Chapter III
Freedom of Press In Per-Independence Period

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Freedom of Press In Pre Independence Period

1) Introduction:

In ancient days, there were very few means of communication. In tribal areas, messages were passed through trumpets and also by lightning fires. Sculptures and wall paintings were used to communicate the messages.

When man learned to write, he made a written form of 'newsletter'. This circulated messages of social events and happenings. During the Roman Empire, "Acta Diurna", the first newspaper was posted in public places for information. This notice is a newspaper used to carry information collected by "Newswriters" posted at various courts. In course of time, these newswriters laid the foundation of modern and professional journalism.

In India, the concept of journalism was not unknown. But the art of printing was too slow to develop. Although there was a sizeable European community in Calcutta in the eighteenth century, no English newspaper had been established in India until 1780. The European community depended entirely on newspapers sent from England. Received often, nine months or a year after publication. An official printing press was established in Calcutta in 1780s. Further newspapers also develop and most of the people of English residents started relying on newspapers.

The desirability of newspapers went on increasing. It was the foundation of Indian Press. The Indian press develop and flourish in next few years.

The brief history and its struggle for freedom unfolds in the following parts of this chapter.
2) PRESS AND BRITISH INDIA

a) James Augustus Hicky and Bengal Gazette

One of the biggest struggles which still continues to achieve its mission began in the 18th century. The struggle is for freedom of press.

In India, confrontation between the press and the government is as old as the publication of the first newspaper, Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser, on 29 March 1780 in Calcutta. The voice of the first full-fledged journalist, James Augustus Hicky was silenced by the then government. He was the first man in India who considered that suppression of the press would cause injury to the society. Mr. Hicky opined that “The subject should have full liberty to declare his principles and opinions and every act which tends to coerce that liberty is tyrannical and injurious to the community.” (Keval J Kumar, Mass communication in India, Jaico publishing house, Mumbai, 2nd edition 2001 pg 62). Hicky had attacked Mrs Warren Hastings and private affairs through his writings. He considered liberty of the press very much essential for the basic existence of a free government. Even though he upheld the freedom of conscience, of education, of speech, and of assembly the fundamentals of human existence he was forced, following the government’s repressive measures, to close down his weekly publication in the year 1782.

It is very sad to note that following Hicky’s refusal to oblige the authorities by dancing to their tunes, his house was raided by European soldiers and as a matter of punishment he was forced to deposit eighty thousand rupees towards security. As a retaliatory measure, the government withdrew the postal facilities extended to the press. The order of the government was as follows: “Fort William, 14 November 1780"
Public Notice is hereby given that as a weekly newspapers called the Bengal Gazette or the Calcutta General Advertiser by J. A. Hicky has lately been found to contain several improper paragraphs tending to vilify private characters and to disturb the peace of the settlement, it is no longer permitted to be circulated through the channel of the General Post Office” 2(Padhy k s, The press in India, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, pg138)

 Forced to pay severe fines, imprisoned several times, subjected to financial constraints, humiliated and tortured by the authorities whose dictates he was not prepared to carry out, Hicky had to close his weekly. The first newspaper had, thus, an inglorious and unceremonious death.

b) Bombay Gazette (1791)

Bombay Gazette was set up in 1791. It gave a strong assurance that it would strongly support the government. But it could not keep up its image. It was taken to task by the government when it criticized the Commissioner of Bombay Police, Auderson. It was forced to close down in September 1791.

c) India Herald

Humphreys, despite has several requests to the government, was not given a license to set up a newspaper. But in 1795 even without a license he published and edited a weekly India Herald. But consequently has was arrested and with this sounded the death knell of his weekly.

d) William Durance and Bengal Journal

It may be mentioned that Wittier Durance, an Irish-American and a founder (along with two legal practitioners, namely, Dinking and Cassan) of the Bengal Journal, was one of the earliest victims of Government’s policy the aimed as suppression of press. While the Marhatta war was in
progress, the Bengal Journal published a news item that Lord Cornwallis died while campaigning. The source of this news was attributed to a French diplomat. Colonel De Canaple, the Commandant of the Affairs of the French Nation in India, protested against publication of such irresponsible news and brought it to the notice of the Bengal Government. Dunce was asked to apologies. But instead of offering an apology he wanted to publish another news item in form of a corrigendum.

