The origin of journalism in India is to be traced to the Western enterprise. Likewise, the growth of Karnataka Journalism runs parallel to the growth of journalism in the rest of the States in India. The role played by the Indian journals is quite significant in the growth of nationalist movement in India after the birth of Indian National Congress in 1885. In this connection it is essential to take a historical survey of the freedom of the press which is closely associated with the growth of nationalism in India. The press in India owes its existence to English enterprise. Hickey's the Bengal Gazette was started in January 1780. It was the first Indian newspaper to be printed in English.


It strongly criticised the administration of Lord Hastings which resulted in its being suppressed in 1782. The Company Government passed a series of press laws including censorship in 1799; and their rigour continued right upto 1817. Mr. James Silk Buckingham, the editor, of the Calcutta Journal, exposed many of the misdeeds of the Government.\(^1\)

Mr. Adams passed rules that the editor or proprietor should take licence before publishing any material.

Mr. John Clark Marshman who was a historian and missionary started "Samachar Darpan" in 1818. Lord Metcalf who held the reins of office for twelve months in the interval between the arrival of Bentinck and his departure earned the gratitude of the Indians by passing An Act, liberating the press in 1835, which cost him his service for the Directors were highly displeased with his action. "We are not here in India merely to maintain order, to collect taxes and make good the deficit; we are here for a higher and nobler purpose to pour into the East the knowledge, the culture and the civilization of the West."\(^2\)

\(^1\) Ibid, pp. 73-74.
The history of the Indian press supports Munroe's dictum: "A free press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible and cannot long exist together." In its early stages the press attracted little attention of the Government as it was in the hands of Englishmen. The modern means of reporting were not in existence then; therefore the papers covered only the news of local interest. The press enjoyed freedom more or less till 1870. It was not capable of doing any harm to the Government. In the hands of Indians, it assumed a new role of giving political education and creating national consciousness. The vernacular newspapers began to appear in different languages; and Bengalee papers were leading. In 1870 there were more than 400 vernacular newspapers in British India. They criticised the Government policy causing alarm in the government circles. The Government gave a stern warning to "Som Prakash", a Bengali paper, in 1872, on the ground that it had published articles inciting the public against the Government. Lord Lytton passed the Vernacular Press Act in 1878 which created widespread discontent in India.¹ The Act had a short

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life. In 1880, it was repealed by Lord Ripon. Gradually, the Indian press became fearless in exposing the matters done against the public interest. It did not hesitate to criticise the actions of the Government. The Congress decided to bring pressure upon the Government by mobilising the public opinion. The constitutional agitation became the chief instrument of the Congress. It became more revolutionary and violent, due to the part played by the press which published the articles that were against the Government. But for a few restrictions the press practically remained free till 1908. Restrictions were again imposed in 1910. "From 1922 to 1930 some kind of precarious peace existed between the press and the Government."\(^1\)

Thus, the rapid development of the vernacular press is a matter of recent times and the early Press laws were mostly aimed at English editors or proprietors and English papers.

"The role of nationalist press in Karnataka"

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fits in with the broader All India background. Roughly
the story was the same, but on a somewhat smaller
scale. It was also a story of a dedicated nationalist
press throwing in its lot with the freedom movement in
Karnataka. Such a tremendous upsurge as the political
awakening of the people in Karnataka, which contributed
eventually to the liberation of the mother land, could
not but be many sided. It drew strength and sustenance
from every source, however humble. Of these sources,
the press in Karnataka was undoubtedly one of the most
important.1

Mr. Channabasappa was the first and foremost
sponsor of a journal entitled "Matapatrike".2 A
press by name "Samachar" was set up at Belgaum for
the purpose. For the first six years, its method of
printing was lithography.3 By the year 1871 some
improvements were made in the trade. If we review the
journal, we find that part of it was mainly devoted

