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An Analytical Study on Indian Freedom Movement and Nationalist Journalism

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Abstract- India got independence from the British rule after a long struggle. Uncountable Indians lost their life and there was destruction of property also to a great extent, in the struggle of freedom movement.

After more than seven decades of India's independence, the martyrs were remembered only on occasions like Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti, etc. National journalism played a significant role in the freedom movement of India. There are innumerable facts on the contribution of journalism and mass media for the freedom movement which were stated in the paper.

Despite of the strict regulations and restrictions imposed by the alien government, the freedom fighters used national journalism as a sharp weapon to cut the roots of the British government from India. A SWOT analysis has been done on the mass media during the freedom movement. There were social and economic problems in the country which were tried to tackle through the national journalism during the pre-independence era. National journalism gave a new dimension in the British India to the Indians. The non commercial aspect of mass media during the pre-independence era was also studied.

Key words-India, independence, national journalism, mass media, freedom movement

Introduction

In 1870s Indian press began to spread across the country. From the year 1870 to 1918 powerful newspapers emerged under distinguished and fearless journalists. The Press was the chief instrument for carrying out the main political tasks. Even the work of the National Congress was accomplished during these years largely through the Press.

Journalism in India was nurtured by some of the greatest men that the country has produced – freedom fighters, social reformers, intellectuals and men of letters gave their best to its development and growth. The history of journalism has, therefore, been inextricably linked with the growth of national consciousness and the progress of freedom movement.

The Indian journalists tried to publish anti-imperialist extracts from London-based socialist and Irish newspapers from radical British citizens. They used tricks to stay outside the Section 124A. Indian (British) Government could not discriminate against the Indians in taking action against them without punishing the offending Britishers too.

Need of the Study

The freedom from the British government was achieved by the Indians at the cost of lives of huge number of freedom fighters. Through debates, discussions, forums and panels this is to be discussed and valued. Henceforth, the topic ofnational journalism and freedom movement is of utmost significance especially for the youth of the country, academicians, journalists of current times and last but not the least the citizens. This study will give an insight to the contribution of national journalism in the freedom movement.

Objectives of the Study are to:

1. Study how national journalism helped Indian Freedom Movement
2. Find out the advantages of National journalism
3. Ascertain non commercialization of mass media in the pre-independence times
4. Know the restrictions on the mass media by the British government in the pre-independence time

The study is done to find out how national journalism helped and motivated the Indians for self governance. Leaders and social reformers of the country like - Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Subhas Chandra Bose, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, etc inspired the countrymen to fight against the atrocities and injustice done by the alien government. Media was a strong weapon in the British colonies like India for the natives.

There were strict restrictions on Indian media, especially on freedom of speech and expressions by the British government. Despite the restrictions, rules and guidelines the leaders of the freedom movement never moved back and faced the British government boldly and achieved their goal.

Scope and Utility

The citizens of the country are taken into consideration. The study will help students, academicians, journalists and citizens at large to understand the hardships that the freedom fighters have undergone to give freedom from the foreign rule. This will help the citizens as voters and political leaders in making good governance. It will help the citizens of the country from every walk of life to value the sacrifice and hardships that the freedom fighters have suffered to give “Swaraj” or “Self governance”.

Literature Review

Several research has been conducted on national freedom movement and the role played by media. An attempt is made to review some selected works on national freedom movement.

K.V. Nagaraj, (1989), stated in its paper that there were varieties of press functioned during the freedom struggle of India such as Press on corruption, Press on the position of women/dowry system, Press on law and order, Press on European dress, Press on reforms, Press on Communal Riots/ Communal Harmony, Press on Early marriage, Press on inter-caste marriage, Press on Sharada Bill (Child marriage restraint Bill), Press on removal on Untouchability, Press and the Economic condition

Archana R Singh (2011) studied thoroughly analyzed the coverage that had been given to the various events starting with Quit India movement and ending with the freedom of our country. The newspaper chosen by her was The Tribune which is one of the pioneer newspapers that have survived to this day. She also urged that, as the Tribune portrayed the popular feelings of the northern region during the freedom movement, it is interesting to peep into the old issues of the paper and discover what the headlines said. The content of the front page of the The Tribune, from the year 1942 (Quit India Movement) to 1947 (The independence) throws light on goings on during the period as also the opinion of the newspaper. The coverage of the Tribune connected the masses to the events as they unfolded.

