GJMC S3 01 (M/P)

History of the Media

SEMESTER - III

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

BLOCK - 1

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Subject Experts

1. Professor K.V Nagaraj, Former Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University
2. Professor Abhijit Bora, Head, Department of Mass Communication & Journalism, Tezpur University
3. Dr. Ankuran Dutta, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Communication & Journalism, Gauhati University
4. Dr. Kh. Kabi, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University , Arunachal Pradesh

Course Co-ordinators : Dr. Trisha Dowerah Baruah & Dr. Juri Hazarika, Bhupen Hazarika School of Mass Communication, KKHSOU

SLM Preparation Team

UNITS	CONTRIBUTORS
1, 2	Dr. V. Krishna Ananth, Associate Professor, Sikkim University, Gangtok
3, 5	Dr. Machunwangliu Kamei, University of the People, Pasadena, CA, USA
4	Sayanika Dutta,Cotton College, Himangshu Goswami, GU and Dr. Trisha D. Baruah
6	Himangshu Goswami, GU and Trisha Dowerah Baruah
7	Prof. Abhijit Bora, Dept of Mass Comm & Journalism, Tezpur University

Editorial Team

Content (English Version) : Prof. K.V Nagaraj, Former Professor Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University

Language (English Version) : Sawpon Dowerah, Academic Officer (Retd.), SEBA & presently Rector, Icon Academy

Structure, Format & Graphics : Dr. Trisha Dowerah Baruah & Dr. Juri Hazarika, KKHSOU

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Head Office : Patgaon, Rani Gate, Guwahati - 781017

City Office : Housefed Complex, Dispur, Guwahati-781006; Web: www.kkhsou.in

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BACHELOR OF ARTS

HISTORY OF THE MEDIA

BLOCK – 1

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

History of the Media is the first course of the third semester programme of Journalism and Mass Communication. This course has been divided into two blocks, with the first block containing seven units and the second block having eight units. This will provide you a glimpse into the past, providing details of the conception, birth and growth of media in the world as well as in India. The units would take you on a ride through the yesteryears, vividly explaining the growth of print and electronic media, photography, film as well as the media scenario in north-east India in the days of its beginning. There are two practical based units in the second block of the course, which would require you to visit a radio station and to review films, thereby providing you with a first hand experience of the working environment of a media house. The units would act as guide to conduct the practicals smoothly. We expect you to gain a comprehensive idea about the history of the media after completion of this course.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This is the first block of the course on ‘History of the Media’. A brief overview of the seven units of the second block has been given below-

In the first unit of the course on ‘History of the Media’, you will be introduced to the different kinds of print media and the general history of the print media.

The second unit of this course is 'History of print media in India'. This unit will introduce you to the history of print media in India, along with an insight into the various angles of this concept since independence.

The third unit on 'Freedom movement and the Indian Press' will discuss Pre and Post independence era of the growth of journalism in India, struggle against repressive measures and print vs electronic media.

The fourth unit 'Pioneers of Journalism in Assam' will delve into some journalists who have been pioneers in the field of journalism and have contributed towards the growth of journalism in the north-eastern region of the country, specially Assam.

‘Language Press and National Development’ is the fifth unit of this paper. In this unit, we will discuss the role of language press in national development, its growth, present status and the problems encountered.

In the sixth unit, ' A brief overview of some of the important press organisation in India' you will learn about some of the important press organisations in India with their respective functions.

The seventh unit, 'History of print media in north-east India with special reference to Assam' will enable you to understand the history and evolution of print media in the NER, the pioneering work in this regard which took place in Assam and the state of print media in the region before and after independence.

While going through this course, you will come across some along-side boxes, which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will explain you the meaning of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions which have been included under ‘Activity’ and ‘Check Your Progress’ in every unit. Activities will increase your thinking capacity because questions put under ‘Activity’ section are not directly derived from text. Answers to the short questions have been put under section ‘Answers to Check Your Progress’. Besides, a few text-related questions have been put under the section ‘Model Questions’. These questions will help to draw your attention on the probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

UNIT 1: HISTORY OF PRINT MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Types of Print Media

- 1.3.1 Daily Newspapers
- 1.3.2 Tabloids
- 1.3.3 Magazines

1.4 Relevance of Print Media

1.5 Let us Sum up

1.6 Further Reading

1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.8 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- elaborate the different stages in the history of newspapers, before it became what we see today.
- discuss the difference between daily newspaper, tabloid and magazine.
- describe the different roles of the different kinds of print media in society.
- assess the role of the print media in the present.
- analyze the prospects of newspapers in the future.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous course, you were introduced to the field of traditional folk media. In the first unit of this course, we will deal with the different kinds of print media such as the daily newspapers, the tabloids and the magazines. In doing so, we will go into some of the features that make

these distinct from one another and also touch upon the differences in their approach to news, the format and the contents. Following this, we will discuss the future prospects of the print media in India. The growing perception that the print media is on its way out is indeed based on the experience from across the world. However, the experience in India is indeed different and in fact goes against the trend from various countries, particularly the West. This discussion will help place the relevance of the print media - daily newspapers, tabloids and the magazines - in India. The evidence in terms of the increasing circulation, even while the advertisement revenue is dipping, is a story that conveys that the print media in India is not only growing but is there to stay.

The next unit of the course will bring to you the entire history about the evolution and growth of print media in India.

1.3 TYPES OF PRINT MEDIA

If one may identify James Augustus Hickey's Bengal Gazette, first published on January 29, 1780 as one of the earliest of newspapers in India, one should also know that it did not follow any regular schedule in terms of the periodicity. It was published as and when Hickey found something to report. The last couple of decades of the 18th century witnessed the arrival of a number of newspapers that were published, in irregular intervals and the money for such publications came, substantially, from grants or advertisements from the East India Company. Even in the phase after that, when newspapers began to be founded and rested upon a business model where advertisements and cover prices added up to make the money that went into the printing and circulation costs, they were started as weekly newspapers.

The Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, considered the first ever regulation that laid down rules before anyone could publish a newspaper, in fact, did not contain anything about the periodicity of newspapers. And that made it possible for newspapers to be started as weekly to bi-weekly and daily as and when they chose to do that. The law also did not prevent a

reversal of the terms of periodicity and thus newspapers in India did not really follow a regular schedule. This was the story until the 1867 Act was amended in 1955, when Section 2-A was added to the Act. By this, it was laid down that newspapers shall, in case they decided to change the periodicity - from a weekly to a daily or vice versa - make a declaration before the Registrar of Newspapers to the effect.

It may be noted that all the newspapers, whether in the English language or in the Indian languages, had invariably moved to the daily news cycle by this time. And those that were weeklies had stabilised in that way. The amendment to the law in 1955, in fact, was guided by a need to prevent newspapers that were not brought out as a daily claiming to do that and thus obtain newsprint, that was imported and thus using up precious foreign exchange, to sell them in the grey market to others. Those were times when newsprint was rationed by the state and was in short supply all the time. The amendment was in the lines of the observations made by the Press Commission that went into a whole gamut of issues at that time.

Thus, at the time of independence, newspapers, invariably were dailies and were brought out in the broadsheet format. This was indeed the shape of newspapers across the world in those days and those in India too followed the format. However, the tabloid format prevailed even at that time. Both Young India and The Harijan, brought out by Gandhiji were tabloids at least in form. So was Kesri while The Hindu, The Times of India, the Hindustan Times, the National Herald and The Telegraph (to name only a few and the list is not exhaustive) were brought out in the broadsheet format.

The tabloids are distinct from the broadsheet in the form. They are smaller in size and in the practical sense are also followed by those newspapers that prefer to print what is called soft stories unlike the broadsheets that delve into serious news and views. This distinction, however, is not a rule. In other words, there are tabloids that deal with news that are hard or serious and broadsheets that deal with trivia. However, there is a notion that goes with the term tabloidization that seeks to describe those papers that make news out of trivia. The most important difference between a broadsheet and a tabloid is in the size of the sheet.

Magazines are a genre in the domain of the print media that is of recent origin. They are, most often, printed on glossy paper (at least the cover) and use colours to the hilt. The most distinct aspect of the magazines is that they are brought out as weeklies or fortnightlies. They distinguish themselves from the daily newspapers - both of the broadsheet variety and the tabloids - in the nature of treatment of the contents. Rather than breaking news, magazines specialise in analysing the developments. In many ways, magazine journalism supplements the daily newspapers and thus exists on parallel tracks. There are, however, instances where magazines do break news and expose wrong doings as well as highlight developments that are positive. The journalists working with magazines enjoy the luxury of having more time to reflect on developments, follow up on news and produce reading material that place things in context.

1.3.1 Daily Newspapers

The category of the daily newspaper arrived in India much later than in many other parts of the world. And it arrived in the context of a strong political movement against the British rule in India. This context also meant that the newspapers existed to serve an agenda; pro or anti British rule. The Times of India and The Hindu belong to an era when the struggle for freedom was building and between them, they voiced the pro and the anti British agenda. It must be noted that there were others too in this category - English language daily newspapers - at that time. All of them were broadsheets and combined news reports with opinions and devoted a part of the space in the pages for advertisements. The advertisements provided for at least 40 per cent of the revenue for these newspapers. And 60 per cent of the revenue came from the cover price of the paper. This was at the time of independence. The significant point was that the newspapers were owned by persons who cared most for the agenda that they had professed and did not go out of the way to increase advertisement revenue. As one analyst puts it, the persons

believed that they were running a newspaper to fight a battle and not to earn money. Indeed, some others who entered the newspaper arena just around the independence years - the Hindustan Times, the Indian Express for example - were also willing to put some of the profits they had made during the war years into the newspapers and this helped them fight for causes even if that meant not breaking even. In the Indian languages, there was the Malayala Manorama, run by a family of nationalists; and the Mathrubhoomi, founded in the post-independence years and both were committed to the agenda of nationalism as much as they were to making the newspapers a business model. The examples of these daily newspapers are extensive and we have mentioned only a few.

The daily newspapers emerged into a viable business model and the experience during the first three decades after independence is that it flourished. The scope for advertisement too emerged following a pattern. While in case of the English language daily newspapers, the advertisement came from high-end consumer products while localised commodities came to be advertised in the Indian language newspapers in equal measure. There are figures available showing the advertisement revenues earned by the 127 daily newspapers (in English as well as Indian languages) in the early 1950s and this was to the tune of Rs. 110 million. This, however began to change since the 1990s and the daily newspapers began to adopt strategies where the proportion of the revenue earnings from advertisements increased significantly while the revenue from cover prices began falling. In other words, daily newspapers began reducing the cover price to increase circulation multi-fold and make up for it through higher advertisement revenue. We shall discuss this in detail in Section 1.4 of this unit.

1.3.2 Tabloids

A tabloid is as much a daily newspaper. It is, however, distinct in two ways. One is that the tabloids are those daily newspapers

that are brought out in a size that is half that of the broadsheet. And the second distinction, which is not necessarily a condition precedent for a publication to be described a tabloid, is with its treatment of the news. It must be stressed here that the second character is not a necessary condition and there are tabloids that treat news in the same way as the daily broadsheet newspapers do. It may also be remembered that broadsheet dailies too may fall in the category of tabloids.

It will be appropriate, at this stage, to look up the definition of a tabloid in the way it is done in a standard dictionary. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, for instance has the following to say: A tabloid, it says, is a newspaper with small pages (usually half the size of those in larger papers) as compared to Berliner Broadsheet. The dictionary entry here, however, does not stop with this. It goes on to add, that a tabloid can also be a newspaper of this size with short articles and a lot of pictures and stories about famous people, often thought of as less serious, than other newspapers.

The important point to remember is that a tabloid can be used both as a noun and an adjective.

In so far as it is used as a noun, it is meant to connote the size of a newspaper and irrespective of its frequency (daily or weekly) or notwithstanding as to whether it is brought out in the morning or in the evening. It is the form that matters here; and not the content. An example of a tabloid, in this sense, is The Daily Mint, brought out by the Hindustan Times group. Such tabloids are, in fact, a trend that picked up across the world since 2005. In the couple of years since then, at least 80 newspapers across the world converted into a tabloid (in terms of the size) and the trend seems to continue even now. An important factor in this process is the increasing price of newsprint and the need to contain costs. A tabloid is an effective way to reduce the costs on newsprint by half and this helps in either keeping the cover price static or even reduce the price of the newspaper and thus increase circulation. In addition, the tabloid is trendy too.

The Mid Day, published from Mumbai and Delhi has been in existence as a tabloid from its inception and brought out in the evening as a daily. The Daily Mint was a late entrant. It began in 2007 and is focussed on financial and business news along with a dose of politics, developmental issues and what is now known as human interest stories. In the same year, 2007, the India Today which group started a tabloid daily newspaper: The Mail Today, which focuses on political and business news and is known to play up pictures, analysis and a strong dose of non-serious news such as gossip and partying. It must be stressed in this context that the broadsheet dailies too have begun carrying non-serious news and gossips and all these are what the 'page 3' means. In other words, there has been a tabloidization of the newspaper industry, as in the sense of tabloid as an adjective.

Analysts of the newspaper industry in India look at the tabloidization as dumping down of the news and relate this as a development in the era of liberalisation. Rupert Murdoch is the prime mover of this process and newspapers across the world suffered its impact. In India, the prime mover of this phase happened to be the Times of India, though brought out in the broadsheet/Berliner format, began the process of reducing the space in the newspaper for serious news and instead began to play up trivia and gossips in their place. It was not incidental that this process began with the advent of Samir Jain at the top in the TOI establishment. Jain, to be fair, was open about this. It was his idea to reduce the cover price of a newspaper, increase circulation and use this to increase advertisement revenue and thus make huge profits. Jain did this at a time when the print industry seemed to have hit a trough in terms of the profit it earned. Jain's price war forced the other newspapers too to follow. Jain was also responsible for the clipping down of the editorial positions and he was explicit that the Times of India was as much a brand as was any other consumer product. The Jain years brought in the professional marketing man into the newsroom and



Berliner format : Berliner, or "midi", is a newspaper format mid-way between a tabloid and a broadsheet, with a page dimension of 470mmx315mm, and is sold folded. The Berliner format is an innovation in press and an alternative to the broadsheet format.

even dictate the choice of stories. This again is tabloidization of the broadsheet and we use tabloid here as an adjective.

1.3.3 Magazines

The concept of news magazines arrived in India in the mid 1970s. India Today was started by Arun Purie when the nation was under The Emergency. The context was indeed interesting. Purie was then the proprietor of a printing press and had imported sophisticated machines that could print in colour and on glossy paper. The press in India, at that time, was gagged and even while none published stories against The Emergency, they also did not celebrate The Emergency in a way that the regime wanted. In addition, the foreign newspapers did carry stories that were critical of the regime in many ways. India Today, then was meant to circulate pro-emergency stories outside India and this was done through the Indian embassies and consulates. The first of the magazines, in fact, came out in that context. It may be noted here that the daily newspapers were bringing out a magazine, mostly on Sundays, in a broadsheet format where the content was more of literature, book reviews and feature stories against hard news that was published during the week days. The India Today was distinct from these and in form too. It started as a fortnightly.

Stardust, Savvy and Debonair existed even then but India Today belonged to another genre. It focussed on political issues whereas the others dealt with news and pictures from the film industry and some even bordered on pornography. The predominant feature of those magazines that existed until then was the use of pictures and less of hard news. India Today defied this trend and in that sense was a pioneer in the segment. The Anand Bazaar Group, which published The Telegraph soon entered the segment with the Sunday and blazed the trail. The Sunday earned its place with detailed exposes on social, political and such issues and emerged into a major player in the segment during the 1980s before folding

up in the following decade. Apart from the Sunday, the group also brought out its Hindi edition called Ravivaar. The 1980s witnessed a huge spurt in the magazine segment with the birth and growth of magazines in Indian languages and many of them continue to dominate the market to this day.

Another important entrant into the magazine segment was The Frontline, started in 1984 by The Hindu group of publications. The immediate provocation for The Frontline was the advanced printing machines that The Hindu group acquired in the early 1980s. Glossy paper, colour printing and hence the most appropriate use of pictures gave The Frontline a place. In addition and unlike the others in the segment, The Frontline stands out for the extensive details its reporters provide while reporting an event or analysing a development/issue and the large space that the magazine devotes to writers who belong to the literary field and also specialists in such areas as economics, law and foreign affairs. For all these, even with a circulation that is not as large as the India Today or the Outlook, which entered the segment in the mid-1990s, The Frontline has a niche readership that is serious and inclined to academics.

The birth of Outlook was another milestone in the area of magazine journalism. Vinod Mehta, who can easily be described a heretic or a maverick, and had edited Debonair in the past, set up the Outlook with funds from the Raheja group of companies that was primarily engaged in the construction industry. In the two decades and more of its existence, Outlook has exposed a few scandals, upset a section of the political and business classes and does blaze a trail in the area of adversarial journalism in the magazine segment. It may be noted that Outlook has given a tough competition to the India Today, which too turned into a weekly in the mid-1990s. However, the important fact is that magazine journalism, even after the entry of many players into the segment, has lasted in a way that none had to exit. The exception being Sunday! An illustration of this is the arrival and survival of the Tehelka magazine. Its strength being

that it engages in exposes and investigative journalism with such stories being done, week after week, without a break. It may be noted that Tehelka's attempt to enter the daily newspaper segment did not succeed. And apart from its print edition, the magazine is a hit with its web edition too. In short, we may conclude that magazines as a genre have come to stay whether in English or Indian languages.



ACTIVITY 1.1

Try to prepare a list of newspapers and magazines published before India's independence.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: ..... considered the first ever regulation that laid down rules before anyone could publish a newspaper, in fact, did not contain anything about the periodicity of newspapers.

Q.2: The most important difference between a broadsheet and a tabloid is in .....

Q.3: ..... and ..... belong to an era when the struggle for freedom was building and between them, they voiced the pro and the anti British agenda.

Q.4: The Mid Day, published from Mumbai and Delhi has been in existence as a tabloid from its inception and brought out in the evening as a daily.

Q.5: The immediate provocation for .....was the advanced printing machines that The Hindu group acquired in the early 1980s.

1.4 RELEVANCE OF PRINT MEDIA

The print media is facing a challenge, unprecedented in its short history, across the world. In India, however, the story is different. Against a world trend which shows a continuous decline in circulation figures of daily newspapers, India has witnessed a hike in the same during the same period. The factors that have affected the newspapers in the West, in fact, are the advent of 24 X 7 TV channels, the arrival and exponential growth of the Internet and the various other forms of news circulation including the mobile telephones. Even though these factors - the round the clock news on TV, the Internet and Mobile Telephony - are present in India, the story in so far as their impact on the print media is different.

Among the 100 top daily newspapers that are sold for a price (as distinct from the free newspapers), 19 happen to be from India. And the Times of India, which is among the 19, happens to be the sixth largest, in terms of its circulation, in the world. With a circulation figure of close to one hundred lakh, which is the combined circulation of all the dailies, India ranks second in terms of the number of copies of paid for newspapers in the world. China is ahead of us by a few hundred lakhs only. The fact is that newspapers, both Indian languages and English, reach as high as 38 per cent of the households in India. And the figure has not shown any adverse trends in recent years and has thus defied the trend across the Western World. For a nation that cannot boast of insofar as the literacy level is concerned, the rising trend in the domain of newspapers is indeed a good thing. And this has happened around the same time as the increase in the number of households accessing cable television (almost half the population) as well as the increasing penetration of the Internet (at least one tenth of the population). It may be that India does not compare as equals with the West in terms of the Internet penetration but the fact is that the expansion of web access has not adversely impacted the circulation of paid for newspapers during the period.

One important factor that influenced the trend in this regard is that newspapers had either decreased or kept stable the cover price during this

period. As seen earlier, the Times of India had goaded the other major newspapers too into the price war. The Hindustan Times, its competitor in the Delhi market was forced to bring down its cover price to a Rupee (against the Rs. 3 for which the paper was sold) in order to stay on in the market. The price war, in fact, helped all the big newspapers to increase their circulation during the decade after 2000. In other words, none of them lost in terms of the circulation as long as they reduced the cover price. And those that could not afford this were eased out of the market. The Indian Express and the Pioneer, for instance, fell by the way. The reasons were not restricted to the price war only but that was a factor. A deep pocket was a pre-requisite for staying afloat and flourishing in the era for the print media. There have also been instances of a stable newspaper falling into trouble after it attempted to enter the TV media. The Times of India happens to be an exception here. And the India Today group seems to have benefitted from cross-media operations; its news channel in Hindi, Aajtak, is indeed making money not only to ensure its costs but also the cost of the group's English channel, the magazine and the tabloid.

In short, the experience with the print media in India, as a business model, has been pleasantly different from those in the West. A few may have fallen by the wayside and the proportion of revenue from the cover price/circulation may have fallen to as low as 5 per cent in some cases and remains a mere 15 per cent even in the best case scenario. And this has happened despite the increase in circulation across the board. Newspapers, by an large, increased their circulation from a couple of lakhs in the mid-1990s to over ten lakhs in 2005 and since. And despite this, the revenue from sales has dipped. This has affected the margin of profit in some cases but the Times of India remains an exception even here. Its profit has increased over the years.

All this was possible with the liberalisation of the economy. At least 15 percent of the 120 million people belong to a class that may be called the consumers in a super-market economy. And this had opened the space for advertisements in the newspapers in a big way for consumer goods, electronic products and a new kind of eating and dressing too. The

newspapers in India seemed to have gained immensely from this. The flip side of all this is that the media, including the newspapers that were adversarial in their agenda have turned into a propaganda tool for the regime. That, however, is another story and could be dealt with in another unit.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6: What factors affected newspapers in the West?

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Q.7: Write in brief the recent scenario of print media in India and how is it different from the rest of the world?

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

- James Augustus Hickey's Bengal Gazette, first published on January 29, 1780 as one of the earliest of newspapers in India, but it did not follow any regular schedule in terms of the periodicity.
- The 1867 Act was amended in 1955, when Section 2-A was added to the Act. By this, it was laid down that newspapers shall, in case they decided to change the periodicity - from a weekly to a daily or vice versa - make a declaration before the Registrar of Newspapers to the effect.
- The daily newspapers emerged into a viable business model and the experience during the first three decades after independence is that it

flourished. The scope for advertisement too emerged following a pattern.

- Analysts of the newspaper industry in India look at the tabloidization as dumping down of the news and relate this as a development in the era of liberalisation. Rupert Murdoch is the prime mover of this process and newspapers across the world suffered its impact. In India, the prime mover of this phase happened to be the Times of India, though brought out in the broadsheet/Berliner format, began the process of reducing the space in the newspaper for serious news and instead began to play up trivia and gossips in their place.
- Another important entrant into the magazine segment was The Frontline, started in 1984 by The Hindu group of publications. The immediate provocation for The Frontline was the advanced printing machines that The Hindu group acquired in the early 1980s.
- The factors that have affected the newspapers in the West, in fact, are the advent of 24 X 7 TV channels, the arrival and exponential growth of the Internet and the various other forms of news circulation including the mobile telephones.
- One important factor that influenced the trend in this regard is that newspapers had either decreased or kept stable the cover price during this period. As seen earlier, the Times of India had goaded the other major newspapers too into the price war.



