UNIT 2 THE ROLE OF REGIONAL LANGUAGE JOURNALISM

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

• outline the development of the use of language in India,
• trace the development of newspapers and magazines in regional languages,
• explain the present state of the regional language press in India and compare its position vis-a-vis the English language press,
• discuss the role of the regional language newspapers and magazines in social awakening and development,
• describe the role of the regional language press in increasing literacy, particularly among the rural masses,
• delineate the future role of the regional language press: in growth of literacy and its impact on participatory democracy,
• enumerate the contributions of new media technology to the regional language press.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first unit of this Block, you were told about the role of the English language press in India, how it has grown in the last two hundred years, the changes that have come about in the contents of newspapers after India's independence and the status of the press at present.

In this unit, we shall now consider the role of regional language journalism, that is, the role of languages other than English.
parts of the country, other than the English language press. As you shall presently see, though the regional language press is far ahead of the English press, both in number of publications and their circulation, its impact has yet to be correctly analysed. Some eminent scholars have opined that the impact of the English language press on the elite of the society is more than that of the regional language press. But they also concede that the regional language press has a great potential. This Unit will seek to provide you a correct perspective of the whole situation. You will then be able to compare the status and role of the regional press in Indian languages with that of the English language press.

This unit will also acquaint you with the history of the regional language press along with its role—past, present and future—in social awakening and in the development process. Further, there is a close relationship between growth of literacy and readership of newspapers. This phenomenon would be explained so that you can understand better the role of regional language newspapers and magazines. However, the status and role of the press in Indian languages can be understood properly only if you know the language scenario in the country. We will, therefore, take a brief look at that. In the following unit, that is, Unit 3, we shall describe the scene of magazines and periodicals in the country.

2.2 THE LANGUAGE SCENARIO IN INDIA

India has 18 officially recognised languages (Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were added to the official list of 15 in 1992). The 1961 and 1971 censuses had listed 1652 languages as mother tongues spoken in India. These have evolved through the ages by the various races that came into the land from ancient times.

The Indian languages of today have evolved from different language families, corresponding more or less to the different ethnic elements that have come into India from the pre-historic times. They may be classified into 6 groups as follows:

These languages have interacted on one another through the centuries and have produced the major linguistic divisions of modern India. Among the major groups,
the Aryan and the Dravidian are the dominating families. They have influenced each other and have, in turn, been influenced by the Austroic and Sino-Tibetan tongues. It is easy to spot Sino-Tibetan and Austroic borrowings in the Aryan and Dravidian languages and mutual borrowings of the Aryan and Dravidian groups.

2.2.1 History of The Indian Languages

The Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European family came into India with the Aryans. It is the biggest of the language groups in India, accounting for about 74 percent of the entire Indian population. The important languages in the group are: Western Punjabi, Sindhi, Eastern Punjabi, Hindi, Bihari, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Pahari, Kashmiri and Sanskrit.

Hindi has produced two great literatures, Urdu and (High) Hindi. Both have the same grammar and the same basic vocabulary. They differ, however, in script and higher vocabulary. Urdu uses the Perso-Arabic script. Hindi uses the Nagari script and has a preference for purely Sanskrit words in contradiction to the numerous Arabic and Persian words borrowed by Urdu.

Dravidian languages form a group by themselves, and unlike the Aryan, Austroic or Sino-Tibetan speeches, have no relations outside the Indian subcontinent. The Dravidian family is the second largest group in India, covering about 25 percent of the total Indian population.

The Dravidian language was present in India centuries before the Indo-Aryan. It split into three branches in the Indian subcontinent—(i) The northern branch comprises Brahui spoken in Baluchistan and Kurukh and Maito spoken in Bengal and Orissa, (ii) The central branch is composed of Telugu and a number of dialects spoken in Central India—Kui, Khond, Holani, Konda, Gondi, Naiki, Parji, Koya and others, (iii) The southern branch is made up of Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Tulu, Badaga, Toda, Kota and Kodagu.

The outstanding languages of the Dravidian groups are; (i) Telugu, the state language of Andhra Pradesh, numerically the biggest of the Dravidian languages, (ii) Tamil, the state language of Tamil Nadu, apparently the oldest and purest branch of the Dravidian family, (iii) Kannada, the state language of Karnataka, another ancient Dravidian language that has developed individually, (iv) Malayalam, the state language of Kerala, the smallest and the youngest of the Dravidian family.

2.2.2 Status of the Indian Languages

With independence, the question of a common language naturally came up. The Constituent Assembly could not arrive at a consensus in the matter. The question was put to vote and Hindi won by the margin of a single vote—the casting vote of the President. Hindi, however, was only one of the many regional languages of India. The Indian National Congress had advocated the formation of linguistic provinces. The acceptance of this policy involved the statutory recognition of all the major regional languages.

The Constitution therefore recognised Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the union (Art. 343 et. seq.) and the regional languages as the official languages of the states concerned (Art. 345 et. seq.). English was recognised as the authoritative legislative and judicial language (Art. 348 et. seq.). Later, the 8th Schedule was added to the constitution; it listed all statutorily recognised regional languages. The Schedule originally contained 15 languages as follows:


Urdu has produced an extensive literature. Muslim speakers of Urdu use the Perso-Arabic script while Hindus use the Devanagari script. Urdu is also written in Roman Characters.
2.2.3 Constitutional Position

Art. 343 of the Constitution provided that for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution, the English Language shall continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union. It was expected that after the expiry of the stipulated period (that is after 1965) Hindi would displace English as the official language of the Union.

