CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

In communication, media (singular medium) are the storage and transmission channels or tools used to store and deliver information or data. It is often referred to as synonymous with mass media or news media, but may refer to a single medium used to communicate any data for any purpose.\(^1\) The beginning of human communication through artificial channels, i.e. not vocalization or gestures, goes back to ancient cave paintings, drawn maps, and writing.

The Persia Empire (centred around present-day Iran) played an important role in the field of communication. They devised what might be described as the first real mail or postal system, which is said to have been developed by the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great (c. 550 BC) after his conquest of Media. The role of the system as an intelligence gathering apparatus is well documented, and the service was (later) called angariae, a term that in time turned to indicate a tax system. The Old Testament (Esther, VIII) makes mention of this system: Ahasuerus, king of Medes, used couriers for communicating his decisions.

The word communication is derived from the Latin root communicare. This was due to the Roman Empire also devising what might be described as a mail or postal system, in order to centralize control of the empire from Rome. This allowed for personal letters and for Rome to gather knowledge about events in its many widespread

provinces. More advanced postal systems later appeared in the Islamic Caliphate and the Mongol Empire during the Middle Ages.

The adoption of a dominant communication medium is important enough that historians have folded civilization into "ages" according to the medium most widely used. A book titled "Five Epochs of Civilization"\(^2\) divides history into the following stages: Ideographic writing produced the first civilization; alphabetic writing, the second; printing, the third; electronic recording and broadcasting, the fourth; and computer communication, the fifth. The media affects what people think about themselves and how they perceive people as well. What we think about self image and what others should look like comes from the media.

While it could be argued that these "Epochs" are just a historian's construction, digital and computer communication shows concrete evidence of changing the way humans organize. The latest trend in communication, termed smart mobbing, involves ad-hoc organization through mobile devices, allowing for effective many-to-many communication and social-networking.

The first dated printed book known is the "Diamond Sutra", printed in China in 868 AD, although it is clear that books were printed earlier. Movable clay type was invented in 1041 in China. However, due to the slow spread of literacy to the masses in China, and the relatively high cost of paper there, the earliest printed mass-medium was probably European popular prints from about 1400. Although these were produced in huge numbers, very few early examples survive, and even most known to be printed before about 1600 have not survived. Johannes Gutenberg printed the first book on a printing press with movable type in 1453. This

\(^2\) McGaughey, William, Five Epochs of Civilization (Thistlerose), 2000
invention transformed the way the world received printed materials, although books remained too expensive really to be called a mass-medium for at least a century after that. Newspapers developed from about 1612, with the first example in English in 1620;³ but they took until the 19th century to reach a mass-audience directly. Mass media had the economics of linear replication: a single work could make money. An example of Riel and Neil's theory proportional to the number of copies sold, and as volumes went up, unit costs went down, increasing profit margins further. Vast fortunes were to be made in mass media.

In a democratic society, the media can serve the electorate about issues regarding government and corporate entities. Some consider the concentration of media ownership to be a grave threat to democracy. Mass media can be used for various purposes: advocacy, both for business and social concerns. This can include advertising, marketing, propaganda, public relations, and political communication; entertainment, traditionally through performances of acting, music, and sports, along with light reading; since the late 20th century also through video and computer games; and Public Service Announcements. For this Journalism is required. Journalism is the discipline of collecting, analyzing, verifying and presenting information regarding current events, trends, issues and people. Those who practice journalism are known as journalists.

News-oriented journalism is sometimes described as the "first rough draft of history" (attributed to Phil Graham), because journalists often record important events, producing news articles on short deadlines. While under pressure to be first with their stories, news media organizations usually edit and proofread their reports prior to publication, adhering to each organization's standards of accuracy, quality and style.

³ http://opencontent.wgbh.org/report/glossary.html
Many news organizations claim proud traditions of holding government officials and institutions accountable to the public, while media critics have raised questions about holding the press itself accountable.

The art and science of managing communication between an organization and its key publics to build, manage and sustain its positive image is public relations. Examples include:

- Corporations use marketing public relations to convey information about the products they manufacture or services they provide to potential customers to support their direct sales efforts. Typically, they support sales in the short and long term, establishing and burnishing the corporation's branding for a strong, ongoing market.

- Corporations also use public relations as a vehicle to reach legislators and other politicians, seeking favorable tax, regulatory, and other treatment, and they may use public relations to portray themselves as enlightened employers, in support of human-resources recruiting programs.

- Nonprofit organizations, including schools and universities, hospitals, and human and social service agencies, use public relations in support of awareness programs, fund-raising programs, staff recruiting, and to increase patronage of their services.

- Politicians use public relations to attract votes and raise money, and, when successful at the ballot box, to promote and defend their service in office, with an eye to the next election or, at career’s end, to their legacy.

India is the world's largest democracy. Its mass media culture, a system that has evolved over centuries, is comprised of a complex
framework. During the early centuries, Emperor Ashoka's pillar inscriptions and rock edicts in different parts of the Mauryan empire during the 3rd century B.C. are considered examples of Imperial political communication to the informed and literate sections of the population. Even before Ashoka, a system of news-gathering is referred to in the Ordinances of Manu though news-gathering was perfected during the Mauryan period (circa 321-185 B.C.). The Mauryas used it as an intelligence organization of great administrative and political significance under Kautilya's (Chanakya's) supervision.4

Ashoka (272-232 B.C.) used the Prakrit language in his communication on ethics and morals as evidenced by his inscriptions. Prakrit was the forerunner of Sanskrit (the language of learning, refined from Prakrit). The learning of languages was confined to the high castes, the aristocracy, priests, army personnel and landowners. The majority were illiterate then as even now and the early communication efforts in India did not bring about any change in the social structure. There was no democratic approach even among the top classes. Social, political and economic power was concentrated in the hands of princes and plutocrats and their high-caste advisers, who were also the leading landowners.

Another feature of communication in ancient India was the emphasis placed on oral and aural systems. Learned people were bahusrut (people who heard and memorized a lot). Of course, writing was done on palm leaves using a stylus, but the written documents were considered too sacred to be touched or used by the lower classes. The ruling class used certain methods for coding, transmitting and decoding messages secretly through the network of spies employed by all princes, to glean information

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about neighbouring enemies. The system initiated by the Mauryan emperors continued into later periods. For example, in the 10th century A.D., the Ghaznavi dynasty which established its rule over the Punjab had a system of news collection that was a source of intelligence about the princes of neighbouring areas, the course of battles and the personal lives of generals.

The news-gatherers and news-carriers were part of the administrative and military intelligence system under the Mughal dynasty established by Babur in 1526. According to historians of journalism, news was collected in a well-organized manner under Akbar the Great. In 1574, Akbar established a recording office that helped later medieval historians gather materials for chronicles. The recording office had a number of copyists on its staff, who wrote abridged versions of documents and presented them to the Waquiah Navis, or the newswriter of the court.  

Such newsletters were sent through messengers to different army commanders and other important government functionaries. Between these newsletters and modern newspapers was an intermediate phase in news communication, namely, private manuscript newspapers organized by former newswriters who were unemployed. The manuscript newspaper was extant during, Aurangzeb's time when soldiers were supplied with such newspapers. There were also other private newsletters written by newsagents employed by merchants and others.  

**European Connection**

A long European era in Indian history was inaugurated towards the end of the 15th century when Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese explorer,

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5 Ibid.
landed on Kappad beach of Calicut (Kozhikode) in 1498, six years after Columbus landed on the American continent, Da Gama had landed along with two shiploads of adventurers and traders and one missionary. There is historical evidence for a visit of Roman Catholic missionaries to northern India during the 14th century on their journey to China, but that visit was for a short duration and it did not lead to any long-term intellectual and cultural relations in the region.

The Portuguese developed cordial relations with the Zamorin of Calicut, but eventually moved their headquarters to Goa. They also developed strong centres in Cochin and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) but they had no influence in the interior parts of India. Eventually, they were displaced by the Dutch whose Dutch East India Company hid already established trade and military posts in different parts of India and Sri Lanka. The Dutch were ultimately supplanted by the British.

**The First Printing Press in India**

According to the historian J.B. Primrose, and the letters of Jesuit missionaries, the first printing press arrived in India on 6 September 1556, and was installed in the College of St. Paul in Goa. The letters also mention that the press was originally meant for Abyssinia (Ethiopia), but the Abyssinian project was abandoned for some reason. Some say that a storm forced the ship to land in Goa. Whatever the reason, the first press and the subsequent ones were brought from Portugal. They were used mainly for printing religious literature—tracts, song-books, catechism, pictures—and not for commercial, social or political information, or for newspapers.

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The First Indian Newspaper

The printing press preceded the advent of printed news in India by about 100 years. It was in 1674 that the first printing apparatus was established in Bombay followed by Madras in 1772. India's first newspaper, *Calcutta General Advertise*, also known as the *Hicky's Bengal Gazette* was established in January 1780, and the first Hindi daily, *Samachar Sudha Varshan*, began in 1854. The evolution of the Indian media since has been fraught with developmental difficulties; illiteracy, colonial constraints and repression, poverty, and apathy thwart interest in news and media. Within this framework, it is instructive to examine India's press in two broad analytical sections: pre-colonial times and the colonial, independent press (which may, again be classified into two: preceding and following the Emergency rule imposed by Indira Gandhi's government in 1975). The post-Emergency phase, which continues at the present, may be the third independent phase of India's newspaper revolution.  

James Augustus Hickey is considered as the "father of Indian press" as he started the first Indian newspaper from Calcutta, the *Calcutta General Advertise* or the Bengal Gazette in January, 1780, carried only classified advertisements on the front page, a practice prevalent in England. In 1789, the first newspaper from Bombay, the *Bombay Herald* appeared, followed by the *Bombay Courier* next year (this newspaper was later amalgamated with the Times of India in 1861).

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8 Jeffrey, Robin, Capitalism, Politics and the Indian Languages Press, India's Newspaper Revolution, op. cit.
The first newspaper in an Indian language was the *Samachar Darpan* in Bengali. The first issue of this daily was published from the Serampore Mission Press on May 23, 1818. In the same year, Ganga Kishore Bhattacharyya started publishing another newspaper in Bengali, the *Bengal Gazette*. On July 1, 1822 the first Gujarati newspaper the Bombay samachar was published from Bombay, which is still extant. The first Hindi newspaper, the *Oodunt Marthand* began in 1826. Since then, the prominent Indian languages in which papers have grown over the years are Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telgu, Urdu and Bengali.

The *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*. Some of them were: *Calcutta Journal, India Gazette, Bengal Harkaru, John Bull, Bombay Herald, Bombay Courier* and *Journal of Commerce*. These newspapers were all weeklies and their circulation did not exceed 4000 copies at the most. They dealt mostly with personal news and carried classified personal advertisements. Most publications of the time, with the exception of the *Calcutta Journal* edited by James Silk Buckingham, dealt with the arrivals and departures of Europeans, the timings of the steamers and the personal domestic needs of European settlers in the three major metropolitan cities, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. According to Moitra many of them were scurrilous and scandalous publications.10

"Newspaper history in India is inextricably tangled with political history," wrote A. E. Charlton.11 James Augustus Hicky was the founder of India's first newspaper, the Calcutta General Advertiser also known as *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*, in 1780. Soon other newspapers came into

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existence in Calcutta and Madras: the *Calcutta Gazette*, the *Bengal Journal*, the *Oriental Magazine*, the *Madras Courier* and the *Indian Gazette*. While the *India Gazette* enjoyed governmental patronage including free postal circulation and advertisements, *Hicky's Bengal Gazette* earned the rulers' wrath due to its criticism of the government. In November 1780 its circulation was halted by government decree. Hicky protested against this arbitrary harassment without avail, and was imprisoned. The *Bengal Gazette* and the *India Gazette* were followed by the *Calcutta Gazette* which subsequently became the government's "medium for making its general orders".12

*The Bombay Herald*, *The Statesmen* in Calcutta and the *Madras Mail* and *The Hindu*, along with many other rivals in Madras represented the metropolitan voice of India and its people. While *Statesman* voiced the English rulers' voice, *The Hindu* became the beacon of patriotism in the South. *The Hindu* was founded in Madras as a counter to the *Madras Mail*.

