CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
1.0 The Backdrop of the Research Proposal

Information is recorded or communicated knowledge gained by man through experience, observations and experiments. It has been growing in ever increasing volume and rate, particularly since the dawn of the twentieth century. The dependency on information in every sphere of intellectual activity has been increased day by day. Without proper and complete information, no worthwhile decision can be taken. In fact, no progress is possible without the support of information.

Communication is an essential component, as, without proper communication, information cannot reach its defined destination. Communication has become an essential part of the modern society. Today, everything depends directly on how speedily things are communicated, whether it is the new
technologies, social, economic, political, cultural, educational issues etc, all these affect our day-today life. As such, the right of information should reach to the right person at the right time. Therefore, a sound information-communication-system is necessary to satisfy the information requirements of the people. Besides traditional print-media, the modern ITs i.e. the combination of computer system, telecommunication, audio-visual media, data base etc. have enhanced mankind’s potential for national, regional and global information-networks.

The development of ‘communication media’ is one of the fascinating events in the history of mankind. It primarily comprises of the print and non-print items like books, newspapers, films, radio, television and other such media. These media have multiple roles by entertaining, educating and informing the people. In short, the media supply the current information and keep the people alert with the events of importance.

Print media include newspapers, magazines, periodicals, books, conference proceedings, pamphlets and other printed forms of communication. They provide a wide coverage of information to the people at large. Print media has three distinctive features i.e. portability, permanence and cost-effectiveness, which act as a powerful communication media. Local print media is concerned with the publication of local topics/issues by the local publishers/editors in different form. The local print media which include books, journals, reports, newspapers etc, is a promising medium for disseminating information on local happenings and other issues required by the local people.

Among the different form of print media, newspapers have a special role of disseminating information or news to the citizen since newspapers are read by
the general public. Newspaper is one of the most sought-after mediums that cater through its wide coverage to the divergent interests of the society. It is considered as the mirror of the world and society and as ‘Fourth estate’ in a democratic setup. As pointed out by Tryon Edwards: “Newspapers are the world cyclopaedia of life, telling us everything from every quarter of the globe and are a universal whispering gallery for mankind.” Thus, the quality of a true newspaper that remains forever constant is its target to the ‘dissemination of information’. No other medium of communication (including electronic media) operates so persistently and so extensively in its range and scope as does the press.

A newspaper is defined as “a publication devoted to the dissemination of news and general affairs of interest.” Like national and international newspapers, the local daily newspapers also occupy adequate coverage of news/information. It is quick to cash in on the benign atmosphere and a low cost medium of advertising, publicity, information and propaganda which provide an easy access to information of immediate importance to the people of the locality.”

Considering the importance of local newspapers to the local people and researchers, necessary steps should be taken for proper circulation and preservation of the same to meet the present and future needs of the people. It is to be noted that the ‘local-dailies’ may become relevant and essential reference-tool for any research on any field and become part in the cultural heritage of the society. For efficient circulation and preservation, a good library system is necessary where people/researchers can use current and back issues of the publication without any hindrance. A library is considered as the storehouse of knowledge, which exists to serve the people in finding and using the information without wastage of time. Among the different reading materials available in the
library, newspaper is one of the print media, which provides current information to the users. A modern library has to procure, display, and preserve all kinds of newspapers (local, national & international) either in print form or non print (cassette diskette) form to satisfy the current and future information needs of its clientele.

Local daily is one of the important media for communication of information to the people of Manipur. This small state (area: 22,337sq. km) with a population of 23.88 lakhs is situated at the extreme corner of the North Eastern Region of India. The higher percentage of literacy (Male 77.87%; Female 59.70%; Total 68.87%) and other factors have made the state culturally rich and information-oriented since its long past (other information about the state are noted at Annexure-I/1). A number of dailies both in Vernacular and in English (including tribal dialects) have regularly been coming out to satisfy the information requirements of the people (Annexure-I/2&3). The dailies are also preserved (though partially) by some of the important libraries in the state for the current and future use of the researchers.