Subsequent developments have turned the current in favour of continuing English as an additional official language, no definite date being fixed for its replacement by Hindi.

As matters stand, the languages listed in the constitution remain the official languages in the respective states, while Hindi and English continue to be used for inter-State correspondence.

Activity 1

You are required to make a simple survey of your locality to gauge the popularity of a particular regional language newspaper among the residents. Here is a list of the probable questions for you to ask the members of fifteen households selected at random from your locality.

**Questionnaire**

1) Do you subscribe to a newspaper? [ ] Yes [ ] No
2) Please name the paper.
3) Do you subscribe to the paper on weekdays? [ ] Yes [ ] No
4) Do you subscribe to this newspaper only on Sundays? [ ] Yes [ ] No
5) Do you subscribe to more than one newspaper on Sundays? [ ] Yes [ ] No
6) Please give a reason for subscribing to this newspaper.

Now, you will have to answer the following questions based on the information you have gathered from the residents in your locality.

1) Of the fifteen households you visited, how many subscribe to a newspaper at all?...
2) Is there a marked preference for any regional language newspaper (Mention name)?...
3) Which newspaper is the nearest rival? In which language?

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

The modern mass media in India have been confronted with the bulwark of myriad oral traditions based on strong linguistic roots. The dichotomy arose after independence, when English education fostered the growth of the mass media in English, parallel to the development of aggressive regional language aspirations.

Two specific groupings emerged, one based on the English language, and the other based on regional language. Votaries in the first group wished to prolong their language at the international level and the...
continued this onslaught to gain ascendancy on the language front. Eventually, the
tidal wave of non-English regional languages has swept the length and breadth of
this country.

The mass media, particularly print medium, radio and TV, were the first to be
affected by the "language wave". While English newspapers and periodicals held
their own in the initial stages, the regional language press soon overtook them, both
in the number of publications and in circulation. Today, there are more newspapers
and periodicals available in Indian languages to cater to the large literate population
in India than ever before. In terms of the number of newspapers published, the
English press constitutes about 20 percent of the total number of publications.
Second to Hindi, in number and circulation, the English Press has 771 dailies and
weeklies having a circulation of 71.61 lakhs while the Hindi Press has 4348 dailies
and weeklies with 119.83 lakhs circulation. However, the Malayalam Press with just
312 dailies and weeklies having 73.83 lakhs circulation tops all the language dailies
and weeklies. It has two weeklies with circulations touching 15 lakhs, and two
multiple-edition dailies with a combined circulation of around six lakhs each. The
Tamil, Bengali, Kannada, Marathi and Gujarati Press have also made tremendous
progress during the last five years. Each of them has at least three newspapers with
more than two-lakhs circulation. Two Bengali newspapers and one each in Tamil
and Gujarati languages, have more than a five-lakhs circulation. One multi-edition
Telugu daily has a combined circulation of 3.5 to 4 lakhs on an average publishing
day. Such is the extent of reach of the regional language press that it looks as if the
English Press has paled into insignificance. Despite this, the influence of the English
Press on the bureaucracy and policy-makers has remained, largely due to the sizeable
base that English still retains among the literate elite in the country.

The fact that there are more newspapers in Indian languages shows the potential
they have. In terms of place of publication, the south Indian press has a very
considerable lead over others.
(Lucknow 367, Kanpur 199, Saharanpur 127, Aligarh 148, Moradabad 146, Dehra Dun, 124, Allahabad 137, Varanasi 120, Agra 129). Further, the U.P. State leads in the total number of newspapers published, with 3722 publications. The other three Hindi-belt States, Bihar with 1057 publications, Madhya Pradesh with 1092 and Rajasthan with 1502 publications, along with Uttar Pradesh, bring out 7373 publications, which is nearly 30 percent of all the publications in the country. However, their share of the total circulation is barely 10 percent.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:

i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

a) The State of................................ leads the rest of the country in publishing the highest number of newspapers.

b) The......................................press tops all language dailies and weeklies in terms of circulation.

c) The......................................language is considered the “Italian of the East”.

d) ......................................is the second largest language group in ‘India’.

e) ......................................is the biggest of the language groups in India.

2) Would you like to see the proliferation of the regional language newspapers in preference to the English language newspapers? Give two reasons for your answer.

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2.4 GROWTH OF NEWSPAPERS IN THE REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Let us now take a brief look at the growth of newspapers in the major regional languages in India.

Assamese

Prior to the publication of Dainik Assamiya and The Assam Tribune, Assam had no dailies, whether in English or in Assamese, except for the daily Dainik Batori of Jorhat which had a short run. The Assamese daily, Dainik Assamiya ceased publication in 1951 and a new Assamese daily, Natun Assamiya, under different ownership and management, was launched. Of weeklies and occasional publications, however, there have been several, of which mention may be made of Assamiya—the oldest Assamese language weekly of the state, and Deka Assom from Gauhati; Assom Sevak from Tezpur; Sramik from Dibrugarh and Janmabhumi from Jorhat.

Bengali

Bengal may well claim credit for pioneering Indian journalism. Besides Bengali and English, the first Persian newspaper, the first Urdu newspaper and the first Hindi newspaper, were all published in Bengal. Journalism in the northern provinces owes its early inspiration to Bengalis. The efforts of Bengali enterprise in journalism can be traced to places like Benaras, Allahabad, Lahore and Karachi.

