

## The Impact of Journalism in Indian English

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### Abstract

India is the second largest democracy in the world, having been recognized the Press as the Fourth Estate. The Press/journalism means writing, informing the current issues and incidents of present and the past. The general practice of investigating and reporting of events, happenings and trends to a broad audience. Though there are many variations of journalism, the ideal is to inform the citizenry. Along with covering organizations and institutions such as government and business, journalism also covers the sports, cultural aspects of society such as arts, films and entertainment. The field includes editing, reporting, photojournalism, documentary as well as copy writing and copy editing. The first printing press arrived in India in the year 1556, through the efforts of Jesuit missionaries. It was brought from Portugal and installed at the college of St. Paul in Goa. It was used mainly for printing religious literature like tracts, hymn books etc.

The first printed newspaper of India was in English, and was called Hicky's Bengal Gazette. It was edited and published by James Augustus Hicky, an ex-employee of the East India Company. The first issue of this newspaper came out in 1780 and carried only classified advertisements on its front page. It was a weekly newspaper and generally dealt with the arrival and departure of Europeans, timings of steamers, fashionable news from London, Paris and Vienna, and personal news. It attended to the needs of the small European community of Calcutta. Many other Anglo-Indian newspapers emerged after Hicky's pattern- such as John Bull, Calcutta Journal, Bengal Harkaru. In the year 1781, Hicky's Bengal Gazette was forced to close down after Hicky published a scandalous story about Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General of India.

### 1. Introduction

Later on, another type of newspaper emerged- Indo-Anglian papers. They were English newspapers run by Indians primarily for English educated elite Indians. The first newspaper of this type was Bengal Gazette, started in 1816 by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, a disciple of Raja Rammohan Roy. Rammohan Roy also began his famous Brahmanical Magazine, English fortnightly. The early Indo-Anglian papers concentrated on drawing the attention of the British to the cultural and philosophical history of India. They did not openly attack social and political evils of the society.

**Indian Journalism and Freedom struggle:** The first war of Independence was fought from 1857-59 in various parts of the country. Between 1860 and 1899, hundreds of newspapers came up demanding freedom of expression and criticizing the repressive measures taken by the British. Journalism played an important role in making educated Indians aware of their rights. Some newspapers of this period are The Hindu of Madras and Amrit Bazaar Patrika of Calcutta. Another significant factor was that during this period a large number of colleges imparting science and liberal arts education sprang up in the major towns of India.

Digdarshan (World Vision) was the first Indian language newspaper, a Bengali religious weekly started in Sehrampur by Christian missionaries. Based on the pattern of Digdarshan, Raja Rammohan Roy brought out Bengali and Urdu weeklies like Bangadoota and Mirat-ul-Akhbar. The newspaper with the greatest longevity in India is the first Gujarati newspaper- Mumbai Samachar, established in 1822. Some of the early Hindi publications were Oodunt Martand, Banaras Akhbar, Shimla Akhbar and Samayadant Martand, the first Hindi daily.

In 1947, the major English newspaper in India were the Times of India (Bombay), Statesman (Calcutta), Hindu (Madras), Hindustan Times (New Delhi), Indian Express (Bombay & Madras) Amrita Bazaar Patrika (Calcutta). Of these, the Times of India, Statesman & Pioneer were under British ownership till 1964, when it came under a group of Indian business. In the long freedom struggle for India's Independence, the major English newspaper that served the national cause were the Hindu (1878), Amrita Bazaar Patrika (1868), & Hindustan Times (1924). Among the Indian language newspapers, the prominent ones were, Ananda bazaar Patrika (1922), Sakal (1931), Mumbai Samachar (1822), Malayala Manorama (1890) & Mathrubhumi (1930).

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.

There are four major publishing groups in India, each of which controls national and regional English-language and vernacular publications. They are the Times of India Group, the Indian Express Group, the Hindustan Times Group, and the Anandabazar Patrika Group. The Times of India is India's largest English-language daily, with a circulation of 656,000 published in six cities. The Indian Express, with a daily circulation of 519,000, is published in seventeen cities. There also are seven other daily newspapers with circulations of between 134,000 and 477,000, all in English and all competitive with one another. Indian-language newspapers also enjoy large circulations but usually on a statewide or citywide basis. For example, the Malayalam-language daily Malayala Manorama circulates 673,000 copies in Kerala; the Hindi-language Dainik Jagran circulates widely in Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi, with 580,000 copies per day; Punjab Kesari, also published in Hindi and available throughout Punjab and New Delhi, has a daily circulation of 562,000; and the Anandabazar Patrika, published in Calcutta in Bengali, has a daily circulation of 435,000. There are also numerous smaller publications throughout the nation. The combined circulation of India's newspapers and periodicals is in the order of 60 million, published daily in more than ninety languages.

## **2. Journalism During the Emergency Period**

In the summer of 1975, as the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi became increasingly threatened by the mounting criticisms of her government, she declared a state of emergency. The declaration of a national emergency lasted for about 19 months. The emergency was declared as a result of mounting political pressure exerted upon the government from opposing political parties which were striving to fight corruption, inflation and economic chaos in the country. The Indira Gandhi's government, rather than taking this as a political challenge, resorted to declaring a national emergency and imprisoning the opposition party leaders, including all dissenting voices from the media and society. Immediately she took control of the press, prohibiting their reporting of all domestic and international news. The government expelled several foreign correspondents (mainly American and British) and withdrew accreditation from more than 40 Indian reporters who normally covered the capital and states capitals.

The fundamental rights of the Indian people were suspended, and strict controls were imposed on freedom of speech and press. According to the Right of Freedom-Article 19(1) of the Indian Constitution, Indians have the right :

- (a) to freedom of speech and expression,
- (b) to assemble peacefully and without arms,
- (c) to form associations or unions,
- (d) to move freely across the length and breadth of the country,
- (e) to reside or settle in any part of India,
- (f) to own or dispose of property, and (g) to carry on any lawful trade of occupation.'

It is obvious that, unlike the American Constitution or others constitutions in the world, in which freedom of the press is mentioned as one of the fundamental rights, but in the Indian Constitution doesn't specifically mention freedom of the press. However, the fundamental Rights Clause of the Indian Constitution treats freedom of the press as an integral part of the larger "freedom of expression." The Indira Gandhi's government used the "security of the state" and "promotion of disaffection" as its defense for imposing strict control on the press. And with the airwaves already under government ownership, Indira Gandhi successfully controlled the mass communication system in India for over a year and a half.

During the censorship, most of the nation's domestic dailies gave up the battle for press freedom. Their pages were "filled with fawning accounts of national events, flattering pictures of Gandhi and her ambitious son, and not coincidentally, lucrative government advertising." But two tough, prominent publishers of English language dailies, The Indian Express and The Statesman, fought courageously against Indira Gandhi's opposition of the Indian press. Despite some bold fights and stubborn stands taken up by these publishers, it was quite clear that Indira Gandhi had a strong grip on the Indian Press as she had on Indian politics. The fact is clear that when a dog bite a man, there is no news but when a man bites a dog, that is taken into consideration as the NEWS.

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