CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Prologue

Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1447 and the first printed newspaper was published by Johann Carolus in 1605. The first newspaper in India appeared in 1780, started by James Augustus Hickey. However, the first printed periodical in Manipur state appeared in 1930. Difficult terrain, miniscule readership, monetary constraints, low literacy rate and lack of awareness of this medium and lack of organizational skills were the main reasons behind the failure of all the newspapers published in Manipur in the past.

After the attainment of statehood in 1971, the literacy rate in the state increased and eventually newspaper readership increased. Introduction of offset printing and colour prints in 1996 was a very important milestone in the history of print media in the state. A couple of daily newspapers enjoy good readership at present but ‘survival’ is still a major issue for other newspapers in the state. As in the case of small and medium newspapers in the rest of the country, most of the newspapers in the state continue to face financial constraints, infrastructural issues and lack of organizational skills.

Besides the above mentioned problems, all the newspapers in the state, especially the major dailies suffer from undue interferences by both the non-state actors and the state government. Freedom of press has been curtailed to some extent by the same in the state. The present study traces the origin of print media in the state. It also makes an attempt to do an in-depth study of the contemporary press in Manipur state using statistical tools so as to get a clear and precise picture of the present scenario of print media in the state.
1.2 History of Print Media in the World

Print media has been utilized for centuries by many civilisations since time immemorial in order to disseminate news and information to the masses. The Roman ‘Acta Diurna’, (Roman official notices) that appeared around 59 B.C, is the earliest recorded “newspaper”. Julius Caesar who wanted to inform the public about important social and political happenings, ordered to notify the upcoming events in major cities. The information or news was written on large white boards and displayed in popular places. The ‘Acta’ kept people informed about government scandals, military campaigns, trials and executions. In 8th century China, the first newspapers appeared as hand-written newssheets in Beijing.

Johann Gutenberg’s printing press invented in 1447 subsequently heralded the era of the modern newspaper. It enabled the free exchange of ideas and the spread of knowledge that would define Renaissance Europe.

During this era, newsletters supplied a growing merchant class with news relevant to trade and commerce. Manuscript newssheets were being circulated in German cities by the late 15th century. In 1556 the Venetian government published ‘Notizie Scritte’, for which readers paid a small coin.

In the first half of the 17th century, newspapers appeared as regular and frequent publications. The first modern newspapers were published in European countries like Germany (publishing Relation in 1605), France (Gazette in 1631), Belgium (‘Nieuwe Tijdingen’ in 1616) and England (‘The London Gazette’, founded in 1665, is still published as a court journal). These periodicals consisted mainly of news items from Europe, and occasionally included information from America or Asia.

Newspaper content began to shift towards more local issues in the latter half of the 17th century. However, censorship was widespread and newspapers were rarely permitted to discuss events that might provoke citizens to opposition. In 1766, Sweden was the first country to pass a law protecting press freedom.

The invention of the telegraph in 1844 transformed print media. After the invention of the same, information could be transferred within minutes, allowing for timelier and relevant reporting. Newspapers appeared in various countries around the world. Japan’s first daily newspaper, ‘Yokohama Mainichi Shimbun’, was published in 1870.

By the middle of the 19th century, newspapers became the primary means of disseminating and receiving information. Between 1890 and 1920, the period known as the “golden age” of print media, media barons such as William Randolph Hearst, Joseph Pulitzer and Lord Northcliffe built huge publishing empires. These men had enormous influence within the media industry and gained notoriety for the ways in which they wielded their power.

Newspapers have also played an important role as a means for disseminating revolutionary propaganda. ‘Iskra’ (The Spark), published by Lenin in 1900, is one important example. On June 21, 1925, ‘Thanh Nien’ made its debut in Vietnam, introducing marxism to the country and providing information on the revolution’s strategies.

Broadcast radio was introduced in media scene in the 1920’s. Newspapers were forced to re-assess their job as society’s primary information provider. Like the new media technologies at present, the development of a low cost, alternative media source caused apprehensions that radio would overthrow the newspaper industry. To counter this new competition, editors gave a face-lift to the newspapers and enhanced the quality of the content in order to broaden their appeal and stories were expanded to provide more detailed coverage.

No sooner had newspapers adapted to radio than they were forced to re-assess themselves due to the introduction of a more powerful medium. It was the invention of television. Between 1940 and 1990, newspaper circulation in America dropped from one newspaper for every two adults to one for every three adults. Despite this sharp decline, television’s omnipresence could not completely overshadow newspaper.

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Some newspapers, like ‘USA Today’, countered the technological advancements by using color and by utilizing the “short, quick and to the point” stories that are usually featured on television.

The technological advancement of today is posing new challenges and opportunities for old media. Unlike earlier days, so much information has been so accessible to so many people at present. By the end of the 1990s, the Internet changed the scenario of world communication.

The amount and immediacy of information on the Internet is unmatched, but it does not indicate the end of the newspaper’s importance. According to Leonard Downie, former Executive Editor of ‘The Washington Post’, there will be layering of new media over the other, but the bottom does not disappear. According to him the Internet is an extension of journalism and not a threat to it.

1.2.1 Important Milestones in the History of Press in the World

It was in 59 B.C that Julius Ceaser published ‘Acta Diurna’ in Rome. He ordered the major political and social events of the day to be made available to his people.”Actuarii”( state appointed reporters), gathered information on everything from wars and legal decisions to births, deaths, and marriages.

713 AD saw the publication of the first newspaper published in China. It was named Kaiyuan. The credit for inventing printing from the movable woodblocks goes to China. It was in 1040 AD that Pi Sheng invented the same. In 1392, movable copper type was invented in Korea.4

However, one of the most important milestones in the history of press was the invention of letter press printing by Johann Gutenberg in 1447. This particular invention enabled the mass production of printed words. In 1501, Pope Alexander VI passed an order that printed material must be submitted to clerical authority before publication in order to prevent heresy. Failure to stick to the order resulted in fines or excommunication.

In what can be considered as one of the earliest first hand information of a significant historical event, Michael Entzinger, in 1588 published a 24 page news book reporting

the defeat of the Spanish Armada. It was published in Cologne, Germany. However, the report came months after the actual event occurred.

The first printed newspaper named ‘Relation’ was published in 1605 by Johann Carolus in Strasbourg, France. This particular century saw the release of many important newspapers in the world. In 1631, ‘The Gazette’, the first French newspaper was released. The first American colonial printing press was established in 1639. In the same year, the world’s oldest newspaper still in circulation ‘Post-och Inrikes Tidningar’, was published in Sweden. ‘Publick Occurrences’, the first newspaper in America was published in 1690 in Boston.5

In 1798, Alois Sedenfelder invented lithography. Although invented over two centuries ago, offset lithography first gained popularity in the 1960’s.

In 1803, Australia’s military government published ‘The Sydney Gazette’ and ‘New South Wales Advertiser’, the country’s first newspaper. These particular publications took place only fifteen years after the colony of convicts had been established in Sydney Cove.

In 1812, Friedrich Koenig invented steam powered cylinder press. In 1814, John Walter, publisher of ‘The Times’ used Koenig’s press to produce the entire print run of ‘The Times’ -- at an output of 1,100 sheets per hour.

Another important invention (related to press) of the 19th century was the invention of telegraph in 1844. A few years later in 1851, Reuters, one of the most popular news agencies in the world was established. In 1880, the first photographs appeared in a newspaper.

In 1903, Alfred Harmsworth started the first tabloid newspaper, ‘The Daily Mirror’, in London. ‘The Daily Mirror’ introduced the concept of the “exclusive” interview. The first was with Lord Minto, the new Viceroy of India, in 1905.6

The first independent on-line daily on the World Wide Web was started in 1994.


1.3 Present Status of Print Media in the World

According to the annual update of world press trends by World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) in 2011, newspaper circulation declined in print world-wide in 2010 but was more than made up by an increase in digital audiences.

The annual report also stated that media consumption patterns vary widely across the globe. Print circulation is increasing in Asia, but declining in mature markets in the West. According to the survey, newspapers reach more people than the Internet. On a typical day, newspapers reach 20 percent more people world-wide than the Internet reaches, ever. The other major updates of WAN-IFRA are as follows:

a) Newspapers are more time efficient and effective than other media when it comes to advertisements.

b) Social media are changing the concept and process of content gathering and dissemination. However, the revenue model for news companies in the social media arena, remains hard to find.

c) The business of news publishing has become one of constant updating, of monitoring, distilling and repacking information.

The annual report also revealed the fact that daily print newspaper circulation declined from 528 million in 2009 to 519 million in 2010, a drop of about 2 percent. However, what has been lost to print has been more than made up by digital newspaper readers. Digital readers are typically a third of print readership.

According to this report, when measured in terms of readership, newspapers reach 2.3 billion people every day, 20 percent more than the 1.9 billion that the Internet reaches world-wide.

The report added that circulation patterns vary greatly world-wide. In the Asia Pacific region, circulations increased 7 percent from 2009 to 2010, and 16 percent over five years. Latin America also saw significant circulation increases – 2 percent last year and 4.5 percent over the past five years. However, drops occurred in Europe – 2.5 percent year-on-year and 11.8 percent over five years in Western Europe and 12 percent last year and 10 percent over five years in Eastern and Central Europe. The
decreases were greatest in North America, where newspapers have lost 11 percent of circulation year-on-year and 17 percent over five years.\(^7\)

As per this particular report, the number of newspaper titles worldwide increased by 200 in 2010, to 14,853, but the rate of increase is slowing due to consolidation in many markets as publishers close unprofitable titles and the number of free newspaper titles decreases worldwide. This was particularly pronounced in Eastern Europe, where freedom of expression led to the creation of numerous titles that were not sustainable economically.

The number of newspaper titles declined 4 percent in Eastern Europe in 2010, and 8 percent over 5 years. In fact, free newspapers took a big hit in 2010 – a drop in total distribution to 24 million copies from a high of around 34 million in 2008.

The report also revealed the fact that newspaper readership is highest in Iceland, where 96 percent of the population reads a daily newspaper, followed by Japan (92 percent), Norway, Sweden and Switzerland (82 percent), and Finland and Hong Kong (80 percent). Japan is the leader when it comes to newspaper sales, with the average circulation of its newspapers at 461,000 – an enormous total. Austria comes second with an average of 162,000 per title.

The same report also stated that newspaper advertising revenues was badly affected by the global recession. However, the decline slowed in 2010. Newspaper advertising revenues in the world declined 23 percent over five years and only 3 percent last year. The report also showed that in North America, newspaper advertising revenues decreased by 17 percent for the five-year period. However, the same increased by 1 percent in 2010. In Western Europe, the advertisement revenue decreased by 12 percent over five years and up 2 percent in 2010. Eastern Europe saw advertising revenues decrease of 3 percent over five years and 3 percent in 2010. In the Asia Pacific, newspaper advertising revenues decreased by 1 percent over five years but up 4 percent in 2010. In Latin America, the revenues declined 23 percent over five years and 3 percent in 2010.\(^8\)


\(^8\) Allen, Alice (2010) - Print Media: Dead or Just Dying?, March 18, 2010 [www.propertyadguru.com](http://www.propertyadguru.com)
1.4 Print Media in India (Past and Present)

Print media in India is one of the largest in the world. It was introduced in India with the publication of the ‘Bengal Gazette’ from Calcutta (presently Kolkata) in January 1780 by James Augustus Hickey. He is considered as the father of Indian press.