In 1937, when Anand Bazar Patrika started the English Hindustan Standard, the Amrita Bazar Patrika brought out the Bengali Jugantar. During the war, the Amrita Bazar Patrika was started in English from Allahabad (1942), and since 1950 it has been published from Calcutta.
In 1939, two more dailies were started—the Bharat founded by Makhan Lal Sen, who had contributed substantially towards the establishment of Ananda Bazar Patrika, and Krishak, an organ of the Krishak Praja Party. In 1941, A.K. Fazlur Huq started publication of the daily Navajug in Bengali and five years later the official organ of the Communist Party of India, Swadhinata, came on the scene along with the Swaraj edited by Sri Satyendra Nath Mazumdar.

Besides Fazlur Haq's Navajug, there were two other Bengali dailies edited by Muslim editors, published from Calcutta, Azad, founded and edited by Maulana Akram Khan in 1936 and H.S. Subrwardhy's Ittehad, published in 1947, which is no longer published from India. Started by the Shramik-Trust Society, Lokasevak (1948), edited by Chakravorty is still being published. So also Janasevak, owned by Atulya Ghosh. Today, Ananda Bazar Patrika, and Jugantar are the most popular Bengali newspapers.

Gujarati

Gujarati journalism owes its origin to the enterprise of the leaders of the Parsi community. The first Gujarati newspaper, Bombay Samachar began its long career in 1822, with a full-fledged printing press complete with types. The first Marathi newspaper was produced ten years later in a lithograph press.

Another paper which made an illustrious beginning was Jam-e-Jamshed, a Gujarati weekly, started by Pestonji Manakji Motiwalla in 1831.

After 1850, the development of Gujarati journalism was marked by the starting of a number of papers, many of which had a short life. Other papers of that time are Kheda Vartman, started in Kaira in 1861, Surat-Mitra started in 1880 and published till 1953 from Bombay, Desh Mitra which was published from Surat between 1873 and 1950, Kaiser-i-Hind, a weekly started in 1880 and still in publication from Bombay, Kathiawar Times started in 1888 and still being published from Rajkot.

Prajabandhu, after a chequered career for long, finally found stability under the name of Gujarat Samachar. Published from Ahmedabad, it is the largest circulated Gujarati daily today. In 1943, Sri Amritlal Seth started in Bombay Janmabhoomi, a Gujarati daily which also has a large circulation. Yet another group consists of the daily Prabhat, the weekly Nav Saurashtra and the monthly Kumar, owned by Shri Kakalbhai Kothari.

Surat has two leading dailies, Samachar, started in 1922 by Sri M.R. Vidyarthi and Gujarati, (1921) edited by Sri Ramanlal Chhotubhai Desai.

Kannada

Journalism in Kannada started around 1870 almost in all the regions. It did not prosper because of political and administrative reasons. Bombay—Karnataka and the Southern Maratha states were under the influence of Maharashtra rulers for a considerable time. In the southern Maratha states, Marathi was imposed on the Kannada population because the ruler's mother-tongue was Marathi.

Between 1880 and 1908, a number of newspapers in English and in Kannada made their appearance, prominent among them was Desabhinmani edited by B. Srinivasa Iyengar. In 1908, the Mysore Legislative Council passed the Newspaper Regulation Act and soon after a Kannada weekly publication. Uryodaya Pakasika published a report which incurred the displeasure of the Government. Prompt action was taken and in protest, most of the newspapers of Mysore closed down. One of these newspapers which ceased to exist, and never appeared again, was the first Kannada daily, Bharati edited by Sri D.V. Gundappa.

With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, some prominent public men encouraged journals for the purpose of carrying on the freedom struggle. Jayarao Deshpande, a leading lawyer and public figure of Bijapur, took the editorship of Karnataka Viabhav and conducted it with great fervour and ability. H.R. Moharay, the present Managing Editor of Samyukta Karnataka entered journalism in 1921, and assumed the editorship and proprietorship of the same weekly after the death of Jayarao
started at Hubli and are still being published. Vishal Karnataka was started on August 9, 1947 by Shri K.F. Patil and his friends, with Sri Patil Puttappa as its editor.

Malayalam

Malayala Manorama of Kottayam, presently the leading daily of Kerala was founded 85 years ago by Kandath Varghese Mappilai who had an instinct for news, keen business acumen and wide experience of men and matters. Prominent literary and public figures of the time contributed freely to the columns of Manorama. Among them were Kerala Varma Valla Koyil Thampuran, Kunhikuttan Thampuran, Sri Vallathol Narayana Menon, Ullor Achutha Menon and Murkoth Kumaran. Some other writers made their literary reputation through the columns of the paper. In 1904, the founder-editor passed away and was succeeded by Sri K.C. Mammen Mappilai who maintained the high traditions built up by his predecessor till he passed away in December, 1953 at the age of 80. This is the largest circulated multiple edition daily in the country.

Started in Quilon as a weekly, Malayalee is now published as a daily. It was started by K. Ramakrishna Pillai but its reputation is associated with Madhava Warrier who edited the paper for many years. Special mention should be made of a fortnightly publication, Kayana Kaumudi started in 1905, which published news, views and a correspondence all in verse. It is now published as a literary magazine by Sri P.V. Krishna Varrier from Kottakkal. The Narsil Deepika and Kerala Kesari edited by Ballath Kunjunni Achan and Yogakeshman edited by V.S. Nambudripad were well-known publications. Papers which stood for social justice were Deshabhimani edited by T.K. Madhavan, the Sahodaran edited by Ayyappan of Cochin and Mithavadhi of C. Krishnan of Calicut.

