HISTORY OF THE PRESS

It is interesting to study the way how news was transmitted in India even before the modern transport and communication facilities like Railways, Post & Telegraphs and Telecommunications came into existence.

The great Mauryan Emperor Asoka who ruled in the third, century B.C., used to announce his policy decisions through edicts on stone slabs and stone pillars. They were put even in the remote corners of his empire. This was to make people know the royal decisions - as transport facilities were not adequate in those days. The kings who succeeded him used to appoint scribes, who wrote interesting news on the walls. They used to wipe out the old news to write the new once. The Moghul period had started a new era in the communication of news. In those days, news was transmitted through news-letters.

In India these forms of communication were generally improved under the Moghuls. The News writers in particular became an institution. The manuscript reports were meant exclusively for official use, but later they were copied for wider use. An emperor like Aurungzeb allowed great freedom to the writers in news reporting. But, the reports sent by
the news-writers were often unreliable and they led to his failure in the Deccan.

Francois Bernier, a French doctor who served in India in 1656-1668 in his book mentions about the news writer (Waki-ahnawis) sent by the Great Moghul to various provinces.

Niccola Manucci, a Venetian traveller, who lived at the court of Aurangazeb, wrote: "It is a fixed rule of the moghuls that the vaquia-navis and the confianavis or the public and the secret news writers of the empire must read the news once in a week, before the king".

Some hundreds of original manuscript newspapers of the Moghul court were sent by Col. James Todd in 1828 to the Royal Asiatic society in London. These papers, 8 inches by 4(1/2) inches inside on an average, written in various hands, recorded notices of promotions, visits by the emperor, hunting expeditions, bestowal of presents and news of similar nature.

These reports were full of Persianized Urdu. In the history of India, these news letters have a very important place. These helped the rulers to understand the various happenings in the country.
Even after the printed newspaper came into existence, manuscripts, newsletters and newspapers continued to exist. In communicating the news, which were antagonistic to the state, these manuscript papers played an important role. In a despatch dated 12.04.1822 belonging to the confidential section of Fort St. George, Sir Johan Malcolm referred to an anti Government manuscript paper. That paper used to reach every village in South India during 1800. He also said that such manuscript papers were existing in large number during the period of Vellore revolt (1800-1806). During the First War of Independence in 1857, Manuscript newspapers played an important role.

ART OF PRINTING

Undoubtedly, the history of journalism is closely linked to the development of the printing press. The credit for the invention of the art of printing goes to the Chinese. It is said that the Chinese were the first to use movable types for the printing press. Even paper was first of all manufactured in China. The first book was also printed by a Chinese in 868 A.D. The Chinese Court Gazette is said to be the oldest newspaper published at peking.
In 15th century, Johan Gutenberg, a goldsmith of Mainz, a city in Germany, developed a movable type. He also invented a suitable ink for the metal type, which replaced wooden blocks. In 1456, Gutenberg printed nearly 300 copies of the Bible.

After that, the printing presses were established in many other countries. Venice, in Italy, became a flourishing centre of printing. In those days, Governments and Churches patronised the printing press. In 1476, Caxton, England's first printer, set up a press in the Westminster. He had learnt the art of printing in Cologne. He also printed the books in English language whereas before him they used to be printed only in Latin. Soon, presses began to be set up in all the flourishing trading centres of the world.

From the work of the great poet Srinatha of 14th Century A.D., we understand that paper was in use in the Reddy Kingdom in Andhra Pradesh.

Wherever the printing press made its appearance the spread of education took place. It brought a radical change in the outlook of man. It can be rightly said that it is the printing press which divides the Modern period from the Ancient. In India also, it has contributed to the
development of knowledge and spread of education. The Indian languages were greatly benefited by this. In the field of newspapers, the printing press plays a vital role.