In 1789, the first newspaper from Bombay (Mumbai), the ‘Bombay Herald’ was started, followed by the ‘Bombay Courier’ in the following year (this newspaper later merged with ‘The Times of India’ in 1861). Other newspapers such as ‘The India Gazette’, ‘The Calcutta Gazette’, ‘The Madras Courier’ (1785) and ‘The Bombay Herald’ (1789) soon followed. These newspapers carried news of the areas under the British rule. ‘The Times of India’ was started in 1838 as ‘The Bombay Times’ and ‘Journal of Commerce’ by Bennett, Coleman and Company, a colonial venture now owned by the Jain Group. The Times Group publishes ‘The Economic Times’ (started in 1961), ‘Navbharat Times’ (Hindi language), and ‘The Maharashtra Times’ (Marathi language).

‘Samachar Darpan’ in Bengali was the first newspaper in an Indian language. The first issue of this daily was published from the Serampore Mission Press on May 23, 1818. In the same year, Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya started publishing another newspaper in Bengali, the ‘Bengal Gazette’. On July 1, 1822 the first Gujarati newspaper the ‘Bombay Samachar’ was published from Bombay. This newspaper still exists even today. The first Hindi newspaper, the ‘Oodunt Marthand’ began in 1826. Since then, the prominent Indian languages in which newspapers have grown over the years are Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Bengali.9

The Indian language newspapers have taken over the English press as per National Readership Survey (NRS), 2005. It is due to the marketing strategy adopted by the regional papers, beginning with ‘Eenadu’, a Telugu daily started by Ramoji Rao. The other reason is the growing literacy rate in various states in the country. Increase in the literacy rate has direct positive effect on the rise of circulation of the regional newspapers.

Localisation of news is another important factor for the rise of circulation of the regional newspapers. Indian regional newspapers have several editions for a particular

9 Mokerji,Amy(2008)- An Ode to 60 years of Indian Journalism, Aug 15, 2008 www.merinews.com
state for complete localisation of news for the reader to connect with the newspaper. For example, ‘Malayala Manorama’ has about 10 editions in Kerala itself and six others outside Kerala. Therefore, regional newspapers aim at providing localised news for their readers. Even advertisers acknowledge the huge potential of the regional newspaper market, partly due to their own research and more due to the efforts of the regional papers to make the advertisers aware of the huge market.\(^\text{10}\)

The ‘Anandabazar Patrika’ founded in 1922 by Prafulla Chandra Sarkar has the largest circulation for a single edition regional language newspaper in India.

During the 1950s, 214 daily newspapers were published in the country. Out of these, 44 were English language dailies while the rest were published in various regional languages. This number rose to 2,856 dailies in 1990 with 209 English dailies. The total number of newspapers published in the country reached 35,595 newspapers by 1993 (3,805 dailies).\(^\text{11}\)

The main regional newspapers of India include the Malayalam language ‘Malayala Manorama’ (published from Kerala, daily circulation- 673,000), the Hindi-language ‘Dainik Jagran’ (published from Uttar Pradesh, daily circulation in 2006- 580,000), and the ‘Anandabazar Patrika’ (published from Kolkata, daily circulation in 2006-435,000). The Times of India Group, the Indian Express Group, The Hindustan Times Group, and the Anandabazar Patrika Group are the main print media houses of the country.

The First Press Commission stated that in 1953 the circulation of dailies per 1000 in the population was 5.4 against the backdrop of an all-India literacy level of 16.4 per cent. From such a low figure, India’s daily newspaper circulation gradually increased to 3.15 million in 1957 and 5.11 million in 1962. It took three more decades for the dailies to cross the 10 million mark and it took 32 long years for the total circulation of Hindi daily newspapers to finally surpass the total circulation of English language newspapers in India.

According to NRS, 2006 (National Readership Survey 2006), there are an estimated 204 million readers of daily newspapers and an estimated 222 million readers of all publications in India. A significant feature is the rising profile of rural readers who

\(^{10}\) Purkhayastha.D.D ( 2007)- Growth of Indian newspapers during recent times, All about newspapers- bi monthly, Vol 5, No 5, Sept-Oct 2010

\(^{11}\) Pandey.Sanjeev ( 2009) – Print industry in India: Most well-established form of media, Nov 4, 2009

www.ezinearticles.com
constitute nearly 50 per cent of all daily newspaper readers. This is in striking contrast to the composition of newspaper readership in India 20 years ago. However, women are severely under-represented in the ranks of daily newspaper readers in the country. Close to 360 million literates or neo-literates are categorised in NRS, 2006 as latent readership. These are people who can read and understand any language but do not read any publication.\(^\text{12}\)

According to N.Ram (former Editor-in-chief of ‘The Hindu’), the press is still the dominant medium for advertising in India, even if television has steadily increased its share. He stated that ‘The Times of India’ is, by some distance, the world’s top-circulated general interest broadsheet daily newspaper in English. He further stated that ‘The Hindu’, with its 128-year-old tradition of serious journalism has been able to develop its net paid circulation of over 1.1 million and a readership estimated by NRS 2006 to be 4 million.

By 2007, 62 of the world’s best selling newspaper dailies were published in China, Japan, and India. According to NRS, 2007, India consumed 99 million newspaper copies, making it the second largest market in the world for newspapers.

### 1.4.1 Problems and Prospects of Small Newspapers in India

Bengal (undivided) is the birthplace of press in India. James Augustus Hickey’s ‘Bengal Gazette’ was the first newspaper to be published in the country from Calcutta (present day Kolkata) in 1780. Although this newspaper was closed down in 1782 due to imposition of fines and seizure of its printing press by the then judicial system in India under Warren Hastings, the venture enlightened the people and made them aware of the importance of this medium. Raja Rammohan Roy, who ushered in the modern age of reason in India, transformed the press into a weapon of social reform. He used ‘Sambad Kaumudi’ (Bengali Weekly, 1821) to spread his new thoughts and ideas in social and religious reform. He is considered as the founder of Indian Language Journalism.\(^\text{13}\)

To him also goes the credit for the close affinity that the small press at press enjoys with the public to which it caters. Besides freedom struggle, the role that small and

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\(^{13}\) Foord.Skelton (2000)- Early Indian Newspapers, Oct,2000, [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)
medium newspapers have played since 1947 is also worth mentioning. The majority of Indian population at present lives in rural areas. The need for flow of information to and from the rural area is even greater.

The large and popular newspapers are mostly published from large cities and towns, and these newspapers are not fully aware of the needs and problems of the people in rural areas or small towns. The small newspapers have the potential to bridge this gap as they are published by people with small means. It also translates into small overhead costs. They speak the language of the local people. They are also aware of their taste and are thus capable of influencing their opinion. They also have the potential to serve as a channel between the public and the local authorities by bringing to the notice of the authorities, the difficulties and the needs of the people, at the same time, delivering the people the type of information they require from the authorities.14

“Small newspapers are often criticized for ignoring ethical values, for using the newspaper as a tool for settling personal scores or for blackmailing. It is never correct to generalize” feels Justice GN Ray, Chairman, Press Council of India (2005). “There are of course always some black sheep and ‘fly by night’ newspapers but that is no reason to lose sight of the very important vacuum being filled by the small papers in the information communication chain”, he stated.

The Press Council of India believes that there is indeed a need to protect and promote the genuine small and medium newspapers in keeping with the country’s commitment to establish a socialist society and to encourage plurality of opinion and sources of information to strengthen democracy. The council also believes that small newspapers are the best means for promoting unity and harmony among the people, which will eventually strengthen the roots of democracy and the process of development.15

In 1995-96, the council conducted a detailed study of the problems of small and medium newspapers and came out with as many as 22 specific recommendations to encourage the small newspapers to play their role efficiently and to improve their conditions. Highlights of these recommendations were additional advertisement support to these papers by the government, cheaper newsprint, machinery and equipment at concessional rates, transparency in advertisement empanelment and

release, quick clearance of advertisement bills by the Directorate of Audio and Visual Publicity (DAVP) and other advertising authorities, making separate arrangements for input of information, news materials and visuals through Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the government of India.

The council recommended the setting up a small and medium newspaper development corporation as an autonomous body sufficiently representative of all medium and small newspapers with a view to promote and ensure the development of small and medium newspapers. It may have its branches at appropriate places. It may start with sufficient fund to be provided by the Government. It should keep the small and medium newspapers right from the stage of filing of declaration and act as a forwarding agency for availing various benefits.

Supporting the above views, the council in its report on the ‘Future of Print Media (2001)’, recommended that co-operatives of small newspapers in particular, may be encouraged to run cost effective modern printing presses, get Internet connections and organize workshops for journalists and printers for improving the overall quality of small newspapers. It also recommended that genuine small newspapers may be helped with subsidized newsprint.
### 1.4.2 The Present Status of Print Media in India

The Indian Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry is on a growth surge and is expected to cross US$ 200 billion by 2015. It reached US $ 11.92 billion mark in 2007 and is the fastest growing in the Asia-Pacific region by having a compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 18.5%.

Print media in India is not free from various issues. The most dangerous of the problems facing print media in India is that some groups are reading less. Newspapers are losing readers in 15-25 age categories to television and Internet. Although total circulation of newspapers and periodicals has increased, per paper readership is falling.\(^\text{16}\)

Cost of production and distribution of newspapers and periodicals is increasing, pushing up the cover price. In recent times, all major newspapers and magazines have increased their cover price and reduced the number of pages. It may be noted that print media market in India is extremely price-sensitive. A slight increase in cover price affects the circulation, which in turn affects the advertisement tariff and thus advertisement revenue.\(^\text{17}\)

Another interesting development is the increasing habit of getting news free. Thanks to growing number of news websites on the Internet and mobile news groups. Even on television, there are free news channels. Even if one watches pay news channel, he/she does not have to pay then and there, and does not feel that he/she is paying for news. This makes an entire generation averse to paying for news. They want their newspapers delivered at their doorsteps free. When that does not happen, they stop buying newspaper.\(^\text{18}\)

Advertisement revenue is falling over the years for most of the newspapers and periodicals in real terms. There are other players in communication spectrum like radio, television, Internet and mobile networks to draw attention of the audience and advertisers. It gives rise to further problems. First, print media has to make extra effort to secure advertisement. It is a common knowledge that pure advertisement

\(^{16}\) Chatterji, Mrinal (2009)- Contemporary Changes in Print Media in India, Feb 17, 2009 [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com)

\(^{17}\) Finch, David (2009)- Will Social Media Save the Newspaper Industry?, May 8, 2009 [www.socialmediaexplorer.com](http://www.socialmediaexplorer.com)

driven media usually dives straight for the lowest common demographic. It eventually becomes the hand maiden of the advertisers, bowing to their whims and fancies. It caters to what readers want or to be more specific what the advertisers think the readers want, rather than what they need. The disconnect between ‘want’ and ‘need’ grows. Socially relevant but market unfriendly reportage becomes a casualty, robbing print media its intrinsic strength. 19

Easy availability of more user-friendly, cost-effective, novel and networked platforms like e-book, reading material on mobile, etc. pose another problem for print media.