The struggle for independence brought into being a number of dailies in the 1920s. The most important of these is Mathrubhumi, it started as a tri-weekly in 1923 and is now published as a daily and a weekly (illustrated) and commands great popularity in Kerala. The paper was founded by K. Madhavan Nari and P. Achutan who gave up their practice as lawyers in Calcutta to join the non-co-operation movement. A great name associated with the conduct of the paper is that of P. Ramunni Menon. The high traditions built up by him have been ably maintained by Sri K.P. Kesava Menon who has to his credit a long record of public service.

Malayali journalism has had the advantage and support of a brilliant band of writers from the earliest times. Some of the most prominent names among them, have already been mentioned. A recent loss is that of M.R. Nayar, also known as Sanjayan, whose understanding of problems and mastery of irony earned for him an unrivalled reputation among the writers of the present day.

Marathi

Bal Shastri Jambhekkar started the first Anglo-Marathi paper, the Bombay Durpun, in 1832 as a fortnightly. A few months later it was converted into a weekly. Jambhekkar later brought out a monthly Marathi magazine, Dig Durshun (May 1840). In February, 1849, Dhyan Prakash of Poona came into existence under the editorship of Krishnaji Trimbak Ranade. Started as a weekly, it was converted into a daily in 1904 and under the editorship of the distinguished Marathi novelist, Hari Narayan Apte, it rose to great heights.

The next Marathi daily to be published from Bombay was Rashtramati, edited by S.K. Damle and published by the Rashtramata Publishing Company Ltd.; this appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century. It was the mouthpiece of the extremist party led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Its sales went up rapidly as it covered extensively the well-known Nasik Conspiracy case. It fell a victim to the press Act of 1910.

In 1923, Khadilkar started Navkal which is today the oldest marathi daily. If A.B. Kolhatkar popularised Marathi daily journalism, Khadilkar may be said to have introduced modern methods of production.

The Role of the Regional Language Journalism
Lokasatta is the first Marathi daily to be published from Bombay after independence. It was started in 1948 by the Express Group with Sri T.V. Pargate as its first editor. It steadily built up its circulation and today ranks among the major Marathi dailies, along with Maharashatra Times and Sakal. The Poona-based Sakal was established in 1931 by Dr. N.B. Parulekar who graduated from the Columbia University, USA and was the first Indian to study journalism as a subject in the United States. Sakal followed an entirely independent policy with the primary aim to educate the general public in the democratic values of life. The Maharashatra Times, was started in 1962 by the Times of India group. Within a brief period it earned a name because it consistently tried to cater to the most diversified reader interests. Like its contemporary, Lokasatta of the Indian Express Group, the Maharashtra Times shares all the editorial, business and mechanical facilities of sister publications in the Times group.

Oriya

Among the earliest Oriya newspapers, Asha and Samaj stand prominent. While Asha was published as a weekly by Sashibhushan Dutt, it was converted into a daily in 1928. After a change in the proprietorship, it was closed down in 1951. But it is now being published as a weekly from Berhampur in the Ganjam district.

Samaj was established by the veteran politician Gopu Bandhu Das in 1928 as a weekly newspaper. Later, in 1931, a daily was also started. A newspaper, Praja Tantra, was started under the guidance of Hare Krishna Mehtab, the noted Congressmen, who later rose to such high political positions as the Union Minister and the Chief Minister of Orissa. Today, Samaj and Praja Tantra are major Oriya newspapers with a large circulation.

Punjabi

The birth of Punjabi newspapers may be traced to the decade of the 1850s with the publication of English-Punjabi dictionary and the casting of the Gurmukhi type for the first time in 1854. In the beginning of the 20th Century, the use of Gurmukhi type was well established and Punjabi prose began to make good progress. New magazines and journals appeared in large numbers. Most of them appeared under the influence of the Singh Sabha. Punjabi journalism entered a new phase with the Akali movement in 1920 when the first Akali paper was started. The division of Punjab dealt a heavy blow to Punjabi journalism in 1947. Lahore, the centre of Punjabi journalism, was lost to Pakistan. Many Gurmukhi papers and magazines were uprooted. Some of them rehabilitated themselves in a short time and others were started. Among the major Punjabi newspapers today are Ajit, Akali Patrika, Khalsa Sevak, Prakash, Newar Hindustan, Nawan Zamana. Among the periodicals, the largest circulated one is the monthly magazine, Preeth Lari, from Amritsar.

Tamil

Tamil is one of the oldest, richest and the most highly cultivated of Dravidian languages of South India. The first Tamil magazine was a monthly, Tamil Patrika, started in 1831. The progress of the Tamil press was accelerated in the last decade of the 19th century with the starting of Swadesamitran in 1882 founded by the great G. Subramanya Aiyer, who converted it into a daily in 1899. The next Tamil daily made its mark only in 1917 entitled Desabhatan, but was forced to be closed down in 1926; that year Tamil Nadu under Varadarajulu Naidu started as a daily. But it was Swadesamitran which had the highest circulation, thanks to its stalwart editor C.R. Srinivasan. In 1936, the Indian Express group started Dinamani, a daily, in September, 1934. A.N. Sivaraman, its editor, spared no effort to make it a leading Tamil daily like Swadesamitran.