Buckingham's paper was a model for later financial and commercial publications. However, there were great similarities in the news content of all Anglo-Indian newspapers. According to Margarita Barnes13, newsletters from London, Paris, Stockholm, Vienna and other major cities in the world appeared in the Anglo-Indian newspapers of the time.

English newspapers of the period run by Indians primarily for English-educated elite Indians are called Indno-Anglian newspapers. The

first newspaper of this kind was the *Bengal Gazette* started in 1816 by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, a learned disciple of Raja Rammohan Roy. This wholly Indian venture, a weekly, lasted for nearly four years. Bhattacharya marked a trend which became powerful in the latter half of the 19th century; the expression of nationalism through the medium of English to draw the attention of British administrators to the cultural history and philosophy of India. The nationalist editor aimed also to educate his readers about the best in European philosophical thought, without sacrificing the essential tenets of Hinduism and the Hindu way of life. But neither Bhattacharya's paper nor Roy's English fortnightly, the *Brahminical Magazine*, dealt with political or economic issues, although Roy deserves credit for fighting social evils such as *sari* and, human sacrifice. Roy's attempts succeeded when Lord Bentinck banned these social evils in 1829.¹⁴

English journalism in India rose out of the needs and interests of an alien population in the metropolitan cities that were the headquarters of the British provinces. When it was taken up by Indians it still maintained its orientation towards European life and culture, with an added flavour of Indian culture, religion and a bit of Indian cultural nationalism in the initial years. Later, when the Indian nationalist movement became strong, Indo-Anglian newspapers became totally committed to Indian national needs and political freedom.

Indian language journalism, on the other hand, was wholly oriented towards religious communication in the initial years as it was sponsored and promoted by European missionaries. While recognizing the commendable pioneering efforts of the European communicators in

¹⁴ Moitra, A. N., A History of Indian Journalism, op. cit.
establishing not only the printing press but initiating the process of printing books and journals in different languages of India, compiling dictionaries, vocabulary lists, proverbs and manuals and laying the foundation of journalism in almost all Indian languages, the historical fact remains that the native population did not take to journalism as a useful means to inform different sections of the population about the events and issues that were of importance to them. Coupled with this indifference of the native elite was the view that scholarship was to be judged by the ability of the scholar to memorize the sacred slokas and the degree of emphasis laid on bahusrut (hearing a lot), as mentioned before. Modern Western knowledge was totally excluded from the realm of scholarship. Moreover, there was opposition from certain quarters to printing and printed material as it was considered mleccha and hence untouchable since the ink used for printing contained animal fat.15

The Major Indian Language Newspapers

Digdarshan (World Vision) was the first Indian language newspaper. It was started in April 1818 by the Serampur missionaries William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward, who also started another journal in June of the same year, the Samachar Darpan (News Mirror). The latter lasted for 34 years and covered general news as well as items of special interest to local Indian Christians. Besides these two Bengali weeklies, the Serampur trio brought out an English journal, the Friend of India.

These efforts aroused the journalistic interest of many Bengali intellectual such as Rammohan Roy who brought out periodicals in English,

Bengali and Persian. Some of Roy's papers were *Sambad Kaumudi, Brahmanical Magazine, Mirat-ul-Akhbar (Mirror of News), Bangadoota* and *Bengal Herald*.

Roy (1772-1833), the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, was the leader of the Bengal Renaissance which inspired many intellectuals in different parts of the country to take up social reform movements that culminated in what historians call the Indian Renaissance. Nevertheless, the missionaries were the prime movers of Indian-language journalism in most parts of the country. The leading newspapers in various Indian languages are discussed below.

### Assamese

Arunodaya, a distinguished journal in the Assamese language, was started in 1846 under the editorship of the Reverend Oliver T. Cutter. About this journal Nadig Krishnamurthy, historian of journalism, has the following comments:

“Besides news items ... [it] contained pictures produced with wood-cut blocks. [It] was published for over 36 years. Learned articles from many eminent writers such as A.R.D. Phookan, Hem Chandra Barua and G. Barua ... adorned this journal.”

### Gujarati

The newspaper with the greatest longevity in India, *Mumbai Samachar*, was also the first Gujarati newspaper. Established in 1822, it will celebrate its bicentennial in 2022. The paper was started by Fardunji

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Marzaban as a weekly, and became a daily in 1832. In those days, the present states of Gujarat and Maharashtra were part of the composite British province of Bombay, also called the Bombay Presidency.

**Hindi**

In 1820, the first bilingual paper, Gospel *Magazine*, came out in Bengali and English and it carried a notice that extracts of the magazine would be available in the Nagari script (used in Hindi). The only copy of 'extracts from the Gospel Magazine' printed in the Khari Boli dialect of Hindi is available in the British museum. This is the earliest example of Hindi journalism, if not the first Hindi journal, according to Vedalankar:

The first regular Hindi publication, however, was Oodunt Martand, a weekly published by a Kanpur businessman, Pandit Jugal Kishore Shukla, who was settled in Calcutta. Its first issue came out in Calcutta on 30 May 1826. *Oodund Martand* thrived for some time on the controversy between the Bengali magazine *Samachar Chandrika* and the upcountry traders in Calcutta. Although Shukla expected some help from the government, he could not get it and his paper was closed down on 4 December 1827.

Among the early Hindi Newspapers were *Samachar Sudhavarshan* (Calcutta, 1854) which was, incidently, the first Hindi daily, *Samayadant Martand* (1850-51), *Bananas Akhbar* (1845), *Shimla Akhbar* and *Malwa Akhbar*.

Calcutta was the birthplace not only of English, Bengali and Hindi

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journalism; the first Urdu newspaper, Urdu-Akhbar, was published there in the second decade of the 19th century. Moulavi Akram Ali was its editor. The first Persian newspaper, *Jam-i-Jahan-Nania*, was also published in Calcutta on 28 March 1812. Urdu and Persian newspapers thus preceded the missionary newspapers *Digdarshan* and *Samachar Darpan*, but they did not catch the attention of journalism historians for a long time. We will return to Urdu journalism later.

Newspapers in different languages were started in Calcutta because Calcutta was the seat of government until 1911, when the capital was shifted to New Delhi. By the middle of the 19th century, there were Urdu and Hindi newspapers in many parts of northern India. The role of Hindi and Urdu papers in the northern provinces in forming public opinion against the East India Company during the Great Rebellion of 1857 has yet to be fully assessed. However, one can be certain that the impetus for journalism provided by the religious communicators and secular scholars paved the way for political rumblings among the English-educated elite of India. The fact that the British government imposed stringent measures against the Indian language press is clear evidence that there was a fear among the rulers of the growing political influence of newspapers.\(^{18}\)

*Kannada*

First published from Bellary and then from Mangalore, Kannada *Samachar* was the earliest Kannada journal, according to many scholars. But others think that the first Kannada journal was *Mangaloora Samachar*, the first issue of which came out on 1 July 1843 under the editorship of

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\(^{18}\) Krishnamurthy, N., *Indian Journalism*, op.cit.
Herman Moegling of the Basel Mission. It was a fortnightly. Since metallic types and a letter press were available in Bellary, the publication was moved there from Mangalore in March 1844, at which point its name was changed to Kannada *Samachar*. However, it ceased publication on 15 November the same year, owing to financial reasons.

*Subudhi Prakasha* was the next regular Kannada publication. It was published during 1854-55 under the patronage of the ruler of Sangli near Dharwar. The editor was Khiru Sheshu of Belgaum. Some other Kannada newspapers during the 1850s and 1860s that were published from Mysore and Bangalore: *Kannada Vaartika* (1857), Arunodaya (1862), *Mahilaasakhi* and *Sarvamitra*. Some of these were printed on the letter press, although lithography was widely prevalent in all parts of India even at the end of the 19th century.19

**Malayalam**

The first Malayalam newspaper was a lithographed one that came out in June 1847 under the editorship of Hermann Gundert, a German literary scholar, orientalist and religious worker of the Basel Mission. Named *Rajya Sarnacharam* (literally, News of the Kingdom), this lithographed monthly carried news pertaining to religious activities as well as news of general interest. It was published from Tellichery near Kannur. It was followed by another journal from the same mission, namely *Paschimodayam* (Dawn of the West), which was more secular than the first because it carried articles on science, geography, world history, sociology and other topics. Most of the contents were contributed by Gundert and Frederick Muller. The first newspaper lasted till November

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1850 and the second till June 1857.  

The third Malayalam journal, Jnananikshepam (Treasure of Knowledge), was started in Kottayam in 1848 and printed on the Church Missionary Society Press. Its first editor was the Reverend Benjamin Bailey. Many people consider this the first regular newspaper in Kerala as it was patterned after a regular news publication, with features, special articles and editorials. It is published even today as a religious publication of the Church of South India. None of these early ventures had any substantial circulation. But they deserve special attention as pioneering efforts in Malayalam journalism.

The first secular newspaper from Kerala was the Western Star (1860) published from Cochin. Charles Lawson, who later on became the editor of the famous newspaper, the Mail of Madras, started his journalistic career in the Western Star.

The oldest surviving newspaper in Malayalam is Deepika, which was started in 1887 as Nasrani Deepika at Kottayam as a voice of the Catholic community in Kerala. Today, the paper is run by Rashtra Deepika, a private company; it has several sister publications and six editions.

Malayala Manorama, the second-oldest newspaper in Malayalam, was started in 1890. It was the first newspaper to be published by a joint stock company, formed in 1888 solely for the purpose of publishing a newspaper. It has 13 editions and a circulation of over the 1 million copies. The other major daily newspapers of Kerala, today are Mathrubhumi, Deshabhimani, Kerala Kaumudi, Mangalam, Madhyamam and

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21 Ibid.
Marathi

The first Marathi newspaper was a bilingual fortnightly (English and Marathi) which was started on 6 January 1832 by a young professor, Bat Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar, of Elphinstone College in Bombay. Though it ceased publication in 1840, Darpan did remarkable service for the cause of disseminating Occidental knowledge among the Marathi-speaking people of Bombay. Through its English columns, it also brought people's grievances to the attention of the British authorities in Bombay.

But the first all-Marathi journal was Mumbai Akhbar (1840). Jnanodaya (Dawn of Wisdom), begun by American missionaries in 1842, was vocal in speaking out against social evils such as superstitious customs, child marriage and caste oppression. Historian Vasant Rao has said: 'Jnanodaya did help the cause of social reform ... the back files of the paper are very useful as a source of social history of Maharashtra'.

Oriya

Orissa and Bihar were part of Bengal province till 1912. But the progress in printing and communication made in Bengal remained confined mostly to Calcutta; it did not flow either to Orissa or Bihar. However, the first Oriya magazine, Janaruna, was published by the Orissa Mission Press in 1849 under the editorship of Charles Lacey. Then came another publication from the mimic press, Prabhat Chandrika, under the

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editorship of William Lacey. Many people consider that real journalism in Orissa was started by Utkal Deepika, which lasted from 1865 to 1936. The paper raised its voice for the separation of the Oriya-speaking areas from Bengal, and criticized the British government for its inaction during the Orissa famine that resulted in the death of more than 20,000 peoples.

_Utkal Sahitya, Bodhadayini_ and other papers of the 1860s served the cause Oriya language and literature; they also registered strong protests against corruption and ineptitude among the administrators. _Baleshwar Sambad Bahika_, started in 1868, was a monthly magazine, which became a weekly in 1878. It made a similar contribution to language and literature and took and took stand against official corruption and inefficiency.²⁴

**Punjabi**

Although Maharaja Ranjit Singh encouraged the development of Punjabi Journalism, the earliest Punjabi newspaper was a missionary newspaper. And it was English missionaries who set up printing presses in Ludhiana and other areas of Punjab. The first printing press in Punjab was established in Ludhiana in 1809.²⁵ Although the Punjabi Bible was brought out by William Carey, the first Gurmukhi grammar had come out in Ludhiana in 1838. By 1860, other Punjabi grammars and an English-Punjabi dictionary were published in Ludhiana.

