Chapter 4

Profile of the Newspapers
‘Profile of the Newspapers’ is the fourth chapter of this research work. This chapter deals with a brief profile of the three selected newspapers taken for the study namely, *The Hindu*, *The Assam Tribune* and *Dainik Jugasankha*.

**4.1. The Hindu**

*The Hindu* was started in 1878 by G. Subramania Aiyer and five other young men to fight its battle to rid Hinduism of its social evils. It was a weekly newspaper then published from Chennai. Now, published from 14 locations across India- Chennai, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Madurai, Delhi, Vishakapatnam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Vijayawada, Mangalore, Tiruchirapalli, Kolkata and Hubli, *The Hindu* has acquired a national status rightly flanked by its masthead ‘India’s National Newspaper’. Till 1883, it continued as a weekly, and then as a tri-weekly till 1889, when it became a daily.

*The Hindu* faced serious financial difficulties during its initial years. Its legal adviser Kasturi Ranga Iyengar bought it in 1905 and devoted himself to the task of developing the newspaper into a national institution. The paper was then taken over by K R Iyengar’s son Kasturi Srinivasan who thought of independent ideas about a newspaper’s mission. Ever since its beginning, *The Hindu* has espoused the cause of first rate journalism, non-partisan, independent and fair. At a time when nationalism was held synonymous with blind support to the Indian National Congress and Mahatma Gandhi, Srinivasan held the view that the duty of a newspaper lays in keeping itself independent and supporting or criticizing the policies of the political parties, according to the merits and demerits of each issue. Under Srinivasan’s management, the fame of *The Hindu* spread far beyond national boundaries. The American Newspaper publishers’ Association selected it for the World Press Achievement Award in 1968. *The Hindu* is regarded as one of the best newspapers in the world.

*The Hindu* is credited with pioneering some latest technological innovation in its functioning. It was the first newspaper to have launched its facsimile editions in Coimbatore and later extended to Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madurai. It also
introduced phototype setting for printing the newspaper. Again it was the second newspaper in Asia to introduce the fax system. *The Hindu* has been the first Indian newspaper to go on the net in 1995. The online version of *The Hindu* can be viewed at www.thehindu.com and www.thehindu.in.

*The Hindu* also contributed greatly to the freedom movement and social reforms of Indian society. It campaigned for widow remarriage, increasing the wedding age, abolition of caste and uplift of the touchable. According to John Merill, ‘Of the several outstanding English language dailies in India, *The Hindu* of Madras enjoys an unrivalled reputation for reliability and concern for truthful and comprehensive news coverage’ (Vilanilam, 2009). Some scholars have the view that *The Hindu* is credited with developing Indian intellectualism.

*The Hindu* is the most comprehensive newspaper of India. The newspaper comes out in a broadsheet size. It has 16 pages on weekdays and 26-32 pages on weekends including a section for classified ads. The daily issue of *The Hindu* brings the most important news and features of the day and also carries a supplement. The Tuesday edition carries a four-page supplement called ‘Young World’ devoted to the children and young adults. The Wednesday edition has a section called ‘Opportunities’ that serves as a guide to better positions and better performance in business firms. It is very useful to job-seekers and young executives and carries advertisements on job vacancies and features related to various professional disciplines. On Thursday, *The Hindu* carries articles on the latest developments in science and technology. Friday issue contain a review of entertainment which carries film and TV highlights, features on film and television personalities, and many more on cinema and showbiz industry. The Saturday issue brings out ‘metro’ section, which carries news and features from diverse fields. The Sunday issue is labeled ‘Weekly Edition’ which has articles and pictures on fashion, art, architecture, performing arts, travel, gardening etc. Another 8-page supplement called ‘Magazine’- Weekly Edition 2 is also published on Sunday. This section carries several big articles and photographs on travel, medicine, health, astrology, etc.
On a regular day, the 6th page in *The Hindu* is the edit page where editorials, articles on important issues and letters to the editor appear. The 7th page is Op-Ed (opposite of editorial) page. It covers articles on the most relevant topics, features and columns by outstanding national and international writers. On page 13 of every Thursday, *The Hindu* publishes ‘Farmer’s Notebook’, a special feature on agriculture and allied activities. *The Hindu* also has a column, ‘Reader’s Editor’ that highlights public issues and gives scope for readers to respond and reflect. Following the tradition of the Indo-Anglian newspapers *The Hindu* carried only ads on the front page until 1954 (Vilanilam, 2005). The newspaper carries columns by *The New York Times* feature writers, Paul Krugman and Thomas Friedman.

According to data published by Indian Readership Survey (IRS) 2001, The Hindu’s current Average Issue Readership (AIR) is 22.4 lakh readers and it is the third largest circulated English daily newspaper in India. *The Hindu* has other publications such as Business Line, Frontline, and Sports Star. Unlike other conglomerate newspapers of India, *The Hindu* is not involved in any other businesses other than newspaper industry. It is owned by the Kasturi family of Chennai and can be regarded as the widely circulated independent newspaper of India.

