

Analytical Discourse Of (Re)Evolution Of Indian Press And Indian National Movement

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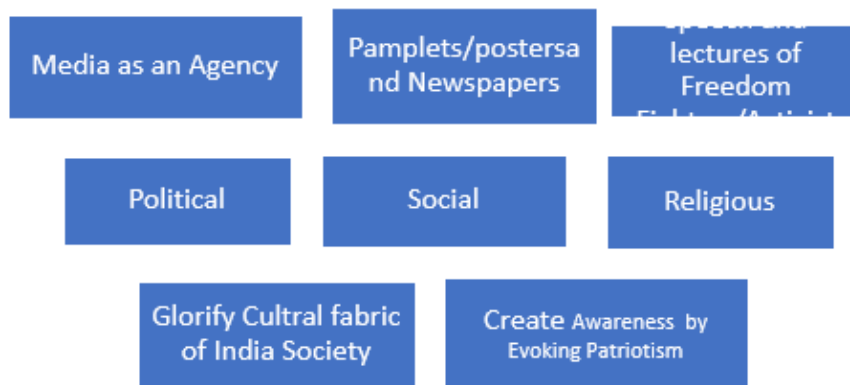
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Abstract

In pre-independence times there was national consensus on socio-political idealism that gave the direction to liberate India from colonial powers. The dream of freedom was mediated by Indian press, which gave every Indian a sense of purpose and enlightened their way to revolution and peaceful resistance at the same time. Much owes to its active communication coordinated by multiple philosophies of ahimsa, persistence, determination, patriotism and above all integration and nationalism. Despite their inability to read and write and absence of social media agencies in traditional times to spread information in distant areas; journalism with its active mass participation in writings, sloganeering and oral tradition communication facilitated the protest that kicked the momentum which accelerated the national movement. Though the East India Communication ruled for more than two century, print and press media played an integral tool for communication amongst the native Indians around the world. However, there were impositions and draconian laws against inter communication like regional gagging and press act to restrict all the information curtailing freedom of mediations and censoring significant messages. This in one way sabotaged their philosophy and instant vigour to think tank; and aroused their leaning to the greater cause of liberation and nationalism endured by undefeated patriotism. Although at this point the country was dependent on the strong educated leaders and majority of the Indians were illiterate under the curse of with poverty and helplessness due to age old subordination by Mughals. The saga of the India Freedom Movement is almost tantamount with the history of India press wherein national consciousness was aroused, sustained and promoted by pen boards, newspapers and periodicals. The ideologies and thoughts of the great visionaries for dawn of freedom was communicated to people and united them.

Media as an Agency:

Newspapers acted as a catalyst to create awareness during the times of crises. They also utilised the social, political and religious beliefs and ideologies to combat imperialism. Indian press acted as an institution against the freedom demanded from the Colonial powers. Despite massive illiteracy whereby majority of people cannot read and write newspapers acted as informative messages in far off remote villages and also in urban areas. Although the idea of social reformers and organisation played actively in independence struggle via newspapers; pamphlets. This declared the onset of newspapers in the south Asian subcontinent to arouse consciousness for national movement and as an event of revolutionary significance by fearless journalists. This way the media became the major boiling point to brew the major events for carrying out multiple tasks such as political propaganda education and propaganda of national ideology to mobile masses and consolidated nationalist public opinion. During those times press was a powerful weapon, primarily a non-profit institution rarely sponsored by advertisement and dependent heavily on the support of the readers staunchly fought for its motherland freedom.

