
UNIT 1 THE PRESS

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will mainly focus on the ownership patterns, organizational structures and management of the press (newspapers and magazines) in India. After you have gone through this unit, you should be able to:

- delineate the development of management of press industry in India;
- describe the various types of ownership patterns of the press in India;
- identify distinctive management features of the Indian press;
- analyse the organizational structure of the press;
- give reasons for the adoption of a particular management pattern by a newspaper magazine office.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In Block 3, we traced the origin and development of the various mass media—the press, radio, television and cinema. We also took a look at the traditional media and concluded the block with an overview of the modern communication technologies in Unit 4. As you know, our concern in this Block is with the ownership, organizational structure and management of mass media in India. We began with the press in this unit. The endeavour here will be to familiarise you with the evolution of press management practices. We shall see what the different types of press ownerships are, in India and what is the kind of newspaper organization prevalent here. In Unit 2 then, we shall proceed to consider ownership, organizational and management aspects of the news and feature agencies in India.

1.2 CHANGING NATURE OF NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT

As you probably know, James Augustus Hicky's **Bengal Gazette**, the first ever newspaper in India which made its appearance on January 29, 1780, was a one-man show. An employee of the East India Company, James Augustus Hicky was himself the founder-editor, printer and promoter of his newspaper. He did not need any elaborate organizational

magazines are giant enterprises. Besides a colossal investment running into lakhs of rupees, hundreds of workers, with different kinds of skills and specialisations, are necessary. A mammoth infrastructure, ingenious planning, imaginative designing and creative production are essential to bring out newspapers and magazines which millions of readers would wish to read and enjoy everyday, day after day.

The owners and managers have, over a period of time, adopted certain unique practices to make the newspaper enterprise economically viable and profitable. These relate to the areas of newspaper economics and management, and to the areas of newspaper production and distribution. The economic and management aspects include advertising, circulation and sales promotion. The structure of a newspaper ownership is relevant to the issues of public interest and editorial freedom. Usually, the nature of editorial policies and business operations vary according to the patterns of the newspaper ownership. The development of newspaper ownership patterns has passed through numerous stages, and all through it has been influenced by business environment in India. The newspaper proprietors and businessmen have generally kept pace with global developments in evolving and adopting ownership patterns and management practices.

Activity 1

Before you proceed with this unit, engage yourself in a short activity. Visit a newspaper office in your area and collect information on the management structure of the newspaper, such as the owner, the editor, the board of management etc. Enquire also on how centralised or decentralised the management structure is.

After having collected the relevant information, present the management structure diagrammatically in the space provided below.

1.3 NEWSPAPER OWNERSHIP PATTERNS IN INDIA

The pattern of ownership is crucial in the newspaper industry, as the press has an extremely prominent role to play in a democratic set-up in India. In case of newspaper ownership, concentrations of two kinds are evident. Firstly, newspapers are concentrated in urban areas, in big cities such as Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Guwahati, Patna, Jaipur, Jalandhar, Chandigarh, Bhopal and Ahmedabad. Secondly, the ownership of these newspapers is concentrated in a few big business houses.

