CHAPTER-II

INDIAN MEDIA SCENARIO:

GROWTH AND ITS CURRENT STATUS

2.1 Historical Overview of Print Media in India

This chapter provides a historical overview of the Indian print media industry. Developments in the print media segment in the last few decades have laid the foundation of current status of the industry. This chapter also gives an insight to the growth of the industry. The history of the Indian media however goes back to the 18th century when the print media first emerged in this country.

2.1.1 The Beginning of Print Media in India

The first printing press was brought to India in 1550 and printing introduced in 1556. First book was printed in Goa called *Doutrina Christa* (Mehta, 1979).

James Augustus Hicky, an Englishman, brought out India’s first newspaper in 1780- *The Bengal Gazette*, popularly called Hicky’s Gazette (Kumar, 2010). This first newspaper of India was called the Calcutta General Advertiser (Mass Media In India-1986, 1987). A year later, Hicky was put in jail by British East India company for his defamatory remarks through his columns and after his second stint in jail, his days of editorship came to an end and hence India’s first newspaper got discontinued. As a result a fine of Rs 5,000 in those days led him to penury and beginning of the first newspaper in India ended, for a while though (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010).

In South India *Madras Courier* was started by Richard Johnson, a government printer, who started this print edition in 1785 south of Madras, now called Chennai (Mass Media In India-1987, 1988).

Reformist Raja Rammohun Roy started a language newspaper, *Sambad Kaumudi* in 1821 which was a weekly Bengali newspaper (Mishra, 2012). Roy, who was known to have fought for the freedom of press and was instrumental in the renaissance of collective

In 1823, the first detailed press regulations came into existence called the Adam regulations. These were named after the then Chief Secretary to the Government- John Adam. These regulations were about procedure to obtain license for printing and publishing from the government (Chatterjee, 1973).

In the pre-independence era, India was struggling for freedom and thus the need of the hour, felt reformers, was to spread the message of independence. The Indian language press continued to play this role of spreading message of freedom struggle (Mass Media in India - 1981-83, 1984).

In 1838, Bennett, Coleman & Co. started Bombay Times from Bombay and in 1861 it was renamed Times of India (Kumar, 2010).

In South India, a weekly newspaper called Malayala Manorama, started in 1888, which is among the top selling newspapers in India till date (Mass Media in India-1987, 1988). It is now one of the largest selling dailies in India (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010).

Launch of The Hindu, a well-read national newspaper of the country in 1878 was a nationalist attempt and it played a crucial role in the cause of promoting India’s independence (Mass Media in India 1987, 1988). The founder of Hindu was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who was a lawyer by profession and his son K. Srinivasan was the editor in the initial years.

Amrita Bazar Patrika started as a Bengali newspaper on February 20, 1868 (Mass Media In India, 1986, 1987). Due to the restrictions imposed on the language press through the 1878 press act which included confiscating printing machinery and paper, Amrita Bazar Patrika, which was critical of the British government, converted to English daily to continue its journalistic mission (Chatterjee, 1979).

Annie Besant, who was a crusader for India’s independence started Common Veil and News India in 1914 in Bombay (Kumar, 2010).

Ananda Bazar Patrika, was started by Mrinal Kanti Ghosh, Prafulla Kumar Sarkar and Suresh Chandra Majumdar in 1922 and Hindustan Standard, an English newspaper, started in 1937 have been a part of the country’s freedom movement (Chatterjee, 2013)
Some other prominent English newspapers founded in India during this period included *The Hindustan Times* in 1923 which was the first daily in Delhi, *The Pioneer* and *The Statesman* to name a few. An important newspaper started in South India was the *Indian Express* in 1931 in Madras by S. Sadanand. He also started *Dinamani* a Tamil daily after two years and both papers became very popular. Later in 1935, Ramnath Goenka acquired these newspapers (*Chatterjee, 1979*).

2.1.2 Print Media in Post-Independent India

More than 120 newspapers and periodicals were started between 1780 until India’s independence in 1947. Some of the most popular names in the newspaper industry in India that survived the ides of freedom struggle and the British rule days include *Times of India, The Hindu, Mumbai Samachar, Malayala Manorama* and *Ananda Bazar Patrika* (ABP) (*Kohli-Khandekar, 2010*).

*Harijan*, started by Mahatama Gandhi and several other papers in India were instrumental during the days of freedom movement. Indian Opinion, Young India, Navjivan were also few journals started by him (*Mass Media In India 1987, 1988*).

Founded in 1948, the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) formed by advertisers, advertising agencies and newspapers, continued to be the only agency till 1970 to figure out how many readers read a particular newspaper and how effective an advertisement could be (*Jeffery, 2013*).

The newspapers in India were always free and this is evident from the significant growth in their numbers from 6903 newspapers and periodicals at the end of 1957 to 11,036 by the end of 1970 nearing 60 percent growth (*Chatterjee 1979*).

Later after independence, in sync with the needs of a modern India, the print media took a shape to catering to those needs. *Navbharat Times, Navjeevan, Jansatta, Amar Ujala* and several newspapers began immediately after India’s independence. In 1960’s and 1970’s, the most popular newspapers in India continued to be *The Hindu, Screen, Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Tribune, the Pioneer, The Statesman, and the Economic Times. The Illustrated Weekly* and *Reader’s Digest* continued to be popular magazines read in India (*Kumar, 2010*).
It was only during the days of emergency in 1975 declared by the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, that several restrictions were imposed on the Indian media. The government suppressed the transmission of news by imposing censorship on newspapers, journals, radio, television, telex, telegram, news agencies and foreign reporters (Kumar, 2013). Excluding this phase, the press in India has enjoyed autonomy and freedom.