Lord Cornwallis was always opposed to any kind of publication that went against the interest of the Company or its Servants. He could not tolerate and kind of antagonism against the government by the press. Therefore, after consulting the legal experts he issued an order for arresting and deporting William Durance. In protest, the latter filed a writ petition. The Supreme Court, though granted the writ of Habeas Corpus, upheld the Governments right to deport him. However, the timely intervention of the French official, M. Fumeron, who argued that no action against Duance was necessary following the death of Colonel De Canaple, saved Duance who had to suffer a lot for his inaccurate publication about the death of Cornwallis.

Duance left the Bengal Journal and founded the India World in 1795. But again he was in the soup. His house was raided and the Government wanted that he should leave India forever. Strongly criticizing the Government's attitude towards him and his writings he observed:

"Subscribers to my paper apologized for withdrawing their names, the alternative had been given to them of relinquishing that or the goodwill of persons in power, tradesman attached to me by personal regard, were compelled to withhold their advertisements, they were told that to advertise with me would be to ensure the loss of custom of the same persons and all their friends; the military where my most numerous attachments lay, were in like manner attempted but not with the same
affect." (Padhy k s , The press in India, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, pg140)

Sir John Shore, who succeeded lord Corvallis, succeeded in deporting Duane. The former invited the latter for a breakfast and while the latter attended the same he was arrested by the soldiers and taken to the nearest port for deportation. On an appeal he was allowed to take with him three orphan children, as he was their guardian. He had to leave behind his property worth thirty thousand rupees and for that he did not get any compensation from the Government.

Duane had to suffer at the hands of the Government for his anti-British writings for which he had to pay a heavy price.

e) Press Censorship in Madras (1795)

Intolerant to press criticism against the government, the authorities imposed censorship on 12 December 1795 in Madras. An order was passed to the effect that the weekly Madras Gazette must sent to the Military Secretary the news copy for scrutiny before publication. In 1799, the scope of censorship was widened and other newspapers were also brought under the review. Postal concessions or privileges allowed hitherto were withdrawn. Newspapers were asked to pay full rates in advance. On a protest, the Government, however, agreed to levy the prescribed fee on delivery, relaxing the earlier order of pre-payment of postage. Thus, the papers in Madras were subjected to Governmental control and pressure as early as 1795.

f) Lord Wellesley and Censorship (1799)

Lord Wellesley adopted all possible measures to effectively curb the press and its freedom to articulate its opinion. Enraged with the publications, which he considered irresponsible and scurrilous, he issued an order in 1799 prohibiting the publication of any news before the Gov-
ernment censored it. The printers of newspaper were asked to write their names at the bottom of every issue of the paper. Editors and publishers were also asked to declare their names and addresses to the Court. Penalty was imposed when these orders were violated. It ranged from fine to deportation to Europe.

Wellesley wrote “I shall take an early opportunity of transmitting rules for conduct of the whole tribe of editors, also to ban mischieves publications and be so good to suppress the papers by force and send their persons to Europe”\(^4\) (Muzumdar Aurobindo, “Indian press and freedom struggle”, Orient Longman limited Calcutta, Pg29).

Following the imposition of censorship, all the news items, before their publication, were to be inspected by the Secretary to the Government of his authorized representative. Declaration was made compulsory.

Under the rules the Secretary was required to prevent the newspapers from publishing information relating to the movement of ships and the embarkation of troops, stores, etc. Not to allow them to publish all speculations in regard to relations between the Company and any of the native Indian powers, asking them not to provide information likely to protect and promote the interests of the enemy; and disallow them to make any comment that would provoke commotion with in the region under the jurisdiction of the Company.