**Tamil**

The earliest printed books in an Indian language were all produced

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²⁴ Ibid.
at Tamil presses in Tarangampaadi, Kollam and Goa. Later on, Nagercoil, Madurai, Tanjavur and towns in Tamil Nadu became major centres of Tamil printing. There was printing in the 'Malabar language' as early as 1578. The first periodical, Tamil Patrika, a monthly, was brought out in 1831 by the Religious Tract Society in Madras; it lasted till 1833. The next Tamil periodical, a weekly, was the Dina Vartamani, published in Madras from 1856 by the Dravidian Press and edited by the Reverend P. Percival. It had a circulation of about 1,000 copies.

The first secular Tamil newspaper was Swadeshamitran, started by G. Subrahmania Aiyar in 1882. Aiyar was also the co-founder of the Hindu with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. In 1898 Aiyar left the Hindu to devote all his time to Swadeshamitran which became a daily in 1892. This was the only Tamil daily until 1917, when Deshabhaktan came out. The very names of these early papers indicates how nationalism had influenced them. A great patriot and poet of Tamil Nadu, Subramania Bharati, joined Swadeshamitran in 1904 as a subeditor. Bharati was inspired by Tilak and started two weeklies, India in Tamil and Bala Bharati in English. Soon the British government began to persecute Bharati and he went into exile in French Pondicherry, from where he continued to edit his newspapers. However, as they were banned from Tamil Nadu, the papers soon became extinct. In 1910 Bharati returned to Madras and rejoined Swadeshamitran, where he worked until his death at the young age of 39. Swadeshamitran lasted till 1970.26

The early newspapers and weeklies in Tamil campaigned against superstitions and evil social practices. A social reform movement called Dravida Kazhakam was founded by E.V. Ramasamy Naicker (known also

as EVR and as Periyor), who also edited Dravidan, which strongly supported the Dravida movement and issued reinterpretations of the Ramayana as the story of colonialism practised on a southern king, Ravana, by a northern king, Rama. EVR also spearheaded the justice Party, with its anti-Brahminism and rationalism. Dravidan became the mouthpiece of this party. Allot her publication of the Dravida Kazhakam was Vitutalai (Emancipation) which also advocated rationalism and sponsored popular movements against casteism.

EVR's movement inspired later political movements such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam (DMK)

Telugu

K.indukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu, known as the father of the renaissance movement in Andhra and the founder of modern Telugu, sparked a social reform movement through his weekly Vivekavardhini (1874). He also founded separate journals for women: Satihitabodhini (Women's Advocate), Hassiavardhini and Satiavaadini, all of which strongly advocated ending child marriage, the caste system and prostitution. In addition, they promoted monotheism, popular Telugu, and the rehabilitation of fallen women.

The earliest publications in Telugu were all brought out by missionaries. Satyodaya (Dawn of Truth) and others like it were published by the Christian Association of Bellary in the early 1830s. Some of these Telugu publications tamed out from Madras as in those days parts of what is now Andhra Pradesh were in the Madras Presidency.27

27 Ibid.
One outstanding publication from the Veda Samajam in Madras was *Tatvabodhini* which serialized the Rg Veda.

**Urdu and Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan**

Some Urdu newspapers were published in the early part of the 19th century in Calcutta but real Urdu journalism took root in the mid-19th century. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, a great educationist, judge and social reformer, did much for the development of Urdu journalism. Sir Sayyid worked especially for the progress of fellow Muslims but he wanted all Indians to be emancipated through modern education. With this aim in view, he founded the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh which later became the world-renowned Aligarh Muslim University.

His contributions to Urdu journalism were perhaps not well known until recent years. He used his own journals for two things—to modernize Muslims and all other Indians through scientific education, and to fight against irrational and superstitious customs and beliefs indulged in by fellow Muslims. A scientific attitude and temper, he believed, was most essential for any community that aimed at progress.

Sir Sayyid founded a social reform organization called the *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* in 1870. Under the auspices of this organization he brought out a journal of the same name. It lasted for 25 years, and most of its work was done by Sir Sayyid himself. Of the 459 articles published in the journal, he wrote 208—and they were well-researched, erudite articles.²⁸

At times, Sir Sayyid's pen was acerbic: he criticized the 'spinelessness' of some religious leaders who chose to remain silent when confronted by serious social issues. He reacted vehemently against

²⁸ Murthy, N. K., Indian Journalism, op. cit.
hypocrisy and sycophancy. He opposed the fanaticism and evil practices of some leaders who kept both male and female slaves and entertained polygamy, opposed mixed dining (of different castes or sexes) and arrogance based on caste or gender. He criticized the religious bigotry of some of his orthodox friends. His critics opposed his views and even labelled him an atheist.

Sir Sayyid's contribution to Urdu journalism was long-lasting. He made Urdu capable of handling writings in science and social science. He introduced Western literature to Urdu writers through his articles in Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq, besides translating some English classics into Urdu. Since he had his own printing press, he modernized the Urdu types and reformed the Urdu printing process. Another contribution of his was an Urdu grammar, which was highly useful in standardizing usage, a factor essential for the growth of journalism. Many later young writers were indebted to him in all these matters. He exhorted the younger generation to eschew superstitious practices and embrace modern knowledge. He established a scientific society in Ghazipur with the sole aim of creating a scientific temper among young writers and through it undertook several major translation projects. The books this society brought out were useful in improving the farming practices of the time. Sir Sayyid spoke frequently about the usefulness of modernizing production systems in India along scientific and technical lines and advocated the use of Western instruments and tools wherever applicable in agriculture and industry.²⁹

The growth and development of journalism depends a great deal on people's literacy and education, as well as the socio-economic activities in a given cultural and geographical environment. It also depends on the

²⁹ Ibid.
political awareness of the people, especially the educated class.

Towards the close of the 19th century, several colleges imparting science and liberal arts education sprang up in major towns of India. A class of intelligentsia came up in the metropolitan cities and industrial towns. Many intelligentsia belonged to this group felt that the British liberalism and democratic approach to life were confined to the British islands and that double standards were being followed in the administration of colonies.

The British model of education for the colonies, based on Lord Macaulay's Educational Minute of 1835, succeeded in making the Indian educated class aware of the essential hypocrisy and insincerity in the administration of social justice. Members of this class were also frustrated by the restrictive employment policy followed by the British government. In the princely states also, opportunities were denied to many deserving young people on account of their caste status. It is against this background that we should look at the sudden growth of newspapers and journals in the last quarter of the 19th century.30

Between 1860 and 1899, hundreds of newspapers came up demanding freedom of expression and criticizing the repressive measures of the princes and the British administrators. Some liberal Englishmen settled in the British-Indian provinces and the princely states raised their voices against British officials who, with the support of Indian officials and princes, tried to suppress free expression. This motivated many patriots and radical thinkers to start journals demanding justice and fair play. The political unrest in different parts of India eventually led to the

formation of organizations for safeguarding the interests of local people and advocating socioeconomic and political reform. Because of all this, journalism received a fillip and it played a significant role in making educated Indians more aware of their rights. The English newspapers such as the Hindu, started in Madras in 1878 and the Amrita Bazar Patrika started in a suburb of Calcutta during 1868 are examples for this.31

In these journals were voiced demands for administrative reforms in recruitment, social justice and privileges for the lower castes. But it took many more decades for advocates of reform to become fully aware of the economic drain that was occurring in India as a result of colonialism.

Although the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 under the leadership of an enlightened Englishman, A.O. Hume, it continued as a memorandum-submitting, upper-middle class organization until the advent of Mahatma Gandhi. However, expression of discontent and demands for political reforms were made through the columns of many newspapers. These publications helped in making the literate Indians and through them a large number of illiterates aware of the need for change.

Gandhi always set high standards for printing words and was of the view that it is the only platform where you can address the mass society in one go and educate them for their legal rights. In his autobiography, he wrote, "The sole aim of journalism should be the service of nation and people. The newspapers are a great power, but just as unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastated crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves to destroy. If the

control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when experienced from within".32

Communication happens at many levels (even for one single action), in many different ways and for most beings, as well as certain machines. Several, if not all, fields of study dedicate a portion of attention to communication, so when speaking about communication, it is very important to be sure about what aspects of communication one is talking about.

Definitions of communication range widely, some recognizing that animals can communicate with each other as well as human beings, and some are narrower, only including human beings within the parameters of human symbolic interaction. “What is really needed to make democracy to function is not the knowledge of facts, but right education. And the true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock the public mind with wanted and unwanted impressions. A journalist has, therefore, to use his discretion as to what to report and when. As it is, journalists are not content to stick to the facts alone. Journalism has become the art of intelligent anticipation of events.”33 The renowned personality of mass media and probably the greatest journalist of all time, Mahatma Gandhi reached out to millions of people across the world through his communication skills and journalistic approach and then put an ever lasting impact on Indian National Movement and waged a battle single handedly against the mighty Britishers. He took to journalism as a medium to educate the common masses as well as to install patriotic

feelings in their hearts for the cause of others. In his journalistic career, which spanned roughly four decades, he wrote articles on various topics, simple and clear, with passion and burning indignation. Gandhi was not a journalist in the popular sense of the term. His life and writing had a symbiotic relationship with each other. Gandhi wrote with a purpose. Writing for him, was not a writer’s pursuit for creativity for a role, it was a duty, bound to be performed. Neither was writing a proselytizing mission with him. Writing satisfied his need to share his ideas with others, a two-way dialogue, between him and his readers on a joint journey on the path leading to the truth.

Newspapers were not only informative and entertaining to Gandhi but also made him ambitious and he started thinking to write for them. The desire is latent in human beings as everyone wants to see his name and article in print and it was that temptation which could not be resisted. His friendship with the members of London Vegetarian Society provided him a necessary launching pad to write for its organ, “The Vegetarian”, and those were his earliest writings on the record. A struggling barrister of Mumbai that he was at that time, he had to do something more tangible than indulging in non-remunerative journalism. South Africa not only shaped many of the ideas and traits of Gandhiji, but also made him an out-and-out journalist as well. If London Vegetarian Society afforded him a forum to write and speak, the political situation in South Africa chiseled him into a conscientious journalist. While fighting incessantly against all disabilities imposed on Indians, through representation, petition, memorandum etc, he did not, for a moment, minimize the great role of newspapers. He would scan through all local papers and reply suitably to

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34 Mehta, D.S., Mass Communication and Journalism in India (Bombay: Allied Publishers Private Limited), 1979, p. 11.
any queries or distortion of facts. In a letter to the editor of The Times of India, he wrote, "Publicity is our best and perhaps the only weapon of defense"\(^{35}\). Gandhi considered journalism as a selfless service to the society. He advocated that journalism should never be prostituted for selfish ends for amassing money. As an operation in ideas, journalism should be as free as possible from the limitations of industrialism. Using print media for the dissemination of his ideas was part of a clear strategy with Gandhi. He was a prolific writer who left behind a vast body of articles and books.

Gandhi's first major essay in journalism was the 'Green Pamphlet', describing the conditions of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi wrote the piece while he had come home to Rajkot on a brief visit from South Africa (1901). The success of the pamphlet made Gandhi more confident of the efficacy and publicity value of print media. The Hindu, The Statesman, The Times of India and The Englishman vied with each other in publishing Gandhi. By that time, Gandhi had made name for himself in the arena of Journalism. By 1903, Gandhi had realized that occasional writing and open letters or articles in newspapers were inadequate to meet the great campaign strategy that he had in his mind. This realization led to Gandhi taking over the editorship of the Indian Opinion, a weekly published from South Africa, which established Gandhi as a journalist. On one hand, the readers were given lessons in hygiene and sanitation and on the other, they were reminded of their rich culture and civilization. In short, the journal addressed itself to the whole gamut of Gandhi's concerns that were communicated in the most straightforward and lucid manner. Care was taken to make the whole exercise of communication come to the level of the dialogue between the readers and the writer.

