CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

Punjab passed through a period of social and political turmoil from 1978 to 1992. The social fabric remained under pressure and the normal political process stood suspended. There was a situation of insecurity to the lives and property of the people. The killing of targeted and innocent persons, bank decoities, snatching of arms, and physical annihilation of the opponents disrupted the free movement and normal social life. These were the visible manifestations of a serious crisis in the state. During this period a section of vernacular press in Punjab had been engaged in fomenting the religious divide between the Hindus and the Sikhs by reinforcing the fusion of linguistic and religious identities. This led to the reinforcing of religious based linguistic identities over the other competing identities such as class, gender and profession. The people of Punjab during this time were made to swallow a number of lies, bogus stories, distorted facts and false propaganda. The press was equally involved in reporting blindly and reproducing the official versions without verifying them.

The present work is a modest attempt to make an analysis of the role of three popular vernacular newspapers published from Jalandhar (Punjab) i.e. *Ajit, Punjab Kesari* and *Nawan Zamana* on the major issues and incidents during the period of 1978 to 1984. *Ajit* and *Nawan Zamana* are printed in Punjabi while *Punjab Kesari* in Hindi. These newspapers reflected different ideological perspectives while reporting the issues and subsequent developments which followed. The happenings and developments were explained and expressed in different ways by these newspapers. The communal tones were found in the contents published in the first two newspapers i.e. *Ajit* and *Punjab Kesari*, while *Nawan Zamana* put up its views in some objective way.

Beyond the physical requirements of food and shelter, Mankind needs to communicate with fellow human beings. This urge for communication is a primal one and in our contemporary civilization a necessity for survival. Subsequent to the need for communication, the media evolved and developed as a potential instrument in informing the people and sharing their destinies. Today, the media not only reflects the society but also is one of the major instruments of change in it. It also determines
the values, tastes, and the minds of the people.\textsuperscript{2} The media, like other institutions, has changed under the impact of the rise of democracy, industrial and technological revolutions and the rise of urbanization. In this process, it has gained importance and became an important means in keeping a political system in operation. It has acquired a great social significance and has become instrumental in creating an informed public, which in its turn has created the awareness of a democratic society. A well-informed and participatory public is the backbone of a healthy democracy. Along with a strong civil society, a vibrant and vigilant media is the sinew that connects and binds the people and their representatives. It is sometimes referred to as the Fourth Estate, integral to a democratic dispensation. It reflects the public opinion as well as moulds it.\textsuperscript{3} Furthermore, in a world of increasing interdependence between men and between nations, the flow of information has become the vital factor in creating mutual understanding.\textsuperscript{4}

The mass media has become an integral part of the social system. According to Peterson, "the media is seen as a mode of social interaction of various sorts amongst individuals, between individuals and institutional orders of society and among institutions themselves, all this they do by the symbolic transfer of meanings, values and beliefs.\textsuperscript{5} The importance of media has increased to the extent that it provides motivation for social change; creates the climate for development and influence attitudes and traditional practices.\textsuperscript{6}

The print-media made its entry in the seventeenth century and its potentiality as a mass communicator was soon realized as an informer as well as a propagator. It emerged as a powerful weapon to manipulate public opinion and to rule the people through manipulation.\textsuperscript{7} All the governments, even the liberal democracies,\textsuperscript{8} control and manipulate the media through different agencies and these agencies sometimes observe neither any minimum media ethics nor do they care for any moral, constitutional or political authority in order to achieve selfish ends, and spread unfounded, imbalanced and inflammatory stories, which aggravate a tense situation rather than ameliorate the things. They create and depict false incidents and situations to suit their designs.\textsuperscript{9}

The use of media as an additional weapon of war assumed significance during the First World War and it reached a level of higher sophistication in the Second World War. The use of news agencies for management of information and disinformation became very significant in the Second World War period. The word
'propaganda' assumed its current negative connotation during that period. War by media is categorized as low intensity warfare alongside subversion, insurgency and psychological sabotage. This has been demonstrated by the success of the media-war unleashed by the United States with the active connivance of its allies, at the time of war against Afghanistan in 2002 and Iraq in 1991 and 2003. What is still sought to be shrouded in mystery is the same treacherous deception practiced against humanity at the time of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This type of manipulation of media was also done by the so called impartial media corporations like BBC, while reporting on Falkland’s war in 1982 and on trouble spots like Kashmir etc.

In communication studies, the term mass media has come to be a useful collective phrase which includes press, cinema, radio and television. The new technology has given birth to the internet which is a new and more advanced medium of communication. Written or the print media generally includes letters, hand bills, posters, bill boards, pamphlets, books, magazines, handwriting on the walls and streets and direct mail literature etc. Among audio-visual media, television is the most powerful medium of communication while other audio-visual media includes public speeches, motion pictures, theatres, marching bands, mass demonstrations, talking exhibitions at fairs, expositions and art shows etc.

