such a frequency table gives a better overall view of the distribution of data and enables a person to rapidly comprehend important characteristics of the data. If the tabulation plans have been carefully worked out, the analyst is bound to think of new analysis as he goes along.

Tabulation may also be classified as simple and complex tabulation. The former type of tabulation gives information about one or more groups of independent questions, whereas, the latter type of tabulation shows the division of data in two or more categories and as such is designed to give information concerning one or more sets of inter-related questions. Simple tabulation generally results in one-way tables which supply answers to questions about one characteristic of data only. As against this, complex tabulation usually results in two-way tables (which give information about two inter-related characteristics of data), three-way tables (which give information about three interrelated characteristics of data) or still higher order tables, also known as manifold tables, which supply information about several interrelated characteristics of data. Two-way tables, three-way tables or manifold tables are all examples of what is sometimes described as cross tabulation.

Analysis of Data and Types of Analysis : For analysis of data, both quantitative and non-quantitative methods can be used. The objectives of analysis are (i) to characterize what is typical in a voters group; (ii)

to indicate how widely individuals in the group vary; (iii) to show other aspects of how the individuals are distributed with respect to the variable being measured; (iv) to show the relation of the variables in the data to one another and; (v) to describe the difference between two or more groups, Rao and Vakil (1984). Further, analysis can help categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions. It also helps reducing data to intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied and tested. Analysis, particularly in case of survey or experimental data, involves estimating the values of unknown parameters of the population and testing of hypotheses for drawing inferences. Analysis, may, therefore, be categorized as descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. (Inferential analysis is often known as statistical analysis.) "Descriptive analysis is largely the study of distributions of one variable. This study provides us with profiles of companies, work groups, persons and other subjects on any of a multiple of characteristics such as Size, Composition, Efficiency, Preferences etc.," Emory C. William (1976). This sort of analysis may be in respect of one variable (described as unidimensional analysis), or in respect of two variables (described as bivariate analysis) or in respect of more than two variables (described as multivariate analysis). In this context, we work out various measures that show the size and shape of a distribution(s) along with the study of measuring relationships between two or more variables.

We may as well talk of correlation analysis and causal analysis. Correlation analysis studies the joint variation of two or more variables for determining the amount of correlation between two or more variables. Causal analysis is concerned with the study of how one or more variables affect changes in another

variable. It is thus a study of functional relationships existing between two or more variables. This analysis can be termed as regression analysis. Causal analysis is considered relatively more important in experimental researches, whereas in most social and business researches our interest lies in understanding and controlling relationships between variables than with determining causes *per se* and as such we consider correlation analysis as relatively more important, Kothari (2005).

In modern times, with the availability of computer facilities, there has been a rapid development of multivariate analysis which may be defined as “all statistical methods which simultaneously analyse more than two variables on a sample of observations”, Sheth (1971). Usually the following analyses are involved when we make a reference of multivariate analysis, Emory C. William (1976):

- (a) **Multiple Regression Analysis** : This analysis is adopted when the researcher has one dependent variable which is presumed to be a function of two or more independent variables. The objective of this analysis is to make a prediction about the dependent variable based on its covariance with all the concerned independent variables.
- (b) **Multiple Discriminant Analysis** : This analysis is appropriate when the researcher has a single dependent variable that cannot be measured, but can be classified into two or more groups on the basis of some attribute. The objective of this analysis is to predict an entity’s possibility of belonging to a particular group based on several predictor variables.
- (c) **Multivariate Analysis of Variance (or multi-ANOVA)** : This analysis is an extension of two-

way ANOVA, wherein the ratio among group variance to within group variance is worked out on a set of variables.

- (d) **Canonical Analysis** : This analysis can be used in case of both measurable and non-measurable variables for the purpose of simultaneously predicting a set of dependent variables from their joint covariance with a set of independent variables.

Report Writing : Research report is considered a major component of the research study; otherwise the research task remains incomplete. As a matter of fact, even the most brilliant hypothesis, highly well designed and conducted research study, and the most striking generalizations and findings are of little value unless they are effectively communicated to others. The purpose of research is not well served unless the findings are made known to others. Research results must invariably enter the general store of knowledge. All this explains the significance of writing research report.

Writing a research report is a technical activity which demands all the skills and patience from the researcher. It requires “considerable thought, effort, patience and penetration and an overall approach to the problem, data and analysis, as well as firm control over language and greater objectivity”. To write the report, a vast amount of planning and preparation is necessary for organizing and then writing the report. Besides, perfection in the research report is achieved by continuous and persistent thought and creative and intelligent writing. Only hard and patient work on the facts, careful and critical assessment and intelligent planning of the organization of the report can facilitate communication. Before starting report writing, the researcher should accumulate a mass of data and

information which should be prudently and carefully used. Well conceived planning and organizing facilitates report writing with proper emphasis on different aspects.

The investigator while writing the report may consider the steps like (i) logical analysis of the subject-matter; (ii) preparation of the final outline; (iii) preparation of the rough draft; (iv) re-writing and polishing; (v) preparation of the final bibliography; and (vi) writing the final draft, L. Naidu (1984).

Methods of data collection in survey research

Kerlinger (1973) classified the methods of data collection in survey research as types of surveys like (i) personal interview; (ii) mail questionnaire; (iii) panel; (iv) telephone; and (v) observations. Among these, personal interview and mail questionnaire are considered to be the most popular methods among the investigators. Often it has been observed that students get confused or are not able to distinguish between interview schedule and questionnaire. To put it precisely, interview schedule is primarily filled in by the interviewer and the questionnaire is filled in by the respondents. The questionnaire is normally mailed to the respondents who have been included in the sample. The methods used for data collection in survey research are described in the preceding pages:

Interview : This type of survey takes many forms ranging from strict formal interview to the completely open-ended or unstructured interview in which the interviewer actually changes mode of questions in the hope of getting a deeper understanding of issues under investigation. In case of strict formal interview or structured interviews, the interviewer follows the instructions provided by the researcher strictly and in no way varies the procedures or helps the respondent in formulating and verbalizing his

responses. The structured interview provides uniform information which assures the comparability of data.

Structured interviewing requires fewer interviewing skills than does unstructured interviewing. In fact, interviewing is an art governed by certain scientific principles. Every effort should be made to create friendly atmosphere of trust and confidence so that the respondents may feel at ease while talking to and discussing with the interviewer. The interviewer must (i) understand the audience profile first – their need, interest, education levels, background of the person including his past history etc.; (ii) put questions in such a way that the audience understand and reply favourably; (iii) start questions from simpler to complex; (iv) not put questions in such a way that may embarrass the audience – the way interviewer ask questions is more important; (v) be friendly, courteous, conversational and unbiased; (vi) be able to keep the respondent on the track by discouraging irrelevant conversation; and (vii) ask only one question at a time.

For successful implementation of the interview method, interviewers should be carefully selected and trained. They should possess technical competence as well as necessary field based experience. Occasional field checks may be made to see that the interviewers are going on the right track.

Strength of Interview :

- More information in a detailed manner can be collected.
- Personal or delicate information can easily be obtained.
- Non response rate is very low.
- Instant or spontaneous response of the interviewee can be gathered
- Misinterpretation of questions by the interviewee can be controlled.

- The interviewer can collect supplementary information about the respondent's personal characteristics and environment which is of great value in interpreting results.
- It has the flexibility as the interviewer has the opportunity to restructure the questions if needed.

Weakness of Interview :

- Very expensive and time consuming method particularly when a large and widely spread geographical sample is taken into account.
- Bias can operate at both interviewer and interviewee levels.
- Sometimes difficult to get the selected sample respondents.
- Getting the appropriate persons and training them and supervising their interview in the field are difficult processes.
- The presence of the interviewer on the spot may over-stimulate the respondent, sometimes even to the extent that he may give imaginary information just to make the interview interesting

Guidelines for Construction of Schedules/ Questionnaires : Design of question is generally an art rather than science. Pauline V. Young (1961) lists out a few items as mandatory for most forms of questionnaires. The list includes (i) the identification of the agency or organization collecting the data should appear in a prominent place on the front of the form. If the information is collected by one agency and sponsored by another, the names of both agencies should be shown. If the forms are to be returned by mail, the address to which they are to be sent must be clearly specified; (ii) the title of the study or survey

should be on the front page of the form and it is desirable for it to appear in large font. Printing and spacing devices can both be used for obtaining effective emphasis on the major items of the form; (iii) the authority for the basis or the collection of the information should be stated. If the enquiry is from a federal agency, a Budget Bureau approval number and an expiration date are required; (iv) the confidentiality of the data should be made clear in such a way that the respondent will be assured of protection; (v) the dates of the period covered by the report should be stated in advance, or space should be left for them to be filled in by the respondent or the interviewer; (vi) if footnotes are needed, the space for recording them should be clearly identified and the amount of space should be determined by the expected number and type; (vii) a place should be provided for the signature of the respondent or the interviewer, unless none is required; (viii) it is usually advisable to assign a serial number to each questionnaire in order to identify it easily, and to facilitate the control of interviewing assignments; and (ix) when a questionnaire contains more than one page, each page should be numbered. If the interviewer is permitted to use extra forms, an item should be inserted for the purpose of identifying each form used.

Delbert C. Miller (1964) in his *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement* provides a guide to the questionnaire construction which includes sixteen instructions viz. (i) "Keep the language pitched to the level of the respondent; (ii) try to pick words that have the same meaning for everyone; (iii) avoid long questions; (iv) do not assume that your respondent possesses factual information or firsthand opinions; (v) establish the frame of reference you have in mind; (vi) in forming a question, either suggest all possible alternatives to the respondent or do not suggest any; (vii) protect your respondent's ego; (viii) if you are

after unpleasant orientations, give your respondent a chance to express his positive feeling first so that he is not put in an unfavorable light; (ix) decide whether you need a direct question, an indirect question, or an indirect followed by a direct question; (x) decide whether the question should be open or closed; (xi) decide whether general or specific questions are needed; (xii) avoid ambiguous wording; (xiii) avoid biased or leading questions; (xiv) phrase questions so that they are not unnecessarily objectionable; (xv) decide whether a personal or impersonal question will obtain the better response; and (xvi) questions should be limited to a single idea or a single reference.”

In one of the issues on seminar series, University of Illinois, Chicago, U.S.A opines what should be the characteristics of a good question. The characteristics include (i) one that yields a truthful, accurate answer; (ii) one that asks for one answer on one dimension; (iii) one that accommodates all possible contingencies of response; (iv) one that uses specific, simple language; (v) one that has mutually exclusive response options; (vi) one that produces variability in response; (vii) one that minimizes social desirability; and (viii) one that is pretested.

Pre-testing of Questionnaire : Before finalizing the questionnaire, it is better if it is pre-tested with the part of sample respondents. Moser and Kalton (1985) point out that “however experienced the questionnaire designer may be, any attempt to short-cut these preparatory stages will seriously jeopardize the quality of the questionnaire”. The pre-testing enables the researcher to identify the mistakes and unwarranted and undesirable trends that might have crept into the questionnaire. It helps in enriching the design of the questionnaire and assists in testing the validity and reliability of statistical technique to be adopted for data processing and analysis. Goode and

Hatt (1952) indicated certain signs or symptoms which may be seen during pre-testing and which may lead to correction or change in the content, sequence and language of the questionnaire. The symptoms indicated by Goode and Hatt are: (i) lack of proper order in the responses; (ii) all-or-none responses; (iii) large number of “do not know” or “do not understand” answers; (iv) many qualified answers or irrelevant opinions; (v) high proportion of refusals to answer; and (vi) high degree of variance in answers when the question order is changed. In situations where these symptoms are observed by pilot surveys or pre-testing, questionnaire should be changed to overcome the shortfalls and failings. “If well done and thoroughly exploited, the pilot study will usually prove to be a substantial saver of time and effort by helping to avoid erroneous and insignificant hypotheses.”

Reliability : This refers to how consistent a measuring device is. A measurement is said to be reliable or consistent if the measurement can produce similar results if used again in similar circumstances. Reliability in questionnaire studies relates to the ability of the tool to produce the same results if we test it more than two-three times.

Validity : This refers to whether a study measures or examines what it claims to measure or examine. Questionnaires are said to often lack validity for a number of reasons. Participants may lie; give answers that are desired and so on. It is argued that qualitative data are more valid than quantitative data.

Collection of data through questionnaire

Questionnaire : After finalizing the questionnaire and correcting it on the basis of pre-testing, it is mailed to the respondents selected in a scientific way. Normally, a covering letter is sent with

the questionnaire which explains why and by whom the survey is undertaken, how the addressee has come to be selected for questioning and why he should take the trouble to answer questions. This last point is significant because often researchers expect the respondents to answer their questions without informing them about the benefits of the survey.

