In the previous chapters, the focus of discussion was the role of theatre in freedom struggle but the role of other forms of expression like cinema, press etc cannot be forgotten. In fact, the Independence of India was achieved as a result of each one of these working in tandem with each other. Therefore, it is imperative that the role and impact of other media besides theatre on the Indian freedom struggle be discussed separately.

7.1 PRESS

The political upheaval in India in the early twentieth century and the press were in 'give and take' relationship with each other. The press not only reflected the diverse views and forces that lay behind the national struggle for freedom but to a large extent sustained and gave them a definite shape and vigor. In return, the movement besides supplying valuable materials to the press also stimulated its activities by making it a vehicle for the most exciting political propaganda that was ever witnessed in India during British rule. While the political movement put the press on a high pedestal and made it a live force such as it has never been before, the press imbued the people with political fervor, indomitable courage, and heroic self-sacrifice to an extraordinary degree. The new spirit which seized the press may be judged from the following statement made by Aurobindo Ghosh about the 'Bande Mataram' edited by him:

"It came into being in answer to an imperative public need and not to satisfy any private ambition or personal whim, it was born in a great and critical hour for the..."
whole nation and has a message to deliver, which nothing on earth could prevent it from delivering... It claims that it has given expression to the will of the people and sketched their ideals and aspirations with the greatest amount of fidelity.” [55].

“The Indian-owned Press, generally speaking, was dominated after 1920 by the new ideals preached by Gandhi, but a few represented different political views. The bitterness and resentment of the British towards Gandhi, the Congress, and the struggle for Swaraj, found full expression in the Anglo-Indian press which barked up almost every other cause against Gandhi and Congress. [56].

At the time of the first war of independence, any numbers of papers were in operation in the country. Many of these like Bangadoot of Ram Mohan Roy, Rastiguftar of Dadabhai Naoroji and Gyaneneshun advocated social reforms and thus helped arouse national awakening.

In the struggle against the British, some newspapers played a very notable role. This included the Hindi Patriot! Established in 1853, by the author and playwright, Grish Chandra Ghosh, it became popular under the editorship of Harish Chandra Mukherjee. In 1861, the paper published the play, “Neel Darpan” and launched a movement against the British, urging the people to stop cultivating the indigo crop for the white traders. This resulted in the formation of a Neel Commission. Later, the paper was taken over by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The paper strongly opposed the Government’s excesses and demanded that Indians be appointed to top government posts. The Indian Mirror was the other contemporary of this paper which was very popular among the reading public.

Mahadev Govind Rande, a leading leader of Maharashtra, used to write in Gyan Prakash as well as the Indu Prakash. Both these journals helped awaken the con-science of the downtrodden masses. Another Marathi weekly, Kesari was started by Tilak from January 1, 1881. He along with Agarkar and Chiplunkar started another weekly journal, Mratha in English. The Editor of the 'Daccan Star' also Nam Joshi joined them and his paper was incorporated with Maratha. Tilak

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And Agarkar were convicted for their writings against the British and the Diwan of Kolhapur. Tilak’s Kesari became one of the leading media to propagate the message of freedom movement. It also made the anti-partition movement of Bengal a national issue. In 1908, Tilak opposed the Sedition ordinance. He was later exiled from the country for six years. Hindi edition of Kesari was started from Nagpur and Banaras.

*So far as the revolutionary movement is concerned, it did not begin with guns and bombs but it started with the publication of newspapers. The first to be mentioned in this context is Yugantar publication of which was started by Barindra Kumar Ghosh who also edited it.

When the Ghadar party was organized in America, Lala Hardayal started publication of the journal ‘Ghadar’. Within one year, millions of copies of this journal were published in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi and English and sent to India and to all parts of the world where Indians were residing. In the beginning the copies of the journal were concealed in parcels of foreign cloth sent to Delhi. It was also planned to smuggle the printing press into India for this purpose. But then the war broke out and it became almost impossible to import printing machinery from abroad. Lala Hardayal was attested in America and deported to India. One of his followers Pandit Ramchandra started publishing Hindustan Ghadar in English. With the U.S. joining the war, the Ghadar party workers were arrested by the American Government. When the trial was on, one of the rivals of Pandit Ramchandra managed to obtain a gun and shoot him dead in the jail itself. The death of Ramchandra led to the closure of this paper.

In 1905 Shyamji Krishna Verma started publication of a journal Indian Sociologist from London. It used to publish reports of political activities taking place at the India House in London. In 1909 two printers of this journal were convicted. Shyamji Krishna Verma left England for Paris from where he started the publication of the journal. Later on, he had to leave for Geneva. He continued to bring out the journal from there for two or three years more. In Paris, Lala Hardayal, in collaboration with Madam Cama and Sardar Singhaoroji Rana brought out our Vandematram and Talwar.