The newspaper, however, seems to be the most important mass media in the present times. Probably originating in the Imperial Rome, a newsheet is said to have been started by Julius Caesar and posted in the forum to give accounts of Senate activities, battles and military appointments. The main impetus to the growth of the newspaper came after the development of printing press, when commercial newsheets were introduced into Britain via Germany and Netherlands. These were the mercuries of the mid-seventeenth century culminating in the first daily newspaper in 1702. The press, unlike the electronic media, was not born into a relatively mature democracy. It was considered as an unwelcome guest by the ruling elites because of its subversive tendencies, revolutionary ideas denouncing the government abuses and social scandals in revealing countless unlawful acts and injustices. Watergate, Vietnam, Bofors, excesses of emergency, riots, wars etc. are the most recent examples of the press's ability to unearth facts, to forge opinion and to encourage the public to act against the atrocities.
The press today is the most dynamic instrument of change in society and politics. An unbreakable organ of public opinion, it is an invincible bulwark of people's rights and liberties. It is possible for the states to manage their affairs without the legislature, executive and judiciary, but not without the palladium of liberty, which is the safety valve of people's ideals and aspirations i.e. the press.\(^{18}\) It is considered one of the important vehicles for political communication among the people. It has positively played important role in arousing people's consciousness and righteous anger whenever the governments have tried to ignore atrocities and gross violation of human rights.\(^{19}\)

The importance of the press has been highlighted in India during the freedom struggle. It gave impetus to the growing political consciousness among the people during this period and the leaders of the freedom struggle fully utilized it to mobilize people against the British Empire. It represented the public opinion touching the patriotic nerve in the country. It was during this period that the political writings in Indian vernacular languages became an effective instrument of freedom struggle. These writings were politically powerful and anti-imperialist in substance and tone. Its impact made Lord Litton to issue a special statement to dismiss "Indian language press irrelevant and non-existent."\(^{19}\)

The rising role of vernacular press became very significant during this period. Several newspapers in Indian vernacular languages appeared during this period which whole-heartedly supported the movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. These newspapers inspired the Indian people to take a deeper interest not only in the political struggle for freedom, but also for economic and social justice. The regular reading of newspapers or listening to others became the most important factor in politicizing the people of India against the British domination and making them aware of their lack of freedom. It was witnessed that during various stages of Indian political struggles such as Home Rule, Salt-Satyagraha, Non-Cooperation and Quit India Movement, the press was able to exercise tremendous influence to mobilize public opinion against the British rule.\(^{20}\)

The contribution of Punjabi vernacular press in the freedom movement was also noteworthy. The incidents of Kamma Gata Maru and Baj Baj Ghat ignited the otherwise political moderate attitude of Punjabi press.\(^{21}\) It played a significant role during the various movements originated in Punjab, for example the Singh Sabha Movement, the Akali Movement etc. and it developed the element of patriotism among
the people of Punjab. The freedom movement brought a revolution in the Punjabi journalism as it came to the forefront to mobilize the people to overthrow the chains of slavery. During this time the Indians abroad, i.e. in USA and in Canada, launched the Gadhar Movement and for making the Indians aware about the policies and programmes of Gadhar Movement they launched a paper named Gadhar in different languages including Punjabi. It infused a new spirit among the people against the British Empire and consequently the British Government banned the entry of this paper in India.22 In addition to it, other Punjabi papers23 also started writing openly against the British rule which highlighted the incidents like imposition of martial law, Jallian Wala Bag massacre and demolition of wall of gurdwara Raqab Ganj, New Delhi etc. and openly condemned the government policies.24 The incident of Raqab Ganj gave birth to the Gurdwara Reform Movement to liberate the Sikh gurdwaras from the clutches of the Mahants. During this time, a paper named Akali came into existence which later on led all the Akali movements and morchas.25 Sohan Singh Josh while writing Akali Morchian da Itihas stated that this paper became the tongue of the people and played significant role in both the Gurdwara Reform Movement and the national movement.26 After Akali another important newspaper i.e. Akali Pattarka started publishing from Lahore. It was dominated by the radicals of that time and was very popular among the rural people. Though its circulation was limited but it had an extensive influence over the common masses.27

On the other side, the press in Punjab remained involved in the lingual, regional and communal issues which sharpened the communal consciousness and emotions of the people.28 The reason was that the growth of press in Punjab was also connected with the community consciousness as Punjabi language was used by the Sikh organizations and Hindi by the Hindu organizations.29 This is evident from the religious reform movements i.e. Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha which were launched in Punjab during the last quarter of the 19th century in which the vernacular press was frequently used by the leaders of these movements to advance their views. The aim of the Singh Sabha Movement was to protect the Sikhs from their absorption in Hinduism, whereas the Arya Samaj Movement launched by Swami Dayanand Sarswati reconverted some outcaste Rehata Sikhs, using a ceremony called Shuddhi. There was a considerable propaganda launched by the leaders of the Arya Samaj Movement in which they hired some professional missionaries to preach their viewpoint. A stream of tracts, pamphlets and newspapers were printed in English as
well as in vernacular languages to supply the Samaj missionaries with a wide variety of literature to bring the Sikhs back into the Hindu fold. The Singh Sabha Movement on the other hand, encouraged the educated bilingual young Sikhs to counter the propaganda launched by the Arya Samajis. The functionaries of the Lahore Sabha took the initiative to use the print media for this purpose; consequently the Khalsa Press came into existence in 1883. The two newspapers i.e. The Khalsa Gazette (an Urdu weekly) and Khalsa Akhbar (a Punjabi weekly) were founded in 1884 and 1886 respectively. The Arya Samajis, in 1899 circulated pamphlets entitled Sikh Hindu Hain, and against this Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha published his classic tract Hum Hindu Nahin. Both were the expressions of a bitter debate.