1.6 FURTHER READING

1. Kohli- Khandekar, Vanita (2013) (Fourth edition).The Indian Media Business .New Delhi : Sage Publications
2. Ram,N (2000).The Great Indian Media Bazar : Emerging trends and issues for the Future. In India: Another Millenium?,edited by Romila Thapar, pp.241-285. New Delhi : Penguin Books India
3. Rao, M.V Chalapathi (1974). The Press in India. New Delh : National Book Trust

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867

Ans to Q No 2: in the size of the sheet

Ans to Q No 3: The Mid Day

Ans to Q No 4: The Times of India, The Hindu

Ans to Q No 5: The Frontline

Ans to Q No 6: The factors that have affected the newspapers in the West, in fact, are the advent of 24 X 7 TV channels, the arrival and exponential growth of the Internet and the various other forms of news circulation including the mobile telephones.

Ans to Q No 7: The price war helped all the big newspapers to increase their circulation during the decade after 2000. In other words, none of them lost in terms of the circulation as long as they reduced the cover price. And those that could not afford this were eased out of the market. The Indian Express and the Pioneer, for instance, fell by the way. The reasons were not restricted to the price war only but that was a factor. A deep pocket was a pre-requisite for staying afloat and flourishing in the era for the print media. the experience with the print media in India, as a business model, has been pleasantly different from those in the West.



1.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What is the difference betwen a tabloid and a broadsheet? which were the tabloids that were brought out by Gandhiji?

Q.2 : What do you understand by the term print media? Explain its relevance in the present times.

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Discuss the contribution of the press in the field of communication.

Q 2: 'Electronic media is casting its shadow over its printed counterpart'. Discuss.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Comprehend the state of print media in the West and compare it with the Indian scenario.

Q 2: Trace the emergence of journalism in the world.

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UNIT 2: HISTORY OF PRINT MEDIA IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 History of Print Media in India

2.4 Evolution of Print Media in India

- 2.4.1 The Early Stages and the English East India Company
- 2.4.2 The Anti-British Sentiment and the Media
- 2.4.3 The English Press: Nationalist and Pro-British
- 2.4.4 The Indian Language Press

2.5 Journalists of Eminence

2.6 History of Media in North East India; special reference to Assam

2.7 Let us Sum up

2.8 Further Reading

2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.10 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- have a clear understanding about the history of the press in India.
- locate the specific context in which the press arrived in India.
- discuss the role and the influence that the national struggle for freedom had on the making of the press in India.
- explain the importance of some prominent personalities who influenced journalism in India and the standards they set for the professional journalist.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have come across the general history of the Print Media.

This unit will introduce you to the history of print media in India. There are several phases in the development of the press and in the evolution of the print media, and in this unit you will find out about them. This unit will also give you an insight into the various angles of this concept since Indian independence.

Before understanding any further let us discuss the history of the press in the Indian context and its evolution and growth.

2.3 HISTORY OF THE PRESS IN INDIA

The history of the press in India, unlike in the other parts of the world, cannot be treated as one entity. The reason being that unlike in England (and other various countries where English colonies were established) or France (countries that were colonised by the French), India happened to be a nation where the people spoke different languages. In that sense, apart from the English language press, which emerged in the early stages of British colonialism in India, there emerged the press in the different Indian languages. Thus, we will find the history of the press in India as one involving the advent and the growth of the English language press as well as the press in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati, Assamese and many such languages. However, we find a common thread uniting all these and that was provided by the concrete condition of colonialism and the anti-colonial sentiment determining the history of the press in India. It is important, in this context, to suggest that the missionaries played an important role in the emergence and the spread of the printing technology over the times. It is also necessary to note that the colonial-anticolonial binary that marked the character of the press in India was a development that evolved a little later than the arrival of the first newspaper in India.

It is also important to note here that there were news reporters even before the British came to India. It is recorded that the Mughal or Moghul Emperor, Aurangzeb had engaged reporters in the various provinces and their brief was to keep the Emperor informed of the various happenings in the provinces. This, incidentally, was a practice that prevailed as early as in

the times of Julius Ceaser. It is also recorded that there were instances when the reporters engaged by the Emperor were paid off by the provincial governors to NOT report a certain development and that Aurangzeb lost the Deccan due to one such instance of corruption. The practice of engaging reporters to inform the Emperor is certainly not an instance of journalism as we understand the term now. And that is also not the press as we will be discussed in this unit.

However, the arrival of the first modern newspaper in India, so to say, happened in a similar context and the idea of having a free press in India was to be found in a context not very different from that as it was found in the Roman era and in Aurangzeb's times. In short, those who were at the helm in Britain and commanded the operations of the English East India Company were guided by similar concerns, i.e., that the officers of the company did not indulge in unpopular acts that will render the company rule unpopular among the people of India. They were keen that the long term interests of the empire were not jeopardised by unpopular and self-serving acts by the company's officers. And it was in that context that the rulers relied upon the works of James Augustus Hickey, who was dismissed from his job in the East India Company in Calcutta. Hickey's Bengal Gazette (also called Calcutta General Advertiser), first published on January 29, 1780, thus can be called the first newspaper in India. Thus the Indian Press was the by-product of the British rule in India.



James Augustus Hickey was an Irishman, who launched the first printed newspaper of India, in January 1780, with the name *Bengal Gazette*.

From such a beginning, the press in India is indeed now a major player determining all the walks of our life in India today. Apart from the newspapers and the magazines, whose number is huge, we now live in a society where the various other forms of media such as the TV, the Radio and the Web as well as news on mobile telephones have arrived on the scene and the expansion has indeed made life so different. In this unit, we will look into the early history of the press in India and also discuss the contribution of individuals who shaped its scope in their own times. This will help understand the scope of the media, in present times and thus come to some conclusions on the state of the press in India in our times.

2.4 EVOLUTION OF PRINT MEDIA IN INDIA

The year 1780 also saw the advent of India Gazette, by Messink and Reed. They were inspired by Hickey (we shall discuss Hickey in detail in Section 2.4.1 later in this unit) and this publication was brought out after obtaining the Governor General's consent too. The publishers of the India Gazette gave an undertaking to the company that they shall abide by any regulation that the company decided to impose from time to time. It is a different matter that no such regulations were imposed but the fact is that India Gazette belonged to a category of newspapers that worked as a collaborator rather than as an adversary of the East India Company in India. This was followed by the Calcutta Gazette in 1784 and this was directly patronised by the East India Company. The decade saw the arrival of such other papers as the Bengal Journal (1785), the Calcutta Chronicle (1786)and the Oriental Magazine of Calcutta Amusement (1785)(a monthly publication) and all these had stayed away from playing an adversarial role in any sense of the term. It is also important to note that these publications folded up soon. It may be added that all these were printed in English and the editorial contents were more in the nature of bulletins that were intended to be read by the officers of the East India Company in Calcutta.



Fig : Hickey's Bengal Gazette

Richard Johnson, meanwhile started the Madras Courier in Madras and this publication, started in 1785, was recognised by the Company. The paper was sustained heavily from funds from the Company's and the Government's advertisements. It is interesting to note here that Boyd, who was editor of this paper, resigned in 1791 to start his own paper, Harkaru in that year. This paper, however, folded up with the death of its founder editor in 1792. Madras Gazette was another paper founded in the Southern city in the year 1795 and when the paper caught the company officers on the wrong side, it's facility for free postage was withdrawn by the Company-led government of Madras.

The Bombay Herald was founded in 1789 and The Courier began publication in the Western city in 1790. Bombay Gazette that began in 1791 and the Bombay Herald, that existed since 1789 was subsequently merged into the Bombay Herald. This publication enjoyed recognition from the Government and thus enjoyed the facility of free postage as well as preference for official advertisements too. In this sense, we find the principle of papers sustained by official advertisements - a revenue model that is central to the media industry in our own times - emerging and establishing itself in those times. It is also interesting to note here that the publications from Bombay and Madras were, by and large, pro-British and thus enjoyed the Company's patronage.

The following decade, however, witnessed the emergence of an adversarial press and this development was most pronounced in Bengal. The Bengal Journal, now under William Duane along with some others, published a report that Lord Cornwallis was dead in the midst of the Mahratta war. This was in 1791. William Duane lost his job as editor on that account and the Bengal Journal, he started soon, was caught in enough troubles in the three years it existed. Duane was arrested, deported and his wealth, which added up to a tidy sum even in those days was confiscated. The decade saw many more of such incidents but then there was nothing in the realm of laws to restrict the freedom of the press in specific terms. The point is that the last decade of the 18th century was when the press as an adversary was emerging across the three provincial capitals - Calcutta,

Bombay and Madras - and the atmosphere in England and the rest of Europe, where free speech was still a prevalent doctrine, prevented any law as such being enacted. It must be remembered that those were times in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution!

2.4.1 The Early Stages and the English East India Company and the Press

After the Battle of Plassey (in 1757) and the terms that made the English East India Company gain political control over the affairs of India, there were a number of battles that the British fought against the various rulers across India. The five decades since Plassey were a time when the British consolidated their hold over the rest of India and there were several instances during this phase when they were at war with the French, Dutch and Portugese forces who had taken sides with petty rulers in different parts at that time. It must be remembered that all these European powers were engaged in capturing colonies in India at that time and in that sense, none were fighting for the Indian people. It is also a fact that while the British succeeded in colonising most parts of India, by way of war or through friendly treaties with the native rulers, the French succeeded in the same way in Northern Africa and the Dutch and the Portugese established colonialism in the Latin America.

As for the concerns of this unit, the Company and the Governor General were determined to ensure that bad news about their activities, particularly reports about the war and the setbacks in that front were not reported in the press. And this they ensured by wielding the threat of deportation of editors who carried such reports in the press and to that extent the idea of free speech that ruled the scene in England was not practiced by the English rulers in India.

Thus, in May 1799, the Governor General issued the first press regulations. These regulations simply laid down that every newspaper carry in its pages such details as the name of the printer, the editor and the owner of the paper. The regulations also made it

necessary that the material, meant to be published, are sent across to the Secretary to Government, before publication. In other words, the very first regulation of 1799 imposed a pre-publication censorship in India. And in the event of a newspaper publishing something without approval warranted deportation of the editor. Interestingly, those were still the times when newspapers were owned and edited by Englishmen and Indians had not entered the realm of the press yet.

The regulations of 1799 specified the following as areas that were not to be published and the Secretary to the Government was the final authority to impose ban on such news. The areas were:

- Movement of ships and embarkation of troops;
- Speculations on relationship between the Company and any of the Indian rulers;
- Information likely to be used by the enemy or comments that were likely to cause excitement or alarm;
- Statements of public credit or the financial transactions of the Company;
- Comments on the life of the Company's officers.

Interestingly, all the newspapers that came out from Calcutta at that time agreed to comply with the regulations but did not submit their reports for pre-publication censorship on many instances. The papers were: Bengal Harkaru, Morning Post, Telegraph, Calcutta Courier, Oriental Star, India Gazette and Asiatic Mirror. It is important to note here that the editors of all these were Englishmen. Lord Wellesley, the Governor General at that time, however, could not achieve much against those who defied and particularly because he did not find support to his anti-press attitude from his masters in London. Moreover, the attempt to gag the press led to the emergence of an underground press with pamphlets appearing every now and then without leaving any trace as to where they were printed. Some of these, interestingly, were from the Baptist Missionary press in Serampore, now in West Bengal.

Wellesley responded to the pamphleteering by issuing an

order that all printed matter must carry the name of the printing press where printed. Wellesley's concerns now were not merely that of the war and such reports. Such pamphlets were also ones that attacked some of the cultural beliefs of the Indian people and were thus evangelical. The company was worried about the consequences by way of hurting sentiments and the impact of that on the Company's rule in India. Finally, after some serious attempts and after the arrival of Lord Warren Hastings issued fresh regulations, in 1818, by which the pre-publication censorship was abolished and the rest of the regulations of 1799 remained. The British rulers also began to realise, by this time that the threat of deportation was not going to be effective against editors. The reason was simple. We now find Indians arriving as editors and they could not have been sent to England as was possible with the Englishmen.

2.4.2 The Anti-British Sentiment and the Media

James Silk Buckingam, an Englishman, was perhaps the one who could be described as having sown the seeds of anti-British sentiment in a sense. Although his writings in the Calcutta Journal were primarily against the East India Company and had advocated the direct take-over of the administration in India by the Crown, his systematic attack on the activities of the Company can be held as the earliest such writings published in newspapers that struck against the insensitive nature of the British rule in India. Buckingham was deported to England in 1823. But he continued his journalism through the Oriental Herald, published from England and his writings were in the nature of exposing the bad acts of the company officials and the Governor General before British Parliament. In the 1850s, Buckingham rode the scene with well argued articles seeking the abolition of the Court of Directors who had exerted a lot of influence on the administration in India. It may be noted that India was brought under the Crown by way of Queen Victoria's proclamation in 1858. Buckingham also advocated an elected legislature in India and the

idea of the Indian Civil Service and he used his newspapers in this campaign.

This was also the time when Raja Rammohun Roy started the Sambad Kaumudi (there is a dispute as to the exact year; but it was either 1819 or 1820). But this newspaper was known for its campaign for social reforms rather than anti-British. In the same year, Bhowani Charan Banerjee founded the Samachar Chandrika, which in every sense represented the counter-view to Sambad Kaumudi. The point to be noted here is that the idea of anti-British sentiment, from where Indian nationalism took shape, was emerging in this crucible. In other words, a critique of the British administration from a point of view of defending the tradition and beliefs that existed in India happened to be the early stirrings of Indian nationalism because the seeds of anti-British sentiments were sown that way. Banerjee's Samachar Chandrika was perhaps the first of this genre of newspapers and it survived until about 1855. It may be stressed here that we now see the arrival of newspapers in Indian languages. Yet another newspaper of this kind was the Mumbai-Na-Samachar, started by Fardoozji Mazban in Bombay. This newspaper was in Gujarati and it survives to this day under a changed name; Bombay Samachar.

The earliest expression of anti-British sentiments in a direct manner was on the issue of Indigo cultivation and the travails of the farmers in the Champaran district in Bihar. Nil Darpan, a play portraying the plight of the Indigo farmers and that they were forced into cultivating the plant for use in the textile industry in Britain, was printed in the form of a pamphlet in 1861. The Hindu Patriot, edited then by Harishchandra Mukherjee, was a prominent newspaper in Bengal and it was seen as a terror to the bureaucrats, the planters and the colonial rulers as such. Shom Prakash, another paper in Bengal played a major role in propagating the problems of the Indigo farmers. The Bengalee, founded in 1868 was another vocal campaigner on the Indigo issue. This paper was purchased,

subsequently by Surendranath Banerjee and under him it emerged into a leading voice of early Indian nationalism. Sisir Kumar Ghose, from Amrit Bazar, a village in the Jessore district, started the Amrita Bazar Patrika, a Bengali daily newspaper in 1868.

A remarkable feature of the Amrita Bazar Patrika is that though it was started as a Bengali language newspaper, Sisir Kumar Ghose turned it into an English language paper in the wake of the Vernacular Press Act, 1878. It may be noted here that the 1878 act was intended to deal with the rising tide of anti-British opinion in the Indian language newspapers. It may be added here that the law was criticised by a cross section of the English language newspapers too and this clearly was a reflection of the emerging patriotic sentiments in India. Surendranath Banerjee will be remembered for his forthright attack on the law and he carried out the campaign both in his writings and speeches in the public. He was sentenced to imprisonment for two months for his article that attacked the British Judges.

The Vernacular Press Act, 1878, was soon repealed (in 1881) after the Liberal Party wrested power in England and Gladstone, who had opposed its passage was Prime Minister of England in 1880. The rising tide of anti-British sentiment, during this period, would express itself in two distinct ways: One being the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and the other being the several acts of violence involving angry young patriots killing or attempting to kill Englishmen across the country. Bengal happened to witness these in a big way. For the concerns of our unit, this also reflected in the emergence of a press that was nationalist in its core commitment and alongside that were such newspapers that were openly pro-British in their approach to news.

2.4.3 The English Press: Nationalist and Pro-British

It was not a mere coincidence that almost all those who had founded and edited some of the leading newspapers of the time

were delegates to the first session of the Indian National Congress in December 1885 in Bombay. Dadabhai Naoroji, considered the father of Indian Nationalism was there as editor of Rast Goftar; M.G.Ranade was there and he was the founder of Indu Prakash; Narendra Sen was editor of the Indian Mirror; G.Subramania Iyer was the editor of The Hindu; W.S.Apte was editor of Mahratta; G.G.Agarkar was editor of Kesri; B.M.Malabari was editor of the Spectator; the list is not complete and among the delegates were many editors of newspapers in English and Indian languages.



Amrita Bazar Patrika is one of the oldest newspapers in India. It was a nationalist newspaper during the British rule.

Among the leading lights present at the first session, special mention is to be made of G.Subramania Iyer, whose newspaper, The Hindu (apart from the Amrit Bazar Patrika) deserves a prime place in the newspaper history and the freedom struggle in India. Founded in 1878 by a group of 6 young patriots, The Hindu emerged as the nerve centre of nationalist political activity soon. So much so that the third session of the Indian National Congress in Madras (in 1887) happened to be conducted, virtually, from the auspices of the newspaper. The paper, meanwhile, was mired in legal cases for its crusade against the British rulers in the couple of decade after it was founded and the founders left it to be run by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, in 1905. Iyengar himself did not dilute the nationalist commitment and steered the paper with further vigour in the years to come. Subramania Iyer, meanwhile, left The Hindu to edit Swadesamitran, a Tamil daily, known again for its nationalist commitment. The great poet, Subramania Bharathi too had edited the Swadesamitran later on. The Madras Standard was another nationalist paper from Madras at that time and it flourished as a nationalist newspaper under the editorship of G.Parameswaran Pillai. The Madras Standard, interestingly was earlier a pro-British newspaper and it was Pillai who steered it into a nationalist weapon.

It is not as if that the press in India was completely anti-British. There were many that were pro-British and came to be known as Anglo-Indian. This was more the reality in the case of the English language newspapers that were published in those times.

In 1861, the Bombay Times, The Courier, the Standard and the Telegraph, all of them published since various length of time, were amalgamated to make the Times of India. And the new paper, published from Bombay, remained a pro-British paper until its English owners transferred its shares to the Indians after independence. The newspaper was sold out by its original English owners to the Dalmias, a leading industrial group at the time of independence. The actual transfer took place in 1950. As for the concerns of this unit, the Times of India (since 1861) and its earlier versions were consistently pro-British. The Pioneer from Allahabad, the Civil and Military Gazette from Lahore, the Madras Mail from Madras and The Statesman from Calcutta were the other pro-British newspapers that were established around the same time. And all of them changed track after independence in the same way as did the Times of India.

2.4.4 The Indian Language Press

It will be improper to treat Persian as an Indian language. However, if one searches for the earliest incidence of non-English newspapers in India, one finds the Zoobdut-ool-Akbhar, started by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan in the year 1833. The paper was funded by petty rulers and the news printed in the paper was primarily translations from the English newspapers. Following this, Syed Mohammed Khan (elder brother of Sir Ayed Ahmed Khan who founded the Aligarh Muslim University) founded the first Urdu newspaper, Sayyad-ul-Akhbar, in the year 1837. Prior to that Raja Rammohan Roy published Mirat-Ul-Ukhbar, a persian weekly in April 1822 and Jam-I-Jahanama, a persian and Urdu weekly wap published from Calcutta under the editorship of Lala Sadasukh Munshi. It may be regarded as pioneer work in Urdu as well as persian jornalism in India.The newspaper folded up soon after Khan's death within a decade after it was founded. Agra, presently in Uttar Pradesh, happened to be the centre of Urdu newspapers apart from Delhi. Soon Urdu newspapers came to be published from Bareilly and

Meerut. Similarly, Benares had emerged into a centre for Urdu newspapers with at least three publications - Soodhakur Akhbar, Benares Ukhbar and Benares Gazette - in the year 1848. Unlike in English, the Urdu newspapers were not printed; they were lithographed (handwritten) and their contents were not necessarily the concerns of the masses. These papers had a limited circulation (sometimes as less as 50 copies and a few hundred at best) and depended on the kings and the landlords for financial support. For all these reasons, the first bunch of Urdu newspapers began facing a slow death by the early 1950s.

In 1832, Bal Shastri Jambekhar (1812-1846), a historian who taught in the Elphinstone College, started the Bombay Darpan, a Marathi newspaper. What began as a fortnightly was turned into a weekly soon. Jambekhar inspired the founding of the Prabhakar, a Marathi weekly by G.V.Kunte in 1841 and it continued publication until 1865. Similarly, P.M.Dandekar, one of the early social reformers, published his Upadesha Chandrika. These publications were known for the boldness with which they indulged in propagating reforms within the Hindu tradition even while opposing westernisation. Another salient feature of these papers were that they were bi-lingual - Marathi and English. The first Marathi newspaper, so to say, was Mumbai Akhbar, founded by Suryaji Krishnaji in 1840. This, however, folded up within months after its birth. The Indu Prakash, founded by one of modern India's tallest social reformers, M.G.Ranade, belonged to this league as well as it represented the transition from a vehicle to propagate social reforms into the campaigner for nationalism. The Indu Prakash stayed in circulation for a long time and even after Ranade gave up the editorship. Kesri was another important newspaper in Marati and gathered a lot of importance under Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the last decade of the 18th century. We shall discuss this in detail in another section in this unit.

The Mombaina Samachar, in Gujarati, began in 1822 from Bombay. And the paper was brought out from a printing press with type-setting and in this sense was more advanced in technology.

Other newspapers in Indian language then were using lithography. The trend in this regard was set by the Parsis. Mombaina Samachar became a daily newspaper in 1832. Another successful newspaper in Gujarathi was the Jam-e-Jamshed started by Pestonji Manekji Motiwala in 1831, first as a weekly and turned into a daily in 1853. Dadabhai Naoroji's Rast Goftar belonged to this tradition.

The Hindi language press has an equally long tradition. Samachar Sudhavarshan, started from Calcutta in 1854 was the first Hindi daily. Meanwhile, in May 1826"Odunt Martand" appeared from Calcutta under the ownership of pandit Jugal Kishore Sukla being the first newspaper in in the Hindi language. It was bi-lingual; in Bengali and Hindi. Benares Akhbar, first published in 1849 used the Nagri script and so did Sudhakoor Akbhar. By the year 1867, there were three Bharthedu Harischandra started the Kavi Vachan Sudha, from Benares and this was indeed the beginning of Hindi journalism in a way. The early stages of Hindi journalism too were devoted to social issues and it was only by 1907 that we find politics becoming a part of the Hindi language newspapers. Hindi Pradeep, the Hindi Kesri and Abhyudaya were examples of this genre. The Aaj from Benares, Vir Arjun, the Sainik, Pratap, Lokmanya were examples of politically oriented newspapers in Hindu that emerged during the 1930s and all these played very important role in the freedom struggle. This period also saw the re-emergence of Urdu newspapers in a big way. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, for instance, started the Al Hilal, a weekly newspaper in Urdu in 1921 and the paper was indeed an influential player in the development of nationalist ideas during its life. Meanwhile, the Amrita Bazar Patrika started its Hindi newspaper called Jugantaar in 1937.