However, there is significant scope for growth for print media in India. According to the findings of NRS 2006, 359 million people who can read and understand any language do not read any publication. It is not just affordability that is a constraint, since 20 million of these literate non-readers belong to the upscale segments.

Print products offer more space for agenda setting, background/context and opinion. No other medium can match print media in this count.

It is good once in a while to listen to a blogger. But when it comes to credibility, there is none to beat an established newspaper. Print media provides the kind of optical and tactile pleasure that no other media can match. It is functionally convenient too. Print media has to build on its strength and discover new areas of influence and revenue generation.

The appetite is there for news, and newspapers are well positioned to serve those needs once they figure out the revenue challenge associated with the new forms of distribution. There is hope for print media. However, the change in media scene requires a different mindset, different approaches and different ways of working.

In June, 2002, The Indian government opened up the print media to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), allowing up to a 26 percent foreign stake in newspapers and current affairs periodicals and 74 percent in other forms of print media. 20

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19 Singh, Jagjeet (2002)- Challenges Facing the Indian Newspaper Industry, Feb 05, 2002
   www.indianprinterpublisher.com

20 Press Trust of India (2006), India pockets Most FDI Inflows Into South Asia in 2006:WB, May 2006,
   www.highbeam.com
In the same year, Indian's premier publishing house Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd which publishes newspaper like ‘Times of India’ and ‘The Economic Times’ reached an understanding with US major Dow Jones to launch an Indian edition of the ‘Wall Street Journal’. The company walked one step forward when The Times Group and BBC Worldwide signed an agreement to set up a joint venture to publish magazines in India. Likewise, the London-based ‘Financial Times’ (FT) signed the long-awaited agreement with Business Standard in 2009. This deal marked the first major investment in an Indian newspaper by a foreign media. Both the entities have been cooperating for over 10 years through various initiatives including publication of ‘FT's’ editorial content in Business Standard, sourced from ‘FT's’ global network.

In 2002, another major Indian media house ‘The Hindustan Times’ tied up in with an Australian media to make his presence felt in the Australian mediascape. Similarly, Hindi newspaper is also not far back in this area as in 2005, Independent News & Media, the UK-based newspaper, led by Tony O'Reilly, acquired 26 per cent stake in the Jagran Group.²¹

In July 2009, Ambika Soni, Union minister of Information and Broadcasting, backed increasing FDI (foreign direct investment) in print media to 49 per cent. She revealed the fact that a large number of newspapers and the entire journalist fraternity is for the infusion of more capital into print media so that they can have better working conditions.

FDI in print media in India has been lauded by many as an important step forward for the development of print media in India. However, a few sections of the media are averse to it and termed it unpatriotic.

According to M.J Akbar (Editorial Director of ‘India Today’), FDI in print media must be allowed because communication has emerged as one of the top businesses in the world. He further pointed out that foreign companies had already invested in television news and the argument of them being unpatriotic did not arise because if they sell anything unpatriotic then the consumer would reject it.

²¹ Juris India (International law firm, 2010) –Foreign investment in print media,... www.indiajuris.com
1.5 Print Media in North-East India (Manipur in Particular)

The American Baptist Mission introduced print journalism in the north-eastern state of Assam in 1846, with the launch of ‘Orunodoi’. Until 1979, the print media in Assam was merely another facet of social work. Two pioneers of Assam, namely RG Barua and Deveswar Sharma, published the dailies ‘Assam Tribune’, Dainik Asom’ and ‘Dainik Janambhumi’ until the 70s. 22

The historic Assam agitation in the 1980s’ changed the social life and living of the Assamese community, which resulted in many new values confronting the local people.

Amid troubles in the region, the media however witnessed a rapid boom in 90s. Today, Guwahati witnesses the publication of more than 20 morning dailies; half of those are in the Assamese language. Most of the dailies are published from more than one centre.

Until 1979, newspapers and magazines in Assam were largely focused on social themes, with the editor and the reporter treating journalism as an instrument of social change. The student agitation of the 1980s changed the face of journalism. Print journalism became more aggressive and focused on investigative reportage. Both the print and visual media have created 8,000 direct jobs and provided indirect employment to 20,000 throughout the state with a population of 26 million.

The ongoing insurgency and unrest among the youth of this region have put tremendous challenges to the working journalists based in the Northeast. They are subjected to numerous threats from insurgents, surrendered militants and even the security personnel from time to time. The statistics reveal that the trouble torn region has lost over 20 dedicated editor-journalists in last the two decades.

1.6 History of Printing in Manipur State

In late 19th century, the relationship between Manipur and the British improved and a political agency of the British was opened in the state. The detailed reports of the administration of the state were printed in Calcutta (presently Kolkata) and Shillong. The Manipuri script and articles related to Sanskrit submitted by Sarang Pandit were published in the Linguistic Survey of India, by Dr. Gearson before and after 1891.

Bengali groups analysed the freedom struggle of Manipur and its history and published in detail in their newspapers. In the year 1899, the Manipuri script was replaced by Bengali script.

The first book written by a Manipuri was printed by Haodijam Cheitanya in Silhet (presently in Bangladesh). In 1912, Sir William Pettigrew wrote Manipuri grammar in the style of English Grammar. “Areppa Marup”, the first book printed in Manipur was written by Sri Sorokhaibam Lilito Singh.23

In 1910-11, a small press was established in Manipur. All the bill forms and related newspapers of the government were printed in the press. This press was established in Imphal by Shanglakpam Bhubon Chandra. In 1914-15, a young Manipuri was sent to Calcutta to learn printing technology at the expense of the government. He was the first person to learn this subject.

The Government Press was established in 1918. It was housed in an old rice mill warehouse. Until 1928-29, the printing machine worked manually (hand press). However, in the 1929-30, a change could be seen. A new double demy Wharfdale printing machine invented by Dowson Fehani and Halliot was brought from England.

All the text books were printed in this printing machine and therefore, printing outside the state stopped. Due to the shortage of electricity, the machines were generated manually. The stereotyping, proof and cutting machines were installed and production increased subsequently.

23 Ibobi Asem (2009)- Journalismgi Itihas Amasung Manipur- Poknapham, Jan 2009
In 1930, the Churachand printing press was established. ‘Dainik Manipur Patrika’, the first daily newspaper in north-east India was printed in this particular press in 1933. In 1932-33, this press became a full fledged department of the government of Manipur.

In the late 1930s, Y-press, Tarun Press, Royal Press, Manipur Press, Friend’s Union Press, New Stars Press, Lalita Bihari Press and Chitrangada Press were started one after the other.

In 1939, the Manipur government resolved that the Assam Press Act would be applied in Manipur too. In 1956, the Publicity Department, Government of Manipur was established.

After independence, the Government Press functioned under the administrative control of the education department of the state. In 1948-75, the number of printing presses increased in Manipur. The value and printing charge of the press were increased as well. This was due to the introduction of western education in the state and the increase in the number of educated people in the state.

The Government Press was upgraded to a full-fledged Directorate of Printing and Stationery in 1979 with the creation of the post of Director along with other subordinate gazetted posts and subsequently, the administrative control was transferred to the General Administration Department.\(^\text{24}\)

The Directorate of Printing and Stationery, Manipur is different from other departments of the Government Press as it was registered under the Factories Act, 1948. As a result of this registration, categories of employees such as assistant superintendent, foreman compositor and binder with the exception of ministerial staff and gazetted officers, have been declared as workmen. The Government Press has three broad divisions, namely machine section, administrative section and store section.\(^\text{25}\)

On its inception, Government Press adopted the letterpress printing process. Hand composition was used for preparation of page formats by using foundry types. Mechanical/hot metal composition was introduced in Manipur in 1968 by installing a


monotype composing and casting machine (England make). This was followed by a linotype (USSR make) slug casting machine in 1975. With the installation of this mechanical compost, machines, quality and speed of work in the Government Press improved remarkably. Modern sophisticated automatic letterpress printing machine (Hindustan Machin Tools, India make) was introduced in 1977. Since then, with gradual change in printing technology, the quality of printing and sophistication has made the print media one of the fast growing industries in the country including Manipur state.

With the advent of new printing technology, conversion from letterpress printing to offset printing in the Government Press was felt. As offset printing has proved to be cost effective in terms of output and less labour intensive work with enhanced printing quality, conversion from letter press technology to offset technology began in a phase manner. In 1994, the desktop publishing systems were introduced for prepress works in the Government Press. The shift of printing technology from letter press to offset has brought unprecedented change in the printing press industry. This phenomenon had also affected the Government Press. The first sheet fed offset printing machine was installed in 1987. The first impression was set on September 1987 on the said machine by using vandyke process of plate making on zinc plate. During this period, the prepress work was dependent on the letterpress process through lithotex process camera (England make). The text or graphic copy was photographed through the process camera and the negative was developed for the preparation of negative working plate. This conventional method of plate making changed with the introduction of Desktop Publishing System (DTP). As a collorary to the shift to offset printing, desktop publishing section and plate making section with computer, scanners and printing down frames were created. With the introduction of the DTP systems, offset printing process gave the much awaited impetus to the Government Press in terms of productivity and output apart from enhanced quality. To upgrade the existing skills and to equip workers with the requisite working knowledge and basic skill to adapt to the new version of printing technology, an in-service training programme was taken up to impart proper training to the surplus employees of the Government Press.

The work of the Government Press is manifold and diversified. It undertakes publication of government gazette (ordinary & extra-ordinary), acts, rules,
government journals, magazines and reports for the information of the public in general. Treasury bills, standard forms registers and various kinds of printed materials are also printed for use in various government departments or establishments. During parliamentary, state assembly and local bodies' elections, ballot papers, forms and printed materials related to election are printed in the Government Press. All this publications help in dissemination of information about important developmental work programmes of the state government thereby creating public awareness. These activities make the Government Press a participant in the print media industry in a limited manner. The role of the Government Press is significant as it is also a repository of records of the official business and transactions of the government. The Government Press can, therefore, be deemed as an archive of government records.

The Government Press at present, has achieved a satisfactory level of printing capability due to the fresh procurement of offset printing machines, computer and duplicators during the annual plan period in 2007-09.26

To meet the requirements of printing machines and other printing equipments, proposals for procurement of two colour offset printing machine (demy size), offset printing machine (crown size), printing down frame (D/D), section sewing machine, perfection binding machine, rotary die perforating machine, images computer, scanner, printer were proposed in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 annual plans.

The non-tax revenue collection of the Government Press in 2008-2009 was Rs. 4.62 lakhs and outstanding arrears were Rs. 32.00 lakhs. Streamlining the billing procedures so as to enable presentation of printing charges to departments with speed and relative ease, a printing rate for various categories of pruning was formulated.

The virtual reliance and shift to offset printing was necessitated the deployment of skilled manpower to man the printing machines and equipments. This was acutely felt as a large section of the existing employees were recruited when letterpress was the mainstay of printing.