Radhika Iyengar (May 3, 2017) stated in her article that during the reign of the British empire there were several Acts passed as stringent curbs over the Indian Press. Prior to the rumblings of the 1857 mutiny, the Press was fiercely involved in rallying the masses, and inevitably, the British government was increasingly becoming apprehensive about the Press' freedom. The newspapers started a nationalistic rebellion which was slowly being pieced together through words and symbols. In view of this, the "Gagging Act" was passed by Lord Lytton, which was driven to curtail and control the Indian publications' content. The Act made it compulsory for all Indian publications to apply for a license from the government. It also ensured that nothing was written against the British government, nor was the government challenged in any measure.

Research Methodology

The research was done to find out how national journalism helped Indian Freedom Movement and ultimately the alien government was compelled to leave the country. The advantages and non-commercial nature of the national journalism was analyzed. The restrictions on mass media by the British government in the pre-independence time were thoroughly analyzed.
The area which was selected for study was Delhi/NCR- which included social studies, political science and history students and teachers of high schools and colleges, researchers, academicians and senior citizens who has knowledge of the freedom movement.
Sample size – 100

The research tool, Questionnaire was given to the respondents. The responses received through the questionnaires were analyzed using coding, tabulation and percentage method.
Secondary data

History and social studies books of NCERT and other publications, newspapers and magazines from the archives

Findings and Analysis

Table 1: National Journalism Helped Indian Freedom Movement

Sr. no.	**National Journalism Helped Indian Freedom Movement**	**Responses of the Respondents in Percent**
1.	Print Media has been the backbone of mass movements	97%
2.	Exhorted Indians to drive the Britishers out of India	89%
3.	Many freedom fighters become journalists to propagate their ideas to the masses	98%
4.	National journalism gave a strong determination to liberate India from British rule	99%
5.	It served as public platform for propagating the nationalist political agenda	95%
6.	Small, informal library movements sprang up in every part of India, wherein the villagers would gather around a cot to read and discuss the day's paper	87%
7.	The library movements did a lot to inculcate the modern ideas of equality democracy, freedom and patriotism.	85%
8.	It played a great role in welding India into a single nation and gave the Indians a sense of oneness and a new national identity, which was non-existent before	93%
9.	The cruelties of British empire were made aware by Newspapers to Indian public.	97%
10.	Patriotic poems, songs and articles published in newspapers made British government restless.	90%

The above table stated the responses of the respondents in percentage on the various help and support of national journalism in the pre-independence times to the countrymen. The fourth option was selected by 99% of the respondents. Option fourth is followed by option 3 which was selected by 98% of the respondents. Next come option 1 and 9 which was selected by 97% of the respondents. Option 5 was responded by 95% of the respondents. The eight option was

responded by 93% of the respondents and option 10 was responded by 90% of the respondents. Option 2 was selected by 89% respondents. Option 2 was followed by option 6 which was selected by 87% of the respondents. Option 7 was selected by 85% of the respondents. Therefore, it can be clearly stated that national journalism helped Indian freedom movement.

Table 2: Advantages of National Journalism

Sr. no.	Advantages	Responses of the Respondents in Percent
1.	Its influence was not limited to cities and towns but also reached remote villages.	85%
2.	Served the purpose of not only political education but also of political participation.	87%
3.	Government act and policies were put to critical scrutiny	95%
4.	Institution of opposition to government was established.	90%
5.	It advocated social reforms and thus helped arouse national awakening.	98%
6.	Through newspapers Indian people kept themselves informed of all the activities going on in the country	95%
7.	It is rightly said that pen is mightier than the sword.	80%

The above table stated the responses of the respondents in percentage on the various advantages of national journalism in the pre-independence times. The fifth option was selected by 98% of the respondents. Option fifth is followed by option 3 and 6 which was selected by 95% of the respondents. Next come option 4 which was selected by 90% of the respondents. Option 2 was responded by 87% of the respondents. The first option was responded by 85% of the respondents and option 7 was responded by 80% of the respondents. Henceforth, it can be concluded that national journalism has several advantages and plays a very significant role in the society.