After the early phase where such newspapers like Satyananandam (1876) Kerala Patrika (1884), Malayalam journalism emerged as a powerful tool in the social and political mobilisation in what is today's Kerala with the arrival of K.Ramakrishna Pillai; he began with Kerala (a monthly), Malayalee (a weekly) and strode like a colossus through his Swadeshabimani (a daily newspaper). His

writings earned him the wrath of the ruler of Travancore leading to his deportation in 1910. The Malayala Manorama, started by Verghese Mappillai, blazed the trail with its nationalist commitment and has now emerged into a top knotch player in the media scene in Kerala. Mathrubhoomi, Kerala Kaumudi and Deshabhimani are other notable newspapers in Malayalam.

The experience with the press in the various other Indian languages was on similar lines. "The Tamil Magazine" was published in 1831 under the patronate of Christian Religious Track Society and it was followed by "Daha Vartamani", a Tamil weekly published Asom Madras in 1836. Satyadoot, Published by the Christian Assocation of Bellary enound the year 1836 was regarded the year 1836 was regurded as the first journal in Telegu language. Similarly American Baptist Mission published orunudoi in 1846 being the first paper in Assamese language. Beginning as a part of the missionary activity and engaged in social reforms, the press in these languages emerged as a powerful tool in the context of the freedom struggle and set a trail that laid the foundation for an adversarial press in the days after independence.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Fill up the blanks:

a. Bengal Gazette is also known as .....

b. The Governor General issued the first press regulations in .....

c. Battle of Plassey took place in .....

Q.2: Which types of news were banned by the Secretary to the Government?

.....

.....

Q.3: Who were the founders of the 'India Gazette'?

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2.5 JOURNALISTS OF EMINENCE

As we have seen, the press in India evolved in the context of the British rule. The early stages of its growth was guided by the conflict between the interests of Britain's long term concerns in India and that of the East India Company's officers; in this, the idea of a free press was sought to be curtailed by the company while those in England were determined to allow a free press. Thus, there was no regulation allowed by the Home Government against the journalists in India. But, the Company, aided by the Governor General, managed to put down efforts by journalists to expose their wrong doings by deporting those who brought out papers to expose these. James Augustus Hickey was the pioneer in this regard and he set the stage for what is adversarial journalism in India. The context, however, changed in the later days of British rule in India. And the regime began enacting laws and using the Indian Penal Code against the idea of a free press. This was particularly so when Indians began setting up newspapers and using them in the campaign against the British rule in India. In this way, they also set the standards for journalism in independent India and laid down some broad principles of free speech and expression to be rendered as guarantees in the Constitution that was adopted on November 26, 1949. Among them were Raja Rammohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Abul Kalam Azad, to name only a few. We shall now discuss these personalities in some detail.

- **James Augustus Hickey:** After his dismissal from the services of the English East India Company in Calcutta, Hickey decided to hit back against the officers of the Company. His sole purpose was revenge and he started the Bengal Gazette in January 1780. Also known popularly as Hickey's Gazette, India's first newspaper, was full of gossips and stories involving scandals in the private life of the Company's officials rather than any lofty principles guiding the journalism. It must be mentioned that Hickey's thoughts and agenda had nothing to do with freedom, colonial policies or the impact of the British Company's activities in India. Hickey was sent to jail for a four month term after being convicted on charges of defamation in June 1781. But the paper

continued to be published and Hickey's columns were far more disparaging than in the past. He was charged for a second time within a year and this time, i.e. in 1782, Hickey was sentenced to a year in jail and his press was confiscated. The Bengal Gazette was closed down. Hickey's career as editor too ended with that. It must be noted that Hickey was the pioneer not merely because he set up the first newspaper in India; more so because he set a framework and declared that in the mast head of the paper. The newspaper described itself in the following words: A Weekly Political and Commercial Paper open to all Parties, but influenced by None.

Hickey may not have set high standards in journalism and his newspaper may have been something of what is today yellow journalism. He attacked one and all and those whom he targeted included the then Governor General Warren Hastings' wife and a few judges. His writings were certainly scandalous rather than based on any investigation. But by sheer grit and the boldness he displayed, even if that meant himself being reduced to financial distress, Hickey certainly was a pioneer.



Keshav Gangadhar Tilak ((1856-07-23)23 July 1856 – 1 August 1920(1920-08-01)), was a journalist, teacher, social reformer, lawyer and independence activist who was the first popular leader of the Indian Independence Movement.

- **Raja Rammohan Roy (1774-1883):** The first Indian-owned, Indian language newspaper was launched by Raja Rammohan Roy in 1820. (There is a controversy over the date and there are some sources that say it as 1821). The Sambad Kaumudi was a Bengali language newspaper that was brought out as a weekly. Rammohan Roy passionately made the Sambad Kaumudi to be a platform for the campaign for social reforms and to attack such practices as sati and child marriage. It is held that the campaign that finally culminated in Lord William Bentinck proclaiming the abolition of sat in 1834, owed a lot to the campaign carried out in the Sambad Kaumudi. The newspaper itself changed hands subsequently and continued to be published for 33 years since is foundation. The extensive writings against sati that Roy did himself in the columns of the Sambad Kaumudi prepared the ground for Lord Bentinck to proclaim its abolition. Roy's newspaper was certainly not a vehicle for anti-British propaganda. This point is relevant because the Sambad Kaumudi does not fit into the frame of adversarial journalism as it is understood in the ordinary sense. But

then, if the scope of being adversarial is extended to a broader and more appealing framework, one will see a point in treating Rammohan Roy as the first Indian adversarial journalist. His campaign against the redundant and ugly practice of sati, which pushed him to campaign against the powerful elite in the society of the times (for instance the forces of reaction at that time were wealthy enough to send delegations to London to campaign against Rammohan and Lord Bentinck) certainly lent to his campaign an adversarial character. In doing this and using the newspaper towards this, Rammohan Roy may be treated as the father of Indian Journalism. The adversarial agenda, after all, need not necessarily be as against the government of the time. A campaign against a bad social practice is as much adversarial and the Sambad Kaumudi played this role and made a huge impact in the making of modern India.

- **Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920):** Kesri and Mahratta were the two weekly newspapers that can, perhaps, be called the first in the class of overtly anti-British. Kesri was in Marathi and Mahratta in English. The two were founded simultaneously by Vishnu Krishna Chiplonkar in January, 1881 and taken over by Bal Gangdhar Tilak very soon. From the beginning, the two had a similar agenda - nationalism - but were designed to cater to two different readership. Kesri was intended to take the issue of nationalism to the `masses of ignorant population' (to quote from its own records) while the Mahratta was meant to intervene among the educated sections of the society. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the one, from among the intellectuals of the time, to break with the trend that focussed on social reforms (and thus ended up being seen as friends of the British rule) to stress upon the idea of political freedom and opposing the British policies in the realm of social reforms consequently. Kesri and Mahratta, thus turned into platforms to oppose the Age of Consent Bill. Tilak considered himself a follower of Sisir Kumar Ghose, who steered the Amrita Bazar Patrika even before. The aggressive nationalism that Tilak advocated through the Kesri rendered the weekly newspaper into a household name in most parts of the then Bombay Presidency. The last decade of the 19th century was indeed

the glorious moment in the life of the Kesri. This was the period when the youth, across British India were launching physical attacks on the British officers. Bombs were hurled at Englishmen and young men, inspired by the idea of anti-British sentiments found Tilak supporting their acts in the columns of Kesri.

The Indian Penal Code was amended and Section 124 A, defining any anti-British expression, including criticism of their actions and insensitive administration were defined as sedition. Section 153 A too was added to the Code and all these were intended to be used against the aggressive nationalist campaign now common in the press. Tilak was sent up for trial and prosecution under these new sections of the IPC in 1898 and two of his essays, published in the Kesri were singled out for attack. Tilak was held guilty of sedition for his two essays where he held the insensitive British administrators responsible for the large number of deaths in Pune due to a Plague epidemic in the preceding years. His argument was that the insensitive nature of the then administrators was behind some young men deciding to attack one such officer with a bomb. The trial court found Tilak guilty and sent him to jail for 18 months in 1898. Tilak continued his journalism of courage and nationalism even after his release and he was tried a second time under the same sections and this time the judge sent Tilak to imprisonment and deportation for a six year term. The fact is that Bal Gangadar Tilak was punished for his patriotism, to cite M.C.Chagla, a jurist of fame in independent India. It may be added that the legacy of Tilak was carried forward by such others as Chittaranjan Das and Bipan Chandra Pal through the Bande Mataram, a weekly newspaper under the editorship of Aurobindo Ghose. The publication was started in August 1906 from Calcutta.



Hind Swaraj is a small tract written by Gandhi in 1908.

- **Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) :** Beginning his journalism in 1906, when he took over the Indian Opinion that had been around for some time, in South Africa, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi remained a journalist until he was assassinated on January 30, 1948. His ability and the determination to communicate with the people of India and engage with them made him the greatest journalist of all times. Gandhi had set the

purpose of journalism in his own way and listed them out as follows: ``One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects.'' This he did through his columns in the Indian Opinion and was in the course of writing one of his classic texts that was published, subsequently under the title Hind Swaraj. The text was from a column that Gandhi published in the Indian Opinion in the year 1909. He has yet to be called the Mahatma that time.

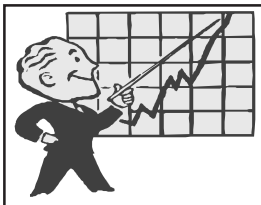
In doing this column, Gandhi resorted to a style that would become characteristic of his writings; the style was to raise a question and follow it with an answer. He masqueraded as a reader raising the questions and answered them in a style that was not only simple but clear. This style, of a conversation, is indeed an aspect that has stayed with good journalism even to this day. It fitted into what Gandhi defined as the three cardinal purposes of journalism and is indeed an effective way of mass communication to this day. Even a casual reading of the Hind Swaraj will reveal that the questions followed a pattern and so did the answers.

The next important landmark in the life of Gandhi as a journalist was the Young India, a weekly newspaper he edited with funds from his friend and industrialist, Shankarlal Banker. It may be added here that although Banker was the one who financed his paper, Gandhi did not hesitate to write in support of the demand from workers for higher wages. It is also important to note here that the Mahatma refused to yield any space in the Young India for advertisement. In other words, Young India was sustained only from the revenue generated from its subscription. It may be added that Young India was not intended to make any profit from out of its existence. Gandhi stuck to this principle with the Harijan too, which he founded with the explicit objective of raising the debate against untouchability in the Indian society.

An important aspect in the story of the Young India was that Gandhi was tried for sedition under Section 124A, the same law that led to Tilak's imprisonment and deportation subsequently. The trial against

Gandhi in 1923 was indeed a landmark in the history of journalism as much as in the history of India's struggle for independence. Gandhi pleaded guilty of sedition (for three of his articles in Young India) and challenged the judge to inflict the maximum punishment provided for in the law. The Mahatma told the judge, during the trial, that it was his passion to preach sedition against an illegitimate law and that it was his duty to defy the laws of a regime that was born out of evil and represented evil. Gandhi was sentenced to imprisonment for a period of 18 months. And it may be added that this was the last time when Gandhi was sent up to trial. The British simply detained him without charges on a number of occasions since then.

From the concerns of this unit, it may be said that Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps the most influential journalists in his times and that he could become because he practiced journalism from the premise of the three core principles of a newspaper that he set out in his 1909 publication. Journalism of courage, in other words.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: Name two anti-British weekly newspapers.

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Q.5: Name the newspaper and its year of establishment by Mahatma Gandhi.

.....

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Q.6: When was Hickey's press closed down?

.....

2.6 HISTORY OF MEDIA IN NORTH EAST INDIA; SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM

No printed self learning materials will be provided for this section. Instead, the university is providing audio-visual materials for this particular section of the unit. The learners are requested to watch

the audio-visual DVD available at the study centre. These materials may also be downloaded from www.youtube.com/kkhsou. Apart from the audio visual materials, a few audio materials are available at www.kkhsou.in. The learners are requested to visit the above sites for the audio-visual materials and contact their study centre to listen/ watch the audio CDs and DVDs on this course. The learners may consult the CDs/DVDs- AV/MC/45. AV/MC/46, AV/MC/44, AV/MC/43 and a few relevant video programmes at *Youtube* produced by the Multimedia Production Unit. The learners are also requested to listen to the Live Internet Radio Service at www.kkhsou.in/crs .



2.7 LET US SUM UP

- It has been seen that the press emerged in India as an instrument in the hands of some Englishmen, who were employed in the East India Company for a time and sent out for reasons best known to them and the company officials at that time. The pioneer, in fact, was one who had his own agenda against officers of the company and the then Governor General, Lord Warren Hastings and thus set out to expose them as well as scandals in their private life. This brand of journalism, however, did not last long and it died with Hickey.
- Social Reforms was central to the newspapers that came up in the last part of the 18th century. Pioneered by Rammohan Roy, the newspapers did have trouble with the British administrators at times because the rulers were not keen on disturbing the equilibrium. But then, in their hey days, the agenda of social reforms was not only central to the newspapers but also played a crucial role in the changes that were brought about. It will not be an exaggeration to say that Rammohun Roy's columns in the Sambad Kaumudi played a major role in the making of the law against sati.
- The next important phase in the history of newspapers in India happened to be the shift from social reforms to political independence. This phase was started by Sisir Kumar Ghose, taken forward by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and reached its peak with Mahatma Gandhi's Young India.

- There were the newspapers, that were guided by a combination of interests; both socio-political and commercial. In other words, the newspapers of the present times that are run with an agenda as well as a commercial enterprise also came into existence in India towards the end of the 19th century. They were The Hindu, The Times of India, the Pioneer and the Statesman, to name a few. In political terms, they were either anti-British and nationalist or pro-British and called Anglo-Indian.
- The other important area insofar as the newspaper history in India is concerned is the newspapers in Indian languages. Most of them began with a social reforms agenda, emerged as platform for the idea of independence and also as commercial models with huge circulation.



2.8 FURTHER READING

1. Rao, M.V Chalapathi (1974). The Press in India. New Delh : National Book Trust.
2. Raghavan, G.N.S. (1994). The Press in India : A New History. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.



2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a. Calcutta General Advertiser

b. May 1799

c. 1757

Ans to Q No 2: The regulations of 1799 specified the following as areas that were not to be published and the Secretary to the Government was the final authority to impose ban on such news. The areas were:

- Movement of ships and embarkation of troops;
- Speculations on relationship between the company and any of the Indian rulers;

- Information likely to be used by the enemy or comments that were likely to cause excitement or alarm;
- Statements of public credit or the financial transactions of the company;
- Comments on the life of the company's officers.

Ans to Q No 3 : Messink and Reed

Ans to Q No 4 : Kesri and Mahratta

Ans to Q No 5 : . Indian Opinion in the year 1909

Ans to Q No 6 : In the year 1782

2.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions:

Q.1: Why was Amrit Bazar Patrika turned into a English language newspaper ?

Q.2: What areas did the Press Regulations of 1799 focus on?

B. Short Question (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Discuss the History and evolution of Print media in India.

Q 2: Describe media's role in the Anti-British movement.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Write a note on any one eminent journalist of your choice.

Q 2: Discuss the role of Mahatma Gandhi as a journalist.

Q 3: Enumerate the role of Orunudoi in Assamese journalism.

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UNIT 3 : FREEDOM MOVEMENT AND THE INDIAN PRESS

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Pre and Post Independence era of the growth of journalism in India

3.4 Struggle of Press against repressive measures

3.4.1 Freedom of Press in India before independence

3.4.2 Freedom of Press in India after independence

3.5 Print vs Electronic media

3.6 Let us Sum up

3.7 Further Reading

3.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.9 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- describe the Pre and Post Independence era of the growth of journalism in India
- understand the struggle of press against repressive measures
- analyse Print vs Electronic media

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Indian press has always played a significant role in Indian nationalism. It has helped in nation building and development in the Post independence era. During the Pre Independence period, the press was used by Indian nationalists to spread the message of patriotism and political ideas. The press has played a notable role in mobilizing public opinion, organising political movements. This unit will discuss Pre and Post Independence era of the growth of journalism in India, Struggle against repressive measures and print Vs electronic media

3.3 PRE AND POST INDEPENDENCE ERA OF THE GROWTH OF JOURNALISM IN INDIA

James Augustus Hicky on January 29, 1780 started the first English newspaper in Kolkata, India. Named Bengal Gazette alias Calcutta General Advertiser, the paper had two sheets with three columns on each page and it was published weekly. The paper declared it as a "weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none." The contents of the paper included items taken from English newspapers in England, letters from local and rural readers, items of gossip and scandal of interest to the European community. Hicky had reserved to himself a column to talk to his readers directly. Hicky and his paper came under extraordinary surveillance by the administration. The paper earned the enmity of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General and other high ups. Indian Gazette, a rival paper, appeared in the world of journalism in Kolkata, in the same year, 1780. It was much better in quality; it had four pages of 16 inches long, the types were better; it had three columns and it was well printed. The authorities granted Indian Gazette postal facilities; the same facilities were denied to Hicky's paper.

In 1818, Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya and Raja Ram Mohan Roy started the first Bangla weekly Bengal Gazette. Thereafter, in April 1818, the Baptist missionaries published the Bangla monthly Dig-darshan from Serampore. This was followed by the publication of Samacher Darpan in 23 May 1818. James Silk Buckingham, a British citizen, in his Calcutta Journal introduced honesty and decency in contemporary English journalism in India. Raja Ram Mohan set up Sambad Kaumudi in Bangla, Brahminical

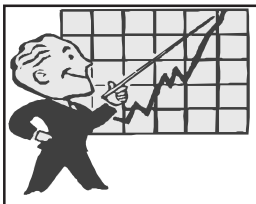
Magazine in English and the Mirat-ul-Akbar in Persian and united with both the Indian and European editors to force Lord William Bentinck to liberalise the existing press laws. The Sambad Kaumudi was primarily intended for common man, whereas the Mirat was for the educated classes. The weekly Rangpur Bartabaha in 1847 propagated progressive views and started writing against local officials. Pre independence english newspapers established by Englishmen like Knight, broke with the press of the British

Raj in criticizing the high-handedness of the bureaucracy in India, the disrespectful manner in which Indian culture was documented in school books, the tax system etc, and also spoke out against the biases in reporting on Indian uprisings. Many of today's leading English national dailies came into circulation in the pre-independence era. Many freedom fighters and social reformers of the time had newspapers to their credit.

1860's witnessed a boom in the Indian Language Press in the country. Several Newspapers made their appearance in this period. Also many English Newspapers which evolved at that time are flourishing even today like The Times of India (1861), The Pioneer (1861), The Statesman (1875) and The Hindu (1878). Jawaharlal Nehru called the Newspapers a tool of national reconstruction and social reformation. He supported the liberty of Press and considered it as a vital part of democracy. Thus the Print Media nurtured during the post independence era too. The Press played an important role in the struggle for independence and in shaping and molding the public Opinion. In the Independent India, it became a medium of inter-communication between the Government and the Public.

Post Independence, the ownership of English newspapers passed into the hands of solely Indian shareholders mostly concentrated in urban areas. Regional language press is more popular in rural areas because of the publication and popularity of local news. English language newspapers are mainly urban national dailies with countrywide circulation and multiple editions and have bigger financiers and sponsors. Better purchasing power in urban areas reduces the ratio of news and increases the visibility for advertisements. Tabloid journalism, paid news and smear campaigns even masked as advertisements, have been presented in national dailies. The English-language press in India is largely owned by business houses leading to Media conglomeration and hegemony. Collaborations between Indian English newspapers and foreign news and business agencies has help create a global culture with free flowing information. However, there is a strong chance of vested interests getting highlighted and others being ignored. The main objectives of Print Media are to report facts and give expression to popular feelings. They serve as archives, objects of records

and can be referred to in the future. In the Indian Print Media industry, most of the Newspapers and Publications are owned by private firms and are free from government control. They can keep a check on the policies and actions of government and help in running a healthy democracy. Thus, the Newspapers have been a major player since independence in the welfare, betterment and development of the society at regional as well as national level.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What were the contents of the first English newspaper Bengal Gazette?

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_____

Q.2: Name some of the English dailies which started after the 1860's which are flourishing even today.

_____

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3.4 STRUGGLE OF PRESS AGAINST REPRESSIVE MEASURES

Knowing the potentialities of free Press in addressing administrative and social reforms, the Press in India also faced several repressive measures to curtail its power. In 1862, the East India Company issued the Amherst circular prohibiting the servants of the Company from having connections with the Press in any way. However, Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1835 brought in an act which repealed the laws circumscribing the liberty of the Press. First war of independence of 1857 led to a regulation which came to be known as the Gagging Act by the Governor-General, Lord Canning, on 13th June 1857. Then came the notorious Vernacular Press Act, 1878, which discriminated against one section of the Indian Press by making prosecution easier in respect of "sedition and defamation".

3.4.1 Freedom of Press in India before Independence

The Press, not being under the direct control of the then regime defied censorship regulations to keep the nation informed of the freedom movement. The authorities treated the press with distrust and imposed stringent licensing and registration laws for the publication of newspapers. There was always a swing from liberty to control and back since the birth of the Indian press with the publication of Hicky's newspaper. Thus, while Hicky was a firm believer in freedom of the press, the governor general Warren Hastings in Bengal wanted to control the press because it was publishing libels against the government. On June 29, 1799, all the papers were ordered pre-censorship. On May 13, 1799 a new rule was passes that every newspaper should bear the name of the printer, that the name and address of the editor and proprietor. Like Warren Hastings before him, Wellesley also believed in restricting the press for keeping the public ignorant and for maintaining power.

18th century marked the period of control on the press. If the person intending to start a paper was already persona non grata with the government or with influential officials, he was deported forthwith. The first two decades of the 19th century saw the imposition of rigid control on the press by the Marquess of Wellesley. The press regulations required a newspaper to carry in imprint the name of the printer, the editor and proprietor, to declare themselves to the Secretary to the Government and to submit all material published in the paper to his prior scrutiny. There was no growth in the newspaper press from days of Lord Wellesley to those of Lord Minto (1810-1813). Lord Hastings succeeded Lord Minto in 1813 who was known to have liberal ideas on education and progressive views towards the press. The 1799 Press Regulations imposed by Wellesley, which required pre-censorship was abolished in 1818.

With the coming to power of John Adam, there was a swing away from freedom of the press to control of the press. Known as Adam's Gag, an Act was passed in 1823. The Act included:

(i) Prohibition of the printing of books and papers and the use of printing presses without a license.