Strength of Questionnaire Method

- The questionnaire is cheaper than other methods.
- Even national level surveys can be conducted very fast.
- Uniformity in responses can be ensured.
- The questionnaire ensures anonymity.
- It provides freedom to the respondents.

Weakness of Questionnaire Method

- Poor response rate—as a result valid generalisations cannot be made.
- Can be used only with the educated respondents.
- Ambiguous replies and omission of replies to certain questions can happen.
- Cannot be applied in situations where spontaneous responses are needed.
- Questionnaire may be filled by an unintended respondent.

Other methods used for data collection in survey research

Panel Survey : It is a method of direct extension of a questionnaire or interview survey. In a panel survey, data are collected from the same people at two or more points in time. Perhaps the most obvious use of panel data is to assess the stability of psychological constructs and to identify the determinants of stability Krosnick (1988) and Krosnick and Alwin (1989). But

with such data one can test causal hypotheses in at least two ways. First, one can examine whether individual-level changes over time in an independent variable correspond to individual-level changes in a dependent variable over the same period of time. So for example, one can ask whether people who experienced increasing interracial contact manifested decreasing racial prejudice, while at the same time people who experienced decreasing interracial contact manifested increasing racial prejudice.

Second, one can assess whether changes over time in a dependent variable can be predicted by prior levels of an independent variable. So, for example, do people who had the highest amounts of interracial contact at time 1. manifest the largest decreases in racial prejudice between time 1 and time 2. Such a demonstration provides relatively strong evidence consistent with a causal hypothesis, because the changes in the dependent variable could not have caused the prior levels of the independent variable (Blalock (1985) Kessler and Greenberg (1981) on the methods: Rahn, Krosnick, and Breuning (1994) for an illustration of its application).

One application of this approach occurred in a study of a long-standing social psychological idea called the projection hypothesis. Rooted in cognitive consistency theories, it proposes that people may overestimate the extent to which they agree with others whom they like, and they may overestimate the extent to which they disagree with others whom they dislike. But in the late 1980s, a number of cross-sectional studies by political psychologists yielded correlations consistent with the noting that people's perceptions of the policy stands of presidential candidates were distorted to be consistent with attitudes toward the candidates (Granberg (1985), Kinder (1978). However, there were alternative theoretical interpretations of

these correlations, so an analysis using panel survey data seemed in order. *Krosnick (1991b)* did just such an analysis exploring whether attitudes towards candidates measured at one time point could predict subsequent shifts in perceptions of presidential candidates issue stands. And he found no projection at all to have occurred, thereby suggesting that the previously documented correlations were more likely due to other processes (e.g., deciding how much to like a candidate based on agreement with him or her on policy issues; Byrne (1971), Krosnick (1988b).

Panel surveys do have some disadvantages. First, although people are often quite willing to participate in a single cross-sectional survey, fewer may be willing to complete multiple interviews. Furthermore, with each additional wave of panel data collection, it becomes increasingly difficult to locate respondents and reinterview them, because some people move to different locations, some die etc. This may threaten the representativeness of panel survey samples if the members of the first-wave sample who agree to participate in several waves of data collection differ in meaningful ways from the people who are interviewed initially but do not agree to participate in subsequent waves of interviewing (Penny S. Visser et.al. (2000).

Observation Method : It is especially used in studies relating to behavioural sciences. In a way, we all observe things around us, but this sort of observation is not scientific unless we keep certain issues in mind like (i) what should be observed; (ii) how the observation is to be recorded; and (iii) how best the accuracy of the observation can be ensured. Under observation method, the investigator himself is seeking information on his own direct observation without asking from the respondent. The information obtained relates to what is currently happening and is not

complicated by either the past behaviour or future intentions or attitudes of respondents. The observation is of two kinds viz: Controlled and Uncontrolled. If the observation takes place in the natural setting, it can be called uncontrolled observation but if the observation takes place as per the definite pre arranged plans following experimental procedures, it can be called controlled observation. The main purpose of observation is to get a spontaneous picture of life and persons.

Strength

- Subjective bias is eliminated if observation is done accurately.
- The information obtained under this method relates to what is currently happening, therefore, it is not complicated by either the past behaviour or future intentions or attitudes.

Weakness

- It is an expensive method.
- Information observed/gathered can be limited.
- Unforeseen factors may interfere during observations.
- Observation can be biased if it is not understood in proper perspectives.
- This method is not applicable in inquiries where large samples are concerned.

Telephone Survey : Under this method, the respondents can be reached quickly and information can be gathered while recall of the news or information is still fresh. This type of survey could be useful only when the respondents can be located through telephone directory. This approach is more popular in western countries obviously because of the development of the communication system and low cost. This method suffers from the inability to obtain detailed information from the respondents.

Key characteristics of survey research

- Survey research is often a quantitative method but can be qualitative which requires standardized information from and/or about the subjects being studied. The subjects might be individuals, groups, organizations or communities.
- Sample selection must be done without any prejudice or preference so that the data collected through the survey will represent the entire population.
- The primary way of collecting information is by asking people structured and pre-defined questions to meet the objectives of the study.
- Interviews or questionnaires are the common methods used for data collection.
- Surveys are widely used in the social sciences and follow specific procedures based on survey science and the scientific method.
- It is one of the few techniques available for the study of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives.
- The survey process is highly inter-connected.

Advantages of Survey Research

- Faster data collection than other methods
- Relatively inexpensive data collection
- Survey data can be very accurate if sampling is probabilistic
- Access to a wide range of participants
- It is more ethical than experiments
- It uses the methods, materials and setting of the study of the real-life situation which is under investigation to ensure ecological validity.
- It is the sole way of retrieving information about a respondent's past history.
- It is the only method where generalized information could be collected from almost any human population.

Disadvantages of Survey Research

- Data may be superficial.
- Can be expensive to ensure representative data.
- Data may not have internal validity.
- Data may not have construct validity because of self report problems.
- Data may not have external validity because of poor sampling or because of non response bias.
- Survey research method is an inappropriate tool for the study of multitudes.
- The critics of the methods say that individual respondent is placed outside the social context and collection of individuals cannot be treated as a group.
- Direction of one's own perception and judgement.
- Survey research lacks dynamism.

Conclusion

Social science methodology largely depends upon survey methods in its research endeavor as it has the advantage of wide scope to have a great deal of information from a larger population. It can also be adapted to obtain personal and social facts, beliefs and attitudes. It is also said that survey research method is an inappropriate tool for the study of multitudes. The survey research requires a considerable amount of research knowledge, experience and sophistication on the part of the investigator with reference to sampling and sampling procedure, construction of questionnaire/schedule, art of interviewing, tabulation and analysis of data, report writing etc. The contributions made by the psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and statisticians to the procedures and methods of survey research deserve mention.

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Content analysis method – An introduction

*B.K. Kuthiala**

ABSTRACT

Content analysis is an important method of communication research to understand, describe, rectify and plan human communication. Today, content analysis has evolved as an important tool for evaluative media studies. Its applications are so widespread that many software packages have been developed to carry out the analysis of not only the textual content but also of visual content and metacommunication.

Content analysis is also a method for finding the intended and actual meanings of the messages. It also determines the antecedents and correlates sequences of communication events. It helps to make the unobserved context of the messages more meaningful. The article seeks to underscore what, why and how content analysis method in its various manifestations.

Communication research is all about messages and the manner in which they are disseminated, shared, received, perceived and acted upon. Since content is central to any communication, investigating the nature of the content of communication becomes the main task of communication research. A physician uses the techniques of blood analysis to determine the dynamics of the metabolic activities of the patient. A dietician investigates the food habits of an individual to find out the deficiencies in the intake of food. Similarly, a communicator needs to analyse the content of various communications to determine the nature of the social discourses. Thus, content analysis is an important method of communication research to understand, describe, rectify and plan human communication. It has evolved as an important tool for evaluative media

studies. Its applications are so widespread that many software packages have been developed to carry out the analysis of not only the textual content but also of visual content and metacommunication.

Content analysis is also a method for finding the intended and actual meanings of the messages. It also determines the antecedents and correlates sequences of communication events. It helps to make the unobserved context of the messages more meaningful. Traditionally, this method had been used in the studies of literature, education, psychology, sociology, anthropology and political science. But its applications have now extended to the fields of management, artificial intelligence, robotics, parapsychology and forensic sciences as well. Its use in media has increased manifold during the last two decades. Analysing the content of media is also an important tool to regulate the media. The proportion of content analysis studies in the totality of communication has also enhanced significantly.

Defining content analysis

There are many definitions of content analysis, each one emphasizing one or another component. Earl

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Babbie defines it as “the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws. It is most commonly used by researchers in the social sciences to analyze recorded transcripts of interviews with participants.”

Ole Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.”

Kimberly A. Neuendorf (2002, p. 10) offers a six-part definition of content analysis : “Content analysis is a summarising, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalisability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented.”

Content analysis is also considered a scholarly methodology in the humanities by which texts are studied as to authorship, authenticity, or meaning. This latter subject includes philology, hermeneutics, and semiotics.

The formula proposed by Harold Lasswell for describing the process of communication is considered to be a good blueprint for understanding constituent elements of communication research. It is stated as:

- Who
- Says What
- To Whom
- In What Channel
- With What Effect

Here ‘Who’ relates to the study of sources of communication. The creators and participants in the

process of communication form an important component of communication research. ‘What’ deals with the message or the content part. It may be a text, spoken word, visual-moving or still, or a gesture. Even absence of message is an important analytical unit. ‘Whom’ is the investigation targeted and actual receivers of communication. Audience studies and media habit studies fall in this category. ‘Channel’ is the medium or the mode of communication. It may be mediated or direct. And ‘Effect’ is the consequence of the communication, event or process. The content analysis broadly deals with ‘What’ - the message part of the process of communication.

Bernard Berelson described content analysis as a scientific description of communication. The use of the term ‘scientific’ makes content analysis a planned and systematic process that can be replicated.

Walizer and Weiner (1978) defined it as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. But today when the researchers analyse the political, social and religious discourses spontaneously, the use of the word ‘recorded’ becomes redundant.

Krippendorff (1980) defined it as replicable and valid references from data to their context. This definition seems to be contextual and not very descriptive.

Kerlinger (1986) defined content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measurable variables. His definition appears to be more comprehensive and appropriate. He has put emphasis on content analysis being

1. Systematic
2. Objective and
3. Quantitative

These three features make content analysis part of the overall scientific method of investigation of the unknown and creation of new information to understand the events and processes. However, in later developments, qualitative analysis has also become part of content analysis.

Kuthiala (1999) defined content analysis as: The scientific process of investigating both qualitatively and quantitatively the oral, printed, audio and visual information within a context in view of the intended and perceived meanings. Here the emphasis is also on the meanings and the contexts. This gives a new dimension to the process of content analysis and makes it more comprehensive and helps to relate various factors of content to each other.

The food that is consumed by human beings is analysed as to the ratio of fats, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and the changes it undergoes in the digestive system and the effect it creates or is likely to create. Similarly, the information that serves as food for the mind and brain needs to be analysed in terms of its content, meanings and possible effects.

Origin of content analysis

First application of content analysis was perhaps carried out during World War II in Europe. Radio broadcasts were analysed to determine the level of the morale of the population in and around the area of broadcast. The language, music, words used and nature of the content indicated the level of occupation. Communication between Japan and various island bases were carefully tabulated and any increase in the volume of message indicated that some new operations were being planned. This method was also used to verify the authenticity of various documents. The frequency of the use of keywords of the document in question was calculated and compared with the document of proven authenticity. The resultant

comparison was indicative of the authenticity or fakeness of the document.

Content analysis method was used to study the element of propaganda, direct or indirect, in the media. The religious texts were also analysed to determine the major principles enunciated by a particular sect. Thus, immediately after the World War II, content analysis became an established method for research into the communication activities. It also became an important subject to be taught in the journalism courses. In the academics, it gained so much importance that in 1968 it was reported that the largest number of master's theses were on the content analysis of newspapers. Studies of the portrayal of minorities, women, obscenity and violence in media has also given a boost to the wide use of content analysis.

Scope of content analysis

Communication is an essentiality of human living. It is the reason and also the consequence of society. Thus content analysis has universal scope. The interaction between two or more individuals (kins, relatives, husband-wife, friends, colleagues, leaders, diplomats, strangers, etc.) may be analysed to determine what transpired, what were the intentions and what was the consequence. Group communication also is an important subject for content analysis.