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1.6.1 Print Media in Manipur (Past and Present)

The history of print media in Manipur state can be broadly divided into two stages namely- press in Manipur before independence and press in Manipur after independence.

1.6.1.1 Press in Manipur Before Independence

Unlike print media history of many other places, the first Manipuri language newspaper was published outside the state. During the invasion of Manipur by Burma (present day Myanmar) in 1890, many Manipuris fled to safer places in nearby Assam and present day Bangladesh. These Manipuris were exposed to the print journalism in Assam and Bengal. Therefore, they were the ones who got motivated and subsequently started the first periodical in Manipuri language titled ‘Meitei Leima’. It was started sometime between 1917 and 1918. However, it could not be fully considered as the first stage of print journalism in the state as the newspaper was not a printed one and moreover, it was published outside Manipur. Masik Jagran, a monthly journal published in Bengali and Manipuri, was published in 1924. Arjun Singh was its editor and Parijat Singh and Ram Krishna Singh served as assistant editors. It was printed at the Islamia press in Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) and its publisher was Nityachand Singh.

After a couple of years, between 1925 and 1926, ‘Meitei Chanu’, a hand written newspaper was released. The period between 1920 and 1949 can be considered as the first phase of Manipuri journalism.27 ‘Yakairol,’ published in 1930 was the first printed periodical published in Manipur. It was a monthly magazine edited and published by Dr Ningthoujam Laihen Singh. The magazine reflected the literary and the cultural heritage of the state. It also gave emphasis to public opinion. The magazine also mirrored the social and political scenario of the state during the reign of Maharaj Budhachandra, just before Manipur was merged with the Indian Union. Famous poets and writers of the state like Dr.Lamabam Kamal, Kwairakpam Chaoba Singh and Sorokhaibam Lolito were important columnists of this magazine. Mahatma Gandhi’s freedom movement and the criticism of the then King of Manipur were the main news stories of this magazine.

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One interesting feature of this magazine was the publication of current news items by a stringer named Hijam Ratan Singh. The price of one copy of ‘Yakairol’ was 5 annas (a small fraction of one Rupee) and yearly subscription rate was only Rs.3. This publication lasted for nearly eight years.

‘Dainik Manipur Patrika’ was the first daily newspaper published from Manipur in 1933. It was not only the first daily newspaper of Manipur but also for the whole of North East India. It was printed by Churachand printing press and edited by Thongam Gokulchandra Singh. Atombapu Sharma was the proprietor of this newspaper. This newspaper was circulated even in Tripura, Nabadweep (West Bengal), Vrindavan (Uttar Pradesh) and in Burma (present day Myanmar) where Manipuri migrants read the newspaper. This newspaper was so much in demand that the newspaper had both morning and evening editions. The circulation figure of this newspaper was 3000, which was a good circulation figure during that time.

Articles published in the ‘Dainik Manipur Patrika’ showcased the Manipuri culture and tradition. At the same time, British imperialism was heavily criticized in the newspaper. Articles expressing desire for freedom and separate administration threatened the British political agent in Manipur. After five years, the publication was banned by the government and thus came the end of the publication. It was at this juncture that the meeting of the Manipur durbar and the political agent of the British empire in India was restricted and even freedom of expression was curbed.

Those Manipuris of that time who received western education and those who were interested in literature supported the growth of journalism in Manipur during this particular period, which is considered as the first chapter of print journalism in Manipur.

**Other Important Daily and Weekly Newspapers**

The ‘Manipur Matam’ was a daily newspaper started in 1938. It was published by Tarun press and edited by R.K Shitaljit. Although the newspaper supported the Nikhil Hindu Mahasabha, the British government was not strongly criticized in this newspaper. Its price was four paisa and it was 50% reduced for students.28 A separate

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28 Ibobi Asem (2009)- Journalisngi Itihas Amasung Manipur- Poknapham, Jan 2009
page was devoted for articles and features in Assamese language and this newspaper was held in high esteem by the Assamese. Renowned personalities of that time like S.Krisnamohan and Dr.Leiren wrote columns for this newspaper. ‘Manipur Matam’ is also included in the history of Assamese newspaper.

‘Manipur Paojel’, was started in 1939. It was published twice a week. Keisham Kunjabihari Singh was the editor and proprietor of this newspaper. It was the time when the freedom struggle in India was at its peak. Hence, most of the editors were put behind bars so that the newspapers could not arouse nationalism amongst the people. In fact, Keisham Kunjabihari Singh was the first editor in the state who was put behind bars. He was summoned by the Manipur Darbar and the Sadar Panchayat for publishing provocative articles in his newspaper. Although, he won the case, he was put behind bars in a case of defamation.

After the end of the Second World War, in 1946, he started a new weekly newspaper titled ‘Ngasi’. The publication of this newspaper was stopped for a few years when Keisham Kunjabihari was asked to deposit a sum of Rs 1000 as security deposit to the concerned authority. In 1948, after depositing the same, ‘Ngasi’ became a daily newspaper.

Other Important Magazines

‘Lalit Manjaree Patrika’, started in 1933, was a monthly magazine published under the editorship of Atombapu Sharma, a renowned scholar of Manipur. It was a contemporary of ‘Dainik Manipur Patrika’. Besides publishing news and articles related to Manipuri literature and culture, this magazine supported the Indian National Congress and the Nikhil Hindu Mahasabha. It was printed on a broad sized newsprint and comprised of 40-50 pages. One important feature of this magazine was the articles and features on “Meitei Puran” or ancient literature of Manipur.

Another important feature of this magazine was the articles contributed by educated Manipuris on topics related to law, medicine and English literature. This magazine also supported the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Some educated Manipuri Muslims also contributed articles on Islam.

Nikhil Hindu Mahasabha supported the establishment of a magazine titled ‘Gouranga’ in 1934. It was released once in three months and the magazine was edited by Lalita Madhav Chaterjee.
‘Manipur Sahitya Parishad Patrika’ was started by Manipur Sahitya Parishad in 1935, the year the same organization was established. This magazine carried the happening news of that particular period. During the period 1935-41, the magazine was edited by Th. Madhu Singh and it was released twice a year. It was during his editorship that the magazine started highlighting the various activities and achievements of the organization.

‘Metei Leima’ was started in 1941 and Akham Thambalngou was its first editor. It was released twice or thrice a month. One of the main features of this magazine was the regular publication of poems written by the last king of Manipur- Maharaj Bodhchandra.

‘Naharol’ was a magazine started by the Calcutta Manipuri Students Union in 1941. It was both published in English and Manipuri. ‘Khonjel’ was a yearly magazine started by the same union in 1946. One important characteristic of this magazine was the contribution by the tribal students from the state.

‘Bhagabati Masik’ and ‘Bhayabati Lalit’ were two monthly magazines started in 1946. Both these magazines were edited by Atom Bapu Singh. The former was a literary magazine and the latter was based on dance and music.

In 1949, Manipur Sanskrit Parishad started a magazine titled ‘Jyoti’. Literary articles published in this magazine were quite popular and all the eminent personalities in the state during that period contributed various articles and features. ‘Imalon’, another magazine was also published during this period.29

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1.6.1.2 Press in Manipur after Independence

The period from 1949 to 1980 is considered as the golden period in the history of Manipuri journalism. After the Second World War, all the Manipuris who left the state in search of safer places, returned to the state and started leading a new and peaceful life. The economic conditions of many people were sound as most of the Manipuris who were war victims were given compensation. As a result of the merger of the Nikhil Hindu Mahasabha with the Indian National Congress, India gaining independence from the British rule and the merger of Manipur with the Indian union in 1949, there was a sudden change in the political scenario of the state. Educated Manipuris who had good command of the English language started entering politics.

The people of the state came to know the power and importance of newspaper in democracy and the role of the newspaper in moulding the political set up of the state. The year 1949 saw the publication of many newspapers and magazines, which were widely circulated. The “Praja”, published in 1949 and edited by H.Ranbir was a weekly newspaper published by Manipur State Congress Committee. This newspaper was banned by the government and so the same newspaper was rechristened as ‘Prajatantra’ in 1950 and was published by the same committee. L. Joychandra was its first editor. Many renowned journalists in the state like L.Achou, Tomba, Kh.Giri, Somorendra, Yaima and R.K Maipaksana became the editors of this particular newspaper one after another.

The “Khollao”, a popular newspaper which was the mouthpiece of the Communist Party started in 1964. Its first editor was Thiyam Meghachandra. The ‘Manipur Arbitor’, edited by P.Achou was published in English in 1971. The ‘Eastern Standard’, edited by S.Neilendra was first published as a weekly newspaper but in 1972, it came a daily newspaper.

Newspaper Related to Hinduism

In 1975, A.V.V Parishad published a magazine called ‘Srimati Manjudas’. In 1978, Imphal branch of ISKON published a monthly magazine in Manipuri titled ‘Bhagavat Darshan’.

**Astrological and Health Magazines**

In 1966, The Manipur Astrological Society started a monthly magazine named “Biswarani”. Telem Yogendra Singh started a health related monthly magazine named ‘Arogya’, in 1967. This magazines propagated ancient and modern shastras. It spread naturopathy as well as ancient Manipuri methods of treating ailments. When Yogendra passed away, Kshetri Kala became the new editor of the magazine and the same was published once a year until it completely stopped publication in 1972. This was the first magazine of its kind in the state.

**Women’s Magazines**

In 1969, a magazine titled ‘Yaipha Yumbanda Nupi’ (the role of women in family welfare) was published. Another very popular magazine named ‘Macha Leima’, was published in the same year by the Chanura Marup (Women organization). The editor and all the writers of this particular magazine were females and their articles were based on issues related to Manipuri women. The publication of this woman oriented magazine was an important milestone in Manipuri Journalism. The Family Planning Association, Manipur branch and the Mahila Kalyan Samiti published many Manipuri journals on the occasion of International Year of Women, 1975.

**Newspapers Related to Manipuri Culture**

The “Eikhoigi Kangla” published in 1969 by Mutuwa Bahadur and Takhellambam Bokul upheld Manipuri culture and tradition. The publication of ‘Ritu’ in 1970 by Cultural Forum of Manipur is considered a great leap in magazine publication of the state. It is considered as an important milestone in the history of print media in the state. This magazine was popular for its strong literary flavour and articles of criticisms. All the other magazines of that period tried to emulate the style and content of this particular magazine. ‘Ritu’ was awarded the best magazine of that particular year by the government of Manipur.

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32 Maipaksana.RK (1990)- Journalism in Manipur
Pan Manipur Youth League was a futuristic organisation that published a radical newspaper named ‘Lamyanba’ in 1971. This newspaper was quite popular for its contents that focused mainly on the criticism of politicians and bureaucrats of the state. Its editorials lamented the degeneration of the courage of Manipuris after the 19th century when Manipur lost its independence. The newspaper wrote strong criticisms on Kabo Valley, a valley bordering Burma (present day Myanmar), which was ceded to Burma by Pt.Jawaharlal Nehru. This newspaper also expressed the need for consolidation of the strengths of Manipuris settled in Cachar district and other places of Assam and encouraged the people to harness the natural resources of Manipur. Later, this newspaper was banned and even the editor of the same was put behind bars.