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*So far as the revolutionary movement is concerned, it did not begin with guns and bombs but it started with the publication of newspapers.
After Yugantar, it was Vandematram that played a significant role in the freedom struggle. This journal was established by Subodha Chandra Malik, C. R. Das and Bipin Chandra Pal on August 6, 1906. Its editor, Aurobindo Ghosh, the editor of Sandhya B. Upadhyay and the editor of Yugantar, B.N. Dutt, had to face a trial for espousing the cause of freedom.

So far as the Hindi papers were concerned, they looked to government for support for some time. Bhartendu Harish Chandra was the first to start a journal Kavi Vachan Sudha in 1868. Its policy was to give vent to the miseries of the people of India. When the Prince of Wales visited India, a poem was published in his honour. The British authorities were given to understand that the poem could also mean that the Prince of Wales should get a shoe-beating.

The government aid to journals like Kavi Vachan Sudha was stopped for publishing what was objectionable from the government point of view. Bhartendu Harish Chandra resigned from his post of an honorary Magistrate. His two friends, Pratap Narain Mishra and Bal Krishna started publication of two important political journals, Pradeep from Allahabad, and Brahman from Kanpur. The Pradeep was ordered to be closed down in 1910 for espousing the cause of freedom.

The Bharat-Mitra was a famous Hindi journal of Calcutta which started its publication on May 17, 1878 as a fortnightly. It contributed a lot in propagating the cause of freedom movement. The journal exposed the British conspiracy to usurp Kashmir. Several other papers published from Calcutta which played an important role in freedom struggle included Ambika Prasad Vajpayee's Swantrantra, Ramanand Chatterjee's Modern Review in English, Pravasi Patra' in Bengali and Vishal Bharat in Hindi.

One of the foremost Hindi journalists and patriot, Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi, brought out weekly Pratap from Kanpur in the year, 1913. He made the supreme sacrifice in 1931 in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. Krishna Dutt Paliwal brought out Sainik from Agra which became a staunch propagator of nationalism in Western U.P. The noted Congress leader, Swami Sharadhanand,
started the publication of Hindi journal *Vir Arjun* and Urdu journal *Tej*. After the assassination of Swami Sharadhanand, Vidyavachaspathi and Lala Deshbandhu Gupta continued the publication of these journals. They were themselves prominent Congress leaders.

In Lahore, Mahashaya Khushal Chand brought out *Milap* and Mahashaya Krishna started publishing Urdu journals which helped a lot in promoting the national cause. In 1881, Sardar Dayal Singh Majitha on the advice of Surendra Nath Bannerjee brought out *Tribune* under the editorship of Sheetala Kant Chatterjee. Bipin Chandra Pal also edited this paper for sometime. Later in 1917, Kalinath Rai joined the paper as its editor.

*There was not a single province in India which did not produce a journal of newspaper to uphold the cause of freedom struggle. A. G. Horniman made the Bombay chronicle a powerful instrument to promote militant nationalism. He himself took part in the meetings where Satyagraha used to be planned. He published vivid accounts of Jallianwala Bagh carnage for which one correspondent of his paper, Goverdhan Das, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment by a military court. Horniman too was arrested and deported to London even though he was ill at that time. Amritlal Shet brought out the Gujarati Journal *Janmabhumi* which was an organ of the people of the princely states of Kathiawad, but it became a mouthpiece of national struggle. Similarly another Gujarati journal *Saanjvartman* played a prominent role under the editorship of Sanwal Das Gandhi, who played a very significant role in the Quit India Movement in 1942. It was soon after independent formed a parallel Government in Junagarh and forced the Nawab of Junagarh to leave the country. The three editors of the Sindhi journal *Hindi Jairam Das Daulatram, Dr. Choithram Gidwani* and *Hiranand Karamchand*, were arrested, their press closed and the property of the paper confiscated.

In Bihar the tradition of national newspapers was carried forward by Sachidanand Sinha, who had started the publication of *Searchlight* under the editorship of Murtimanohar Sinha. Dev Brat Shastri started publication of *Nav Shakti* and *Rashtra Vani*. The weekly *yogi* and the *Hunkar* also contributed very much to the general awakening.

