Printed material is constantly used by man these days. It has become a vital part of his daily life. The invention of printing with movable type was not a single discovery. It was the result of experiments carried on over a long period in several different techniques. It is not certain even today as to who was the actual inventor of printing with movable types. But one thing is certain, namely, that greater credit should be given to Johann Gutenberg on the basis of evidence available.

The art of printing was introduced in India by outsiders. The aim was not to revive Indian civilization but to propagate Christianity. It was meant to serve as an aid to proselytization. No doubt they started printing in Indian languages, but it was only to make the Indians understand Christianity through their mother tongues.

Communication of ideas is one of the necessary conditions for the pursuit of knowledge. For about two centuries, book constituted the primary form of communication of knowledge. But with the passage of time the problem of 'time lag' was greatly felt by readers. The only alternative was the publication of small pamphlets and later on periodicals.

The history of the Press in India begins with the publication of the Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser by James Augustus Hicky on 29th January, 1780. During that period
the press was generally subjected to rigorous Government repression and control. Stringent regulations were issued for the guidance of the conduct of the press.

In this study, the investigator has made an attempt to study the origin and development of one of the most important media for the communication of knowledge in the modern world, namely, the periodicals - with particular reference to India. The study started with the inventory of titles from various sources. It actually begins with the origin of periodicals in 1788 and ends in 1947 - the year in which India became a free country. In response to changes in the intellectual climate and patterns of scholarship, the periodicals underwent many changes.

The early learned periodicals developed as an adjunct to and a consequence of the increase in the number of books, but greater impetus was provided by the need of scientists and professional people. With the development in Science and Technology, scientists felt the need for knowing what other persons were doing in the same or related field. In the beginning only a few persons were engaged in scientific research and they used to communicate by personal correspondence. But planned research greatly increased the quantity of research output and this resulted in the birth and growth of periodicals.

Business and Commerce were also being set up. The import and export business was expanding everyday. People wanted to acquire all the knowledge about new business
possibilities. Machine run industries were also being set up and here was another field for giving and getting new information every now and then. Scholars and research workers in their subjects, Medical practitioners, Engineers, Christian missionaries and Hindu and Muslim revivalists and reformers, and many others interested in their respective lines wanted to impart and obtain the nascent information relating to their field of activities. Infact there was a great desire for new knowledge and this could best be obtained through periodicals.

The study finds that the periodicals started making their appearance in India in the late eighteenth century. The periodicals which had their origin in the period from 1788-1947 are studied by making a line of demarcation into three periods:

(1) **PERIOD 1788-1850**

The first true periodical published in India was *Asiatick Researches* (1788) by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The publication of this periodical created a sensation in the literary world, and the demand for it was so great that a pirated edition was brought out in England in 1798. This was sold so rapidly that within the next five years, two other editions were brought out in Octavo. A French translation was brought out in Paris under the title *Researches Asiatiques*. So it is quite clear that people were in need of such type of publication in those days. It contained papers relating to
science, and of literary and historical interest. The articles were from authorities in the field.

Like other forms of invention the periodical was received with great enthusiasm. This period has been demarcated as Early Days of Periodicals, because periodicals were in the formative stage during that period. There was no specialization of the periodicals in the beginning. Various papers dealing with literature, arts and sciences were included in one periodical. This period also saw the publication of the first bilingual periodical, i.e., Dig-Durshun or The Indian Youth's Magazine. Credit for being the first periodical in Bengali language also goes to it. Another significant event of this periodical was the publication of a very important periodical - The Friend of India. The first medical periodical also made its debut during this period. Most of the periodicals of this period were religious, started with the aim of spreading Christianity in India. The earlier periodicals were published mainly from the three Presidency towns, namely Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.

(ii) Period 1851-1900

This period is the transition period between early periodicals and the latest periodicals. During this period, the periodicals were in the process of development. This period shows a remarkable increase in the number of periodicals as compared to the first period.
There was rapid expansion of the printing industry. Before the middle of the nineteenth century, only a few presses, printing with movable types, had been established in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. But printing industry expanded rapidly after 1850. Not only were many more presses set up in the Presidency towns, but in other large towns of India also a few presses were established. These presses made the printing of so many periodicals possible and periodicals also started to be published from other places like Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Mirzapore, Simla, Lahore (now in Pakistan), Lucknow etc.

A good number of post offices had been opened in India before 1850, but later on postal services were greatly expanded. Without the network of post offices, periodicals, could not have been mailed and delivered to subscribers living in far-off places. The Post and Telegraph Department also helped in the growth of periodicals by offering concessional tariff for them.

The Railways provided the principal means for transporting periodicals from one part of the country to the other. There was a rapid and large scale expansion of Railways in the country after 1850. This greatly helped in the growth of periodicals in India.
The trend in periodicity was also fortnightly, bi-monthly and thrice in a year.

(iii) PERIOD 1901-1947

The period from 1901-47 has been entitled 'A Period of Rapid Advance'. During this period the number of periodicals greatly increased in all the disciplines. There was great development in Science and Technology and there was specialization in small branches of subject.

During this period, the periodicals began to originate from practically all the major towns of India, yet, by far, the largest number of periodicals were published from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. There was remarkable increase in the number of periodicals during this period, but more particularly between 1921-30. The reason for significant increase during this decade may be that after the first world war, periodicals sprouted with new enthusiasm.

The study finds that the first professional medical periodical published in India was the Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta and the first general science periodical in India was Gleanings in Science. Both were published from Calcutta. The study also finds that the first periodical to be published from Delhi was the Saunders's Monthly Magazine for all India. Also there are different periods in which different branches of subjects appear to get special attention, as is clear from the number of periodicals
As in other countries, in India also, periodicals were launched in the beginning by societies and associations.

The investigator noticed that many complexities arose in the world of periodical publications. Among these complexities, change of title was a common phenomenon. It is common in these days also. Periodicals are at the mercy of their publishers or editorial boards. Titles of some periodicals are changed just to satisfy the desire of a new publisher or an individual. However, in some cases, change of title was necessary due to various reasons. Besides other changes, Amalgamation, Splitting, Gap in publication and Change of subtitle, were found to be the other complexities in the domain of periodical publications. Whatever the type of complexity may be, they create a lot of problems for the librarians and readers. It entails heavy expenditure.

This study also finds that the cessation of periodicals in many cases was due to lack of finance. Earlier periodicals faced many difficulties. Those periodicals which could not bear the pressure of the time; disappeared. One of the major factor for the disappearance was that the people were not educated at that time.

We may conclude that the growth of periodical has kept pace with the growth of knowledge. We have seen that in India during the last part of the eighteenth century the
periodicals acquired the characteristics of the "periodicals" in the modern sense. They became numerous during the nineteenth century, and are available in almost all the fields of specialization during the twentieth century.