Public communication may need to be analysed to determine the nature of the messaging between the public and the organizations. In an environment where modern man receives torrents of information through the media of mass communication, the content of the print media, television channels, radio broadcasts, recorded cassettes and compact discs need to be revealed. Mobile messaging is today an important subject of research. Here content analysis methodology

is applicable. Similarly, the huge content on internet – search engines, e-mails and blogs also need scientific analysis. Today, the content of social communities on Internet is an interesting subject for content analysis.

To understand the scope of content analysis, some illustrations will help. To find the answers to the following questions, content analysis would perhaps be the only authentic and scientific method:

1. What percentage of the total space in a newspaper, on an average, is covered by the editorial content and how does it appear to be related to advertisements?
2. How does the 'paid news' differ from the genuine news?
3. How do the television channels compare to each other with regard to the content they telecast.
4. How is the developmental information covered in different media.
5. What is the policy reflected by a particular newspaper towards a given issue in its editorials?
6. Frequency of using particular words, phrases, names and body movements while delivering public speeches by the politician (s)
7. Frequency and nature of reference to God in the textbooks for primary school children.
8. Frequency, duration and nature of obscenity and violence depicted in India films.
9. Subject matter of interaction between husband and wife.
10. Frequency and nature (positive, neutral or negative) of reference to Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition in media.
11. Types of shots and transitions used in a given video programme.
12. What kind of issues are discussed in social networks, and what is the level of conformity and disagreements..

Types of content analysis

1. *Content Description* : A given body of communication is content analysed so as to describe it both in terms of quantity and quality. A random sample of the various issues of newspaper may be analysed to find out the proportion of advertisements, news stories, news analysis, articles, readers' communications, visuals and graphics, editorials etc. This is calculated both in terms of numbers and space occupied. Similarly, the syllabi of various courses may be analysed and described so as to have an understanding of the nature and quantum of information being given in the classrooms. The descriptive content analysis of the films would reveal the selling formula for a successful film. The news values of the newspapers and news channels can be studied by carrying out the content analysis of the news stories.
2. *Stimulus Response Experimentation* : In communication, it is important to find out the relationship between the messages and their possible responses. The ideal situation is to conduct such experiments in lab or near lab conditions. But the recorded content and the response to the content provides the information which, when analysed and correlations determined, would provide important knowledge. The reasons for decrease in circulation of newspaper can be looked into, among other many reasons, in the intended or unintended change in the content. Answers to

the question whether pre-marital and extra-marital relationships depicted in the serials make them more or less acceptable to the viewers need to be found.

3. *Reality and Communication* : A significant portion of communication, both mediated and non-mediated, is the description of the real world. Both the events and processes are the subject matter for communication. It is also said that communication is the mirror image of the society. How real is the described reality and what is the degree of creativity in a narration can be determined by content analyzing the communication and comparing it with the reality. The actual incidences of real life corruption can be compared to the frequency of such cases projected in the media.
4. *Image Perceptions* : The images in the minds of the people are reflected in their communications. The image of a teacher can be determined by analysing the content of communication between the students of the teacher. The existing images of organizations, individual leaders and groups are there in the media content and content analysis shall reveal them. This is very important in the practice of public relations and advertising.

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Impact analysis : Resolving the dialectics of thought and action

Mohanmeet Khosla*

ABSTRACT

Creating usable science is the basic premise behind impact analysis – be it in the sphere of operational management or action-oriented consumption of innovations. Communication is central to all that is human in us and much of our reality is a mediated one. Attendant upon this is the issue of power—the power to be an agent of change, whether of behaviour or of thought. With survival hinging on the commodity called the “audience”, the focus of today’s managements is on the ownership of the public mind. Similarly, changes in any social parameter, resulting from a particular activity or intervention, are a subject of study. Identification, prediction and evaluation constitute the phases of analysis. Impact is predicted or measured over a specified period and within a defined area and analysed in terms of its reversibility/irreversibility, significance et al. The focus is on motivational factors that can be manipulated to manufacture consent.

Key Words: Impact Analysis, Communication Paradigms, Behavioural Psychology, Manufacturing Consent, Relevance Detectors.

“The whole of science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking.”

- Albert Einstein—Physics and Reality (1936)

Introduction

Creating usable science is the basic premise behind impact analysis – be it in the sphere of operational management or action-oriented consumption of innovations. Often, Information, Education, Communication (IEC) campaigns are the cornerstone to the development support required by the government for the acceptance of its community programs. Applied research is equally relevant in the private sector, spanning the gamut from human resource development to crisis management to product launches *et al.* And, then, there is the generic connotation of ‘impact’ i.e. the impact of mass media

and its representation of our socio-political reality that puts the ‘pictures in our heads’ [Lippmann: 25], veritably setting the agenda for how we think and act. Therefore, impact analysis is a multi-faceted exercise that can be employed to study the efficacy of a project, conceptualised and implemented as per a policy decision. It can be used to collect baseline data to revert policy on another project. It can also be used to analyse organisational behaviour and strategy as linked to audience segmentation and response sets.

An impact or effect can be described as the change in any social parameter which results from a particular activity or intervention. It is predicted or measured over a specified period and within a defined area and analysed in terms of its reversibility/irreversibility, significance *et al.* Known as impact analysis, this stage can be broken down into three

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overlapping phases : **identification** — to specify the impacts associated with each phase of the project and the activities undertaken; **prediction** — to forecast the nature, magnitude, extent and duration of the main impacts; and **evaluation** — to determine the significance of residual impacts i.e. after taking into account how mitigation/accenuation will reduce or increase a predicted impact.

Impact identification and prediction are undertaken against a baseline, often delineated by selected indices and indicators (e.g. demographics, psychographics, lifestyle patterns, effects of proposals already being implemented, effects of other foreseeable proposals etc).

Impact characteristics

Nature : The most obvious impacts are those that are directly related to the proposal and can be connected (in space and time) to the action that caused them e.g. change in leisure-time activities on account of introduction of TV in a village. Indirect or secondary impacts are changes that are usually less obvious, occurring later in time or further away from the impact source e.g. anxiety, stress and community disruption associated with increased exposure to TV programs. Cumulative effects, typically, result from the incremental impact of an action when combined with impacts from projects and actions that have been undertaken recently or will be carried out in the near or foreseeable future. These impacts may be individually minor but collectively significant because of their spatial concentration or frequency in time. Cumulative effects can accumulate either incrementally (or additively) or interactively (synergistically), such that the overall effect is larger than the sum of the parts.

Magnitude : Estimating the magnitude of the impact is of primary importance. Typically, it is

expressed in terms of relative severity, such as major, moderate or low. Severity, as opposed to size, also takes account of other aspects of impact magnitude, notably whether or not an impact is reversible and the likely rate of recovery such as the impact of hydro-electric projects on hitherto isolated villages. Malana in Kullu (Himachal Pradesh) is one such example.

Extent/location : The spatial extent or zone of impact influence can be predicted for site-specific versus regional occurrences. Depending on the type of impact, the variation in magnitude will need to be estimated, for example, rural-urban migration. This is much easier for direct impacts but can be attempted for other types of impacts. Impacts arising from all of the stages of the life cycle of the project should be considered (i.e. during construction, operation and decommissioning). Some impacts will occur immediately, while others may be delayed, sometimes by many years. For instance, in Malana, the immediate effect of the Everest Power Project was a rift amongst the villagers as it was felt that jobs in the project were being given to those villages who belonged to the ruling party in Himachal Pradesh. Delayed concerns are the closer proximity of the police once the tarred road is completed – this would affect the villagers' staple income through opium cultivation.

Duration : Some impacts may be short-term such as the noise arising from the operation of equipment during construction. Others may be long-term such as the inundation of land during the building of a reservoir. Certain impacts such as blasting may be intermittent, whereas others, such as electromagnetic fields caused by power lines, may be continuous. Impact magnitude and duration classifications can be cross-referenced; for example, major but short term (less than one year), low but persistent (more than 20 years).

Significance : The evaluation of significance will depend on the characteristics of the predicted impact and its potential importance for decision-making. Significance is usually attributed in terms of an existing standard or criteria of permissible change, for example the permissible extent to which the ecological balance can be disrupted or the debatable issue of displacement versus development.

Methods for prediction

‘Best estimate’ professional judgment – These may be unavoidable when there is a lack of data to support more rigorous analyses or there is a lack of predictive methodology (as in the analysis of certain social impacts). Examples include the prediction of the effect of a water supply proposal on the activities of women or community interaction and the loss of a communal place or sacred site.

Quantitative mathematical models – These express cause-effect relationships as mathematical functions derived from deterministic or probabilistic relationships. For instance, the more the involvement of women in development work, the more the adoption.

Experiments and physical models – Experiments and scale models can be used to test and analyse the effects of project-related activities and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation techniques. Examples include the effect of an IEC campaign on HIV/AIDS and the drop in cases.

Case studies as analogies or points of reference - Reviewing case studies of projects in similar environments can inform and assist impact prediction and analysis. Comparisons are especially helpful if impact monitoring and auditing data are available.

Ethical considerations

The effort to make an impact can result in weakened or skewed research, can inadvisably influence the direction of management and can even be contrary to the real needs of management and researchers alike. One of the most difficult problems faced by researchers is that organisations funding research or providing assistance in any manner, have their own agenda. Some researchers use their understanding to shape and sell their projects; others make extensive efforts not influenced by the organisation’s agenda. Still others are unwilling to define variables and questions in a manner guided by the preferences of those interested in supporting projects.

Another issue is a certain degree of lack of control. Data is proprietary and cannot be used externally without prior permission. Usually, the most telling and useful information is where there is either no access or where it cannot be released externally. Disconfirming studies regarding the failure of a new technique/policy, for instance, are unlikely to see the light of day beyond the organisation.

University-industry collaborative research centres pose additional problems. Exceptional research can emerge but many of the applied problems calling for solution are pedestrian, repetitive and small. To the extent that the university relies on the centre for funds, its researchers are likely to be pressurised to accept the work that can be profitably accomplished, without regard to its scholarly value. Further, the iterative nature of academic research has to be overlooked because of the time constraints to which a project functions, pressurising scholars and managers alike to deploy promising but incomplete research immediately.

Communication, Community and the Individual

Usually, when we consider Applied Research, we do so in terms of profits – profits in terms of time, effort and money. Projects are policy driven – good or bad; objective or partisan; direct or indirect; for the collective or for the few – very often with inherent conflicts of interest. Nonetheless, the common goal is to reach the common good, the choices that a majority of citizens can live with at least for a while, and for that it is important to understand the art and science of Impact.

When analysing the issue of impact, both in terms of its theoretical premise and its practical application, the constant is the change, yet, there are also certain fundamental truths. These are examined from two broad perspectives: the manner in which the source frames the message and the manner in which the prospect receives it.

Early communication paradigms

To put Impact Analysis into proper perspective, it is important to understand how the interface between communication and society develops in relation to other theories of society, texts and culture. From their beginnings in the 1930s, mass communication studies have been shaped by two major political and philosophical perspectives: liberal empiricism and Marxism, both grounded in theories of social and economic organization.

The liberal-empiricist position, resting on the philosophical principles of individualism expounded by John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold, treated mass communication as part of a modern industrial culture built on the desire for wealth and power that betrayed the needs and aspirations of the individual by depriving him of real experiences and creative insights that only literature could do. According to the early British critics

such as Frank Raymond Leavis and Denys Thompson [1933] mass communication such as advertisements and popular novels, was driven by commercialism and the desire to sell shallow fantasies and emotions. Other studies spoke of the negative impact of mass communication on cultural standards and values, notably in the area of violence on television. Paul Lazarsfeld [1948]; see also Lazarsfeld *et al.*, [1944] and Wilbur Schramm [1964] in particular documented the social effects of the mass media through numerical studies while emphasizing the ultimate power of individuals to resist the manipulative strategies of the media. Detailed empirical analyses of the strength of the media in imposing change and determining social structures were also carried out by Harold Innis [1951] and Marshall McLuhan [1964].

The Marxist approach to mass society is less concerned with the need to protect or retrieve individualism and more concerned with social and political oppression that habituates the masses into passive acceptability. Disseminated in particular by the Frankfurt School of theorists - Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer [1986], and Walter Benjamin [1968], the Marxist approach views the mass media as part of a social and economic construct in which the function of the media is to disseminate a view of the world or an ideological perspective that serves the interests of the ruling class.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the work of the French structuralists such as Roland Barthes [1967; 1972] and Umberto Eco [1976], challenged the liberal-empiricist concept of meaning as direct and unmediated and emphasized the working of ideology and the social construction of meaning in all areas of communication. Their work has led to the development of more message-centered studies that draw on linguistic and semiotic theory to account for the cultural

construction and mediation of media texts.

