

CHAPTER - IV

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EVOLUTION OF PRESS MEDIA IN ORISSA

As it has been pointed out that Orissa became a separate province only in 1936, so development of Orissa was not at par with other provinces of India. This was also the case with the development of press media in Orissa, which took place hundred years later than it was in Bengal.

Development of Print Technology in Orissa:

In Orissa, nothing appears to be on the record to visualize that journalism was practiced in olden days. But as the Kalinga, the ancient name of Orissa had established an Empire in Southeast Asia for over two centuries, such a possibility would not be ruled out. Orissa had some manuscripts of that period. The existence of such manuscripts written on palm leaves or country made paper had been recorded. It was named as *Kujibara Patrika* after the *Kujibara* (small banyan tree) Ashram set up by its editor Mahatma Sadhu Sundara Das.¹

The Patrika was written on palm leaves and it was being copied by the disciples of Sadhu. At that time, there was no paper and no printing. Hence, this journal was not a newspaper as such but carried the views of its editor on matters concerning religion, education, health, agriculture, trade, and also the news. However, the Patrika was stopped after the death of the Sadhu in 1838.² It has been regarded as the first news journal in Orissa.

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1. Surendra Mohanty. *Odia Sahityara Kramabikasha*, Agradoota Prakashans. Cuttack. 1978. pp.205-206.
 2. Chintamani Mohapatra. *Journalism in Orissa*. Radiant Press. Berhampur. 1984. p.16.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the necessity of copying and maintaining the official documents led to the evolution of *Karani script*, the writing style of the Karana official writers. With the introduction of English printing the *Karani Script* ceased to continue. Again, when Oriya type writers were introduced by the efforts of *Ranganath Mohapatra*, slight changes became necessary in the Oriya script. When the lino type system was introduced, the letter types had undergone further modification to suit to technical needs. or, as it was contemplated, the printers might have jumped to phototype setting in which case , the characters of letters took new shape. The first person to start type foundry work in Orissa was Kapileswara Nanda followed by Kapila Behera, who was engaged by *Utkal Deepika*. Even now, some of the Oriya heading types in use was named as Kapila Types. In the 19th Century, the Press of Orissa possessed caxtonian machine, which could produce about a thousand copies a day.

The British Government took over Orissa in 1803 and the hand-made press was introduced in Orissa by Christian missionaries.³ Handmade press was replaced by Flatbed. But till the end of the 19th century, most of the newspapers were published by Flatbed machine, which could print two pages at a time. Flatbed was replaced by Rotary, which was invented in United Kingdom in 1868. The machine had developed to a great extent to print about 4 Lakh papers with 16 pages in an hour. The intention of this machine was to publish the newspaper in huge number to cater the needs of millions of people. In Orissa, the Rotary machine was introduced by a leading newspaper *The Prajantatra* for the first time in 1954 after the country's independence.

3. Chintamani Mahapatra. (*Op.cit.*, pp.2-9).

By the second half of the 20th century offset machine was introduced in many printing presses of Orissa. The end of the 20th century brought a new era in printing technology in Orissa. The *Sambad*, a daily Oriya Newspaper, for the first time, introduced the computer system for news service and this was the modernization of printing system in Orissa. Though today, most of the newspaper printing presses in Orissa are now using computer and modern technology, still Orissa is much behind the other states of India in the development of printing technology.

Press Media in Orissa: An Evolutionary Study:

When the Christian missionaries came to Orissa in 1822, Rev.C. Lacey brought with him a hand set and started the first press in Cuttack in 1836-37 under the name of the Orissa Mission Press. Then in 1838, Oriya letters were brought from Srirampur of Bengal by Cuttack Mission Press, which produced the first Oriya monthly *The Janaruna*. Till 1865, the Orissa Mission Press was the only press in Orissa while 43 presses were working in Bengal during that period. Between 1865 and 1900, only 16 presses were operated in Orissa and mostly Cuttack and Balasore were the main centres for the growth of Oriya literature and journals at that time.⁴

The main purpose of Orissa Mission Press was the propagation of Christianity. The missionaries tried utmost to popularise their newspapers in Orissa. But they failed to do so because, at that time there was the lack of an awakened educated society in Orissa and there were not too many subscribers of the newspaper. The standard of

4. Natabar Samantaray, *Oriya Sahitya Itihas, 1803-1930*, (in Oriya), Bhubaneswar, 1964, pp.170-173.

newspaper was also not high. However, it cannot be denied that the British missionaries took the first step in spreading press media communication in Orissa.