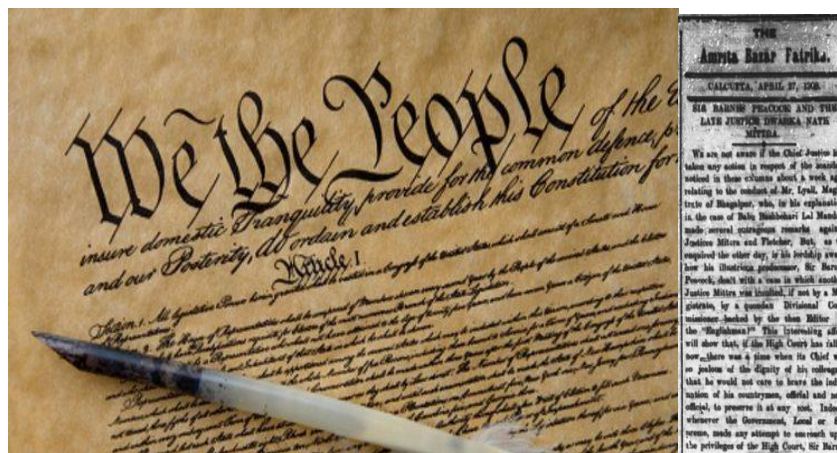


Flow chart: Media as Agency

This raises investigations as in how does the interrelationship of press vis-à-vis struggle to independence is observed and in context of national movement. To decode the linguistics of the print media is to confront Independence struggle with its analysis and interpretation as backbone of India. Since the inception of 1857 Mutiny, primarily the handwritten notes and the print media in all regional languages incited and supported the struggle to evacuate the Indian lands from the hands of the Britishers. This provoked them to hit back with the notorious vernacular press act popularly known as Gagging Act, imposing many restrictions on the print media periodicals of the day. Similarly ,Amrita Bazaar patrika faced the Government’s ire and was forced to close down in 1871, before moving to Calcutta from Jessore to continue their fight against the establishment. It was in 1857 itself that Payam-e-Azadi started publication in Hindi and Urdu, and anyone found carrying of the copies of the respective papers was charges with sedition. This leads to think whether a descriptive or an analytical approach is required. Press in India has always been in the conflict of the resultant riots and protests of the changing political structure and culture underlying changing contours of historicity and communication in the Indian society. Simultaneously, a consistent matrix of novice aspects of different cultural underpinnings and likewise situations which necessitate a differential priorities or concerns to undertake as projects. Although, cannot delve much into the nuances of independence movement, but have tried to reconcile the two in analytical discourse. Inadvertently, media has been reshaping the society and state which in turn needed to be amicably accommodating the acculturation process. Thereby, the catharsis of the debate is more on dialectical catharsis of the Indian intellectuals shaping the political landscape both qualitatively and quantitatively as well. From this vantage point the role of media was in pre-independence was to integrate on cultural terms alongside building international diplomacy with other countries to garner political-economic support to wage a war.

Historical Review:

Earlier than 1857, were the Pen-newspapers, there were then handwritten articles distributed among the readers or sometimes to underground audience and revolutionaries. In 1800, a person had issued several millions of pen-newspapers for the purpose to gain support to oust the colonial powers from what belonged to them. Liberty of the press was of utmost importance as it was a powerful tool to propagate political ideas. Thus the entire historical review of the newspapers can be divided into clubbing the second and third phase (1828-1900-1947) to that of the first phase of India Independence (1780-1826).



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Ther protests were conducted by Rammohun Roy on several occasions passing a resolution that restricted the autonomy of Indian publishing in 1824. From then on, the focus shifted to propaganda based upon political demands, popularising cultural harmony of diversity and uniting them all under social welfare of women, children and one nation and igniting this public opinion at the same time. (Hans media).