In Madurai, a Tamil daily known as Dina Thanthi was born in 1940. Within a short time simultaneous editions were brought out from Madras, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirappalli. Becoming immensely popular under the editorship of T.R. Bheem Singh, it overtook the two giants Swadesamitran and Dinamani.

Among the Tamil weeklies, it is Ananda Vikatan which achieved notable success. Started in 1924, it has always been identified with its founder-editor, S.S. Vasan, the
movie tycoon, Kalki, started by R. Krishnamurti in 1941, is another popular Tamil weekly. But the largest circulated Tamil weekly is Kumudum, started in 1947, with a print order of over four lakhs.

Telugu

The first newspaper in Telugu was Satyadoota, started in 1835. The renowned Andhra social reformer and literature, Kandkuri Veeresalingam Panthulu started Vivekavardhini in 1885 from Rajahmundry. The first competing journal to this was started by Kokkanti Venkatarathnam Danthulu; this was Andhrabhasa Sanjivini.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Pinja! Subramanya Setty started a Telugu daily called Samadarshini. It had a lively but brief existence. A precursor of modern Telugu journalism was Janata, launched by two eminent literati, Viswanadha Satyanarayana and Ramakoteswara Rao. An outstanding journalist in the Telugu language at that time was Desodharaka K. Nageswara Rao Panthulu. An enterprising young man, he migrated to Bombay where he built up a good business patenting a pain balm known as Amrutanjan. As he was deeply interested in the Telugu language, he founded a Telugu weekly in Bombay, entitled Andhrabhasa Sanjivini.

In the Telangana area, the first journal was Hitabodhini started in 1913, with Srinivasa Sharma as its editor. The most important journal was Golkonda Patrika promoted by Madapati Hanumantha Rao Panthulu. Besides this, many weeklies and monthlies are published from the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. The most important Telugu journal to make its appearance in recent years is Andhra Prabha. It was started in 1938 and was first edited by Keesa Subba Rao and later by N. Narayana Murthy. The famous colmn of Khasa Subba Rao entitled 'Pan Supari' was a rage with the readers and was held in esteem for its polished language and wit. Very soon, this paper became a popular rival to Andhra Patrika. Andhra Prabha belongs to the Express Group of newspapers. Another journal of the same group is The Andhra Prabha Illustrated Weekly which is the Telugu weekly with the largest circulation.

The inauguration of the State of Andhra Pradesh on October 1, 1953 gave a real fillip to the development of Telugu journalism. The following four daily newspapers were started in Andhra Pradesh after 1953: Andhra Janata edited by K.S. Subramanyam and published from Hyderabad, Andhra Bhoomi started in 1960 by K.R. Pattabhiram; Rajahmundry Samacharam started by Gandham Seetharamayyanalu and published from Rajahmundry since 1956, and Vishalandhra started in Vijayawada in 1952, by K.R. Rajagopal Rao. Another prominent Telugu daily of recent years is Andhra Jyoti, started in 1960.

An exciting contribution to Telugu journalism has been made by a businessman, ch. Ramoji Rao, who launched Eenadu in 1974. It picked up circulation within no time and climbed to the top in just one decade. It outstripped the known leaders like Andhra Prabha, Andhra Bhoomi and Andhra Jyoti. Today, it has a circulation of over three and half lakhs. Yet another daily which has made its mark recently is Udayam started by a film personality, Dasari Narayan Rao, in 1983. The competition among the leading Telugu dailies has resulted in a splash of colour on the newspapers.

Hindi

The contribution of Hindi journalism to the freedom struggle and in the political awakening of the masses is immense. In the initial phase, the Hindi phase was concerned almost solely with social and religious questions and there was not much involvement in political affairs. The earliest Hindi newspaper was started in Calcutta in 1826. It was a weekly, Oodunt Martand; its editor was Joogul Kishore Sookool. Banga Doot, sponsored, among others, by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarkanath Prasad Thakore, appeared in 1829. The first Hindi daily, Samachar Subha Varsha, came out in 1854 with Shyam Sunder Sen as its editor. A literary magazine which set the standard for Hindi journals in the early years of the century was Saraswathi, a monthly, edited by Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi. In 1920, Aaj was started in Banaras and it played a very notable part in the freedom struggle. Its first editor was Sri
Prakasa, a renowned freedom fighter who occupied positions of power and prestige in free India. He was assisted by Babu Rao Vishnu Paradkar whose contribution to the development of Hindi journalism was considerable. In Patna, Desh, a weekly, was an influential journal and a mouthpiece of the Congress. It was founded by Babu Rajendra Prasad and his friends in 1920 and proved a valuable medium for nationalist propaganda. As freedom came to India, one of the important Hindi dailies to greet it from the capital was Hindustan, a sister newspaper of The Hindustan Times, started in 1936. The Nav Bharat Times of the Times of India group started in 1936 and today it is the largest circulated Hindi daily. According to the Registrar of Newspapers, its circulation in 1992 was 3,98,966. It is also published from Bombay. It is popular for its coverage of national and international news. Aryavart, a daily, was started by the Indian Nation group of Bihar in 1940 and has wide circulation. Amrita Patrika of Allahabad is another daily well-known for its trenchant editorials. In Madhya Pradesh, Nav Bharat published from Jabalpur, Bhopal, Raipur and Indore is widely circulated and popular; its last edition is the one published from Nagpur in Vidarbha. Ravivag, a Hindi weekly of the Sunday group, has as much influence as its better known sister journal, Sunday. The Hindi Blitz (Bombay) has almost overtaken the circulation of the English edition.