Table 3: Non commercialization of mass media in the pre-independence times

Sr. no.	Non commercialization of mass media	Responses of the Respondents in Percent
1.	During the freedom movement, the media were not established as profit-making business ventures but it is seen as rendering national and public service.	98%
2.	The main aim and objective of the mass media in the pre independence time was patriotism and self governance from the foreign rule.	99%

3.	Importance of advertisements and promotional activities was not at all given by the media to earn money in the pre independence times.	88%
4.	There was no or little earning of the mass media but importance was given to information that was to be given to the masses.	95%
5.	Newspapers and journals were distributed for free or extremely negligible amount which never covered the cost of production.	85%

The above table stated the responses of the respondents in percentage on the Non commercialization of mass media in the pre-independence times. The second option was selected by 99% of the respondents. Option 2 is followed by option 1 which was selected by 98% of the respondents. Next come option 4 which was selected by 95% of the respondents. Option 3 was responded by 88% of the respondents. The fifth option was responded by 85% of the respondents. It can be observed that from the responses of the respondents that mass media was totally non- commercial during the pre-independence times.

Table 4: Restrictions on the Mass Media by the British Government in the Pre-Independent India

Sr. no.	**Acts Formulated by the British Government**	**Year**
1.	Censorship of Press Act	1799
2.	Licensing Regulations	1823
3.	Press Act of 1835 or Metcalfe	1835
4.	Licensing Act	1857
5.	Regulation Act	1867
6.	Vernacular Press Act	1878
7.	Discrimination between English and Vernacular press -No right to appeal	1878
8.	Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act	1908
9.	Indian Press Act	1910
10.	Indian Press(Emergency Powers) Act	1931
11.	More than 90% of people in India was illiterate	Prior to 1947

Source: http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Hans/2015-03-12/Role-of-the-press-in-freedom-struggle/136832

James Augustus Hickey is considered the father of Indian press. He started the Bengal Gazette in the year 1780. But it was seized in the year 1872 as it was critical of the British Government. With the increasing number of newspapers, the government became accountable. Therefore, it brought into action several acts in order to suppress the press.
Freedom of the press was of utmost importance as it was a powerful tool to propagate political ideas. Raja Rammohan Roy, in 1824 had protested against a resolution restricting the freedom of the press. The early phase of the nationalist movement, from around 1870 to 1918, focussed more on political propaganda and education, formation and propagation of nationalist ideology, training, mobilisation and consolidation of public opinion.

The Government amended Section 124A. And it added Section 153A in 1828. Due to which it was a criminal offence for anyone who tried to bring into contempt the Government of India or tried to create hatred among different classes vis-a-vis the English in India. This also led to nation-wide protests. Due to the Swadeshi and the boycott movements and also the rise of militant nationalist trends, several repressive laws were passed. During the first and second world wars, not only freedoms of speech but also political and human rights were strictly restricted.

Since press was a powerful weapon in the development of Indian nationalism and the nationalist movements, it was subjected to restrictions by the British government which was reluctant to satisfy grant of the demands of Indian nationalism.

Table 5: Some Early Newspapers of Pre-Independence era and their editors

Sr. no.	Name of Newspapers	Editors	Years
1.	Bengal Gazette orCalcutta General Advertiser	James Augustus Hickey	1780
2.	The Calcutta Gazette	Francis Gladwin, an orientalist and an officer of the EAST INDIA COMPANY	1784
3.	The Bengal Journal	Thomas Jones and William Duane	1785
4.	The Oriental Magazine of Calcutta 1785	John Hay	1785
5.	The Calcutta Chronicle		1786
6.	The Madras Courier		1788
7.	The Bombay Herald 1789		1789
8.	The Bombay Samachar		1822
	The Bombay Times		1838

The first newspaper in India titled “Calcutta General Advertiser” or “Bengal Gazette” was published in 1780 by James Augustus Hickey. But he was too outspoken and the result was that his press was seized in 1782.