In 1865, Late Sri Gouri Shankar Roy, who can be considered as the first person to develop journalism in Oriya language, established a press named as Cuttack Printing Press and became the editor of the first Oriya magazine titled *Utkal Dipika*. The idea of establishment of printing press and publication of newspaper was accentuated on account of the great famine, which brought disaster to Orissa. Late Gouri Shankar and his two friends made a press note of the horrible condition of the famine-stricken people. The colossal and catastrophic loss of human lives showed the failure of Government machinery to meet the situation and to render immediate relief to the affected people and to rescue them from the disaster. These ideas gave birth to the first publication of Oriya newspaper, the *Utkal Dipika*, under the editorship of late Gouri Shankar Roy, who was not only the Editor of that newspaper but also the Managing Director of Cuttack Printing Press. The horrible account of death and pestilence of lakhs of people in *Naanka Durvikshya* (the great famine) of 1865 were brought to light by Gouri Shankar Roy and his friends through the press and on the platform. As a result of that, the then Government of our country as well as the British Government of Home felt grave concern and they had created worldwide commotion. Due to this Great Famine, around 9 lakh people were lost and suffered the most. The village economy and the social structure were greatly disturbed. This fact was well reflected not in the missionary paper but in the *Utkal Dipika*, the first magazine published by the local patriot.

Utkal Dipika's contribution to the development of the State cannot be ignored. It was the only printed magazine, which reflected successfully a number of public issues of that period like, the introduction of local self-government, provision of irrigation facilities and flood control measures, introduction of compulsory primary education, provision of health measures in rural areas, economic measures in the interest of cultivators and artisans, implementation of permanent settlement laws to encourage the Zamindars and the introduction of welfare projects for the poor. The then Government could be aware of the public demands and made public policies accordingly on the basis of public opinion as reflected through this magazine. Though, it is true that the Britishers were less concerned about the public opinion of India in making the public policies but it cannot be denied that at least the Government was aware of the minds of the people of Orissa through the *Utkal Dipika*.

The contribution of *Utkal Dipika* for the growth of Oriya literature and Oriya Nationalism cannot be ignored. When Orissa was not a separate province and Oriya as a language was not recognised and having its identity. Sri Gouri Shankar Roy through *Utkal Dipika* tried to develop not only the language but also tried to awaken the unity and identity of Oriya people to have a separate province like other provinces of India. For a long time, due to the dearth of published books in Oriya language, the Bengali books were used as textbooks even for the Oriya students in the schools of Orissa.

Later, as more Oriya books were written, books in both the languages were studied in educational institutions which many Bengali Officials and academicians did not favour. Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, a

famous historian, pointed out that Oriya was studied by not more than ten lakhs people, so it could hardly remain as a separate language.⁵ But, *Utkal Dipika* reacted to it very strongly. It said that the statement given by Mr. Mitra was born out of ignorance. *Utkal Dipika* also noted that the Director of Education, Madras had suggested the government in 1871: if Oriyas were compelled to learn Telugu, it would be of great benefit to them, as in Telugu script there was a great number of books, while Oriya was a half uncivilised tongue and a small number of books in existence in Oriya were of no value.⁶ But this was exposed and condemned vehemently by *Utkal Dipika*.

Sambada Bahika, another newspaper, was published in 1868 at Balasore by Fakir Mohan Senapati and Govinda Chandra Pattanaik. At first, it was published as a monthly paper, then weekly and from 1869, it was published as a daily paper. The *Sambada Bahika* of Balasore was the second journal sponsored by Oriya Journalist and it pledged the expansion of education in Orissa. Two other newspapers namely, the *Utkal Hiteishini* and the *Cuttack Star* were published from Cuttack in 1869. The *Utkal Hiteishini* was published by the Cuttack Society and was edited by Kalipada Bandopadhya. The English version named as the Orissa Patriot, was published in 1888. The *Utkal Darpan* was published in 1873 and *Utkal Madhupa* was published in 1876. The first non-government paper published from South Orissa was the *Swedeshee*. It was printed and published in 1876 in three languages, namely, Oriya, English and Telugu. The second paper from Berhampur was the *Barta Lahari* in 1877. It was also published in three languages, namely, Oriya, English and Telugu. Another paper *The Aguyanee* was