Urdu

The Urdu Press in India today is the fourth largest group numerically. Delhi's earliest Urdu newspapers, Fawaid-ul-Nazarin and Kiran-us-Sadai (1852) were edited by a Christian convert, Ram Chandra. In the 1860s, there were six Urdu papers published from Delhi and they were all owned by loyalists. The most enduring of these was Akmal-ul-Akbar published by Hakim Abdul Majid Khan. By the 1880s, there were more than 12 newspapers, many of them owned by those who were critical of the establishment. In 1877, Maulvi Nasir Ali, one of the founders of the Anjuman Islamia, edited three newspapers, Nusrat-Ul-Akbar, Nusrat-Ul-Islam and Mihir-e-Darakshan. A notable Urdu journal in the first decade of this century was Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad's Al-Hilal which came out from Calcutta in 1912. Al Hilal marked a turning point in the history of Urdu journalism. It achieved unprecedented popularity within a short time. Al Hilal created a revolutionary stir among the masses. The demand for it was so great that within the first three months all the old issues had to be reprinted as every new subscriber wanted the entire set. Within two years, Al Hilal reached a circulation of 26,000 copies a week, a figure which till then was unheard of in Urdu journalism. Urdu nationalist papers had their share of persecution at the hands of the alien rulers during the freedom struggle and there were many men who made great sacrifices in the patriotic movements. One of them was Milap of Lahore, a daily started in 1923 by the Arya Samaj. Another Urdu daily which suffered for its part in the freedom movement was Pratap of Lahore, started by Mahshe Krishan in 1919. A prominent Urdu daily in Delhi in 1923 was Tel, founded by Swami Shradhanand. Its first editor was Lal Deshbandu Gupta, a leading Congressman. Currently, it is being edited by Vishwabandhu Gupta. The most important Urdu daily to make it to the top was Hind Samachar, launched by Lala Jagat Narain in 1948. The veteran journalist was assassinated by extremists in the wake of the Punjab crisis. His son Ramesh Chander also fell to the bullets of terrorists. The paper was the largest circulated Urdu daily in the country with over three lakh circulation during the 1970s. Today, under editorship of Vijay Chopra, it is published only from Jalandhar with a circulation of about 60,000. It has its sister publication Punjab Kesari, a Hindi daily published from Delhi, Jalandhar and Ambala. The group's total circulation is over 6 lakhs.

Today, Urdu journalism has assumed an All-India character coming next to English and Hindi in a number of states and Union Territories. One of its strongholds is Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh. The oldest newspaper is the daily Musher-e-Deccan (1884) published by Vinayak Rao Vidyalankar. Three prominent Urdu dailies of Hyderabad are Siasat, Rahnuma-e-Deccan and Musafir. From Bangalore, Salar, Pasban, and Azad, are the leading Urdu dailies. Musalman in Madras is an Urdu daily with a respectable circulation. From Calcutta, the important Urdu dailies published are Asre-Jaddid, Azad Hind and Imroze. Qaumi Awaz, launched by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1945, is published from Lucknow. Bombay has one of the oldest, and now the leading Urdu daily of India, Inquilab. It was launched in 1926
only a year after the famous *Siasat-e-Jadid* was started from Kanpur. Bombay also has the *Urdu Times*, which is quite popular. Among the leading periodicals in Urdu are *Bisvin Sad* and *Shama*, both monthlies, published from Delhi. The weekly *Urdu Blitz* of Bombay also has wide readership.

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**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note:** 
1) Match the items in Column I with the correct items in Column II, in both Section A and Section B.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A)</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ananda Vikatan</td>
<td>Bengali daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kaiser-i-Hind</td>
<td>Urdu monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Navjug</td>
<td>Oriya daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Amrita Patrika</td>
<td>Tamil weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Shanre</td>
<td>Hindi daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Samaj</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B)</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rashtramat</td>
<td>Tamil weekly with the largest circulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Malayala Manorama</td>
<td>leading Urdu daily of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kumuidum</td>
<td>leading Telugu daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Eenadu</td>
<td>Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad's Urdu newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Inquilab</td>
<td>Marathi mouthpiece of nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A Hilal.</td>
<td>largest circulated multiple edition daily of India.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C) Note:** Write short *answers* of one or two sentences each for the following questions:

1) Why can *Bengal* take the credit for pioneering *Indian* journalism?

2) Name the most popular *Bengali* dailies at present.

3) Name the three major *Marathi* dailies.

4) Who founded *'Quami Awaz'* and *'Desh'*?

5) In which language are these published?
   - Dina Thanti, a daily.
   - Praja Tantra, a daily.
   - Navkal, a daily.
   - Punjab Kesari, a daily.
   - Matrubhumi, and illustrated weekly.
2.5 CONTRIBUTION BY LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

The history of the origin, growth and development of journalism in the Indian languages have been described to show how these newspapers in various languages helped in the fight against foreign rule, in our struggle for freedom. They built up a glorious tradition in journalism, and they have helped the growth of democracy in India.

2.5.1 Moulding Public Opinion

Vernacular newspapers which were isolated during the freedom struggle are now wielding a lot of influence and are potent instruments of moulding public opinion. In the past, they were struggling to survive, but now they are thriving. Initially, they were organs of individual opinion. Now they are pre-occupied with political, economic and social issues of general interest. The language newspapers today are providing adequate coverage on all aspects of life. They are adopting sound business principles. Instead of relying upon the favours of individuals or political parties, they have developed advertising as their primary source of revenue. They have also built up circulations by giving more attention to news coverage and by catering to the entertainment needs of readers. Through improved mechanical equipment, they are able to provide thicker and cheaper editions. There is more diversity in the contents of the Indian language newspapers today; besides, they also show greater responsibility in the collection and presentation of all reading material.