Popularly addressed as the Birmingham School, the early impetus for a cultural approach to mass communication came from the work of Richard Hoggart, who was the founding director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham from 1964 to 1968. His book, *The Uses of Literacy* [1957], analyzes the effect of popular culture in reshaping “traditional” working-class culture in Britain and affirms the power of the individual to resist manipulation by the mass media. In the wake of structuralist and semiotic theory, the School broke away from the “direct-influence” and stimulus-response models of earlier media theory and moved toward a concern with the ideological role of the media and the relationship between the “encoded” media text and the audience’s “decoding” of its message, both operating at levels of the conscious and the subconscious. This position has become associated with the contemporary schools of behavioral psychology and linguistics which look for direct causal connections between external stimuli and individual behavior.

One accomplishment of the Yale School of Media Analysis (Hovland, Lumsdaine & Sheffield, 1949), however, is to throw doubt upon the rigor of analyses that look to mass media output as reflecting cultural or social characteristics. The Yale School effectively demonstrated that sovereign governments and other centralized authorities, such as advertising agencies, can exercise substantial control over the effects of centralized media. Because of this power of centralized authorities to “manufacture consent” (Chomsky, 1986), at least from time to time, reliable descriptions of underlying social or cultural processes based on analysis of media output appear to be unlikely.

But, because of the dominance of the cultural approach, there has been a tendency in the late 1980s

and early 1990s to replace the term mass communication with the term popular culture, indicating the shift from empirical studies to studies of cultural forms and meanings. Areas of research have moved to reception and audience theory and to new kinds of mass communication including rock-music videos, soap operas, satellite broadcasting, computer games, and the Internet that draw on the cultural theories of a number of disciplines, including sociology, economics, history, feminism, linguistics, and semiotics.

Sourcing the impact

Communication is central to all that is human in us and much of our reality is a mediated one. Attendant upon this is the issue of power – the power to be a change agent, whether of behaviour or of thought. Castells refers to power as the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor’s will, interests and values. Power is exercised by means of coercion (or the possibility of it) and /or by the construction of meaning on the basis of discourses through which social actors guide their action. [2010: 10-11]. And wherever there is the issue of power, the politics of resistance are never far behind. In fact, if power is relational, then domination is institutional. A particularly relevant form of domination has been, throughout history, the state in its different manifestations [Mulgan, 2007]. Media often provides organised resistance to this domination but many a times it is itself a state actor.

History is full of examples of oligopolistic control over communication media – either by priesthoods or by governments or military or business houses – ebbing and flowing as a result of complementary and contradictory changes in

regulation, markets, the political environment, and technological innovations. With the rise of satellite, wireless and Internet communication platforms, territorial and institutional boundaries are now crossed at will. Companies that form the core of global media networks are pursuing policies of ownership concentration, inter-company partnerships, platform diversification, audience customization, and economies of synergy with varying degrees of success. For instance, a handful of companies (Disney, Time Warner, Viacom, Bertelsmann, NBC Universal, Fox Studios (News Corp), CBS) control global media through a dense web of partnerships and cross-investments, effectively reprogramming the regional market toward a commercial format that facilitates the connection with its business networks.

And these networks are what companies target today as they seek to diversify their portfolios to impact an increasingly fragmented audience. Media organizations have more platforms with which to deliver audiences to advertisers, but the process of targeting, distributing and controlling messages is simultaneously becoming more complicated as therein hinges critical advertising markets.

The first evidence of global impact on local media markets is the direct import of programming and channels such as CNN, Fox, ESPN, HBO, and other transnational media channels. The second is the adoption of this corporate-driven media model by players further down the media chain. Several scholars have written about the diffusion of corporate and cultural formats from the global to the local sphere. Thussu [1998] describes the “Murdochisation of the media” in India as “the process which involves the shift of media power from the public to privately owned, transnational, multimedia corporations controlling both delivery systems and the content of

global information networks” [1998:7]. This “Murdochisation” is characterised by “a tendency toward market-driven journalism thriving on circulation and ratings wars; transnational influence of US-inspired media formats, products and discourse; and lastly, an emphasis on infotainment undermining the role of the media for public infotainment.” Lee Artz [2007] has analyzed the rise of “transnational media projects” or “enterprises that produce within one nation but are jointly owned by multiple corporations from multiple nations ...[and] have no national allegiance and bring together capitalist classes from two or more nations for the purpose of producing and profiting from media commodities” [2007:148]. For example, Germany’s Vox television channel is owned by the Australian/American News Corporation (49.5%), France’s Canal Plus (24.9%), and Germany’s Bertelsmann (24.9%).

Thirdly, global media players export programs and content which are produced for local formats, but typically are based around standard formats popularised in the West. Iwabuchi [2008:148] refers to this process as “local camouflaging”. Shows such as American Idol, Survivor and Who Wants to be a Millionaire have been franchised to many countries on the ‘Think global, Act local’ premise.

However, while global media corporations control a disproportionate number of distribution and production processes, they do not hold a monopoly over the markets in which they operate. Indeed, there are numerous “counter-flows” that impact on the form and structure of the operation of these media giants [Thussu, 2006]. In India, for instance, globalization is less an influx of Western culture than the outflow of Indian cultural products into the global sphere [Murdock, 2006:25]. Eventually, it is all about surviving the market.

Ownership of the public mind

With survival hinging on the commodity called the 'audience', the focus of the management is on the ownership of the public mind because that is the bait that reels in the advertiser. The power to capture mind space is brokered on a three-pronged approach: agenda-setting, priming and framing. The idea is to 'hook' the consumer by giving him what he wants and then to raise the bar so that he stays, asking for more. The power lies in the control and the control comes from the knowledge of how the mind of the audience functions.

Agenda setting refers to the assignment of special relevance to one particular issue or set of information by the source, making its private agenda a public agenda. The strategies of repetition, placement *et al* are used so that the audience will correspond with heightened attention to the content and format of the message. Agenda setting research assumes that, if the media is not able to tell people how to think, it has a major role in influencing what they think about [Cohen, 1963].

Priming occurs when news content suggests to news audiences that they ought to use specific issues as benchmarks for evaluating the performance of leaders and governments [Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007:11]. The priming hypothesis draws on the cognitive model of associative networks. It proposes that stories on particular issues that affect one memory node can spread to influence opinions and attitudes on other issues. Thus, the more frequently an issue is covered and the more linkages that are drawn, the more the chances of people mining the information presented and drawing conclusions along expected lines.

Framing is the process of "selecting and highlighting some facts of events or issues and making

connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and /or solution" [Entman, 2004:5]. Framing is a fundamental mechanism in the activation of the mind because it directly links the structure of a narrative conveyed by the media to the brain's *neural* networks and it is usually a deliberate action on the part of the sender. *Entman* [2004] argues that frames that employ the most culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential for influence: words and images that are noticeable, understandable, memorable and emotionally charged. Frames are effective by finding resonance and increasing the magnitude of their repetition. They operate by leaving gaps in the information that the audience fills with their preconceived schemas : these are interpretative processes in the human mind based on connected ideas and feelings stored in the memory. This is especially effective when there are no counter frames or contradictory messages. For instance, the world stereotype of the Muslim as a terrorist has now become a habitual schema. Stereotypes are culturally conditioned reflexes or the footprints of history, culture and power, running through our minds. To a large extent, they shape how we will define other people even before we see them. In the media, and in the theatre of politics and power, stereotypes are routinely employed to stir up public emotions while systematically sidestepping thought.

Another operation that diminishes the autonomy of the audience in interpreting the message is indexing wherein publishers and editors index the salience of news in terms of its level of engagement by the elite [Bennet 1990, 2007; Bennet *et al*, 2006]. If there is unanimity, the media will index according to a single set of evaluation on a given issue (e.g. 26/11 and the public outcry for Kasab's hanging in the "war on terror" frame). On the other hand, the more there is division or ambiguity in elite responses to a crisis, the more the

media exercise their own diverse judgments in the indexing of an event (e.g. the nuclear deal in India). They compile data on public opinion, call upon representatives of interest groups, media and political pundits and present it to the public as if it were a self-generated verdict. The same is done by other media houses, each one striving to accord legitimacy to its own opinion and make it that of the audiences’.

Entman [2007: 164-6] argues that many times the media not only tell the audience what to think about, as in the classical proposition of Cohen (1963), but also what to think. “The consolidating question, then, is whether the agenda setting and framing content of texts and their priming effects on audiences fall into persistent, politically relevant patterns. Powerful players devote massive resources to advancing their interests precisely by imposing such patterns on mediate communications”.

The power of framing in the media can be exemplified by the study of Bennet *et al.* [2006] on American troops torturing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison in 2003-04. In spite of overwhelming photographic evidence of human rights violations picked up by the Internet and the media of other countries, the American media tended to play it down, adopting the frame that Abu Ghraib represented isolated abuses on the part of a few troops. The mainstream media were reluctant to engage in criticism of American troops in the middle of a war. Much like the logic put forth by the Indian media when diluting the truth of inefficiency on the part of the Indian army leading to the Kargil war or of the torture of Pakistani soldiers captured during the offensive.

Receiving the impact

However, network technology and networking organization are only means to enact the trends inscribed in the social structure. The contemporary

process of globalisation has its origin in economic, political, and cultural factors, as documented by scholarly analysis of globalisation [Beck, 2000; Held and McGrew, 2000, 2007; Stiglitz, 2002]. The theoretical construction proposed by Michael Mann for understanding the social sources of power provides some insights into the matter because on the basis of his historical investigation, he conceptualises societies as “constituted of multiple, overlapping and interacting socio-spatial networks of power” [1986:1].

The receiver too exercises power as, in most societies, he is no longer a ‘sitting duck’ ingesting the messages in the manner framed by the source with such rationality. As Legee and Wald [2007: 296-7] write : Meaning is “an attribute of symbolism” and is “a function of the context in which the symbol or the individual himself, was located.” The most powerful symbols are not found in complicated theories of taxation and economic growth, or in efficient structures of health care delivery or in strategies for fighting terrorists or winning a war. They are found in pictures and sounds that tap into primary group experiences of things that promote pride or satisfaction or tap into reservoirs of fear or revulsion ... Meaning is invested with emotion. It is far distant from cool rationality.

Meaning and motivation

Not only is reality mediated by the source, but the receiver too processes it in terms of the networks of associations of images, ideas, and feelings that have become connected over time as *neural* patterns. The brain mapping dictates perception. This is what Impact Studies target i.e. the manner by which the receiver can be or is turned into a consumer of thought and opinion. The source first determines the brain map of his audience and then frames his content to match it, thereby giving the consumer what he wants. The idea, of course, is to find the largest common denominator.

Or, he packages his content in a manner that would attract the effect he is looking for.

The receiver's decision to go with a content or a content source is primarily due to emotional arousal, negative or positive. Emotions play a double role in influencing decision-making by covertly activating the emotional experiences related to the issue i.e. the object of decision-making as well as acting directly by prompting the subject to decide the way he feels. It is not that judgment becomes irrelevant, but that people tend to select information in ways that favour the decision they are inclined to make. Here the Reinforcement Theory is at play with the Cognitive Dissonance theory as a corollary.

According to the analysis of Huddy *et al* [2007], positive and negative effects are linked to two basic motivational systems that result from human evolution: approach and avoidance. The approach system is linked to goal-seeking behaviour that produces positive emotions by directing an individual toward experiences and situations that produce pleasure and reward. Many development programs use this approach.

The negative effect is linked to avoidance intended to protect an individual against negative occurrences. This too can be used with effect. Evidence lies in the extensive use of negative appeals in advertising where the use of the product is the only means of conflict resolution. Public opinion is also manipulated by generating negative emotions. Neurological research connects anger and approach behaviour and anxiety and avoidance behaviour. An association has been found between anxiety and risk aversion and anger and risk taking [Huddy *et al.*, 2007:212]. Anxiety is a response to an external threat over which the threatened person has little control. It increases with the perception of an unjust action and with the identification of the agent responsible for the

action. It can also lead to an imprudent processing of events, reduction of risk perception and greater acceptance of the risks linked to a given action. Anxiety is connected to avoidance and induces a higher level of threat evaluation, a higher concern about risks involved and a cautious assessment of information. A study conducted by Huddy *et al* [2002] found a link between anger toward Saddam Hussein and terrorists and American support for the Iraq war. Those who reacted with anxiety about the same subjects were also those who opposed the war.