But almost all of them did not choose the "blasphemy" of the company and thus avoided clash like James Augustus Hickey did. But, in 1799, Lord Wellesley brought the Censorship of Press Act, 1799. The idea was to stop the French from publishing anything which could harm British in any way. This act brought all the newspapers under the Government scrutiny before their publication. This act was later extended in 1807 and covered all kinds of Press Publications newspapers, magazine, books and Pamphlets. The rules were relaxed when Lord Hastings came into power. The Bombay Samachar, started in 1822. It was printed in Gujarati which was the oldest newspaper in Asia still in print. The Times of India was founded in 1838 as The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce by Bennett, Coleman and Company, a colonial enterprise now mainly owned by Indu Jain and her family.

Most of the newspapers are pro British. It mostly stated about the lifestyle of the British officials and the royals. The newspapers contained advertisements, page 3 and lifestyle based articles and information.

Table 6: Some of the newspapers which brought revolutionary changes in the Indians in Pre-Independence Time

Sr. no.	Year	Name	Newspaper/Journal	Founder
1.	1819	Samvad Kaumudi	Bengali weekly newspaper	Raja Ram Mohan Roy
2.	1822	Mirat-ul-Akbar	Persian language journal	Raja Ram Mohan Roy
3.	1854	Rast Goftar	Gujarati newspaper	Dadabhai Naoroji
4.	1858	Som Prakash	Weekly newspaper	Ishwar Chandra Vidhya Sagar
5.	1862	Indian Mirror	Newspaper	Devendra Nath Tagore
6.	1868	Amrita Bazar Patrika	Newspaper	Sisir Kumar Ghosh & Motilal Ghosh
7.	1871	Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq	Journal	Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
8.	1878	Hindu	Newspaper	Vir Raghavacharya and G.S. Aiyar
9.	1881	Kesari	Marathi Newspaper	B.G. Tilak
10.	1888	Sudharak	Newspaper	G.K. Gokhale
11.	1892	Hindoo Patriot	English weekly	Girish Chandra Ghosh

12.	1896	Prabuddha Bharata	English monthly journal	Swami Vivekananda
13.	1899	Udbodhana	Magazine	Swami Vivekananda
14.	1903	Indian Opinion	Newspaper	M. K. Gandhi
15.	1905	Bande Mataram	English language newspaper	Aurobindo Ghosh
16.	1910	Bombay Chronicle	English language newspaper	Firoze Shah Mehta
17.	1911	Comrade	Weekly English newspaper	Maulana Mohammad Ali
18.	1912	Al-Balagh	Urdu weekly newspaper	Abdul Kalam Azad
19.	1912	Al-Hilal	Urdu weekly newspaper	Abdul Kalam Azad
20.	1913	Pratap	Hindi language newspaper	Ganesh Chandra Vidhyarthi
21.	1914	New India	English language daily newspaper	Annie Besant
22.	1919	Independent	Newspaper	Motilal Nehru
23.	1919	Young India	Weekly Journal	M.K. Gandhi
24.	1920	Mook Nayak	Marathi weekly	B.R. Ambedkar
25.	1924	Hindustan Times	English daily newspaper	Sunder Singh Lyallpuri
26.	1929	Nav Jeevan	Weekly newspaper	M.K. Gandhi
27.	1932	Harijan	Weekly journal	M.K. Gandhi
28.	1936	Free Hindustan	Journal	Tarak Nath Das
29.	1936	Hindustan Dainik	Hindi newspaper	M.M. Malviya

Source: https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/important-newspapers-during-indian-freedom-struggle

The major objective of these newspapers was not to make profit but to serve the general public. These newspapers had a wide reach. And they stimulated the popular library movement. The impact of this movement was not limited to cities and towns; these newspapers also reached remote villages, where each news item and editorial would be read and discussed thoroughly in

local libraries. Hence, libraries helped not only in political education but also political participation.