‘The Kanglachefong’ (1977) “Salai Teret”(1977) “Nongpok Thong” (1979) Luptin” (1979) and “Hingba” (1977) were also other magazines that were published with the sole aim of safeguarding Manipuri culture and ancient traditions.

Newspapers Related to Politics

In 1950, N.Birendra Kumar Singh published the ‘Mukti’, a monthly magazine that wrote against monarchy. ‘Simanta Patrika’ was started in 1964 by Birendra Kumar Singh. It later became the mouthpiece of the Congress (I). In 1974, the youth communist party released ‘Aonba’ (revolution), a monthly magazine.

In 1974, the Manipur State Communist Party published a monthly newspaper titled ‘Apunba Khollao’. ‘Mannaba’, edited by Shri.L.Achou Singh (ex-MP) was published in 1973. In August 1977, he was put behind bars during emergency in the country. However, he again circulated the newspaper in a big way after he was released. This monthly newspaper was later changed to a weekly newspaper. After the emergency, the congress party was defeated in the general election both in the centre and the state and the Janata Party formed the government in the centre as well as in Manipur state.

During this time, the newspaper spread the policy and programme of this party. Editor, L.Achou Singh was the party Gen.Secretary who expressed his stand very clearly in this newspaper.

Journals on the Economic Condition of Villages in Manipur

‘Loyalam’ a monthly magazine was published by the Rural Development Organization; Imphal in 1977. It was edited by Chidananda Sharma. This organization
arranged camps and released souvenirs in relation to national integration and adult education programmes.

**Journals Related to Shumang Leela (Jatra)**

The Shumang Leela All Manipur Jatra Association released a half quarterly journal edited by Thockchom Pholendra in 1976.

**Drama and Theatre Journals**

In 1977, Bhagirat Shastri released a magazine on the theatre in Manipur. This magazine was released once in three months.

**Journals Related to Hindi Language**

In 1977, Acharya Padha Govind Kaviraj started the first Hindi language journal called ‘Hindi Sikshak Dweep’ in Manipur. It was released once in four months. After releasing two issues, the journal ceased to function. In the same year, Gokulchandra Sharma released a monthly journal in Hindi language called ‘Parbat Bani’. This journal helped the tribal of the hills in learning Hindi. Hindi speaking people of the state and those who had an inclination towards the language wrote articles and features for this journal. An interesting feature of this journal was the articles contributed by the Kabui tribe of Manipur. Brajamonhan Dev Sharma published ‘Samachar Gazette’ in 1963.

**Academic Journals**

‘Young Soldiers’ Guidance Bulletin’, an English journal edited by Prof. Kshetri Kala was started in 1976. When the State Institute of Education and Science was opened by the education department of the government of Manipur in 1977, a journal titled ‘The Young Guidance’ was released. In 1978, a yearly journal titled ‘Education Today’ was published by the same institute. A journal called ‘Lamjing Meira’ was published in Manipuri language by the Manipuri Literary Council in 1978.

**Sports Magazines**

‘Olypus’, started by Ajit Singh in 1970 was the first sports magazine published in the state. The magazine stopped after the publication of two issues. In 1979, ‘Sports Digest’ a monthly publication, ‘Sports Revolution’ and Sannaroi, weekly publications were started by R.K Ronendrajit.
**Science Journals**

‘Bigyan gi wa’, a quarterly journal was published in 1978. It was the first science journal published in the state. The journal was edited by Lamabam Biramani Singh. The Science Forum of Manipur rendered monetary help for the publication of this journal.

**Newspaper for Propagating Christian Religion in Manipur**

A monthly newspaper named ‘Thawai Hingnaba Lambi’ (The path to save life) edited by Ch.Nabachandra was published from Churachandpur district in 1979. The ‘Gospel’ was also published in Manipuri language in the same year and from the same place.

**Newspaper Published by Manipuri Muslims About Islam**

Mohammed Hussain started the ‘Payam Islam’ in 1977. This newspaper was released once in three months. Another newspaper of the same periodical was started by Pukhrimayum Kiyammudin in 1978. The newspaper was titled “Khonthang”.

**Film Magazines**

In 1965, Mohammed Kudus started ‘Stars and Lovers’. This magazine could not survive for a long time. In 1971, the first feature film in Manipur was released and along with its released, a film magazine was also published by its producer, KT Company.

**Magazines in English Language**

‘The Cultural Flow’, a magazine edited by R.K Thambalsana was released in 1968. It was released once in three months. In 1978, three English magazines namely ‘Meitei Leirang’, edited by N.Tombi, ‘The Scale’, published by All Manipur Non-government Teachers’ Association and ‘The Profile’ published by the Cultural Forum, Manipur were released. All these magazines showcased Manipuri culture and tradition. However, all the magazines could not last for a long period of time. The reasons for the same are increase in the price of newsprint, shortage of manpower and less profits. The Manipur State Kala Academy sanctioned annual grant to non-political cultural magazines. However, the grants could not redress the grievances of publication
houses as people were more interested in reading Hindi and English magazines that came from outside the state.  

**Press in the Hill Districts of Manipur**

Print media in the valley districts developed in a much faster pace compared to the hill districts due to geographical reasons. However, the same gradually developed in the hill districts too. There are two major hill tribes in the state namely Kukis and Nagas. Again these two major tribes are divided into many sub-tribes who speak 24 different dialects. Daily newspapers and other periodicals in tribal dialects are few.

Tribal newspapers/journals in good numbers started to appear in Manipur from 1980 onwards. The circulation of a tribal newspaper and its survival depend to a large extent on the population of the tribe. For instance, a Tangkhul newspaper will depend on the population (readership) who speak Tangkhul dialect.

It was the Christian missionaries that introduced western education in the tribal belt of Manipur state. In fact, they were also responsible for the introduction of print journalism in these areas. Creation of social and religious awareness through print media began with the publication of many Christian literatures in the early part of the 20th Century. Most of the literatures were printed outside the region due to the absence of printing machine. Initially, the local publications were mostly handwritten or done with typewriter.

A Hmar dialect magazine, ‘Hmasawnna’ which was started in 1941 was the first periodical in tribal dialect of Manipur. The journal was edited by Zathuoi, a Hmar literary personality. The journal was published from Mission Compound in Churachandpur. Churachandpur was the only hill district that published many newspapers and magazine as it is the only hill district that has better access to the valley districts. Around the same period, a journal called ‘Lhangsam’ appeared in the northern hill district of Manipur. SL Lunneh, a pioneer of Christianity and the doyen of Thadou-Kuki literature edited ‘Lhangsam,’. It was published from Motbung in Sadar Hills. The journal was known for its multi-perspective content.

In 1952, a monthly magazine ‘Zingsol’ was published in Gangte dialect. Lamzasoi Chelmang, the first graduate among the Gangtes, edited the magazine. The following

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years witnessed the release of ‘Sim le Mal’ a magazine in Thadou-Kuki dialect. This magazine was also edited by SL Lunneh from Motbung. A few magazines like ‘Penna Gam,’ ‘Muoltinchan,’ and ‘Zouzam,’ appeared one after the other. However, they could not stand the test of time due to financial constraints.35

However, the factor, which contributed to the rise and growth of print journalism among the tribal people of Manipur, was quite different from that of the same in the valley districts. Unlike the publications in the valley districts, none of the publications in the tribal districts were started with the aim of criticizing the authority. Rather, it was the increasing awareness and the need felt by them to tackle the social issues that necessitated the release of such publications. Another important factor that contributed to the growth of print journalism in the hills of Manipur is the ever increasing consciousness to preserve their respective identities. This trend still prevails among them.36

‘Thuthang,’ was the first daily tribal language newspaper released 1972. This newspaper was edited by T Gougin and was published from Churachandpur. It was a Zou dialect newspaper.

‘Sikni’ is another popular tribal newspaper that runs till today. CS Sitkill started it from Saikot in Churachandpur. This Mizo newspaper began to hit the stands on September, 1975. Kapthianga also edited the newspaper for one year during 1977-78. It enjoyed good readership among the Mizo-speaking community of Manipur and Mizoram. Another Mizo daily ‘Chhantu’ was also started in 1976 by F Hrangzuala.

‘Sumkawn,’ another tribal language newspaper in Thadou-Kuki dialect was started in 1980 from Churachandpur. Its first editor was Mangjangam Touthang. A year later, the office of the newspaper was shifted to Imphal and was printed in Tongvom Memorial Printing Press, New Lambulane, Imphal.

Some Kukis residing in the valley districts published their own language newspaper in their dialect. Gogin published “Young Yomi” and “The Young Democrats” fortnightly newspapers in 1961.

Students who published journals and newspapers were supported by the administrative officers of the state in various ways. Hence, print journalism in the hill

districts developed soon. A Paite dialect newspaper, ‘Manipur Express’ was started in 1981 as a weekly. The periodicity of the newspaper later changed into daily in 1983.

A Thadou-Kuki magazine titled ‘Thinglhang Post’ was started on October 1, 1982. It was started as a weekly journal by TN Haokip from Churachandpur. The journal became a daily newspaper in the nineties.

‘Hmasawnna Thar’ a Hmar daily newspaper was started on October 1, 1987 in Churachandpur. It was published by Lalmalsawm Sellate. It continues to hit the stands till date and it achieved a feat when the editor of the newspaper was conferred the Manipur State Journalist Award in 2008.

In 1992, a Tangkhul-Naga daily newspaper, ‘Aja’ was published in Imphal. The newspaper has been edited by Valley Rose Hungyo since its first publication. In 1999, another tribal newspaper was launched in Tamenglong. It was a Rongmei-Naga newspaper named ‘Dee-cham’, started by Ramkung Pamei.

Other tribal newspapers that started after 2000 are Paite dialect newspaper-‘Lamka Post’ (started on September 1, 2002),published by Thangzalian Thomte and a Vaiphei-dialect newspaper -‘Nisin Thuhiltu’ (2004) published by Benlian Khaute.

Monthly magazines like ‘Lenlai,’ (in Simte), ‘Hetnapha (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Vaphual (Zou)’ ‘Shi-twi (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Chennagam (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Lenkolni (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Akshi Sawmleng (Vaiphei),’ ‘Suangmantam Digest (Paite),’ Tongshann (Zou),’ ‘Zingsol (Gangte),’ and ‘Zo-Khua (Zou),’ appeared for a short period of time and disappeared.37

Weeklies like ‘Mediator,’ ‘Tulai Zogam (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Kanthouna (Maring),’ ‘Frontier Weekend (Paite),’ ‘Kaphung Khon (Tangkhul),’ also could not survive for a long time and soon disappeared from the scene.