A study by Graber [2007] documents that, according to a 1986-2003 Pew survey, only 7 percent of stories reported in the US media attracted a great deal of attention. The most salient stories were those that threatened the media consumer's safety or violated social norms. Fear-arousing situations attract the largest audiences [Graber, 2007:267].

Emotions come across as the central players even when we study the impact of political campaigns. For a long time, scholarly research minimized the impact of media and political games on the outcome of elections (e.g. Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944), but since the 1990s, a substantial body of political communication studies have provided evidence of the influence of news, political campaigns and political advertising on citizens' decision-making processes (e.g. Ansolabehere *et al.*, 1993; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1995; Zaller, 1992; Valentino *et al.*, 2002). Most of these studies identified message content and policy issues as the primary factors in political decision-making. However, an increasing number of studies emphasize the role of emotional appeals contained in political campaigns (Jamieson, 1992; West, 2001, 2005; Richardson, 2003). Brader [2006] focused on enthusiasm and fear as the key motivational sources of action. He first conducted experiments designed to

replicate real decision-making as closely as possible in order to identify the mechanisms by which emotions embedded in political advertising, and particularly in music and images would affect voting patterns. His findings show that advertisements that elicited enthusiasm mobilized the voters by reaffirming their choice and simultaneously inducing a stronger rejection of the opposite candidate. Fear-based advertisements, on the other hand, introduced uncertainty in the voter's choice, thereby increasing the likelihood of changing the viewer's political preferences. They also discouraged the potential voters of the opponent. Interestingly, the most knowledgeable citizens are also the most responsive to emotional appeals. This is consistent with the argument of the theory of affective intelligence, according to which emotions serve as 'relevance detectors'.

Thus, emotions simultaneously prompt reasoning, frame understanding and mobilize action under the frames conveyed by the constructed message. Yet, the effects of emotional messages vary according to the context of their reception. They depend on the feelings of the receivers of the message at the time and place of the message's reception. It is the capacity of one given set of stimuli to activate a given frame that defines its impact. While frames are pre-existing conditions in our brain, their association with specific images depends on the meaning of images in a given cognitive environment: e.g. 26/11 Mumbai becomes associated with a political message related to the war on terror in the context of still being at war; while the vision of an abandoned factory may resonate differently in an economic depression as it signifies unemployment. But the same would not be the case in a booming technology-driven economy where the building would signify a redundant past. Therefore, information and emotion are mixed in the construction and processing of messages.

But what happens when the conflict between cognition and emotion sharpens? A plurality of studies seems to indicate that people tend to believe what they want to believe. Experiments reveal that people are more critical in evaluating facts that contradict their beliefs than those that support what they think. The level of incidence increases with the level of education as the educated are more capable of elaborating interpretations of available information in support of their predetermined preferences. This is because a higher level of knowledge provides people with more intellectual resources for self-rationalisation in support of their emotionally induced misperceptions.

In the same line of argument, the theory of motivated reasoning effects maintains, on the basis of experiments, that individuals exhibit a widespread tendency to hold onto their evaluation of events even when confronted with information that contradicts their assessment [Kunda, 1990; Lodge and Taber, 2000]. Individuals are more likely to recall information that confirms their desired outcome(s) or goals. They are also likely to draw upon their intellectual resources in order to search for information that supports rather than contradicts their goals. Motivation is thus a key factor in shaping how individuals process information leading to their judgements, particularly when they are dealing with important issues. Conflicting emotions simultaneously increase attention to some pieces of information while diminishing the perception of new, contradictory information.

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Evaluation research : an overview

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation is a systematic assessment of progress made by the particular mass communication channel in producing and distributing the message or programme, and also assessing the audience reception of the programme. In fact, evaluation helps the programme producer to improve upon the programme, and to make it more effective in terms of drawing the audience attention. Evaluative research uses different social research designs to study the contribution of the programme or a message or a channel. Normally, researchers use survey design, experimental design or participant observation method to obtain data related to the study.

Mass communication researchers undertake research to study the impact of different messages or programmes or channels on the receivers or audience. In the process of understanding the evaluation research, normally a set of research questions emerge: how effective are the messages? How effective are the programmes? How do the readers think about the new newspapers that have been launched? To answer such questions, reliable data need to be generated and examined. The term used for the process of obtaining such reliable data by using scientific technique is known as evaluation.

Broadly speaking, evaluation is a systematic assessment of progress made by the particular mass communication channel in producing and distributing the message or programme, and also assessing the audience reception of the programme. In fact, the evaluation helps the programme producer to improve upon the programme, and make it more effective in terms of drawing the audience attention. For instance, the English newspapers like the *New Indian Express*

or *The Hindu* have introduced new lay-outs of the pages and also used new fonts to make the pages more attractive; the two newspapers sought the opinion of the readers to modify the designs of the newspapers. However, different experts of mass media underline several aspects of evaluation research such as information seeking, effectiveness of programmes, achievements of goals of the programmes and so on.

The 'American Public Health Association defines evaluation as 'the process of determining the value or amount of success in achieving a pre-determined objective. It includes at least the following steps: formulation of the objective, identification of proper criteria to be used in measuring the success, determining and explaining the degree of success and recommendation for further programme activity' (Laldas, 2005: 182-83). Thus, evaluation research uses different social research designs to study the contribution of the programme or a message or a channel. Normally, researchers use survey design, experimental design or participant observation method

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to obtain data related to the study. Historically, audience measurement for radio was used in the early 1940s to ascertain the audience appreciation of radio programmes. The first audience appreciation measurement was introduced as long as 1941 by the British Broadcasting Corporation in order to monitor the listening experience of its radio audiences during the war time years. Under the direction of Robert Silvey, its first head of audience research, the BBC set up a number of separate listener panels for different categories of programming (e.g. plays, music, features, talks, discussion, and light entertainment). Each panel had 500 members who were respondents to a radio broadcast appeal for volunteers (Gunter, 2000:137). In India too, All India Radio started audience research in 1946 and listener research officers were appointed at the stations to study listening habits, opinions and tastes (Masani, 1985:128).

In 1956, UNESCO-sponsored Pune Radio Farm Forum was launched in India to trigger discussion about developmental aspects among the village listeners. A series of programmes broadcast by All India Radio (AIR) raised the awareness levels of the villagers, and the evaluation research of the experiment found that the programmes were highly influential (Singhal and Rogers, 2000; 70-71). Subsequently, AIR conducted many audience research studies and also the impact of radio programmes. In relation to television programme evaluation in India, two evaluations need to be remembered. One, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment which was conducted in 1975-76 covering 2400 villages in six states was evaluated by using survey and participant observation method. The evaluation revealed that the television programmes produced in the local language should be related to the needs and aspirations of the people (Mody, 1979; Aggarwal, 1985). The second experiment, Jhabua development communication

project, which was undertaken in 1996, was aimed at ascertaining the utilization of an interactive satellite-based broadcasting network to support development and education in remote, rural areas of India.

In 1998, the mid-term evaluation showed that the poor people of Jhabua district made significant knowledge gains in several life-skills areas, enhancing the quality of their life and of the environment surrounding them (Singhal and Rogers, 2000 :101). In a recent study, Harindranath (2009) conducted an audience reception of documentaries and the audience interpretation of their meanings in cross-cultural settings such as India and Britain. He showed a set of two films (one Indian, other British) to 20 Indian respondents and 20 British respondents and subsequently interviewed each respondent about his/her understanding of the films. Therefore evaluation research forms an important part of mass communication as seen in these examples and it can be taken up in two stages depending upon the objectives of the researcher (see Table 1).

The plan of evaluation is followed by the implementation part of evaluation study. This involves the task of formulation of instruments or tools of data collection, such as questionnaire, interview schedule etc. This needs considerable preparation in order to achieve a deep understanding of the programme, discussions with the facilitators, target groups , systematic study of the pertinent literature and so on (Laldas, 2005). The tentatively formulated instruments have to be pre-tested with a view to detecting their shortcomings before their final administration in the field. The choice techniques to be utilized for data collection depends on the level of education of the respondents, the objectives of the programme, area of study and many other considerations. Certain studies require more than one technique to be used for data collection.

Table 1
Stages of evaluation

Step	Stages of programmes	Evaluation research design
I	Programme planning/ formulation	Survey research design for need assessment
II	Programme impact/ outcome	Impact study / experimental or quasi-experimental study

Evaluation design I : Survey for needs assessment

In some of the evaluation studies, the needs assessment of the audience is conducted to focus on the communication messages to be delivered to the audience. Since the development agencies or newspapers or any other mass communication channel devise programmes with a view to influencing the audience, they spend huge amounts for the purpose. In the initial stages, the researchers evaluate the needs to design messages for the benefit of the audience. In some instances, the researchers without assessing the needs of the receivers launch programmes which do not serve the desired results. In order to enhance the programme effectiveness, evaluators assess the problems and needs of the target population. Normally, they assess the extent and location of problems, the programme as well as the target population's characteristics, problems, expressed needs and desires (Monette, 1986). This information is then used to guide programme planning and implementation concerning such issues as coverage of news, contents of TV programmes and so on. The evaluation in this stage is commonly known as need assessment /baseline study or feasibility study. An example is given below to understand the needs assessment study of a newspaper in Karnataka.

Example 1

Udayavani, a Kannada daily established in 1970, which is published from Manipal (Karnataka), carried a 3-year (1981-84) experiment in development journalism, 'Identify Backward Village Experiment' in early 1980s. In order to carry out the experiment, the newspaper carried an advertisement on January 2, 1981 detailing the objectives of the experiment by inviting nominations from the readers. The advertisement was as follows :

Udayavani has taken up a novel scheme to identify a backward village for studying the impact of numerous central and state government-sponsored schemes since Independence. Readers' involvement is of paramount importance. They are encouraged to identify two backward villages, one in their taluka and one in the district. To help you, a proforma listing the ten basic infrastructure facilities has been provided. These facilities have been identified based on Government of India census report.

The newspaper identified a backward village if it did not have a primary school, middle school, electricity, post office, telephone, doctor, hospital, drinking water, road, and bus service. The newspaper encouraged readers to identify a backward village basing on the above criteria and a 50-day time limit was fixed to send their nominations. A total of 465 readers sent their nominations identifying 417 villages and hamlets in the district as backward. However, keeping in view the scope and nature of the experiment, nominations from eight talukas of the district were considered for further evaluations. The readers' responses were analyzed with a view to selecting the most backward villages. In the next stage, 15 legislators

were involved in identifying the villages from the district and they selected 10 villages. Further, taluka level officials were asked to identify villages under their jurisdiction by checking their official records. The coordinator of the project, Sanjay Daitota, travelled over 1900 kms to verify and crosscheck the information given by the people. At the end of 17-day visit, the coordinator could identify 10 backward villages for the experiment. The identified villages were: 1) Alanthaya 2) Bellapady 3) Bolmane 4) Didupe 5) Kemtoor 6) Kudyady 7) Malachowki 8) Mandekolu 9) Manila, and 10) Navoora.

The main problems of these villages were: non-availability of potable drinking water, mosquito menace, frequent malarial attacks, diarrhoea, and other water-borne diseases. Since the villages lacked even a miniscule of medical facilities, the patients had to be taken to nearby towns for medicare. Lack of proper roads along with isolation of villages made the emergency medical care very difficult (Daitota and Sanjay, 1990:8). To make the project successful, some youth in these villages were motivated to take up developmental works, and later these youth formed a team of grassroot reporters for the newspaper.

The newspaper decided to highlight the problems and to sensitize the people for solving their problems. In the first year, the newspaper covered all the problems and activities of the villages extensively and regularly because the needs assessment survey was carried out by the newspaper before launching the experiment. The coverage concentrated on developmental processes with an interpretation of the problems when the coordinator was touring the villages to understand the village's problems. In the second year, the coverage was restricted to happenings and occasional success stories. In the third year, there was no coverage of any issue while the coordinator was

contacting the youth who were working as field assistants.

Moreover, the coverage concentrated on ordinary folks instead of politicians and rural elite. For instance, Maila, a resident of Mandekolu village, the first to travel by a bus to the village, could easily be recognized in the village after a photo story on him appeared in the newspaper. The coverage used all formats of publications such as front-page news, photo-features, readers' complaints and double-page supplements which accelerated the process of development in south Karnataka. Farm clinics and school library came into existence. Officials cooperated with the villagers and youth and others participated in developmental works.