1. Ibid, p. 346.
2. Basappa Shintri, Namma Masikavu, in Jeevana
   Shikshana, Centenary Commemoration
   Volume, (in Kannada) ed. by S.P. Patil,
   Govt. Training College for Men, Dharwar,
   1957, p. 21.
3. Ibid.
to education and the rest to the issue of circulars and appointments, leave and transfer of teachers. Gradual changes took place in the first ten years of the span of the journal. It was later renamed as "Shalapatrika". With the shifting of the college from Belgaum to Dharwar in 1875, the journal came to be published at Dharwar though its printing was done at Belgaum only. From April 1879, its sphere of activities gradually expanded. It began to publish articles on cultural, social and literary aspects, excluding the political.

No journal can afford to eschew politics.¹

For every journal politics is, so to say, the life-breath. Those who worked in this profession were more or less politicians. By about 1850, the three newspapers — "Chhava", "Chandrodaya", and "Dharawada Vritta" — were being published from Dharwar.² The earliest of such newspapers was "Chhava" (Marathi) which was started in about 1850. It was being published

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2. Ibid, p. 35.
on Sunday from Dharwar. After some time, Karnataka Vritta, Dhananjyaya were being published on Saturdays. There were other weekly papers, such as Dharwada Vritta, printed in Marathi, and "Chandrodaya" printed in Kannada. The former had 450 subscribers and the latter 150 subscribers. Another such paper, entitled "Rajahansa" began to be published in 1892. The main object of these newspapers was the regeneration of Kannada language and political awakening.

Karnataka was more politically divided than any other linguistic region in India. "No other linguistic region in India is so heterogeneous as the province of Karnataka which is surrounded by Maharashtra in the north, Andhra in the east, Tamilnad and Kerala in the south and the Arabian sea in the west. Kannada has been the spoken as well as the written language of the people of this region for nearly eighteen centuries." Still Karnataka's contribution in the

1. Ibid, p. 35.
struggle for the freedom of India in the British days has not been small. After the disappearance of all princely States, the Kannada speaking areas had been distributed among the separate administrative units, such as Bombay, Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad and Kodagu. About 20 millions of people, speaking Kannada language had no opportunity for evolving a common public opinion. The Kannada presses, scattered in these various administrative units, strove hard to unite the region but their object was not accomplished.

In Mysore, the first printing press came to be established in 1850. The founder of the press was Rev. J. Garret of the Wesleyan mission. It was founded with an object of propagating the missionary work. The earliest papers, published in Karnataka, were neither in Kannada nor in English. A Hindustan newspaper by name Kasim-ul-Akbar was started in 1863.

"Karnataka Prakashika" which was the first Kannada weekly newspaper, was started in 1865 in the Mysore State. Its policy was to support the political party of the pro-Mysoreans and disavow the non-Mysoreans. It died a temporary death. It was revived in 1874 as a Kannada English weekly by J.C. Srinivasachar, a great Sanskrit Scholar under the editorship of Bhaskyam Tirumalachar. It ceased publication in 1898. The "Mysore Gazette", an Anglo-Kannada weekly, under the editorship of L.Ricket, was published by the Government of Mysore in 1866. It was mainly devoted to the publication of the Government news. In the same year, four journals, entitled "Daily Post and Evening Mail" in English, Vrittapatrike, Karnatak Prakashike, Mysore Star in Kannada were started. They contributed a good deal to the regeneration of the Mysore State. The monthly Kannada journal "Hitabodhini" was started in Mysore in 1881. It included articles on

1. R.Y. Dharwadkar, Patrika Vyavasaya, (in Kannada), Janata Shikshana Male, Dharwar, 1948, p. 34.
subjects of general interest and scientific knowledge. The other monthly journals, "Kavya Manjari" and "Granthamala" were of a high literary quality.