(As the decade of 1920s unfolded, according to Prem Raman Uparty, "the three communities in Punjab increasingly used the press to disseminate ill will and hatred towards each other.") The vernacular press of Punjab became the single most important vehicle responsible for the flaring-up of the inter-communal tensions as each community armed itself with dailies, weeklies and monthlies to propagate their views and to attack or even ridicule others. Rise of communalism during this period made the press sectarian in its approach. The Hindi and Urdu Press largely appealed to the Hindu and the Muslim sentiments respectively while the Gurmukhi press appealed to the Sikhs. Thus, the pre-independence era witnessed a complete communal divide between the three main communities i.e. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.

In 1947, Punjab got divided into two sovereign states i.e. India and Pakistan. The Akalis representing the interests of the Sikhs started working for the formation of a state in the Indian Punjab in which the Sikhs could form a numerical majority. This demand was sometimes expressed in clear and unambiguous terms of a Sikh majority state in the form of Punjabi speaking state. The Hindi and Punjabi press in the post-independence Punjab got divided on this issue and took a diametrically opposite stand against each other. Akali Dal launched its first major agitational movement for the Punjabi Suba in 1950s but its demand was rejected by the States Reorganization Commission in 1955. The Akalis under the leadership of Master Tara Singh believed that their interests could be protected only if they had a Sikh majority area having a separate territorial entity within India. The Punjabi Suba Movement launched by the Akalis remained an important issue in Punjab till 1966. The total history of the Punjabi Suba Movement throws light on the significance of language as a symbol of
group identity. The non-Punjabi press identified the Punjabi language as the language of the Sikhs and opposed the adoption of Punjabi as an official language of Punjab. The Hindi press became suspicious of the demands and assertions by the Akalis. Hind Samachar, Punjab Kesari, Pratap, Vir Pratap and even Milap attacked the Punjabi Suba demand as being anti-national. The Punjabi newspapers advocated the development of Punjabi language and acceptance of its status as the primary language of Punjab while the Hindi press supported the Save Hindi Agitation against the Punjabi Suba demand and asked for Maha Punjab or Akhand Punjab. The Hindi Press appealed the Hindus to register their mother language as Hindi rather than Punjabi, consequently most of the Hindus declared Hindi as their mother tongue in 1961 census.

During those days Sant Fateh Singh, an Akali leader started emphasizing the secular character of the demand of Punjabi Suba, differing from Master Tara Singh’s viewpoint. Sant was of the view that Sikhs were interested in a linguistic state irrespective of its area and religious composition of its population. Fixing his target, he went on fast unto death in January 1961 to move the Prime Minister to concede the legitimate demand for a Punjabi province purely on linguistic basis. It was Master Tara Singh who, on the assurance of Jawahar Lal Nehru to concede the claims of Punjabi language, insisted the Sant to give up his fast, which he did on January 9, 1961. In between the Congress Party swept the assembly polls of 1962, enabling the entry of Partap Singh Kairon to the second term of his Chief Ministership. The Akali leaders began to move away from Master Tara Singh. The Akali Dal was divided into two groups in 1963. Later Sant Fateh Singh’s group gained strength by winning 95 seats out of 138 elected seats in the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee elections held in January 1965.

In May 1965, a conference was held at Ludhiana in which the Sant Akali Dal moved a resolution that there was no other alternative left with the Sikhs than the demand for a self-determined status within the Indian Union. It is to mention here that Master Akali Dal also supported this resolution. The Arya Samaj press in Punjab interpreted this resolution as a demand for a sovereign Sikh state. In yet another resolution passed by the working committee of the Sant Akali Dal, it was stated that denying a linguistic state in Punjab was a clear discrimination against its people. However, the new state of Punjab was constituted on November 1966 as a result of Sant Fateh Singh’s continued efforts for conceding the linguistic basis for new state.
The capital city of Chandigarh and some Punjabi-speaking areas were kept out of the new Punjab.