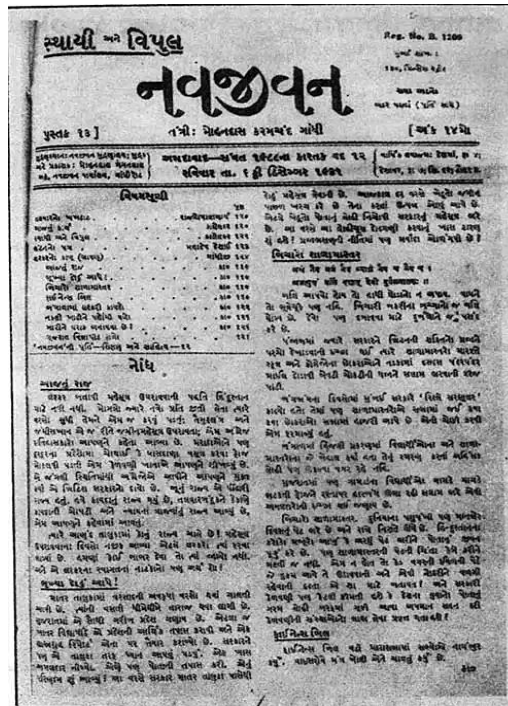
First Phase (1780-1826) : The famous newspaper Bengal Gazette was started by James Augustus Hickey, an English . In one way, the initial newspaper in pre-independence era was ‘Hicky Gazett in 1788 to protest for the Britishers. Followed by “Calcutta chronicle” by James Silk Buckingham(British) in relation to the socio-economic and political aspects of the state. This initiatives was strongly supported by Ram Mohan Roy, was also addresses as ‘father of Indian Journalism’ by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Ram Mohan Roy was a proponent of education and social causes in terms of eradicating all forms of social evils in the society. His initiative to save society stems from the welfare state so he created Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta in 1828. And also resisted the conversions of Christian missionary to safeguard the Vedanta philosophy rooted in traditional knowledge. In this regard a magazine of Brahmins was also started resist the religious propaganda of Christianity. Alongside, 'The Inquirer', and the 'Gyan Anshan', which was the marker of school of progressive Hindu Journalism dominated the field in Bengal till 1891 with him. He also got associated with an old newspaper of the Persians which came out on every Friday "Mirat UL Akbar", Mirror of News" in 1822, and then it was shut down in 1823 as a mark of protest against the Press Regulations Act 1823. He had empowered India citizens with the dream to get rid of and protested against social evils like Sati, polygamy and child marriage. Mr. Roy also protested for the exploitation meted in the name of glorification by excluding them. From the ancestral property and for the cause of freedom of press and believed that the free press could act as a bridge between the government and society (Wikipedia).

The first stage: As was expected the Britishers sensed the revolutionary zeal and patriotism of the nationalist from the then mutiny itself. As a result, various bans and impositions were put up as restrictions and bans of speech liberty and print by letting censorship of Press Act 799 and the diverse draconian acts such as the, Press Ordinance Act 1823. This was an autocratic beginning that demanded scanning of the British officers and hence was heavily condemned by the public. This all accumulated the anguish of the freedom with the civil liberties of the masses guided by the freedom fighters as integral to national struggle. This was followed by the first publication of Hindi, "Udant Martand" in 1826 by Pandit Jugul Kishore Shukla and then "Indian Mirror" in Hindi.

Second and Third Phase (1851 to 1900-1947): This period emerged more strongly as trigger to the rise of Indian writings in newspapers. The brutal suppression of the revolt of 1857, suppression of India nationalist press and founding of Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 and other citizen's associations were shaping public opinion against the Britishers. The INC was founded by Allen Octavian Hume in 1885 which was in subsequent years responsible for freeing the country from British imperialism. The first session of the INC in Bombay was attended by founders of leading newspapers which explicitly elevates the position of eminent freedom fighters. Then the relationship established between world War I and media in India, when an order was passed by the government of India taking the control of naval and military news alongside press of India. There was dissension between Indian nationalist and Anglo-Indian press for not publishing for the rights and liberties for which the allies were fighting in Europe. Therefore post war times, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi propagated ideas of non-violence and satyagraha editing three publication namely, Young India, Harijan and Navajivan'. The India press played valiant role in the struggle of freedom. Indian Opinion was a weekly published in four languages in English, Gujarati, Tamil and Hindi during 1903-1915 in South Africa. He was editor of young India (1919-1931), and Harijan (1933-1942) (1946-january 1948). Though at this point, conflicting and exaggerated reports of riots and fearful predictions of communal outbursts were flashed by newspapers prior to independence elicited a rebuke from nationalist freedom fighters. At this juncture newspapers underlined three assumptions: to understand the popular feelings and give expression to them; the second is to arouse certain desirable sentiments and the third is to fearlessly expose popular defects (Gandhi). His newspapers for a long time carried no advertisement and dependent on readers and subscriptions. But after a while, the situation demanded the active protest seeking to take revenge at the onslaught of English to withhold the freedom to speech and Vernacular Press. At this juncture "the Ananda Bazaar Patrica" was changed abruptly to "Amrita Bazaar Patrica" with other popular language such as English. This symbolises the patriotism and also expected mass participation of the intellectual across the country with regional variations to read and contribute in national struggle via their writing. At this critical time, dada Bhai announced "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it".