Only one paper, a weekly, Hitechhu, in Marathi was being published on Sundays from Kaladgi in the present district of Bijapur in the year 1870. No newspapers existed in the Kanara district. There were hardly any Kannada text-books except only a couple of Kannada periodicals. But, on account of the general awakening and starting of the Kannada schools, demand for journals, periodicals and books in Kannada grew up. Many educated Kannadigas began to write books in Kannada for the first time in hundred years in order to satisfy the demands. Many of the pioneer writers such as G.M. Turmari, D. N. Mulbagal, U. T. Kulkarni, V. R. Katti, Bhujang Rao Huilgol, Sheshagiri Rao Turmari, Gadigeyya Honnapurmath, Sakkri Balacharya and others produced Kannada text-books and translated

many of the text-books into English and other languages. They came into contact with Rev. Mr Zeiglier and persuaded him to compile the English-Kannada Dictionary. All this resulted in a quick pace in the production of books both originals and translations. Standard Kannada newspapers increased in number. These were Chandrodaya, Loka Shikshana, Karnatak Vritta, Karnataka Patra, Dhananjaya, Rajahamsa, Loka Sandhu. The movement for providing good Kannada books was vigorously carried on by the pioneer writers like Srinivas Rodda, G.Honnapurmath, Narayana Rao Karigudri, R.H.Deshpande and others. Their object was to acquaint the Kannadigas with their rich glorious past.

About the year 1839, the whole of Karnataka had come under British sway with the exception of Mysore which had been under Wodeyars. The British restored the administration of Mysore to the hereditary ruler in 1881. Now much impetus was given to the Kannada

press. The public opinion was properly and freely organised. "An impetus to the Kannada press came when administration of Mysore was transferred by the British back to the hereditary ruler in 1881. For fifty years, from 1831 to 1881, the State had been under the governance of the British who managed affairs through Commissioners. With the reversion to princely rule, public opinion had a freer play. It must be remembered that it was in the same period that the Indian National Congress took birth."¹

Several national leaders took to the profession of journalism. One of them was Vriddhapitamah M.Venkata Krishnaiah who is regarded as the father of Kannada Press in Mysore. "Vrittanta Chintamani", a Kannada weekly was started in 1885. The profession of journalism became a mission in the life of M.Venkata Krishnaiah. His two brothers by name, M.Gopal Ayyangar and M. Srinivasa Ayyangar were trained in the mission of journalism.²

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² Ibid, p. 373.
These two founded "Kannada Nudigannadi" in 1895. They may be described as the full-fledged journalists in the Mysore Karnataka. This paper exercised an intellectual and moral influence on the people.

By the time the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, the press in Karnataka had become an important institution. The public spirited men regarded journalism as an effective means to propagate their mission and it became a potent weapon for the struggle of national emancipation. It was an era of L. Tilak who had by 1885, become the embodiment of the political desires and aspirations of the Indians. He had a great following in Karnataka also and he was held in high esteem. He started a Marathi paper, "Kesari", in Poona. A prototype of that paper was started in Kannada with the same name at Hubli. The autocratic rule of the British Government was often criticised severely by the Kannada journals, as they based the articles on the slogans of the L. Tilak. The "Kala" journal which was edited by Prof. Shiva Ram Mahadev Paranjpe, a great writer and an orator, was
much revolutionary.¹ Both the journals - "Kesari" and "Kala", tremendously influenced the Kannada journals in the North-Karnataka. Narayana Apte, an eminent novelist founded the journal entitled "Karamanock" in 1889.² This journal was pre-eminent from the literary point of view.