At present, some monthly periodicals in tribal dialect are struggling to survive despite several constraints. They are magazines like ‘Chollha (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Tongluang (Paite),’ ‘Zingvalpa (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Zopatong (Zou),’ ‘Sawrtui (Hmar),’ ‘Laizon Digest (Thadou-Kuki),’ ‘Kohhui (Thadou-Kuki),’ and ‘Zalen Banner’ (weekly in Thadou-Kuki)’

Tribal language newspapers that are running successfully at present are Sikni-Eng, Manipur Express, Lamka Post, Thuhiltu, Hmasawnna Thar, Aja, and Dee-cham. The launch of a multi-lingual colour daily newspaper, ‘Gosem’ from Imphal, the state capital in December 2009 is an important milestone in the history of print media in the tribal regions of the state.

1.6.2 Freedom of Press and Nature of Work in Manipur from the beginning Until 1980

Many newspapers in Manipur were mostly owned by the political parties and they were the mouth pieces of the same. Some newspapers, of course, were not owned by the political parties. However they were also found to have leanings to one or other political parties. Thus, these presses were not free from prejudices. Such being the cases, the newspapers used to engage themselves in issuing propaganda of the parties through these newspapers with an attempt to fishing in the troubled water.\(^{38}\)

The first daily newspaper that contained articles on the criticisms against the British rule in Manipur was the “Dainik Manipur Patrika” which started in 1933. It existed for about five years. But later, the government of Manipur banned its publication. The next in the fray was the ‘Manipur Paojel’ edited by Keisham Kunjabihari Singh. It was started in 1939 and was published twice a week. The newspaper contained criticisms against the British rule.

As a result, the editor was prosecuted several times in the Sadar Panchayat and the Darbar of Manipur. Although the charges against the editor could not be substantiated, he was fined and imprisoned several times on the ground that his articles amounted to defamation against the government. This was the first time where an editor was imprisoned in Manipur. The permit for this particular newspaper and newsprint were also withdrawn by the government.

After this incident, the existence of any newspaper and magazine stopped until 1946 in which Keisham Kunjabihari Singh started his weekly newspaper named ‘Ngasi.’ He could not continue publishing this newspaper continuously because of the pressure from the Government of Manipur asking him to deposit a sum of Rs. 1,000 as security deposit. Later, after a lapse of about two years, he could start publishing his daily newspaper with effect from July, 1948.

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\(^{38}\) Maipaksana.RK (1990)- Journalism in Manipur
Another newspaper which started its publication as a weekly was ‘Praja’, with Loitam Yaima Singh as its editor. This weekly, after some time, was renamed as the “Prajashakti “ and it subsequently became a daily. The editor published an article titled, “Ningthougi Yug Loirre ( the King’s days are over)”. For this, the newspaper was banned.39

It was only during the second half of the last century that print media in the state started enjoying the freedom of press under some limitations. The local dailies and other periodicals in Manipur started exercising this right very freely. In most of the cases, however, the newspapers and magazines indulged in criticizing various government departments, organizations and individuals mainly for earning cheap publicity. Some of the criticisms were quite destructive and based on half baked reports. Thus, some newspapers care to see only one side of the coin leading to the misuse of the right that these presses have under the Constitution of India.40

Creation of an atmosphere conducive for the growth of journalistic ideas amongst the people engaged in the printing and publishing was needed during this period. Many people engaged themselves in journalism field during this period. However, most of them were not professional journalists and they joined with the sole aim of earning some money. This makes them deviate from the right path. The general mass in Manipur had no regular reading habit. They were not, with the exception of a few, willing to study anything in depth. Generally, people used to read any short articles containing high sounding and easy to know words that needed no deep thinking. Hence, thought provoking articles did not have much value during the early stages of journalism in the state. However, the scenario changed after Manipur gained statehood in 1972. The literacy rate and number of educated people increased and many people became aware of the value of newspapers. Trained journalists and experienced professionals started working in newspapers and magazines published in the state.


The employees employed in the printing presses or newspaper establishments were classified into journalists and non-journalists. As mention above, many newspaper establishments in Manipur were owned by political parties. These newspapers served as mouthpieces for these parties. Most of the political news was tempered to suit the political agenda of the parties concerned. Hence, in most cases, the true colour of a matter could not be seen by the general readers. The political leaders who were engaged in this field had no intention of earning profits from the publications as their main motives were different. Such being the case, they usually pay no heed to the structure, service condition or the terms of employments of the employees employed in these newspaper establishments. This resulted in losing of interest by employees of the same.

The newspapers, magazines, bulletins and souvenirs carried advertisements and it formed a major source of income for these establishments. Various departments of the government of Manipur used to assist these establishments through their advertisements and displays.

The occupations available in the printing presses in Manipur during this period were editor, manager, assistant manager, machine operator, machine men, fitter, compositor and hawkers. However, they had no regular and systematic wage/pay structures. The number of employees employed in these establishments varied from 8 to 50 in this state. The wages paid to these employees ranged from Rs.100/- per month to Rs.500/- per month depending on the skill of the workers. Salary was increased for a few regular workers employed in some standard presses only.

The Government of Manipur revised the minimum rate wage in December, 1988 from 12.40 per day to Rs.23.70 per day in the valley areas and from Rs13.40 per day to Rs.26.70 per day in hill areas under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. 41

With regard to the working of these presses, it was commonly found that the total working hours was 7 hours per day. Working hour was usually between 10am and 5pm and in some presses, lunch break was available to the employees. However, in most of the cases, this interval for rest or for having lunch was not made available to

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the workers. This practice was very much against the provisions of the Factories Act, 1948. Further, the condition of service of the employees of these presses was also against the provisions of the working journalists (conditions of service and miscellaneous provision) Act, 1952.

Most of the employees in these establishments were not timely paid. This was also against the provisions of the payment of Wages Act, 1936. The employees did not get bonuses also. Employees in private presses in Manipur could not avail casual leave. They were also not given annual leave with wages and other leaves entitled to them under the Factories Act, 1948. Maternity Benefits Act, 1961 was found to be unknown to these establishments. The numbers of women workers were increasing in these establishments. Apart from these, the employees in these presses did not have the idea or time to form unions and get their unions registered under the Trade Unions Act, 1926.

However, in the printing presses run by the government of Manipur, two unions were formed. One trade union of the private presses namely, the All Manipur Private Press Employees Association was started in 1979.

1.6.3 Press in Manipur During Emergency (1975-77)

On 25th June 1975, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime minister of the country imposed an emergency in the country. Fundamental rights stood suspended, censorship was imposed on the press and prominent political leaders were arrested during this period.

Like elsewhere in other parts of the country, emergency affected the press in Manipur state too. Popular newspaper during that period like ‘Khollao’, ‘Prajatantra’ and ‘Mannaba’ bore the brunt of emergency. The then editor of ‘Mannaba’, L.Achou Singh was put behind bars for criticising the government in his newspaper articles. During this particular period, government officials from the Directorate of Information and Public relations, Manipur routinely scrutinized all the print publications of the state during that period.42

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1.6.4 Contemporary Press in Manipur


‘Anouba Yaol’, ‘Ema Leipak’, ‘Chingkhei Hunba’ ‘Matamgi Ichel’, ‘Lingjel’ and ‘Sanathong’ were popular magazines during this particular period.

During the decade 1972-82, daily newspapers increased by 77.7 percent. A manifold increase in the number of newspapers in the state was due to the rising standard of the people of the state, increase in literacy rate, increasing mass awareness and more importantly, the recognition of journalism as a profession. At present, 33 newspapers (both dailies and weeklies) and four magazines are published in the state.

Due to various factors like financial constraints, lack of professionalism or lack of awareness of the importance of print media, many newspapers, magazines and journals that started publication before 1980 could not survive for a long time. Daily newspapers that were popular during the 70s and 80s like ‘Prajatantra’ and ‘Khollao’ are no longer in the scene.

At present, only a few dailies that started in 1980 or before it still exist.43 ‘Hueyen Lanpao’ and ‘Poknapham’ are a few of them. However, ‘Hueyen Lanpao’ has been owned by a different proprietor at present. The latter started its publication in 1980 and it is the largest circulated Manipuri daily in the state. The former was started in 1978 by Salam Bharat Bhusan.

What can be considered as a very important milestone in the history of print journalism in the state was the birth of an English daily named ‘The Imphal Free Press’ in 1996. It instantly became very popular amongst the masses due to its professional touch in design and more importantly the colour prints on its front and last pages. There has been a sharp improvement in terms of reporting, presentation and designing during the last 15 years. The technological advancement has brought a sea-change in print journalism of the state. Using offset machine for printing by ‘The Imphal Free Press’ is a far cry from the manual press used for printing process in the

past. At present, most of the major local dailies in the state use web printing technique at present.

The success story of ‘The Imphal Free Press’ posed a serious challenge to all the other dailies in the state. It prompted other leading dailies like ‘Hueyen Lanpao’, ‘Naharolgi Thoudang’ and ‘Poknapham’ to introduce colour prints. However, only the front and the last pages are in colour and the rest of the pages in black and white. The newsprint is of low quality unlike the high quality ones used by big national dailies in the country.

‘Sangai Express’, an English daily started in 1999 is one among the most popular dailies in the state. In the same year, ‘Sangai Express’ started its Manipuri edition.

‘Manipur Mail’, ‘Lamka Post’ and ‘Tongna’ are other important dailies in the state at present. ‘Sanathong’, started in June 1994 by Manindra Konsam, ‘Image’ (June 2007, proprietor- Salam Ranjan), ‘Ipak’ (November 2009, proprietor- Naorem Rajesh) are the popular magazines in the state at present.

Most of the leading newspapers in the state has 8 pages per copy. All the major daily newspapers in the state have about 50-60 staff including reporting, editing, administrative and printing staff. Rs.3 is the average price of one copy of these newspapers at present.

It is a fact that newspaper publication before mid-1970 was a ‘come and go’ affair. They were unable to survive for long. Lack of government support, low literacy rate and absence of public awareness were the main reasons behind this. The other reasons include issues related to infrastructure, modern printing technology and management. Apart from these, standard of journalism was low because of the absence of professionally trained journalists in the state.

However the scenario has changed now. For a population of just 23 lakhs (according to 2001 census) a circulation of nearly 29,738 copies daily is not a less amount. This is the circulation figure of ‘Poknapham’ the highest circulated daily newspaper in the state. The ‘life span’ of newspapers have increased and a few of the major local daily newspapers (including Poknapham) has been in circulation since the early 80s. This is an ample proof that newspaper publishing is, to some extent, not a futile exercise in the state.
In most of the bigger states in the country, there is generally a big threat by big national dailies to the local newspapers as most of the national dailies have their local editions that cover local news. With more pages on local news with better prints and better coverage, the national dailies pose a great challenge to local dailies. However, it is not so in the Manipur. ‘The Times of India’, ‘The Telegraph’ and ‘The Indian Express’, are some of the popular national dailies in the state. These newspapers have their Guwahati editions that cover news in the northeaster region of the country. However, it does not pose a threat to the two leading local English dailies in the state—‘Sangai Express’ and ‘The Imphal Free Press’ because the local news does not get due prominence even in such editions of the major national dailies.

Another important reason is the irregularity in the arrival of these newspapers in the state due to bad transport facilities. As a result, many readers of these dailies have to read stale news published by these newspapers. And it is also a fact that English is not a very common language in the state and so the vernacular dailies are far more popular than the English dailies.