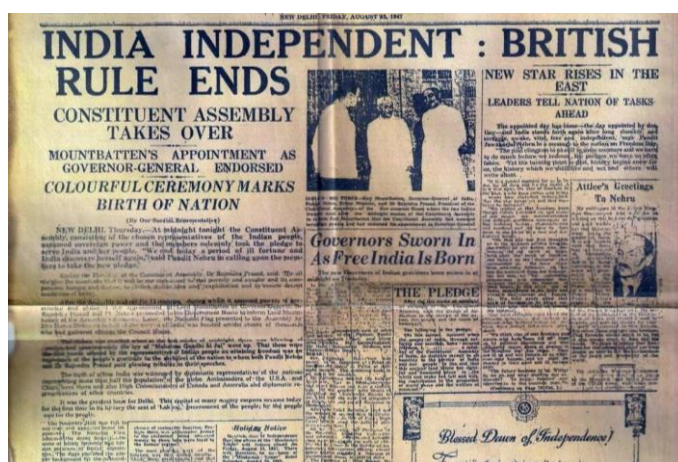
This marked the landmark of independence struggle and provided immense energy to the fellow Indians and revolutionaries. This was to popularise nationalism among his fellow Indians 'Tilak' encouraged published two newspapers "Kesari" in Marathi and "Maratha" in Marathi. There were eminent activities of INC Party were also eminent Journalists and editors of the Newspapers that include like Dadabhai Nowroji, Ranade and Narendranath Sen. Loka Manya Bala Gangadhar Tilak, was a social reformer and freedom fighter who waged war in the name of 'Swaraj'(self-rule).



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Third Phase (1900 to 1947): This phase remarked the advent of the growth of unrest and end to the long overdue right of freedom. Also, it witnessed Bengal was divided by Lord Curzon which was tormenting for Indians at large. Followed by the pathbreaking Surat session of national Congress where it declared radically the war of independence. Although, there were difference between the ideological underpinning of the radicals to that of the moderates such as Mahatma Gandhi himself. He believed in the strength of pen and press was utilised as a weapon against the Britishers. During this time the public expressed dissent when there were political trials against national leaders in 1922 under charges of sedition.

Newspapers like “The Indian Express” and “The Hindusthan Times” instigated attention of the British raj. This created turbulence instigating Britishers to ban Indian press not to cover ‘Dandi March’ in 1930. They were also heavily fined and taxation penalty was imposed to stop them from covering and igniting nationalistic sentiments. Newspapers were asked to deposit heavy securities whenever authorities made unreasonable demand. Simultaneously, English and regional newspapers came forward to support the nationalist movement like the India Express; Free press Journal; The Dawn; Hindustan Times; Blitz; National Herald; Matrubhumi etc. This was further aggravated by many British proprietors and newspapers when decided to sell their share to Indian owners and repatriate their proceeds to their homeland. As “Times of India” was sold to Ramakrishna Dalmia and “The Statesman” came under the Tatas, “The Hindu” was taken over by G. Subramaniam Iyer in 1878, “Amruta Bazaar Patrika” in 1868 by Ghosh Brothers, “The Times of India” in 1861 and “Statesman” in 1875 by Robert Knight, “The Tribune” in 1888 by Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia. Despite the ‘Quit India Movement’ massacre and Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy Gandhiji suspended the publication of harijan and other weeklies on account of pre-censorship imposed by the government. National herald was closed down in 1942 and could resume only in 1945. After this there was a transition,



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Aims and Objective :

- The Indian press (pen newspaper and newspaper) aimed to attain the most viable method and used it as a tool to motivate and inform masses in large numbers in short time to gain support for national Independence movement.
- Utilising the pen was mightier than sword as it liberated the mental slavery and instigated their consciousness by encouraging them to feel bad by the local and global antecedents of the freedom of the innocent people by colonial powers.
- This was to bring enlightenment on physical and mental levels and to prepare the people for war and get the country free from colonial raj.