In the first elections to the new Punjab in 1967, the Congress failed to secure a majority in the Assembly. Justice Gurnam Singh formed the first non-Congress United Front Ministry in March 1967 with the support of Jan Sangh, Communist Parties and others. It was alleged that Congress’ maneuvering made the Gurnam Singh Government to fall on November 22, 1967. The President rule was imposed in Punjab within two years of its formation.41

During the 16th Akali Dal Conference held at Batala on September 28-29, 1968 the demand was made to review the ‘centre-state relations.’42 It was added by the Akali leadership to the earlier concern i.e. getting Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas included in the new Punjab and regaining the control of power and irrigation projects. After the mid-term elections to the state assembly in 1969, Justice Gurnam Singh again formed the government in coalition with Jan Sangh.43 Later, Parkash Singh Badal replaced him as Chief Minister on March 27, 1970 due to internal dissension in the Akali Dal itself. He also had to advice the Governor to dissolve the Assembly due to cracks in the Akali-Jan Sangh coalition. The President rule was again imposed in Punjab on June 15, 1971.44

The Akali Dal considered the alleged maneuvering of the Congress Party ‘ultimately instrumental’ in overthrowing the Akali-led ministries.45 It decided to review its policies and programmes for which a sub-committee comprising 12 members was made in December 1972. The sub-committee held ten successive meetings and prepared a document which was unanimously adopted by the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal at a meeting held at Anandpur Sahib. Since the draft resolution was adopted there, on October 16-17, 1973, it came to be known as the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.46 The primary objective stated in the resolution was to create ‘proeminence of Khalsa’ in a given territory.47 The text of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution became the subject of considerable controversy while one section of the press supported it and the other equated it with a demand of sovereign Sikh state which could pose a threat to the unity and integrity of India. However, on this question the Akalis denied that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution envisaged an autonomous Sikh state.48 While clarifying the party stand, the then President of the Akali Dal declared:
Let us make it clear once and for all that the Sikhs have no designs to get away from India in any manner. What they simply want is that they should be allowed to live within India as Sikhs, free from all direct and indirect interference and tampering with their religious way of life.\(^{49}\)

In between this, Congress won the assembly elections in March 1972. Gyani Zail Singh became the first Congress Chief Minister of the new Punjab.\(^{50}\) The important incident of his tenure as a Chief Minister was the declaration of emergency in the country on June 25, 1975 which brought him into a direct clash with the Akalis.\(^{51}\) The Akalis gave a tough fight to the Congress led governments both at Delhi and Chandigarh on the issue of emergency. The Akali Dal had started a campaign against the Congress even before the declaration of emergency. It had organized a big rally against the Congress at Ludhiana in 1974.\(^{52}\) And now immediately after the proclamation of emergency had been issued, the executive committee of the Akali Dal unanimously criticized the declaration of emergency and resolved to begin a Save Democracy Morcha. The morcha continued until the general elections were announced in January 1977. Over 40,000 Akalis were arrested or detained during this time.\(^{53}\)

In the Parliamentary Election of 1977, the Akali Dal and Janata Party alliance won 12 out of 13 seats.\(^{54}\) It also swept the assembly polls later by winning 82 out of 117. The Akali Dal alone had clear majority in the assembly but it adhered to the process of coalition and formed the government in alliance with the Janata Party.\(^{55}\) The political opponents of the Akalis in power started creating difficulties for them on the socio-cultural front.\(^{56}\) The Sant Nirankaris of Delhi were alleged to have been encouraged to hold their congregation at Amritsar on the day of Vaisakhi of 1978. On April 12, 1978, they took out a procession in Amritsar and allegedly made remarks derogatory to the Sikh orthodoxy. On April 13, 1978, a score of Sikhs went to the site of Nirankaris’ congregation to protest against their alleged practice of denigrating Guru Granth Sahib and the Sikh Gurus.\(^{57}\) In the ensuing clash 18 persons were reported killed.\(^{58}\)

Thus, the history of the beginning of the Punjab Crisis can be traced back to this incident of armed clash between Nirankaris and the groups of the followers of Akhand Kirtani Jatha and Sant Bhindranwale. It was considered as the major catalyst of the crisis in Punjab. This clash between the Nirankaris and the followers of
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Bhindranwale was not the first, as an earlier clash between them had taken place during Bhindranwale’s predecessor Sant Kartar Singh’s time at Chowk Mehta in 1973. But it was not as severe as the one in 1978. The 1978 incident was widely covered by the local and the national media. It was condemned by all the newspapers. In the beginning a demand was made for a judicial enquiry to the incident. However, the reporting of the news and editorials by the Punjabi and Hindi newspapers in Punjab showed a considerable degree of divergence and advocated almost contrary viewpoints on the whole issue. The different newspapers gave different versions of this development.