Notwithstanding the severity and rigidity of all these regulations, all the seven existing newspapers in Calcutta submitted to the Government and filed their declarations without any delay. The papers were: The bengal Harakarn (Editor: William Hunter); The Morning Post (Editors: Archibald Thomson, Paul Ferris and Morley Greenway); the Telegraph (Editor: Holt Mckenely); the Calcutta Courier (Proprietors: Thomas
Hollingbery and Robert Khellen); the Oriental Star (Editor: Richard Fleming); the India Gazette (Proprietors: William Morris, William Farrlie and J. D. Williams); and the Asiatic Mirror (Editor: Charles K. Bruce).

Their efforts were not noticed much.

g) The Telegraph and Charles Mc Lean

On several occasions, newspapers invited the wrath and displeasure of the Government when they exposed the Government servants and power wielders. The authorities took a strong exception to any kind of writings that sought to expose the officials. For example, the Telegraph published a letter signed by Charles Mc Lean, a medical officer of the Company, who strongly criticized the official conduct of Rider, and Englishman and the Magistrate of Ghazipur. When Rider lodged a protest with the authorities, the latter asked the paper and the author of the news item to offer an unconditional apology. Holt Mc Kenly, the editor of the Telegraph, offered his apology and Mc Lean was deported.

After his deportation to England, Mc Lean ceaselessly carried a campaign against Wellesley and published a pamphlet entitled, The Affairs of Asia. Finally he succeeded in removing Wellesley from office when the latter resigned as Governor-General in 1805.

It is significant to observe that the eighteenth century saw the harassment of the newspapers at the hands of the authorities that, instead of safeguarding their interested, discouraged them. Postal concessions were denied to those who pointed out the lapses of the Company or made sarcastic comments against its administration. Pre-censorship was specifically resorted to in order to prevent the publication of any news that would or might bring disrepute to the Government.
Notwithstanding the nature and content of the press during the eighteenth century, the relationship between the Government and the fourth estate was very much strained. For this sordid state of affairs, both of them were responsible. The press should have been more responsible while publishing news items and the authorities more cautious and a little bit tolerant and liberal in their attitude an approach towards the press. Describing the character of the Indian Press, James Mill observed:

"The character of the papers of the early days sufficiently shows that the indulgence was abused and that, while they were useless as vehicles of local information of any value, they were filled with indecorous attacks upon private life and ignorant censures of public measures."

(Padhy K S "The press in India", Kaniska publishers New Delhi 1997, Pg 142)

Even though it was a fact the Mill became too much critical of the press, the latter should have behaved in a more responsible manner. The government should not have also become oversensitive to the publications.

h.) The Year 1800

The 1799 Regulations were perhaps not enough to deal with an, according to the Government, irresponsible and arrogant press. Therefore, on 22 May 1800 the newspaper proprietors were asked to deposit security amount to meet any deficiencies.

Within two years of the enactment of regulations in 1799 and 1800 the Government came to know that these were not effective, as the newspapers were not submitting themselves to pre-censorship with promptness and regularity. As before, military news was published and the matters which were not supposed to be published in the newspapers appeared ten the books and pamphlets. The Editors of the Calcutta
Gazette, the Asiatic Mirror, the Harakaru, the Post, the Star and the Telegraph, were asked not to publish news relating to the activities of the military. They were also asked to give an undertaking that they would not violate the orders of the Government. The response of the editors in this regard was quite encouraging.

It may be mentioned that Marquess of Wellesley’s authority was challenged by Tipu Sultan of My sore, the French and other European communities. And when any publication to this effect was made by any newspaper it was considered as a crime against the Government. Hence punitive measures were taken against the newspaper. For example, when Wellesley wanted to curb the designs of the European community, Charles K. Bruce, the editor of the Asiatic Mirror, published some figures showing the estimated strength of the European and regional population. This provoked Wellesley as he considered it to be mischievous. He asked the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Ahured Clarke to suppress the editors of mischievous writing by fore and send their persons to Europe.