Women’s Role in India National Movement:

This can be marked both chronically and social issue wise intertwining women’s contributions and writings along with national Independence Movement. The initial role was social religious reform movements that inspired in the 19th century in second half to the initial half of their twentieth century intervenes to throw some light on the women really did fight for the freedom movement. However, the debate arises regarding their authentication of struggle was for the nation or the women’s fighting for the their individual freedom as a principal of French declaration. For 19th century marks the beginning i.e. firstly the upheaval of women’s movement in the Western countries and the rise of the women question in the east; secondly the French Revolution was instrumental in unleashing the forces of change in several of the Western countries; thirdly, women’s issues became prominent such as slavery and the suffrage. In India, this facilitated upsurge of consciousness to uproot discrimination by the initiatives of the reformers inspired by a golden past and liberal West. Up till now this was followed by social religious reforming activity undertaken by Rajaji and Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, as they took several social issues such as sati ,widow remarriage etc. In this time women as social reformers and educationist participated actively in freedom struggle by writing pamphlets, participating in prabhat-pheri; word of mouth and gathering people were all part of communication. Savitri Bai Phule did a lot of work for the welfare and to educate women and children for the lower class and other classes as well such as social reforming activities of encouraging widow remarriage and educational activities. Several schools were setup and this was driving hard hitting reality of other factors as well that demanded reforms.

Resultantly, the practise of sati was made illegal in 1829 and female infanticide. Another area of thrust, by 1810 first girl schools started and by 1830 Women’s education trust movement started by English and American missionaries. Women’s

education had become reasonably popular specially in Bengal and by mid nineteenth century it has been adopted as a main issue by liberal reformers members of Vedic society. Since it was based on comparing (wo)men -equality of man and woman which was the basic principle of social progress, the reformers recognise the principle of liberty and individually emulated from western liberal culture profusely. By 1860s the stage was set for us the major breakthrough that the campaign against child marriage was culminated which raise the age of consummation of consent from 11 to 12 years .This was a period, when there was increasing concern with the reform in terms for custom of environment seen as an attack on the customs add its fire to growing nationalism and anti-westernism. The reaction of national movement of the India people was albeit delayed on the basis of perception and emulation. Women were pulled in this vortex from all the corners of the country. The old order was destabilised along with women's organisation such as all India women organisation were formed safeguarded by the preamble written in the constitution of India guarantees liberty to all women and to all the citizens of India.

Infact Lala Lajpat Rai also wrote in his autobiography that political goals were all right but where are the social reforms? In the course of struggle, Indian women goals were twofold i.e.; alongside the massive participation from all quarters in the freedom struggle; and alongside concern for their own collective wellbeing and rights. This was also time where there was no barriers on their getting together ;singing songs and orienting others on emotional appeal by writing and organising work for freedom struggle. Illustrating few were Swarna kumar devi, sister of Ravindra Nath Tagore was the editor of journal "Bharati" and 1886 "sakhi samiti" started as women's organisation; Kadimbini ,Pandita Ramadevi, Sarla devi chaudharani; they all composed songs urging people all over the country to join the national congress movement. Sister Nivedita close aid of Swami Vivekananda also participated contributing revolutionary literature and organisational activities. Begum of Bhopal started all India Muslim league, however in early 20th century it cropped up NCWI 1925 ;all India women's conference, delegation was led by Annie Besant in order to take up power and responsibility revolutionised the India national Struggle. Also as the first women president of India national Congress 1917; Sarojini Naidu propagated and wrote and invoked the masses by writing poetry and literature and political notes to convince masses at this times. So the feminism in India was essentially intertwined in freedom movement ,the role of women got within the patriarchal structure, and this consciousness helped women in India too to upsurge the press of India.