The increase in the rate of literacy in India and a remarkable rise in the people's standard of living are the two important contributing factors in the revolution in circulation of the Indian language newspapers and periodicals. The role of the press has certainly undergone a change after 1947 but the press has not wavered from its fundamental role of a critical social educator.

2.5.2 The Provincial Press

With the advent of freedom and growth of democratic institutions, the regional and provincial press has assumed significance. From the financial angle, the regional newspaper stands in the middle of the chain of which the metropolitan daily is the strongest link and the district newspaper is the weakest. The constant problem for the regional newspaper is to become financially viable. It does not have the resources of the metropolitan daily. It has, however, to maintain certain minimum standards which obviously require finance. A few of the small and independent language newspapers have attained affluence and are acting as the real link between the people and the government. In fact these papers, which command respect by virtue of their passion for truth and public service, are so effective that they act as opposition to the party in power. Undoubtedly, this is a great contribution of the Indian Press.

2.5.3 Location—Specific

The Indian language newspapers have evolved their own pattern, guided by their own experience and responding to the demands of their readers. Local and regional news assumes importance for them more than national or international news. They normally do not miss any "spot news" of national or international significance which they get through the news agencies. But events and problems of the locality or the region are of special interest to them as they are not adequately treated in the metropolitan newspapers. The vernacular press has assumed leadership of the local community and is respected by their readers as their friend, philosopher and guide. People of local communities find their names and views in the smaller papers. They see their joys and sorrows reflected in the columns of these newspapers and develop a kind of personal and emotional attachment to these papers. This, in a way, helps the growth of village republics.

Indian language newspapers have ceaselessly tried to interpret the great heritage and culture of India. In this task, they have had the good-will and support of many great men from all walks of life. Thus, they have strengthened the basic unity of India. This is yet another contribution of the language press.
Check Your Progress 3

Note:  i) Give short answers of two sentences for each of the questions given below.

   ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What was the role of Indian publications during our freedom movement?
   ..........................................................................
   ..........................................................................
   ..........................................................................

2) Explain the contribution of financier to a publication's existence.
   ..........................................................................
   ..........................................................................
   ..........................................................................

3) List three strong points of a regional publication.
   ..........................................................................
   ..........................................................................
   ..........................................................................

2.6 LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS AND LITERACY

Literacy in India has increased steadily since 1951. In 1991, the census found 352 million literate people, roughly equalling the total population of 1951. Major advances in literacy rates have yet to occur in the four big Hindi-speaking states where literacy is very low. Against an all-India literacy average of 52 percent of the population over 7 years of age, Bihar stands at 39 percent, Madhya Pradesh 44 percent, Rajasthan, 39 percent and U.P., 42 percent. Never-the-less these figures themselves represent a literate population of more than 110 million people in 1991. As per the figures of the Registrar of Newspapers, the four states in 1988 had a circulation of about six million copies of daily newspapers in all languages. This gives a ratio of 55 copies of a daily per thousand literates. This approaches the Kerala ratio, but in Kerala more than 90 percent of the population is literate. Given the large number of readers per newspaper (usually estimated between six and 12), this 1:20 ratio may represent the general pattern of newspaper consumption in a rural society.

2.6.1 Purchasing Power

Purchasing power appears to play only a small part in determining whether a person spends money on a newspaper. In 1993, the purchase of a daily newspaper represented an expense of between Rs. 50 and Rs. 60 a month (most dailies sold at about Rs. 1.75). This totals to Rs. 600-700 a year or the equivalent of more than 100 kg. of rice. In Kerala the average per capita income in 1990 was estimated at Rs. 3,389. The cost of a daily news paper as per thus represented 20 percent of the average annual income. In Punjab, with the highest average per capita income of Rs. 7,081, the cost of a daily newspaper represented 10 percent of annual income. In the 1980s, moreover, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh had roughly the same average per capita income (about Rs. 2,300), slightly below the national average. In absolute numbers, Andhra had about two million more literates than Kerala. Yet Malayalam dailies sold more than twice as many each day as Telugu dailies. Nationally, Malayalam dailies, in the late 1980s, sold roughly 58 copies for every 1,000 Malayalam speaking population.

Why should Kerala's Malayalam-speaking people, with a per capita income of no more than the national average, purchase newspapers at roughly double the rate as compared to other Indians? Politicisation — a craving to know and participate — is
2.6.2 Technology and the Language Newspapers

One of the handicaps of the Indian newspaper industry in 1970s was slow and antiquated printing technology and a poor road network in most regions. Language newspapers had to depend on hand composition of type and that was time-consuming; it took unduly long to transport copies to other towns. The 1980s brought about a transformation in the printing technology. Electronic technology and indigenous manufacture of offset presses have allowed printing centres to be set up in smaller towns, thereby reducing the distance a newspaper has to be transported. It would take seven hours to move a truck load of newspaper 300 miles in most parts of India. But using telephone lines, news copy can be sent by the facsimile process in a few minutes to distances of hundred of miles. Indian newspaper publishers began using this in the 1980s.