The Punjabi newspaper Ajit elevated the killed to the status of Shaheeds (martyrs). It reported 18 ‘Singhs martyred’ and 200 injured. The reporting of the news in Vir Pratap and Punjab Kesari gave different aspects of the issue by describing it as a clash between Nihangs and the Nirankaris. Times of India on 14 April 1978 also stated in its editorial that a group of Nihangs forcefully entered the stadium where the human unity convention of Nirankaris was going on and in the ensuing clash 17 persons were killed and more than 100 got injured. The editor of Punjab Kesari, Lala Jagat Narain demanded that only a judicial enquiry could ensure justice. He also warned that the Akali Dal-Janata Party Government in Punjab could function smoothly only if the Hindu-Sikh unity was maintained. So, evidently judicial enquiry was presented as necessary for not only finding the truth but also for maintaining the Hindu-Sikh unity. On the other hand, Ajit in its editorial retaliated sharply by stating that Lalaji wanted to spoil the atmosphere of peace in the state by making it an issue of Hindu-Sikh of Punjab. It demanded that action should be taken immediately against the culprits and asked for the police inquiry into the incident. Another pro-left daily i.e. Nawan Zamana demanded the judicial enquiry to the incident and asked the Akali Dal-Janata government to restore peace in the province. Therefore, a long polemical debate started on whether there should be police enquiry or judicial enquiry. The lines were drawn along the communal lines.

The vernacular press in Punjab was not confined to this controversy alone. It had taken a diametrically opposite stand on the issue of state autonomy contained in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution which also remained a debatable issue during the period under study. Though, the demand for greater autonomy for the states in administrative or financial spheres was also made by the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu and CPI (M) in West Bengal.
But it was given a sectarian and communal orientation by one section of press in Punjab. The three newspapers, Ajit, Punjab Kesari and Nawam Zamana interpreted and judged it in their own respective ways. Ajit in one of its editorials described it as a genuine demand for truly federal relations. Taking note of the writings in many newspapers which described it as a demand for a separate Sikh state and threat to the nation's unity and integrity, it stated that they had misunderstood the issue; the demand for autonomy in financial sphere could not be termed as demand for separation. The Nawam Zamana held the demand for more financial powers to the State was correct but it accused the Akalis for making it a communal and sectarian issue and thus harming the larger interests of the inter-communal harmony and the unity of the country. The sharpest tirade, however, against the autonomy demand came from Panjab Kesari. It indeed went much farther and described the demand as "extremely dangerous", "open treachery" and "anti-national" and branded the demand as very much close to Jinah’s Two-Nations Theory.

The other events during this period were the Akali Dal's congregation at Ludhiana in October 1978, Elections of Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee in 1979, dismissal of Akali Government in 1980 and coming of Congress Party in power, the murder of the Chief of Nirankari Sect, Baba Gurbachan Singh and the editors of Hind Samachar Group i.e. Lala Jagat Narain and Ramesh Chander and the dramatic arrest and release of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale etc. All these issues provided a lot of material to the vernacular press to spread communal tension and antagonism.

Between 1981 and 1984, the Akali Dal launched a series of mass-agitations to present a set of demands to the central government. In 1981 Sant Harchand Singh Longowal called upon a Sikh Samelan at gurudwara Alamgir, Ludhiana and declared Dharmyudh in the light of the demands presented in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1978. Till 1984 several meeting were held between the Central Government and the Akali leaders but no agreement was reached. Due to the failure of talks the situation became critical. In between this the violence assumed the serious proportions in the state which led to the unfortunate incident of “Operation Blue Star” in the Golden Temple Complex. Throughout this period the vernacular press in Punjab had been critically engaged in fomenting the religious divide between the Hindus and Sikhs. In its study on the role of the press in inflaming communal passion
in Punjab, the editors Guild of India reported;

Responding to the general climate of sectarian confrontation and polarization, it is disturbing to note that newspapermen in Punjab by their own admission are divided all the way down on communal lines; it was repeatedly told this quite candidly, in Chandigarh, Jalandhar and Amritsar by a variety of journalists both Hindu and Sikh. This is a sad commentary and a matter of deep professional and social concern. If the press becomes partisan, the images it reflects will be distorted. The reporters who met us preferred to discuss matters individually and separately rather than collectively in an open forum.70

**Review of Literature**

Looking for the studies on Indian Press it is surprising to note that barring a few books by some reputed journalists and writers there is hardly any scholarly study available on the topic. Though some writers have made good studies on the Punjab Press, yet there is a paucity of literature directly related to the vernacular press of Punjab.

A Ganesan in his book71 made a good attempt to analyze the trends in the writings of the press during the national movement and their ultimate impact on the public opinion. The study is related to the socio-economic issues that figured in the newspapers in Tamil Nadu during this time. The author in his work has analyzed different issues of the period, the respective stands taken by different social groups as well as the sections of the press and their consequences. The details of the different trends, seemed complicated much because of political overtones. The nationalist press formed itself into a unit and carried on propaganda against the British rulers and the Justice Party. The home-rule propaganda of the *New India, The Hindu, The Swadesamitran, The Desabakthan* and *The Tamil Nadu* greatly contributed to their popularity. The Anglo-Indian Press which enjoyed the official patronage assisted the Dravidian Press to carry on its propaganda against the nationalist press. The study is very useful to understand the role of vernacular press during the national movement.
A.S. Iyengar in his work\textsuperscript{72} has also assessed the role played by the vernacular Indian Press during the freedom struggle. The author has analyzed the editorials and news coverage of the newspapers of Indian languages leaned towards social problems and which often attacked the oppression and injustices of the British rule. The book vividly describes the history of Indian media. It reflects more than a historical chronicle of the Indian freedom struggle. Throughout the colonial period, the media in India was neatly divided into the English and vernacular press reflecting the division of Indian society into the modern and traditional and the Western and the Indian. It was the vernacular press which led the freedom struggle while the English press continued to cater to the western educated readers who isolated themselves from the Indian social mainstream. The author has presented a narration of the most fascinating story of the Indian freedom struggle through the exercise of the basic human right the "freedom of expression".