Hypothetical finding of Indian Press and Independence Struggle: Qualitative Analysis

The socio-political analysis reveals newspapers as differential non profit-making venture as compared to contemporary times, hence more at public service and intellectual growth for nationalism was seen in freedom struggle. This is a direct proportionate relationship between press vis-à-vis struggle for India independence. Despite the handicap of reading and writing literacy in pre independent India, pen newspapers acted as carrying oral tradition of story-telling to masses in the hinterland about the atrocity and exploitation of their native habitat and its people.Thus could render to millions of listeners in hinterland. Subsequently, it inaugurated the festivals such as "Ganesh Chaturthi" to mark the religious rallies as political gathering to propagate ideas and criticism for naïve audience and mobilised them for freedom struggle of India. Followed by village libraries and meeting happening at regular intervals to commemorate the achievement of the struggle and sacrifice of freedom fighters encouraged political education and participation. This way they could interrogate the government policies and acts by critically scrutinising its length and breadth to oppose the ruling government. This also did help them to be informed about the world wide protests and misdoings under the supervision of colonial powers and the awareness of their style of protests and combat systems. In one way ,it was like the harmonious relationship communicated via newspapers building a universal brotherhood to all the suffering people are facing across the world. Alongside, helped them to quote to Britishers from the London based newspaper against their atrocities ,as a blow to them. Many incidents were being informed such as like Jallian Wala Bagh appealed to all parts of India supported the peasant movements, by writing the articles in the press. Newspapers were talking to unknown strangers and bringing resolution to the problems subjected to sharp criticism

Government's reaction/challenges faced by the Print Media

"Socrates provides a good example, even a champion of the liberties of the people such as Cromwell placed restrictions on the press. Erasmus that in a free state the tongues should be free. John Milton hinted that press is essential not merely to citizens but also to society....The Great revolution of 1688 recognised the press of freedom"(Jahangir 2009).

Press was usually seen as an opposing force for the ruling government as it challenged its policies and acts imposed severely on the Indians. As it was a radicalised instrument of arousing revolutionary actions in support of the liberating from the colonial powers. The press was seen as creating dissent and divisions and even milder protests amongst the masses. However doing all this was challenging as various laws and sections punished even mild forms of dissent against the government. To circumvent the bylaws government ,clever journalist used sarcasm, sloganeering, coded messages mocking and other forms of critique to gain people's support and spread awareness about the autocratic government misdoings.

The national movement too defended the press whenever government tried to curtail its freedom. Colonialism impacted intellectual climate and temperament in the 19th and the first-half of the twentieth century (Sharma 2019). This can also be debated as a milestone of the development of institutions' and reflecting upon the culture and rich heritage of this nation. Although, it was a subordinate to the imperial forces earlier too but never has shown such resilience to protect one's motherland. Also, It is not true that there was any built-in reluctance or resistance among intellectuals in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to make natural science as the paradigm of human knowledge (Sharma, 1985).

As they have always struggled for the liberty and empowerment of speech. In 1799, Lord Wellesley appointed an official censor entrusted with the duty of passing all matter for publication and framed drastic rules to punish those who infringed them. Lord Hastings repealed those restrictions in 1818 (Indian press). Freedom of press became integral part of the national movement. E.g. the vernacular press act was enacted by Lord Lytton to curb freedom of press of Indian language readers. This was due to fact that their readership went beyond the middle class. Draconian act provided for confiscation of documents and was later repealed by Lord Ripon (Press India). Vernacular Press Act 1878 curtailed the freedom to write against the policies of Britishers and thereby ordered confiscation of the printing press, paper and other material of a newspaper if the ruling government believed the material published provocative material. Eventually after protest it had to be repealed in 1881 by Lord Ripon. With the popularity of India Press, the newspaper Act was passed 1908 and India Press act in 1910. This was another integral job to defend the civil liberties, all inclusive of which was the freedom of the press that had always been high in intellectual capacities of nationalist leaders. As most of the leaders, whom people held in high regard was also journalists and they all protested the freedom of press. The British govt reacted with a volley of acts and policies. Right in 1799, Censorship of Press Act; was enacted by Wellesley anticipating French invasion of India. Licensing Regulations 1823, Metcalfe Act 1835, Licensing Act 1857 and Registration Act 1867 followed by Shyamji Krishnavarma's activities are well known, namely his founding the India House and the Indian Home Rule Society in London, both of which he developed as hubs for a worldwide network of freedom fighters and for propaganda against the British rule. That he called a monthly periodical, entitled the India Sociologist (Shah 2009).