1.3.1 Types of Ownership Patterns

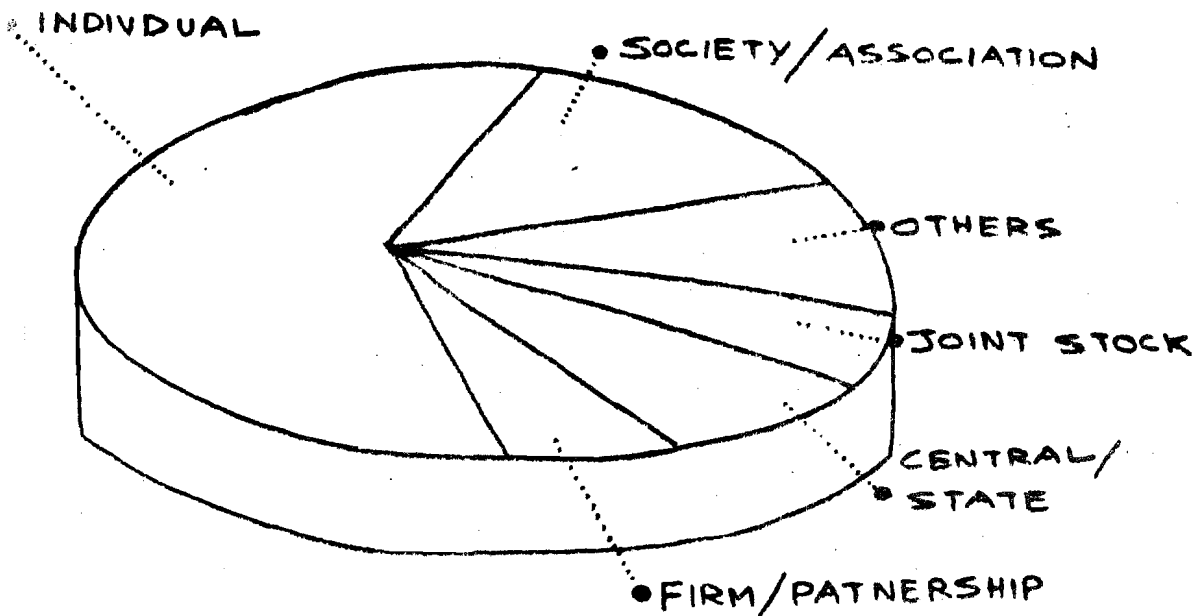
According to the 1990 Report of the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, the latest newspaper ownership pattern in the country is as follows:

Ownership Pattern of Newspapers, 1990

Form of Ownership	No. of Newspapers
1) Individual	18,873
2) Society/Association	3,875
3) Firm/Partnership	1,237
4) Joint Stock Company	1,199
5) Government Central/State	673
6) Others	1,197
Total	27,054

(The figures relate to the year 1989, but have been published in the RNI's publication, *The Press in India, 1990*.)

It can be seen from this list that the number of newspapers concentrated in the individual ownership is the largest, followed by societies/associations. In the newspaper industry, though the type of ownership is important, even more significant is the influence that a newspaper unit commands. The influence that a newspaper wields in society, can be gauged to quite an extent from its paid circulation, advertising volume and revenue.



Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

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

1) Why have the newspaper industries become giant organisations? Give two reasons.

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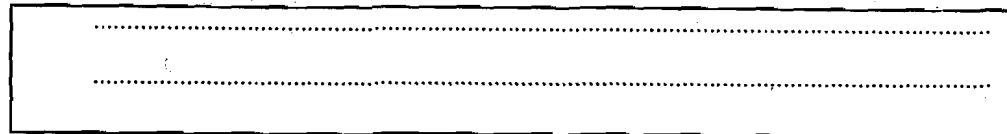
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2) What are the two patterns of location and ownership of Indian newspapers that one can easily find out ?

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1.3.2 Distinctive Features of Ownership Patterns

According to the Registrar of Newspapers' annual report cited above, the joint stock companies own only 1199 newspapers, but their share is the highest in the overall circulation, followed by ownerships of individuals and firms/partnerships.

Here, it will be appropriate to note as to what a particular type of ownership stands for.

A single **individual** owner means one who generally owns 100 per cent of the newspaper company's stock, and runs it as a private enterprise. For example, **The Hindustan Times**, New Delhi, is owned by K.K. Birla and **The Telegraph**, Calcutta, is owned by Avik Sarkar.

Or, there can be **partnership** of a small group of individuals holding stock in the company, i.e., **The Hindu**, Madras.

Similarly, a **joint stock company** is a big commercial organisations such as Bennett Coleman and Company, publishers of **The Times of India** and several other publications.

