CHAPTER 6

ROLE IN NATION BUILDING
ROLE IN NATION BUILDING

In the modern society, journalism has to play a vital role. Newspapers constitute a basic source of information for majority of population. In the absence of electronic media during the 19th century, newspapers remained the single source for disseminating information. To keep masses aware of day to day happenings, newspaper was to be relied upon. A newspaper caters to the needs of the different readers by publishing various types of news such as political, economic, socio-religious, scientific, cultural etc.

We can say that the newspapers are the written records of our contemporary civilization, they can advance the progress of civilization or they can thwart it \(^1\). The main purpose of the press is to keep people informed and mould their opinion. Journalism works like an adventure, which is full of fresh experiences and unexpected developments. The press makes earnest effort to keep people aware of national and international happenings. The press also plays a remarkable role in eliminating the undesirable conditions prevailing in the society. The press is responsible for diffusion of knowledge. The press, during the second half of the 19th century became the symbol of progress. It also gave articulate expression to the political

\(^1\) A Free and Responsible press, by the commission on freedom of the press, p. 3.
consciousness seen in the newly emerging sentiments of national integration, and enlightened thinking and acting.

For interpreting and assessing the public opinion, press is recognized as the most suitable agency. During British regime legislatures failed to represent the opinion of the masses opinion. At this juncture press stood unrivaled as a vehicle of public opinion. Significantly enough, the journalists of this period were commoners. Any enterprising person from the middle class could bring out newspaper when there was actually a scarcity of press and publishing houses.

The freedom of press was granted by Ripon in 1882. Which marked the rapid growth of the press in India. The press therefore offered unprecedented opportunities of ideas. The public leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Keshav Chandra Sen, Bipin Chandra Pal, Balgangadhar Tilak etc. were attracted towards journalism. Their contribution through writing for the cause of nation is unforgettable in the history. Since they belonged to different strata of the society, they represented a true picture of the public opinion accordingly.

Role of the press, especially towards moulding the destiny of nation, is noteworthy. According to A.C. Majumdar, “Press with all its, defects and lapses, as well as its numerous disadvantages,
difficulties and disabilities, the Indian press has played an important part in the evolution of national life". The editors of vernacular press courageously discussed all political, social and economic problems in detail both at micro as well as macro levels. In their criticism they were relentless and brought the ruthless nature of the British imperialism in a number of ways.

Kirti Narain rightly observed that, "With experience the vernacular press became more and more adept at exposing the colonialism and imperialism of the administration and its attempt to subvert the society, culture, politics and the economy of the province". The editors were reactionaries in their approach and this attitude enabled them to successfully appeal to people's emotional susceptibilities. All section of Press Anglo-Indian, Ultra nationalist, communalist had the propensity to interpret events in political context.

The problems like administrative high handedness, case of racial arrogance, educational matters, missionary activities, economic policies, representative government, Indianization of services etc. occupied the columns of most of the newspapers. Every event and issue that occurred during the period was critically

---

2. A.C. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 27.
analysed. People were kept well informed of the entire episodes. In North India, the press was fast coming up and manifestation of divide and rule policy was closely visible in the vernacular press.

“The 19th century witnessed the rapid socio-political changes, which was best reflected in the newspapers. The political development throughout the country necessitated the growth of journalism, Vernacular press started posing a threat to the well entrenched colonial power as, they became representatives of the views of the people on a variety of issues and with the growing awareness became more analytical and critical”4, says Kirti Narain.

Broadly speaking, the newspapers were grouped along different lines. For instance, circulation wise; paper that represented important sectional interests or had germinal potentialities of blazing new trials was the Aligarh Institute Gazette etc. The Pioneer, the resourceful Anglo-Indian daily of Allahabad, enjoyed a special position. Its observation was believed to be officially inspired.

Bukingham encouraged Indians to adopt journalism as profession. He made the newspaper the mirror of the people, he manifested at its keenest and most persistent at the spirit of enquiry and criticism. He imparted to the press the quality of leadership5.

The tradition of independence and revolt set from Hickey to Bukingham, became firmly rooted in the Indian press.

The Revolt of 1857 created a division in the Indian press. The Journalist in India came to the divided on the basis of their nationalities\(^6\). The resultant ferment after 1857 and the subsequent development of communication attracted a number of thoughtful Indians to journalism, which offered great scope for the propagation of views\(^7\). In fact the period 1857-85 witnessed a phenomenal rise in the number of important journals and newspapers.