In 1803, during the Second Marhatta War, the Government General himself asked the newspapers not to publish anything that would be helpful to the enemy. In 1804, newspapers were asked not to publish any naval news. The cities of Madras, Bombay and also the Prince of Wales Island came under the purviews of 1799 Regulations. Any kind of information and dissemination of news was not to the liking of the Company. Even holding of public of public meetings was not approved by it.

i) Lord Minto

Following the death of Lord Cornwallis in 1805, Sir George Barlow succeeded him as Governor-General. But he remained in office for a very short time. In 1807 he was succeeded by Lord Minto. At that time
some pamphlets ridiculing the religious beliefs of the Hindus appeared. These were published by the Christian Missionaries in Serapore. Minto asked the Baptist Missionaries to shift their press from Serampore to Calcutta. The latter requested that the order be withdrawn as it would be highly expensive to shift the press. The order was withdrawn on the ground that they would submit all their news items for censorship before publication and circulation. In Madras, the order were even stricter.

Newspaper proprietors were also asked to print the names of the printers on all printed material.

**j) Lord Hastings**

Lord Minto was succeeded in October 1813 by Lord Hastings and exerted a tremendous influence on the Indian Press as Governor-General. A liberalist and progressive-minded, he had a strong faith in freedom of the press. He wanted that the press should be free to inform the public and look after its own affairs. He felt that it should be given a free hand and in this connection held a discussion with the Supreme Council of the Company in London. But his views were not acceptable to the latter. Still then he was not discouraged.

Soon after assumption of office, he asked for the submission of the proof of all newspapers including the supplements and other extra publications. The Chief Secretary was asked to make revision of all notices, handbills and other ephemeral publications. The titles of all original works scheduled to be published were to be made known. This order was considered to be a liberal measure relaxing the earlier restrictions imposed in 1799 and 1801.

Under the Charter Act of 1813 it was made compulsory for the missionaries to obtain license.
k) The Calcutta Journal and James Silk Buckingham

Calcutta Journal a bi-weekly and consisting of eight quarto-sized pages appeared on 2 October 1818. Established by John Palmer and edited by James Silk Buckingham, each copy of the journal was sold at one rupee.

Buckingham, who started his career as a mariner, was a man of character and integrity. As an editor, he was not only courageous in exposing the misdeeds of the authorities and telling disagreeable truths but also played a key role in shaping public opinion in India. That he was aware of his duties and responsibilities is evident from the following statement “the editor’s function was to admonish Governors of their duties, to warn them furiously of their faults and to tell disagreeable truths.”6(Padhy K S “The press in india”, Kaniska publishers New Delhi 1997, Pg 145)

Buckingham firmly believed that a free press could bring out reforms in the society. He made his paper extremely popular. The popularity went on increasing and this made several other papers jealous. There was a violent opposition from contemporary journals like the India Gazette, the Bengal Hara-kiri and the Asiatic Mirror. Bold and impartial in his writings, he did not hesitate to attack even dignitaries like the Chief Justice, the Governor of Madras and the Lord Bishop of Calcutta. In 1819, he was warned for criticizing the Governor of Madras. In 1821, he wrote:

“Such as the boon of a free press in Asia, with which the world has rung, for the last three years; the praise of those who knew not what availed it, is not even yet at an end. Such is the salutary control of public opinion on supreme authority and the values of a spirit to be found only in men accustomed to indulge and express their honest sentiment.”7(Padhy K S “The press in india”; Kaniska publishers New Delhi 1997, Pg 145)
Though the authorities were enraged with the writings of Buckingham, they could not take action against him, as there were not sufficient grounds for filing cases of libel.

In one of the issues of the journal, Buckingham wrote, while commenting on Indian affairs, that “If no wrongs are to be redressed, or suggested improvements listened to, except those which go through secretaries and public officers to the Government, none will be redressed or listened to but those whom they favour.”