5. Mrutyunjaya Rath, *Karmayogi Gouri Shankar* (in Oriya), Lark Books, Cuttack, 1977, pp.25-43.

6. Sudhakar Patnaik, *Sambad Patrara Odishara Katha* (in Oriya), Cuttack, Grantha Mandir, 1972, p.58.

edited by Ravi Philips in August 1872. Other newspapers published before 1870 were *The Cuttack Agnus*, the first English journal of Orissa started in January 1869; *The Cuttack Standard* in November 7, 1869 and *The Utkal Shubhankari* in November 8, 1869. The *Bideshee*, a weekly newspaper, was edited by Bandopadhyaya in November, 1873. The *Utkal Putra* was edited by Pyarimohan Acharya in April, 1873. It fought for the cause of education in Orissa. *The Sikshak* was edited by Bhakta Kabi Madhusudan Rao in April, 1874. It discussed the condition of education and carried articles on Oriya literature. He also edited *The Dharmabodhinee*, a monthly magazine on religion and spirituality in May, 1874. It was interesting to note that a monthly journal named *Central Provinces News* was published from Nagpur in Oriya language and was available to the *Utkal Dipika* in 1876. It was a lithographed journal and carried articles on history and education. *The Mayurbhanja* was sponsored by Maharaja Krushna Ch. Bhanja Deo in April 1879. It was a bi-lingual journal in Oriya and English. *The Purushottama Patrika* was a weekly magazine published from Puri by Haradhan Ray in 1880. *The Prajabandhu* was from Balasore. *The Taraka*, a monthly missionary paper, was published by the Sabbath School in June 1883. *The Sabaka* from Cuttack was edited by Bhabagrahee Das and Chaturbhuja Pattanaik in September, 1883, who later edited the monthly magazine *Sanskaraka* in October, 1884. It was later converted to a weekly. The *Dhumaketu* was published first from Balasore by Dwaraknath Das and Shiba Narayan Nayak in September, 1884. It was followed by *Nababiddhana* in 1884 and *Haribhakti Pradayinee* in April, 1885. The *Pradeepa* was published from Cuttack in January, 1885. At the same time, the *Sikhabandhu*, a monthly magazine, was

also released from Cuttack. It was irregularly published till 1939⁷. A missionary paper *Taraka Shubhabarta*, edited by J. F. Hill, was also published in 1886 from Orissa Mission Press. During the same year came out *Orissa Student*, an English weekly, edited by Laxmi Narayan Dasgupta. The *Naba Sambada*, edited by Bhutanath Basu, was first published in January 21, 1887 and later it was combined with an Oriya weekly paper named as *Odia Naba Sambada* which was first published in January, 1888. It was followed by the publication of *The Asha* from Cuttack being edited by Sadhu Charan Ray in October, 1888. The *Samalochana* being sponsored by Sahitya Sammilani was published from Cuttack in 1889. The *Sambalpur Hiteishini*, an outstanding weekly paper, was edited by Nilamani Bidyaratna came in 1889. This paper played an important role in advocating for a separate province of Orissa and opposed the proposal of annexing Sambalpur to Madhya Pradesh. Although named as the *Sambalpur Hiteishini* or *Sambalpur Patriot*, it was indeed writing for entire Orissa and gave more coverage to feudal states. A paper *Bijuli* was published in 1893 from Bamra and edited by Nilamani Bidyaratna. *Indradhanu*, another paper was also published in 1839 by Gouri Shankar Ray. In 1894, one more Oriya paper named *The Brahma* edited by Bhakta Kabi Madhusudan and the other was published. Two years later in August, 1896, a monthly magazine *The Utkal Bandhu*, edited by Braja Bandhu Mishra, was published. *The Ganjam News*, an English weekly, edited by Shyama Sundar Rajguru was first published in 1896 from Paralakhemundi and it dealt with the grievances of Oriyas. The *Utkal Sahitya*, which was also published in the same year and edited by Biswanath Kar, gave a new leadership to Oriya literature by providing

7. PTI News Agency, Bhubaneswar, also see Chandra Sekhara Mohapatra, *Orissara Patrapatrika* (in Oriya) 1980, and *Sambada O Sambadikata* (in Oriya) 2nd part, Text Book Bureau, Bhubaneswar, 1978.

a forum for talented writers. The *Ganjam Odia Hitabadinee* was first published in June 1899. The *Alochana*, another paper, was also published in the same year by Jogesh Chandra Das from Deogarh in Burma. Most of the papers during the time were of small book size, only *the Sambalpur Hiteishinee* attained the size of modern daily paper.⁸

A review of the performance of Orissan print journals during the 19th century however, shows that they had several important achievements. While the early missionary papers introduced Oriya prose writings in describing current developments, the later journals succeeded in defending and retaining Oriya languages in the administration, educational institutions and in standardizing prose writing. The Oriya language had become enriched and widespread among the Oriyas living outside Orissa by the development of Oriya newspapers and magazines. These journals played important role in giving separate identity to Oriya language and Oriya people during a period when Orissa was not a separate province of British India.