A.C. Majumdar says, "while the public associations were thus slowly but steadily inculcating the educated community of the country with political thoughts and ideas, and the early friends of India in England persistently, though ineffectually drawing attention of the British public to Indian affairs, there was yet another and more powerful agency at work silently moulding and shaping public opinion on a much larger scale throughout the country. The Indian press, which like the public associations was founded after the western model, with the rapid spread of education steadily gaining in strength and rising into power"\(^8\). By 1885 the press was by and large representative of diverse public opinion and had public eminent

7. S. N. Banerjee, *A Nation in Making*, Noted that in the seventies of the last century the press had become such a great necessity of an organ for political work, p. 63
public leaders as journalist. Bengal took the lead and provided leadership to the nationalist movement. Bengal became the cradle of all political activists.⁹

Throughout the medieval period, Persian remained the language of the people and press. It was only towards the first quarter of the 19th century that Urdu replaced Persian¹⁰. Introduction of lithography into India led to the establishment of Urdu and Persian press. Since lithographic publications were available at cheap rate. This enabled people to purchase and an increased desire of people to get themselves acquainted with happening around them increased the circulation of newspapers. Though habit of reading newspaper was until then yet to develop. Though this habit was limited to a small circle, its significance, because of its potentialities for the future, could not be minimized¹¹.

The growth of vernacular press resulted into a new variety of politics and the emergence of new classes as active element in politics¹². The vernacular press in general and Urdu in particular created a national consciousness amongst the intelligentsia as it

---

⁹.  Aligarh Institute Gazette, August 1, 1882 observed: “Undoubtedly the Bengali are the leaders of the native community these days, as we have repeatedly declared... They were the first to breakthrough the trammels of prejudice and cross the sea for the purpose of education...”


became increasingly aware of the economic and social anomalies in the British form of government. Significantly, in the second half of the 19th century, vernacular press including Urdu Press assumed the role of oppositional force to the British government. Its policies and programmes were critically analyzed and evaluated. Growing national consciousness was a natural outcome of this evaluation.

According to R.C. Majumdar, among the important public questions they chiefly concerned themselves with (1) reduction of public expenditure, (2) appointment of natives to high offices under the state, (3) defect in the administration, (4) the existence of feelings of distinction between the conquerors and the conquered. In many cases writers displayed quite a high level of knowledge and strong independence of views. Importance of the Indian press as a means of educating public opinion and inculcating patriotic and national views among the public is significant.13

Gokhale, on the importance of press rightly observed, "The 20th century marked the beginning of a new era in Indian politics during this period an organized public opinion, hitherto absent came to the forefront, and this manifestation of organized public opinion could be traced in the development of the press, which readily expressed people's political aspirations. It spread the message of

13. R.C. Majumdar, p. 251. op. cit.
equality and idea of justice. It stimulated public spirit and set high standard of public duty." 

Vernacular press made slow progress. So was the case of Urdu press. Urdu press initially owes its existence to Hindu proprietor, who contributed significantly in its development. *Agra Akhbar* was founded by a Hindu. During later half of the 19th century Urdu press was actually revived and a new lease of life was given by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Sir Syed was aware of immense possibilities of this medium, specially for rousing the Muslim consciousness.

Generally, the Urdu press was moderate in political, social and religious matters. The Urdu press like other vernacular came heavily upon the British administration for its racial arrogance and its biased attitude against Indians. The main Urdu journals of the time were the *Oudh Akhbar, Bharat Patrika, Kankub-e-Hind, Muraqqa-e-Tahzib, Anwar-ul-Akhbar, Oudh Panch, Akhbar-e-Alam, Nizam-ul-Akhbar, Shahna-i-Hind* etc. These papers however contained a very little original matter, they actually had to rely upon English newspapers.

The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was bitterly criticized throughout India. In 1881, Lord Ripon, we then viceroy of India repealed it and

---

15. *Agra Akhbar*, first published in 1830, this was regarded as the first Urdu Akhbar, see also Rafique Zakaria, p. 210.
17. Rafique Zakaria, p. 211.
brought a sense of relief among the journalist. The office of the press commissioner was abolished and Home Department was held responsible to supervise instead of press commissioner. Lord Rippon’s tenure was thus a time of national awaking, which generally spread from the educated Bengali to the rest of India.