(ii) Penalty for infringement was a fine of RS.1, 000 commutable to imprisonment without labour for a period of not more than six months.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy memorial against the Press Ordinance of 1823 to the Supreme court and then to the Privy Council, his closure for the publication of the Mirat-ul-Akhbar as a protest against the repressive Government Ordinance have earned for him an esteemed place in the history of the Indian Press.

In 1818, Sir James Silk Buckingham's contribution to the struggle for freedom of the Press in India was monumental; he believed it was his duty to admonish Governors of their duties, to upbraid them furiously for their faults, to uncover the truth, though it was disagreeable to some people. When John Adam became the new Acting Governor General, the Calcutta Journal was forced to cease publication and he hastened Buckingham's deportation to England the same year. Lord Amherst succeeded Adam, he issued the regulations of 1825, prohibiting the servants of the East India Company from having any connection with the press. When Lord William Cavendish Bentink came to power in1828, he introduced reforms of the press regulations. He understood the advantage of the press in the Indian. The Indian language newspapers began to flourish during his time. Governor General Lord Metcalf came to power in 1835. When appointed, he invited Lord Macaulay to draft a Press Act presumably to be incorporated into the code which was being drafted by the Law Commission. Macaulay, who favored the new act, pointed out that the existing licensing regulations were wrong and the press in India should be free. On August 3, 1835, Metcalfe the successor of Bentink with the unanimous support of the Council

passed the Press Act of 1835- the most liberal Press Act in Indian history. Lord Auckland succeeded Metcalfe, holding the position of Governor General until 1842. Auckland is remembered by the Indian press as favouring freedom of the press and supporting Metcalfe's liberal legislation.

After the 1857 Sepoy mutiny against British rule the notorious Gagging Act by Lord Canning, was imposed on the newspapers and periodicals. A permit was necessary for launching any paper or periodical and the Government observed utmost discretion in granting such a permit. Lord Lawrence became Viceroy of India in 1864. It was during his administration that the landmark 1867 Press and Registration of Book Act was passed. It also repealed Metcalfe's Liberation Law. From 1870, the Indian Penal Code was systematically extended to cover "constructive" threats to public order through the press. The law was repealed in 1881 by Lord Ripon who was sent to India as a Viceroy. Ripon, in consonance with his policy of conciliation and reforms, took measures for the liberation of the Vernacular Press.

Lord Curzon took office in 1899 as Viceroy of India. The Official Secrets Act of 1903 was passed. It was nothing but an additional fetter to curb the liberty of the press. The partition of Bengal in 1905 led to the rise of the revolutionaries and their journalism. Barindra Kumar Ghose, younger brother of Aurobindo Ghose, founded Yugantar in 1906 as the journal of the revolutionaries. Lajpat Rai in Punjab started a newspaper called Bande Mataram, the rallying cry of the movement against Bengal's partition. Aurobindo Gose attracted the adverse notice of the authorities for his writings in Bande Mataram. A Marathi weekly, Kesari was started by Tilak from January 1, 1881. He, along with Agarkar and Chiplunkar started another weekly journal, Maratha in English. The Editor of the Deccan Star, Nam Joshi also joined them and his paper was incorporated with Maratha. Tilak's papers became the leading media to propagate the message of freedom movement. They also made the anti-partition movement of Bengal a national issue.

When Lord Minto succeeded Lord Curzon, he passed the Newspapers (Incitements to Offences) Act of June 1908, which empowered the authorities to take judicial action against the editor of any newspaper which published matter which, in the view of the Government, amounted to incitement to rebellion. Partition of Bengal, violence in different parts of the country, and the British assassinations caused a threatening situation. To cope with this situation, new legislation, the Indian Press Act of 1910, was passed and the provision of the bill increased Government control over the printing presses and publishers. Between 1910 and 1914 the Government initiated 355 cases (warnings, security demands and prosecution) against the printing presses. In 1922, the Central Legislative Assembly on the recommendation of the committee appointed to investigate press legislation repealed the Newspaper (Incitement to offences) Act of Press Act of 1910.

In April, 1931, Lord Willington became the Viceroy of India. The first of the repressive measures was the passage of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931. Similar to the 1908, 1910 and 1930 legislation, this act empowered local magistrates at their discretion to require publishers and printers to deposit security of up to 1000 rupees. On October 25, 1940, the Government of India issued an order which prohibited the printing or publishing by any printer, publisher or editor in British India of any matter calculated, directly or indirectly, to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion, or of any matter relating to the holding of meetings or the making of speeches for the purpose, directly or indirectly, of fomenting such opposition as aforesaid: provided that nothing in this order shall be deemed to apply to any matter communicated by the Central Government or a provincial government to the press for publication. Fresh restrictions were imposed on the press following the Quit India resolution of August 1942.

3.4.2 Freedom of Press in India after Independence

Before independence, the attitude to the press depended on the Governor Generals and Viceroys in power and after independence, the attitude to the press depended on the Prime Minister of that time. In the post-independence era the press enjoyed a large measure of freedom because Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India was a liberal who realized that for the successful functioning of democratic set-up, the freedom of the press was absolutely necessary. Although Nehru was a liberal and believed in freedom of the press, on October 23, 1951 he got a new Act passed called "The Press Objectionable Matters Act" as a concern over the newspapers' role in rousing communal discontent in India. The passage of this act brought protest from editors and journalists throughout India. The All India Newspapers Editors' Conference, the Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ), and the Language Newspapers Association passed resolutions protesting against the Press (Objectionable Matters) Act. Finally, in order to quiet the journalists, Nehru, in October 1952, announced the formation of the Press Commission composed of distinguished personalities to look into the whole issue of the press in India. The Press (Objectionable Matters) Act was allowed to lapse in 1956.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was authoritarian and believed in curbing freedom of the press. In 1971, Mrs. Gandhi got to curb press freedom when war was declared with Pakistan. On December 4th the Defense and Internal Security of India Act was signed into law. This Act prohibited the printing or publishing of any newspaper, book or other document detrimental to the defense and security of India; it provided for the demand of security from any newspaper or publisher or the forfeiture of security already given; it empowered the Government to confiscate copies of any printed matter which might be inflammatory and to close down the presses; and it empowered the state and local Governments to impose censorship. Mrs. Gandhi's

antipathy to the press continued and got further intensified after the declaration of internal emergency on June 26, 1975. The emergency lasted for 19 months and this period is considered to be the darkest period in the post independence history of the freedom of the press. The Government issued the "Central Censorship Order" and "Guidelines for the Press in the present Emergency".

On February 11, 1976, with the approval of the legislature, Mrs. Gandhi's Government presented journalists with the Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matters Act of 1976. Included in it were all the provisions of suppression contained in the 1908, 1910, 1930, 1931, 1932 and 1951 Acts. The provisions of this act extending to the entire territory of India were made effective retroactive to December 8, 1975. The Act empowered the central Government or the competent authority (officers above a certain rank in the central and state Governments and union territories) to prohibit publications detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of India, friendly relations with foreign countries, public order, decency, morality or publications inciting the breaking of law. It also empowered competent authority to serve warning, to demand security or declare security forfeit, or to demand further security from publishers and printers suspected of printing Objectionable Matters.

There were two Commissions set up by the Government after Emergency to enquire into excesses related to the press. According to the Das Commission Report, 253 journalists were arrested during the state of Emergency. Fifty-one journalists and cameramen were deprived of accreditation, seven foreign correspondents were expelled from the country and twenty-nine foreign correspondents were banned from entering India. The commission further charged that Mrs. Gandhi used the press to distort the news. The Shah Commission's findings charged Mrs. Gandhi's Government with the following:-

- The Government resorted to cutting off the electricity of newspaper offices on June 26, the day after the emergency was proclaimed in order to buy time to set up the apparatus of the censorship. Three days later when the censorship machinery was set up, the power supply was resumed.
- The Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting designated newspapers as either hostile, friendly or neutral and issued instructions to withhold or reduce advertisements from hostile and neutral newspapers and to increase advertisements in friendly newspapers.
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting ordered a study of the newspapers over the six month period preceding the emergency in order to determine each newspaper's attitude to Government and to penalize it accordingly.

The emergency was lifted in March 1977 and Morarji Desai came into the power. This marked the swing from control of the press back to freedom of the press and removal of all restrictions upon it. On April 18, Desai obtained the approval of both Houses of the Parliament and the signature of the President for repeal of the Prevention of Publication of the Objectionable Matter Act of 1976, and approving the Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publication) Act of 1977. Freedom of the press thus returned to India, and the status of the press was restored to that of the pre-emergency era. Rajiv Gandhi, became Prime Minister after the assassination of his mother in 1984. He had a smooth relationship with the public and the press for the first few years. The press started becoming critical of his government afterwards and so he got the Defamation Bill, 1988, passed in Lok Sabha, thereby making an attempt to suppress the press. The mounting pressure of the public and the press forced the government to withdraw the Bill without referring it to the Rajya Sabha.

It is evident from the history of freedom of the press during the past two centuries, from its inception in the 1780s to 1980s that

the Government of India took measures both during the pre and post-independence period to curtail the freedom of the press. There were more Governor Generals and Viceroys who passed laws imposing restrictions on the press than those who relaxed such restrictions. After independence also, laws continued to be passed imposing restrictions on the press.

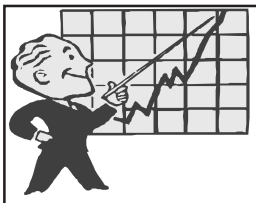
3.5 PRINT VS ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The technological breakthrough in printing has brought in unforeseen structural change in the set up of print media. Developing Information Communication Technologies have facilitated news reporting from different parts of the world with quick transmission and dissemination of news. Indian press is going through transformation, readers of the print media have a wide variety of options to choose from the publications devoted to specialized subjects because of diverse information easily available on account of technological development. Print is the pioneer form of mass media. It comprises of newspaper, magazine, pamphlets, tabloids etc. It is affordable when compared to other media. Print media allows us to read anytime and can be carried anywhere. The information content on the print media is static and cannot be quickly changed interactively. It serves as an easy sort of proof for any information and is relatively easier form of accessibility for public campaigning.

Electronic media is electronic devices used to convey information like television sets, radio, computer etc. It is second phase and more advanced form of mass media. It introduced more revenues and job opportunities to the mass communication industry. It involves more innovative methods like text, videos and animation. It is fast and appropriate for instant polls and reviews. Unlike print media, visual media works better with people having hearing and seeing disabilities and does not require its audience to be literate. Electronic media which provides facility of live transmission can also be used to connect and communicate between locations where telegraph and telephone wires are impractical. The last decade of twentieth century witnessed an emergence of digital media which includes internet, tablets and smart phones etc. collectively known as new

media. The latest developments in internet and World Wide Web allow integration of audios, videos along with texts and graphics. This gave us many ways of interactive interaction with the information. Archival of digital information is cheap and easier.

As an industry print invested enough to create a newspaper habit among people. Indian print media is extremely competitive industry and journalists are extremely innovative. According to the social mentality of the nation, people have huge faith in newspapers and they believe that it portrays more truth rather than electronic and digital media. Print has more credibility whereas digital media remains as a faceless entity in India. In a country like India, subscribing newspaper is cheaper than taking an internet connection. Frequent power failures for long hours are not uncommon in rural India. So there is no viable replacement for newspaper. According to Indian psychology of middle class and lower class men folk, they believe that only tangible product can be priced. So there is reluctance towards digital information. People read newspaper to gather more information in depth after watching it in electronic media. India got commercial access to Internet only in the midst of 1995; the Indian Print media has kept pace with the rest of the world in on-line publishing.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: Mention the restrictions imposed by the Indian Press Act of 1910.

_____

_____

Q.4: What were the main features of the Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matters Act of 1976?

_____

_____

Q.5: Define Electronic media.

_____

_____



3.6 LET US SUM UP

Let us recapitulate some of the important points from this unit-

- Indian press has always played a significant role in Indian nationalism. It has helped in nation building and development in the Post independence era. During the Pre Independence period, the press was used by Indian nationalists to spread the message of patriotism and political ideas.
- James Augustus Hicky on January 29, 1780 started the first English newspaper Bengal Gazette alias Calcutta General Advertiser in Kolkata, India.
- First war of independence of 1857 led to a regulation which came to be known as the Gagging Act by the Governor-General, Lord Canning, on 13th June 1857.
- When Lord Curzon took office in 1899 as Viceroy of India, the Official Secrets Act of 1903 was passed.
- When Lord Willington became the Viceroy of India he passed the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931.
- Post Independence, the ownership of English newspapers passed into the hands of solely Indian shareholders mostly concentrated in urban areas. Regional language press is more popular in rural areas because of the publication and popularity of local news.
- Before independence, the attitude to the press depended on the Governor Generals and Viceroys in power and after independence, the attitude to the press depended on the Prime Minister at that time.
- The technological breakthrough in printing has brought in unforeseen structural change in the set up of print media. Although, many Indian newspapers are on Internet, its utility from the view point of users of India is slowly catching up



3.7 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala, V.S Gupta (2002) Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Kumar, Keval J. (2006) Mass Communication in India. Mumbai : Jaico Publishing House

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1: James Augustus Hicky on January 29, 1780 started the first English newspaper in Kolkata, India. Named Bengal Gazette alias Calcutta General Advertiser, the paper had two sheets with three columns on each page and it was published weekly. The paper declared it as a "weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none." The contents of the paper included items taken from English newspapers in England, letters from local and rural readers, items of gossip and scandal of interest to the European community. Hicky had reserved to himself a column to talk to his readers directly.

Ans to Q.No 2 : 1860's witnessed a boom in the Indian Language Press in the country. Several Newspapers made their appearance in this period. Also many English Newspapers which evolved at that time are flourishing even today like The Times of India (1861), The Pioneer (1861), The Statesman (1875) and The Hindu (1878).

Ans to Q.No 3 : The Indian Press Act of 1910, was passed and the provision of the bill increased Government control over the printing presses and publishers. It empowered district magistrates to levy and to forfeit security deposits from the publishers of newspapers and the keepers of presses; to authorize searches and to declare printing presses and newspaper copies forfeited to the Government; and for prohibition of the transmission by post of copies of newspapers deemed to contain objectionable matter.

Ans to Q No 4: On February 11, 1976, with the approval of the legislature, Mrs. Gandhi's Government presented journalists with the Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matters Act of 1976. The Act empowered the central Government or the competent authority to prohibit publications detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of India, friendly relations with foreign countries, public order, decency, morality or publications inciting the breaking of law. It also empowered competent authority to serve warning, to demand security or declare security forfeit, or to demand further security from publishers and printers suspected of printing Objectionable Matters. It empowered the central Government or competent authority to shut down or confiscate printing presses for failure to furnish the required deposits, to confiscate objectionable literature and to impose jail terms and fines for violations. Customs officers were given authority to confiscate objectionable materials and state police officers to seize unauthorized newspapers and news-sheets. Metropolitan magistrates, chief judicial magistrates and first class magistrates were authorized to issue warrants to enter establishments for the confiscation of printing presses and to seize objectionable newspapers and news-sheets.

Ans to Q.No 5: Electronic media is electronic devices used to convey information like television sets, radio, computer etc. It is second phase and more advanced form of mass media. It introduced more revenues and job opportunities to the mass communication industry. It involves more innovative methods like text, videos and animation.



3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: When did the first English newspaper start in India ?

Q.2: Who launched The Hindustan Times?

Q.3: What were the prohibitions under the Amherst circular of 1862?

Q.4: State the advantages/disadvantages of Print media.

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Explain the notorious Gagging Act imposed by Lord Canning.

Q.2: Differentiate between Print and Electronic media.

Q.3: Write a short note on the Shah Commission's findings.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Write a short essay on Freedom of Press after independence.

Q.2: Describe the Pre-independence growth of journalism in India.

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UNIT- 4 : PIONEERS OF JOURNALISM IN ASSAM

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Contribution made by some of the well-known personalities towards the growth of journalism in Assam

- 4.3.1 Dr. Nathan Brown
- 4.3.2 Oliver Cutter
- 4.3.3 Dutta Dev Goswami
- 4.3.4 Radhanath Changkakati
- 4.3.5 Chanda Kumar Agarwala
- 4.3.6 Padmanath Gohain Baruah
- 4.3.7 Lakshminath Phukan
- 4.3.8 Ambikagiri Raychoudhury
- 4.3.9 Siva Prasad Barooah
- 4.3.10 Radha Govinda Baruah

4.4 Let us Sum up

4.5 Further Reading

4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.7 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to –

- discuss the contribution made by some of the pioneers of journalism in Assam
- analyse the different newspapers and magazines that were brought out by some of the leading luminaries of the earlier times

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In second unit of this course, we have already discussed with you some of the renowned journalists like James Augustus Hickey, Raja Rammohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi whose contribution towards the growth of journalism in the country is immense. In this unit, we shall confine our discussion to some other journalists who have also been

pioneers in this field and have immensely contributed towards the growth of journalism in the north-eastern region of the country specially in Assam.

4.3 CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY SOME OF THE WELL-KNOWN REFORMISTS AND JOURNALISTS TOWARDS THE GROWTH OF JOURNALISM IN ASSAM

The history of journalism in Assam is replete with contributions made by some of the illustrious sons of Assam and other personalities the world has ever known. In this section , we shall dwell on the contributions made by some of the celebrated journalists and torchbearers of Assamese literature and culture.

4.3.1 Dr. Nathan Brown

Reverend Dr. Nathan Brown played a very significant role in the history of Assamese language and literature. He was born on June 22, 1807 in New Ipswich in the state of New Hampshire in the US. He graduated from Williams College in 1827. For a few years, he was Associate Principal of Bennington Seminary and editor of a weekly newspaper called *The Vermont Telegraph.* The American Baptist Missionary Union appointed him as a missionary to Myanmar in 1833. Having greatly contributed to the literary and spiritual life of the people in Myanmar within a short period, he headed for Assam upon the request of Captain Francis Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam. This request was made to launch the Shan Mission aiming to help the British administration to enlighten, refine and educate the warrior tribes of Shan, Khamtis and Singphos. Brown and his associate Oliver Cutter along with their printing press sailed to Calcutta. With the establishment of the first printing press in Assam, Brown's arrival brought in an era of literary development in the region. Due to inadequate assistance from the Mission and due to tribal aggression in Sadiya, Brown had to shift his base to Joypur near Naharkatiya in 1839 and then to Sivasagar in 1843. He visited the

villages in Assam to study personally the diverse cultural and racial characteristics of the people. He along with two other missionaries, Miles Bronson and Cyrus Barker, organized and founded the first Baptist church in Guwahati in 1845. He established 14 Assamese medium schools in and around Sibsagar by 1846. He was deeply involved in teaching, translating and preparing books in Assamese. He translated and published a catechism in Assamese. In 1848 he published, the *Grammatical Notes of the Assamese Language*, which served as the first Assamese Grammar book. He undertook to translate the Bible and published the New Testament into pure and simple Assamese in 1848. He wrote books on elementary arithmetic called *Prathamganana*(1845), *Dutioganana*(1855) and geography called *Bhugulorbiboran* (1851). He translated John Bunyan's famous *Pilgrims Progress* into Assamese.

The greatest contribution of Brown was the *Orunodoi* which means 'the dawn' or 'sunrise'. It was the first news magazine in Assamese published from Mission Press, Sivasagar, beginning from January 1846. Brown did the editorial work whereas Oliver Cutter was involved in printing and publishing the magazine. The columns of the magazine brought various news from all corners of the globe. With illustrative articles on science, geography, astronomy, history and many other topics it soon found an encouraging readership among the Assamese intelligentsia and thereby paved the way for Assamese journalism. Many Assamese scholars like Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Gunabhiram Baruah and Hemchandra Baruah also contributed articles in this magazine that became a launching pad in the struggle for restoration of Assamese language. Brown was the editor of this magazine till he left for the US. Under his able editorship, *Orunodoi* published history by bringing out the texts of old chronicles in properly edited form such as *Chutia Buranji*, *Purani Asom Buranji* and *Kamrupar Buranji*. Brown also published a Assamese grammar related book called 'Grammatical Notices of the Assamese

Language'. An ardent supporter of his work, his wife Eliza Brown published the very first Assamese children literature in 1850.

Due to ill health and certain problems, Brown left Assam on February 13, 1855 for US. His farewell note said, "One of the hardest partings I ever experienced. If God in mercy restores my health, so that I can again be useful, I will return and labour for them till life ends, with all my heart." Unfortunately due to some unavoidable reasons he could not return to Assam, the land and the people that he so loved and cherished. He joined in anti-slavery movement there. Brown died on January 1, 1886 at Yokohama in Japan. Brown would always be remembered for his unparalleled contributions to the Assamese language and literature at a very crucial time of Assam's history.

4.3.2 Oliver Cutter:

As you have already read in the previous section that the American Baptist Nathan Brown introduced the printing press for the very first time in Assam, it should be noted that Oliver T. Cutter accompanied Brown in his mission. Oliver Thomas Cutter was born in the United States in 1811. He started his journey towards east in 1831 along with his wife Harriet B.L. Cutter. He first landed in Burma (Myanmar) and from there he crossed Patkai to reach Assam in 1836 along with Nathan Brown's family. At first, Nathan Brown and Oliver Cutter set up the missionary press at Sadiya, and started to print books in Assamese, Khamti and Singpho language. Oliver Cutter's wife Harriet Cutter and Nathan Brown's wife Eliza Whitney Brown started a school to teach Assamese to children. They also printed text books for children in school. But they were forced to leave Assam and go to Jaipur for some time due to Singpho rebellion. After few years, Cutter returned to Assam and settled down in Sivasagar; the British missionary press was also shifted to Sivasagar in 1846.

The first Assamese periodical 'The Orunodoi' was brought to publication in 1846 from the British missionary press at Sivasagar.

The *Orunodoi* was edited by Oliver Cutter. This periodical had played a significant role in shaping modern Assamese literature. It was published for over 36 years. It was after 25 years that another local newspaper *Asam Bilasinee* was started in Majuli in 1871. The main aim of *Orunodoi* was to spread Christianity, and it was greatly influenced by the then Bengali newspapers. Oliver Cutter's wife Harriet also contributed to the Assamese language and literature. Her English-Assamese 'Vocabulary and Phrases' was published in 1840, it was reprinted in 1877. The influence of the *Orunodoi* towards Assamese culture, literature and society was so immense that the period between 1840 to 1880 can rightly be called as the '*Orunodoi* Age'.

Brown and Cutter also started the translation of the 'New Testament' to Assamese and published it in 1848 as '*Amaar Traankorta Jisu Christor Notun Niyom*'. Apart from the Bible, hymn books, tracts and school books in Assamese, a good number of other works were published under Oliver Cutter's care in the Mission Press. In 1853, Cutter left the mission work and joined as the superintendent of the Government Press in Calcutta.

Along with the other missionaries, Cutter's greatest contribution was the beginning of press in Assam. Although Orunudoi was published with a view to infuse the principles of Christianity among the people of Assam, it played a significant role in highlighting the socio-economic problems of the society. It was devoted to religion, science and general intelligence. Orunudoi restored the Assamese language to its legitimate status and infused new ideas in the minds of the people.