The Government took a strong exception to such kind or writing and considered it a gross libel. John Adam was looking for an opportunity to take action against Buckingham. Seven secretaries to the Government filed a suit. Prosecution was started against him by the Advocate-General for his publication of a criminal libel. In the jury trial, the Government could not establish the guilt of Buckingham and the latter was set free. He spent six hundred pounds in this famous libel suit.

Daring and outspoken, fearless and courageous, Buckingham went on exposing the Government for its lapses and weaknesses. In July 1882, he strongly criticised appointment and observed that rampant corruption prevailed in the administration. This observation made the Government and the appointee angry. There was a demand that Buckingham should be deported immediately. Supporting this, John Adam said that “free and uncontrolled newspaper would weaken, if not destroy, the habitual subordination to superior officials and this would foment indiscipline in the administration.”

He was of the opinion that the parliament, by not the press, should guide the destiny of the country. Very much averse to the freedom of the press Adam wanted that the press should be subject to censorship.
To teach a lesson to Buckingham he appointed James Bryee as clerk Buckingham once again wrote about the false appointment. Adam not only cancelled his licence but also asked him to leave the shore.

There were many such incidences relating to the press freedom happened.

British government suppressed many newspapers Actually the press was for the people and also for the government. It is rightly said by Sita Bhatia “A free press stands as one of the great interpreters between the government and the people, to allow it to be fettered is to fetter ourselves.”10(Bhatia Sita, “Freedom of press” Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1997Pg23)

There were some indian newspapers and the personalities enterng this conflict. The details follows
3) INDIAN NEWSPAPERS AND PERSONALITIES

In the history of the Indian Press 1818 was a landmark year. So long the newspapers were all in English language and they were owned and also edited by Englishmen. A new trend was set in with the public appearance of Vangal Gazette, Dig Darshan and Samachar Darpan. Both Dig Darshan and Samachar Darpan, though started by the Serampore missioneries, were the first Journals published in Bengali. While Dig Darshan came out in April 1818, the first copy of Samachar Darpan rolled out of the printing press on May 23. In between, the Baptist missioneries also started on April 30 th monthly periodical. The Friend of India which was later merged with the “Statesman”. The principal aim of Dig Darshan and Samachar Darpan was to carry on tirade against the prevailing religious faiths in India in order to popularise Christian ideas.

Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya’s Vangal Gazette marked a new era in Indian journalism. A teacher having progressive reformist ideas. Bhattacharya started the first Bengali weekly paper, assisted in his efforts by Hara Chandra Roy, a close associate and member of Raja Rammohun Roy’s “Atmiya Sabha”, The Gazette represented progressive views of the day. Rammohun’s first Bengali tract on “Sati” was printed on the pages of the Gazette.

But the Indian who left his indelible imprint on the Press of the day was Raja Rammohun Roy.

Quest for truth was Rammohun’s mission; his torch, reason. And he would not swerve from the path once he believed it was the right one. Indeed, this quest was the mainspring of all his activities. It inspired him to defend Hinduism from the onslaught of the Christian missioneries,
He started three papers viz. (1) Sambad Kaumudi (Bengali weekly) 2. Meerut-ul-Akhbar (Persian weekly) and 3. Brahminical Magazine (English weekly) --- all these to hold aloft the truth he realised.

In official quarters Kaumudi was feared more than any other paper, for when the paper ceased publication for a period because of its desertion by its editor, Bhawani Charan Banerji.

In 1823 Governor General John Adam laid down the ordinance that "Henceforth, no one should publish a newspaper or a periodical without having obtained a licence from the Governor-General-in-Council, signed by the Chief Secretary. The application for licence should give the name of names of printer and publisher, of the proprietors, their place of residence, the location of the press and the title of the newspaper, magazine, register, pamphlet or other printed books of paper. The penalty for infringement was prescribed to be fine and imprisonment."

Rajaram Mohan Roy opposed it. In sheer protest Rammohan stopped the publication of the paper. Adams Regulations were thus a forerunner of the Vernacular Press of 1878.