In 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded and according to Pat Lovett, The real development of the art of business of journalism as it is understood in the west, dated in India from the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

R. C. Majumdar rightly remarked that, “The foundation of Indian National Congress considerably changed the tone of both the Indian and Anglo-Indian Press and brought politics into the forefront of discussions in both cases. The more important newspapers now sought to educate the public into political ideals of the congress.

Though the language newspaper were still in their incipient stage as far as their effectiveness is concerned. These newspapers could not create healthy public opinion. Lord Dufferin expressed his support to the newspapers. He professed to regard in as essential to

18. Lord Lytton had constituted a press Commissionership to provide the press with authentic information The Latter proved to be an official monitor but an unattractive one
19. S. Natrajan, p.128. his resume of the History of the press has been compiled from Natrajan Pandit Ambika Prasad Bajpai Samachar patron Ka Itihas, Prem Narain, Vinod Kumar Saxena, Reaction to British Politics 1898 – 1911.
20. R.C. Majumdar, p. 251.
the welfare and progress to the nation and though that it might rendered great service to the people in general and the government in particular. Alfred Lyall, the then Lt. Governor of NWP and Awadh also acknowledged that the language press has made progress in intellectual power and civilized feeling.

The reason for this growth of journalistic enterprise was attributed to certain development, which had taken place during the last quarter of the 19th century. For instance transport and communication, the introduction of railways and the telegraph brought revolutionary changes in this field. It was during this period national movement gained momentum and like vernacular press Urdu journalism made remarkable progress and it became more vocal. Specially with the rise of educationist Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the growth of Aligarh School, which made journalism meaningful. Improvement of education system consequently increased the number of educated Indians so this resulted into an increased circulation of the newspapers. Journalism now began to be regarded as noble profession and people started attracting towards it. Socio-

21. VNR of NWP &O Hindustani, Lucknow, 3 June 1885. This communication was in response to the newspapers editors resolve at a meeting at Lucknow to show moderation and refrain from false rumors.
religious reform movements brought a change in the attitude of orthodox section and they became more moderate in their outlook\textsuperscript{25}.

The journalists in India were furious as they felt that this would be beneficial to express their ideas and this method of advocacy would certainly arouse the passion of Indians against the British. Government always tried its best to stop the publication of certain newspapers and for this purpose they from time to time brought legislation, the copy of Right Bill introduced in 1885 was an example. The fact of the matter was that towards the close of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Indian press was becoming an important vehicle of expression. It vigorously criticized the policies and programme of the British government and offered a natural check on the activities of the British officials\textsuperscript{26}. So the press legislations were enacted with an objective to suppress the activities of the press. At this time we will find the government provided all sort of encouragement to the English press\textsuperscript{27} and its opinions needed but the government completely ignored the opinions of the native newspapers. The English newspapers and the government accused the language newspapers of seditious utterances.

\begin{itemize}
\item 25. Ibid.
\item 27. Saxena, op. cit. pp. 2-30.
\end{itemize}
The official Secrets Act of 1889 targeted the local newspapers and they protested vehemently. The Indian press criticized the Act. The English newspapers tried to make the government believe that the Hindi and Urdu papers were inciting Hindus and Muslims against it. Though reality was different as accepted by a liberal Lt. Governor Anthony McDonnell who saw the native press as temperate and non-inflammatory, he was not in favor of giving it too much importance. The official secrets Act of 1889 had prevented the publication of Secret information relating to naval and military matters. Later through an amendment it extended to the civil administration as well. This was a clear indication of repression and there was every possibility of becoming every official as Czar.

When government of India proposed to amend the Official Secret Act, in 1903. The nationalist opposed it. Criticizing the amendment, Gokhle said, “I would like to see the official who would venture to arrest and march to the police thana the editor of Anglo-Indian paper. But so far as Indian editors are concerned, there are, I fear officers in this country, who would be sorry for an opportunity to march whole battalions of them to the police thana. It is dreadful to think of the

29. VNR of NWP O, Sharna-i-Hind, Meerut, 16 July 1897.
abuse of authority which is almost certain to result from this planning of Indian editors, especially the smaller ones among them, so completely at the mercy of those whom they constantly irritate or displease by their criticism.... The proper and only remedy.... is.... to discourage the issue of confidential circulars which seeks to take away in the dark what has been promised again and again in the Act of Parliament, the proclamation of the Sovereign and responsible utterances of successive viceroys. Nowhere throughout the British empire is the government so powerful relatively to the governed as in India.... The Press is, in One Sense, like the government a custodian of public interests and any attempt to hamper its freedom by repressive legislation is bound to effect these interests prejudicially and can’t fail in the end to react upon the position of the government itself.