4.3.3 Dutta Dev Goswami :

Due to the spread of Christianity by *Orunodoi*, a lot of Assamese people of that time were attracted towards and adopted the religion. This gradual popularity, evolution and extension of Christianity caused a state of concern for the staunch Hindu clerics, especially the *Sattra* people. Concerned at the growing popularity of Christianity through the *Orunodoi*, the eleventh *Satradhikar* of

Auniati Sattra, Shri Shri Dutta Dev Goswami accepted the use of the press and newspaper to spread religious teachings. He bought a printing press from Calcutta (Kolkata) and installed it in Auniati Sattra and named it the *Dharma prakashyantra*. It was the first press to be set up in Assam by the indigenous people. In 1871, *Asam Bilasinee*, the second Assamese newspaper and the first by an indigenous person of Assam, was published through *Dharma prakashyantra*. From this printing press, two magazines named *Asam Dipak* and *Asam Tara* were published in 1876 and 1888, respectively. A number of other books were also printed. The only surviving copy of *Asam Bilasinee* has been kept preserved in the British Museum in London. All these publications of Auniati Sattra under the initiative of Shri Shri Dutta Dev mark a golden era in the history of journalism in Assam.

Shri Shri Dutta Dev Goswami was an expert in Sanskrit, Assamese and Bengali language especially in the field of poetry. Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev introduced an artificial language called *Brajavali* in his *Ankiya-naats* which attracted the masses towards the dramatic performances. Shri Shri Dutta Dev Goswami heralded a new tradition in Sattras, of plays written in Assamese which came to be known as *Matribhasharbhaona* (vernacular dramatic tradition). The *Sattradhikar* himself composed number of plays such as, *Kaliya Daman*, *Kangsha Badh*, *JanakiHarana*, *Draupadir Bastra Harana*, *Padavar Banagamana*, *Bharatagamana*, *Akruragamana*, *Bhismaparva*, *Udyogparva*, *Indrajit Badh*, and *Rasalila*. As a result, all *Sattradhikars* of the Sattra since Shri Shri Dutta Dev have been composing plays while some of the inmates of the Sattra have also boosted this output with their unique dramatic compositions.

Shri Shri Dutta Dev Goswami was the first Assamese religious leader to publish a newspaper 145 years ago. To recognize the contribution of this great person, the Auniati Sattra has introduced the ‘Dutta Dev Goswami Rural Journalism Award’, which was conferred for the first time in 2012.



LET US KNOW

Sattra: The Sattra is a religious and cultural institution which is concerned with dissemination of principles and devotional practices of Neo-Vaishnavism, a religious movement which has had a strong impact on the religious and socio-cultural life of people of Assam since the 15th century.

4.3.4 Radhanath Changkakati

Radhanath Changkakati (1853-1923) was one of the pioneers responsible for the growth and development of English language newspapers in Assam. Changkakati's name is very much synonymous with 'The Times of Assam' for which he was the editor as well as the publisher. This newspaper , which was started on 5th January, 1895, heralded the beginning the English language newspapers in Assam. Although this newspaper was published to serve the needs of the British tea planters in the tea gardens of Assam and to protect and expand the interests of the ruling business class, Changkakati was successful in popularizing the newspaper in the villages and towns of Assam. After his death in 1923, the reigns of the newspaper were passed on to Lakshminath Phukan, another path breaker for Assamese journalism. Another special feature of the paper was the extensive use of advertisements which Changkakati believed was the life-line of any newspaper.

4.3.5 Chandra Kumar Agarwala

Chandra Kumar Agarwala (1867–1938) was an eminent writer, poet, journalist from Assam. He belonged to the Jonaki Era, the age of romanticism of Assamese literature. Agarwala was titled as *Pratimar Khonikor* in Assamese literature. Agarwala was the first editor and financer of the Jonaki magazine and a founder member of Oxomiya Bhaxa Unnati Xadhini Xobha, a literary organization of Assam with his intimate friends Lakshminath Bezbarua and Hemchandra

Goswami. Agarwala, together with his friends Lakshminath and Hemchandra, are collectively known as "Trimurti of Assamese literature" for their remarkable contribution to the very beginning of modern Assamese literature. Chandra Kumar Agarwala belonged to a well known family with his brother Ananda Chadra Agarwala being a renowned writer and a poet and his nephew, Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, a noted poet, playwright, composer, lyricist, writer and the first Assamese Filmmaker.

Chandra Kumar Agarwala brought out an Assamese weekly called Assamiya from Dibrugarh in 1918 and later on shifted to Guwahati. This particular newspaper was brought out in a bid to arrest the growing influence of Bengali newspapers like Sanjibani, Hitbadi and Bangabadi. Through the medium of this newspaper, Chandra Kumar Agarwala wanted to reach out to the educated middle class of Assam through the newspaper as a mass medium. He formed Assam Printers and Publishers by selling shares to Sadananda Dowerah, Nilmoni Phukan and a few other leading citizens of the State. An important feature of the weekly was that it mirrored the Assamese society and it made the people change the notion of their own identity.

4.3.6 Padmanath Gohain Baruah

Born at North Lakhimpur in 1881, Padmanath Gohain Baruah (1881-1946) started his career as a teacher at Jorhat and subsequently held many positions like Chairman, Tezpur Municipality, member of the Assam Council, president of the Ahom Associstion etc. Padmanath Gohain Baruah was closely allied with a number of Assamese journals and magazines. While studying in Kolkata, he with Krishna Prasad Duwara brought out an Assamese monthly journal called *Bijuli* Later he became its editor and ran it for more than three years. In 1901, he with Mathura Mohan Baruah published a weekly tabloid called *Asom Banti* from Tezpur. At a most critical period Asam Banti played a leading role in Assamese language and

literature. Acting as a mouthpiece of Assamese society it brought to the focus many important issues to the British government. From 1907 onwards, he started editing Usha, another leading monthly in Assamese. Many stalwarts like Hemchandra Goswami, Satyanath Bora, Sarat Chandra Goswami etc. regularly wrote in the magazine that heralded a new era in Assamese literature.

4.3.7 Lakshminath Phukan

Lakshminath Phukan (1897 -1975) pioneered Assamese journalism for about half a century from 1915 to1964. He was highly respected by one and all. Profulla Chandra Borua, a leading journalist himself, observes : “The Orunnodoi, The Assam Bilasinee, Assam News and The Advocate of Assam apart, the history of journalism (in Assam) is the history of the journalistic career of Lakshminath Phookan”.

Lakshminath Phukan was a journalist par excellence and edited a record number of newspapers. He began his career as the editor of Alochani, a newspaper which was brought out from Dibrugarh and retired as the editor of The Assam Tribune half a century later. Apart from these two newspapers, he also edited The Times of Assam, Batori and Assamiya and worked as an Assistant Editor of national newspapers like The Amrit Bazar Patrika, The Hindustan Standard and the Independent that were brought out from Kolkata.

Besides being an eminent journalist of repute, Lakshminath Phukan was also a poet and a short story writer. One of his major prose work was *Mahatmar para Rupkonweraloi* which won him the Sahitya Academy Award. This pioneering work also includes a few articles which reveal the nature of investigative journalism in Assam preceding and following Independence. Two of the important articles, entitled , ‘Radhanath Changkakati and ‘Chandrakumar Agarwalla’ speaks about the tough times encountered in the field of Assamese journalism. As a short story writer, Phukan’s individual distinctiveness is a fine sense of humour and a mild satire free from malice. On the

passing away of another pioneering journalist of the State, Radhanath Changkakati, Phukan joined as the editor of the Times of Assam at the age of only 28. However, he did not allow the paper to be influenced by the programmes and policies of the congress party. Instead he kept the tone of the paper nationalistic.

4.3.8 Ambikagiri Raychowdhury

Ambikagiri Raychowdhury (1885-1967) was another pioneer in the field of Assamese journalism and also a renowned playright. Raychodhury, who in the coming decades came to be known as the Asam Keshari (the Lion of Assam) wrote his first revolutionary drama, *Bandini Bharat* in 1906 under the influence of the Swadeshi movement.

Aruna Press was the collective effort of Lakshminath Phukan and Ambikagiri Raychowdhury . The press , which was established in 1918, was the mainspring of Raychowdhury's literary, journalistic and political philosophy. A monthly periodical, Chetana (consciousness) was brought out by Aruna Press in the month of September, 1919. Chetana mainly concentrated upon the writings on literature, society, health and hygiene. The periodical was jointly edited by Chandra Nath Sharma, B.L.,and Ambikagiri Raychowdhury. The regular features of Chetana consisted of editorials, news and views from the nation and abroad, brief overview of the newly published books, miscellaneous discussions, letters to the editor etc. Chetana lasted for seven years till it was closed down in 1927.

The second important paper that was published from Aruna Press in 1935 under the editorship of Ambikagiri Raychowdhury was Deka Asam (Young Assam). This paper played an important role in building up a strong foundation of the Assamese nationality in Assam. Deka Assam continued its publication almost regularly, at times as a weekly and then as a fortnightly from 1935 to 1944. Both Chetana and Deka Asam emerged as the mouthpiece of the Assamese

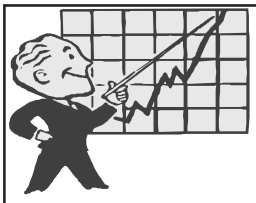
people. Specific mention can be made of the editorials which focused on the identity of the Assamese people in the contemporary world and about the realities of the future. For instance, in some of the writings like Bharatiyar Swaraj aru Asamiyar Swaraj (Chetana, Vol.2, 1920), Atmachetanahinatar Parinam atmabilop (Deka Asam,Vol.VI,1940), Asamiyak ki Lage aru ki Nalage (Deka Asam,Vol. IV,1938), Jatiyata aru Mahajatiyata (Deka Asam,Vol. I, 1935), we come across certain elaborate reflections on the existence of the Assamese, failure of the leaders and their duties at the present critical juncture. Raychowdhury criticized the concept of internationalism and was of the view that national feelings were important for safeguarding one's national interests. In one of his editorials that was published in the second volume of Chetana in 1920, titled, 'Bhabishyat Rashtra ba Manabtantra, Raychowdhury put forward a detailed plan with an advanced vision of establishing, in his own words, Mahamanabtantra. The editorial notes of Chetana and Deka Asam edited by him have been compiled in the form of a book known as 'Ahuti'. The literary genius in Ambikagiri's personality helped him in his powerful journalistic career to considerable extent.

4.3.9 Siva Prasad Barooah

Siva Prasad Barooah (1880–1938) was a renowned planter, philanthropist, politician, and humanist from Assam. He was a pioneer or path-breaker in the field of Assamese journalism who published *Batori*, the first daily newspaper in Assam. The Siva Prasad Barooah National Award has been instituted in his fond memory. This award is being given to individual or group by 'The Kamal Kumari Foundation' since 1999 for outstanding contributions in the field of journalism. He belongs to the famous Khongiya Barooah family of Thengal, the family that emerged as the champion of Assamese interests and repository of Assamese Culture and traditions.

4.3.10 Radha Govinda Baruah

Radha Govinda Baruah , born on 17th October, 1900 was the founder of The Assam Tribune, a group of news papers. Radha Govinda Baruah, an enterprising person in Dibrugrah, first conceived the idea of launching an English daily. With some help from his friends and well wishers, he brought out an English weekly newspaper instead of a daily on 4th August, 1939 under the editorship of Lakshminath Phukan, former editorial staff of Hindustan Standard, a leading daily of Anand Bazar Group, Kolkata. He founded the Assam Tribune in 1939. He was a sports enthusiast, who was president of the Assam Cricket Association for over a decade. He is also noted for his contributions to the society and culture of Assam. Such a personality who is called "the architect of modern Assam" for his being "instrumental in realising the educational needs" of the Assamese people breathed his last on 15th July,1977. Radha Govinda Baruah College (or R G Baruah College) in Guwahati is named after him. In 2000, he was honoured with a postage stamp as part of a series of "Great Leaders : Social and Political" along with Jaglal Choudhary, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, and Diwan Bahadur R. Srinivasan.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Name the books that were written by Dr. Nathan Brown on elementary arithmetic.

Q.2: What does the name 'Orunodoi' refer to ?

Q.3: When was Orunodoi published and from which place?

Q.4: What was the name of the printing press that was installed at Auniati Sattra by Shri Dutta Dev Goswami?

_____

_____

Q.5: What is the name of the award constituted in recognition of Shri Dutta Dev Goswami's contribution to journalism?

_____

_____

Q.6: Who was the first editor of Jonaki magazine?

_____

_____

Q.7: Which renowned journalist is also known as Asam Keshari?

_____

_____

Q.8: The editorial notes of Chetana and Deka Asam edited by Ambikagiri Raychowdhury have been compiled in the form of a book known as _____

Q.9: Who founded 'The Assam Tribune' and in which year?

_____

_____



4.4 LET US SUM UP

The present unit can be summarized by focusing on the following points-

- The greatest contribution of Brown was the *Orunodoi* which means 'the dawn' or 'sunrise'. It was the first news magazine in Assamese published from Mission Press, Sivasagar, beginning from January 1846
- The *Orunodoi* was edited by Oliver Cutter.
- Brown and Cutter started the translation of the 'New Testament' to Assamese and published it in 1848 as '*Amaar Traankorta Jisu Christor Notun Niyom*'.

- The Sattra is a religious and cultural institution which is concerned with dissemination of principles and devotional practices of Neo-Vaishnavism, a religious movement which has had a strong impact on the religious and socio-cultural life of people of Assam since the 15th century.
- Chandra Kumar Agarwala brought out an Assamese weekly called Assamiya from Dibrugarh in 1918.
- Siva Prasad Barooah was a pioneer or path-breaker in the field of Assamese journalism who published *Batori*, the first daily newspaper in Assam.
- Radha Govinda Baruah , born on 17th October, 1900 was the founder of The Assam Tribune, a group of news papers.



4.5 FURTHER READING

1. Kalita, Samin (2012). Uttar Purbanchalar Dusagaraki Jyestha Sangbadik. Panbazar : Chandra Prakash
2. Sarma, Gobinda Prasad(Ed) (2007). 150 years of Journalism in Assam. Assam : Media Trust

4.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1 : *Prathamganana*(1845), *Dutioganana*(1855) and geography called *Bhugulorbiboran* (1851)

Ans to Q.No 2 : The name Orunodoi refers to 'the dawn' or 'sunrise'.

Ans to Q.No 3 : The first Assamese periodical 'The Orunodoi' was brought to publication in 1846 from the British missionary press at Sivasagar.

Ans to Q.No 4 : Dharma prakashyantra

Ans to Q.No 5 : Dutta Dev Goswami Rural Journalism Award

Ans to Q. No 6 : Chandra Kumar Agarwala

Ans to Q. No 7 : Ambikagiri Raychowdhury

Ans to Q. No 8 : Ahuti

Ans to Q.No 9 : Radha Govinda Baruah founded the Assam Tribune in 1939.



4.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : Who was Shri Dutta Dev Goswami? What are the names of the plays that were composed by him?

Q.2 : What was the name of the Assamese weekly that was brought out by Chandra Kumar Agarwala ? What did it focus on?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : What was the contribution of Dr. Nathan Brown towards the development of journalism in Assam?

Q.2 : 'Lakshminath Phukan was a journalist par excellence and edited a record number of newspapers'- Which were the newspapers that he was associated with?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 : Who was Ambikagiri Raychowdhury? Discuss his contribution towards the growth of Assamese journalism?

Q.2 : Do you think the quality of Assamese language newspapers has declined in the recent years? Justify your answer with the help of examples.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 5 : LANGUAGE PRESS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Role of the language press in the field of national development

5.4 Problems encountered by language press

5.5 A study on some of the growth of important language newspapers of India

5.6 Present status of circulation of newspapers

5.7 Let us Sum up

5.8 Further Reading

5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.10 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- describe the role of the language press in the field of national development
- understand the problems encountered by language press
- describe the growth of important language newspapers of India- Dainik Jagaran, Dainik Bhaskar, etc.
- analyse the present status of circulation of language newspapers.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Language newspapers or regional newspapers are newspapers published in different languages spoken in the country. Multi-ethnicity, mutli-culture and multi-language are the hallmarks of India where language papers are published in more than 100 languages. Language press faced many obstacles prior to independence. For instance when the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was passed, the printer and publisher of any paper in an Indian language could be called upon to enter into a bond not to publish anything

likely to excite feelings of disaffection against Government or antipathy between persons of different races, castes and religions among His Majesty's subjects. If a newspaper contravened this regulation, it was first warned, and if it recurred, its equipment was liable to be seized.

At the time when India became independent, the country had only 3533 publications. Among them 330 were daily newspapers and 3203 were periodicals. After 50 years, there has been a 12 fold increase in the number of publications. In 1997, according to the data published by the Registrar of News Papers of India, there were 41705 publications among which the number of newspapers was 4719. In 2006, this has gone up to 45600 publications, in which 5600 are newspapers. The Language Press has come in a big way in popularizing the beneficial effects of various development projects launched at local, provincial and national levels. The role of the press in a developing country like India is varied. It acts as a communicator of news, the source of information about the world, national and local events.

5.3 ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE PRESS IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The constitution has recognised 18 major languages but there are 1652 languages spoken as mother tongues by the people of India. The Malayalam press tops the list of largest circulated newspapers and magazines. India has the world's largest newspaper market after China. At the time of Independence, there were about 3,000 newspapers and periodicals, which included 300 major English and language dailies. In 1960, there were about 392 language dailies with a combined circulation of 36 lakhs; the corresponding number rose to 704 and combined circulation 68 lakhs in 1971, when the number of daily newspapers rose to 704. In 1971, all the top four dailies were Indian language dailies. The circulation of language dailies nearly doubled between 1960 and 1971. In 1989, the number of Hindi newspapers was nearly double to that of English newspapers.

The rapid growth of language press in India was a direct outcome of increase in literacy, active participation of common people in politics and

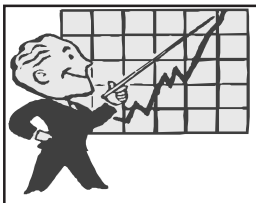
rise of economic condition of the people. Political information forms the major content of the language press. In a study, (Haque 1986) found that English dailies attached more importance to politics and government than development news or any other subject or category. Development news deal with reforms and improvement of quality of life; it includes news relating to physical growth, and progress or problems regarding subjects included in the development category. Various issues categorized under development are: health, education, literacy, communication (transportation), agriculture, industry, housing, population training, national integration, energy and ecology.

The Vernacular Press can help in improving reader's awareness and promote their participation in the development process. Being in the regional language, the content can reflect the needs and aspirations of the local people and provide a forum to articulate the urges of the common man by taking up local issues and catering to the immediate requirements of the people. It has the potentiality of giving greater importance to the problems of the masses; unemployment, scarcity of agricultural inputs, the law and order situation etc. The columns of vernacular newspapers, through "Letters - to - the - Editor", reports and even features, highlight the various problems and issues which touch the everyday life of the common man. The vernacular press is best suited to act as the second level of conversion of scientific knowledge into information in a usable form for the benefit of the common men.

In 1818, the first regional language newspaper Samachar Darpan was published in Bengali. The Bombay Samachar started in 1822, remains to this day the oldest newspaper in Asia. In the pre independence era, newspapers had one agenda in their minds – to further their ideology. Bal Ganghadar Tilak is a prominent stalwart of the pre-independence era and a revolutionary leader who used his newspaper as a vehicle of communicating his ideas and ideals of the freedom struggle. Kesari, which was established in 1880, was published in Marathi. Prior to 1947, the newspaper industry had only one goal – to proliferate the cause of Independence. The potential of the Hindi press and of other regional-language newspapers had been

underestimated for decades and the same holds true with regard to advertising in regional languages.

Besides the sweeping breakthrough of advertising in regional languages, the two decisive factors for this tremendous and steady growth in circulation and readership figures over the last thirty years clearly lie in the regionalization and localization of newspaper offices and of newspaper content, which also practically did not exist until the beginning of the 1980s. It was only when market research began to expand all over the country in the late 1970s that the Indian-language press was able to acknowledge and realize its huge growth potential. Especially the results of the second National Readership Survey (NRS) in 1978 can be regarded as a real breakthrough in this context. This development also led to speculations about the potential readership in less urbanized or rural regions. This has led to debate about the question if "regional is really the new national" (Gupta 2013) and the need for newspapers to focus much more on the small towns and rural regions and try to build and engage local reader communities.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define Language Newspapers.

Q.2: What are the reasons for rapid growth of language press?

5.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY LANGUAGE PRESS

Big business has been capturing the press and treating it as a commercial proposition. The huge cost of production and dependence on advertisements has made a large section of the press an appendage to capitalism and hegemony. In India there is the 'rich press' and the 'poor

press'. The poor press, largely in the smaller towns, makes do with poor resources – low investment, inadequate management, rickety machines, ageing type, and untrained correspondents. Its lack of capital makes it vulnerable to advertisers and politicians. Financial constrains in many of the language press acts as a brake on India's media development. Some theorist consider postcolonial continuity i.e. government bias against Indian-language newspapers as another barrier.

Until the gradual replacement of government advertising by corporate advertising in the course of the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1980s and early 1990s, successive Indian governments used their advertising monopoly to influence the press for their interests. During the first decades following Independence the press and the state became interdependent. The danger resulting from too much interference by the state or from pre-emptive self censorship by the press was often pointed out. Many observers were also critical of the fact that the English-language press received by far the largest amount of government advertising budgets, while non-English (Indian- or regional-language) newspapers were clearly disadvantaged. As Jeffrey argues, the unequal treatment was partly based on the central government's assumption that the non-English language press was 'less national' and 'less modern' and exhibited more 'communalist tendencies' than the English-language press - an attitude remarkably similar to the stance the British colonial administration had taken vis-à-vis the so called "vernacular" press (Jeffrey 2003: 6-10; Naregal 2001: 1-17).

Though growth of language newspapers is a welcome sign there are also some areas of concern. This is because intense and fierce competition often results in unhealthy practices. One such practice is predatory price wars. One Newspaper reduces the price resulting in an increase of its circulation. But this will soon be retaliated by further price cut by rival papers. The readers benefit by reduced prices, but small and medium newspapers suffer because they cannot afford to have price cuts to increase circulation.

Excessive dependence on advertisement revenue is also not good for newspapers. Government advertisements account for more than 50

per cent of all advertisements in Indian papers. This monetary incentive makes newspapers to limit criticism of the government policies. Cut-throat competition is also a threat to journalistic norms and values. There are instances of media excesses and media trials, fake sting operations, criminal trespassing of privacy, glamorization of criminals, promotion of hatred among communities and inflaming of raw emotions. Media houses also resort to mudslinging through advertisements to show that their publication is superior and the products of rivals are inferior. All these unhealthy practices along with lack of good financial background and good marketing strategy also effect the normal functioning of language press.