\(^{35}\) The Times of India, Bombay, October 20, 1896.
Through judicious use of print media, Gandhi was able to highlight the plight of Indians in South Africa, publicize the discriminatory laws and actions they were subjected to, and finally, to organize Satyagraha to streamline the things. Another great quality of Gandhi, the editor, was his direct and forthright manner in conveying the things. Direct presentation was the beauty of all his writings. He had a clear thinking and knew well what he was going to say. He would put forth his ideas and arguments in crisp short sentences.36

Gandhi attempted to realize his dream through effective use of his writings and was fairly hopeful of doing so. Gandhi used the print media actively during his stay in South Africa and highlighted the plight of Indians in his columns. He continued to follow the standards of journalism even in the later part of his life that he set for himself and his staff during the initial struggle in South Africa. Similarly, his ornamental style of writing and his restraint were emulated by the upcoming journalists of the contemporary times. About impact of his writing during that period, one can safely say that he was at least able to make the Indian community aware of their rights in the colony. Gandhi used very dignified language to put across his ideas, which were in the nature of educating the Indians and others. His attitude, as revealed from his writings, never had a tone of confrontation or challenge; rather Gandhi was developing a new technique and style of appealing to the fairness for which the British were known. Mahatma Gandhi’s life, attitude and political action were informed by the highest moral principles and compassion. Uniquely among public men, he sought to analyze and explain events and his own reaction in terms of these principles through his talks, statements, writings and interviews. The moral force that he

brought to bear on the political discourse was compelling and inspired large section to take up the cause of freedom.

Gandhi, in fact, brought in many new elements, which introduced fresh life in the field of journalism. "As a result of his wide interest, his genius for simplification, his eagerness to reach the largest number of people and startling nature of his activities, there was a quickening of life in journalism. Many of his followers were moved to write and publish in the Indian languages and in imitation of his own direct style, they wrote a simple prose. Regional journalism began to acquire an importance and there was hardly an area of the country which did not have its newspapers".37 Undoubtedly, Gandhi introduced a new and a noble element in the field of journalism. It was his approach - his human approach - which gave his writings a character. He never looked upon the reading public as target for propaganda. He belonged to the people by identifying himself with them and wrote about their feelings and aspirations. For Gandhi, neither subject was too big nor too small. Louis Fisher once said that Gandhi would attach equal importance to a letter written to President Roosevelt as much to an article on the subject of individual rights. Gandhi was very much laconic in speech. He seldom used a superfluous word. Each comma or colon conveyed something or the other. Moreover, his expression was much less than his profound thinking on the subject. He had suggestions to give on each item published in the journal.

Gandhi, as an editor, would correct himself publicly if he found that some untruth had crept in his writings. To cite an example, he compared the Jalianwala Bagh massacre to that of Glenco. A

correspondent drew his attention saying that the latter was more horrible. In the next issue of the Young India, Gandhi corrected his statement. Newspapers or view papers is a social institution. Its success depends on how they produce materials in their columns. It is also judged by the readers whom they are going to address through their writings. Unfortunately, papers mostly cater to the lower taste of the readers, through sensation mongering rather than educating them for better citizenship. Some times, the monetary benefits pushed back the ethics in journalism and yellow journalism and page 3 stories occupied the main attention. To whom the journalist is loyal? To the proprietor, to one's own self or to the particular class he belongs to? As per Gandhiji, ‘readers’ were the most important. A journalist may be a patriot, a party member or a faithful employee but his loyalty ought to be primarily associated with his readers. Public has the right to know the truth. He must be informed objectively as to what is happening. His stories neither are hampered by partiality nor by loose connectivity. If the paper loses confidence of its readers, it has lost all that is worth in journalism. Gandhi interpreted that the writer alone is in a position to link up with the very sources of life on important event, be it political, social or economic and bring it strictly into human domain that is accessible to all.

Personally, Gandhiji did not like to write much in English, though he loved the language and developed a style of his own. He knew English could not be the national language of India. But as long as the national language, Hindustani, was not developed, he had to choose a medium through which his message could be reached to the four corners of the country. As a nationalist, he wanted a common language for the country and though aware of the richness of the Gujarati literature, did not hesitate to support and foster the claim of Hindustani for this honour. He
made all efforts to make the language acceptable all over India. On his writing skills, J. H. Holmes wrote, "Gandhiji’s literary achievement is more remarkable in view of the fact that he was never, in any sense of the phrase, a literary man. Unlike his great contemporary, Rabindra Nath Tagore and his accomplished successor Pandit Nehru, the Mahatma had no special grace of style. Seldom, in his writings, did he rise to heights of eloquence and beauty. Gandhiji interests were never aesthetic rather pragmatic. He had no desire or ambition, no time to be an artist. His own thought was of his own people and his struggle to make them free. So, he wrote with disciplined simplicity, seeking only to make himself clearly understood. The result was the one most important quality of literary art, namely clarity. I doubt if, in all his works, Gandhi ever wrote a sentence, which failed to express with utter precision the thought he had in mind to convey. He wrote in a style that was perfect for his purpose of communication. To read his writings is to think of the contents and not of the style, which means a triumph in the adoption of means to ends".  

Romain Rolland, one of the best biographers of Gandhi, assumes: “Nations have short memories and I should have but slight faith in India’s power to remain true to the Mahatma’s teaching if his doctrines were not an expression of the deepest and the most ancient longings of the race. For if there is such a thing as genius, great by its own strength, whether or not it corresponds to the ideals of its surroundings, there can be no genius of action, no leader, who does not incarnate the instincts of his race to satisfy the need of the hour, and require the yearning of the world.  

A year after Gandhi’s death, the Harijan wrote: "All work in whatsoever

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sphere was a means mainly of service in Gandhiji’s eyes. Newspapers and journals can build up a fitting memorial to him in this matter by conforming or trying to conform to the unimpeachable standards of journalism practiced by our revered and beloved".\(^{40}\) As a journalist, Gandhi wanted to educate the people so that they could understand not only the significance of independence - political, economic and social - but also participate actively in freeing humanity from the bondage it was in. Gandhi's motto as a journalist was service. He once said, "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments, and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects."\(^ {41}\) Such was the conviction of Gandhi in South Africa that he constantly kept a companion for his writings and gave him expression for publication through his journals and newspapers. Thus he used the press as a tool for political mobilization is confirmed by the fact that he brought out four major journals: Indian Opinion, Young India, Navajivan and Harijan, all with the purpose of arousing ‘among the people certain desirable sentiments’, besides a number of books producing a total of two million English wordage. “His instrument for creating social change was to create mass awareness. His tools were letters, articles and speeches.”\(^ {42}\) Gandhi has been termed as the most influential writer and journalist that India has produced. He knew the power of the word, spoken and written, in inspiring people to action. He resembled a charismatic arbiter when airing grievances, be it in South Africa or India. His words were loaded with purpose, "No one who has used the words on a massive scale has been as passionately purposive as Gandhi. No one has brought into use words

\(^{40}\) Harijan, 2-02-49, p. 87.
\(^{42}\) Harijan, 2-02-49, p. 98.
with such intense longing to be down-to-earth on the one hand and paradoxically, to reach for the stars on the other.” Gandhi plainly wrote his objective, "I write as the spirit moves me at the time of writing." He further said, "I write to propagate my ideas."  

Gandhi’s journey in journalism started quite early in his life, when he made contribution of nine articles on Indian diet, customs and festivals in a magazine Vegetarian in London. When on arrival in London in September 1888, to study law, Gandhiji, at the age of 19, for the first time realized how actively he would be associated with the newspaper for the rest of his life. Gandhi consistently wrote for the next six decades. The press, for him, became a tool for informing, educating and mobilizing the masses. He used newspapers to educate masses about public causes for which he led mass movements. The Indian Opinion was the first journalistic tool of Gandhi that was unveiled on June 4, 1903 in South Africa. It was a weekly newspaper and was published in English, Gujarati, Tamil and Hindi for the advantage of Indians inhabiting in South Africa. As Gandhi recalled later about the purpose for which the Indian Opinion was launched, "A struggle which chiefly relies upon internal strength cannot be wholly carried on without a newspaper. We could not have educated the local Indian opinion, nor kept Indians all over the world in touch with the course of events in South Africa in any other way, with the same ease and success as through Indian Opinion, which was a most useful and potent weapon in our struggle." Next in Gandhi’s armoury was Navajivan, a Gujarati monthly that was started as a weekly on October 7, 1919 with Gandhi as the editor. And the magic of

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 100.
Gandhi’s pen soon showed up. Writing the editorial for the first issue of Young India, which was also relaunched under Gandhi’s editorship a day after Navajivan, Gandhi exulted: "The editing of Navajivan has been a perfect revelation to me. Whilst Young India has little more than 1,200 subscribers, Navajivan has 12,000. The number would leap to 20,000 if it would get the printer to print that number. It exhibits that a vernacular newspaper is a felt want. I am proud to think that I have numerous readers among farmers and workers. They make India... the English journals touch but the fringe of the ocean of India's population."46

Gandhi was aware of the readership while writing in various languages. He wrote trilingual, in English, Gujarati and Hindustani. Gandhi’s tone and tenor changed while writing in different languages, because he had the ability to empathies with the audience and understand their expectations and requirement in a newspaper. Gandhi said that he was editing the English Journal, Young India, which along with Navajivan, priced at one anna each, mainly for the advantage of his friends in the Madras constituency. Still, however, Young India sold more copies than the combined total of several newspapers in India. There was not only a new thought but a new language in newspaper writing, and what he wrote was finest in journalistic writing. The last of Gandhi's journals, Harijan, also priced at one anna, began publication on February 11, 1933 from Poona. While the first Gandhi decade in India is often called the story of Young India, the decade of the thirties was dominated by Harijan, which was begun to help Gandhi in his crusade against untouchability. Introducing the weekly to his readers, Gandhi wrote in the inaugural issue: "The English edition of the Harijan is being published by and for the Servants of Untouchables Society at my request. Ten thousand

46 Navajivan, 08-10-1919.
copies are being printed. If you diligently study the Harijan, it will give you an epitome of the week's doings in the different parts of India in connection with the campaign against untouchability." Besides the English version, Harijan was brought out in Hindi and Gujarati and it went by the names of Harijan Sevak and Harijanbandu, respectively. In subsequent years, the journal was also published in Urdu, Tamil, Oriya, Marathi and Kannada.

Initially, Gandhi wanted to keep politics out of Harijan but soon the journal became the voice of Indian reaction. The message of ‘Do or Die’ rang from the meek looking pages of the Harijan. When Gandhi and his followers were locked up after the Quit India Resolution, the government confiscated and destroyed it. Harijan was revived in February 1946, survived Mahatma’s death, only to peter out in 1956. Today, the crafts of Gandhi’s journalistic charisma are repositories of vivid memories and scholarship, adorning the thousands of libraries over the world, these journals reveal stories of India's emancipation from colonial rule, distend the richness of India’s heritage and culture, and give innumerable leads to social scientists for pursuing research. The existing work, which looks into the role of these journals in political mobilization, is based on one such lead. The vastness of Gandhi makes it very difficult to keep the focus of the topic intact. However, every attempt has been made and precautions taken, to ensure that the focus remains.

Gandhian journalism was the product of Gandhi’s approach to life, his concern for humanity and his deep commitment to the poor, for whose sake he fought for national independence. It was essentially the journalism of communitarianism and humanitarianism. He had certain noble goals that were based on his philosophy of non-violence (ahimsa),

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47 Harijan, Vol. 1, Introduction
self-reliance (swadeshi), self-rule (swaraj) and truth-force (satyagraha). All these were reflected in his journalistic writings and oral communications, and his non-verbal communications (such as his innumerable journeys on foot, *padayatras*, within India, meditation, fasting and prayer meetings).

Realizing the potential of newspapers in moulding public opinion when he was in South Africa, Gandhi started using the columns of the *Indian Opinion* in 1903 to mobilize and educate Indians there. Commenting on the power of the press years later, he described how *Indian Opinion*, his first newspaper, helped him in his political career: “I believe that a struggle which chiefly relies upon internal strength cannot be wholly carried on without a newspaper. It is also my experience that we could not perhaps have educated the local Indian community, nor kept Indians all over the world in touch with the course of events in South Africa in any other way, with the same ease and success as through the *Indian Opinion* which therefore was certainly a most useful and potent weapon in our struggle.”