In 1905, the partition of Bengal created turmoil in the country and with the growth of extremism in politics, the Urdu press like others became more vociferous. Whether extremist or moderate, Hindu or Muslim whether political or communal leanings the newspapers became increasingly more aggressive in tone, attracting the wrath of the government for further repressive measures. However, the government was fully convinced that the editors were responsible for instigating masses.

33. Ibid., p. 222.
The government of India passed the Seditious meeting Act in 1907. By this the local government was empowered by the Governor – General in Council to institute prosecution in consultation with their legal advisors in all cases where the law has been willfully infringed. The government of India sent another directive to the local government that postal articles and telegraphic messages should be censored to avoid excessive being made by newspapers. Under this Act Only U.P. came into its purview. The newspapers disapproved of it; this was considered necessary for disturbed areas and U.P. was hardly that.

In 1908 two acts namely the Explosive Act and the Newspapers Act VII were passed with an objective to curb the vernacular press. Under this Act local government were empowered to take stern action against the editors and those newspapers who did not refrain themselves from publishing seditious articles. This proved to be a temporary relief for the government. The tone newspapers of remained more or less same. How can voice of a journalist, having nationalist approach, dedicated to the national service be curbed. Ram Das Ram wrote, wrote those who have in

36. VNR of UP, Advocate, Lucknow, 11 June 1908.
their hearts love for their country, do not care about the punishment by foreigners\textsuperscript{38}.

Hewett feared that unless the government did something to curb seditious tendencies of the press in some parts of the country it would have to face with consequences of a most serious character. Newspapers, if not blatantly seditious were instigated by a feeling of hostility against to government and calculated to have a harmful effect on the relation between the government and the people\textsuperscript{39}. The only option remained with the British government was to pass strict laws in order to disarm the disloyal Journalists\textsuperscript{40}. The existing laws enforced only made the offending paper more popular and its editor a martyr. Thus the government decided to make strong laws to check the growth and publication of the Vernacular press.

Editors were persecuted and many were threatened for further action if they did not change their ways. In 1908 the Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed. This Act had little effect on the Journalists, they expressed their views as much fearlessly and boldly as earlier. The net result of this was the passage of the press Act of

\textsuperscript{38} Ram Das, editor of Swarajya, Allahabad, 18 July 1908, Aligarh Institute Gazette, 17 June 1908.

\textsuperscript{39} General Administration Department, File No. 320/1909 Control over the newspaper press in India, p. 27. Sep. 1909.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 31
1910. Under this, the system of licenses and registrations was more stringent.

The local governments were assigned more powers. Several extremists Newspapers were closed downed and some moderate newspapers were warned of dire consequences. The Indian Press Act of 1910, with its drastic provisions, was no doubt, a serious menace to the healthy growth of public opinion in the country. The Act, at least for the moment, paralyzed all the honest and independent criticism. “Liberty, says A.C. Majumdar, “is always nurtured on the Lap of persecution and “action and reaction” is the law of progress in all living organism.”

Under the influence of Pan-Islamic the Urdu Newspapers became more aggressive in their tone against the British imperial design in Turkey. The rise of politico-religious newspapers like Comrade, Al-Hilal and Zamindar preached anti-British opinion

41. A.C. Majumdar, op. cit. p. 30.
42. The Comrade of Mohd. Ali was started in January 1911, An English Weekly. It became sole spokesman of Indian Muslims on the Turkish Question. Its motto was to be “Comrade of all and partisan of none”. See Rajkumar Trevidi, op. cit. p. 255, Khursheed A.S. op. cit. pp. 361-63.
and Indian Muslims were convinced of their religion being in danger. This development actually enhanced the effectiveness of the press in general. Sensationalism became the order of the day. The effect on public mind was immense. The Comrade enjoyed overwhelming influence over the students.

The British government came down heavily on the Urdu press. The editors were being persecuted. Thus, to check Urdu press Criminal law Amendment Act was passed in 1913. The internationalization of the press and the outbreak of the First World War created turmoil within the British government. In 1914, the government of India passed the Press and Sea Customs Act, proscribing the pamphlet Al-Jihad\(^45\). In 1914 the Naval and Military News ordinance was passed which actually created military censorship. The defence of India Act of 1915 was aimed at checking the seditious writings among Muslims against the government.