Evaluation design II: Experimental or quasi-experimental research

In order to evaluate the impact of a programme such as radio lessons, on the school children or TV programme on the viewers or a newspaper design on the readers, experimental or quasi-experimental designs are used by mass communication researchers. In a classic experimental study or quasi-experimental study, two comparable groups such as experimental or control group are selected by the researchers. However, the two groups are equivalent, they are defined as experimental and control groups in order to ascertain the impact of a mass media programme because the experimental group is exposed to the independent variable. To assess the effect of the independent variable, researchers take measurements on the dependent variable, known as scores twice from the each group. One measurement is the pre-test, taken from all cases or subjects prior to the introduction of the independent variable in the experimental group; second, the post-test from all cases or subjects after

the experimental group has been exposed to the independent variable. The difference in measurements between the pre-test and the post-test is compared between two groups. If the difference in the experimental group is significantly larger than in the control group, it is inferred that the independent variable is causally related to the dependent variable. Nevertheless, quasi experiments always correspond to certain natural settings in which the experimenter can approximate experimental procedures for data collection, even though he lacks full control over the delivery of treatment (*See* for details Nachmias and Nachmias, 2002, Priest, 1996, Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). An example is given below where both the authors were involved in the conduct of the experiment to evaluate the impact of radio lessons on the primary school children in Visakhapatnam.

Example 2

As part of the educational broadcasts, AIR, Hyderabad introduced some school broadcasts for the benefit of school going children in Andhra Pradesh with the initiative taken by the district primary educational project (DPEP). The radio school programme titled as 'Vindam Nerchukondam' (Listen and learn) as a pilot project was broadcast from the All India Radio station, Visakhapatnam in 2002. Visakhapatnam is one of the 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh in India. It was divided into 43 mandals (mandal means a revenue block consisting of 25 to 35 revenue villages) of which 26 mandals are in rural areas, 11 are in tribal areas and six mandals are in urban areas. Visakhapatnam has 5.8 million population of which, 3.5 million are living in urban, 1.3 million are in rural and 1 million people are in tribal area. For the purpose of the present study, four mandals were

Table 2
Selection of the school and its names

Area	No. of Mandals	Mandal Name	Control Group schools		Experimental Group schools		Total
			MPUPS	MPES	MPUPS	MPES	
Rural	2	Ananda Puram	MP UPS Anandapuram	MPPS Boipalem	MP UPS Boddapalem	MPPS Garipeta	4
Urban	1	Padma Nabaham	MPUPS Korada	MPPS Sankara peta	MPUPS Pandrangi	MPPS Revidi	4
		Bhimuni pat nam	MFC UPS Bhimili	CMES Bhimili	GM UPS Bhimili	PN MES Bhimili	4
Tribal	1	Paderu	GUPS Thum pada	MPPS Madiga banda	MP UPS Bangaru Metta	MPPS Geddam Puttu	4
Total	4	4	4	4	4	4	16

Note : MP UPS = Mandal Parishad Upper Primary schools, MPPS= Mandal Parishad Primary Schools. MFC UPS=Mahatma Gandhi Fisherman Colony Upper Primary School, CMES=Cental Municipal Elementary School, GMUPS=Government Model Upper Primary School, PNMES=Pandit Nehru Municipal Elementary School, GUPS=Girijan Upper Primary School.

randomly selected: Bhimunipatnam in urban area, Anandapuram and Padmanabham mandals in rural area and Paderu in tribal area. The purpose of the present study is to evaluate the impact of radio lessons on the urban, rural and tribal students studying in the government schools. Sample for the study were drawn from upper primary and primary schools of urban, rural, and tribal areas located in Visakhapatnam district on the basis of exposition of radio programmes. The schools in which radio programmes were played back were regarded as experimental group schools and others were treated as the control group schools in urban, rural and tribal areas. The investigators for this study selected randomly four mandals out of 43 in the district, one mandal in the urban area, two mandals in the rural areas, and one mandal in the tribal areas, in which 16 schools were selected: four schools from urban areas, eight from rural areas and four schools from the tribal areas. Out of these 16 schools, 8 schools were experimental (2 urban, 4 rural and 2 tribal areas) and 8 schools were control (2 urban, 4 rural and 2 tribal areas) (see Table 2).

The researchers selected a sample of 120 students from the sampled schools. As the strength of the each Grade (class) ranged from 5 to 50, the researchers listed the selection of the students to only 5 from each Grade of selected schools. In some of these schools, boys and girls together were higher than five and lower than ten. Hence, the researchers confined to only five students from each school basing on the geographical locality and ratio of the school/Grade and prepared a list of 120 subjects in four mandals. The students, both boys and girls, of urban, rural and tribal schools were treated as control and experimental groups. In the same way, the teachers were selected from primary and upper primary schools in only experimental settings. Like that, the investigators selected total random sample population of 120 pupils (60 control and 60 experimental) and 40 teachers (experimental only). It was also ascertained that the subjects of the experimental schools were directed and motivated to listen to the radio programmes regularly whereas the control group were not at all exposed to

Table 3
Selection of the subject for the study (students and teachers)

Area	Treatment	Grade V	Grade VI	Grade VII	Students Total	Teachers
Urban	Experimental	5	5	5	15	10
	Control	5	5	5	15	-
Rural	Experimental	10	10	10	30	20
	Control	10	10	10	30	-
Tribal	Experimental	5	5	5	15	10
	Control	5	5	5	15	-
Total	Experimental	20	20	20	60	40
	Control	20	20	20	60	-
	Exp & Con	40	40	40	120	40

radio programmes. The teachers from experimental schools only were instructed to give their personal judgment (comment) on the overall radio programme (see Table 3).

Tools selected for the study : The tools used by the investigators consisted of questionnaire schedules for the students and teachers, achievement test and observation schedule as given below.

1. Knowledge gain Test (for the students of grades V, VI, and VII)
2. Questionnaire Schedules
 - A. Schedule to the students of grade V, VI, and VII to know the perceptions on the radio lessons.
 - B. Questionnaire schedule to the teachers to know the perceptions on the radio lessons.
3. Observation Schedule

For knowledge gain test, 26 test papers were prepared by the researchers. Out of these 10 papers, five papers were in five subjects of Grade V, 8 papers were for four subjects of Grade VI, and 8 papers were for four subjects of Grade VII. Ten questions were selected in each lesson of the each Grade for the knowledge gain questionnaire for the students of primary and upper primary school broadcasting programmes.

For the test of perception, 61 items (questions) were selected for the students of Grade V, 54 items for Grade VI, and 54 items for Grade VII. Further, the first 25 questions were common for three Grades which were analyzed in six dimensions as general perceptions of students, and various questions on suitability of language and format were developed separately in lesson wise and subject wise for all the Grades which were analyzed as specific perception of students. About

36 items were selected for the perceptions of teachers which were analyzed in six dimensions. For observation, a school broadcasts' observation schedule was developed by the investigators for recording observation with respect to school broadcasting lessons in the schools. The researchers followed 8 items for programme observation and 9 items for content observation.

The data thus collected directly from the source (teachers and students) through administration of the questionnaires to smaller group of subjects was selected as the sample. When the subjects were found to be mentally prepared, the questionnaires were distributed among the students. For understanding of the different formats of upper primary school programmes broadcast by All India Radio, Hyderabad, for the target group, varieties of programmes were recorded in cassettes and were played back before the students of experimental group only. General comprehension question along with the specific questions for each formats of the programme were given just after the listening of the programme and 20 minutes were given for the test. This was the way, in which comprehension test was held. Data so collected, were treated, scored and tabulated for analysis.

The level of knowledge gain revealed that there were significant differences in the pre and post tests in the experimental and control groups. The study revealed that the format and language used in the radio lessons in teaching Telugu, English and Science Subject for V, VI, and VII grades made good impact among the pupils.

Conclusion

In essence, Evaluation research differs from conventional social research. In a broad sense, evaluation research is applied research. Conventional

social research focuses on adding knowledge or testing of a hypothesis to validate theories. Therefore, evaluation research is of shorter duration as the results decide the outcome of the programme. In some instances, the results let the researcher in continuing the programme or discontinue the same project. In mass communication research, the evaluation helps the researchers formulate better policies for the benefit of the people.

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Audience Research in All India Radio : Why, How and What

*P.K. Bandyopadhyay**

ABSTRACT

Audience research plays a pivotal role in content generation and manner of presentation for the programmes of All India Radio. All India Radio (AIR) is a Public Service Broadcaster. But thanks to the revolution in communication technology and a new style of convergence, AIR has to face stiff competition from different channels and media entities. So a two way flow, particularly an understanding of the felt needs of the listeners and interweaving of the programmes with their frames of reference are the sine qua non of a successful communication. Audience research is essentially an offshoot of social science research. So it must rigorously follow various techniques and parameters to ensure objectivity in collection of data, collation and analysis. Only then the findings can be useful to the policy planners and the higher management.

Audience research in AIR is now being conducted by a departmentally run unit with some kind of functional autonomy. Some case studies have been taken up to show the depth and incisively analytical approach for feedback and listenership surveys.

‘Give the audience what they need’ is the cardinal principle of the modern media organizations. All India Radio, with its countrywide network, is the premier Public Service Broadcaster and hence it can afford to ignore this principle only at its own peril. In this context, some kind of SWOT analysis or marketing research or audience research assumes significance.

SWOT Analysis, one of the important marketing planning approaches, is essentially a method to find out ‘the Optimum fit’ by preparing a profile of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization. A well-prepared profile helps development of a strategy and fulfillment of the organizational goal. The SWOT FRAMEWORK has to keep in view the feedback and audience survey.

The question is how is All India Radio connected

with the SWOT analysis? It is a Media Organization and, in today’s context, where it has to face keen competition for space, it must know where it stands and what could be its strategy for survival and growth. Ultimately, All India Radio has to communicate. Its basic function is to inform, educate and entertain its clientele. It must answer the following five questions:

- a) To whom do you need to communicate?
- b) Why do you communicate?
- c) How do you get the timing right?
- d) What routes do you follow and how effective are they?
- e) What responses do you like or expect from them?

The need for a strategy by All India Radio is sharply felt today in its competition for space and relevance. This is more so in the backdrop of the growing media of television and launching of Prasar Bharati on 23rd November, 1997 with a mandate to organize and conduct public broadcasting service. Various Private FM Channels and recommendations of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of

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India (TRAI) in favour of opening the News and Current Affairs to these FM Channels came as a strong challenge to All India Radio. Gone are the days when AIR was primarily guided by the motive to propagate and had a monopoly in the broadcasting map of India.

In those days of dominance of AIR, all ears were on its broadcasts—programmes, news bulletins, content and slant. The present writer was in the General News Room in the 1970s and was a witness to this phenomenon. The authorities were particularly attentive. The Director of News Services (DNS) was always monitoring the bulletins. If there was no call from the DNS after an important news bulletin, one News Editor used to say ‘today we are fortunate. There are no ‘ifs and Bhatt’s’ (the eminent radio journalist and the then DNS, S.C. Bhatt was being referred to). Another former DNS talked about various incidents during the Janata regime (Tewari:1998). This underlines the attitude of dictation from the top towards the Public Service Broadcasting medium. Even earlier, the listener research activity suffered a setback particularly when Dr. B.V. Keskar was holding the reins of the I&B Ministry.

The scenario has changed since then. For a Public Utility service, the listener research may not be the final decisive factor. But without its aid with facts and figures, one has only to grope in the dark of guesswork. After all, the media activity is essentially a social science function and any communication must have the support base of communication research. Communication has got several barriers and these have to be understood with all their dimensions.

Barriers to communication

In any development communication one has to see the different barriers. Otherwise no worthwhile communication is possible. The primary function of AIR is to communicate and that too effectively. The barriers to this function have to be understood to tackle them. Dr. Wilbur Schramm, considered to be the pioneering figure in the field of mass communication, explained the point effectively in a lecture at IIMC,

New Delhi in 1976. He said, *inter alia*.

“Activity at the village level is the only means, I would say, of effective village change and whereas communication has to travel down, it has got to travel up and, much more important, it has got to travel round at the village level. People have to work together and discuss together; they have got to make their changes together. Only when communication can build itself into the social structure, is it going to show any real hope for extensive results. Only when media channels can mix with inter-personal channels and with the organization in the village, are you going to have the kind of development that you will like? In other words, the idea of big media, of talk-down communication, is something which is not going to work.”

As the bullet theory and the trickle down theory do not work satisfactorily, radio communicators have to resort to the two-way flow with a constant assessment of the audience frame of reference and their needs.

Media convergence and fashioning of messages

Moreover, today’s scenario is one of multilevel convergent media world where all modes of communication and information are changing to adapt to the demands of technologies. Technological Convergence is the interlinking of computing and other information technologies, media content and communication network following development of Internet and the evolution of digital media space.

The rise of digital communication made it possible to deliver text, audio and video material over the same wired, wireless or fibre optic connection. It opened the possibilities of multimedia delivery of information. This digital convergence of news media has been described as ‘**mediamorphosis**’.