1.1 Research Proposal

To examine the contributions made by the local dailies in dissemination of information (to the people of Manipur) and to find out the services provided by the libraries in connection with local dailies, a research programme is designed here in the backdrop of the ideas mentioned above and as noted below. The title of the said work is named as Role of Local Dailies of Manipur in Dissemination of Information: A Case Study. Before mentioning the objectives, scopes and other areas of such research plan, a brief survey of the literature on the issue/related issues seems to be necessary.
1.2 Literature Review

Studies on the role of dailies/newspapers (print media) in fulfilling the information needs of the society should be conducted at regular interval particularly at the time when the electronic media are at command. The literature of library science surveyed so far has not given much emphasis on this issue. In India, very few research studies have so far been made on the role of local dailies in the dissemination of information. This review aims to understand the latest development in the field so that the current study can have a link with the studies done before.

Natranjan (1955)\textsuperscript{10} in a report of the Press Commission traced the history and situation of the development of journalism in India. Gupta\textsuperscript{11} discussed about the National Media Policy in India, media strategies for rural development, Right to Information, role of regional language press and similar other issues. Several studies on the development of journalism and role of print media in Manipur were undertaken during the recent years. In 1980, Kriti,\textsuperscript{12} a Manipuri scholar, traced back the history of journalism in Manipur. Maipaksana,\textsuperscript{13} another local scholar, in his paper ‘Govt media in Manipur: Prospects and Challenges’ gave a brief sketch on the development of journalism in Manipur. Brojendra,\textsuperscript{14} a renowned media person, stressed that the press in Manipur particularly the vernacular achieved certain credibility and of course profits. In a study on the growth of newspaper industry in the state, Iboyaima\textsuperscript{15} found that eighty percent of the houses in the state subscribed to the local newspapers. It revealed that the reading habit is spreading far and wide and this industry has been growing up in the state. A well-known media columnist Kakchingtabam Bijoy,\textsuperscript{16} has also drawn a vivid picture of the journalism at present Manipur. Further, N. Tombi,\textsuperscript{17} the former MP and the founder of a local English daily, pointed out some of the trends in the growth of
Journalism in Manipur. He added that considering the small population and the limited reading circle of the state, newspaper has emerged as a powerful forum of public opinion. Suchitra\textsuperscript{18} and Haokip\textsuperscript{19} the notable media scholars, stressed the importance and the role-played of/by the local dailies/newspapers in disseminating information to the people. Analysing the state of the press in north-east, the Press Council of India (PCI)\textsuperscript{20} submitted a report on the situation prevailing in the sphere of journalism in Assam. Chitra Ahanthem,\textsuperscript{21} a renowned columnist in Manipur, while attending a workshop for women in journalism held at Shillong, stated that the workshop was of course a better understanding of the existing media situation in the north-east, and how women journalist fit into the scheme of things.

Patnaik\textsuperscript{22} and Rau,\textsuperscript{23} studied the role of press in safeguarding democracy. Amartya Sen,\textsuperscript{24} the noted economist, wrote that the informational role of a free press is to keep people generally informed on what is going on where and the rapid dissemination of information can also make a contribution to protection and security. Extending his views, Soli J Sorabjee,\textsuperscript{25} Attorney General, in a memorial lecture in New Delhi, described ‘the freedom of the press as a distinct fundamental right.’