5.5 A STUDY ON SOME OF THE GROWTH OF IMPORTANT LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS OF INDIA

Four language press Malayalam, Bengali, Hindi and Marathi showed the fastest growth between 1998 and 2000; whereas newspapers in Telugu, Urdu, Tamil, Oriya and Kannada showed stagnation or decline during the same period. Malayala Manorama, a language daily in Malayalam, which was started in 1890, became the largest circulated daily in India by 1980s. Malayala Manorama continued to remain in that position for more than a decade. Ananda Bazar Patrika in Bengal continued as the largest circulated newspaper published from one centre, Kolkata. But when the Hindi newspapers started expanding in a big way, they surpassed all other language papers in circulation. Today Dainik Jagaran and Dainik Bhaskar are the two largest circulated dailies with a readership of more than 20 million. Most language newspapers have shown remarkable recoveries in circulation in the late 1990s. The National Readership Survey of 2006 revealed that newspaper readership in rural areas has grown so fast that it paralleled the readership in urban areas.

The language press is identified on regional or local basis, having readers who are both literate and semi-literate. It appeals to a particular language audience. English press is mainly confined in urban areas and cities. In small towns it might reach the growth centers along with major

road sides. The language press is accessible only to a small majority of population based on common linguistic and cultural background of a particular region. The language press in India is regional in character. No language press claims its national character in the sense as some English newspapers claim. But, in the real sense no English newspaper in India also shows national character as it is understood to exist in the western and communist countries. The English press had faster growth compared to language press during pre-independence period. After Independence, the situation changed as the language press found a better environment for its growth in professionalism and leadership.

By 1941, India had about 4,000 newspapers and magazines in 17 languages. In its report, the first Press Commission said that at the end of 1952, there were 330 daily newspapers, 1,189 weeklies and 1,733 newspapers of other periodicity in India. Except for some lean years, the number of newspapers has gone up on an average by 5 per cent every year. At the end of 1998, there were 43,828 newspapers as against 41,705 in 1997. Of these, there were 4,890 dailies, 331 tri-and biweeklies, 15,645 weeklies, 12,965 monthlies, 5,913 fortnightlies, 3,127 quarterlies, 383 annuals and 1,474 publications with other periodicities. The number rose to 51,960 that included dailies and publications of all the periodicities, in 2001. As on 31st March 2006, there were 62,483 registered newspapers with all periodicities on record of Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), as against 60,413 at the end of March 2005.

As per INS (Indian Newspapers Society) the Print landscape is dominated by regional newspapers which target a population of approximately 0.98 billion. Of the more than 62,000 newspapers printed, around 92 percent are published in Hindi and other vernacular languages. English newspapers focus primarily on the metro cities with a population of approximately 0.5 billion. As a result, regional language newspapers also dominate the readership statistics with only one English newspaper (The Times of India) in the top 20 newspapers and none in the top 10 newspapers (IRS, 2009 R2). A comparison of the readership of top 5 publications in various major Indian languages indicates that Hindi newspapers (159 million

readers) have significantly high readership as compared to English newspapers (31 million readers). Further, even some of the vernacular language papers with largely state specific readers such as Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Marathi have a higher readership than English newspapers. Industry participants agree that regionalization will gain prominence in the years ahead as a key growth driver. One indicator to track this trend would be to track the revenue contributions from Vernacular, Hindi and English languages in the coming years.

Localization of news through special editions has plenty of growth opportunities. In terms of revenues, English continues to garner the lion's share of revenues accounting for 40 percent of total revenues. English market scope is primarily restricted to urban pockets and hence sees its consumer base limited in comparison to the regional language markets. Times of India, HT Media and The Hindu dominate the English landscape. Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran and Hindustan have dominated the Hindi market. The Hindi market can further be sub classified into Hindi heartland pockets and urban/semi-urban areas as the extent of market penetration and competitive intensity varies across the states within the Hindi segment. Over the years, there has been a gradual increase in the market share of vernacular newspapers. The combined share of Hindi and vernacular dailies has risen from 53 percent in 2008 to 61 percent in 2012. The industry expects this trend to continue largely due to volume growth driven by the launch of new local editions and gradual improvement in advertisement rates of these markets.

While the English print commands higher 'cost-per-thousand' (CPT) compared to regional print, metro markets are challenging in terms of advertising and circulation, leading to lower growth for the English language dailies. The English segment grew by 3.6 percent versus industry growth of 7.3 percent and Hindi and vernacular grew at 9.8 percent. Vernacular dailies continued to enjoy volume growth with their share increasing from 37 percent in 2011 to 39 percent in 2012. In 2012 the growth in advertising over the previous year was largely driven by volume. Localization of news through special editions has plenty of growth opportunities. Localized and

targeted advertising is difficult to achieve in nationwide broadcast media, giving print an edge with respect to local businesses such as restaurants, malls, retail shops and neighborhood services. Supplements continue to be launched; the industry believes that launching supplements in existing markets helps them penetrate further by gaining access to new readers and expanding the advertiser base. A few examples of the supplements launched during 2012 include Habitat, Watches Luxury and Beyond and Weekend Life by Hindu, Ebela, Ananda Plus and Bishoy Ashay by Ananda Bazar Partika and Yuva by Hindustan Times. Further, Dainik Bhaskar (Bhopal) brought together ten real estate developers of

Bhopal who are developing 'New Bhopal Area' near the International Airport and launched 'Gatefold' a special feature which was distributed in Bhopal.

Hindi and vernacular papers now contribute approximately 62 percent of industry's revenues and cater to 89 percent of the readership. Together, the Hindi and Vernacular markets are expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.9 percent over the period 2012-2017, outpacing the English language market's growth of 4.8 percent. By 2012, regional players increased their foothold in key markets and also the national players in regional markets. Dainik Bhaskar increased its penetration in Maharashtra with its Marathi daily 'Divya Marathi' while Bennett Coleman & Co. (BCCL) entered the Bengali market by launching a Bengali daily, 'Ei shomoy'. The newspaper ('Eishomoy') is placed to compete against Ananda Bazar Patrika, which has for many decades now been eastern India's most widely circulated daily. The 'Hindu' has also shared their interest to launch a Tamil daily in 2013. Various national as well as regional players have expanded their reach by means of launching newer editions in local languages or sub-editions by adding printing centers in the local areas. Some examples include The Hindu launching a Tamil edition; Times of India launching a Gujarati edition NavGujarat Samay and Dainik Bhaskar's entry into Patna. DB Corp has also consolidated its presence in MP with the launch of a 4th edition. HT Media also has separate editions for Gurgaon and Noida.

The rise in literacy rates, significant population growth, high aspiration, resilience of the agrarian economy, increasing demand for region-specific content, and expansion by players into new geographies and languages could drive future expansion of regional newspapers' circulation and readership across India. Existing Hindi and vernacular players are expanding by either launching editions in new geographies or by launching sub-editions at a place, where an existing edition is already available for e.g. it is in recognition of the power of Hindi that both BCCL and HT Media have thrown their clout behind Navbharat Times and Hindustan respectively. Navbharat Times re-launched its Lucknow edition after closing it in 1985. Hindustan Media Ventures Ltd. (HMVL) Hindi daily, Hindustan, is also planning to start more editions in its core markets of Uttarakhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, from the point of view of advertisers, the cost of reaching the audience is much lower compared to national media like television mostly due to lower advertising rates.

Indian economy is basically a rural economy. More than 60 per cent of our population lives in the rural areas. According to a survey by National Sample Survey Organization, more than 16 crore households live in the rural areas. A paradigm shift has been visible in the rural population over the past 50 or 60 years. Indian farmers have become one of the most influential consumer groups in society now. Their income levels have increased and along with that, tastes and preferences have also shown changes. This advancement of the rural mass has resulted in the growth of language newspapers. A marked change in the coverage of local news by newspapers is another reason for the growth of language newspapers. Earlier national and international news dominated the Indian press. But the experiment by some newspapers, especially in the southern states, of covering local news with prominence gave a big boost to their circulation.

Newspapers from other parts of the country soon copied this. Newspapers started covering issues that were concerned with the ordinary people. The rural people found that there is a medium to express their grievances and aspirations. Starting of multiple editions was another factor that resulted in the growth of the language press. Earlier newspapers were

confined to state capital cities only. But as more and more potential readers emerged from other areas, newspaper owners started editions from even district centers. Thus multiple editions of newspapers were brought out the boom in advertising also helped in the growth of the language press. The rural mass turned out to be the biggest market for any product. For attracting them, advertisers were forced to give advertisements in local papers. This in turn resulted in an increase of revenue for the language press.

5.6 PRESENT STATUS OF CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS

The First Press Commission noted that in 1953 the circulation of dailies per 1000 copies in the population was 5.4 against the backdrop of an all-India literacy level of 16.4 per cent. From such a low base, India's daily newspaper circulation climbed slowly to 3.15 million in 1957 and 5.11 million in 1962.3 In India, the total circulation of all the newspapers in 1998 was 1268, 49, 500 copies. An idea of the acceleration in the growth of circulation had from the fact that while circulation increased by 50 per cent between 1987-96, it went up by 42 per cent in just two years between 1996 and 1998 and in the recent decade the trend of circulation is showing positive increasing trend in Asian countries like China and India. The total circulation of newspapers increased from 15, 67, 19,209 copies in 2004-05 to 18, 07, 38,611 copies in 2005-06.

As per the annual statements received at the RNI office during 2005-06, the number of dailies being published in the country was 2130. Their claimed circulation figure was 8,88,63,048 copies, 12.93% higher than that of the previous year. The 2007 annual report presented by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) on the Indian Entertainment and Media Industry (E&M), titled A Growth Story Unfolds, projects that the print media will grow at a 13 per cent compound annual growth rate, from the size of Rs. 85 billion to Rs. 232 billion in 2011.

The 2010 Indian Readership Survey findings show that the largest read local language newspapers to be Dainik Jagran (with 16.0 million readers) and Dainik Bhaskar (with 13.5 million readers), both published in

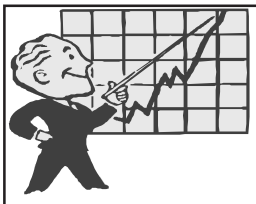
Hindi. The Times of India is the most widely read English language newspaper (7.3 million), followed by Hindustan Times (3.5 million), The Hindu (2.1 million) all published in English. The New Indian Express is another widely-read English language newspaper (1.8 million). Malayala Manorama newspaper which is published in Malayalam from Kerala currently has a readership of over 9.9 million (with a circulation base of over 1.8 million copies) has the most circulation in regional languages. In the year 2011 According to the information given by the minister of State for Information and Broadcasting ', there are more than 74,000 registered newspapers with the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) and Uttar Pradesh is leading with 11,789 registered newspapers and it is followed by Delhi with 10,066 and Maharashtra with 9,127 registered newspapers.

In 2011, 94 percent of total print revenues were contributed by the newspaper publishing sector up from 92 percent in 2007. The newspaper industry is estimated to be worth INR 197 billion while magazine industry is estimated to be INR 13 billion. Together, the Hindi and Vernacular markets are expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.9 percent over the period 2011-16, outpacing the English language market's growth of 6.3 percent. The pan India reach of regional newspapers is 173.80 million compared to only 22.21 million in case of English newspapers. At present, English enjoys an advertising premium over vernacular languages; however, experts feel that the there is a potential for the Hindi and Vernacular dailies to increase their rates. In 2012, the INR 224 billion Indian print industry grew by only 7.3 percent from INR 209 billion in 2011. The high dependence on advertisement revenues resulted in the growth of print industry being dampened by poor macro-economic performance of the country. In 2012-13, the Indian economy slowed down its growth momentum registering a growth of only 5 percent as compared to 6.2 percent in 2011-12.

While the market for English dailies continues to be tough, the regional and vernacular markets continue to grow on the back of rising literacy and low print media penetration as well as the continued tide of advertisers wanting to spend in these markets. The growth of the overall print industry was, hence, largely driven by Hindi and the vernacular print

markets. The Hindi print market grew by 9.8 percent from INR 62 billion in 2011 to INR 68 billion in 2012 and vernacular from INR 63 billion 2011 to INR 69 billion in 2012 respectively. The government is also trying to bridge the media gap by encouraging more newspapers to come up in the Northeastern states, the information and broadcasting ministry said in a separate statement. The ministry has relaxed norms for empanelling newspapers published in the Northeastern states and the border areas. This apart, Rs.87.95 corers was allocated during fiscal 2009-10 for the North East Special Package.

As per latest estimates of the Press in India report, the number of dailies published in India stood at 6730 in 2013-14 against 5767 during 2012-13. In 2013-14, the annual growth in circulation stood at 17.81%.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: In what way can Language Press help in development?

_____

_____

Q.4: Name some of the early language press which showed its growth.

_____

_____

Q.5: Name some of the supplements launched by some newspapers which helped in reaching niche readers.

_____

_____



5.7 LET US SUM UP

- Language newspapers or regional newspapers are newspapers published in different languages spoken in the country

- India has the world's largest newspaper market after China.
- At the time of Independence, there were about 3,000 newspapers and periodicals, which included 300 major English and language dailies.
- The Indian Rural Press Association defines a rural paper as one which devotes at least 40 per cent of its editorial space to agriculture, community development, co-operation, horticulture, Panchayati Raj and the like. Rural Press may be conceived as that which highlights rural problems in preference to urban ones. Ideally, it should be the rural educator, entertainer, informer and motivator; it should help in acquiring new attitudes, outlook and skills.
- The Press in India is said to be of two different kinds, the English press and the language press. English press is identified with the elite and educated readers whose intellectual interest is supposed to cover a wide canvas. The language press is identified on regional or local basis, having readers who are both literate and semi-literate. It appeals to a particular language audience
- Times of India, HT Media and The Hindu dominate the English landscape. Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran and Hindustan have dominated the Hindi market.
- Dainik Bhaskar increased its penetration in Maharashtra with its Marathi daily 'Divya Marathi' while Bennett Coleman & Co. (BCCL) entered the Bengali market by launching a Bengali daily, 'Ei shomoy'. The newspaper ('Eishomoy') is placed to compete against Ananda Bazar Patrika, which has for many decades now been eastern India's most widely circulated daily. The 'Hindu' has also shared their interest to launch a Tamil daily in 2013
- Given the size and diversity of the Indian market, media owners and advertisers are increasingly adding a regional element to their strategies. As a result, regional markets have grown in size and importance.
- The rise in literacy rates, significant population growth, high aspiration, resilience of the agrarian economy, increasing demand for region-

specific content, and expansion by players into new geographies and languages could drive future expansion of regional newspapers' circulation and readership across India.



5.8 FURTHER READING

1. Sharma, K. C. (2007) Journalism in India: History, Growth, Development; New Delhi: Regal Publications
2. Ravindranath, P.K. (2005). Indian Regional Journalism; New Delhi: Authors Press.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1: Language newspapers or regional newspapers are newspapers published in different languages spoken in the country. The Language Press has come in a big way in popularizing the beneficial effects of various development projects launched at local, provincial and national levels.

Ans to Q.No 2 : The rapid growth of language press in India was a direct outcome of increase in literacy, active participation of common people in politics and rise of economic condition of the people. The sweeping breakthrough of advertising in regional languages, the two decisive factors for this tremendous and steady growth in circulation and readership figures over the last thirty years clearly lie in the regionalization and localization of newspaper offices and of newspaper content.

Ans to Q.No 3: The Vernacular Press can help in improving reader's awareness and promote their participation in the development process. Being in the regional language, the content can reflect the needs and aspirations of the local people and provide a forum to articulate the urges of the common man by taking up local issues and catering to the immediate requirements of the people. It has the potentiality of

giving greater importance to the problems of the masses; unemployment, scarcity of agricultural inputs, the law and order situation etc. The columns of vernacular newspapers, through "Letters - to - the - Editor", reports and even features, highlight the various problems and issues which touch the everyday life of the common man. The vernacular press is best suited to act as the second level of conversion of scientific knowledge into information in a usable form for the benefit of the common men.

Ans to Q No 4: Four language press Malayalam, Bengali, Hindi and Marathi showed the fastest growth between 1998 and 2000. Malayala Manorama, a language daily in Malayalam, which was started in 1890, became the largest circulated daily in India by 1980s. Malayala Manorama continued to remain in that position for more than a decade. Ananda Bazar Patrika in Bengal continued as the largest circulated newspaper published from one centre, Kolkata. Today Dainik Jagaran and Dainik Bhaskar are the two largest circulated dailies with a readership of more than 20 million.

Ans to Q.No 5: A few examples of the supplements launched during 2012 include Habitat, Watches Luxury and Beyond and Weekend Life by Hindu, Ebela, Ananda Plus and Bishoy Ashay by Ananda Bazar Partika and Yuva by Hindustan Times. Further, Dainik Bhaskar (Bhopal) brought together ten real estate developers of Bhopal who are developing 'New Bhopal Area' near the International Airport and launched 'Gatefold' a special feature which was distributed in Bhopal.



5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: State the Vernacular Press Act of 1878.

Q.2: Name the oldest existing newspaper in our country.

Q.3: Why do language newspapers in India have an advantage over English newspapers?

Q.4: What is 'cost-per-thousand' (CPT)?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Explain some of the problems faced by Language Press.

Q.2: How can localized and targeted advertising be achieved through Language press?

Q.3: What were the findings of the First Press Commission?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Write a short essay on the growth of some of the important language press.

Q.2: Write a report on the current status of circulation of newspapers.

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UNIT 6 : A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE IMPORTANT PRESS ORGANISATIONS IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Brief overview of some of the important press organizations in India

- 6.3.1 Press Council of India
- 6.3 2 The Registrar of Newspapers for India
- 6.3.3 Audit Bureau of Circulations
- 6.3.4 Indian Newspaper Society
- 6.3.5 Indian Federation of Working Journalists
- 6.3.6 Press Institute of India
- 6.3.7 Editor's Guild of India
- 6.3.8 Indian Languages Newspapers' Association

6.4 Let us Sum up

6.5 Further Reading

6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.7 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to –

- discuss the different press organizations of the country
- analyse the objectives and functions of the different press organisations

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have learned about the role of the language press in the field of national development. In this unit, you will learn about some of the important press organizations in India with their respective

functions. After analyzing the present unit, you will be able to get an idea on how the press organizations functions in the society .

6.3 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE IMPORTANT PRESS ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA

There are a number of press organizations in the country which caters to the needs and functions of the different press organizations. Let us look at some of the important organizations as given below-

6.3.1 The Press Council of India:

Press is said to be the 'fourth estate' of democracy. Being a democratic country, our country India enjoys a free Press. Though it was not specifically mention about freedom of press in India in our Constitution, citizen of India is guaranteed the right to freedom of speech and expression by the Constitution in the Article 19 (1) (a) and freedom of press is implied from that article. However, this right is not absolute. Article 19 (2) adds the provision that this freedom can be subjected to "reasonable restrictions… in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence". In a democratic society, therefore, the press needs to be free as well as responsible. The Press can perform the function as the watchdog of our society effectively only when freedom of expression is ensured by securing the press from fettering and hindering by any authority, organized bodies or individuals. But this sense of press freedom is legitimate only when it is exercised with the sense of responsibility and therefore the Press need to follow the accepted norms of journalistic ethics and maintain high standards of professional conduct. In this context, a mechanism to check and control the breach in norms and tainting of freedom by unprofessional conduct is required. A need for such mechanism which can empower the press to regulate itself has given the birth of the Press

Council. Press Council is a mechanism where the peers of the profession with constant assistance from a few discerning laymen to regulate the Press through a properly structured, representative, and impartial way.

It was in Sweden where the first press council was set up in 1916 and named as the Court of Honour for the Press in Sweden. The concept of press council first gained acceptance in the Scandinavian countries and gradually spread to the other parts of the world and today, the Press Councils or similar other media bodies are in place in more than four dozen nations.

On 23rd September, 1952, the Government of India appointed a Press Commission to enquire into the state of the press and to indicate the lines of its development in the future. The First Press Commission in its report in 1954 revealed instances of yellow journalism, scurrilous writing, often directed against communities or groups, sectionalism, bias in presentation of news and lack of responsibility in comment, indecency and vulgarity and personal attracts on individuals in some sections of the press. The commission was of the opinion that the existing law relating to press was not adequate enough to check "a large quantum of objectionable journalism" and "the best way of maintaining professional standards of journalism would be to bring into existence a body of people principally connected with the industry whose responsibility would be to arbitrate on doubtful points and to censure any one found guilty of infraction of the code of journalism ethics" (Govt. of India, 1954).

The Commission recommended for setting up of a statutory Press Council to take care of the issues like preserving the freedom, editorial independence, objectivity of news presentation and fairness of comments etc. on the part of newspapers. In the same manner, the council was also to look out for protecting the press from any external pressure; regulate its conduct matters related to objectionable writings and overall improvement of the standard of press in India. In this way, the recommendations of First Press

Commission (1952-1954) has paved away for the setting up of the first Press Council of India in 4th July, 1966 by the parliament under the Press Council Act 1965, with Justice J.R. Mudholkar as the chairman.

During Internal Emergency (1975-1977) the First Press Council was abolished w.e.f. 1st January1976 on the ground that the council was not able to carry on its functions effectively to achieve the objectives for it was established. However, under the recommendations of the Second Press Commission of India (1978) a fresh legislation the Press Council Act 1978 was enacted which provided for the establishment of the Council in 1978.

The body of the Press Council consists of a Chairman and 28 other members .The chair person is the head of the Press Council and he/she is nominated by a committee consisting of a Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Speaker of Lok Sabha and one elected representative of Council members. The Chairman is usually a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India. The current Chairman of the Press Council is Justice Chandramauli Kumar Prasad.

The Press Council of India is an autonomous, statutory, quasi-judicial body which acts as a watchdog of the press. Being an important body that sustains democracy as it has supreme power in regard to the media to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained. However, it has the power to hold hearings on receipt of complaints or grievances against any print media organization / institution and to take suitable action where necessary. The actions taken by the Press Council may not be questioned unless it is proved to be in violation of the Constitution.

Out of total 28 members, 13 represent the working journalists (of whom 6 editors of newspapers and 7 are to be working journalists other than editors), 6 persons from management, big, medium and small newspapers who own or carry on the business of management of newspapers, one is to be from news agencies, 3 are to be persons having special knowledge or practical experience

in respect of education and science, law and literature and culture. The remaining five are to be Members of Parliament: 3 from Lok Sabha, and 2 from Rajya Sabha. The Chairman and members were to serve the office for a period of three years.

The main objectives of the Council are:

- to safeguard the freedom of the press,
- to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and the news agencies.
- to ensure on the part of the Press the maintenance of high standards of public taste and to foster due sense of both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and
- to encourage the growth of sense of responsibility and public service among all those engaged in the profession of journalism.

According to the Press Council Act, anybody can lodge complain to the Council against a newspaper or journalist where the complaints has "reasons to believe that a newspaper has offended against the standards of journalistic ethics or public taste or that an editor or a working journalist has committed any professional misconduct or a breach of journalistic ethics". Even the council has the power to take *sumoto* action against a newspaper. The powers of the council can be exercisable throughout India. The Council can summon and enforce the persons to attend and examine. The acts also recognize immunity of a journalist from disclosing his source of information. According to eminent journalist M.V. Kamath, the Press council is not court of law rather it is "a court of honour" and therefore its verdicts are not judicial pronouncements. The first chairman of the council, Justice Mudholkar said that moral authority is the only weapon in the armoury of the commission and the sole strength of the council lies in the appeal to conscience.