A trust is a **non-profit organisation** which runs a newspaper such as **The Tribune** of Chandigarh or **The Lok Sevak** of Calcutta.

In case of the Central and State Governments' publications, the ownership is generally vested in the departments of information, publication, publicity, public relations or any other specific department bringing out the newspaper/journal/periodical/magazine.

1.4 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF A NEWSPAPER

Since the newspaper industry is a commercial proposition, the most important objective of the management is to ensure efficient and effective functioning, so that the unit earns the maximum profits and a good name for its publications. Keeping this in view, the newspaper proprietors structure their organizations in a particular manner so that all the essential functions of the newspaper are performed most efficiently. Some of the most important and common functions of a newspaper enterprise, according to Professor Herbert Lee Williams, include :

- Decision-making
- Organizing
- Staffing
- Planning
- Controlling
- Communicating and Coordination
- Directing
- Innovation

In a modern newspaper unit of medium size, generally, the organizational structure is divided into five distinct wings/divisions/sections/departments. These are:

- Editorial department dealing with news and views;
- Printing and production department;
- Business department which includes sections for advertising, circulation, billing, collection, etc;
- Computers, engineering and equipment/store;
- Personnel, sales promotion and public relations.

In some organisations, engineering and equipment sections are merged with printing and production departments. Besides, personnel and sales promotion departments are also

combined with the administrative wings. However, the editorial wing, in most cases, is completely independent, and is entirely under the charge of the chief editor, managing editor, executive editor or editor. Variations are found in individual enterprises depending upon their size, business volume, general financial status and editorial traditions.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

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

1) Match the units of **Column-A** with units of **Column-B**:

Column-A

Column-B

—A single Individual Owner

—is a non-profit organisation

—A Trust

—is a small group of individuals holding all the stocks

—A Partnership

—means a single individual who hold 100% of stocks in a company.

2) What are the five essential sections one can generally find in a medium sized newspaper organisation ?

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1.4.1 The Editorial Department

The editorial department of a newspaper organization is its heart and soul. In fact, the entire business of a successful newspaper depends on the effective, efficient and prompt operations in this department. As stated earlier, the functions of a newspaper's editorial department are extremely crucial and significant.

Activity 2

The editorial department is the most vital unit in a newspaper organisation. It is extremely important to have a first hand experience with the functioning of a newsroom.

Visit a newspaper office and request the authorities to permit you to be in the newsroom for sometime. Be alert and note carefully the activities, take an interest in the personnel, observe what they do. Having grasped the organisational structure of that particular newsroom, now, in the space provided below, draw the structure.

We shall be discussing the general structure and functions of a newsroom. Compare your findings with whatever we are to discuss in the following section.

The editorial department of a newspaper/magazine collects, receives, processes and finalises the news and all other writings relating to news for publication in the newspaper/magazines. The news is collected, received and solicited by a newspaper from all parts of the world as well as from all concerns of the country.

For collecting the news efficiently and promptly and making it fit for presentation to the readers in a readable, attractive and digestible form, the editorial department of a newspaper has to take the entire responsibility. The editorial department is the life sustaining force and be-all and end-all of a newspaper establishment. The three main operations of the editorial department are carried on as follows :

- 1) **Newsroom** : Editing and processing the news on the editing desk;
- 2) **Newsgathering** : Making arrangements for gathering news from the city where the paper is located, other parts of the country and other countries. Prominent news categories include political ; economic ; financial and business; sports; crime; social; educational; cultural; health and environment. All this news may come from Parliament/Assembly, stock markets, chambers of commerce, labour organizations, courts, hospitals, universities, police, social and cultural organizations and so on. Anything happening anywhere in any part of the globe in which the readers could be perceived to be interested, needs to be covered in newspapers.
- 3) **Views and Opinions** : Every newspaper/magazines has one or more editorial pages which reflect the policy of the organization. The means that every newspaper has its own opinion on all serious national and international issues. Opinions have to be in conformity with the newspaper's policy which is determined by the proprietor/owner. The chief editor or editor as the head of the editorial department has to ensure that opinions expressed in editorials are in line with the publication's policy. The editorial page or section carries material such as editorials, special articles, letters to the editor, special columns and cartoons.