During the period of the study Mr. N. Ram was the editor of *The Hindu*, he is succeeded by Mr. Siddharth Varadarajan, with effect from January 19, 2012.

4.2. *The Assam Tribune*

*The Assam Tribune* is the first English daily newspaper published from Assam and the entire North-East India. Being a premiere English daily, it is widely read throughout the state of Assam. *The Assam Tribune* represents a tradition that forms the backbone of the North-East India’s newspaper industry. Legacy of the newspaper dates back to pre-independence India when Radha Govinda Baruah, an enterprising person of Dibrugrah, first conceived the idea of launching English daily. With some help from his friends and well wishers, he brought out an English weekly newspaper instead of a daily on August 4, 1939 under the editorship of Lakshminath Phookan, former
editorial staff of *Hindustan Standard*, a leading daily of Anand Bazar Group, Kolkata. This was the beginning of *The Assam Tribune*.

During the long six years of the World War II, *The Assam Tribune* had to make immense sacrifices and face numerous problems. However, it overcame the obstacles to develop into an attractive and long living newspaper. *The Assam Tribune* came to be regarded not as a paper of Assam alone but of the entire North-Eastern region of India. As the popularity of the paper grew, its owner Radha Govind Baruah thought of converting the weekly into a daily newspaper. After being shifted from Dibrugarh to Guwahati, *The Assam Tribune* was started as a daily newspaper on August 14, 1946. As the first daily newspaper of Assam, *The Assam Tribune* gained popularity in all nooks and corners of the state.

*The Assam Tribune* plays an important socio-political role in the lives of the people of Assam. It has played a significant role in the struggle for independence as well as in the Assamese language movement. During freedom struggle of India, it has helped greatly in forming public opinion and making people understand the spirit of nationalism and motivating them to sacrifice for the liberation of the country from British Colonialism. The paper not only spoke against the injustice perpetrated by European rulers during the pre 1947 India, but also has been playing an active part in portraying the problems facing by the state of Assam then, and now. Unlike the pre Independence period, *The Assam Tribune* continue the tradition of shaping public opinion to protect the greater interest of Assam and the Assamese in the broad perspective of national interest in post colonial Assam also. It is publishing news, articles, opinions etc. on different matters like foreigners issue, terrorism.

*The Assam Tribune* has the credit of being associated with stalwarts like Radha Govind Baruah and Lakshmi Nath Phukan, who would be remembered by all as the pioneers of the newspaper industry in Assam. The emergence of journalism as a profession in Assam was the direct outcome of the professionalism introduced by Lakshmi Nath Phukan. The business skill, courage and entrepreneurship of Radha Govind Baruah and the journalistic principles and healthy editorial policy of Lakshmi
Nath Phukan made *The Assam Tribune* a household name among English language newspapers of Assam. The traditions established by Phukan were followed by his successors Satish Chandra Kakoti, Robindra Nath Barooah, Naren Deka and others. The editorial policy of *The Assam Tribune* demands truth, accuracy, balance and objectivity in reporting news and occurrences. The vocal editorials and sensible reporting of important issues establishes the penchant for just and neutral journalistic principles followed by the newspaper organization. *The Assam Tribune* is famous for its journalistic writings and is occupying a prestigious position as opinion leader. It is perhaps best known for its credibility in news and features content as for its dour and unassuming format. It is widely read by educated section of people also for it reports on environment and conservation issues.

The Assam Tribune caters to the information need of the vast section of English speaking population of Assam and the North-East India. Being the largest circulated and most popular English daily, its coverage represents the interest of the upper and middle class intellectuals and policy-makers. The circulation of the newspaper is increasing day by day due to its relevant content and fair and timely reporting of important issues concerning the social, economic, political and ecological environment of the entire North-East. On an average day the front page of *The Assam Tribune* covers hardnews, soft news, features and anchor stories based news items of local, regional, national and international importance. The entire 2nd page is for classified advertisements and the 3rd page gives continuation of the news stories published in front page. Again page 4 is devoted to classified advertisements with small snippets that also appear along with the advertisements. Important happenings of the city features in page 5. Page 6 is the edit page. Editorials, articles, middles and letters to the editor appear in the edit page. Page 7 covers news from North-East. Page 8 and page 9 are devoted to news stories based on events from the state. Page 10 covers national news items. Page 11 is the business and economy page wherein international news appears in page 12. Page 13 mainly publishes cartoons, film and television charts and horoscope. Page 14, 15 and 16 cover sports news on a regular day.
First published from Dibrugarh, *The Assam Tribune* is now published from Guwahati and Dibrugarh. Prafulla Govinda Baruah is the present editor of the newspaper. The newspaper has a current *circulation* of over 700,000 copies and a readership of over 3 million. The paper comes out in broadsheet size and has 16 pages on all days except Thursday, Saturday and Sunday when special supplements of 4 pages come out. The Thursday issue has ‘Planet Young’ for kids. Saturday has ‘Horizon’ and ‘Sunday Reading’ appears on Sunday. The Assam Tribune Group has a sister publication named *The Assambani* launched on July 1, 1955. *The Assam Tribune* is one of the vital organs of the people of the North-East and has tremendous power and bears great responsibilities in strengthening and developing the nation. *The Assam Tribune* has an internet version also. It can be read at www.assamtribune.com.