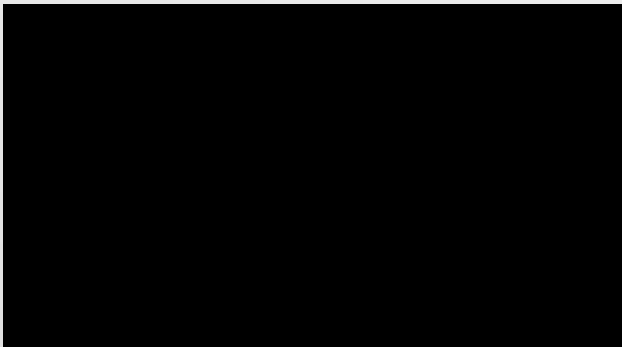
Convergence of media happens when multiple products come together to make one product with the advantages of all of them. It requires the media persons to deliver and prepare news in any media and this requires mastery of the skills as news writer, editor,

reporter and also producer. Important news story has to be written in a form appropriate for the Web, print, PDA screen and broadcasts. Development journalists, including the radio communicators have to learn this art to put the millennium goal messages effectively in an integrated manner.

All India Radio : Listenership pattern

Now I refer to a graph prepared by the Audience Research Unit of All India Radio below to show the range of listenership of AIR for various broadcasts/ programmes: This was based on a Survey of national level programmes in major metropolitan cities in 2005-06.

The News and Current Affairs retains its popularity among the people at large particularly in various regional languages. Through this mode,



appropriate development messages are disseminated without any interruption. Findings of the Audience Research Unit say that “only All India Radio is providing news bulletins among radio channels in India and also there have been sizable listeners for news in almost all states.”

This gives a clear idea about the listeners and their preferences and the rating of various programmes socio-economic category wise, providing ‘*raison d’etre*’ to the existence of an Audience Research Unit. The findings help prepare a plan and chalk out a strategy for better, appropriate and cost-effective programming. In today’s context of revenue

generation, it gives an important clue for selling air time to the advertisers. Sponsors, advertisers, marketing personnel and programme producers must have strong and detailed data base for judicious formulation of their strategies. It is true in the case of not merely commercial broadcasting but also public service broadcasting. As Lazarsfeld and Kendall wrote: “We can determine which programme types are the particular favourites of men and which of women: we can find out what types have special appeal for educated listeners and which for uneducated: we can see whether city dwellers have different preferences from people living in rural areas, and so on.... Who listens to news broadcasts and who to quiz programmes.”

All India Radio today

All India Radio today is a vast organization with 233 stations, and 375 transmitters (MW, SW and FM). The service reaches 91.82 per cent of the area and 99.16 per cent of the people of the country. It is in the fitness of things that an elaborate Audience Research Unit has been very active so as to feel the pulse of the audience.

It was in 1946 that a Listener Research Unit was set up and six Listener Research Officers were appointed in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Lucknow and Lahore (now in Pakistan). With several ups and downs at different periods, the Audience Research Unit has been expanded. With headquarters in New Delhi, the Audience Research Network has got six Zonal Offices, viz. North Zone with seven units, West Zone with seven units, Central Zone with seven units, East Zone with five units, South Zone with eight units and North East Zone with seven units.

This Network conducts Feedback Surveys, Radio Audience Surveys, Vividh Bharati Listenership Survey, FM Channel Survey, Socio-Economic Classification of Listenership of different channels, Actual Listening to Primary channel, CBS Channel, Feedback Survey of Kisanvani programme, Top Ten

Programmes of Primary Channel, News Listenership Surveys and so on.

The methodologies of conducting surveys normally follow the system of social science research. Various methods like 'Recall' method, 'co-incidental' telephone enquiry system, 'Audi meter' method, door to door surveys of radio households, and random sampling method are followed. An Online Audience Feedback System has been developed and when fully operational, it is expected to become a very useful and prompt system .

There is a debate whether the audience research should be carried out by some independent bodies/agencies. The idea appears to be attractive. But experience shows that the departmental research body with a functional autonomy can serve the requirement better for several reasons. The unit personnel are aware of the ethos, functional style, and capabilities of the organization from the programme, engineering and finance points of view. Unlike many other organizations, radio research is not a one time or a casual and a periodic affair. It is a regular and continuing exercise. So a pool of departmental personnel with adequate training and professional competence is a better and cost-effective option.

This has been shown by the Audience Research System of AIR in their extensive and 'in depth' surveys in respect of various questions and issues. It has already created a strong database. When the idea of launching a 24-hr News Channel was mooted, lots of data in respect of the potential audience were collected . When analyzed, it was seen that the findings are quite interesting on various aspects of the audience profile. This may be studied objectively by way of an example so as to throw light on the functioning and usefulness of the audience research as a fruitful exercise.

Specifics of research : Some case studies

'Proof of the pudding is in the eating', so goes the saying. It is appropriate to come down from the

realm of ideas and generalities to the specifics. How the audience research can be of help with empirical studies, analyses and recommendations emanating out of them to the planners and the higher Management is extremely relevant.

The Audience Research Unit of AIR, through its various sample surveys', has established that the most popular programmes of AIR are music and news & current affairs. This is a highly positive data and AIR news can take advantage of this and increase its output to stay ahead of other channels. During the State Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh in 2007, it has been proved beyond doubt that AIR news enjoyed a very powerful listener-ship. It is also on record that the sales of radio sets went up significantly during the election. In many areas particularly rural areas, absence of electricity was a hurdle for TV viewer-ship.

Commercial viability of 24-hr bilingual radio news channel : Market survey

A pre-launch market survey was conducted by the Audience Research Unit of All India Radio in December 2004 for assessing the commercial viability of 24-hr bilingual (English and Hindi) Radio news channel in different parts of the country. The survey was conducted in four Metros - Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai and four non Metros—Bangalore, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Lucknow. Altogether, 8346 sample respondents were questioned in the radio households of urban and rural areas. The following are some of the key observations of the Survey :

1. Nearly 70% radio audience say they would listen to it when commissioned. 16.4 per cent people would like to log on Internet and Direct Home Services (DTH) though in reality as of today, not even 2.0 per cent of household possessed Internet/DTH facility.
2. Generally, the potential listeners of the news channel constitute 64.4 per cent. The ratio of

- rural listeners is 69.2 per cent compared to 59.06 per cent urban listeners. While listener-ship of men is 69.9 per cent, it is 59.3 per cent for women.
3. Relating to mode of broadcast of news channel, 38.1 per cent (rural 40 percent, urban 36.2 percent) favour FM mode of broadcast followed by MW (combined 28.2 per cent, rural 35.3 per cent, urban 21.1 per cent) and SW (combined 10.1 per cent, rural 11.1 per cent, urban 9.1 per cent). Hence, it is preferable to give 24-hr news channel in FM mode.
 4. 48.1 per cent (rural 50.0 per cent, urban 46.2 per cent) of the radio listeners like the present style of news presentation.
 5. Significant portion of radio news listening among higher socio-economic groups clearly indicates that despite the existence of television, the radio news was not abandoned by the elite group.
 6. AIR can bridge the communication gap, as many important local/regional events are untouched by All India Radio even today.
 7. The value-added facilities through news on cell phones, website etc. would be a boon to the proposed 24-hr news channel. The Radio can strengthen mall, supermarket, trade activity, taking shape in different parts of the country.
 8. All India Radio is capable enough to launch the news channel, as it covers 99.6 per cent of the population.
 9. Trained personnel of AIR, far ahead of other channels, can strengthen the news channel through their live reports.
 10. It can successfully compete with the print media, namely, newspapers, magazines and electronic media, namely, television, satellite channels including Doordarshan in the field of commercial revenue.
 11. The content of the news should be crisp, prompt, innovative, unbiased and credible in the present style. Much more emphasis is to be given, among other things, on agriculture, health, sports, business, science and technology as well as weather news. Career guidance, employment, socio-economic development, trade and commerce, education and human interest stories are to be prominently covered. News-based programmes on current affairs are to be highlighted.
 12. As per marketing personnel perspectives, AIR has to tap potential listeners for the news channel. They include housewives, shopkeepers, professionals, educationists, retired people, young men and women, students, hoteliers, car radio owners, workers and rural people. The potential advertisers include government and private institutions, banks, companies, film makers as well as share market, insurance, telecommunication and IT sectors.
 13. The media planners are of the view that the “wait and see”-commercial viability of the channel purely depends on its listener-ship/reach and cost, more specifically, the type of audiences. Thus, first exist and then expect.
 14. Continuous feedback mechanism should be evolved to provide guidelines for improving the quality of the Channel.
 15. This Channel can be exploited by film makers/producers, business people etc. In rural areas, the inexpensive medium is radio for their entertainment. Entertainment is, one of the top priorities in rural agenda. Hence, this Channel can be popular among rural audience.
 16. Flash news can be provided at any point of time in the proposed 24-hr News Channel.
 17. The Channel can attract the left over segments of potential listener-ship mainly children, youth

etc. with the news stories related to specific segments.

18. Due to availability of time for news, (as the Channel is for 24 hrs) exposure can be given to the news related to the areas which are untouched at present. This includes the areas like documentary on eminent personalities, film news, events of world importance, health news, science news, chat shows, stock market trends, sports news and so on and so forth.
19. It is essential to achieve the requisite commercial revenue for the Channel by marketing experts and professionals through further research on marketing.
20. Periodic changes in rate depending upon the market and competitors are to be given priority.
21. Within the news bulletins, advertisements/commercials may be broadcast by giving short commercial breaks to improve the reach of the commercials.
22. Frequent interaction at local, regional and national levels between the advertising agencies and All India Radio would definitely strengthen the commercial viability of the channel.
23. Professional marketing people are to be employed for progressive and aggressive sales.

As a broadcaster with social responsibility, initially All India Radio may have limited scope for commercial revenue. Government should support All India Radio at the initial stage of launching of the News Channel. However, all the sources of revenue- the government, the autonomous bodies, the corporate world and even the private sector can be tapped for revenue. Adequate multi-channel, cross channel publicity etc. must be given before launching the channel. Strong measures are absolutely necessary for the success of the 24-hr News Channel.

Some more findings are given below just to show the DEPTH of the study.

Preferred items in radio news bulletins

In order to assess the items to be included in the News Channel, a probe was done among the respondents. An analysis in this regard based on the respondents revealed that the 'political news' dominated among the preferred items in the news bulletin to be included with Combined: 64.5 per cent; Rural: 69.0 per cent ; Urban 60.0 per cent followed by regional news combined: 51.7 per cent Rural: 57.4 per cent; Urban: 45.9 per cent, Sports with combined: 41.4 per cent: Rural 42.6 per cent ; Urban 40.2 percent, International news with Combined: 40.9 per cent; Rural: 40.6; Urban:41.2 per cent, Weather with Combined: 32.4 per cent Rural: 39.1 per cent ; Urban: 25.7 per cent and Health with Combined: 22.7 per cent, Rural: 27.6 per cent; Urban:17.8 per cent.

Preferred listening time to radio news

The proposed 24-hr News Channel implies broadcasting of news round the clock. However, a probe was made to find out the preferred listening time to radio news in the morning. The most preferred news time between 7-8 with 39.3 per cent (Rural: 44.1 per cent; Urban 34.5 per cent) was advocated by the respondents followed by between 6-7 with Combined: 33.9 per cent, Rural: 38.2 per cent; Urban 29.6 per cent. This trend is uniform both in rural and urban areas and even among sex-wise, age-wise and socio-economic category-wise.

The preferred time to listening to radio news in the afternoon was not preferred in general as only 16.6 per cent (Rural: 18.3 per cent ; Urban: 14.9 per cent) preferred listening time to radio news in the afternoon between 1-2 followed by between 2-3 with Combined: 10.8 per cent, Rural: 12.3 per cent ; Urban 9.4 per cent.

On considering the preferred radio news listening time in the evening, 23.4 per cent (Rural: 30.3 per cent; Urban: 16.5 per cent) of respondents indicated between 7-8 followed by Combined: 20.4 per cent, Rural: 26.4 per cent; Urban: 14.6 per cent between 6-

7 and Combined: 15.5 per cent, Rural: 17.8 per cent; Urban: 13.3 per cent respondents preferred radio news time between 8-9. Similar was the trend observed among rural and urban and all categories of respondents.