Basanti Sinha in his book\textsuperscript{73} has carried out a useful study over the role of Bihar Press during the freedom movement covering the period from 1912 to 1947. The press in Bihar generally supported the non-cooperation movement and highlighted the steps taken by Mahatma Gandhi during the civil-disobedience, Harijan's upliftment, Quit India movement and for the communal harmony. Alongwith depicting the role of press in highlighting the social problems like position of women and the measures connected with their upliftment, the problems of law and order, the poverty of the people and attitude of the government towards these problems, the book contains views of the press on communal riots and communal harmony. On the issue of cow-slaughter at the Sonepur fair, the positive role of one of the newspapers of Bihar, named "Searchlight" in bringing harmony between Hindu and Muslim communities is well discussed. In another incident of communal riots on the occasion of Bakr Id at Patna and Gaya in 1916, where several Hindus were short dead, the press played positive role and directed the people to concentrate on the supremacy of the nation. This book is very useful in understanding the role of press during communal riots.

S Natrajan in his book\textsuperscript{74} argues that the Indian language press in Punjab was an offshoot of Hindi journalism till 1880. According to the author, during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign, the English missionaries set up a press at Ludhiana. In 1854, a Guurmukh newspaper was printed by the missionaries to propagate their faith. The author has noted that the growth of Punjabi journalism was related to the movements
launched in Punjab from time to time. Though the book contains very little references of the history of Punjabi press, it is very useful for the knowledge of the history and background of the Indian Press.

Sharad Karnkhanis in his book\textsuperscript{75} has analyzed the influence of press on important events in the political history of free India unto 1980, the years in which Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power after the collapse of Janata Government. The author has also attempted to analyze the role of the press related to the communal riots, agitations, demonstrations which erupted at the time of partition in 1947 and afterwards. He has made special reference to the role played by the press during emergency (1975-1977). Though the book contains a very little information on Punjab Press but it is very useful for understanding the role of print-media during the crisis-ridden situations.

Shakil Akhtar's work\textsuperscript{76} highlights the role of mass-media in developing countries. The study has been conducted to comprehend the political sociology of mass-media in Pakistan through discourse analysis of some important political events unfolding between 1970 to 1990 and developing a sociological analysis of the political events and the role of media in shaping the contours and dynamics of these events. The main focus of the book is to examine the triangular relationship between media, politics and religion. This study has identified Pakistan's cultural ethos as parasitic landlordism. The author has not only analyzed the various attempts of manipulation of the political discourse by the different regimes but has also defined the role and scope of media in maintaining the status-que and keeping the forces of change in check by the powerful elements like landlords, Ulemas, civil bureaucracy and the military in Pakistan. The interdisciplinary approach adopted by the author helps in understanding the interrelationship between society, history, ideology and politics.

Suba Singh in his book\textsuperscript{77} written in Punjabi has given a detailed history of the press in Punjab. The Punjab press has been growing side by side the various movements which were launched in Punjab. It has also been developing alongside the political movements, bearing all the encroachments on it by the government of the time. It has remained affiliated with the different organizations and parties and kept on changing with the passage of time. According to the author, the Punjabi press played a very significant role during the freedom struggle. He has given a very useful analysis of the different Punjabi newspapers. This study has mainly focused on the
various movements and processes that have contributed a lot for the development of Punjabi Press. The book has been written prior to the present Punjab crisis but is very useful for understanding the history of Punjab press and its role during the different movements in Punjab.

Gyani Bhajan Singh in his work\textsuperscript{78} has praised the role of Punjab Press to highlight the problems faced by the common masses. The focus of the study is to analyze the contribution of the Punjabi language press in bringing social consciousness among the people of Punjab. The author emphasized that Punjabi press adopting the positive role, tried its best to reduce the communal tension during the Punjab crisis. He argues that some non-Punjabi papers like \textit{Vir Pratap} and \textit{Punjab Kesari} tried to inflame the already tense situation in Punjab during the recent crisis. Though the book does not cover the detailed overview of the press related to the situation in Punjab but it is useful for understanding the role of press during communal riots.