6.3.2 The Registrar of Newspapers for India

The Office of the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) came into existence on 1 July 1956, on the recommendation of the

First Press Commission in 1953. It is a statutory office under Section 19A of the Press & Registration of Books Act, 1867. It is headquartered in New Delhi, and has three regional offices at Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai to cater to the needs of publishers in all corners of the country. The registrar is designated as Press Registrar, and S. M. Khan is the current Press Register in India. The Press Registrar is assisted by a Deputy Press Registrar and four Assistant Press Registrars one each at the headquarters and the regional offices. There is also a Senior Circulation Officer and five Circulation officers, two at headquarters and one each in the regional offices to assist the Press Registrar in assessing the circulation claims of newspapers.

The Registrar of Newspapers for India, commonly known as the 'Press Registrar', is required, inter alia to submit an annual report to the Government of India on the status of newspapers in India. These reports are titled as 'Press in India' which contains valuable information and statistics related to the press with particular reference to the emerging trends in circulation, ownership units etc. The duties and functions of the RNI can be classified into two broad categories: (i) statutory, and (ii) non-statutory.

Under statutory functions, RNI performs the following duties:

- The RNI is central government body which looks after the compilation and maintenance of a register of newspapers containing particulars of all the newspapers and other periodicals published in the country. It issues 'certificate of registration' to the newspapers and maintains the particular rating to them in a register. The RNI ensures that newspapers are published in accordance with the provisions of PRB Act 1867 and the rules made there under.
- It oversees the allocation of titles and informs the District Magistrates about the availability of proposed titles for intending publishers to intending publishers for filing

declaration. It is a duty of the Press register to prepare and submit the annual report to the Government every year.

- It can scrutinize and analyse the annual statements sent by the publishers of newspapers every year containing information on circulation, ownership, etc. Frequently checking whether the registered newspapers are publishing regularly or not, and also whether the circulation figures claimed by the newspapers are credible or not, are important duties carried out by the RNI.

Under the head of non-statutory functions the RNI formulates newsprint allocation policy of the registered newspapers by issuing 'eligibility certificate' to the newspapers to enable them to import newsprint and to procure indigenous newsprint. The NRI also can assess and certify the essential need and requirement of newspaper establishments to import printing and composing machinery and allied materials.

6.3.3 Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC)

Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) was founded in India in 1948. It is a not-for-profit, independent, self-financing, private organization that operates in different parts of the world. The foremost responsibility of this organization is to conduct regular audits of the circulations of major periodicals including newspapers and magazines in India and issuing certificates about circulation figures. It has very high reputation for reliability and impartiality, and is therefore quoted with authority.

Before initiation of the ABC there was not any reliable organization for conducting circulation audit of the newspapers. Therefore the publishers had no means to verify the actual circulation number of publications that they used for advertising. They more or less had to depend on their own judgment. Some newspaper and magazine publishers even inflated the number of readers for their publications in order to collect more and more advertising revenue

from the advertisers. It was difficult on the part of publisher to convince the potential advertiser of the relative values of their publication for the purpose of advertising. On the other hand, advertisers seek reliable facts and figures about how many people buy a publication and in which area before investing his money in advertising. Therefore the representatives from the advertising profession as well as publishers, came together to establish the Audit Bureau of Circulation which started to serve the common interest of both the parties- the publishers and the advertisers. It is an urban oriented organization which covers most of the major towns in India.

The benefit of ABC certificates of circulation have been availed by advertisers, advertising agencies, publishers and organisations connected with print media advertising. ABC conduct regular audit of the 'net circulation' of member publications, issues certificates of Net Paid circulation every six months and disseminate the data for the use of space buyers enabling the publisher to earn advertisement revenues. ABC also publishes data on territorial distribution of copies in various states, major cities and small towns is included as an add on.

The main policy making body of the Bureau is the Council of Management which function as the Board of directors. Bureau's Council of Management consists of 8 elected representatives of publisher members, 4 elected representatives of advertising agency members and 4 elected representatives of advertiser members. Chairman is elected by the Council of Management every year. Presently 562 dailies, 107 weeklies and 50 magazines along with 125 advertising agencies, 45 advertisers and 22 news agencies and associations connected with print media and advertising are perusing the membership of ABC.

6.3.4 Indian Newspaper Society

The seeds of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) were sown in October 11, 1927 when a Society bearing the name 'The India,

Burma & Ceylon Newspapers' London Committee came into being, the name of which was later changed to Indian & Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS) on October 4, 1935. Based in London, this organization represented and acted solely under the authority of newspapers, magazines, reviews and other journals published in India, Burma, Ceylon and other countries of Asia.

In India, a need was felt for the establishment of a co-ordinating body which comprised of the proprietors of newspapers and which could deal directly and more expeditiously with the various day-to-day problems arising out of newspaper production. Thus, The Indian & Eastern Newspaper Society came into being . The Society was inaugurated at a meeting of the representatives of the following founding publications on February 27, 1939, at the Statesman House, New Delhi, with Mr. Arthur Moore, Editor of the Statesman in the Chair :

- The Bombay Chronicle
- The Times of India
- The Rangoon Gazette
- The Amrita Bazar Patrika
- The Hindustan Times
- The Hindustan Standard
- Advance
- The Pioneer
- The Leader
- The Tribune
- The Civil and Military Gazette
- The Hindu
- The Madras Mail
- The Statesman

At the meeting of the Society the following persons were elected as office bearers for the ensuing year :

1. Mr. Arthur Moore of the Statesman - President

2. Mr.Dev Das Gandhi of The Hindustan Times -Deputy President
3. Mr. Desmond Young of The Pioneer - Vice President
4. Mr. B. J. Kirchner of The Statesman - Honorary Secretary

The meeting also elected a Standing Committee consisting of five members. The membership of this Committee was increased to eleven at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting held on 12th February,1947. The number of members in the Committee (later named as Executive Committee) underwent changes with the passage of time and further increase in the number of members. As per the Memorandum & Articles of Association the general management and control of business, powers and policy of the Association today vests with the Executive Committee whose numbers shall not be less than 15 nor more than 50 consisting of :

- Office Bearers**(4)**
- Past Presidents**(not exceeding 10)**
- Members elected by the General Body**(31)**
- Co-opted members**(5)**

The Society also has a total of 14 Regional Committees including one committee catering to the interests of the north eastern region of India known as North East Regional Committee. In addition to the Regional Committees , the Society also has 12 sub-committees dealing with different subjects at the all India level like Advertising Committee, Newsprint Committee, Industrial Relations and Legal Affairs Committee, Press Freedom Committee, Vision Committee etc.

The Society was registered under the Companies Act 1913 on 12th October, 1951. With the separation of Burma and Ceylon, after independence, the title of the Society necessitated a change and with the acceptance of the Registrar of Companies (accorded on 25.1.1988), the word 'Eastern' was deleted and the Society acquired its present name, i.e. The Indian Newspaper Society (INS).

The activities of the Society, development of its Corporate structure, interface with various organizations, governmental and

non-governmental, etc. are briefly brought out in the ensuing paragraphs:

The Society consist of a President, Deputy President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and also a Committee of five. The President has been entrusted with the responsibility of running the Secretariat, Secretary in charge of all records and the Treasurer shall be responsible for all the funds of the Society.

In other words, the INS is concerned with the business aspects of newspaper industry. It gives accreditation to advertising agencies which can place advertisements with members' publications and become entitled to credit and other facilities. The Society also publishes a monthly journal called 'Indian Press'. It maintains close liaison with the government's departments and advertising agencies and safeguards members' interests. INS also has international associations with London Society, World Association of Newspapers and Commonwealth Press Union.

6.3.5 Indian Federation of Working Journalists

Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) was founded in New Delhi on 28th October, 1950.

Independent India's first trade union of media persons, the IFWJ has now over 30,000 primary and associate members, working for electronic media, news agencies and 1,260 journals of 17 languages in the country. Overseas Indians, employed in other continents, are among its primary members. The IFWJ's fraternal organisations in the media world are the National Federation of Newspaper Employees (N.F.N.E., Kolkata) and the National Confederation of Newspaper and News Agencies' Employees Organizations (Mumbai).

Since it is the only professional body of working journalists, the IFWJ's regional and territorial units have set up press clubs, press akademies, reference libraries, training institutes and study circles. They publish professional journals and engage in activities

like media researches, trade union struggles, human right campaigns, environmental protection and anti-war movements.

The IFWJ is actively involved in the worldwide journalist movement. It has bilateral relations with over 47 national unions of the world. IFWJ members take part in the activities of International Labour Organization (I.L.O., Geneva) and the UNESCO's International Programme for Development of Communication (I.P.D.C., Paris). It is affiliated to the Confederation of Asian Journalist Unions, Colombo.

The IFWJ is headed by its president, elected in a nationwide direct voting by thousands of its primary members every three years. The President is assisted by a Working Committee which has a Secretary-General, four vice-presidents, six secretaries, a treasurer and 17 members of executive, chosen at the trivial plenary session by hundreds of its National Council members by a system of single transferable vote.

Presently the IFWJ has, as its 12th President, K. Vikram Rao, formerly of the Times of India, who started his three-year term in 2013.

6.3.6 Press Institute of India

The Press Institute of India (PII) ,an independent non-profit organization was established in 1963 to create and sustain high and responsible standards of journalism. The training workshops that are undertaken for journalists mainly focuses on a wide range of issues – from development journalism, women empowerment and child rights to national security, foreign policy and the art of writing, reporting and editing. Today, PII's training workshops for journalists, conducted in-house or elsewhere, have a strong focus on rural reporting, development journalism and writing on women's empowerment, the fight against child labour, the fight for child rights, etc. These workshops are conducted to equip the journalists with better reporting and writing skills and to empower them better.

In a way it encourages coverage of vital issues affecting the lives of the majority of our people, which mainstream media is really not in a position to cover substantially.

Over the years, PII has trained thousands of journalists from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other parts of Asia. PII was the nodal agency for sending reporters, subeditors and photographers for training to the Thomson Foundation, UK.

Training and other activities

PII has had long-standing collaborations with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ford Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, UNICEF, Press Foundation of Asia. There have been other notable collaborations – with the British Council, Thomson Foundation, Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Oxfam (GB), Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, International Council for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, and International Red Cross.

6.3.7 Editor's Guild of India

The Editor's Guild of India was established in 1977 at New Delhi for upholding the freedom of the Press and other form of mass media, striving for improvement of professional standards, safeguarding editorial independence and taking appropriate steps to implement and further these aims . According to the draft constitution which was discussed at the first national convention of the Guild held in Delhi from 18th to 19th March, 1978, the Guild is to be " forum of editors to meet, discuss and seek solutions to professional problems pertaining to freedom and independence of the mass media and their social responsibility, ethics and standards, media standards, access to information and the reader's right to know".

The Guild accepts membership on an individual basis. No particular institution can be admitted as a member. Membership is

open to functioning editors of 'bona fide general interest newspapers, news agencies and periodicals'. However, editors of house journals and trade magazines are not eligible for membership. A person who is not a functioning editor, but has functioned for a minimum of five years as editors of a newspaper, news agency or periodical can be admitted as an 'associate' member.

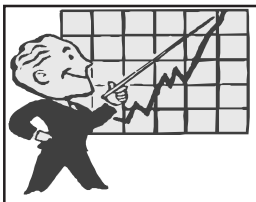
A Code of Practice for journalists was adopted by the General Body of Editors Guild of India at a meeting held in New Delhi on August 30, 2002 which was later revised in August, 2007 to incorporate certain changes. The Code highlights the role played by the Editor and the staff (including News Editor, Chief Sub Editor along with their colleagues on the Desk) of a media organization.

At present, the Guild has over 200 members from national, regional and local newspapers, magazines and electronic media.

6.3.8 Indian Languages Newspapers' Association

Indian Languages Newspapers' Association (ILNA) which was established at Bombay (now Mumbai) on 14th June, 1941 is an organization of newspapers and periodicals. The main objective of ILNA is to safeguard the business interests of mostly small papers and periodicals and guides them to improve their publications by better management and information. The association brings out a monthly, *Language Press Bulletin.*

Apart from the above mentioned, press organizations, there are also other associations and unions like National Union of Journalists, National Confederation of Newspaper and News Agency Employees and Newspapers Association of India.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What is known as the fourth estate of democracy?

Q.2: Why did the Press Commission recommend for setting up of a statutory Press Council in India?

Q.3: Where was the world's first Press Council set up and in which year?

Q.4: When was the first Press Council of India set up?

Q.5: The Press Council of India consists of how many members?

Q.6: When was the RNI established?

Q.7: What is the main responsibility of ABC?

Q.8: What is the main objective of ILNA?



6.4 LET US SUM UP

Let us summarise the unit by focusing on the following points-

- The Press can perform the function as the watchdog of our society effectively only when freedom of expression is ensured by securing the press from fettering and hindering by any authority, organized bodies or individuals.
- Press council is a mechanism where the peers of the profession with constant assistance from a few discerning laymen to regulate the Press through a properly structured, representative, and impartial way.
- In Sweden , the first press council was set up in 1916 and named as the Court of Honour for the Press in Sweden.
- During Internal emergency (1975-1977) the First Press Council was abolished w.e.f. 1st January1976 on the ground that the council was not able to carry on its functions effectively to achieve the objectives for it was established.
- The Office of the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) came into existence on 1 July 1956, on the recommendation of the First Press Commission in 1953. It is a statutory office under Section 19A of the Press & Registration of Books Act, 1867.
- Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) was founded in India in 1948. It is a not-for-profit, independent, self-financing, private organization that operates in different parts of the world.
- The seeds of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) were sown in October 11, 1927 when a Society bearing the name 'The India, Burma & Ceylon Newspapers' London Committee came into being, the name of which was later changed to Indian & Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS) on October 4, 1935.
- Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) was founded in New Delhi on 28th October, 1950.

- The Press Institute of India (PII) ,an independent non-profit organization was established in 1963 to create and sustain high and responsible standards of journalism.
- The Editor's Guild of India was established in 1977 at New Delhi for upholding the freedom of the Press and other form of mass media, striving for improvement of professional standards, safeguarding editorial independence and taking appropriate steps to implement and further these aims .
- Indian Languages Newspapers' Association (ILNA) which was established at Bombay (now Mumbai) on 14th June, 1941 is an organization of newspapers and periodicals.



6.5 FURTHER READING

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4. Government of India (1954), Report of the Press Commission
5. Website of The Press Council of India available at www. presscouncil.nic.in
6. Website of The Register of Newspapers for India (RNI) available at http://rni.nic.in/
7. Website of Audit Bureau of Circulations available at http:// www.auditbureau.org/

6.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1 : Press

Ans to Q.No 2 : The Commission recommended for setting up of a statutory Press Council to take care of the issues like preserving the freedom, editorial independence, objectivity of news presentation and fairness of comments etc. on the part of newspapers.

Ans to Q. No 3 : Sweden in 1916.

Ans to Q.No 4 : 4th July, 1966

Ans to Q.No 5 : The body of the Press Council of India consists of a Chairman and 28 other members .

Ans to Q.No 6 : The Office of the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) came into existence on 1st July, 1956

Ans to Q. No 7: The foremost responsibility of this organization is to conduct regular audits of the circulations of major periodicals including newspapers and magazines in India and issuing certificates about circulation figures.

Ans to Q. No 8 : The main objective of ILNA is to safeguard the business interests of mostly small papers and periodicals and guides them to improve their publications by better management and information.



6.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: Which is the main policy making body of the Audit Bureau of Circulation? The body consists of how many members?

Q.2: When was ILNA established? What is the main objective of ILNA?

Q.3: What is the sole motive for organizing training workshops by the Press Institute of India?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: What are the main objectives of the Press Council of India?

Q.2: Discuss the composition of the Press Council of India.

Q.3: Who can apply for membership to the Editor's Guild of India?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: What are the statutory and non-statutory functions of the RNI?

Q.2: Do you think the different press organizations have been able to properly look after the media scenario on the country? Justify your answer with examples.

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UNIT 7 : HISTORY OF PRINT MEDIA IN NORTH-EAST INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Birth of Orunodoi

- 7.3.1 More newspapers and journals
- 7.3.2 Few Other newsapapers and magazines of the pre-Independence era

7.4 Media scenario after Independence

- 7.4.1 The decade of the 1980s : A sudden upsurge
- 7.4.2 The present scenario
- 7.4.3 Causes of concern I
- 7.4.4 Causes of concern II

7.5 Let us Sum up

7.6 Further Reading

7.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.8 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Study of this unit shall enable you to understand —

- the history and evolution of print media in the North-Eastern Region (NER)
- the pioneering work in this regard which took place in Assam
- the far-reaching significant impact of the first Assamese newspaper Orunodoi
- state of the print media in the region before and after Independence

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Print media of the NER and specially that of Assam has a rich legacy of 170 years till now. It also has an invaluable contribution towards the

development of the society and the nation as a whole over the decades. This period has seen many ups and downs in the media in its struggle for survival. Today, we can say that it is at a steady status and we look forward for a meaningful journey for at least another century and continuing its valuable contribution.

Prior to 1826, more precisely the famous Yandaboo Treaty between the British and the Myanmarese aggressors, the erstwhile land of Assam – this entire territory was not privy to modern western education and civilization and thereby the concept of media.

Of course, a few hundred years before this major development, the great saint Sankardeva was highly successful in letting the indigenous people here a taste of a different kind of media. It was through his ankiya naat, borgeet, satriya naach, mask-making ideas for bhaona etc. These items contained a lot of inputs from various sources which included the culture of many of the ethnic communities within the region and also those from Varanasi, Puri even during those days –around the 15th century. This is why Sankardeva is also acknowledged as a 'great and successful mass communicator par excellence' even today.

It may be mentioned here that the administration of the region was taken over by the British following the Yandaboo Treaty of 1826. This had facilitated the Baptist Christian Missionaries to arrive at the scene for expanding their religious hold over a vast virgin territory with a huge scope for converting the people to their religion.

They were already exposed to the influences of the formal mass media. Thus they had a very good idea about the 'power of media' in reaching out and influencing people in a highly convenient manner compared to face-to-face contacts. Hence, they came out with the novel idea of launching a newspaper for the purpose and after a lot of preparations they succeeded in doing so. And this was a blessing in disguise for the region for opening up the vistas for a healthy evolution of the media here which is still going on in a steady manner.

7.3 BIRTH OF ORUNODOI

It was in March, 1836 that a team of the American Baptist mission led by Dr Nathan Brown, Oliver T Cutter arrived at Sadiya to set up a mission here on the invitation of the British administration in the state before moving on to Sivasagar.

And, in a matter of a decade, in January, 1846 – the first ever Assamese newspaper, a monthly – Orunodoi was published from the Sivasagar mission press. This was a publication that was a mixture of a newspaper and a magazine, yet did not possess all the characteristics of any of these two categories. But, it was an epoch-making landmark event as it had opened up the vistas for more media efforts in the future. While initially it was introduced as Orunodoir Sambadpatra, the term - paper was later replaced by 'magazine' from October, 1850. Starting with about eight pages in the early years it rose to around 16 pages later on with photographs from January, 1858.

Though this newspaper was basically published for spreading Christian religion among the people of Assam, it also declared its policy as devoted to religion, science and general intelligence and maintained a secular view to focus attention on socio-economic problems of the state.

In spite of the religious orientation, its significance for modern day mass media of Assam is invaluable as the pioneer of the system. Its own declaration was – 'The Orunodoi, A monthly paper, devoted to Religion, Science and General Intelligence, is printed and published at the Sibsagar Mission Press, by OT Cutter'.

Cutter was the first editor of the paper between 1846 to February, 1850 in addition to being the printer and publisher for a long time. He was succeeded by Nathan Brown and several others in between before finally Rev. AK Gurney took over as editor till the final days of the venture. Among the invaluable contributions of the paper included – various aspects of historical dimension about Assam, numismatics studies, economics and commerce, Anthropological studies, creating awareness about various superstitions, spread of education, introduction to the new age life, knowledge and intelligentsia etc.

According to Prof. Nagan Saikia, eminent litterateur and former President of Assam Sahitya Sabha (1998) the almost six decades' time between Orunodoi and Jonaki (1846 – 1903) is not only the age of birth of media in the state. It is also the age of a modernizing attitude, modern Assamese language and literature among others and its evolution and consummation to say the least.

Beginning with a lot of promise and offering invaluable service to the nation, the paper became irregular in publishing around 1880 and ceased publication in 1882. This was the end of an illustrious era of the first ever Assamese media venture though was the beginning of a long journey of mass media that is continuing with its legacy till date.

Not only in the field of media, it had immense contribution towards modern Assamese literature. "It is in the pages of Orunodoi the first florescence of modern Assam literature can be found. In both poetry and prose the magazine provided literary status and dignity to the spoken language of the people. In fact, the language thus evolved continues to be standard language of Assamese literature".

Orunodoi established the modern Assamese prose Hemchandra Baruah gave Assamese prose a stable form on the pages of Orunodoi. Thus Orunodoi helped Assamese prose to get a stable form. Orunodoi formed the base of modern Assamese literature.

7.3.1 More newspapers and journals

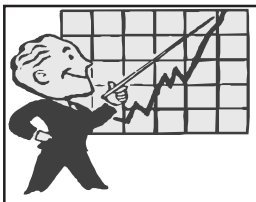
Orunodoi was followed by Assam Bilasini from 1871 to 1883 (first phase) from Auniati Satra of Majuli and again during 1913-24 as a weekly. It is important to mention here that during the second phase, it was edited and published by Krishna Kumar Bhattacharyya from Jorhat who was a government official. However, because of the paper's active support to freedom movement the government dismissed him from service without pension. Not only this, the paper had to be closed down finally because the published had faced a lot of harassment including a hefty penalty of Rs 2000.00 for running the paper which was a major blow to the publisher. It speaks enough

about the paper's contribution to the freedom struggle if the country. Helmed by Christian missionaries, Orunodoi periodically disseminated religious information. Faith apart, it contributed immensely to the development of Assamese language and literature.

The more prominent among the other media ventures were - Assam Darpan (1874, Tezpur), Assam Mihir(1872, Guwahati), Goalpara Hitashadhini(1876,Goalpara), Chndrodaya (1876, Nagaon), Assam Dipak(1876, Guwahati), Assam News(1885, Guwahati), Assam Bandhu(1885, Nagaon), and Mau(1886, Calcutta).

Then came one of the most important journals in Assamese literature – Jonaki (1889). It was a monthly published by the Calcutta (present day Kolkata)-based Assamese students. This is because this city used to be a hub of a considerable number of students from the state for higher studies because of lack of such facilities in Assam during those days. A formal organization named Axomia Bhaxa Unnati Xadhini Xabha was formed under whose patronage the magazine was published from January, 1889 with the able editor Chandra Kumar Agarwalla. The magazine sustained itself till 1903 with publication from Guwahati between 1901 and 1903 before being published from Kolkata for one decade since 1899. Though rather short lived, its contribution and legacy for the Assamese literature is invaluable to be precise.