There were also not many Oriyas with modern education and rather non-Oriya speaking people dominated over them. Hence, the main task of the newspapers, magazines and journals during that period was to preserve and enrich Oriya language on the one hand and to educate the Oriya people in their native language on the other.

In the first decade of the 20th century, only three Oriya and one English magazine were started, such as, *The Gadajat Basinee*, *The Neelachala Samachar* and *The Mukura* in Oriya and *The Star of Utkal* in English. The *Gadajat Basinee* was a weekly magazine

8. Chintamani Mohapatra. *Op.cit.* P.9.

published from Talcher and sponsored by Raja Kishore Chandra Birabara Harichandan. In 1903, *Nilachala Samachar*, a monthly literary magazine was published from Puri and the *Mukura* was published in 1905 and was edited by Braja Sundara Das. In 1905, *The Star of Utkal* was published and this claimed to be the first English weekly of Orissa, edited by Khirod Chandra Ray Choudhury from Cuttack. As its popularity increased, it was later brought out twice in a week. It voiced national feelings and sentiments of the people of Orissa. The Oriya and English weekly, edited by Madhusudan Das, were brought out in 1910.

Several other papers were published in Oriya language during the period between 1911 and 1920. In 1913, three papers namely *Asha*, *Prathamik Sikshya* and *Nabajyoti* were published. In 1914, four more papers were published. In 1919, the *Samaj*, *Sahakara* and *Seba*, the three important newspapers, were published. The *Utkal Basee* was published from Ichhapur prior to the publication of the *Asha*. It was edited by Banikinkar Sharma. Another paper, the *Pallibasee*, was also published from Belaguntha in Ganjam district during that period.

The *Asha*, the weekly paper, published by Sri Shasi Bhusan Rath, brought about a revolution in Orissa journalism. The *Asha* was an useful instrument to unite the Oriyas together and to voice their common grievances on the national platform. Subsequently, the *Asha* was published as a newspaper daily from April 13, 1928, and was named as the *Dainika Asha*. The *Asha* served as the training ground for the journalists like Godabarisha Mohapatra, Shreeharsa Mishra, Ramesh Chandra Mohanty and many others. Its publication was suspended for some years and again it became published in Berhampur

from 1982 with Shreeharsa Mishra as its first editor followed by Chandra Sekhar Mohapatra and Pramod Panda as its editors subsequently.⁹

Although, *Dainika Asha* was the first printed daily in Oriya, the first lithographed daily newspaper was the *Gandhi Samachar* brought out by Niranjan Pattanaik from Berhampur in 1927.

The *Satyabadi*, a literary monthly from Sakhigopal of Puri district, was edited by Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das in 1914. The editor of this paper created a new era in Oriya literature by providing a forum for talented writers like Pandit Nilakantha Das, Pandit Godabarish Mishra and historian Krupasindhu Mishra. A journal titled *Sahakar* was published in 1919, edited by Sri Balakrushna Kar. Another journal titled *Jugabina* was published from Cuttack, edited by Sri Harihar Mohapatra. In 1934, a journal named *Nababharat* was edited and published by Pt. Nilakantha Das. During this period, another journal titled *Dagara* was published in Balasore and edited by Kantakabi Laxmikanta Mohapatra. *Niakhunta*, a journal, was published in 1938 by Godabarish Mohapatra. Another paper titled *Gramaseba* was published by Khadimandal in 1948. It was edited by Sri Manmohan Choudhury. After independence, Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, took initiative to publish a monthly magazine named *Jhankar* from Prajatantra Prachar Samiti in 1949 and it is still continuing as a monthly magazine. Similarly *Nabajivana* was published in 1957 and edited by Chintamani Mishra.¹⁰