Harnik Deol has argued in one of the chapters of her book\textsuperscript{79} that media was central to the process of identity formation in Punjab during the recent crisis and that the process of equating linguistic and religious identity was facilitated by the vernacular press, cassettes and television etc. The author has given a brief comparative analysis of the three major newspapers, \textit{The Tribune}, \textit{Punjab Kesari} and \textit{Ajit} and concluded that the newspapers seemed to share different political alignments. The response of the newspapers reflected a significant difference among their views regarding the religious identity and the conflicts ensuing from it. The main focus of the study has been to highlight the role of the vernacular press in heightening religious identification in recent years in Punjab by reinforcing the linguistic basis of it. The author has critically analyzed the role of the press in further aggravating the crisis and concluded that the vernacular press and cassettes had become the foremost means of transmitting religious messages of mass appeal. This book is very valuable for the present study though it has failed to give a detailed analysis of the Punjab crisis and confined to some incidents only.

Satpal Dang in his work\textsuperscript{80} assessed the role of mass media including vernacular press during the Punjab crisis. He has briefly analyzed the viewpoints of some important dailies of the state and concluded that the English papers on the whole have played a positive role, though one of the two English papers of Punjab has, however, evoked criticism from certain circles of the public for being soft
towards the Akalis. The other paper i.e. Ajit and the papers belonging to the Hind Samachar Group have presented their images of being Sikh and Hindu newspapers respectively. The two left dailies also fought against terrorism and played a positive role. Though the major thrust of the book is to highlight the various reasons of the origin of terrorism in Punjab but even the brief analysis of the Punjab Press helps us in understanding the role of media during the recent crisis.

Prem Raman Upadhyay in his book has focused on the communal relations among the three communities in Punjab in 1920. Numerous factors contributed to make the Punjab a focal point of communal tensions during this period. He analyzed that how the mixture of religion and politics became a crucial issue in 1920. The press played a significant role in the communal politics and became an important agency for the different communities to propagate their own rather sectarian viewpoints. Though confined to a specific period and relying more on the English language press than the vernacular dailies, the author has given a useful framework of cultural disparities from which communalism developed. His approach reflected a certain predisposition to the conclusion it reached. However, the book is of good interest for understanding the role of press in relation to the communal politics in Punjab.

Emmett Davis in his work has analyzed the changes brought about by the printing press in the social and political life and the intellectual climate of the western Punjab including the territory which is a part of the present day Pakistan. The study is an overview of the close relation and interaction between the press and the politics in the British Western Punjab over a century since the annexation of Punjab in the British Empire to the partition of Indian subcontinent into two independent nations. The study mainly focused on the understanding of the forces behind the development of various vernacular languages. This work is not only very useful for understanding the role of press in shaping the public opinion but also a useful source of the knowledge of the history of the Press in Punjab.

Baldev Raj Nayar in his book sought to understand the basis and politics of Sikh minority community in Punjab up to early 1966 with specific reference to the demand for the formation of new state on the basis of ethnic identity, out of the territories of the then Punjab state. The study examines the strategies employed by the Akali Dal to secure this demand. Nayar has looked at this issue from the majority community's rather rigid nationalist perspective. The author is of the view that press
in Punjab emphasised the virtues of different political parties rather than give primary importance to the general news coverage. Any particular focus on the study of newspapers was however out of the objectives of Nayar. The book is very useful for understanding the background of the recent crisis in Punjab.

S. Gajrani in his article argued the vernacular press being the most powerful weapon of mass communication played a very significant role in creating political consciousness, organizing public, structuring institutions and mobilizing public opinion in Punjab and other parts of the country. It helped in the rise of nationalism and democratic institutions during the British rule in India. The author has highlighted the role of vernacular press to protect the Indian national interest against the British policies. According to him, the press gave expression to the discontentment of the public. Imposition of some taxes like the “Licence tax” was adversely reacted by the press in Punjab. It also exhorted the educated, Indians to vow to use only the Swadeshi goods. To sum up the author has assessed the role of vernacular press of Punjab to prepare public for a sustained agitation against the Britishers. The article is very useful for understanding the role of press in criticizing the policies of the government.

K.R. Narayanan in his article assessed the role of media in interpreting the society and the world even. It is according to the author, one of the potent instruments for changing the world. It changes the society its values and tastes and influence the minds of the people. No other institution has woven itself more closely into the life of all classes. The author has not only categorized media as an integral part of life but has highlighted the negative role played by it as there seems no borderline between the fact and fiction in media. According to the author, in newspaper journalism every event reported becomes a story rather a set of facts or a social process. The content of the article is very useful for understanding the role of media and as a path finder for the society.

P.B. Sawant's article analyzed the role of media as mass communicator, informer and propagator. Main thrust of the article is to assess the role of media during the conflict-situations. According to the author, during the seventeenth century the print media emerged as powerful weapon to manipulate the public opinion and it has been used to misinform, control and manipulate the news to shape or mould the opinions. The author is of the view that media stokes the conflicts when it creates false reports. He opines that the inertia, the incompetence, the personal prejudices and
also the corrupt motives of the media-men often bring about the conflicts and prolong them. The out-put of media outlet depends upon the moral and intellectual calibre of the persons owning and manning it. This article is very useful for understanding the role of media in crisis-ridden situations.