A weekly published in four languages—English, Hindi, Tamil and Gujarati—to serve all Indians in South Africa, *Indian Opinion* drew the attention of the authorities to the legal and political disabilities suffered by the Indian community in that country. It, however, made no attempt to mobilize the Indians to work against the British government since in those days Gandhi still had faith in the fairness of the British system and never advocated disloyalty to the British monarch.

Gandhi’s first major essay in journalism was the ‘Green Pamphlet’ (so called because its cover was green) describing the condition of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi wrote the piece while he had come from

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48 *Indian Opinion*, 1950, p. 142
home to Rajkot on a brief visit from South Africa (1901). Ten thousand copies of the Pamphlet were published. The success of the Pamphlet made Gandhi more confident of the efficacy and publicity value of the print media. Open letters from Gandhi to public men in India followed. Gandhi came to be acknowledged as an authority on South African affairs. India’s English Press solicited letters and articles from Gandhi.

Back in South Africa, the ‘Green Pamphlet’ was a subject of publicity, though of a different kind. In India, the Pamphlet had turned Gandhi into hero of the Indians in South Africa while in South Africa, the same Pamphlet had made him a villain in the eyes of the white settlers. When after a brief visit to India, Gandhi returned to South Africa with his wife and family and other Indians, the whole convoy was not allowed to land on the African soil. Gandhi was man-handled and beaten up by a hostile white crowd. But for the cunning of his friend in the police department, Gandhi would have lost his life. Later on, there was widespread denunciation of the violence in the white press and Gandhi managed to score a point over his detractors by refusing to book culprits.

It should be noted here that the misinterpretation of the subject was largely the doing of the British news agency, the Reuters, which showed that the world came to know about the affairs of the South Africa through Gandhi’s writings and was exercised over it. Thus even before taking up his own journal to publicise the cause of Indians’ Gandhi had made extensive use of the print media via the local newspapers and by printing pamphlets. This was in spite of the fact that he wrote very few articles on the conditions of Indians in South Africa till he was requested by the The

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Times of India to do so. Except for the series of six articles that he wrote for The Times of India between June 1899 to April 1903, most of his articles dealt with non-political issues.

Indian Opinion, a fullscap-sized-three-column weekly journal, was started at Durban on June 4, 1903 by two of Gandhi's close aides, Madanjit Vyavaharik and Manshukhlal Hiralal Nazar. The former looked after the press. The latter was a journalist from Mumbai and held editorial charges till 1906.\textsuperscript{50} The Indian Opinion was begun to vent the feelings of the Indians in South Africa and to improve their condition. It was a non-commercial venture. Initially, the journal was started in Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil and English languages. Later, the Hindi and Tamil versions were withdrawn. The journal was a mirror of an important part of Gandhi's life. "Week after week, I poured out my soul in its columns and expounded the principles and practice of satyagraha"\textsuperscript{51}, beginning from the first issue in which Gandhi wrote an editorial titled, 'Ourselves', Gandhi continuously wrote for Indian Opinion till 1914, the year of his departure from South Africa.

Gandhi's touched upon different aspects of exploitation of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi made the journal a potent weapon in his fight against the racial and discriminatory policies of the British Government. He declared at a later date that Satyagraha would probably have been impossible without Indian Opinion. Gandhi outlined three objectives of the journal: first, to make Indian grievances known to the governments in South Africa and in Britain and to the people of India; second, to make the Indians in South Africa aware of their own defects so that they could

\textsuperscript{50} Indian Opinion, 27-01-1906, pp. 56-60.
make effort to overcome them; and third, to eliminate the prevailing
distinctions between Hindus and Muslims and among Gujaratis and
Tamilians and others. Gandhi wrote in one of the initial issues of the
Journal, "The British rulers in India follow a different policy. They do not
desire that we should come together and become united. Here, in South
Africa, these groups are small in number. We are all confronted with the
same disabilities; we can easily essay an experiment in achieving unity".52

Many years later, acknowledging the importance of Indian
Opinion in his struggle in South Africa, Gandhi wrote in his
autobiography: “Satyagraha would probably have been impossible
without Indian Opinion. The readers looked forward to it for a
trustworthy account of the Satyagraha campaign as also for the real
condition of Indians in South Africa…….. It was as though the
community thought audibly through me. It made me thoroughly
understand the responsibility of a journalist and the hold I secured in this
way over the community made the future campaign workable, dignified
and irresistible.”53 Gandhi describes himself as a General and Indian
Opinion as his weapon in his book ‘Satyagraha in South Africa’ in the
following statements: “I propose to acquaint the reader with all the
weapons, internal as well as external, employed in the Satyagraha
struggle and now therefore proceed to introduce to him Indian Opinion, a
weekly journal which is published in South Africa for him every day.”54
At another place, he wrote: “I know of many, whose first occupation on
receiving the paper would be to read the Gujarati section through, from
beginning to end. One of the readers would read it, and the rest would

53 Gandhi, M. K., An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with
Truth, op. cit., p. 214.
54 Gandhi, M. K., Satyagraha in South Africa (Ahmedabad: Navajivan
surround him and listen. Not all who wanted to read the paper could afford to subscribe to it by themselves and some of them, therefore, would club together for the purpose.\footnote{Ibid., p. 133.}

The journal was very interactive and readers were always invited to contribute their opinions and suggestions on crucial issues. In fact, the style of Gandhi's struggle - passive resistance - got an Indian name through a campaign in the Indian Opinion. Looking for an apt name for his technique of struggle, Gandhi invited suggestions from his readers. There was an overwhelming response and finally 'Sadagraha' was chosen which was changed as 'Satyagraha' by Gandhi. This instance reflects the wonderful ability of Gandhi in involving the masses constructively and instilling in them a sense of participation. The files of Indian Opinion incorporate a series of growing images of the Gandhian spirit. In the early editorials, only a mild protest against the racial segregation was seen. At the initial stage, Gandhi had firm faith in the British Constitution which was steadily shattered. Indian opinion continuously carried a vivid portrayal of the shattered Indian community in South Africa. It successfully made effort to educate public opinion and indicated the line of duty that every Indian was needed to follow in order to assert his or her basic human rights. There existed a close link between the readers and the editorial office of Indian Opinion. Gandhi himself was in close touch with the readers through the regular correspondence column. The editorials and columns of letters in Indian Opinion carried many features of popular interest. It had contributors writing from abroad too. Gandhi kept Indians in South Africa informed about the progress of the freedom movement in India. He wrote in strong protest against the Bengal partition and encouraged the boycott of foreign goods by Indians in South Africa. He
stood for the adoption of the Vande Mataram as the Indian national anthem. Gandhi called it "A Passionate Prayer" and published it in Gujarati and Devanagari scripts in the Indian Opinion.

The success of Indian Opinion in educating and awakening the Indians in South Africa had been epoch-making effort on the part of Gandhi. He realized the requirement for a similar organ after he intensified his campaigns against the British rule in India, a couple of years after coming to his motherland in 1915. This need became more pronounced after Gandhi started his satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919. Gandhi assumed the editorship of Young India, which was published by the management of the Bombay Chronicle, in 1919. The objective of the Indian Opinion, as declared in the newspaper, was a "desire to promote harmony and goodwill between the different sections of one mighty empire."

But by the time Gandhi became related to the Young India and Navajivan, his hopes in the British justice had been shattered. He was becoming more and more conscious of the true nature of colonialism and was preparing the country to fight injustice through satyagraha, as practised in South Africa. Gandhi thus spelt the policy of Young India. Apart from its duty of drawing attention to injustices to individuals, it also devoted its attention to constructive satyagraha as also sometimes cleansing satyagraha. Cleansing satyagraha is a civil resistance where resistance becomes a duty to remove a persistent and degrading injustice such as the Rowlatt Act. Gandhi poured out fire through his pen. He sincerely felt that the alien government had no right to govern. He wrote a number of fiery articles like 'Tampering with Loyalty' and 'The Puzzle and its Solution' in the pages of Young India to arouse the Indian masses.

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Apart from this the journal was also used to educate the masses on different socio-political and economic issues of national and international importance. Gandhi used articles written by renowned personalities of the freedom struggle on various issues. The Journal was also utilized as a forum for intellectual debates, for instance the debates between Gandhi and Tagore on ‘Khadi’ and ‘Scope of Education’. The management of Young India entrusted its editorship to Gandhi. Writing about this development later, Gandhi noted in his Autobiography: “I was anxious to expound the inner meaning of Satyagraha to the public, and also hoped that through this effort, I should at least be able to do justice to the Punjab situation. For, behind all this writing, there was potential Satyagraha, and the Government knows as much.”

The first issue of the Navajivan came out on 9th September, 1919. Gandhiji, as the editor, said, “There is no dearth of journals in Gujarat at present. But, being a Gujarati by birth and a Gujarati indeed, I aspire to be absorbed into the life of Gujarat, for I can serve the country only by doing so. This will be the first occasion when I shall be known publicly in Gujarat as an editor. I wish that the Navajivan should reach the huts of the farmers and the weavers because I am going to write in their language; I am going to pray that the Navajivan be read by the women folk as well.”

Gandhiji had announced in the same issue that it was the solemn resolve of all associated with the Navajivan to say whatever they felt, no matter what restrictions Government had enacted for the press. He also declared that the Navajivan would not contain any advertisement.

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58 Navajivan, 09-09-1919.
In the inaugural issue of Navajivan, Gandhi wrote: “I think I have a service to render to India by delivering a message to her...... I am convinced that I have no gift better than this for India. I have always been avid of placing before the people this priceless thing, and several others of which I have had ample experience. One powerful modern means for this purpose is the newspaper.”

The Navajivan, in its issues during December that year, took up the Khilafat and the Punjab issues in view of the 34th session of the Indian National Congress due to meet at Amritsar (Punjab) and after the session concluded gave details in its issues during January 1920 about the resolutions adopted with the text of the speeches made thereon. Gandhiji wrote in successive issues about the demands made by the Congress organization and explained their implications. The weekly frequently gave information about the tours undertaken by Gandhiji and published in detail the speeches made by him from place to place. In addition to that the weekly used to include articles on Swadeshi, Khadi, Spinning, Satyagraha, and Cow-protection, Gandhiji used to request those who were literate to read the Navajivan aloud before those who were not capable of reading; he also expressed his satisfaction that the Navajivan was read so extensively by the people of Gujarat. Navajivan was a regional journal in Gujarati, published along with Young India under the editorship of Gandhi. Outlining its purpose, Gandhi wrote in the March 12 issue of the Young India that it was published "for the sole purpose of educating the nation to win Purna Swaraj through truthful and non-violent means".

A couple of years after the Young India and Navajivan were silenced, Gandhi realised the requirement for another journal. But this

60 Young India, 12-03-1920, p. 45.
time the need was different, the pitch was different and the motives or
goals were different to help him in his crusade against untouchability.
Born in 1933, the paper Harijan initially carried items only devoted to
social issues. "It will be solely devoted to the Harijan cause," Gandhi
wrote after being released from prison in May 1933, "and will
scrupulously exclude all politics." So much so that there was a complete
blackout of important political news of the day, there was no mention of
the Congress session and the Government of India Act of 1935. The
Harijan became a mouthpiece for the Harijan movement and village
industries. The paper published useful extracts from books on rural
problems. However, the tide of surging nationalism in later years did not
let Harijan maintain its focus. Increasingly, it started carrying the
messages of the non-violent satyagraha of Gandhi and became a chief
messenger of the Quit India Movement. The slogan of 'do or die' given by
Gandhi during the movement was conveyed to the masses through the
Harijan. It became a fiery propaganda vehicle, so much so that just after
the arrest of Gandhi on 8 August 1942, the Harijan was closed down.
However, even after that, Gandhi's message appeared to be echoing: "The
Harijan may be suppressed, its message cannot be, so long as I live.
Indeed, the spirit will survive the dissolution of the body and somehow
speak through the millions." The millions did speak, and Harijan lived
up to its cause.