1.6.5 Organizational Structure and Infrastructural Facilities of Press in Manipur at Present

The organizational and infrastructural structures of all the major newspapers in the state are almost the same. The proprietor or the publisher is on the top of the hierarchy. The organizational structure is broadly divided into four categories namely, the reporting team, editing team, administrative unit and the printing staff. The editing team is headed by the chief editor followed by the associate editor, executive editor and sub-editors. The chief reporter heads the reporting team and he is followed by reporters for political affairs, crime, sports and art and culture. The general manager is the head of the administrative staff. The manager, clerks, accountants and circulation & distribution staff work under him. The advertising staff also comes under the administrative section. And finally, the printing section comprises of the head machine man, machine men and security guards. There is 24 hours service in this section and therefore roaster system is applied for employees in this section. All the major daily newspapers have their own websites. For example, one can get access to ‘Poknapham’ newspaper through its site-www.poknapham.com and ‘Hueyen Lanpao’ at www.hueyenlanpao.com

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1.6.6 Law and Order Situation and Press in Manipur

Manipur is home to as many as 33 listed scheduled tribes and a number of unspecified tribes mostly reside in the five hill districts of the state namely-Churachandpur, Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul. The Meities and Meitei pangals (Muslims) form the non-tribal population that reside in the remaining four valley districts in the state namely-Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishenpur and Thoubal.

According to 2001 census, Manipur has a population of 23,88,634. It has an area of 22,327 sq.km. The 33 listed scheduled tribes are again broadly divided into the Naga and Chin-Kuki-Mizo groups. Among the Nagas, the most prominent ones are Tangkhul, Mao, Poumai, Rongmei, Lamkang, Zeme, Maring, Anal, Maram, Thangal and Liangmei, while Thadou, Simte, Gangte, Vaiphei, Paite, Hmar, Khongsai, Sitolou, and others constitute the important Kuki tribes.

Hence various histories, varied cultures and numerous identities are spread out and struggling for recognition within a tiny geographical territory of 22,327 sq km. An unfortunate consequence of these complexities and certain tactless governmental policies is that, at present, there are more than 40 banned outfits functioning within the state. The main aim of each outfit is to organise the people’s support and wage an armed struggle against the government of India under various causes and ideologies. However, the history of each of these banned organizations is, again, different.44

While the Meitei outfits remember the shame of an autonomous princely kingdom being forcibly annexed to the British Empire in 1891 and later, after India’s independence, merged with the Indian sub-continent in a doubtful agreement, the Nagas cannot forget how their proud community was forcibly divided by new geopolitical boundaries imposed by a foreign hand. Outfits belonging to other ethnic groups like the Kuki, Hmar, Manipuri Muslims and Zomi too espouse the history and wellbeing of their communities as their main interest.

On one hand, there are groups of armed people, that are ideologically against India’s nationhood. On the other, the government, stating that the armed movements are a law-and-order issue, imposes counter-insurgency forces in the state to help the state government function smoothly. Controversial laws such as Armed Forces Special


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Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958 are imposed to help the security forces in their mission -- AFSPA has been in force in the hills since 1961 and in the valley (except for the Imphal municipality area) since 1980. Therefore, the conflict has been worsened instead of being resolved.

Significantly, the first resistance movement in the state was a communist movement led by Hijam Irabat in the 1930s demanding, among other things, that the British quit Manipur, abolish the Manipur state durbar and establish an elected government. On August 14, 1947, the Naga people, through the Naga National Council (NNC), declared their independence from British rule, one day before India declared her independence.

The first resistance movement of Hijam Irabat also gave birth to journalism in the state. The first recorded event in the history of the print media in Manipur is publication of the journal Meitei Chanu by Hijam Irabat in around 1925-26. Hand-stencilled and cyclostyled by Irabat himself, the publication survived for only a few editions. During 1932-48, Hijam Irabat published pamphlets, journals and booklets with the main aim of spreading political philosophy to the masses.

During the 1930s and 1940s, a number of publications came into existence. ‘Yakairol’, ‘Lalit Manjuri Patrika’, ‘Bheigyabati Patrika’, ‘Dainik Manipur Patrika’, ‘Manipur Matam’, ‘Manipur Paojel’, ‘Ngashi’, ‘Praja’, ‘Anouba Yug’, and ‘Meitei Leima’ were the major newspapers published during this particular period. However, all these publications enjoyed a short lifespan. These were followed, in the post-independence era, by political papers like ‘Prajatantra’ and ‘Simanta Patrika’.

The response of the state government in this regard has been disheartening. Instead of attempting to sanitise the atmosphere, they have instead tried to curb the freedom of the press from time to time in the name of stamping out insurgency.

During 1950-60, government actions like banning newspapers, imposing fines and imprisonment of editors were common when publications like ‘Ngasi’, ‘Loumi’, ‘Bhagyapati Patrika’, ‘Eikhoigi Patrika’, ‘Mother Manipur’, and others criticised the

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45 Sharma.Arihan.Ibomcha( 2007)- Covering Armed Conflict: Journalists are Under Siege in Manipur, April,2007 www.newswatch.in


functioning of the government in their newspapers. Later, in 1970-80, when militancy started in the state, seizure of printing materials and arrests of journalists were quite common. One of the most noteworthy cases was the arrest of ‘Hueiyen Lanpao’ editor Salam Bharatbhusan and editor of ‘Matam’ Meinam Mithai, who were booked under the National Security Act (NSA) and imprisoned for nearly six months.

Imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958, in the state (since 1980) also has an adverse affect on the media, with frequent harassment, obstruction of work and frequent arrests.

The present law and order condition in the state, job insecurity and unsafe working conditions in Manipur are some of the factors that seriously impact press freedom and the quality of journalism in the state. Journalists are poorly paid despite talks of implementing the R K Manisana Wage Board, for the simple reason that many newspaper houses are not in a position to generate the type of revenue that would enable payments and incentives as stipulated by the Wage Board.

However, in spite of all these issues, the media community has been united in its stand that the sanctity of the profession must not be compromised. It is a known fact that the very nature of the job which requires them to report in the midst of arms conflict, makes them vulnerable as they are at risks of being targets from both sides - militants and the government. 48

In its fifth annual press freedom report for South Asia, ‘The Fight Goes On: Press Freedom Crises in South Asia (2006-2007)’, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) identified five key needs to be addressed. First, journalists must be trained to monitor violations of press freedom and journalists’ rights. Systems should be set up to communicate and highlight such violations through alerts. Journalists in conflict areas must be provided safety training and professional skills development. Finally, they should receive training in union/association-building to help them present a stronger, united front and assert their rights to report objectively, free from pressure and harassment. 49

49 UNESCO’s Fifth Annual Press (Freedom report for South Asia 2006)- Madellin declaration for securing the safety of journalists combating impunity- 2006 www.unesco.com

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Apart from the above major issues, there are a few other problems faced by newspapers in the state. There are two national highways in the state-national highway 39 and 53. Both the highways are not in good condition. National highway 39 is in better condition than national highway 53. Therefore, national highway 39 is considered the lifeline of the state. However, a few organizations in the state take undue advantage of the importance of this highway and conduct economic blockades very often. This affects the lives of the people in the state especially those who reside in the valley districts. For example, due to the two months economic blockade in May and June, 2010 called by a particular hill based organization, people suffered a lot due to shortage of petroleum, LPG and life saving drugs. Very essential items and life saving drugs were carried to the state by cargo flights but it was a costly affair. There was shortage of newsprint in the state and therefore all the newspaper had to reduce the number of pages per copy for many days till the economic blockade was lifted. Thus, the deteriorating law and order condition in the state has an adverse effect on newspaper publication in the state.

1.6.7 Globalization and Press in Manipur

‘Connectivity’ is the origin of the term ‘globalization’. Connectivity refers to transport and communication. The introduction of computer, Internet, mobile phone services and 3G telephony have shortened the gap between any two points on earth. In short, any distance is just a finger tip away from us. Apparently, by and large, the term globalization is yet to find a right place or meaning in the context of Manipur, except in the urban areas.

Leaving aside other infrastructure and developmental works to be taken up, poor connectivity such as roads, bridges and communications, are some of the main issues faced by the people in Manipur, especially the hill districts.

While FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) on print media in India or business ties with big international media organizations with the print media organization in India is feasible mostly with big national dailies in the country, it is still a very distant dream for small and medium newspapers in India.

Investment will be done by foreign companies only when the atmosphere of the particular is very conducive for the same. Big market, good law and order situation and better infrastructure are the major criteria for attracting good investments in a
particular region. Manipur or print media in Manipur state does not fit the bill where FDI is concerned. Miniscule readership (compared to circulation figures of big national dailies), worst low and order condition and infrastructural issues are the various factors that will prevent the same in this region.

1.6.8 The following is the list of periodicals published in Manipur state. The same has been released by DIPR (Directorate of Information and Public Relations), Manipur, in August 19, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Newspapers and Magazines</th>
<th>Circulation Figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Poknapham (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-29,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Naharolgi Thoudang (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-27,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Matamgi Yakairol (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-24,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Sangai Express (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-24,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Hueyen Lanpao (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-16,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Imphal Free Press (English)</td>
<td>-11,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Sangai Express (English)</td>
<td>-10,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Manipur Mail (English)</td>
<td>-10,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Simanta Patrika (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-10,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Lamka Post (Tribal)</td>
<td>-8,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Toknga (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-7,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Thoudok Wathok</td>
<td>-7,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Sikni (Tribal)</td>
<td>-7,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Aja (Tribal)</td>
<td>-6,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Kangla-Pao (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-5,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Ireibak (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-5,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Meeyam (Manipuri)</td>
<td>-5,165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18) Paojel (Manipuri) - 5,128
19) Mannaba (Manipuri) - 4,375
20) Kangleipakki Meira (Manipuri) - 3,653
21) Punshi (Manipuri) - 3,112
22) Manipur Express (Tribal)\textsuperscript{51} - *
23) Sumkawn (Tribal) - *
24) Sanaleibak (Manipuri) - *
25) Hmasawnathar (Tribal) - *

**Weekly Newspapers**

26) Zalen Banner (Tribal) - 3,355
27) Manipuri Chayol Pao (Manipuri) - 2,318
28) Athouba (Manipuri) - *
29) Eikhoigi Panthung (Manipuri) - *
30) Chayol Pao (Hindi) - *
31) Iramdam (Manipuri) - *
32) Yumshakeisha (Manipuri) - *
33) Tongluang (Tribal) - *

**Magazines**

1) Sanathong (Manipuri) - *
2) Image (Manipuri) - *
3) Ipak (Manipuri) - *
4) Ichemma (Manipuri) - *

\textsuperscript{51} *Circulation figures not available*
1.6.8 A Brief History of Manipuri Language Newspapers Published Outside the State

There are many Manipuris settled in the Kabo valley of Myanmar, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar Nagoa and Cachar districts of Assam, Agartala in Tripura, Nabadweep in West Bengal, Brindavan and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, development of Manipuri language newspaper started outside the state. During the British regime in India and the state under monarchy, freedom of the press was a distant dream. When western education started spreading in Assam state, Manipuris living in the state started publication of Manipuri language periodicals. And Guwahati, being the only proper city in this region has been the gateway to the north east India for a long time. It was the only happening city in this region with better transport and communication facilities unlike other places in North East India. Therefore, Manipuris settled in this particular city had more exposure to print journalism. 52

The “Nongpok Meira”, a monthly journal edited by Chandra Singh of Silchar in Assam, was published in 1973. Another newspaper named “Ima” a fortnightly, was published in 1975 by Dhunba Roy, a Manipuri settled in Assam. The newspaper published articles and features on Manipuri history and literature.