HIGHLIGHTS:
*There was not a single province in India which did not produce a journal of newspaper to uphold the cause of freedom struggle.*
Press was active since the time of first war of independence. The newspapers aligned themselves to different political parties or units. There were two major groups- one which supported the revolutionists and freedom fighters and the other who supported the British. So, press provided a chance to both the oppressed and the oppressor to express their views. The Anglo-Indian press was owned and edited by Englishmen. 'The Statesman', 'The Englishman' and 'The Asian' of Calcutta, the 'Times of India' of Bombay, The 'Madras Mail', 'The pioneer' of Allahabad, 'The Civil and Military Gazettee' of Lahore, and other Anglo-Indian newspapers lent their full and indiscriminate support to the government and the British community [55]. The government naturally looked upon the Indian press as its enemy and the Anglo-Indian press as its friend. The following observations hold good throughout the pre-independence era since the birth of press. "The terms of race arrogance and contempt in which some of these newspapers constantly speak of Indians, and especially of educated Indians, cut into the mind more than lash can cut into the flesh. Many of the countrymen imagine the every Anglo-Indian pen that writes in the Press, is dipped in government ink. It is an absurd idea but it does great harm all the same." [56]. Again, "I would like to see the official who would dare to arrest and march to the police thana the editor of an Anglo-Indian newspaper. But so far as Indian editors are concerned, there are, I fear, officers in this country who would not be sorry to march whole battalions to police thana." [57].

**The climax was reached when the Anglo-Indian press lent support to Brigadier General Dyer and the Martial Law in Punjab. But this had an unfortunate effect upon it. Masses could not accept the favoritism for murderers like General Dyer. So, the Indian section of the press took the lead. This section supported the moderates and the extremists. The Government sought to crush it with a high hand with the help of repressive laws. Many eminent Indian journalists fell victim to these laws. Aurobindo Ghosh and Brahma-bandhab Upadhyay of Bengal were prosecuted. In Madras and the South, Chidambaram Pillai and

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Subramania Siva were sentenced to six years' transportation; Srinivas Iyengar, editor and proprietor of the Telugu ‘Swaraj’ were sentenced to nine months imprisonment. In the central Provinces, the editor of the ‘Hari Kishore’ was sentenced to five years imprisonment, and the press was confiscated. In the United Provinces, the editor of the ‘Urdu-i-Moalla’ was sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500, and Hoti Lal Verma was deported for seven years for communicating a seditious message to the ‘Bande Matram’ [58].

Several newspapers ceased publication in 1908 after the first press act was passed, most of them expressing sympathy and support for terrorists. 9 prosecutions were instituted-and of the seven presses confiscated, 4 were in Bengal, 2 in Punjab and 1 in the Bombay presidency [55].

Apart from rigorous Press laws, the government attempted subsidization of the press. Even the noted journalist, Narendra-nath Sen, the editor of the ‘Indian Mirror’ agreed to start a Bengali newspaper with government subsidy (1911) and was completely discredited by this act. [59].

*Nevertheless the Indian Press, both in English and Indian languages, boldly expressed the different points of views that stirred the Indian public. Most of the Indian papers cared less for material gain and more for patriotic duty inspiring the people with advanced ideas.

7.2 CINEMA

As an art form that strikes the chords of both emotion and intellect, the power of cinema is unmatched. **Naturally, Indian cinema has contributed immensely to the cultivation of uniting and uplifting the feeling of nationalism. Patriotic films, as a special and much-admired genre of Indian cinema, have had a tremendous impact on our people, cutting across religious, regional, linguistic and economic identities. Moreover, they have also proved their unsurpassed power of communicating both to educated and illiterate masses.

The struggle and sacrifices of national heroes and martyrs, the work of our social reformers, have been a recurring theme with the Indian cinema.

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**Naturally, Indian cinema has contributed immensely to the cultivation of uniting and uplifting the feeling of nationalism.
The Hindi film industry’s adoption of patriotic themes happened at its very inception, when India was engaged in a unique struggle for freedom from the British colonial rule. The first film which boldly ventured in this direction was Sohrab Modi’s ‘Sikandar’. This 1941 film carried the message of patriotism indirectly by praising the valour of King Porus in his war against the invader, Alexander the Great. Other films of this era were ‘Bandhan’ (1940) and ‘Kismet’ (1943). [60]

The first association of film workers was the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association (IMPPA). Set up in May 1937, its main function basically was to arbitrate in trade disputes amongst various trade interests in their respective regions. Film producers were certainly least interested in the politics of the time. When this happened, they looked for the attention and support of political leaders to obtain relief to carry on their business.

In Calcutta, the New Theatres bosses always tried to maintain cordial ties with the ruling British elite, often inviting them, including the Viceroy, to visit the studios, or join at some important get-togethers. However, it was the creative team — the writers, lyricists and directors — that was alive and responsive to what was happening around them.

Hemen Gupta, K. Subrahmanyam and G. Ramabraman stand out as committed individuals. Also of significance were K.A. Abbas, Bhalji Pendharkar, B.N. Reddy and V. Shantaram. They rather more successfully portrayed the social reconstruction programme of the Congress party, though by no reckoning the full spectrum of the party’s political struggle. Nationalist fiction was created but it was proscribed as soon as it saw the light of day. However, it should be obscured that the commercial film-makers by and large were reluctant to base their commercial ventures on proscribed works.