News Editing

In the **newsroom**, the news editor is the boss. He makes sure that the editorial desk operates smoothly, receives the news from news agencies, reporters, correspondents and other sources. He is assisted by a chief sub-editor, who, in turn, has four or five sub-editors to process the copy (all news items received on the editorial desk are collectively called copy, not copies). It is this desk which finalises many of the pages of each newspaper issue.

Generally, there are three shifts of the editorial desk—9.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., 3.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. to 3.00 a.m. As there are several editions of a newspaper in 24 hours to serve the readers in different cities/towns, far and near, where the newspaper/magazines are sold, the publication of these editions is timed, taking into consideration the modes of transporting copies of the papers to particular towns and cities. The newspaper/magazines copies are sent by air, rail, road, or even by specially requisitioned taxis so that the newspaper is served to the readers without loss of time. Since the newsfall has no prescribed timings, the editorial desk has to be ever ready to publish the latest news in the next editions under preparation.

News Gathering

For **news gathering**, a paper often has three categories of news reporting personnel : **Staff reporters** who collect news from the town where the paper is located; this is local news;

special correspondents/representatives who are senior and experienced journalists with 10-15 years reporting experience : they report high level political, diplomatic news. **Staff correspondents/state correspondents** who mostly function from state capitals such as Agartala, Bangalore, Calcutta, Guwahati, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Madras, Srinagar, They are known as "state bureau chiefs".

Local reporting in a newspaper is supervised by the "city editor" or "chief reporter" and political reporting by the "Chief of News Bureau". State reporting is supervised by the news editor under the guidance of resident/deputy/associate/executive/senior assistant editor, depending on the size of the newspaper or the editorial ladder in practice in that office.

The Sports and Commerce Pages

The sports desk is looked after by the sports editor, assisted by the sports reporters. Similarly, the commerce and business desk has a commerce and business editor who is responsible for the coverage of commodity markets, stocks, and share and bullion trends.

Foreign News

For the foreign news coverage, normally, the newspapers depend on international news agencies such as UPI, AP, Reuters and AFP and our own PTI and UNI. Some newspapers have their own correspondents in world capitals where newswall is frequent. These are London, New York (UN headquarters), Washington, Paris, Moscow, Beirut, Nairobi, Hong Kong, Harare, Singapore, Islamabad, Kathmandu etc.

The Editorial Page

The editorial page is the editor's responsibility. The editor has a team of assistant editors, who are usually specialists in diverse areas of current affairs on which the newspaper has to comment and come out with editorials/articles. These include economic matters : international issues— further divided into Asia, Africa, America and issues in the United Nations; national politics, and then several other subjects such as education, science and technology; women, children, other weaker sections of society; religion, community relations, etc. The editor and his assistants also receive letters from the readers, contributions from freelance writers and journalists. These are to be evaluated for use. It is the editor who has a final say in all these matters. It is also the editor who commissions special pieces from established and well-known writers and journalists.

Functionaries

Thus, you will see that we have indicated above the various wings /divisions / sections/ departments into which a newspaper/magazine organisation is divided. Each department has to discharge its own functions as sleekly as possible. The responsibility of the editorial department is to marshall all resources to produce a complete and satisfying newspaper/ magazine issue. The functionaries in the editorial department are as follows:

- Editor/Chief Editor/Managing Editor
- Associate Editor/s
- Deputy Editor/s
- Senior Assistant Editor/s
- Assistant Editor/s
- Chief/News Editor/s
- Deputy/Chief News Editor/s
- Chief Sub-Editor/s
- Chief of Political News Bureau
- Deputy Chief, Political News Bureau
- Diplomatic/Political Correspondent

Ownership patterns, organisational structures and management of mass media in India

- Special Correspondent/s
- Staff Correspondent/s
- State Bureau Chief/s
- City Editor/Chief Reporter/s
- Staff Reporters
- Stringers

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the three main operations of the editorial department of a newspaper?