PRINTING IN INDIA

Christian Missionaries entered India to spread the Gospel. They were required to print the Bible and other religious books for the spread of the religion. They learnt the local languages and even prepared dictionaries and grammar books in their languages. Then came the colonial powers to establish their colonies in India. The civil servants were required to learn the local languages for efficient administrative performance. They too required the dictionaries and grammar books in the Indian Languages. Out of this necessity, the missionaries and the colonial powers developed printing in India in Indian languages. The first printing press in India was established in 1576 by the Jesuit missionaries in Goa. The first book printed in India was "Doctrina Christa" in 1578. There was a printing press in Pulikail village in Tirunalveli District in South India. The missionaries also established a printing press in Ventry in 1579 and made it their headquarters. Later in 1581, they changed their headquarters to Vypikota which is near Ventry. In 1602, the Pope gifted one printing press for use by the Jesuit

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missionaries at Vipikota. Prayer books were printed in Tamil, Malayalam and Konkani Languages in Roman script in this press. Christian religious books written in Portuguese language were translated into Malayalam and printed in Malayalam around 1616. Reprints were made in 1649 and 1654. It is interesting to note that these language books were printed in the Roman script. In 1674, a Gujarathi merchant by name Bhimji Parekh established a printing press in Bombay. He sent an appeal to the East India Company to send him one printer and the company sent a person by name Henry Hills, who was an expert in printing. Here also books were published in Roman letters only. His attempts to make types in Gujarathi and other Indian languages did not bear much fruit.

In 1679, a printing press was started in the village Humbel Khand. The first dictionary published in India was from this printing press. It was a Tamil-Portuguese Dictionary. The Danish missionaries established a printing press in Tanjore District in 1712. In the beginning, books were printed in Portuguese language. They imported Tamil letters moulded in Germany. But they were found to be too big. Letters of small size were attempted to be moulded in this press. In 1744, 'New Testament' was published in Tamil in this press. In 1733 itself, a Grammar Book in Tamil was
printed in this press. This was considered to be the first Tamil Grammar Book printed in India.

PRINTING PRESS IN MADRAS

In 1761 A.D., a printing press was established in Madras in curious circumstances. In that year, the Britishers took over Pondichery from the French. They brought the printing press in the Governor's residence to Madras, and handed it over to a British scholar in Tamil. It was fixed in the Mission Compound in Vepperi. It is here that a Tamil-English Dictionary was printed in 1779 and an English-Tamil Dictionary in 1786. But it is not the first printing press in Madras. There is evidence that printing press was existing in Madras even in 1746. It was taken to Pondichery by the French and the same was brought back by the British in 1761. It is interesting to note that printing was started in South India in the sixteenth century itself, whereas in North India, it took another two centuries for the same. But it is the Serampore press in Bengal that had contributed significantly to the development of the printing in various Indian Languages. The credit of establishing the first power press goes to the Serampore missionaries.

The Printing technology that started in 16th century in India blossomed fully by the beginning of the 19th century.
It not only helped much in the spread of literacy and knowledge, but also prepared the foreground for the advent of newspapers.

PRINTING IN TELUGU

As the present study relates chiefly to the Telugu newspapers, it is necessary to outline the beginnings and the development of printing in Telugu language.

As already stated, officials of the East India Company and the Christian missionaries tried to master the Indian languages in order to perform their work efficiently. They not only systematized the study of these languages, but also introduced the techniques of printing in these languages. Benzaman Sehultze, a Danish missionary, was the first European to make a thorough study of Telugu language.

Around the middle of the Eighteenth Century, the European world began showing interest to learn about Telugu language. Some such works were, "Catechisms Telugicus Minor" (1746), "Colloquium Religiousum Telugice" (1747) and "Perpicua Explication Doctrina... exlingua Tamulica in Telugican Versa (1747)". Also 47 Telugu words collected by Greg Sharpe were printed in the appendix to "Syntagma Dissertationum Oxonia" (1767) by Thomas Hyde.
evidence shows that printed word in Telugu appeared almost simultaneously at Serampore and Madras. Charles Willkins, who came to India in 1770, was the first Englishman to learn Sanskrit. He translated "The Bhagavadgita", "Sakuntala" and "Hitophadesha" into English. With his own hands, he prepared the type for printing, cut letters in steel and made materials and moulds for Devanagari characters and trained the local people to apply this mould to other Indian languages.

