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THE HISTORY OF THE PRESS BEFORE FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA



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ABSTRACT

Broadly speaking the functions of the press is to convey government policies to the public keep government informed of public needs and reaction to government policies and keep the public and government informed of events and happenings at home and abroad. Each of these functions developed and the need or it was felt.

The history of the Indian press begins with the coming of Europeans. The Portuguese were the first European nations who brought a printing press to India and the first book published in India was by the Jesuits of Goa in 1552. In 1684 the English east India company's territories because the company's servants in India wished to withhold the news of their malpractices and abuses of 'private trading' form reading London.

KEYWORDS: Government Policies, European Nations, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The first attempts to publish newspapers in India were made by the disgruntled employees of the east India company who sought to expose the malpractices of private trade in 1776 William Bolts being ensured by the court of directors for private trading, resigned his service under the company and announced his intention to publish a newspaper and made it known that he had in his possession in manuscript many things to communicate which most intimately concerned every individual. The official quarters at once reacted and Bolts scheme ended in embryo. It was left to James Augustus

Mickey to publish the first newspaper in India entitled the Bengal Gazette or Calcutta general advertiser in year 1780. War his outspoken criticism of government officials and scurrilous attacks on the governor-general and the chief justice Hickey's press was seized in 1782 the following years saw the appearance of new publications like the Calcutta amusement (1785) the Calcutta chronicle 1786. The madras courier (1788). The Bombay Herald (1789) etc., the promoters of these new publications profited from Hickey's better experience and avoided clash with the authorities.

THE CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS ACT 1799

Lord Wellesley imposed censorship on all newspapers apprehending a French invasion of India and engaged in the struggle for super ending in India might have the affect of weakling his influence vis-à-vis his Indian adversaries or the French vernaculars press act of 1828. The one measure of lord lyfton which provided maximum controversy and resistance was the passing of the press act popularly known as the gagging act. He introduced this act because his policies were critined vehemently the by the Indian press in 1878 he passed the vernacular press act. This act required the editors of vernacular papers not to publish anything which was likely to excite the felling of dissatisfaction against the government.

HISTORY OF KANNADA JOURNALISM

MRINAL CHATTERJEE

As In many other parts of India, Christian missionaries were the pioneers of Kannada journalism. The first Kannada newspaper, Mangaloorasamachara, a fortnightly, was published in Mangalore in 1843. Rev Herman Moegling of the Basel Mission was its editor and publisher. Although its main objective was to propagare Christianity, it carried government circulars and notifications and also published news of importance and of local interest. After a year it was shifted to Bellary where it assumed a new name, Kannada Samachara. But it did not live long in its new habitate.

It may be noted that before Independence arid the re-organization of the states, Kannada journalism was spread over two princely states (Mysore and Hyderabad) and two provinces of British India (Bombay and Madras). The publishing centres were Mysore and Bangalore in Mysore State, Belgaum, Oharwar and Hubli (Bombay), Mangalore (Madras), Gulburga (Hyderabad). In Mysore State it had to struggle for existence in the face of repressive measures by the state administration and It also had to face the wrath of the British rulers outside for espousing the cause of freedom and solidarity with the forces of nationalism. The Kannada press has had a proud record in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji, and the sacrifices made and the persecution and imprisonment suffered by the great Kannada journalists have left a rich tradition of heroism and patriotism.

M. Venkatakrishnaiah (1844-1933), considered by many as the father of Kannada journalism brought out his weekly, VrittantaChintamani, in 1885, in Mysore. He laid the In 1908, the Mysore Government enacted the Mysore Newspaper Regulation Act under which permission of the government had to be obtained before publishing a newspaper. It was laid down that the government could withdraw permission for any newspaper at any time and those who published newspapers without permission or continued to publish after withdrawal of permission could be prosecuted. A victim of the Act was the editor of Kannada Nadegannadi who was deported from the state. Sharathi, a nationalist daily started in 1907, was shut down. Venkatakrishnaiah protested against the press regulation and closed down his newspapers as a gesture of solidarity. The Press Act was modified during the regime of DewanVisveswarayya and Venkatakrishnaiah resumed publication of his papers.