Though communication through press media has developed

9. C. Mishra and Gopal Mishra. *Sambada Patra and Satabdi Ra Odissa*. (in Oriya). Bhubaneswar Publication. 1989. p.12.

10. C.S. Mohapatra. *Orissa Ra Patra Patrika*. Orissa Text Book Bureau. Bhubaneswar. 1980. p.10.

late in Orissa compared to other states like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, the contribution of press-media in enriching the Oriya language, strengthening the movement for a separate province for Oriyas and creating the national consciousness among the Oriyas cannot be underestimated. As Orissa was a part of Bihar and Bengal for a long time, it was but natural that the identity of Oriya speaking people was undermined. The heritage, the culture and the richness of language were no doubt developed with the development of press media. The press had got tremendous impact in unifying the Oriya speaking people and in creating a separate province Orissa for the Oriyas. Apart from the provincial affinity, the development of press media also influenced the National Struggle for freedom in Orissa. The role of press media during the pre-independence period cannot be ignored, so far as the educational status of the province is concerned. As the printing news were published in Oriya language, people became interested to know the national and international news and this forced them to go through education. Hence, the importance of Press media during the pre-independence period is tremendous in the socio-political process of the state.

However, after independence, a number of newspapers are published all over Orissa and it is difficult to give an exhaustive list of all those papers.¹¹ But the development of newspapers in Orissa is much slower than that of any other States in India. In 1958, only 4 Oriya daily newspapers and one English daily newspaper were being published but, it has increased to 38 in 1998. The progress in the field of newspapers in Orissa even after independence is not so encouraging.

11. See Appendice 4 and 5.

Many of the newspapers in Orissa are short-lived. They are not able to compete with the established newspapers and survive. The quality of newspaper printing is still to improve with the modern technology. The newspapers in Orissa are neither developed in technical ground nor in quality. Even in post-independence period, the newspaper industry in Orissa is neither financially viable nor prospering. Most of the papers depend upon their sales rather than on the advertisements. as Orissa is a least developed state, so also the newspapers industry. In Orissa, no newspaper is backed by the industrialists or the capitalists. So the financial viability of the newspapers is very discouraging.

In Orissa, most of the newspapers, except *The Samaj* are sponsored by political persons. *The Samaj* still continues to be the property of the Lok Sevak Mandal. Hence, political interference in case of *The Samaj* is very less. There are many newspapers, which are owned and financed and owned by the political persons, so they have become more or less partisan papers. Publication of political events in newspapers is very much necessary for creating political awareness and interest among the citizens. But when the events become distorted because of too much of partisan favouritism, the communicated news instead of giving correct information becomes the source of abuse of the objectives of news media. The press, now a days instead of being the mouthpiece of national life and thought, becomes the mouthpiece of political parties. It is found that today there are many newspapers but very few of them are non-political, non-partisan, impartial, wedded to the objective of nation-building in a democracy like that of India and Orissa. Sometimes, the newspapers of Orissa have become too regionalised and localised so that the news contents go against unity

and integrity of the Nation. We cannot but admit that this trend is quite disturbing and unhealthy.

On the other hand, it can be admitted that in the post-independence period in Orissa the newspapers cater to the readers different kinds of subjects, which are social, political, cultural and commercial etc. The newspapers have crossed the distinctions of age, class and caste of the people. The newspapers also cater to the needs of every group of people like children, women, adult, businessmen, agriculturists and many others- through the publication of specific features for specific groups of people. The world of fine arts like music, drama, painting, dance etc., is also presented to the readers. Several subjects like philosophy, science, literature, commerce also find place in today's newspapers in Orissa.

But the management of newspaper industry in Orissa sometimes faces difficulty particularly in the present days. As most of the newspapers are owned by political persons, management does not become efficient and results in internecine quarrel amongst the employees as well as between the employer and employees. Professionalism in press job is still lacking in Orissa.

SUMMARY:

Along with other factors, development of Press media indicates the progress and advancement of a Nation or state. Orissa, Oriyas and Oriya language faced an identity crisis upto 1936, when Orissa became a separate province of India. Therefore, development of Press media in Orissa took place one century after that of West Bengal. However, the contribution of news media to the social life prior to independence

cannot be underestimated. The newspapers of Orissa during this period reflected the disaster caused by Great Famine, the de-recognition of Oriya as a separate language and the demands of the Oriya people in different parts of other State. In creating Oriya Nationalism and Orissa as a separate province, the role of Oriya newspapers was noteworthy. During that period also Oriya newspapers created national consciousness among the people to join the National Movement for independence of the country.

After independence, development of newspapers in number, objectives and printing technology has taken place in Orissa, but the progress is not as satisfactory as it is in other States. The number of daily newspaper is still less, printing technology is not as modern as it should be, management is not efficient and newspapers are becoming too much political and partisan. So after independence, the survival of newspapers in Orissa has become a question. However, newspapers cater to the needs social, economic, political, cultural and commercial of the people of today's Orissa.