But the efforts of the bureaucracy not to allow Indian Journals to function freely failed to check the wave of enthusiasm that time had brought about. Many newspapers were started in Bombay, Madras and Northwest provinces.

Fardoonji Murzeban, who started the Gujarat Printing Press in 1812 in Bombay, launched after ten years Mumbaina Samachar, weekly Gujarati paper, in 1822 as a commercial venture. The paper which later assumed the title of Bombay Samachar.

Besides Mumbaina Samachar there were two English papers in Bombay - the Daily Gazette and the Courier.

In Madras there were two newspapers--- the Government Gazette and the Madras Courier.
Marathi Journalism was inaugurated in 1832 by Bal Shashtri Jambhekar. He started Bombay Darpan, first as an Anglo-Marathi fortnightly but subsequently converted it into a weekly paper. In 1840 he started Dig Darshan, which helped to start Prabhakar, a weekly in 1841. Jambhekar was educationalist and his paper was free from all superstitious. He was the follower of the press freedom struggle. Indian newspapers continue their work till few more regulations imposed by the regulations came in their way.
4) Regulations on Press Freedom
   a) Lord Bentinck

   while the vernacular press developed in India, British continued imposing restrictions.

   Federick Adam regulations were mentioned earlier. Lord William Bentinck was appointed the Governor-General after Adam. He had a liberal attitude. Meanwhile, journalist planned the protest.

   In the year 1835 Indian and European journalists jointly submitted the petition to the viceroy. The points were:

   1. That the restrictions imposed were not only useless but mischievous and degrading both to the Government and to the Press.

   2. That Englishmen who came to India outside the Company’s service should not be considered as having been admitted on sufferance but as being as interested in the maintenance of national power and supremacy as the proprietors of the company and its servants and that coming to India could not deprive them of the rights enjoyed by them in England:

   3. That the publication of Journals in English did not constitute a danger to the supremacy of the ruling power because of the number of natives of India conversant with the language was deplorable small and confined to the limits of Calcutta:

   4. That danger to the supremacy of the ruling party from publication in the vernacular languages could not justify the prohibition of all printing or publishing in such languages without a licence:

   5. That there was greater danger of dissemination of libels and false intelligence among the native soldier by written rather than by printed libels, and that periodical publications would dispel ignorance and correspondingly diminish the credulity of those to
wards whom such writings were directed with a view to mislead and subvert them.

6 That prohibitions against the circulation of obnoxious native publications were uncalled for as the government could prevent the circulation of such publications by the imposition of stamp duties: it was pointed out that newspapers were still subjected to a heavy rate of postage.11(The reference taken from the book by Ghosh Sumit “Modern History Of Indian Press”, Cosmo Publications, 1998, New Delhi, 93)

Bentinck assured that he will soon appoint a committee to solve the problem. But he resign due to ill-health.

b) Lord Metcalf

Lord Metcalf became the governor-general. He was the firm believer in Press freedom. He pointed out that “licensing regulations were indefensible and should therefore by repealed.” He opined that “it was unwise of the government to incur the odium of repressive press laws which in their application did not ensure the smallest accession of security or of power.” 12(Ghosh Sumit “Modern History Of Indian Press”, Cosmo Publications, 1998, New Delhi, 98)

Metcalf’s proposal was to frame a uniform law for both European and Indian newspapers all over India and to repeal the harsh press law. He was of liberal mind compared to other authorities.

Thus the year 1835 was a landmark in history of journalism in India. The fight started in 1823 by Raja Rammohan Roy and five other respectable citizens, achieved notable success in 1835. All restrictions were withdrawn by the Metcalf and the Press was liberated, for the time being at least
c) Indian Press Act 1910

Though the press was free for the time being it could not last for long. Partition of Bengal took place in 1905. It was the period of great turmoil. Once again the newspapers came under pressure. Newspapers (Incitement Of Offences) 1908 Act which gave powers to punish and seize the press if it publishes the news of violence was imposed. In those days.