Rutstein,\textsuperscript{26} in a survey at Colorado State University Library on the role of newspaper in academic libraries, found that the potential of newspapers had not yet been fully realised. Bamane and Suryanarayana,\textsuperscript{27} conducted another survey on the utilisation of newspapers by scientific and technological personnel. Aina\textsuperscript{28}, in a study, revealed that majority of the researchers at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria used newspapers for their research purpose. Baliair and Mahapatra,\textsuperscript{29} investigated
(through interview method) more than hundred persons at their residences as a part of a large project, for assessing the information needs of a semi urban Community of Orissa. They also analysed the respondent’s interests on newspaper, magazine and book reading. Joseph,\textsuperscript{30} conducted a survey among the different cadres of journalists working in the eight major newspapers in Kerala in order to examine the reading materials on which they depend heavily and sources other than the newspaper library, which they use. Bedi and Pattnaik,\textsuperscript{31} stressed that due to lack of appropriate orientation among the media and low literacy in rural sectors, maximum circulation is confined only to large cities and towns, though the rural area account for 90 percent of the population of the country. Kumbar and Biradar,\textsuperscript{32} in a study examined the use pattern and utilisation of mass media particularly newspaper, radio, TV and public library by the rural community. Maity \textit{et al.}\textsuperscript{33} discussed the characteristics, contents and other features of newspapers and the news items. Tadasa and Kalamadragi,\textsuperscript{34} studied the newspaper reading habits of post-graduate students, on the basis of a users survey of two hundred and six post-graduate students of Gulbarga University under eight headings \textit{viz.} newspaper reading habit, extent of reading, average time spent on reading, mode of reading preference of language, purpose of reading, regularly read news columns and core list of newspapers. Gangadhar Reddy and Lakshmi,\textsuperscript{35} conducted a survey with the help of a questionnaire on the use of a national newspaper (\textit{The Hindu}) in Anantapur town. It is found that nearly forty percent of the readers are dissatisfied with the coverage of regional news in \textit{The Hindu}. Usha,\textsuperscript{36} in a study highlighted the similarities and differences between the newspapers of two different languages, English and Kannada with regard to coverage of sports. Analysed information in terms of type, content pattern, design and preferences.
In view of the importance of newspaper clipping service, Nath, in his paper necessitated the maintenance of press cuttings service in TISCO in order to make available the latest occurrences and utterances within reach. Sharma, too felt the importance of press clippings, which saves the times of the information seekers and solves the storage problem of newspapers. Sanyal and Sengupta, discussed the organisation, physical aspect and subject of the news clippings in the Ananda Bazar Patrika library and highlighted the services in the U.K. as surveyed by Whatmore and others. Mukhopadhyay, presented an overall picture of a press-clipping library and discussed its utility to the modern world. Again, Banjo, stressed the need of an organised press-clippings service in the Press Library of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs. Patel, while studying about the clipping service rendered by the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad, noted that press news service was very much appreciated and regularly referred by the users. She felt that press-clippings service in library plays a vital role like SDI, Current Contents Service, etc and automation of clippings service help a lot for quick search of required data in the least possible time. Gurdev, stressed the role of newspaper-clipping as the most important component of newspaper and news agency library.

Das, in a study, discussed about the importance of the preservation of the news-publications. He was of the view that national level library and information centres should not only support the microfilming but also take up the production of computerised indices and the task of preserving and translations of regional newspapers on microfilm. Extending to such views, Joseph, discussed the role of the library in newspaper-organisations and proposed the setting up of an information-network in newspapers in India. Bankapur and Sangam, analysed the role of newspaper-libraries and highlighted the networking system in such
libraries. Kufa,\textsuperscript{47} revealed that without proper preservation and indexing services, the information from newspapers is difficult to access and use in an effective manner. Sangeeta,\textsuperscript{48} in a study opined the necessity of protection of ‘local dailies’ in the background of preservation of ‘cultural heritage’ of the society.

The aforesaid reviews have confirmed that no study has so far been conducted on the information-contents of the local dailies of any particular state, though all these previous works have admitted that the local dailies have great role to play in the society.

1.3 Objective of the study

The objective of the proposed study (as mentioned above in Research Proposal) is, therefore, to analyse the information-contents of the local dailies, to examine its social relevance and to find out some means which can support the local dailies and libraries/information centres of Manipur in providing maximum volume of relevant information to all the sections of the people of the state for their better living and prosperity.