Moreover, the press law of 1932 and Foreign Relations Act of 1932 diminished the freedom of India Press. Yet another weekly Amrita Bazar Patrika, being published from Jessore was also publishing against the government, with the result that its proprietors faced trial and conviction. In 1871, the Patrika moved to Calcutta and another Act was sanctioned to put a ban it and other native journals. Newspaper Incitement to Offences Act 1908 and Indian Press Act 1910 were the other laws passed. Thereby, the local officers were sanctioned to imbibe the security at registration. In the India Press Act-de-register/forfeit newspaper which was offending to the the law and confiscating of property under (incitement to offence) Act 1908.

Defending civil liberties amongst many crucial rights including the freedom of the press had on top priority of nationalist agenda. For example, in 1824 they all expressed and protested for putting the restricting the freedom of the press. It helped in building nationalist political opinion. Example- Kesari, Maratha, Amrit bazar Patrika, Neel Darpan. In 1858, British amended 124A of IPC and added 153A which prescribed punishment for those attempt to bring contempt to or to create riots and unrest (British and Indians). Surendra Nath Banerjee was the prime Indian to be arrested for journalism. Tilak contribution was remarkable as he Published two papers Maharaja and Kesari in English and Marathi. In 1897, plague had hit Poona and Tilak supported British government strict measures for large-scale segregation and house searches which attracted backlash of public. Resultantly, the murder of the chairman Charles Walter Rand of The Plague Committee in Poona was committed by the Chapekar brothers. The government policies on tariff, currency and famine were also behind this popular resentment. In this way, government has conspired against Shivaji, to arrest after the popular killing of Rand on the pretext of poem publication 'Shivaji's Utterances', in Kesari, and justifying Afzal Khan's murder by Shivaji (Hans India, media daily).

Besides, Tilak was imprisoned twice for his journalistic activities while he pleaded not guilty everytime. Infact, Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act 1931-sweeping power was given to propaganda to withhold the Civil Disobedience Movement. This liberalized the press as Charles Metcalfe is the one who secure the title of liberator of press as he declare that a simple declaration from editor is only thing which should dine for press.

Conclusion:

Indian freedom struggle is emotional and strategic partnership for national press and masses from all the quarters of the nation. The national movement though can be divided into various phases from pre independence to post independence has underwent multiple challenges and constraints. As it is, the marginalised, the poor, women and people across religions, castes and classes were all equally part of the freedom struggle and have contributed under the able leadership. kind of movement which had many phases contribution from various section. many issues and changing demands with the course of time. The Indian publishing press role was significant as it acted as a breeding ground for discontentment and nationalism and willingly registered their protest against colonial authorities. Consequently, the press filled the void created by vast geographical and cultural differences witnesses by the nation to mobilise local struggles of the disintegrated communities/people as the national struggle of India. The Indian Press, however was born in the cradle of

British empire leaped its way to maturity from pen newspapers to grow in vernacular and English languages as milestones in national movement. The Indian leaders and intellegencia served two purpose by contributing the international information to local readers vis-a-vis the local struggles to diasporic communities living around the world. The freedom fighters were also writers to write about socio-economic and political impact of raj and their misgovernance in India, which attracted international support for freedom struggle. Illustrating a few, is "NEEL DARPAN" written by Din Bandhu Mitra about the indigo revolt and suppression of peasants by the planters in Bengal. Even for that matter hand written notes and pamphlets worked wonders like "Simon Go Back" and "Quit India Movement" to quote a few. Britishers were therefore, afraid and felt threatened multiple times by progress and outreach of press and tried to regulate press in their own interest. However to their dismay, the self- determined nation never gave up and were motivated till their goal of freedom was attained. Despite several hinderance and government policies against the freedom struggle and freedom fighters and the nation at large could not have attained the independence, had there not been political mobilisation and participation incited by India Press.

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