The eighties and nineties saw advent and popularity of several news magazines and newspapers including Filmfare, Stardust, Femina, India Today, Business Today, Outlook among others (Kumar, 2010).

The Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), a government body incepted in mid 1950’s was founded to record data related to all periodicals in India (Jeffrey, 2013).

Post India’s independence some other milestones in print media industry were the creation of some news agencies including Press Trust of India (PTI) founded in 1947, Hindustan Samachar in 1948, United News of India (UNI) in 1961 and Samachar Bharati in 1965 (Kumar, 2010).

An indication of the phenomenal growth of newspapers and periodicals has been the figures of the RNI. In 1984, according to the RNI, there were 1662 Bengali newspapers as against 1583 in 1983. Of them, 52 were dailies and 433 weeklies. By 2007-2008, the total number of newspapers shot to 3244 of which 125 were dailies and 707 weeklies (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010).

2.1.3 Print Media in the 21st Century

In 2001, there were close to 7596 magazines and newspapers in India in English. The circulation of The Times of India, that continues to be a top English newspaper in the country till date had touched 21,52,046 copies in 2001 (Kumar, 2010).

In June 2002, the Indian government allowed 26 percent Foreign Direct Investment in the country. However, 51 percent of the ownership was required to be with an Indian single shareholder and three quarters of the board of directors and editorial staff had to be Indian employees. (Jeffery, 2013). Because of several restrictions and not too many investors coming in, further liberalization was done in 2005. Federation of Indian Industries (FII’s) were then allowed to be a part of the 26 percent share. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) upto
100 percent is permitted for publishing or printing scientific and technical magazines, periodicals and journals in India (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010).

Between the years 2000 to 2007 the circulation of Indian dailies grew by 66 percent and touched 95 million copies a day (Jeffery, 2013).

The Indian Media, particularly the newspaper industry has a rich history with nearly 41 newspapers in this country having crossed the 100 year mark of their existence (Kohli-Khandeker, 2010).

2.2 Current Status of Media & Entertainment Industry in India- A Synopsis of Recent Reports:

2.2.1 Statistics Related to Print Media Industry in India

1) FICCI-KPMG Report (2013)

The Indian Media and Entertainment industry has witnessed a stupendous growth over the years and statistics indicate that the industry showed growth from INR 728 Billion to INR 820 Billion from 2011 to 2012. This growth was nearly 12.6 percent (FICCI-KPMG Report, 2013). For Print Media segment, the growth in 2011 was lower than that expected although it touched 8.3 percent from 2010 to 2011. The print sector was worth Rs. 193 billion in 2010, which increased to Rs. 209 Billion in 2011.

Cruz (2008) mentions how top most and leading newspapers as well as magazines all over the world are on the verge of closure. However, on a close evaluation and projected growth of this sector in India from this report reveals that print sector continues to enjoy a favorable position.

2) Report by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India Pvt. Ltd (2013)

A report issued jointly by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India Pvt. Ltd in 2013 titled “Media & Entertainment in South India” highlighted interesting facts on the growth of south Indian media sector. The growth estimated is due to popularity of vernacular media in this part of the county. The industry in South shall touch INR 43,600 crores by 2016-17 from INR 23,900 crore in 2012-2013. The
print sector, cites the report, is the second largest here with 28 percent share. This print sector alone accounts for INR 6680 crore. The projected growth percentage is 17 percent till 2017 (FICCI & Deloitte, October 2013).

3) Figures of the Registrar of Newspapers for India, RNI, (2012)

The official figures from the Registrar of Newspapers for India (Government of India), a statutory body of newspapers in India reveals that the total number of registered publications in India was 86,754 on March 31, 2012. The new number of publications registered is 4,545 amounting to 5.51 percent growth over previous year that is 2011. A crucial figure of the Indian print industry is the number of circulation of newspapers- 37, 38, 39, 764 (approximately INR 37 crores).

4) National Skills Development Corporation, NSDC (2011)

a) Human Resource Management in the Indian Media Industry

A report released in 2011 by NSDC on the human resource status and skill requirements in the media and entertainment sector in India reveals that one million persons are employed in this industry. This spans all section of the industry like films, television, print, radio, animation, gaming and digital media sectors, which make up 95 percent of the industry. This study predicts that by 2022, nearly four million persons would be required in this industry.

b) Market Structure of Media & Entertainment Industry in India - National Skills Development Corporation

The National Skills Development Corporation report, 2011 (p.17) based on human resource and skill requirement in this sector had identified few major players. These include The Times of India, The Hindu, Deccan Chronicle, Hindustan Times, The Telegraph among the English newspapers, Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar, Hindustan, Amar Ujala and Daily Thanthi among the vernacular newspapers. In the magazines segment, India Today, Outlook, Femina and Business World were mentioned. The top ten magazines in India according to this report were- Vanitha, Pratigogita Darpan, Samanya Gyan Darpan, India Today, Saras Sahil, Meri Saheli, Cricket Samrat, Malayala Manorama, Karmashetra and General Knowledge Today.

5) Global Media and Entertainment Industry Outlook (2012-2016)

A report on the status of the media and entertainment industry in India was released as the 13th edition by Pricewaterhouse Coopers, PwC, p.80 in June 2012. This report projects that
India is second in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of the projected growth rate of this industry. For 2012-2016, the projected growth is 14.3 percent in terms of Compound Annual Growth Rate. By 2016, the growth is expected to reach $42,226 million.