By this time, education had spread among the masses. They participated in the public life. Consequently political consciousness was intensified. The people began to think not merely of Karnataka but also of the nation. Hence there was rapid growth of journals in Karnataka. The great leaders made journalism their mission in life and the full-pledged journalists appeared in Karnataka. By 1880 the newspapers, entitled "Vijaya", "Karnataka", "Pusparaka" were being published from Dharwar. In 1881, "Karnataka Patria", a weekly paper was started by Desai Seenappa. In 1883, B. Narasimba Rao started a Kannada daily "Sarvodaya Prakasika". In 1894, "Deshabhimani", a Kannada weekly was started. One of the objects in starting these news

² Ibid.
papers was to avoid the influence of Marathi language on Kannada people. English, the official language, naturally enjoyed a unique position. The Indian newspapers wielded much influence over the people. Similar was the case with Kannada papers. All this was conducive to the rapid growth of journalism in Karnataka.

Hyderabad Karnataka had no Kannada papers of its own till the end of the 19th century. The circumstances and the atmosphere were not favourable for the same. Piteful it was that Kannada was reduced to such a plight though the region had a glorious past in Kannada literature. It is interesting to consider why a region with a record of such glorious past lagged behind in the field of Journalism. It was due to the historical circumstances. For instance, during the 13th century, Kannada had to suffer a great

set back. There was no peace and order here from 14th to 18th centuries. This region was a scene of frequent fierce battles. In the middle of the 18th century, the Royal dynasty of Asufia was established. After the Indian mutiny in 1857, some sort of peace and tranquillity prevailed. By this time, the sense of Kannada consciousness was completely wiped out. So, how could there be any scope for the development of Kannada journalism? The other languages such as Marathi and Persian exercised a predominant influence over the other languages. People had to learn Persian or Marathi for their pursuit of education. Hence, the Kannada journalism could not take its roots there. Kannada was taught in some parts of the district of Raichur in the schools of Jongams, called "Ayyanavara Shalegalu."
There was no political consciousness in Kodagu till 1910. The political movements were started in Kodagu with the establishment of Landholders' Association. The constitutional changes that took place in other parts of India provoked the people of Kodagu, for starting such movements which found expression in different spheres.

The Karnataka Literary Society founded in about 1890, was another significant step in the development of Kannada journalism. The idea of the unification of the entire Kannada region originated in the North Karnataka. Karnataka Vidyavardhak Sangha which was one of the premier cultural institutions in Karnataka was founded at Dharwar in 1890. Giving an impetus to the library movement was one of the main objects of the Sangha. In 1897, it began to publish a journal, entitled "Vagbhushana". It gained wide-spread popularity and appreciation in Karnataka. Alur Venkat Rao published an article in the journal, emphasising the urgency of the unification for the progress of the Kannadigas and sowed the seeds for wider outlook of the people.

The number of printing presses increased.
between 1880 and 1900. The number of Kannada newspapers increased. Great many works in Kannada were published in the weekly papers, such as 'Lokashikshaka', 'Lokabandhu', 'Dhananjaya' etc. The aims and objects of these papers were not only to represent the grievances of the public to the Government but also instill a sense of patriotism among the people by publishing articles and books inspiring patriotism and nationalism. Mudaveedu Krishna Rao was instrumental to the upsurge of Kannada patriotism which found expression in the propaganda for the unification of Karnataka. "From 1885, onwards, a number of weeklies were started of which 'Lokashikshaka', 'Karnataka Vrita', 'Lokabandhu', 'Rajahamsa', and 'Dhananjaya' deserve mention. These weeklies had two aims. The first was to check the influence of Marathi in the Karnataka area, and the next was to ventilate public grievances against the Government. The strong man behind the upsurge of national as well as Kannada patriotism was Mudaveedu Krishna Rao."¹

Journalism in Karnataka like that in other parts of India, had to encounter several difficulties from 1890 to 1906; since Lord Lytton curtailed, by a Press Act, the freedom of the Press in pursuing his imperialistic policy. Agitation against the measure started everywhere particularly at Poona. A protest movement was launched throughout India. The journals and newspapers criticised in pungent terms the policy of the Government with regard to the Press. The waves of discontent and indignation spread throughout.