1.4 Purpose of the work

The main purposes of the present work are to:

- investigate the different ‘forms’ in the local dailies through which the information are disseminated;
- examine whether the target groups (\textit{i.e.} the people of the state) use the information disseminated by the local dailies;
- know whether the readers consider the local dailies as authentic and reliable ‘source of information’ required by them;
- investigate that what percentage of people gets the ‘information services’ from the local dailies;
- identify the areas of limitation of the local dailies in the dissemination of information;
- study the user-needs, use pattern and reading habits of the target groups; and
- to examine the services provided by the libraries/ information centres of the state in procuring, retrieving and disseminating the local dailies.

1.5 Scope of the study

The scope of the present work will be limited to:
- the scanning and the analysis of the information accommodated in six selected local dailies (both in Vernacular and in English) published from Imphal, capital city of Manipur during 1999-2001;
- the identification of the problems faced by the local dailies of Manipur in disseminating information and analysis of the opinions of the editors of the local dailies;
- the identification and analysis of the information needs of the people residing in valley and hills and in urban and rural areas of Manipur;
- the collection and analysis of the opinions of various sections of the people like students, teachers, service-holders, business communities, farmers, professional and other groups; and
- the investigation and analysis of the services provided by some of the important libraries/information centres of the capital city Imphal in connection with the local dailies.

1.6 Hypotheses

After a preliminary study, the following hypotheses are formulated for the present work:
- the local dailies in the state have been playing a great role in the dissemination of information;
- the dailies are, to some extent, able to satisfy the information needs of the target groups;
the limitation of financial capacity and circulation and lack of proper selling network have compelled the local publishers to limit the newspaper in single/double pages (i.e. small size);

consequently, many relevant items are not included in the local dailies (because of space limitation) and people of the remote areas of the state are deprived of having current information of their use; and

the libraries/information centres of the state are not able to organize and use properly the local dailies in providing information services to the people.

1.7 Research Methodology

The research methods followed for collection of data during the course of the present study are:

- questionnaires have been used in procuring data from all sections of the public to record their information needs, information-use-habits and satisfaction regarding availability of information from the local dailies;

- detail scanning (item-wise) of six local dailies (1999-2001) have been conducted to record the areas of information accommodated;

- questionnaire- method is also used to examine the services provided by some of the important libraries and information centres of the state;

- an interview-schedule has been used to examine the problems of the editors while accommodating information in the dailies; interaction with other press personalities is also carried out; and

- different statistical methods (including chi-square method) and other techniques have been used for the analysis of data.

1.8 Chapterisation

The study is carried out under the following chapters:

In the first chapter (Introduction), the terms like ‘information’, ‘information-communication’, ‘communication-media’, ‘print-media’, ‘local print-media’, ‘role of library for dissemination and preservation of newspapers’ are
introduced in brief. Research proposal, objective, purpose, scope, hypotheses drawn, methodology of the study and brief focuses on literatures related to the work are also highlighted.

In the second chapter (Information and Media), different concepts related to the ‘information’ and ‘media’ (viz. ‘information’, ‘role of information in society’, ‘Right to Information’, ‘information-communication’, ‘various mass media’, ‘role of print media’, ‘role of local dailies’, etc) are defined and explained.

The third chapter (Newspapers in India: Some Important Events) has drawn a brief outline on the origin and development of press in India, development of language press in north-east region, modernisation of press, leading personalities, National Media Policy and the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in newspapers.

Different phases of journalism in Manipur which includes the importance of local newspapers, growth and development of journalism in Manipur, various events related to local newspapers in Manipur, ‘Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO)’, media environment of neighbouring states (north-east region) and other related issues are highlighted in the fourth chapter titled as ‘Journalism in Manipur: Different Phases’.

The fifth chapter, which comes under the title “Local Dailies in Manipur: A Critical Exposition”, is an attempt to analyse local dailies in Manipur. This chapter is divided into four parts as noted below:
Part I – Editors’ Viewpoint.
Part III – Readers’ Viewpoint.
Part IV – Librarians’ Viewpoint.

The sixth and last chapter concludes with suggestions and recommendations for a joint venture in the publishing-programme and the proposal of *Newspaper Library* in Manipur for better dissemination of information.

**References:**