Some newspapers have imported facsimile machines which can transmit a full broadsheet page. News-gathering, editing, type-setting, page make-up and paste-up take place in a single centre. Then the full newspaper is sent by facsimile to distant printing centres, equipped with plate-making facilities and offset presses. The printing centre receives from the facsimile machine a film from which an offset plate for the press can be made. This is the method used by India's largest selling daily newspaper Malayalam Manorama (Malayalam: 6,74,000 copies — ABC, June-December, 1992), which centralises most activity in Kottayam. It sends pages by facsimile to printing centres in Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram, Palakkad and Kochi. Punjab Kesari, the largest selling Hindi daily (5,63,000 copies), uses the same method with Jalandhar as the base. In Andhra Pradesh, Eenadu (Telugu: 3,61,000 copies) has the capacity to make similar transmissions from Hyderabad to its plants in Vijaywada and Rajahmundry. Photo-composing has also meant that the intricate scripts of Indian languages can be more sharply and consistently reproduced than was possible with metal types. Offset presses allow good quality photographs to be reproduced quickly and cheaply. And colour photographs and advertisements are possible at an increased but still reasonable cost.
2.7 THE FUTURE

Indian language newspapers will continue to expand, and advertising revenue and political excitement will determine their contents and character. In the present situation, there seems little doubt that capitalism and consumerism will continue to grow. Indian language newspapers will play a key part in spreading consumerist messages in the various regions. In that process, what is likely to happen is that in each linguistic region there would be just one or two major, dominating newspapers. The diversity and competition which characterise the language press at present may be obliterated in the next 10 years.

Yet the multiplicity of languages offers some guarantee against a national domination of the print media by one or two chains. The sheer number of highly developed languages in India ensures against the sort of national chain dominance that afflicts the press in countries like the U.S.A., Canada and U.K., France and Australia.

Check Your Progress 4

Note:  i) Write short answers of three sentences for each of the questions given below.
      ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Are the literacy rate and the growth of the regional language press related factors.

2) What are the contributions of technology to the growth of the regional language press?

3) List the three probable causes for the increase in sales of publications in general.
2.8 LET US SUM UP

India is a land of a myriad languages and dialects. In this unit we have described the press in Indian languages. We traced the growth, evolution and development of newspapers and periodicals brought out in the major Indian languages. You now know that despite the established nature of the English press in the country, particularly in the urban and metropolitan centres, it is largely the language press which has overwhelmed the circulation charts.

You have been told about the role some of the more important language newspapers played during the freedom struggle and also about the current status of many language newspapers and magazines published from different regions.

Further, the relationship between literacy and the growth of language newspapers was explained. In view of the National Literacy Mission's aim to achieve total literacy, the role of newspapers, particularly in the rural hinterland of the country, has assumed significance. The language newspapers are expected to supplement and support the literacy campaign and that will take the nation closer to the goal of participatory democracy.

The expansion of new printing and telecommunication technology has had a tremendous impact on the growth of the language press. However, low purchasing power of the people has inhibited its growth. This phenomenon has been discussed in brief to give you an idea about the relationship between economics (purchasing power), education (literacy) and politics (participatory democracy). We have also outlined the future of the language press in the country in the current environment of growing capitalism and consumerism. Indian language newspapers are expected to play a key role in spreading consumerism beyond the urban centres. Finally, the dawn of a vibrant language press in most of the states would act as a check to the national domination of the print media by one or two newspaper chains or monopolies.

2.9 FURTHER READING


2.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1
1) a) Uttar Pradesh
   b) Malayalam
   c) Telugu
   d) The Dravidian family
   e) The Indo-Aryan family
2) Yes, because there are many positive outcomes from the growth of the regional language press. This will help people become aware of the regional issues; sustain the neo-literate population with reading material, as everyone cannot afford to buy books; enable people to contribute articles, short stories, etc. and generate the right approach to reading and writing habits.

Check Your Progress 2
A) 1-c, 2-f, 3-a, 4-e, 5-b, 6-c
B) 1-c, 2-f, 3-a, 4-c, 5-b, 6-d
C) 1) Bengal takes the credit for being the state where the first Bengali, English, Persian, Urdu and Hindi newspapers were published.

2) Ananda Bazar Patrika, and Jugantar are the two most popular Bengali dailies.

3) Lokasatta; Maharashtra Times and Sakal are the three major Marathi dailies.

4) Jawaharlal Nehru and Babu Rajendra Prasad respectively.

5) Tamil; Oriya; Marathi; Hindi; Malayalam.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Indian publications openly addressed the problems of oppressive foreign rule. This aroused the people and resulted in a successful nation-wide movement to overthrow the British.

2) Financers invariably seek to influence the opinions and interpretations of issues that are presented in their publications. Increasingly, publications are primarily sustaining themselves on advertisement revenue, which is a healthy trend.

3) Regional publications carry more local news, address need-based matters and play a leadership role in the community with great passion. Their quest for truth is matched by their will to serve the public.

Check Your Progress 4

1) Yes, a higher literacy rate boosts the sales of regional language publications. The regional language press is a 'social educator' for the people living in semi-urban and rural areas. The high literacy rate in Kerala owes much to the Malayalam press there.

2) Photocomposing and offset press, besides facsimile facilities have all made it possible to have multi-edition regional language dailies. Computerisation and colour printing offer a range of page make-up choices. The final product is made more appealing to the consumers.

3) There is a general rise in purchasing power in the population. A definite increase in the rate of literacy has naturally led to increased readership and circulation. The people are also more politically aware now than ever before.