One of Gandhi’s seminal works is Hind Swaraj which was
written in Gujarati and published in a book form in Gujarati in January
1910 by Gandhi’s own International Printing Press. The English
translation by Gandhi himself came out a few years later. Hind Swaraj is
written in the literary genre of dialogue: a dialogue between a newspaper

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61 Harijan, 05-05-1933, p. 99.
62 CWMG, Vol. LXXVII, pp. 343-44.
editor and a reader. It was addressed to a mixed audience: the expatriate Indians who were attracted to terrorism and political violence, the extremists and moderates of the Indian National Congress, the Indian nation and the English. As to why he wrote the book, he said there was first of all the consequent urge to communicate. Secondly, he wanted to clarify the meaning of Swaraj. Thirdly, he realised it was essential to respond specifically to the ideology of political terrorism adopted by the expatriates. Fourthly, Gandhi was anxious to teach the Indians that modern civilization posed a greater threat to them than did colonialism. Lastly, he wanted to contribute towards the reconciliation of Indians and Britons. Finally, Gandhi believed that through Hind Swaraj, he would be able to provide Indians a practical philosophy, an updated conception of Dharma that would fit them for life in the modern world. The urgency with which Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj shows that it was written with a definite purpose in mind. He wrote: “During my stay in England, I had occasion to talk with many Indian anarchists. My booklet, Indian Home Rule, had its birth from the necessity of having to meet their arguments as well as to solve the difficulties of Indians in South Africa who held similar views.\(^{63}\)

Hind Swaraj was the seed from which the tree of Gandhian thought has grown to its full stature. No wonder that it has been known as ‘a very basic document for the study of Gandhi's thought’, his ‘confession of faith’, a ‘proclamation of ideological independence’, and the nearest he came to producing a sustained work of political theory.\(^{64}\) Anthony J. Parel has very convincingly elaborated upon the reasons that impelled Gandhi to write this Hind Swaraj. By the Indian nation, Gandhi means ordinary

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\(^{63}\) Gandhi, M. K., Satyagraha in South Africa, op. cit., p. 211.

Indians, irrespective of their religious, linguistic, regional or caste differences as well as the new emerging middle class, referred to in the text as doctors, lawyers and the wealthy. And by the English, he means both the British ruling class living in India and Britons living in Great Britain.\(^6^5\) Dennis Dalton, in his book, ‘Gandhi’s Power’ writes: The aim of Hind Swaraj was to confront the anarchists and violence-prone Indian nationalists with an alternative to violence derived from Gandhi’s earliest experiments with satyagraha. Equally important is the book’s concern with the concept from which it takes its title: this is Gandhi’s first extensive statement on swaraj, his idea of freedom\(^6^6\).

The first edition of Gandhiji’s Autobiography was published in two volumes. Volume I in 1927 and Vol. II in 1929. The original in Gujarati which was priced at Rs. 1/- has run through five editions, nearly 50,000 copies having been sold. Gandhi said, “If I had only to discuss academic principles, I should clearly not attempt an autobiography. But my purpose being to give an account of various practical applications of these principles, I have given the chapters, I propose to write a title of ‘The Story of My Experiments with Truth’. These will of course include experiments with non-violence, celibacy and other principles of conduct believed to be distinct from truth. But for me, truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also and not only the


relative truth of our conception but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God.”

Gandhi further clarified in his writing that “If anything that I write in these pages should strike the readers as being touched with pride, then he must take it that there is something wrong with my quest and that my glimpses are no more than mirage. Let hundreds like me perish, but let truth prevail. Let us not reduce the standard of truth even by a hair’s breadth for judging erring mortals like myself.”

The book ‘An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth’ is divided into Five Parts. He started the book from the Chapter “Birth and Parentage” and concluded it by the Chapter of “at Nagpur’s Farewell”. The book proved to be a masterstroke of communication and it was soon translated into various foreign and Indian languages and still continues to change lives across the globe.

Other original work of Gandhi was Satyagraha in South Africa published in the form of book in 1928 written in Gujarati and translated into English by Valji Govindji Desai and had been revised by Gandhi himself and assured the reader that the spirit of the original in Gujarati has been very faithfully kept by the translator. He admitted that, “The original chapters were all written by me from my memory. They were written partly in Yervada Jail and partly outside from my pre-mature release. As a translator knew of this fact, he made a diligent study of the file of Indian Opinion and whenever he discovered slips of memory, he has not hesitated to make the necessary corrections. The reader will share my pleasure that in no relevant or material particular has there been any

68 Ibid., p. xiv.
slip. I need hardly mention that those who are following the weekly chapters of my experiments with truth cannot afford to miss these chapters on satyagraha, if they would follow in all its detail the working out of the search after truth. 69

The Satyagraha struggle of the Indians in South Africa lasted eight years. The term Satyagraha was invented and employed in connection therewith. In the preface of the book ‘Satyagraha in South Africa’, Gandhi expressed his feelings regarding the launching of Satyagraha in South Africa by saying, “I had long entertained a desire to write a history of that Struggle myself. Something only I could write. Only the general who conducts a campaign can know the objective of each particular move and as this was the first attempt to apply the principle of Satyagraha to politics on a large scale, it is necessary any day that the public should have an idea of its development.” 70

Gandhi in Yervada Central Prison wrote weekly letters to the Satyagarha Ashram, containing a cursory examination of the principle Ashram observance. As the Ashram influence had already travelled beyond its geographical limits, copies of the letters were multiplied for distribution. They were originally written in Gujarati. There was a demand for translation into Hindi and other Indian languages and also into English, translated by Valji Govindji Desai in English and his translation was revised by Gandhiji himself during his incarceration. He said, “I have gone through it carefully and touched up several passages to bring out my meaning more to my liking. I need hardly add that if I was writing a news for the English reader, perhaps I should write a wholly new thing. But that would be going beyond my commission and perhaps

70 Ibid., preface, p. xi.
it is as well, that even the English reader has the trend of my thought as expressed to the inmates of the Ashrams, and in the year 1930. I have, therefore, taken the least liberty with the original argument." The book contains Sixteen Chapters written in 38 pages while the last chapter on ‘Swadeshi’ was written when he was released from Jail in 1931.

The Constructive Programme may otherwise, and more fittingly, be called construction of Purna Swarajya or complete Independence by truthful and non-violent means. Gandhi first wrote Constructive Programme in 1941 and revised it in 1945. The items included in it have not been arranged in any order, certainly not in the order of their importance. When the reader discovers that a particular subject, though important in itself, in terms of Independence, does not find place in the programme, he should know that omission is not intentional.72

Gandhi, while drafting his Constructive Programme of rural development took care of social, economic, political and moral aspects of development. His approach to constructive programme can be classified into five segments, viz., economic, educational, social, environmental and political. The Constructive Programme, as revised, has 19 items including Improvement of Livestock. These include (i) communal unity; (ii) removal of untouchabilities; (iii) prohibition; (iv) khadi; (v) other village industries; (vi) village sanitation; (vii) new or basic education; (viii) adult education; (ix) women; (x) education in Health and hygiene; (xi) provincial languages; (xii) national language; (xiii) economic

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equality; (xiv) kissans; (xv) labour; (xvi) adivasis; (xvii) lepers; (xviii) students; and one more to be included (xix) improvement of Livestocks.73

Key to Health, according to Gandhiji, this new name was given to his earlier articles written under the heading Guide to Health in or about the year 1906 for the benefit of the readers of the Indian Opinion in South Africa. These articles were later published in a book form but the copies were not available in India. Late Swami Akhandanand took permission from Gandhi to publish an Indian edition which proved fruitful. The book was translated into several Indian languages. An English translation also appeared. This reached the West, and was translated into several European languages. The result was that the book became the most popular of all his writings. For this, Gandhi said, “I have never been able to understand the reason for this popularity. I had written those articles casually and I did not attach much importance to them. But perhaps the reason for the popularity is to be sought in the fact that I have looked upon the problem of health from a novel point of view, somewhat different from the orthodox methods adopted by doctors and vaidyas. Whether my presumption is correct or not, many friends have been pressing me to publish a new edition putting forth my views to date.”74

‘Key to Health’, according to Gandhi, is that anyone who observes the rules of health mentioned in this book will find that he has got in it a real key to unlock the gates leading him to health. He will not need to knock at the doors of doctors or vaidyas from day-to-day.

Gandhi was a born journalist and writing was in his blood. His writings were different in both style and content from the writings of the

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73 Ibid.
leader-journalists. Their style usually was grand and aimed at impressing the educated class of Indians. In contrast, Gandhiji’s language was simple devoid of embellishments yet clear, straightforward and easily understandable. He wrote on a variety of topics not confined to politics and he was a diligent correspondent who replied to every letter written to him. His compassion, humility, nobility and his concern for the poorest of the poor breathed through his writings. His writings also focused on economic issues like poverty and unemployment with suggestions as to how to remove them. Health and hygiene also occupied an important place in his writings. Spiritual growth was another important area which he usually touched upon. Infact, one can find him writing on almost everything under the sun which had relevance for human beings. The vide range of topics also shows that Gandhi was aiming at not only freedom of the country but also the building of the nation which further differentiated him from the other leaders.

After going through the whole gamut of Gandhi’s writings, it becomes clear that print media occupied an important place in Gandhi’s communication. His insistence on putting the minutest detail in black and white and his belief in publicity of a cause he thought right further strengthens his view. In view of the style and content of his writings, Broomfield has described him as a great “scribbler”. Whatever came to his mind was put on the paper. That is why there was never much of a difference in the content of what he wrote or what he spoke. This is not to say that what he wrote was of inferior quality but to emphasise that for Gandhi who was continuously practicing self control like a yogi to get a

right expression was never a problem. It is said that Gandhi liberated his writings from the tradition of written word. In fact, the written words constitute only half of Gandhi’s repertoire of communication. One, however, draws solace in Gandhi’s words, “After I am gone, people will remember my words.” This indicates that Gandhi knew that the dialogue he had initiated will not end with his death. And even in the absence of his physical body, his words would carry weight.

Gandhi himself described his all his newspapers as a ‘viewspaper’ rather than a newspaper as none of these newspapers had high circulations except Young India, which one time printed close to 50,000 copies daily, but it was common practice among patriotic editors and Congress workers to copy many Gandhian newspapers (which had not more than 8 or 12 pages) totally or partially and circulate these among the people. In fact, Gandhi himself advised readers to copy and circulate his papers among their friends.

This way of circulating newspapers may perhaps look too low-tech in this age of Internet, fax and copying machines, but one should not forget that even now there are areas in India where there is no circulation of standard newspapers at all.

Gandhi, as editor, was faced with several practical problems besides illiteracy (although those who could read aloud to the rest) and lack of purchasing power among villagers. The repression he suffered was tremendous. A notice to the subscribers of Young India (started on 8 October 1919) is revealing indeed: “This paper has not been registered according to the law. So, there can be no annual subscription. Nor can it be guaranteed that the paper will be published without interruption. The editor is liable at any moment to be arrested by the government and it is impossible
to ensure continuity of publication until India is in the happy position of 
supplying editors enough to take the place of those arrested. We shall 
leave no stone unturned to secure a ceaseless succession of editors.”

Readers of newspapers in the 21st century who are constantly 
bombarded by commercials about the big prizes in gold ornaments, cars 
and even flats that can be won through subscription may not be impressed 
by the Gandhian warning about discontinuity and government harassment, 
but they cannot ignore the Himalayan obstacles faced by 
Indian editors during the Gandhian era. Many an editor had to edit and be 
imprisoned; many publishers had 'to publish and perish! But phoenix-like, 
they came back to life, not necessarily in the same place or through the 
same press. Many freedom fighters and editors had to receive the 
hospitality of 'His Majesty's hotels', a phrase Gandhi used to describe 
British-Indian prisons. The big difference between Gandhi and modern-
day journalists is that he considered journalism primarily as service to 
society and a vehicle for his views on religion, ethics, morality, politics 
and economics.