Mahadev Govind Ranade’s ‘Indu Prakash’, Lokmanya Tilak’s Kesari & Mahratta were the great leading papers of twentieth century. On the background of the above circumstances Tilak was arrested and tried in respect of two articles on three charges when he opposed Incitement to offence Act.

Other champions of press freedom who were prosecuted at about same time were Aurobindo Ghose of Bande Mataram, B B Upadhaya of Sandhy, B N Dutta of Jugantar.

The leading Amrita Bazar Patrika stated “It is no use shutting our eyes to the disquieting political developments in the country and the deplorable happenings that are taking place throughout India. How can a conflict be avoided where there is so much political discontent and mental or moral frustration all around?” (Muzumdar Aurobindo, orient longman limited, 1993, Calcutta, 170). Soon after

Indian press Act, 1910. was imposed. It was directed against offences involving violence as well as sedition. This Act made it compulsory that every owner of the printing press should deposit an amount as security which could be forfeited by the government if the newspaper published something that incited violence and sedition. The security deposit could also be forfeited if the newspaper had “a tendency, directly or indirectly, whether by inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication or otherwise, to incite to murder or to any offence under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, or to any act of violence or
to seduce any officer from his allegiance or duty, to put any person in fear or cause annoyance to him, to encourage or incite any person to interfere with the administration of the law or with the maintenance of law and order and so on.”14(Padhy K S “The press in india”, Kaniska publishers New Delhi, 1997 pg 147). This act was brutally implemented further in the history of press the world war occur.
5) World War I

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 had a great impact on press. The press differed on the question of India's support to war efforts. The Anglo-Indian Press viewed that nationalism should have given way to the necessity created by the emergency of war. The Indian Press, however, felt that the spontaneous response of the princes and people of India for help and cooperation should be acknowledged by the British Government by according to India the same rights and liberties for which the allies were fighting in Europe. The newspapers that emerged during the war time were Nav Bharat edited by R G Maheshwari, Maulana Azad's Al Hilal Urdu paper, and daily Pratap of Mahashe Krishen.
6) Mahatma Gandhi and press freedom

One of the greatest personality without whom the independance of the country and the press was impossible was Mahatma Gandhi. Young India, Harijan were his newspapers.

In 1919 Gandhiji took over the editorship of Young India and of Navjivan, a Gujrati monthly converted into weekly. The two papers were edited by C. Rajagopalachari, Jairamdas Daulatram and George Joseph when Gandhi was in Jail from 1922 to 1924. Young India ceased publication for a time when the Swaraj Party was in power but Gandhi started the Harijan soon after under the editorship of Mahadev Desai.

Gandhi’s papers carried no advertisements. They enjoyed a wide circulation and his articles were often circulated by the news agencies to the daily Press for publication simultaneously on the day after. His clear and simple style, direct and free from all flourishes, gave Gujrati a strength and vividness of expression which was a valuable contribution to the development of the language. In his autobiography, Gandhi defined the objects of journalism 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”15(Ghosh Sumit, Modern History of Indian Press, Cosmo Publications, 1998, New Delhi. Pg 189)

Gandhiji always supported freedom of press and strongly opposed the policies of the government. He opposed Indian Press Emergency Powers Act 1931. The aim of this act was to prevent criticism of the administration of Indian states in the newspapers of British India. Under this act govrnmnt took against many newspapers like Anand Bazar Patrika Bombay cronical Liberty and all others. Thus struggle went on.
7). World War II

World War II broke out on September 3, 1939. At the out break of the war, the Government had promulgated the Defence of India Act which, among other things, provided for precensorship of materials for publication in the Press relating to certain matters. The penalty of imprisonment was extended to five years. The Official Secrets Act was amended to provide a maximum penalty of death, or transportation, for the publication of information likely to be of use to the enemy. The Press Emergency Powers Act was also similarly amended to provide against the conveying of confidential information to the enemy or the publication of an prejudicial report which amounted to commission of a prejudicial act as defined in the defence of India rules.