### 4.3. **DAINIJK JUGASANKHA**

*Dainik Jugasankha* is one of the oldest and the largest circulated Bengali daily newspaper of Assam. The newspaper is very popular in Silchar, Hailakandi, Karimganj and other parts of Assam and across the North East India.

*Dainik Jugasankha* started its journey as a weekly, printed in crown size paper in 1950 from Silchar. It was founded by late Mr. Baidyanath Nath. In 1970, on the death of the founder editor cum owner, his son Bijoykrishna Nath, took over the charge of the management. During 1970s, it was the highest circulated weekly in the valley. After some days, the office of the newspaper was shifted to Guwahati. Again it came back to Silchar and started printing with new off-set technology.

At present *Dainik Jugasankha* has three editions- Silchar, Guwahati, and Dibrugarh. The newspaper started its Guwahati edition from the year 2000 and Dibrugarh edition was started from May, 2006. Mr. Bijoy Krishna Nath is the Chairman of the publication group. *Dainik Jugasankha* has a circulation of more than lakhs and readership of about more than seven lakhs. With time, its circulation has been growing up. The Silchar edition of *Dainik Jugasankha* is the highest circulated Bengali daily in entire Barak valley along with parts of Tripura. *Dainik Jugasankha* is published by
Shankha Group of publications. *Dainik Jugasankha* is a member of Indian Newspaper Society (INS), Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) and National Readership Survey (NRS). To reach English readership section, Sankha Group also started publishing English daily *The Eastern Chronicle* since 2009 from Silchar and Guwahati. The founding editor is Pratik Chandra Bora.

The newspaper comes out in a broadsheet size. It has 12 pages in all days of the week. The Sunday issue has a special section, ‘Rabibarer Baithak’ devoted to special features and columns written by eminent people, travel stories, literature, short stories, and poems. The Monday issue has ‘Khelar Bhuban’, a page devoted to sports news. The Tuesday issue has a special page on art and culture named, ‘Shilpo Sanskriti’. ‘Ananya’ is a women’s special page that comes out on Wednesday. The Thursday issue devotes a page on health science ‘Shastho Bigyan’. The Friday issue brings out a page labeled ‘Celluloid’ which covers news on films and television personalities, latest Bollywood releases, etc. The Saturday edition has a special page named ‘Sabujer Mela’ for children.

*Dainik Jugashanka* is the leading and highest circulated Bengali daily of Assam. It is very much popular among large Bengali speaking population living in Barak Valley and other parts of Assam. It caters to the information need of all sections of people. It is widely read since it is published in regional language. People can easily connect with the news and information expressed through this newspaper. It follows a tradition of fair and aggressive reporting practices.

*Dainik Jugashanka* published the kind of stuff that is an ideal mixture of both hard, soft and feature based news items. Generally local, regional and international reports occupied the first page of *Dainik Jugashanka*. The second page consists of classified advertisements and other type government advertisements, and sometimes few news items also appear in this page. The third page gives coverage to the news of the local area, the Barak Valley, and rarely to the small news from the other areas of north eastern region. The edit page or the fourth page contains editorial, letters to the editor, and special articles on personalities and different burning issues of local, regional,
national or international importance. While fifth page titled *Cachar Zela* (Cachar District) consists of reports from the different localities of the native district. The sixth page accommodates the remaining part of the some important front page columns and also news from local districts of Barak Valley and the region of Assam. National and international news stories publish in pages numbering seventh and eighth on an average day. The ninth page name Karimganj and Hailakandi yet again features news reports from these other two districts of the Barak Valley. The tenth page which attributes special section keep changing every day with different titles such as *Sobujer Mela, Robibarer Baithak* etc. The eleventh page with title *Khela* (sports) highlights sports events from local to international level on an average day. The final page or the twelfth page presents news on different sports, and very often big advertisement belongs to government and private offices.

Recently, *Dainik Jugasankha* achieved sixty years mark in publication world, as a newspaper. The dynamism of the newspaper continued in terms of technological changes also. Till 1995 it was printed in flat bed machine. In 1995 offset machine was introduced and in 2004 colour printing was introduced. The Sankha Group of publications augmented the medium of language with the launch of *Eastern Chronicle*, English daily, in 2009, under the editorship of Phatik Chandra Bora. The Sankha Group of publications also publishes *'Mashik Jugasankha'*, a monthly magazine.

Mr. Shantanu Ghosh was the editor of *Dainik Jugasankha* during period of this study, however, he has been succeeded by Mr. Arijit Aditya since January 31, 2012. The internet edition of *Dainik Jugasankha* is available at www.jugasankha.net. The online version of *Dainik Jugasankha* attracts innumerable Bengalis of Assam living outside the state, for whom the print copy is out of reach.