Modern-day publishers and editors look upon their work primarily 
as a business—like any other business, motivated by considerations of 
profit, economic advantage and social prestige. In his autobiography, 
Gandhi wrote: “The sole aim of journalism should be service. The 
newspaper is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water 
submerges whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an 
uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it 
proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only

76 Bhattacharya, S. N., Mahatma Gandhi The Journalist (Bombay: Asia 
Publishing House), 1965, p. 34.
It is doubtful if this philosophy of journalism will be fully acceptable to press barons of today, especially the first sentence, although his pronouncement on freedom of the press will be totally acceptable to them. In principle, they may accept that freedom of the press is basically freedom of speech and expression for the citizens. In practice, they look upon freedom solely as their freedom to publish anything they want. They guard it jealously, and rightly so. Gandhi, the journalist, was in full agreement with the Jeffersonian and Nehruvian view that if there was a choice between a government without the press and a press without government, he would certainly opt for the latter.

However, service to the people as the sole aim of journalism will not be acceptable to the media moguls of the 21st century who build their media empires in conglomerate or cross media ownership style or in collaboration with foreign media firms primarily for profit. Service to people based on national priorities is secondary or even incidental. Lord Thomson, a 20th century press baron who is the model for modern newspaper and media magnates such as Rupert Murdoch, openly declared his purpose: he ran his newspapers to make profit and buy up more newspapers to make more profit. ‘The bigger the better’ is the principle of these businessmen-journalists or journalist-businessmen, whereas 'small is beautiful' inspired Gandhi.

Gandhi was totally committed to the cause of the freedom of India, but he wanted an India free of inequality and exploitation. “My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing

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heels of Western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner.”

During Gandhi's time, media in India (mainly newspapers and periodicals) had not become huge businesses. Today, the media and editors are evaluated based on the nature and volume of advertisements and commercials they bring in. Barring his views on advertising, Gandhi's views on the press are in conformity with libertarianism and social responsibility as advanced by Siebert et al., in their theories of the press. Gandhi would defend the freedom of the press at any cost, but he was wedded to social responsibility. This can be seen from what he said about the decline that had set in the press of his time. He did not want any curb on people's freedom to express their opinions, however wrong they were. The remedy against abuse of freedom, he said, was the creation of healthy public opinion that would refuse to patronize poisonous journals. He wrote in the Young India of 12 May 1920: “Freedom of the press is a precious privilege that no country can forgo. But if there is, as there should be, no check save that of the mildest character, an internal check should not be impossible and ought not to be resisted.”

The Indian Press at Independence and Today

In 1947, the major English newspapers in India were the Times of India (Bombay), Statesman (Calcutta), Hindu (Madras), Hindustan Times (New Delhi), Pioneer (Lucknow), Indian Express (Bombay and Madras), Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta), National Herald (Lucknow), Mail (Madras) and Hitavada (Nagpur). Of these, the Times of India, Statesman and Pioneer were under British ownership. Soon the ownership of two changed to Indian hands. The Statesman continued under British

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78 Bhattacharya, S. N., Mahatma Gandhi The Journalist, op. cit., p. 43.
80 Young India, May 1920, p. 45.
ownership till 1964, when it came under a group of Indian businesses.

During the long struggle for India's Independence, the major English newspapers that served the national cause were the Hindu (established in 1878), Amrita Bazar Patrika (1868), Bombay Chronicle (1913), Free Press Journal (1930; it later became the Indian Express) and Hindustan Times (1924). Among the Indian language newspapers, the prominent ones were Aaj (1920) Anandabazar Patrika (1922), Sakal (1931), Swadeshamitran (1882), Mumbai Samachar (1822), Malayala Manorama (1890) and Mathrubhumi (1930).

Generally speaking, journalism is flourishing in India today. The Indian Language newspapers have overtaken the English newspapers in number and circulation (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2). The highest circulation till the 1990s was enjoyed by the English newspapers despite the fact that less than 5 per cent of the population of India claim English as their mother tongue. English is still the medium of instruction in colleges and many prominent schools. It is also the language of administration, although state governments have introduced legislation in favour of local languages.

Table 1.1
The National Readership Survey (NRS)—Dailies, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name of the Publication</th>
<th>Readership in Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dainik Bhaskar (H)</td>
<td>15,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dainik Jagran (H)</td>
<td>14,985</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Daily Thanthi (T)</td>
<td>10,094</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eenadu (Tel.)</td>
<td>9,458</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malavela Manorama</td>
<td>8,798</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Amar L-hala (H)</td>
<td>8,640</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hindustan (H)</td>
<td>8,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lokmat (Mar.)</td>
<td>7,899</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mathrubhumi (M)</td>
<td>7,646</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Times of India (E)</td>
<td>7,419</td>
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Table 1.2

National Readership Survey (NRS) —Magazines,

<table>
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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name of the Publication</th>
<th>Readership in Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Saras Salai (H)</td>
<td>9.385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>India Today (H)</td>
<td>5.900</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vanitha (M)</td>
<td>5.514</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Grihasobha (H)</td>
<td>5.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malayala</td>
<td>5.406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Malt Saheli (H)</td>
<td>4.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>India Today (E)</td>
<td>4.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Balaratna (M)</td>
<td>3.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mangalam (M)</td>
<td>3.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Filmfare (E)</td>
<td>3.518</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(a) E=English; H=Hindi; M=Malayalam; Mar.=Marathi; T=Tamil; Tel.=Telugu.
(b) The survey covered 2,300 rural villages and 837 towns. A total of 140,000 persons were surveyed, of whom 42,000 were from rural areas.
(c) Readership is calculated on the assumption that one copy of a publication is read by 10 persons. The above figures are for 2009.

Hindi newspapers have the largest total circulation in India. The progress made by Hindi dailies and periodicals is enviable. Hindi is the main language of 10 Indian states—Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, it is understood by a sizeable section of Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, Punjabis and Kashmiris. It is also understood by a considerable proportion of people living in metropolitan cities and in large business and industrial towns, no matter where they come from. In fact, about 45 per cent of Indians have Hindi as their mother tongue and more than 5 per cent in non-Hindi areas can converse in Hindi and read and write it.

Although about 500 million Indians can understand Hindi, the literacy rate in the larger states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand is very low, particularly among women. These states have a combined population of nearly 200 million, but the total circulation of newspapers is under 10 million! This is a very pitiable situation. Rural newspapers are not available anywhere. This is a
great challenge for journalism and communication in India.

The imbalance in circulation can be discerned more clearly when we look at the southern states where the literacy is higher. In Kerala alone, where about 93 per cent of the population of 32 million is literate, newspaper circulation is almost 10 million, whereas in the large states in the north, as stated above, there is a combined total of less than 10 million circulation. The states that have the highest circulation of newspapers are Delhi, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka.

Changes in Technology and the Advent of New Journalism

Like the 'new wave' in film, 'new journalism' is also open to different interpretations. Therefore let us first of all be clear about what we mean by new journalism.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, writers (and also journalist-writers) such as Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer and Gay Talese wrote non-fiction novels based on actual events reported by other journalist according to the conventional ‘5 Ws and H’ (who, what, where, when, why and how) sequence. These writers disregarded the conventional limitations of reportage as well as principles of journalistic objectivity in order to make their writing more appealing and colourful. They delved deep into the inner working of the minds of the main 'actors' in the news reports.

Although this new style gained wide currency in the early 1970s and earned the sobriquet of 'New Journalism', it faded away in the 1980s, especially after it was discredited by an American reporter named Janet Cooke, Cooke fabricated a heart-rending story about an 8-year-old drug
addict and published it under the title *Jimmy's World*. Even the Pulitzer Prize committee was moved, and she won the prize.81

Perhaps all newspaper and television reports are not fictitious, but there seems to be an element of Janet Cooke in many reporters who present news in the form and style of fiction—overstating facts, using colourful adjective, and sensational expressions. Every story that can be told in a hundred words is bloated into a thousand and illustrated by photographs, drawings, and so on. Media magnates conveniently dismiss all criticism by saying that they are giving the public what it wants.

New publishing technology has made it possible to romanticize features so much that most news-reports in general newspapers (not financial newspapers, and special publications) are no longer straight reports but fictionalized versions containing certain elements of truth.

This sea change in the philosophy of mediated communication began in the early 1970s in many parts of the world, and perhaps in the early 1980s in India—the delay owing to the late arrival of new technologies of printing and media production in India. The new technologies have influenced not only production but also distribution or dissemination in broadcasting and film exhibition. Based on the observations of Anthony Smith almost 25 years ago, the changes in the print media world of the late 20th and early 21st centuries can be summarized as involving the following:

- The convergence of a series of changes in society and demographics.
- Changes in the economics of advertising.

• Basic changes in the technology of media production.
• The changed goals and purposes of editors and publishers (and hence all media workers), who look for new content and new ways to serve their dual market of media users and advertisers.
• Newspapers yielding space to electronic media in the devices of production and in basic character.
• Competition with other media which offer users more content in a more attractive format much lower cost.
• The inconvenience in transportation and storage of the end product (until all newspapers are delivered electronically to readers). The print media are therefore less timely and slower than other media.
• Big changes in the ownership of the newspapers, particularly in cross-media ownership, conglomeration and vertical integration.

All these changes in technology of production, organization of distribution, etc., have resulted in the new journalism of today. The old journalism of the Gandhian era, of journalists with noble goals, motivated by the need for social change in India, has disappeared, yielding to the journalism of the pocket book, of the purse—in short, of pure greed.

Journalism as service to society has been replaced by journalism aimed at profit and affluence for media promoters and media workers. The very nature of the media has changed in India. To justify this change by saying that the same process is taking place throughout the developed world is a lame excuse often advanced by media tycoons.

During the Independence movement, the press in India (the Indo-Anglian and the Indian language press) stood for national ideals, the most important of which was the readiness to sacrifice everything for the sake
of freedom from foreign domination. The press in those days gave literate and educated opinion leaders (the social and economic elite) the inspiration to work for social change. Unfortunately, those ideals have almost wholly vanished from the mainstream media. A certain smugness or false complacency, if not greed, fills the media world these days. The purpose of the modern media seems to be to bring out a product that caters to the gossip interest of the literate and the well-to-do and protect the business and sociopolitical interests of the higher echelons.

The big changes in the Indian media world started in the late 1970s and culminated in the early 1990s, the period when the process of computerized and offset printing entered into widespread use in almost all leading newspapers, and other technological changes were introduced in the electronic media.

The competition between newspapers for maximum circulation (almost a circulation war) has now resulted in offers of gold and other valuable gifts to attract subscribers in all regions of India. The readers' greed is appealed to through television commercials and print advertisements. Similar efforts to increase the reach of radio and television programmes are also being made.

The media are no longer a channel for communicating news of significance to the users; they are utilized increasingly for selling objects, particularly gold ornaments, expensive perfumes and clothes, that are unaffordable to common people.

Some leading newspapers have also become film and television programme-producing companies, and makers of audio and video tapes.

The assumption among global media industries is that the 21st-
century citizen is a 'consumer-citizen'. This is true, no doubt, of a significant minority in urban centres of both developing and developed countries. The 'new media user' is catered to by the 'new media'. The 20th-century elite was a 'voting elite', but the 21st-century elite has less interest in politics and voting, as evidenced by the steady decline in the percentage of citizens who vote in the urban areas of India and the world.

Pandering to the elite mood became a habit of the media during the early 1990s. It could not be otherwise, because maximizing revenue from advertisements was the major goal of all successful media units. To swim with the current was the easiest thing to do and questions of right and wrong, constitutional guarantees and directives among other things, had only secondary importance. The media had only one goal: to deliver the maximum number of readers, viewers and listeners to the advertiser. In this, they have succeeded and the media boom in India is continuing.

Cynicism and negativity have become notable characteristics of the modern media. Despite occasional tributes to nationalism, internationalism and a global outlook, the media thrive on factionalism and social division. Unwary sections of the public believe the myth that the media give every viewpoint an opportunity to be heard. The public is misled by media's dictum of diversity of opinion and the superficial nobility of 'giving the public what it wants'.

Even the definition of news seems to have changed. News is interpreted by some media producers as that which entertains the majority of the audience and the lucky-dip contestants, 'the gold miners'. The newspapers that had different goals and ideals in the past century are now practising the techniques of entertainers.