Many editors protested against the circumstances. Friendly conversation at Delhi was held. Editors assured that they had no intention of impeding the country’s war effort any newspapers who publish against it may be viewed with disapproval by press. Government agree to negotiate. Soon after this major achievement the conference of editors was converted in to All India Newspapers Editors designated press censors, was set up in all the provinces with the chief press adviser at the centre.

The arrangement was that the editor should have the benefit of the advice of the press adviser in the matter of publication of all news coming within the purview of D.I. rules. But soon the Delhi agreement came under severe strain. Some press officers exceeded their brief and sought to maintain a rigorous control over the press. News published in one region was banned in another. Authentic news was severely censored to the point of becoming misleading. Headlines were dictated. Restrictions were imposed on the comments of on government and government officials. All powers assumed by the government
exercised and the civil and military censors constituted under D.I rules suppressing events and views of political significance on the ground that such publications impeded the effective prosecution of war.

It was difficult for the press to accept the unwanted restrictions. The press had to face few more problems till India had independance. Discussions between the press and the government went on.
8) Jawaharlal Nehru’s views on press freedom

One of the renowned newspaper the National Herald started its publication in Aug 1938 with Jawaharlal Nehru as a chairman of board of directors till 1946. One incident took place with the National Herald. U.P government ordered to submit the headlines before its publications. National Herald pointed out that “the action taken by the government is absurd and impracticable” 16 (Natrajjan J “History of Indian Journalism” Publication division, government of India, New Delhi, 2000, Pg 173)

It represented the order as an unwarranted restriction on the freedom of the press and as no government censor was available in the early hours of the morning the order made it impossible for the paper to carry the latest news. For six months until the order was withdrawn the National Herald published news relating to war without headlines.

Jawaharlal Nehru was aware of the press freedom. News and freedom of news were the two things he stressed always. Nehru maintained that newspaper editors should avoid not only distortion but also suppression of news he regretted that in India “there was not only a good deal of suppression of news by the authorities but suppression of views as well. If news was suppressed by the authorities, no newspaper could function properly, for by this a newspaper lost importance. People ceased to believe what a newspaper said or people imagined that what newspapers said was not whole truth. It was an odd thing.” 17 (Ghosh Sumit “Modern History Of Indian Press” cosmo publications, New Delhi, 1998, Pg 173)

Nehru asked the newspapers not to be influenced by any external factors. Newspapers had to face the continual desire of the authority to suppress news and facts. Nehru urged the newspapermen to insist on complete freedom of news, criticised the news services which were not satisfactory as the news services only covered cities and certain types of
people. The rural India was forgotten. Nehru had also referred to the possibility of setting up a federation of a larger number of countries in the east through the developments of news contacts with the countries like Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Singapore.

He predicted that the future of Indian journalism lay with Indian language newspapers.
Conclusion:

In the early period it was the policy of the British rulers to keep the 'natives' in the dark and any attempt to spread the light of knowledge or disseminate information among the people was opposed. Hence the independent free press was not encouraged in early days.

Government imposed restrictions in 1799 for the first time and the conflict began. It was the policy of the British government to impose restrictions on press and civil liberties. The wind of freedom which started from English man reached the Indian Newspapers at early 19th century. Various regulations were imposed. Lokmanya Tilak, Rajaram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Ghandi & Jawalarlal Nehru all the great leaders book efforts to free the press from the British authorities. After all, press is like a bridge between the government and the people.

Jastice Patanjati shashtri has said.

"Freedom of the press lay at the foundation of all democratic organisations, for without free political discussions no public education so essential for the proper functioning of the processes of popular Government is possible “18(Mass Media in India 1998-99 Research & Reference Division New Delhi. Pg. 27)

Therefore press, the fourth estate was an important media in pre-independance period whose liberty was essential for the welfare of the society. Struggle which began in pre-independance phase of India continued after the country's independance. The situation of post independant phase is explained in next chapter.
Reference List


18 Mass Media in India 1998-99 Research & Reference Division New Delhi. Pg. 27.