Between 1880 and 1908, a number of Kannada newspapers appeared. Among them were: Kannada Kesari (1-lubli, 1888), VokkligaraPatrika (Bangalore, 1907) and ArthasadhakaPatrika (1914). During the period, many women journalists made their entry into the profession and among them were T. Sanjeevamma (Shagyodaya 1914, Shimoga) and Tirumalamma (Karnataka Nandini, 1916, Mysore).

The early part of the 20th Century was also notable for the work of a distinguished Kannada journalist, D. V. Gundappa. A scholar in Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and English, Gundappa started a Kannada daily, SarnacharSangraha, in Bangalore in 1907. It was followed by a weekly, Sumati (1909). Another weekly, Karnataka, lived for 14 years. The language used by Gundappa was scholarly. However, it exercised great influence on the public and administration. BalGangadharTilak exercised great influence on the Kannada press in the first two decades of the 20th Century, especially in the Kannada-speaking area of the Bombay Presidency. Among Kannada journalists who were influenced by Tilak were AlurVenkatRao, who founded Jayakarnataka in 1922, HardekarManjappa whose Dhanurdhari carried translation of Tilak's articles in Kesari, and SitaramaSastri who started Veerakesari. AlurVenkatRao was one of the earliest writers to plead for unification of Karnataka (which was achieved after Independence). Other newspapers which made important contributions to the political movement were Chandrodaya (1913), Karmaveera, (1921), SachitraBharata (1913), K. Vasudevacharya'sShubhodaya (1917), and Vijaya (1921). All the papers were published from Dharwar. Karinadiga (1925), published from Bagalkot, was also a politically influential paper.

In 1921, TirumalaTatacharya Sharma started ViswaKarnataka, which played an important role in promoting the national cause and incurred the hostility of the government. For 20 years, Sharma launched a crusade for freedom, made great sacrifices, suffered imprisonment and refused to submit to the dictates of the government. The paper was suppressed in 1929 by the state government for its reports of riots in Bangalore. On the occasion, editors of two other papers, SitaramaSastri of Veerakesari and Aswathanarayan Rae of Navjeevana, were prosecuted for sedition and sent to jail. Viswakarnataka, which had a different editor and management, In 1942, played a significant role during the Quit India Movement. It was again suppressed in 1944 for an alleged seditious editorial and an open letter to the Viceroy. It was revived in 1945.

Tainadu, founded in 1926 in Mysore by P. R. Ramaiya (1894-1970), was another nationalist newspaper. It started as a weekly and then moved over to Bangalore where It was converted into a daily in 1929. It fought hard for responsible government In the state and the national cause. Ramaiya and P. H. Srinivas, who became its editor later, courted imprisonment in 1943. Tainadu celebrated its silver jubilee in 1952.

Samyukta Karnataka, published from Hubli, was in the vanguard of the freedom movement in north Karnataka. It was started as a weekly in Belgaum in 1929 but it moved to Hubli and became a daily in 1933. Its sponsors were KabburMadhwaRao, Rama Rae Hukkenkar and R. R. Diwakar. It became a byword in Karnataka journalism and its most famous editor was H. R. Mohray. Mohray came from a family of journalists and was connected with Karnataka Vaibhavak, one of the oldest Kannada weeklies in Bijapur started by his ancestors. Mohray, who in the post-Independence period became a national figure, being president of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and a director of the Press Trust of India, was editor of Samyukta Karnataka for over 25 years. He made the paper the authentic voice of the leaders of the freedom struggle and it enjoyed immense popularity in north Karnataka.