Batuk Vora’s article analyzed the role played by the Gujarati print-media during the recent communal-riots in Gujarat. The author analyzed the views of the editors of Gujarat Samachar and Sandesh which clearly created hate towards the Muslim community. Mr. Falgun Patel of Sandesh has even gone to the extent of saying that he would defend the Hindu community at any cost, as it has been harassed enough and harmed by the Muslims in the past. The author has quoted some examples of the news published in these newspapers inflaming the communal fire. The author not only assessed the partial role played by the 'Gujarati Print media' during the carnage but concluded how the press irresponsibly prolonged or fanned the riots. He has given very useful data in this article and asked the readers to judge for themselves the role of media. The article is useful for understanding the faces behind the media.

Ammu Joseph in his article has highlighted some of the trends he observed in the press over the past few years. The author is of the view that the commercialization of Doordarshan, the emergence and penetration of the domestic and international private channels and the consequent ascendancy of TV as the prime medium for advertisements, has had a major impact on the press. Today, the editors and the advertising executives in many newspapers are compelled to plan the new joint strategies to attract more advertising revenue for the paper. This article deals with other such reasons which are responsible for the irresponsibility of print-media towards the society. The author has attempted to prove that the press today merely reflects the priorities and preoccupations of those who produce and consume it. The article is very useful for understanding the recent trends in journalism.

R.S. Joshi in his article has discussed the interrelationship of media and civil society. Major thrust of the article is to assess the role played by media to implement the idea of civil society in a backward country like India. According to the author, in the post-independence period media's role has changed radically. The journalism has become a fulltime paying profession and it has no longer remained an honourable mission as it was regarded by the freedom fighters during the national movements. The commercialization of the media and the urge to reach far and wide has resulted in broadening the mental horizons of users' on the one hand and pushing its users minds
into irrationality by telecasting mega mythological serials on the other. This double
edged role of media has been responsible for rising of the satanic heads of
fundamentalist and fascist type forces in many independent nation of the
commonwealth, including India. The author has concluded that in such a situation,
modernity is mistaken for modernization and Westernization and rationality are
clubbed with the revivalism of all retrogressive tendencies of the past.

Along with these books and articles discussed above, many other books and
articles whose references are made in the bibliography were helpful during the
research work.

Some authors like Gerald Barrier, Prem Raman Upety, and Emmett Davis
have brought out very good studies on the press in Punjab during the pre-
independence period and with a focus on communalism. Though a few studies are
also available on the role of press in Punjab during the recent crisis but to the best of
my knowledge no detailed study on the role of vernacular newspapers particularly
Ajit, Punjab Kesari and Nawan Zamana during the Punjab crisis has been undertaken. 
That’s why; I have undertaken this study to make a detailed analysis of the role of
vernacular press during the period of 1978 to 1984.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has focused on the role of vernacular press on the various
situations and developments that took place during the period of 1978-1984. It also
analyzes the historical context of the problem.

Research Questions

In this exploratory study an attempt has been made to seek the answers to the
following questions.

I. What is the role of media during a crisis ridden situation?
II. What are the major issues that affected the situation in Punjab?
III. How vernacular press is more influential than national press about the
local issues?
IV. How people depend upon the press reports in making their opinions?
V. How far media is responsible in accentuating the tension and fueling
the already tense situations?
VI. How far the press in Punjab is responsible in aggravating the crisis in
Punjab?
VII. What kind of role does the vernacular press have had in building-up of
the public opinion in Punjab?

VIII. What has been the impact of news and reports of the major developments and incidents during this period (1978-84) on the general public?

IX. What role it played to resolve the issue?

Chapterization

The text of the study has been divided in the six chapters as follow;

Chapter-I
Introduction

In this chapter, the role of media in general and vernacular press in particular in the crisis-ridden situations has been discussed and the topic of the research has been introduced.

Chapter-II
Historical Context

This chapter has been focused on the role of vernacular press on pre and post-independence developments in Punjab like Freedom Struggle, Punjabi Suba Movement, Save Hindi Agitation and Anandpur Sahib Resolution etc.

Chapter-III
Vernacular Press and Punjab Crisis; Phase-I (1978-1980)

In this chapter, the happenings of Sikh-Nirankaris clash, Akali Dal’s state autonomy demand and the other major incidents during this time like the murder of the chief of Sant Nirankaris and the rise of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale etc. have been discussed.

Chapter-IV
Vernacular Press and Punjab Crisis; Phase-II (1981-1982)

In this chapter the emergence of the demand of Khalistan, Dharamyudh Morcha by the Akalis and other major incidents during this period like Nehar Roko, Rail Roko and Kamm Roko morchas etc. have been discussed.

Chapter-V

This chapter has been focused on the incidents of violence in the province and the incident of Operation Blue Star and related issues.
Chapter-VI

Conclusion

In this chapter, main findings of the study have been mentioned.

Research Methodology

This is an exploratory study based on the secondary sources. It has been based on the information provided by the three vernacular dailies Ajit, Punjab Kesari and Nawan Zamana. Thus, it is primarily a newspaper analysis which includes important editorials, articles and reports published in these three newspapers.

ENDNOTES

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