In these newspapers, government acts and policies were put to thorough scrutiny. They acted as an institution of opposition to the Government. The Government imposed many laws to restrict the newspapers, such as Section 124 A which said that anyone trying to cause disaffection against the British Government in India was to be transported for life or imprisoned for any term But journalists evolved clever strategies to subvert these legal hurdles. For instance, pieces critiquing the Government were prefaced with sentiments of loyalty to the very Government or critical writings of socialists or Irish nationalists from newspapers in England would be quoted. This was a difficult as it required an intelligent mix of simplicity with subtleness.

The Indian newspapers became highly critical of Lord Lytton's administration, especially regarding its inhuman treatment to victims of the famine of 1876-77. The Government imposed Vernacular Press Act of 1878. The Act was for 'better control' of the vernacular press and effectively suppresses seditious writing.

Pro Indian newspapers during the British rule brought lot of changes in the society. The Indian national journalism brought a new wave of change in the thinking and opinion of Indians in various aspects. There were several social evils, illiteracy, unemployment, discriminations in the name of caste, creed, gender, race, etc. The national journalism in the pre independence era tried to uproot the social evils from the society.

SWOT Analysis of Mass Media during the Indian Freedom Movement

The following SWOT analysis is done on the basis of the primary and secondary data collected for the research study.

Strengths

The aim of journalism was to attain freedom from then alien government

Self governance was one of the prime aims of journalism in the pre-independent India

Social reformers, patriots of the country, are generally part of National journalism in the pre-independent India

Journalism was used to inculcate the feelings of patriotism in the countrymen

National Journalism was to ignite the minds of the citizens with social awakening and to discard the social evils from the society

Weaknesses

Financial weaknesses

Infrastructural weaknesses like non-availability of printing press, space, etc.

The government was not in favour of the natives

There was lot of restrictions on the Indians

Opportunity

The citizens of the country was understanding the significance of National Journalism

Despite of high level of illiteracy the citizens from every walk of life showed interest in following the mass media.

The youth of the country participated in large numbers wholehearted with full enthusiasm and dedication

Threats

The alien British government was a threat

Anti-British contents was not allowed to publish

There was no freedom of press

There was no freedom of speech and expression

The above SWOT analysis is done on the basis of the respondents responses and the information received from various available documents.

Conclusion

In the early days of print media, the newspaper was dominated by the Britishers. But after some time the educated Indians realised the importance of the national journalism and it gave power to ignite the mind of the Indians for self governance. Several Indian newspapers came up which were started by social reformers and freedom fighters. They started a revolution against the British rule. The atrocities of the Britishers on Indian started coming up freely in the newspapers. Every nook and corner of the country emerged with various slogans to drive the foreign rulers from the country. The newspapers become a strong and ultimate tool for the freedom fighter leaders to drive away the British government and established self governance. The sacrifice of the revolutionaries in the pre-independence time was portrayed in the newspapers in such way that provoked the whole nation to drive the alien government from the country. The power of

pen is mightier than the sword was proved by the national journalism in the pre independence time. It brought the downfall of the British government in India.

In the pre-independence times the national journalism also helped in the eradication of the social evils that existed in the society. Social evils like racial discrimination, superstitions, male dominance, dowry, sati, child marriage, widowhood, etc are tried to uproot from the society by the national journalism. Indian citizens were enlightened and the light of knowledge was given as a gift by the mass media.

Newspapers were not published with profit motives or any business intentions but as a national or public service. They were patronized and financed by wealthy, aware philanthropists.

Recommendations

1. Mass media is a very strong and significant tool to retain patriotism and the spirit of freedom from not only from foreign rulers but form the contemporary world's evils and problems.
2. Proper use of mass media, that is the use of both the traditional media, (newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television) and the new age media, that is, the digital media which includes the web portals, social media, etc.
3. The new media can be used to inculcate good qualities in the youth of the country which will make them responsible citizens.
4. It will also help the country to develop socially, economically and politically.

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