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2) What kind of news and views items can one find in a newspaper?

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1.4.2 The Business Department

The business department looks after the sale of space, that is, advertising, and the sale of printed copies, that is, circulation. The advertising section is concerned with the procurement of advertisements from diverse sources such as advertising agencies, business houses and small individual advertisers. The collection of advertising revenue is the job of the advertising section in the business department.

Similarly, for the sale of the newspaper/magazine, the circulation section is charged with organizing the network of hawkers/selling agents at the station where the newspaper/magazine is published and at other place where its copies, can be sold.

The business department has two important wings:

- 1) Advertising 2) Circulation

The functionaries in these wings are as follows:

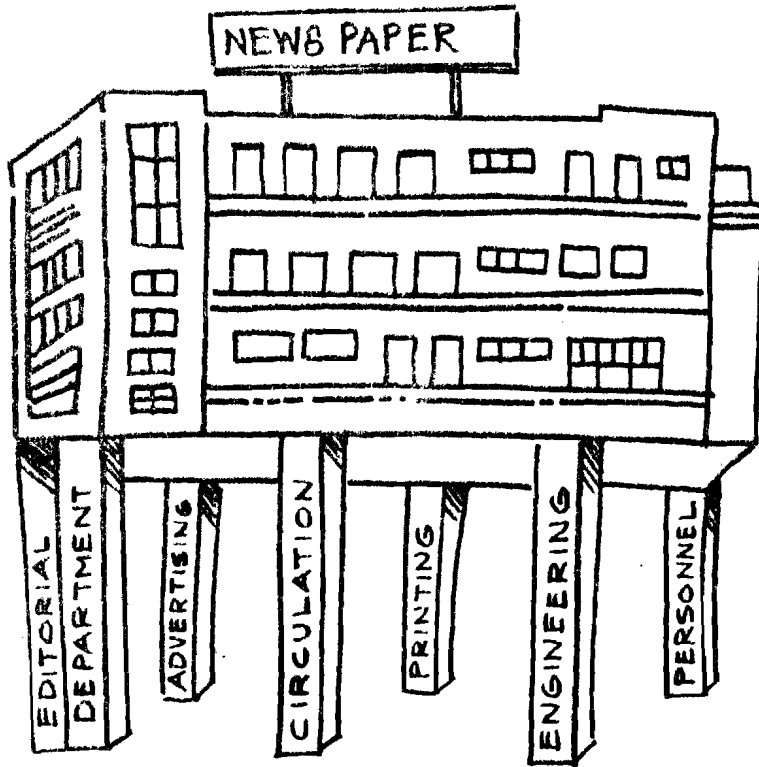
**1. Advertising
Manager**

- Display Ad. Manager
- Classified Ad. manager
- Billing and collection
- Space-selling or marketing

**2. Circulation
Manager :**

- Transportation Manager
- Packing and Dispatch Manager
- postal subscription
- ad. agency relations
- billing and collection
- print order
- circulation audit

Since the technology is changing rapidly, the engineering department keeps track of the new processes being innovated in the newspaper industry. **The Times of India** or **The Indian Express**, for example, have full-fledged engineering departments to undertake these tasks.



1.4.3 Other Departments

Other departments have their own respective jobs to perform. The print and production department organize composing, make-up, paste-up printing and production of the newspaper/magazine. The Promotion of sales and public relations activity for the unit is to be carried on regularly. This is done by the personnel in the sales promotion and public relations department of the newspaper establishment.