Temporarily though, these acts, however imposed restriction but these encouraged their circulation. The more repression means more popularity. They became more effective in the formation of public opinion. Then vernacular press in total, became a pivotal force in channelizing and highlighting the national movement and it gained

---

45. GAD, File No. 589/1914.
momentum. With the emergence of Gandhiji criticism became the fashion of the day.

Controlling the press became necessary for the British government. The press was to be suppressed as they were at the verge of creating socio-political upheaval. One method to control the press was providing active patronage to it. For instance, 'Aligarh Institute Gazette' of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, which lost its popularity among masses for its attitude towards the British. The aristocracy was its subscriber who could ensure its survival.

Later on, the government came with the idea of giving subsidy. The payment of such subsidy was subversive to the freedom of the press. The vernacular press was unhappy about annual government subsidies to a few chosen papers like Aligarh Institute Gazette, the Oudh Akhbar of Lucknow and Kashi Patrika of Varanasi which supported the government measures strongly. The resentment against such policy was inevitable. The Aligarh Institute Gazette remained loyal. For instance once it reported that the vernacular newspapers were so provocative that the government was forced to pass the Press Act 1910. Though the Oudh Akhbar had changed its stand. It was not disloyal but became more logically

47. Ibid., pp.43-44

158
critical of the issues involved. For example, it considered the press act too harsh. Later, the *Oudh Akhbar* lost ground with the government\(^49\).

Development of extremist journalism and growing Pan-Islamic trend forced the government to provide subsidy to the loyal newspapers. These papers came to the rescue of the British government and Urdu newspapers like *Al-Bashir* of Etawah, *Mushrique* of Gorakhpur etc. supported the British government. These newspapers had good circulation and actively engaged in counter attack. This move was resented by other newspapers specially the nationalist one. Sir Anthony MacDonnel Once suggested that the officials should be provided with the supplements of language newspapers. So that the authorities could be in close touch with the opinion and sentiments of the people and thus an improvement could be made possible\(^50\). The British government promulgated all suppressive and repressive measures to curb the vernacular press. Editors were harassed and the government took a tough stand against them. At Gorakhpur the police instigated and attack on the editor of the *Riaz-ul-Akhbar* as the later had exposed police corruption\(^51\).

\(^50\) MacDonnel papers, p. 9 of the appendix of the committee appointed to consider the question of the enlargement of the function of the provincial councils 1888.  
The importance of the vernacular can be realized that the severe punishment to the editors led to an increased popularity and wide circulation of the paper. The editors of the Rafiq-i-Hind, Nayar-e-Azam were punished for publishing libel in 1887. Several editors were implicated for libel. For instance Ain-i-Hind, faced libel charges for voicing anti-government views. The editor of Qaisar Panch of Ballia was imprisoned by the police with false charges being trumped up against him. As indigenous press progressed, government practiced further persecution. As a result, many Urdu newspaper stopped their publication. While editors strongly argued that the freedom of the press was necessary in the interest of the government and of the people. Riyaz al-Akhbar rightly remarked that, "if editor are brought into difficulty by false charges of theft.... Being trumped up against them for exposing the irregular proceedings of officers, government will have no means of obtaining local information of an independent source".

With the growth of extremism in politics, the press became more vocal and even moderate did not hesitate to openly criticise the government policies and programme. The rising wave of extremism and its influence was clearly visible in the press, which perturbed the British authorities. Persecution became the fate of editors. But it

hardly discouraged them. On the contrary, they become more vociferous. The Government felt to formulate a ready-made procedure to penalize a newspaper, which was persistently hostile against the government. In fact, those newspapers wrote most violently which had the widest circulation and showed that a general interest was taken in the extremist movement. The writings of the more rabid section were more deeply trained with the view of sedition than had hitherto been the case⁵⁴.

When Pan-Islamism became more fervent, the government sought out the Muslims Urdu newspapers, suspected of instigating communal furvour against the British. *Hamdard⁵⁵* and *Al-Hilal* continued to publish articles, which were considered instigatory by the government. The Muslim Gazette of 19 December 1913 still wrote, “To use European goods is against the Islamic religion”. For this reason the government directed the newspapers to adopt a more reasonable line otherwise under the press Act they would be booked. However this had little impact on the papers. Inspite of this, language press was gradually becoming more conscious of its power and influence and repressive measure did not really curb its ferocity.