During the police action in Hyderabad after Independence, Samyukta Karnataka played a prominent part. The Nizam banned its entry into Gulburga and other areas of Hyderabad. However, Mohray managed to smuggle the paper into Nizam's territory. He was an ideal journalist who was endowed with

rich common sense and who hated personal publicity. He went to jail during the Saft Satyagraha. He had two objectives: Swaraj (Self Rule — Independence) and Akanda (United) Karnataka, and he saw them realised during his lifetime. The people of north Karnataka were so fond of Samyukta Karnataka that when in 1940 it faced a financial crisis, they came forward and raised a fund to meet its commitments. Unfortunately, after the passing away of Mohray in 1960, the paper was involved in litigation which continued for a long time.

A powerful weekly in Dharwar in 1921 was Karmaveer which carried on in the face of heavy odds and official persecution its mission to propagate the message of freedom. R. R. Diwakar was its editor and MadhwaRao its publisher. At one time Diwakar was arrested for the paper's anti-government attitude. Karmaveer later moved on to Hubli. Its most notable editor was H. R. Purohit who held the post for 30 years.

B. N. Gupta, an enterprising journalist, started many journals during the freedom movement. He started Prajamata, a weekly, in Madras in 1931 and then brought it to Bangalore. It was banned by the state government and was shifted to Hubli (then in Bombay Presidency). When its entry into Mysore state was banned, Gupta changed the name of the journal to Prajamitra and sold it in Mysore and Bangalore. M. S. Gurupadaswami was its editor. Gupta started a daily, Janvani in 1934 to promote the national cause. He later sold it to an industrialist of Bombay.

There was no Kannada daily in Mangalore (which until the recognition of states after independence was part of the Madras Presidency) until 1941 although it was the birthplace of a number of weeklies, as many as ten at one time. The daily, Navabharata, which appeared in 1941 under the editorship of V. S. Kudva is still going strong today. The Udayavani of Manipal (1970) and its sister illustrated weekly Taranga (1983) are also popular.

The most widely circulated Kannada daily by early 2014 was Prajavani. Founded in 1948 in Bangalore by K. N. Guruswamy, it was first published in 1948 as a sister paper of Deccan Herald. B. Puttaswamiah was its first editor. Prajavani has a history of being a politically independent newspaper; it is known for espousing the causes of Dalits, encouraging women's empowerment and taking pro-poor positions on economic issues. The weekly, Sudtia, published by the group (Printers Mysore) is also very popular. The Indian Express group's Kannada Prabha was brought out in 1957 with N. S. SitaramaSastri as editor. Other newspapers which have earned a name after 1980 are Lakwani, Bangalore (1974), VishalaKarnataka, Hubli (1947), Janamitra, Chikmagalur (1969) and Nadoja, Belgaum (1974). Prapancha, an influential weekly in Hubli was published in 1954 by Path Puttappa who was also its editor.

Towards the end of 1984, there were 687 newspapers in Kannada, including 93 dailies. The total circulation of newspapers was 2155000. Six hundred and three newspapers were published from Karnataka and the rest from Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Three of the eight big dailies had a circulation of more than a lakh. Prajavani was the largest circulated daily and Sudha the largest circulated weekly. By 2007-08, there were 2610 publications, including 493 daily and 573 weekly newspapers. According to the figures released by IRS (Indian Readership survey) Q-3 2010, the top five most read Kannada daily papers were: Vijay Karnataka (average issue readership: 34.25 lakh), Prajavani (29.10 lakh), Samyukta Karnataka (11.31 lakh), Kannada Prabha (11.15 lakh), and Udayavani (8.90 lakh).

CONCLUSION

The circulation of newspapers during this early period never exceeded a hundred or two

hundred these journals usually aimed to cater to the intellectual entertainment of Europeans and Anglo Indians. These were hardly any danger of public opinion being subverted in India. What really worried the company's officers in India was the apprehension that these newspapers might reach London and expose their misdoings to the home authorities in the absence of press laws, the newspapers were at the mercy of the company's officials. The Government sometimes enforced pre censorship, sometimes deported the offending editor for antigovernment policies.

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