The early type in Telugu might have been prepared by one Pancharam and his assistant Manohar at the famous Serampore press. The Serampore missionaries reported in 1804 to their society in England that they had a large printing establishment and efficient letter foundry capable of any expansion. They mentioned seven languages of India into which they wanted to translate scriptures, and Telugu was one among them. Among the books, advertised for sale by the foreign Bible Society was Telugu gospels priced Rupees four.

To reduce costs, they tried to get the Telugu and Nagari font from London. By 1807, the Serampore missionaries succeeded in printing the scripts in seven languages, Telugu being one of them. In the disastrous fire accident on 11th March, 1812, 14 fonts in Eastern Languages...
and the Manuscripts of the translation of "The Ramayan", were entirely destroyed. The rough copy of "Telugu Grammar" also perished. But the press was brought into operation within a few months. All the works consumed by fire were again begun before the close of the year. One of these books was a grammar in Telugu language by W.Carry.

The second important centre for early Telugu printing was Madras. As early as 1788, Henry Hariss proposed to establish a new printing press at Madras and introduced Persian and other oriental characters, in response to specific application made by the Brahmins, of Madras. By the end of Eighteenth century, Haris was ready to take up printing in Telugu. The first missionaries of the London Mission Society came in 1804 to work in the Telugu speaking Viziapatam (Presently Visakapatnam District). They were advised by Carey of Serampore to learn Telugu. One of them, Besgranges learned enough Telugu and prepared some sections of the Holy Bible and a few tracts in Telugu. The tracts were printed by an association called 'The Christian Institution in the East'. William Campbell wrote much about the contribution to Telugu books in Christianity by the Mission at Vizagpatnam, (presently Visakapatnam) in his book, "British India's Relations to the Decline of Hinduism", written in 1839. The first Telugu Tracts were
issued from here as early as 1809 and 1810. The Old Testament was printed at Vizagapatam (Presently Visakapatnam district) for Madras Bible Society. A version of the New Testament was prepared by John Guardedn and Edward Pitchette who arrived in 1810 and 1812 respectively at Vizagapatnam (Presently Visakapatnam district) and was printed in Madras about 1818. A Grammar of Gentoo Language, as it is understood and spoken by the Gentoo people residing North West of Madras, printed in 1800 does not bear the name of the author. The book with the same title was again printed in 1817. It bore the name of William Brown as its author. He also brought out a dictionary with the title "A Vocabulary of Gentoo and English", composed of words in current use and illustrated by examples applicable to the familiar speech and writing of the Middle order and more elevated ranks of the modern Gentoo people. The expression Gentoo originally used to denote the Hindus. But by the middle of the Seventeenth century, it came to signify the Telugu people and their language.

A printing press was founded in 1825 by the Bellary Tract Society which was founded in 1815. It printed thousands of scriptures and Tracts in Telugu. Two books of A.D. Campell were printed at Madras. The first is "The Grammar of the Teloogoo Languages, Commonly Termed the
Gentoo, Peculiar to Hindoos inhabiting North Eastern Provinces of the Indian Peninsula" (1816). The Second is "A Dictionary of the Telooogoo language Commonly termed the Gentoo peculiar to Hindus inhabiting..." (1821). The Madras Religious Tract Society which was started in 1818 printed more than a million tracts in Telugu by the Middle of the century.

It is not only the Christian literature, Grammar and Dictionaries that were printed, an attempt was made to print school books also. C.P. Brown's work 'The Prosody of the Telugu and Sanskrit Languages Explained' was printed in 1827.

Thus, the early missionaries and the British civil servants contributed significantly to the early printing in Telugu, making it a fertile land for the growth of the newspapers in the languages.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

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