---


At this juncture, the English language press came to stand solidly behind the government and the bureaucracy\textsuperscript{56} and blindly defended government policies\textsuperscript{57}. While vernacular press came heavily on the government and its policies. Consequently it was subjected to rigorous enforcement of the press laws. The entire language press was branded as seditious. This is not true, because the vernacular press was responsible for exposing high handedness of the British administration and economic exploitation and expressed public opinion to prevent the growth of popular discontent.

The English papers were more interested in subjects like legislative reform, separation of executive from judiciary, the currency question and university education etc. Whereas local language newspaper highlighted the issues related to national importance concerning the common masses like racial arrogance, unemployment, famine, plague and matter of public interest\textsuperscript{58}. Actually the vernacular press was accused of inciting communal disharmony. This is not true because we have evidences that how tirelessly the vernacular has fostered the growth of communal harmony. At this time a certain section of the press tried to infuse sectarian feelings, to some extent, they got success in their mission.

\textsuperscript{57} Natrajan, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{58} Prem Narain, op.cit., pp. 285 – 86.
These activities proved a great hindrance in the process of national integration. This section of the press also justified the British rule in India and had praised them.

The Pan-Islamic trends left a deep impact on Urdu Journalism. Urdu Journalism, prior to the pan-Islamism was divided into two stream, one was supporting the British authorities and its policies blindly, the other group was to represent an anti-British sentiments and stood for the cause of Indian nationalism. The Urdu press at this time brought the Muslim more close to the Indian National Congress, which was the greatest contribution the Urdu press played. It gave a great boost to the Pan-Islamic supporters in the Urdu Press.

Vernacular press was very popular among the masses. The true picture of the country was best reflected by papers in local languages whose editor showed exemplary courage. By then reading newspapers became a feature of Indian life. The newspapers besides becoming the political educator became a mean of political participation. The vernacular press was quite sure that their influence was not because of repressive measures taken by the British of the newly educated classes-whose character and aspiration they faithfully reflected.

The circulation of the English newspapers was larger if compared with vernacular newspapers. The number of Urdu or Hindi newspaper was larger but their circulation was less. Among Hindi and Urdu paper the latter has much smaller circulation. The probable reason was that Muslim in general was not as much educated as Hindus. Hindi Journalists more acutely felt problem of the finding buyers, for Urdu was the language generally understood by the people\(^6\). Small circulation should not lead us to conclude that the vernacular press was ineffective. As a disseminator of ideas the worth of the newspaper was very great. It reached out to the common man and influenced those who could not afford to buy it. The village headmen and masters read the papers loudly to the common people\(^6\). *The Pioneer*, in a great desperate remarked", the disloyal language rags now penetrate into remote villages... The village schoolmaster or accountant is generally the disseminator\(^6\). A local library would be organised around a single newspaper. Gradually this tendency spread althrough the country\(^6\). This was the reason why the British government was afraid of language press and wanted to curb its free expression. Government realized that it afforded a valuable index of the State of public feeling\(^6\). The Journalists fearlessly continued

\(61\). Prem Narain, p. 287.
\(62\). Ibid., cited pioneer, 16 Nov. 1893.
\(63\). Natraj, pp. 71-2, Bipin Chandra, *India’s Struggle for Independence*, p. 103.
\(64\). Home Public, A, Sept. 1901, Nos. 88-9.
with their mission probably because they gradually realized that they had captured the public imagination and also because they understood the defensive psychology behind repressive government measures.

Journalism became a potent force during the national movement. Though during the second half of the 19th century Urdu Journalism was in its early stage of development, but it was effective to create a viable public opinion. It could reach to the common man and could feel the pulse of the nation. It created a turmoil in government circle by raising the voice of people and their concern about exploitative nature of the British rule. Its influence on the government machinery was tremendous. The government was interested in knowing the development and public opinion through the language press, but at the same time they made earnest effort to curb the press. The British authorities adopted several measures to check the growth of press. For instance their strategy to give a limited or no news to the language newspapers. In these circumstances the vernacular press was forced to publish its own versions, making them more attractive by adding their own flavor. The newspapers proved to be an effective means to disseminating news to the public and influencing government policies. They were actually fountainhead of information on social, economic, cultural and political developments. This gave a certain unity to all these
diverse phenomena, which were threatening the foundations of a firmly entrenched colonial power.