Using electronics technology, news about far-off disasters and
natural calamities is regularly presented as if it is the most important news for local media users. All over the world, it is the tabloids, which focus on gossip, scandal, crime and disaster, that have achieved the highest circulation. Regular newspapers, especially in the regional languages, are vying with one another to imitate the tabloids in content, without changing their size. The Indian newspapers publish weekend supplements these days, devoted to food, recreation, hobbies, sports and business affairs, each with complementary advertising, in live and bright colours. With a few exceptions, commercially successful newspapers are becoming more trivial than serious.

As Anthony Smith avers, 'newspapers with a high content of sexual stories and pictures are becoming increasingly popular, as are papers that concentrate on financial and industrial news'.

Good use of technology is made by them to 'editorialize' the newspapers these days. All the big newspapers of India are doing this and they have a minimum of six editions and a maximum of 22 editions each. These are false editions because the same product is published with a page or two of local news to make it appear different. The proliferation of editions has been made possible by the facsimile reproduction of most pages from headquarters and the addition of one or two local pages from each edition-location. And this is certainly in the interests of the publishers themselves as it gives them the advantage of securing advertisements from the local (edition-town) businesses and manufacturing firms.

The Salzburg Declaration of Journalism as a Public Trust made by journalism from 32 countries in March 2002 (Appendix – I) It deals with

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many of the issues of great concern to thinking journalists and is relevant to our discussion.

Rural newspapers are absolutely essential for India if we are serious about improving communication through the media for the benefit of people living in rural areas. A study done by this writer in the 1980s showed that there were practically no rural media in those days.\textsuperscript{83}

The situation has not changed much even now, though occasionally some noise is made about the spread of television in the rural areas. The fact is that there are no rural television stations where programmes based on rural social and economic issues are produced and in which rural people participate; programmes are produced in the metropolitan cities and telecast to rural areas. Only the radio in India gives some attention to rural issues, but there are only a few rural radio stations.

The threat from the concentration of ownership in fewer and fewer hands is an inevitable consequence of cut-throat competition in any business. The media business is no exception to this general rule, which governs all businesses in the West.

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) was taken over by Lawrence Tisch, the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) was taken over by General Electric (GE) and the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) was first taken over by Capital Cities and later by the Disney Corporation.

News Corporation Limited (NCL), the biggest media company in the world, is reaping the greatest revenue from advertising. Rupert Murdoch is the head of NCL, which owns media companies in the US.

\textsuperscript{83} Vilanilam, J. V., “Rural Press in India”, Media Asia, 1984, Vol. 11, No. 4.
UK, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Pacific Rim. The 20th Century Fox Film Corporation, Fox Broadcasting Corporation, Fox Television stations, HarperCollins, TV Guide and News America Inc., are owned by NCL in the US.

NCL owns the top British newspapers such as the Times (London), the Sunday Times, the Sun, the News of the World, the Times Literary Supplement, the Times Educational Supplement and the Times Higher Education Supplement, besides BskyB (British Sky Broadcasting) and the UK Multichannel Pay-TV Service. It also owns a German TV channel named VoxFilm-undFernesch GMBH.

In Australia and the Pacific Rim, NCL is the largest newspaper publisher, owning nearly 100 daily, Sunday, weekly, bi-weekly and tri-weekly newspapers. In New Zealand, NCL owns 50 per cent of Independent Newspapers Ltd., which publishes 60 newspapers and 25 community newspapers in the US and five provincial newspapers in Australia, besides a magazine distribution business in Australia and New Zealand. The Seven Network Ltd., one of Australia's three major commercial TV networks, is also partly owned by NCL.

NCL owns a 50 per cent share in Cable Television Network a joint venture with Telstra Corporation Ltd., and a 42 per cent share of the Queensland Press Ltd.

NCL has almost three-fourths share in STAR Television Ltd., which beams television programming via satellite into China and India and 50 other countries from Israel to Japan and Turkey to Indonesia. STAR (Satellite Television Asia Range) programmes reach nearly 50 million
households in Asia.  

The largest media chain is in the US, namely, the Gannett chain of two dozen television and radio stations and over 90 dailies, earning profits close to a billion dollars a year. As a company, its main objectives are to acquire more media units and increase its profit.

A trend in major media corporations in recent years is to appoint as chief executive someone from a non-media company, having little or no experience in journalism. People from big corporations such as General Motors, General Electric and General Mills come in as CEOs of major media companies. For example, the Times Mirror Company, parent of the Los Angeles Times and Newsday, appointed as its CEO a marketing manager from General Mills in 1995.  

There is also a trend towards hiring MBAs as news and advertisement executives in media organizations. All this is a clear indication that the media corporations want to put the media business in the hands of non-media professionals who can raise profits. What matters is not political ideals or social goals, but reaping higher and higher profits every year. Media production is treated just like the manufacture of cereals, hamburger helpers, cake mixes, soap, cement, rubber or jute products. No wonder that the most successful publications in certain countries are magazines that publish pictures of beautiful women and handsome men in various stages of undress!

Conveniently for media conglomerates, they can easily switch executives from non-media units under their management to media units

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85 Ibid.
and vice versa. Media companies and their training institutes and some so-called five-star alleges are exhorting their wards to be fit for the highly competitive news world before working as media executives. Those already working in the media but deficient according to proprietorial judgement are either graciously shown the door or sent for retraining (retooling) and repackaging to make them competent for the changing economy.

The result of such retraining is subtle skewing of news and submission to market needs (particularly of advertising and the hunt for ratings), saleability of half-truths and too much flexibility. Truthful and comprehensive reporting is not considered important; reaping consumers through entertainment and keeping them hooked is all important. Those who want to make their audience forget the realities of their surroundings must themselves forget them and that can be achieved only through intensive psychological—even subliminal—training and of course through very high salaries and perks even at the training stage. No wonder the harsh realities of the country are not of any great concern to the major media. Virtual reality is perhaps of more concern to them and the new journalists they train. Marketing the media product is what really matters. And what is good for profits is good for the new marketplace of ideas, because that is no longer a place of many voices.

The phenomenon of concentration and multimedia ownership is not confined to the West. It exists in India as well, a fact which we can confirm on the basis of ownership of media in India. An issue of far-reaching consequence is the trend among certain major media groups to imitate or collaborate with foreign media groups, which they justify on the grounds that it is a global trend. The new technologies of production and distribution contribute to this trend because they require huge capital
investment, sophisticated management and constant growth in profit. Global media companies enter foreign markets with varying degrees of direct investment, with or without the intention of gobbling up local media, but certainly to make huge profits. Such a trend is deleterious to the public's freedom of expression for the following reasons:

1. Technologies that existed separately are now converging to create new media linkages. Their efficiency is a cause not only for integration but also for disintegration among different groups whose tastes and interests are not satisfied.

2. In previous decades, the newspaper gave information at a fixed time and many people absorbed it slowly, and steadily. But now all kinds of information are repeated over and over again which act as a trigger for undesirable reactions and harmful actions by a large number of people who do not get the leisure to ponder received information. Moreover, many people are likely to take media information as if it were the gospel truth.

3. Those who cannot afford to spend Rs 200-300 a month on cable channels are cut off from the information dissemination that is going on through the mass media. There is no attempt on the part of the sophisticated media to reach this section of the population. The Conditional Access System (CAS) is likely to increase the gap between the information 'haves' and 'have-nots'. Even though CAS has been introduced in Tamil Nadu, there have not been many takers. It will not take roots in other states as well, in the opinion of many people.

4. The media are now inextricably locked into patterns of advertising and distribution and it is a heavy burden on those who have no access to big capital to keep pace with the 'high and mighty'!

5. The newspaper is becoming a deliverer of specialized information to
some groups. Most of the time, information from other sources, not the newspaper's own but of the global news agencies that dominate the financial world, is highlighted. The functions of the press as a fourth estate demand that the newspaper be a complete social presence, not just a channel for someone else's information or information that is of importance and benefit to someone else.

6. Since demand for individualized information among affluent sections that can easily afford the new technologies will increase, the conventional newspaper will disappear or cease to be of interest to the average reader, especially when it deals more and more with investments, profit returns, stock exchange rates, shareholders' rights, foreign direct investment, etc., which are all matters of great moment for the upper middle class engaged in financial speculation. The newspaper of the new era will turn out to be an information medium instead of a news medium and will be accessible more to the computer-savvy than to the non-computer-owning lower middle class and the literate poor.

7. Above all, the price of newsprint, which is what conventional newspapers are printed on, has gone up several-fold since the 1970s. Newsprint is no longer as cheap or plentiful as it used to be.

8. Both printed and Internet newspapers are now unavailable to the average person in India with the exception of a few city-dwellers. The situation is made acute by the high price of modern newspapers printed in colour and by the inaccessibility of newspapers on the Internet. A single copy of a printed newspaper costs not less than Rs 3 which works out to more than Rs 1,000 a year, an amount that is a sizeable proportion of the per capita income of an average Indian!

9. Illiteracy is an insurmountable obstacle now to the spread of newspapers in the majority of Indian states, particularly in the highly populated but severely backward regions of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and
Uttar Pradesh, usually referred to as the BI MA R U states.

10. The economic factors of high cost of production, publication and distribution and the social factors of illiteracy, poverty, ignorance, lack of transport and communication facilities, especially in the rural areas, act as barriers against access to the media for millions of Indians, while the new technologies of production are further concentrated within the urban areas, making mass communication a highly elitist phenomenon. Rural news is given as an occasional sop to the 'mob' in the non-urban areas.

Freedom of the Press

What Anthony Smith observed about the Western press is relevant to the media of many regions of the world, including India. “Given modern technological and industrial costs, freedom of the press can only be interpreted as freedom of the already existing organs of the press. Since these are for the most part, at the service of particular interests, they do not add up to the harmonic representation of the general interest preached by Adam Smith.”

The US Commission on the Freedom of the Press, called the Hutchins Commission (Professor Robert M. Hutchins was President of the University of Chicago at that time), said in 1947: “Protection against government is not sufficient to guarantee that a man who has something to say will have the opportunity to say it. The owners and business managers of the press determine what persons, what deeds, what versions of the said

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The Commission listed society's five requirements from the mass media. Although this list was advanced before television became a major medium in the US, it is still valid in the 21st century. Media must provide

- a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning;
- a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism;
- the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society;
- the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society; and
- full access to the day's intelligence.

As far as the citizens of the United States are concerned, a sizeable proportion have access to the Internet and they can exchange ideas with fellow citizens even without the help of the mass media. But it will take at least half a century more for such a situation to develop in India. The Hutchins Commission's views on sensationalism are quite apt for many media units of the East and the West even today: “To attract the maximum audience, the press (media) emphasizes the exceptional rather than the representative, the sensational rather than the significant. Many activities of the utmost social consequence lie below the surface of what are conventionally regarded as reportable incidents.”

In most of news media, such matters crowded out by stories of nightclub murders, race riots, strike violence (student agitations) and

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88 Ibid., p. 142.
quarrels among public officials. The Commission did not object to the reporting of these incidents but to the preoccupation of the media with them to such an extent that the citizen is not supplied with the information and discussion he needs to discharge his responsibilities to the community. 89

Even the lowest rungs of society must have the freedom to express their ideas and be heard. But often the dissenting individual's voice may not be heard at all or even if heard will not be presented in a clear manner. Big media are not the answer; only the small media can be effective in voicing dissenting views and the views of the least in society. There must be media affordable to the voiceless and the unempowered.

Conventional values associated with the fourth estate have been eroded in this high-tech era. This may be characterized as an exaggeration, but it is an exaggeration of a vital truth. Big media devour small ones whether it be in New York, London, Tokyo or New Delhi. Ownership changes hands overnight. The public may not have any inkling about the extent to which economic pressures are exerted on the environment of communication and about the pace of conglomerate growth, mergers and interlocking of directorships. The large sums of cash earned by publishers and media owners through the media-advertising collaboration are used for further investment in the acquisition of other media units and non-media industries at lightning speed.

89 Ibid.