A Kannada weekly entitled "Mysore Star" was started in 1900 by Yajaman Veerabhadrappa. The learned people contributed articles to this journal. It took up the cause of the Non-Brahmins. Its aim was the uplift of cultural, social and political development of the backward classes.

The vivisection of Bengal in 1905 by Lord

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Curzon created a great turmoil in the whole nation. Rising tide of nationalism created a stir in Karnataka as in other parts of India. The newspapers, such as 'Vijaya', 'Karnataka Vritta', 'Shubhodaya', 'Rajahansa', 'Karnatak Vaibhava' etc. advocated the extreme political views. They also undertook a bold political propaganda to protest against the autocratic attitude of the Government. Sir Valentine Chirol in his book "Indian Unrest" characterised "Karnatak Vaibhava", as a revolutionary paper. "Sir Valentine Chirol, in his book entitled "Indian Unrest" quoted certain passages from "Karnatak Vaibhava" and dubbed it as a revolutionary paper. Notwithstanding all this tribute paid indirectly to Kannada journalism by the foreigners, from the point of view of circulation and revenue, Kannada newspapers were not much of a success.¹ He further writes that the weekly papers were read with keen interest. They stimulated the political awareness and roused the people into action. This is a signal contribution of the early journalists.

¹ V.D. Naik, Kannada Journalism, in Karnataka Darshana, R.S. Hukkerikar, Bombay, 1955, p. 388.
D.V. Gundappa, another great journalist deserves mention in the contributions of Kannada journalism towards the social and political awakening of the people. An English weekly "Karnataka" was started by him. At the time when Sir M. Vishweshwaraiah, the Engineer-Statesman had been the Diwan of Mysore, Gundappa did not spare even Sir M. Vishweshwaraiah who had pursued the policy of democratisation of the Government, whenever, there were pitfalls. He suggested the constructive suggestions to be adopted by the government. He rendered his great services for the education of the people, in respect of political, economical and civic matters through the institute known as "Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs". He started a monthly journal "Public Affairs", to propagate the ideals of the institute. Standard articles both in English and Kannada were written on national issues. "The history of Kannada journalism would be incomplete without the mention of another great journalist, D.V. Gundappa. He is a scholar in Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and English and has come to be an authority on politics, literature and art. He started an English Weekly, Karnataka. This paper became the sentinel of public opinion, though only a few could read it. Sir M. Vishweshwaraiah, the engineer-statesman,
was then Dewan and took energetic steps for the
democratisation of Government. Gundappa did not flinch
to attack even Sir M. Vishweswaraiah's policies where
necessary, and to offer constructive suggestions. But
even Karnataka went the way of all ventures ahead of
their time. Gundappa became a free-lance journalist,
and to this day he is a contributor of learned articles
on political and cultural affairs. He took to public
life and became a member of the Mysore Legislative
Council and later the Mysore Constituent Assembly.
The "Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs" he has started
has been doing great service in educating the people
in civic, political and economic matters. In order to
propagate the ideals of the Institute, Gundappa has
started a monthly bi-lingual journal, Public Affairs.
Highly specialised articles on national and inter-
national affairs are discussed in it in both English
and Kannada.  

1. Navaratna Krishnaswami started a Kannada
daily, entitled "Bharati" in 1907. It was closed
during the year 1908 on account of the Press Act.

1. Nadiga Krishnamurthy, History of Kannada
   Journalism, in Karnataka Darshana,
   R.S. Hukkerikar, Bombay, 1955,
   p. 373.
The object of the paper was to give expression to the sentiments of nationalism.

A new era opened in the history of Kannada press in 1910. The number of dailies, weeklies, monthlies, increased. A remarkable progress made by the Kannada press is definitely seen during the First World War and after. The graduates in Karnataka pursuing the impelling national urge, contributed their articles for various journals, magazines etc. The explosive political atmosphere made the youths of the country irresistible. It continued till M.Gandhi appeared on the political scene. Since the assumption of the leadership by M.Gandhi, the pattern of journalism underwent a tremendous change. M.Gandhi adopted a constructive and balanced way of discussion. His articles provoked the Government. He brought about a material change in the pattern of Indian journalism. Kannada journalism could not escape the influence of Gandhiji's writings. Many graduates came under the direct influence of M.Gandhi and undertook the profession of journalism either by accident or by design.