Insensitive of several handicaps wrote, R.C. Majumdar that, ‘the Indian press performed its tasks fairly well. It was clearly recognize even by enlightened Englishmen that the Indian press must necessarily, be always in opposition to the government. The Indian press as a body, followed this principle, and reviewed the entire administrative policy of the government. There was hardly any topic of public importance, which did not form their subject of discussion” 65.

The press contributed to the growth of the socio-political awakening. The press published the day-today activities of various social movements and it also brought them in touch with the masses. It resulted into development of the progressive tendencies like the reorganization and unification of the social organism in the light of modern requirements.

Apart from this the press made a valuable contribution in the field of cultural sphere. It introduced Indian Society to the etiquettes, manners and other socio-cultural patterns of western civilization. It acquainted the people with the utility of western dress, civilization,

method of living, education etc. The press inculcated the modern tendencies in the newly growing generation.

With a growth of patriotism as reflected in the nationalist press showed that the days of imperialism in India were numbered. Press raised its voice against the denial of Indian's share in the administration. The monopolization of power by the British halted the progress of the country. At this time press made the people aware about the economic and political exploitation by the foreign power and raised an alarm against the alien power. The language newspapers at this time propagated the ideals of national liberation. They also created a new confidence in the vitality of their people.

It is interesting to note that Urdu newspapers like other language newspapers highlighted the very issue relating to the common people, for instance, supporting the cause of peasants and workers against the feudal bourgeois classes. It reserved ample space for publicity to the strike of the workers. The newspapers also published articles demanding the reduction of working hours, better living condition etc. The net result was the passage of factory acts, which brought a sigh of relief to the working class. It was the first legislation directly affecting the industrial labours in the country.

This legislation however, wrote Girish Mishra, did not satisfy either British manufacturer or Indian social workers." Consequently, another legislation, the factory Act of 1891 was passed.

The growth of modern education facilitated the emergence of an educated class on one hand and helped the press to grow on the other in India. An alert and grown up press during the course of freedom struggle played a prominent role to strengthen the Indian nationalism. The free press, commented Marx, "introduced for the first time into Asiatic Society and managed principally by the common offspring of Hindus and Europeans in a new and powerful reconstruction". The printing press had a revolutionary effect in revealing new ideas before the public mind. The press was the most significant medium of the mass communication. The newly educated class knew that with the introduction of the art of printing took forward for a change of substantial improvement in the socio-political life of the people. At the same the renaissance leaders realized that an alliance between the new ideas and printing press, will, undoubtedly, prove more influential in removing the hindrance in the way of development of nationalism.

On the political front the nationalist movement got impetus because the press was a very meaningful instrument in facilitating political education and propaganda. With the assistance of the press, the nationalist were able to familiarize the masses with doctrines and ideologies such as representative institutions, liberty, democracy, local self government etc. The newspapers on the one hand devoted columns criticizing the various policies of the British government and on the other hand educating the masses in the field of political problems. Press was a powerful weapon to propagate and popularize their programs, policies and means of the struggle enunciated by them from time to time. Raj Kumar Trivedi rightly remarks, “The Indian owned Press had thus became powerful medium of reflecting and determining the public opinion”70. He further says, “In addition there was a fairly strong Urdu Muslim Press, watchful of Muslim interests. The Urdu Press underwent a revolutionary change as a result of the Turkish developments. There was as a result a great strengthening of anti-British sentiments in the Urdu Press. The dominant currents even in the Urdu Press became nationalist in spite of official encouragement to separatism since 190571.

70. R.K. Trivedi, op.cit., pp. 255.
71. Ibid.
One can't deny the truth that without the support of the press neither could All India conferences of nationalist organizations have been conducted successfully nor the various political movement aiming at political independence organized.

Again, it was the press which made possible the exchange of views on an extensive, swift and perpetual basis among various communities residing in different parts of the peninsula. Thus, it is a powerful instrument in establishing closer social and political links between people of various castes, creeds and provinces. The extensive exchange of views on programs and problems relating to different sectors of the country led to the creation of a spirit of national collaboration in various political and social spheres.

It was this dauntingly accomplished collaboration which could achieve the proverbial tryst with destiny in the subsequent period. It is the legacy of the period that the press stills remains and 'arbiter' between the government and governed.