Dhaka (capital of present day Bangladesh), was another important city for the Manipuris of that time. Many Manipuris went to this city for pursuing higher studies. When Burma invaded Manipur in 1890, many Manipuris fled to East Bengal (present day Bangladesh). 53 When East Bengal became part of Pakistan after the country’s partition, communication and transport between Dhaka and other cities and towns of the region were completely cut off from North East India. However, the same was resumed after the region became an independent country and was named Bangladesh in 1972. In the same year, a Manipuri language newspaper named ‘Pujari’ was published by Sahitya Sansad Tapobon. Another Manipuri newspaper named ‘Dipanita’ was published in Sylhet district of Bangladesh. In Tripura, Manipuri language newspapers were in good circulation. One amongst them was ‘Marup’ published in 1968.
1.7 Concept of Journalism

Obligation to the Truth

Democracy depends on citizens having reliable, accurate facts put in a meaningful context. Journalists should be as transparent as possible about sources and methods so that audiences can make their own assessment of the information. Even in a world of expanding voices, accuracy is the foundation upon which everything else is built--context, interpretation, comment, criticism, analysis and debate.54

Loyalty to Citizens

While news organizations answer many constituencies, including advertisers and shareholders, the journalists in those organizations must maintain allegiance to citizens and the larger public interest above any other if they are to provide the news without fear or favor. Commitment to citizens also means journalism should present a representative picture of all constituent groups in society.

Discipline of Verification

Journalists rely on a professional discipline for verifying information. When the concept of objectivity originally evolved, it did not imply that journalists are free of bias. It called, rather, for a consistent method of testing information--a transparent approach to evidence--precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work. The method is objective, not the journalist. Seeking out multiple witnesses, disclosing as much as possible about sources, or asking various sides for comment, all signal such standards. This discipline of verification is what separates journalism from other modes of communication, such as propaganda, fiction or entertainment.

Independence

Independence is an underlying requirement of journalism, a cornerstone of its reliability. Independence of spirit and mind, rather than neutrality, is the principle journalists must keep in focus. While editorialists and commentators are not neutral, the source of their credibility is still their accuracy, intellectual fairness and ability to inform--not their devotion to a certain group or outcome.

Independent Monitor of Power

Journalism has an unusual capacity to serve as watchdog over those whose power and position most affects citizens. Journalists have an obligation to protect this watchdog of freedom by not demeaning it in frivolous use or exploiting it for commercial gain.

A Forum for Public Criticism and Compromise

The news media are the common carriers of public discussion and this responsibility forms a basis for our special privileges. This discussion serves society best when it is informed by facts rather than prejudice and supposition. It also should strive to fairly represent the varied viewpoints and interests in society and to place them in context rather than highlight only the conflicting fringes of debate.

Interesting and Relevant

Journalism is storytelling with a purpose. It should do more than gather an audience or catalogue the important. In short, it must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.

Comprehensive and Proportional

Keeping news in proportion and not leaving important things out are also cornerstones of truthfulness. Journalism is a form of cartography: it creates a map for citizens to navigate society. Inflating events for sensation, neglecting others, stereotyping or being disproportionately negative all make a less reliable map. The map also should include news of all our communities, not just those with attractive demographics. This is best achieved by newsrooms with a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives.

Exercise Personal Conscience

Every journalist must have a personal sense of ethics and responsibility--a moral compass. They should be willing, if fairness and accuracy require, to voice differences with their colleagues, whether in the newsroom or the executive suite. News organizations do well to nurture this independence by encouraging individuals to speak their minds. This stimulates the intellectual diversity necessary to understand and accurately cover an increasingly diverse society. It is this diversity of minds and voices, not just numbers that matters.\(^5\)

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1.8 Significance of the Study

Only a few books on the history of print journalism in Manipur have been published until now. This may be due to the fact that print journalism started in the state much later as compared to the rest of the country. The other reason is that not many newspapers, magazines and journals were published in the state until the early 1970’s as literacy rate was low and even many literate and educated people did not have the habit of reading newspapers and magazines. There was lack of awareness of this particular medium and therefore, many periodicals that started before 1980 never lasted for a long time. This may be the reason behind the lack of interest amongst prospective writers or researchers to write books or conduct researches on this particular topic.

However, a handful of scholars traced the history of the origin of print journalism in the state and their studies are worth mentioning. Their studies give valuable information about the release of the first newspaper in the state and the various challenges that newspaper proprietors had to face during the nascent stage of print journalism in the state. This included curtailing of freedom of press, lack of readership, financial constraints and hurdles in the printing process. Therefore, many of the new editors and proprietors of that period were those who did not have any commercial motive behind the publication of their newspapers and magazines. Many of them were those who received education outside the state and were aware of the political and social scenarios of the country during that period.

Mention has been made in a few research studies about journalism in the tribal areas of the state. There are 33 different tribes in the state which are broadly grouped into Nagas and Kuki-Chin-Mizo. Most of these tribes have their own newspapers that highlight their culture and tradition.

Many renowned journalists and columnists, both in the state and outside the state have written various articles and features on the contemporary press in the state that has been badly affected by militancy.

The major deficiency observed in the past research studies on press in the state is the lack of study of the present scenario of press in the state from the viewpoint of the newspaper readers, newspaper proprietors and newspaper staff. A descriptive survey will be conducted so as to get a clear picture of the present status of press in the state.
This research study will make an attempt to answer several questions related to newspaper readership in the state and the working condition of the newspaper staff. It will also bring forth the plight of both the journalists and proprietors in the state who bear the brunt of insurgency.

1.9 Statement of Problem

Print Media in Manipur state has developed to some extent in a short span of time. However, many periodicals in the state still face some major challenges like financial constraints, issues related to infrastructure and lack of organizational skills.

A few journalists and scholars have written books and various articles on newspapers in the state. Dr. Kirti (1981), Amar Yumnam (2010), R.K Sanahal Singh (1982) and others have done various studies on the history of print journalism in the state.

Anjulika Samom (2009) has written in-depth articles on the plight of journalists in the state who have been targeted both by militants operating in the state and the state government. However, some important deficiencies that have been observed in the studies done by past researchers are the lack of emphasis on newspaper reading habit of the readers in the state and their views on the present status of Manipuri press. Their research studies also lack focus on the working condition of the newspaper staff at present and the major challenges (besides militancy related issues) faced by newspaper proprietors in the state.

Therefore, the primary tasks of the present study are concerned with identifying a reasonably representative sampling of staff of newspaper firms, proprietors of newspapers and newspaper readers in all the nine districts of the state so as to assess their views on the present status of press in the state.

Unlike previous research studies, this research study will highlight the respondents’ (newspaper proprietors, journalists, printing staff and newspaper readers) perspectives of press in Manipur state so as to unveil the above mentioned features. The study will also suggest some important means for the development of press in Manipur.

Growth and development of print media in Manipur state has been considered in the study because:

Manipur is a small state that has a population of just 25 lacs. 33 different tribes reside in the hill districts. Each tribe has its own language/dialect and distinctive tradition.
The valley districts are dominated by the non-tribal population who speak Manipuri. It is interesting to note that many of the hill tribes have their own newspapers published in their respective languages / dialects. However, many of these newspapers cannot stand the test of time and eventually become defunct.

Media in the state (mainly print media) has been badly affected by militancy. Until now, 20 journalists in the North-East India (including four from Manipur) have been shot dead by militants. Freedom of press is a major issue in the state where the journalists and newspaper proprietors are caught between the militants and the state government.

Despite these obstacles, some major newspapers in the state have thrived. In general, print media in Manipur has developed to some extent as compared to the past. Therefore, in order to make a proper assessment of the present status of press in Manipur and highlight its various challenges, an appropriate research action is required that will focus on bringing forth these matters. The present study has been, therefore, designed to cover all these dimensions and make the study more comprehensive.

1.11 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

- To study the growth and development of print media in Manipur state

Specific Objectives

- To document the history of press in Manipur
- To assess the present status of press in Manipur
- To highlight the problems of press in Manipur
- To suggest means for the development of press in Manipur

1.11 Scope of the Study

The present study will not only trace the history of print journalism in the state but also throw light on contemporary press in the state. For the latter, the study will be done quantitatively so as to obtain a precise statistical result, which none of the past researchers have done.
The study will also throw light on the condition of the press in geographically isolated and militants infested area like Manipur. The outcome of this study will help researchers to make an assessment of the working conditions of journalists and newspaper owners in such areas. It will also evaluate newspaper readership in both the hill and valley districts of the state. Further, the study will also throw light on the ‘freedom of press’ in such troubled area.

Researchers can conduct further studies (mainly analytical studies) on this particular topic after analyzing the outcome of this study. This will unravel a clearer picture of print media not only in Manipur state but also the whole north eastern region of the country.

The north eastern region of the country is home to more than 200 different tribes. Manipur alone has 33 different tribes that are mainly grouped into: Nagas and the Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups. This study includes the growth and development of print media in the tribal dominated regions of the state. Taking a leaf from this study, future researchers can also conduct an in-depth study on journalism in tribal regions of the country.

1.12 Presentation of the Study

The first chapter enumerates the history of press in the world, history of press in India, a brief history of press in Assam, press in Manipur, significance of the study, objectives of the study, scope of the study, etc. The second chapter includes review of literatures wherein 100 studies (40 studies on press in Manipur, 20 studies on press in Assam, 25 studies on press in India and 15 studies on International press) are mentioned. The third chapter, namely research methodology deals with the study variables, study areas, study sample, research design, statistical analysis and limitations of the study etc. The fourth chapter presents the data analysis of the survey research. The last chapter summarizes the findings of the study and implications of the findings. The appendix contains relevant photographs, the bibliography and questionnaire.
1.13 Summary

Although print media in India started with the publication of ‘Bengal Gazette’ by James Augustus Hickey in 1780 and ‘Orunodoi’, the first newspaper in North-East India was published in 1846, print media (in the real sense of the term) started in Manipur only in 1930. ‘Yakairol’ was the first printed periodical in the state.

It is a fact that one could see a significant improvement in print media in Manipur after the Second World War and later, after the attainment of statehood in 1972. However, survival of the newspapers and magazines was a major issue then. Although the literacy rate of the state increased in the 70s, newspaper and magazine publishing houses could not sustain due to financial constraints and a slight lack of awareness of this medium by the general public. However, the scenario changed from the early 80s. Journalism gradually became a profession and a few trained journalists were employed in many newspaper and magazine publications since the early 90s. Eventually, wages and working conditions of the employees of print media establishments improved to some extent.