"The development of Assamese language and literature was the primary aim of the organization. For these purposes the organization decided to publish a monthly journal to preserve the old Assamese literature, to translate different important books from Sanskrit and other languages to Assamese, to develop reading habit in all classes of people, to introduce pure grammar and orthography and to create one standard written language all through the areas of Assam", Rasaraj Lakshminath Bebaruah, Vol5, issue No.7, Jonaki.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. What is the importance of Orunodoi in the media scenario of Assam ?

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7.3. 2 Few Other newspapers and magazines of the pre-Independence era

Asomiya, a weekly was launched in 1918 which went on till 1958 – full four decades. This paper also carried on its active support to freedom struggle.

Other papers of this era included – Asam News (1882 – 85), Assam (1894-1901), Times of Assam, (weekly, 1815), Asam Bonti (1900), Weekly Chronicle (1900).

One significant event that happened during this period was with the paper Asomiya by Chandrakumar Agarwalla (1918). Following the implementation of the Press Act (1930), amongst the only nine newspapers out of about 150 across the country had to cease publication for not paying the penalty for supporting the freedom struggle. And Asomiya was one of them though it was revived within three months. Under the circumstances, publisher Chandra Kumar Agarwalla appealed to public for donations for running the paper and was successful in his efforts which is a unique example in the country itself.

Deka Asom under editorship of Ambikagiri Rai Chaudhury (1935) though could not be strictly put in the category of a newspaper as it was mainly a bulletin kind of publication. The paper which was published till 1967 not very regularly had facilitated creation of a strong sense of Assamese nationalistic feeling during its life.

Batori – a weekly was published by tea planter Shiva Prasad Baruah from Thengal, near Jorhat in 1930 and was converted to a

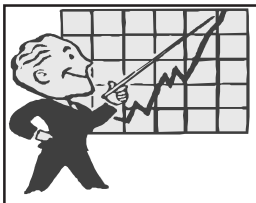
daily - Dainik Batori in 1935. According to Birendranath Bhattacharyya, noted litterateur, this paper had ushered the age of daily journalism in the state which had published news items even from Reuters and Associate Press at that time.

These efforts were supplemented by other publications such as - Asom Raiz, Asom Sevak, Swaraj, Tarun Asom, Panchayat, Janambhumi, Bihalangani.

We have already discussed about Jonaki which had a far-reaching contributions to Assamese literature and language. According to Maheswar Neog, this magazine had been able to create a genre of literature that was not parallel to anyone else and continued till the 1940s which is a great service to the society.

Prior to this, Abahan, a magazine with pictures since October, 1929 from Kolkata till 1945 was successful in creating an environment that is considered as the 'golden age' of Assamese literature. It is also acknowledged that during the difficult times for the language it was Abahan which took the lead in guiding it towards enrichment till the era of the Second World War, continuing the efforts of Jonaki.

Thus it can be said that all these newspapers and periodicals contributed their lots to the society in their own capacity to a big extent which in the long run contributed immensely towards strengthening the base of the media world in the state. So, it was from this strong platform that the media in the post-Independence era could begin from for a glorious legacy. .



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.2. Briefly describe the media scenario of the state in the pre-Independence era.

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Q.3. How did the media of the state stand up to suppressive tactics of the British government ?

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7.4 MEDIA SCENARIO AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Following the developments during the pre-Independence period, the evolution of print media in the state continued its strong journey after Independence also. It needs to be mentioned here that prior to 1963 the entire NER was one single unit known as Assam. Only after Nagaland became a separate state in this year followed by Meghalaya in 1972 the erstwhile concept of Assam disintegrated into seven states with common boundaries to which Sikkim was also added not very long ago.

Few newspapers were continuing since the pre-independence days also. Notable among them are – The Assam Tribune which was founded in 1939 in Dibrugarh as a weekly and shifted to Guwhaati in 1946 and converted to a daily. Another noted weekly was Asomiya which was set up in 1918 by poet Chandra Kumar Agarwala and it was in circulation till 1958.

One prominent daily that was launched in the year 1947 is Dainik Janambhumi though it started as a weekly in the initial period. It was converted to a daily in 1972 after 25 of years in existence. Another popular daily was Dainik Asom in 1965 from The Assam Tribune group of publication which had itself established as a major media house of the region. This newspaper being the only daily in Assamese with The Assam Tribune being the only English daily of those days enjoyed a high circulation figure across the state. It is important to note that even with the launch of Dainik Janambhumi both these Assamese dailies enjoyed a privileged position among the readers with no sign of any one them trying to cut across the other's territory in an undue manner.

In addition to these prominent ones, there were several newspapers and magazines launched in this period though they were not able to make a major impact. These newspapers mentioned above have been continuing

their journey despite all odds till date and seem to be robust enough to continue the same in the near as well as distant future.

Among the weeklies - Asom Bani, also from The Assam Tribune group was a highly-reputed name even during the early days.

Noted musical personality Bhupen Hazarika was also the editor of a highly successful magazine named Amar Pratinidhi published from Kolkata since the 1960s till early 1980s.

This was the overall scenario till the decade of 1970.

Dainik Asom was launched in 1965 by the Assam Tribune group of publications. Other notable publications of this era include – Shantidoot (1949), Pratidin (1982), Tinidiniya Batori (1981), Ajir Asom (1087) from The Sentinel publications, Natun Dainik (1988), Ajir Batori (1991), Ajir Sangbad (1994), Asomiya Pratidin (1995), Dainik Agradoot (1995), Sandhya Dainik (1980).

Among the non-dailies were – Asom Batori (1963), Saptahik Neelachal (1968), Ganatantra / Mahajati (1962 / 1964), Navayug (1963), Agradoot (1971), Sadin (1989), Budhbar (1989), Prantik (1981), Uruli (1964).

Those in English included – The Times of Assam (1895-1947 and 1948-50), The Assam Tribune (1939 till date), Assam Express (1969-1993), News Star (1982), The Sentinel (1983 till date), The North-East Times (1990), The Eastern Clarion (1991), Newsfront (1991), The North-East Observer (1992), The Frontier Sun.

7.4.1 The decade of the 1980s : A sudden upsurge

The serene and usual media scenario of the state or the region took a major turn for growth beginning with the early 1980s as a new era in Assam's print media was ushered in as reflected by the developments.

Several newspapers, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies were launched in this decade many of which have been going on with a good health even today.

The lead was taken by a daily named Tinidiniya Batori Pratidin (1982) in Guwahati followed by several others.

The Sentinel Group of Newspapers launched its flagship daily The Sentinel in April, 1983 under the Editorship of Mr Dhirendranath Bezbarooah who steered the daily to its reputation over the years. In 1987 this group has also launched an Assamese daily Ajir Asom. Today they have a Hindi and a Khasi daily also published from their press.

Soon afterwards, many others have joined the league like Natun Dainik (1988) among others.

Continuing the tempo, the decade of 1990 also saw similar developments, rather with more zeal and vengeance.

A series of publications came up for people's choice which included – Ajir Batori (dialy), Rangpur (weekly), Asomiya Pratidin (1995), Dainik Agradoot (1995), Amar Asom (1997) etc.

Again, in the decade of 2000, several other newspapers have come to the market and are doing business in the right earnest. For example, Ajir Dainik Batori, Natun Asomiya, Asomiya Khabar, Niyomiya Barta among others.

Besides, there have been several weeklies, fortnightlies, monthlies which have also contributed effectively to the overall scenario of print media in the state.

In the weeklies mention must be made of Asom Bani from The Assam Tribune group which had a mark right from its inception under the leadership of Nirod Chaudhury, Homen Borgohain, Satis Chadra Kakati and at present Dilip Chandan. Janambhumi which began as a weekly still maintains it with good effect. Saptahik Neelachal with Homen Borgohain from Dutta Baruah Publishers also had its share of impact in the society.

Among the monthly magazines – Prakash (Publication Board, Edited by Chandra Prasad Saikia, Jonbiri, Amar Pratinidhi, Binjan Jeuti (Assam Science Society), Prasangik, Sampratik Samayiki, Natun Prithivi, Sutradhar, Satsari, Gariyoshi, Bismoi, Trishul, Rahasya, woman's special Priyo Sakhi, Nandini etc.

News magazines like Eclectic, North-East Panorama etc. have also made their presence felt in this period.

7.4.2 The present scenario

Today, Assam has more than 10 dailies, a few magazines, and about five TV news channels functioning. NETV, which closed down some time ago, was the first among the TV news channels.

There have been a few trends in this chain of developments.

First, with more and more outlets for news, people are getting a wider choice and platforms for expressing their diverse views, which is a welcome development. In a democracy, multiple choices for information consumption as well as expression of opinions is a sacred right of the people.

Under present day circumstances there is a need for reflecting on the Indian languages including Assamese which are languishing far behind in terms of number of copies of newspaper being sold. It is necessary to understand that a good media presence of a language also means good visibility of it in the public, more usage, and thereby it's potential for survival in the long run in the long run. In case of Assamese, the Audit Bureau of Circulation, Delhi has listed only two Assamese newspapers with average qualifying sales figures certified up to May 8, 2015, with a comfortable amount of sales.

Now comes the concern. What happens to the vernacular languages with lesser numerical strength of speakers or readers? To focus particularly on Assam, herein comes the question of survival of a host of languages spoken in the State other than Assamese, such as Bodo (the only other language from Assam recognized by Indian Constitution), Mising, Rabha, Karbi, Dimasa, Tiwa and Deuri.

The panel of accredited media outlets of the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) of the Assam Government has close to a hundred newspapers (dailies, bi-weeklies, weeklies). Out of this, the highest figure of 45 goes to Assamese followed by

28 in Bengali, 12 in English, six in Hindi, three in Bodo and one in Nepali. So even though there might be unregistered newspapers in some other languages, they must be of a very negligible circulation and available only as a local entity.

Of course, there definitely will be more publications in languages other than those listed by the DIPR which may not have been listed in this panel for various factors. A newspaper, TV / radio channel is not only a profit-oriented activity or a public service instrument. It is also an important tool to keep a language alive for the future. In Assam, for instance, various ages of its literature have been named after a specific Assamese magazine right from Jonaki to Abahan. Similar is the influence of the printed word in other smaller languages of the State. It is a living proof then that more and more newspapers and magazines in a language can be a very good solution, not only for its survival but for its spread in future.

The contribution of the print media towards the nation-building process of Assam is so important that according to prominent journalist-cum-litterateur late Chandra Prasad Saikia, in Assam, literary ages are known by the names of prominent magazines published from time-to-time. For example, Assamese literary ages are known as – Arunodoi age, Abahan age, Ramdhenu age etc.

This is because the major magazines so named above here and several others were instrumental in bringing out as well as shaping a long list of litterateurs, editors of repute over the decades who have managed to remain role models in respective fields in the greater domain.

In addition to other areas, the contribution of the print media in the state has to be counted in several related aspects. This includes – providing moral advocacy and leadership to the national times of crisis. Such as, the language agitation of 1967, Assam agitation of 1979-85, raising public opinion against the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act or IM(DT) Act that was ultimately repealed in 2005, the media led the people about the relevant steps to be taken when things were confusing to say the least.

Besides, at times of serious threats to the media itself like the 1975 emergency period, print media in Assam has also shown adequate courage and strength in maintaining its personality intact.

Like the earlier periods this era has also had its share of prominent editors and other mediapersonnel who had earned high reputation for exemplary discharging of their role in the job.

This bevy of media persons include – Harendranath Baruah (Dainik Asomiya, 1946), Chandra Prasad Saikia (Prakash, Natun Dainik, Gariyoshi), Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya (Dainik Asomiya, Ramdhenu), Lakshminath Phukan (The Assam Tribune), Satis Chandra Kakati (The Assam Tribune), Homan Borgohain (Asom Bani, Amar Asom), Kirtinath Hazarika (Tilak Hazarika, Asom Bani, Sadin), Phani Talkdar (Dainik Asom), Radhika Mohan Bhagawati (Natun Asomiya, Hindi Sentinel), Padma Barkataki (Amar Pratinidhi, The North-East Daily), Kanaksen Deka (Agradoot), Nirupama Borgohain (Saptahik Neelachal), Nirod Chaoudhury (Asom Bani) among others.

Out of these personalities several of them including Chandra Prasad Saikia, Homen Borgohain, Padma Barkataki, Nirupama Borgohain, Nirod Choudhury also excelled as litterateurs in their own right.

Today, as already mentioned, with more than 10 dailies, quite a few non-dailies in different languages across the state the audience is getting a bigger choice to choose from in terms of news and entertainment outlets. This is definitely a good sign.

7.4.3 Causes of concern - I

However, there are a few aspects which need introspection.

First – while adequate number of newspapers and magazines are published in the major languages of the state and the region, in the languages spoken by a far lesser number of people. For example, it is common to find a good number of print media outlets in Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and also in English (which is

not even an Indian language, let alone of the state). Yet, when we look at languages of the ethnic communities with far less numerical strength, we hardly find any newspaper or magazine.

As a number of languages are not recognized by the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution (only two from Assam – Assamese and Bodo), publication of newspapers and magazines in these languages would have facilitated their existence in a healthy manner. This aspect needs to be looked into by the parties concerned.

7.4.4 Causes of concern - II

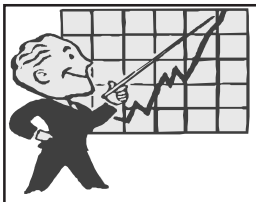
Secondly, the question of threat to media personnel which is a long-standing problem in other states of the country, has also been assuming a serious proportion over the years in the state. The brutal killing of Kamala Saikia (correspondent of Sivasagar from Amguri), Parag Das (editor of Sadin / Budhbar), Anil Majumdar, arrests and threats of arrests of several senior mediapersons from time-to-time etc. are discouraging for the existing journalists as well as the would be mediapersons.

Yet, despite all the odds, it is commendable that the print media in the state has been maintaining its head straight without compromising on journalistic ethos till date.

From technical aspects also, nowadays the print media of Assam has become almost up-to-date with recent developments elsewhere in the country. Today, like their counterparts outside the NER, few of the established print media houses have launched several editions from different places of the state for catering to the requirements of the audience or the masses. This has facilitated easy access to the print media right in the morning of the day.

There is one aspect that needs to be highlighted here. In addition to the vibrant print media of the state, newspapers and magazines from outside the state are also available at least in Guwahati the same day and in other towns usually the next day. Yet there is a technical difference among these newspapers available.

For example, few of them including The Hindu do not have a special edition for the region and only their Kolkata or Delhi editions are available in the state. On the other hand, those like The Times of India and The Telegraph publish NER edition with offices at Guwahati for catering to the people of the region. Besides, The Hindustan Times is not available at all at Guwahati or any other place of the state for reasons best known to them.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: Give a short description of the print media scene in the state in post-Independence era till date.

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Q.5: Mention a few benefits of the vibrant print media scenario in Assam.

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7.5 LET US SUM UP

After studying the above text, we have found that —

- The first ever venture in journalism in the NER was Orunodoi which was started by Baptist Christian Missionaries from the USA in 1846 from Sivasagar
- The contribution of Orunodoi which was in circulation till 1882 is 'invaluable' for the Assamese society as well as the NER as a whole as it has pioneered the age of modern journalism to this region
- Following Orunodoi, quite a few newspapers – weeklies and monthlies were published at various points of time across the state many of which have made a permanent and important mark on the socio-economic and political status of the state

- The age of the magazines, specially – Jonaki, Banhi, Abahan and Ramdhenu are considered as the golden ages of Assamese language and literature because of their meaningful contribution to this domain. They also created a bevvy of litterateurs whose names would remain etched in bright golden letters in the state's history of literature
- While most of them in the pre-independence era would resist any directive or repressive measures from the British government, several of them including Asomiya (Chandra Kumar Agarwalla) fought this by inviting public participation in reviving the newspaper after the paper was almost ruined following payment of a hefty penalty of Rs 2000.00 for defying the government dictat.
- Asom Bilasini (second version) even had to be closed for similar reasons as above though the publisher never bowed to unjust demands of the then colonial government.
- In the post independence era also, the print media in the state has maintained its watchdog and keeper of conscience of the society status to the correct extent.
- Today, there are more than ten dailies in different language of the state with at least three of completing more than half a century of existence till date.
- One major encouraging aspect here is the existence of a healthy status of newspapers and magazines in vernacular languages of the state led by Assamese
- The availability of many newspapers and magazines is facilitating voices of various communities (not necessarily based only on kinship), diverse and alternative viewpoints in different issues of the society, becoming more and more inclusive in terms of population, community and language among others.
- Newspapers and magazines from outside the region are also available in the region

- With availability of technological advances and other developments and requirements the edition concept has also caught up with the state's media. Thereby the established media organizations do have various editions of their newspapers and magazines across the state



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7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1: Orunodoi being the first ever newspaper of the state and the region, the media definitely owes a lot to this newspaper for all the pioneering work which had led to the media development here. There is no denying of the fact that it was basically published as an outlet by

the American Baptist Christian Missionaries for spreading religious awareness among the masses and gradually convert them to Christianity. Yet, during its 36 year-long glorious journey it had paved the way for finer journalistic endeavours by publishing news about many aspects of the world, rather than confining itself only to issues of Christianity. This unique venture has contributed in so many ways to the Assamese language and literature and the society as a whole that the description can never be completed properly. It had introduced us to the significance of journalism, paving the way for enrichment of the Assamese language and thereby according it a rich status. More importantly, it had ushered in an era of journalism and media environment which would enrich the society of the state and the region for the next 170 years till date. It has thereby also opened up the society to the happenings of the world in a simple language understandable by any person of the society and so democratizing the access to information and news by its efforts. Hence it has become the role model for many other such efforts in the following years and decades facilitating enrichment of the language and literature of the Assamese society to an ever newer height.

Ans to Q.No 2 : Once Orunodoi had set the pace in motion, a reasonable number of ventures in media took off in the following years from persons with a goal to serve the society from all aspects. This included creation of general awareness, political consciousness against the rule of the foreign power, fight against superstitions etc. And more importantly – creation of a class of noted litterateurs who would remain significant names in Assamese literature and language forever. Particularly, the role played by Jonaki, Banhi, Abahan and Ramdhenu is invaluable to say the least. Their contribution is so important that four ages of Assamese literature have been named after these magazines which is a reflection of their great service to the cause. In this period majority of the print establishments have showed exemplary spirit of resistance against the British government in various ways – publishing news about the freedom movement, defying penalty

imposition for supporting the movement, many of them almost ruined because of this etc. The most important trait of this era's print media world was service to the society and various causes was the primary objective of their existence rather than profit or anything else. The print media of the pre-Independence era had been highly successful in setting a legacy rich in all spheres to be followed by those in post-Independence era. And this legacy has been so strong andsound that it still makes sense to be followed and kept alive. It may be mentioned that The Assam Tribune which started its journey in 1939 at Dibrugarh, is still going strong towards completing eight decades of its eventful journey in a fewyears. This is no mean feat by any standard for a regional newspaper, that too in English in a land where speakers of this language is far outnumbered by those speaking vernacular languages.

Ans Ans to Q.No 3. The media of the state functioned in a bold manner against the suppressive tactics of the British government and always stood its ground even under very adverse situations whenever necessary. A few prominent examples are discussed here. For instance, the editor and publisher of the second edition of Assam Bilasini, Krishna Kumar Bhattacharyya (Jorhat) who was a government official had to suffer even with his job and forgo his pension because of the paper's active support to freedom movement. Also the paper had to cease publication following a lot of harassment including a hefty penalty of two thousand rupees – a princely sum during those days. Another example is that of the paper Asomiya by Chandrakumar Agarwalla (1918). Following the enactment of the Press Act (1930), Asomiya was one the just nine papers across the country which had to cease publication for not booing down to the government pressure for 'not to extend its support' for the freedom struggle. However, the sheer courage, enthusiasm and hard work of late Agarwalla revived it within a quarter of a year even appealing successfully to the public for donations for running the paper. It can be mentioned here that the concept of 'crowd sourcing or funding'

had its germination even in such early times. before its becoming popular nowadays. Several editors and publishers were even jailed for such activities.

Ans to Q.No 4 : The post-Independence era print media of the state is that of a vibrant one with quality and quantity both intact to a good extent. Beginning with a few numbers of them in the initial decades after 1947, it picked up in the 1980s decade and there has been no looking back. Today, our print media is part of the national number of around one lakh of them with at least 10 dailies in the state in more than one language. This is followed by so many non-dailies and magazines of different subjects in addition to general ones.Today, there are several established media houses with various publications of different hues to their credit cutting across diverse areas of interest. This is catering to a broader array of audiences with several editions allowing people convenient access to them anywhere in the state. There is a healthy growth of the print media with advantages to most of the people who may be interested. A wide range of choices is available to know one's requirement of daily news and views which was not the case about three decades earlier. This is auguring well also in the sense that more and more diverse viewpoints on any and every issue of importance for the society are getting proper representation which would not have been possible in the earlier days. However, the issue of some quarters of the society and the state trying their best to attack the media for petty gains constantly is a serious concern in the post-independence era in the state.

Ans to Q.No 5 : The availability of so many newspapers and magazines in Assam is a highly positive and important development for the masses by any count. This is because first of all – it reflects that aspect of a democratic set up in which many media outlets vie for attention of the people by offering their contents to the society on any issue of concern. Secondly, it offers several alternatives to the people for exercising their freedom of choice of news outlets by which they can satisfy their requirements for information on a day-to-day basis. Thirdly,

because of limited space in any particular newspaper or magazine, such a wide availability allows people to be served with those topics which may not be entertained by the mainstream media for various reasons, mainly lack of consideration for issues and concerns which may not merit much in their opinion. In simple terms, lack of space and other conditions dictate a kind of priority by which some of the issues may be relegated to the backburner. And thereby necessitating the need for having more than a few alternatives for news presentation. It is an accepted norm in a democracy that there has to be dissent among people at all levels on any issue. And the media is the most effective and convenient system for spreading such issues among the masses. Thus, the existence of a few media outlets would mean a limitation of opportunities for presenting the public with those issues. So, the presence of a big number of media outlets is important and beneficial for the public and the society at large.



7.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: When was Orunodoi first published? What are the issues which it gave importance to?

Q.2: Which were the important newspapers of Assam during 1980s?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Discuss briefly about Orunodoi.

Q.2: What were the major impacts of the four magazines Jonaki, Banhi, Abahan and Ramdhenu on our language and literature ?

Q.3: How is the vernacular sector of the print media in Assam doing so far ? Would you like to suggest anything for improving this scene ?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Briefly write about a few prominent journalists who have contributed considerably towards the domain in the state.

Q.2: Do you find any specific trend in reporting and presentation of news and views by the print media of the state ? Write with necessary examples.

Q.3: Can you find out any difference in news presentation between Assamese and English newspapers and magazines of the region ? Write with relevant examples.

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