Preferred watching time to television news

Similar to that of preferred time to radio news, a probe was made into the preferred watching time to television. The preferred listening time was highest between 7-8 (Combined: 15.8 per cent; Rural: 14.4 per cent; Urban: 17.1 per cent) followed by between 8-9 (Combined: 15.1 per cent; Rural: 12.9 per cent; Urban: 17.2 per cent). The preferred watching time for television news, the maximum proposition registered in favour of between 1-2 (Combined: 10.8 per cent; Rural: 8.7 per cent ; Urban: 13.0 per cent). The preferred watching time to television news was found to be highest between 8-9 during night (Combined: 33.9 per cent; Rural: 32.4; Urban: 35.3 per cent) followed by between 7-8 (Combined: 21.6 per cent; Rural: 23.2 per cent; Urban: 20.2 per cent) and between 9-10 (Combined: 20.2 per cent; Rural: 18.1 per cent; Urban: 22.4 per cent)

Opinion on the present style of radio news

Opinion on the present style of radio news presentation was sought from among the respondents. It was found that 48.1 per cent (Rural: 50.0 per cent; Urban: 46.2 per cent) of the respondents preferred present style of radio news style presentation. Further there was no significant difference in pattern between rural and urban and among difference variables.

Preference of mode listening to radio news

It is known that the radio broadcasting at present has been identified with three modes, namely, Short Wave, Medium Wave and FM. An attempt was made to find out the preference of the mode among the respondents. It was found that Combined: 38.7 per cent; Rural: 50.0 per cent; Urban: 46.2 per cent of

respondents were favouring FM mode of broadcast followed by MW with Combined: 28.2 per cent; Rural 35.3 per cent; Urban: 21.1 per cent FM with Combined: 10.1 per cent; Rural: 11.1 per cent; Urban: 9.1 per cent. It may be noted that although the listeners have preferred SW, our earlier studies indicated poor listening of radio through SW mode. Hence, it is preferable to give 24-hr News Channel (bi-lingual) in FM mode.

Although majority of potential listeners had indicated their patronage for the proposed 24-hr News Channel, it must be borne in mind that the proposed channel would be bi-lingual in broadcasting and non Hindi region would not be able to utilize this news service fully as they do not know Hindi and their knowledge of English might not be good enough to understand it.

The average time spent on radio news listening was considerably less than the average news watching in television. This necessarily implies the higher importance of television over radio as the latter has visuals which consume significant portion of news coverage. Hence, the proportion to tuning the medium would be a better indicator and radio has got an edge over television.

Significant proportion of radio news listening among higher socio-economic groups clearly indicates that despite the existence of television, radio news was not abandoned by the elite groups.

A Survey was carried out by the Audience Research Unit in December 2004. in Kolkata and surrounding villages. The findings were as follows :

Programmes normally tuned

Listening to News in rural areas excelled over all other Programmes broadcast by AIR. On the other hand, in the urban areas more respondents were

exposed to music than any other items of Program schedule. Preference for listening to various programs as emerged from the study is as under

**Preference for programmes
Percentage of respondents - Urban**

Programmes	Rural (N =700)	Urban (N =700)	Total (N = 1400)
NEWS	57.6	40.1	48.9
MUSIC	50.5	53.0	51.8
PLAYS/DRAMA	25.1	19.6	22.4
SPORTS/ COMMENTARY	10.6	20.0	15.3
FILM MUSIC	30.6	23.9	27.2
DOCUMENTARY/ FEATURE	4.6	2.7	3.6
ANY OTHER	0.9	NIL	0.4

Radio news listening

58 per cent rural and 40 per cent urban respondents were listeners of Radio news in one frequency or the other. Regular or daily listening to news was equal with 18 per cent each both in urban and rural areas.

Preference for round the clock news channel

There was a proposal for bilingual round the clock news channel which entailed to conduct the present study. 67 per cent rural and 76 per cent urban respondents advocated in favour of such proposal. Thus, on the whole such preference was recorded by 72 per cent of the total respondents.

Radio station tuned for news

AIR News Bulletins were more popular among the respondents compared to news from any other foreign radio stations. 58 per cent rural and 40 per cent urban respondents were exposed to AIR News bulletins in one frequency or the other. News from foreign stations like BBC and VOA recorded only about 1-2 per cent listening. The station-wise frequency of news listening is presented in the following Table :

Time spent for radio news

On an average, how much time an individual normally spent for listening to radio news was probed in the study. A little more than 40 per cent of the rural respondents stated to have spent around 20 minutes a day, on an average, for listening to news from radio. Those who spent around 30 minutes for the purpose

Station-wise frequency of news listening

Frequency of listening

STATIONS	RURAL (N = 700)			URBAN (N = 700)			TOTAL (N = 1400)		
	R	F	O	R	F	O	R	F	O
AIR	21.7	24.0	11.9	20.6	9.7	9.9	21.1	16.9	10.9
BBC	0.3	-	0.1	1.7	2.3	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.5
VOA	-	-	-	0.4	-	-	0.2	-	-

No other station recorded listening to news

R : Regularly, F : Frequently, O : Occasionally

constituted 8 per cent of the rural respondents.

In the city of Kolkata who was consuming around 20 minutes of their time for news constituted a little more than 33 per cent of the respondents.

Listening to radio news beyond 30 minutes was very limited. On the other hand, there were also some news lovers who spent more than an hour for having a treat of the news.

Optimum duration of news

Highest percentage of respondents was in favour of radio news for duration of 10-15 minutes, only a few respondents advocated for duration of 30 minutes or more.

Preference for Items

The type of news the respondents would normally prefer for inclusion in the news bulletins were ascertained from the respondents. The rural listeners stressed for more regional news followed by political news. On the other hand, almost equal number of urban respondents expressed their keen interest for political and sports events. The normal preference for various items for inclusion in the bulletins is summarised in

the following Table :

The Table projects that the respondents' preferences were widely spread over different items with significant variations.

A Study of another Report of the Survey in December 2004 reveals the following :

Preferred programmes of AIR

It was found from the study, the preference for news constituted a maximum percentage of 77.1 per cent (Rural: 81.3 per cent; Urban: 72.9 per cent) followed by film music with 63.3 per cent (Rural: 64.0 per cent; Urban: 62.6 per cent) and other music programmes with 44.3 per cent (Rural: 44.0 per cent; Urban: 44.6 per cent). This clearly indicates the preference of news for listening is uniformly holding top position both among rural and urban respondents.

Male listeners preferred news listening with a proportion of 82.2 per cent (Rural: 86.4 per cent; Urban: 78. per cent) over females with 69.8 per cent (Rural: 72.3 per cent; Urban: 67.4 per cent). Thus, the trend in listening between genders uniformly tilted in

ITEMS	RURAL (N = 700)	URBAN (N = 700)	TOTAL (N = 1400)
Political News	34.9	24.6	29.7
International News	15.7	21.9	18.8
Regional News	37.4	18.3	27.9
Science News	4.3	14.6	9.4
Entertainment News	12.3	12.4	12.4
Sports News	21.1	24.4	22.8
Stock Market/Business News	2.6	1.6	2.1
Weather Forecast	16.6	13.0	14.9
Soft Stories	5.7	1.9	3.8
Health News	13.0	16.9	14.9
Other News	1.4	0.4	0.9

favour of males over females both in rural and urban areas.

Weekly Reach of Radio News :

Similar to that of weekly reach of radio, an attempt was made to find out the weekly reach of radio news. It was found that 80.9 per cent (Rural: 84.5 per cent; Urban 77.2 per cent) reported listening to radio news at least one day in a week. The regular listening (6- 7 days) in a week was found to be 41.6 per cent (Rural: 47.3 per cent; Urban: 35.8 per cent). This clearly indicates, news listening was found to be more regular among rural area than urban.

The males (Combined: 85.1 per cent, Rural: 89.4 per cent ; Urban 80.8 per cent) Reported listening to news at least one day in a week as against females with a per cent of Combined: 74.5 per cent, Rural: 76.1 per cent ; Urban: 73.0 per cent.

Similar is the trend observed among sexes for regular (6-7 days) listening to radio news both in rural and urban areas where males dominated over females. In rural 50.5 per cent males reported listening radio news as against females 41.9 per cent and in urban while 38.6 per cent of males reported listening to radio news as against females with 32.4 percentage.

Among age groups, young age group (10-18 years) reported listening to news with 71.7 per cent (Rural: 73.4 per cent; Urban: 70.1 per cent)- uniformly higher than the rest of the age groups both among rural and urban respondents.

Listening of news at least once in a week was uniformly reported by all the categories of Socio-economic classification with the proportion of listening around 80.0 per cent. Similar is the trend observed both in rural and urban areas.

Preference of Bi-lingual 24-hr News Channel

The proposed radio news channel would be in bi-lingual (Hindi and English) and also for entire day (24 hours) round the clock. Those who reported listening to All India Radio were asked to indicate

whether they would listen to the proposed News Channel.

Nearly 70.0 per cent affirmed that they would listen to that channel if commissioned. The encouragement is more among rural (75.7 per cent) than among urban (64.2 per cent).

Males (75.0 per cent) were more responsive than females (62.7 per cent) who preferred to listen to 24 hour news channel. Similar was the situation both in rural and urban areas.

Among age groups, maximum acceptance of the channel was found among young age groups namely 10-18 years (Combined: 71.3 per cent, Rural: 72.7 per cent; Urban: 69.6 per cent) while 19-30 years of age group reported preference for listening to the news channel to the extent of 76.6 per cent in rural, 10-18 years age group (69.0 per cent) registered the maximum.

On considering the Socio-economic categories, it was found encouraging that the higher categories were found to prefer to listen to the proposed News Channel as compared to other categories. Similar was the pattern in rural and urban areas.

Logging of Internet/DTH for Radio News

The respondents were asked whether they would log on Internet/Direct to Home to listen to radio news in the proposed 24 -hrs News Channel. The responses obtained revealed that as high as 16.4 per cent (Rural: 12.8 per cent; Urban: 19.9 per cent) affirmed as if they would listen to radio news in Internet/Direct to Home.

From the studies, availability of Internet/Direct to Home was as low as 2.0 per cent and worse would be the situation particularly in rural areas. The present estimate of respondents who would log on to internet/ Direct to Home to listen to radio news was highly optimistic.

However, the positive response by the A1 and A2 of Socio-economic categories (who can afford to

have Internet/Direct to Home) was over-whelming.

Preference for Interval for News Updates :

The proposed 24 –hrs News Channel must have news stories besides other things, business, sports, weather etc. The reporting of the above items must be updated periodically and also frequently depending on the change/need/demand. The respondents opinion was sought on the frequency at which they must be updated. It was found that 35.0 per cent (Rural: 38.3 per cent; Urban: 31.7 per cent) of the respondents wanted the business/sports/weather should be updated ‘twice’ a day followed by ‘thrice’ a day with 27.0 per cent (Rural: 26.4 per cent; Urban: 27.7 per cent) respondents favouring it.

Normal Listening Radio News

Besides, All India Radio there are many other agencies providing radio news. An attempt was made to find out the tuning habit of listeners of news in the context of radio news.

All India Radio was reported to be listened for news by 78.5 per cent (Rural: 81.8 per cent; Urban 75.3 per cent).

It may be noted here that considerable proportion of respondents extended their loyalty to radio news as compared to television news.

Time Normally Spent on Radio News

In order to estimate the time spent on radio news listening, a probe was made among respondents, it was found that on an average an individual spent 15 minutes on listening to radio news with a higher proportion of news listeners from rural (16.4 mts) than urban (13.6 mts.) listeners.

However, it was found that 57.9 per cent (Rural:

59.3 per cent; Urban: 56.6 per cent) listeners were found to be listening to radio news less than 20 minutes. On considering gender-wise radio news listening, it was found that male spent 17 minutes while female spent 12.1 minutes. Among age group, ‘61 and above’ group registered a listening of 19 minutes per day for radio news.

Purpose of analysing the case studies

The purpose is to show how the Audience Research Unit carries out their work, uses different parameters, analyses and collates the data and presents the inputs to the Management. It is not a slipshod piece of work but quite a detailed, incisive and analytical study to assess both listenership and revenue potential of the proposed channel. Channels under survey. Even after a lapse of over four years the studies in question remain relevant, as revealed by random inquiries from different parts of the country in 2009 by the then Director General, News. Yes, the study stands the test of social science research parameters. Is it a useful and worthwhile exercise, too? The answer is again an EMPHATIC YES.

The 24 hour News Channel has not been implemented yet. But the above work amply shows that the Audience Research Unit is in a position to give new direction to the programme content, policy formulation, up gradation and overall communication. This is an era when the listeners look beyond their participatory role. They want to be programme planners and communicators themselves. The Audience Research in that ambience happens to be a very important tool for the planners, strategists and decision makers of All India Radio.