Dhondo Rajaram Thakur founded Bharat Vaibhava Samaj at Belgaum in 1910 for the uplift of the Depressed
Classes. Under the auspices of the Sangha, a monthly journal "Taruna Bharat" was started. It strove for the amelioration of the condition of the down-trodden. It was at that time that two weeklies — Vibhakar and Karnataka Times started publication for the welfare of the masses under the editorships of Panditappa Chikkodi (Belgaum) and Shivalinga Shastri (Dharwar) respectively. They wielded a tremendous influence over the lower middle class people. "Kannada Dhureena" and "Kumata Vritta" were the two leading papers of North Kanara in those days. The Karnataka Sangha, Central College, Bangalore started publishing a quarterly journal entitled "Prabhudha Karnataka" in 1918. It was devoted to literary criticism and arts. Kerur Ragabhatta and Y.V. Dharwadkar edited two daily papers — "Chandrika" and "Navoenabharata" respectively. J.A. Balawantrao started "Karnataka Shikshana" in 1918 at Bagalkot.

Another newspaper of Bombay Karnataka by name "Karmaveera" was started in February 1921 by three youths of Dharwar — Madhawa Rao Kabbur, Rama Rao Hukkerikar and Ranganath Diwakar. L.Tilak was the fountainhead of inspiration to them. These three youths were inspired by the writings and message of
L. Tilak and M. Gandhi. "The history of Kamaveera, another weekly newspaper of Bombay Karnataka, is an interesting one. Three youths of Dharwar, Kabbur Madhava Rao, Rama Rao Hukkerikar and Ranganath Ramachandra Diwakar, inspired by the writings and the message of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, decided to enter public life. All three were poor. They had no means even to buy a small press which then cost about Rs. 5,000/-. Their purses were lean, but their zeal, ambition and spirit of service were great. People who had faith in them helped them finally in their desire and Kamaveera was born on February 5, 1922 at Dharwar. Diwakar became the editor. Kabbur was the publisher, and the management was under Hukkerikar. But the actual composing, printing and writing was done by all the three. Their dream was realised. In the short space of four months the paper came to be the most popular weekly of Karnataka. The District Magistrate of Dharwar sternly warned the publishers against its language and anti-government attitude. The next day the editor was arrested following a mass meeting of citizens of Dharwar. Three persons were killed at the meeting by Government agents, who began to shoot on the unarmed crowd."
After Diwakar's arrest, Hukkerikar became both manager and editor. With the help of Alur Venkat Rao, Vaman Rao Desai, the paper continued with redoubled vigour until the release of Diwakar. Since then the weekly has grown from strength to strength. It was transferred to Hubli after a short sojourn in Belgaum and at Hubli the three men decided to start a daily newspaper, Samyukta Karnataka. This paper heralded a new era in the Karnataka journalism. Its influence on the public mind was phenomenal. By this time, the newspapers such as "Hyderabad Samachar" and "Sadhana" were started in the Hyderabad Karnataka. These papers served as mouth-pieces of the Kannadigas in the Hyderabad State. "Navabharat" and "Rastrabandhu" were published from Mangalore of Madras Karnataka. Pandyananda Bellappa published the 'Kodagu Vritta' at Kodagu in 1921.

During the period the Kannada Press was conscious of its duties and responsibilities to the

people and the nation at large. The journals played their role well in educating the public in all fields — educational, social, cultural, literary and political — the cumulative effect of which was nothing but national. The Kannada newspapers were not only emphatic in expressing their views but also fearless; and their contribution to the national cause was by no means small.