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Chapter Seven

The role and impact of the other media

It is plausible to assume that in these years of struggle, independent filmmaking was hard to come by. We could, for the sake of argument, lay one ghost to rest, which is: the mainstream movement for freedom itself did not seek to involve the film industry in their political charter. Nowhere, and on no occasion did the leaders of the freedom struggle plan to harness the vast resources of this privately-run business of propaganda, opinion-making and entertainment.

The other media then available were broadcasting, phonograph and theatre. The phonographic industry was largely owned by foreign interests. Fanchise broadcasting had failed to make any headway, so that in 1930s the government conveniently stepped in and monopolised the air waves. Theatre did have the stirring of the freedom movement but it was closest to being curbed, because scripts were subject to pre-censorship and public performances needed approval of local police authorities. Without doubt, cinema did shirk from filming revolutionary theatre.

For the sake of record, there were only three occasions when individuals from the INC attempted to use or consider the option of trying out this medium. The first instance is of Bal Gangadhar Tilak who wanted to exploit the medium as a business proposition. He was a mediaman and had the foresight to realise the impact of cinema on the general masses. His death in 1921 possibly robbed Indian cinema of a potential saviour of the type we are visual who could engage Indian cinema politically.

The second occasion was the political rise of S. Satyamurthy, as the dramatist-turned-politician, who organised the first congress of the Indian film industry in 1939, at Bombay, and was also elected president of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. His tenure was the high point in the association of the Indian film industry with the working of the INC. But, INC’s interest did not go beyond contractual movie coverage of the annual conventions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and its circulation as newsreel material. Even here, when film-makers came to grief, the INC’s intervention to rescue the films and the film-maker is not traceable in existing records.
Cinema, being a performing art, came to be influenced by the period of its creation. A Bhakt Vidur could not have been created in the manner it was, had not Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement gathered momentum and found general public support. Year after year we learn of new creative film writers and directors entering the arena providing a commentary of their times; either they attempted to full theme based on subjects which could be associated with the sentiments of the freedom struggle, or made passing references.

If censors were hoodwinked to let pass depravity in films, and there certainly was a good deal of it to arouse public outcries, the more purposeful filmmakers were not averse to use the same tricks for the national cause.

*Stepping out of its stage of infancy around 1918, the Indian cinema joined this movement of social reconstruction. Utterances of Swami Vivekanand, Ram Tirath Shastri, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swami Sharaddhanand Saraswati, Motilal Nehru, Ishwarchandra Vidya Sagar, Jawaharlal Neur, Annie Besant, Sister Nivedita, Mahatma Gandhi, to name just a few of the moulders of public opinion, became the seed of new stories for films. Characters representing the old and the new orders made points and counterpoints on the screen, and large cinema audiences heard these debates. The screen debate percolated to the village level, sometimes supplemented by popular songs.

Indian cinema may have helped tremendously in the early recognition of the role of women in modern Indian society, espoused specially by Mahatma Gandhi. Not only women came out of homes to see films in large numbers, they were also exposed to such radical messages on women's emancipation as one heard in Duniya Na Mane, Balayogini, Sumangali, Indira MA or Apna Ghar. These young ladies quietly endorsed the work of their menfolk who were often found in the streets in demonstrations and other political activities. Women also
took to education in a big way. Certainly their new participation, contrasting the earlier total absence from schools, was a new phenomenon. As this generation grew, it also began to work actively in the freedom struggle as field activists, courting arrests and undergoing jail terms which not many European women did.

*Films ridiculed social taboos, outworn customs, negative conventions and also sartorial influences of western civilisation, thus reinforcing national pride. A whole range of films which fell in the generic term of “social themes” eulogised things Indian, Swadeshi, and secular. Practically in each film, there would be a khadi clad youth a Muslim character as a young friend, or elder kindred soul. The negative forces would be represented by a character imitating western ways alone, or in a group, or even as a villainous character; a satan personified.

The reformative zeal in Tamil, Telugu films must be lauded by a special mention. Inspired from the success of dramas performed in the countryside, filmmakers adopted their messages to a wider audience. In Bengal, the wholesale adaptation of stories by Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chander Chatterjee and others filled the void of positive themes when film-makers wanted to contribute to the sentiments of their times. In this respect the contribution of films from the workhouse of New Theatres is outstanding. Marathi cinema on the other hand adopted the language of satire and social comment to decry westernisation.

Contrary to this the saddest part of the revelation is that there is not a single official document from the film industry sources which laid claim that the film industry had also contributed to the national freedom struggle. Strange it may seem when we recall there were people still making films on patriotic themes, getting into trouble with the authorities, paying the price in pain and bankruptcy. It

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was not the case of the odd individual effort, each of the first five decades of Indian cinema tells the stories of such sacrifices. But the film fraternity has not taken the responsibility to accept and honour these soldiers of the freedom struggle from their own ranks. [61].

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