The general structure of these wings/sections/departments is briefly detailed here. It should be remembered that the structure of these departments is not fully identical in any two newspaper organisations:

Printing and Production

- press manager or mechanical superintendent
- composing supervisor (engineer)
- press supervisor
- paste-up supervisor
- process photographers
- platemakers
- press operators

Engineering, Equipment, Stores

- Manager computer operation
- Computer engineer
- Data processing supervisor
- Computer operators
- Programming managers
- Systems manager
- Store manager
- Purchase manager
- Store supervisor

- Manager (Personnel)
- Administrative officers
- Establishment supervisor
- Sales, promotion staff
- Public relations officer
- Sales representatives
- Agents, hawkers

1.4.4 Technological Changes

The technological changes in newspaper management and organization are taking place at a fast rate. The newspaper establishments in India are somewhat slow in adopting these changes. But it is clear that the newspaper management, organisation and structure in India are in for revolutionary transformation. All newspapers are not alike and things are bound to vary between small and big newspapers. The Proprietors of small and medium size newspapers in the country, generally tend to combine two or more of their departments and make the systems work effectively. The big newspapers such as **The Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Statesman, Indian Express, Deccan Herald, The Hindu, Ananda Bazar Patrika, Malayala Manorama, Nav Bharat Times, Mathrubhumi, Eanadu, The Tribune** and some others have evolved their own system to organise sales, advertising and overall management.

Check Your Progress 4

- Note :**
- i) Use the space given below for your answers.
 - ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the non-editorial departments of a newspaper? Mention each of them with the description of their functions in one sentence.

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2) Can an identical management structure be followed in newspaper establishments? Give reasons.

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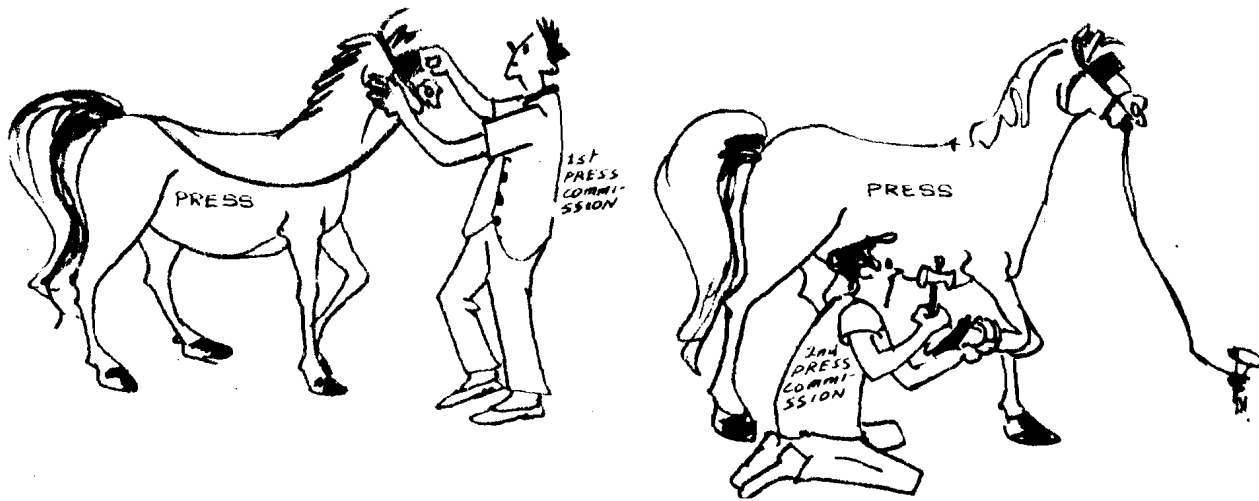
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1.5 PRESS COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION ON OWNERSHIP PATTERN

The second Press Commission which was appointed in 1978 gave its report in 1982. Among the various matters relating to the press which the Commission had examined were the issues of Ownership Patterns and of Delinking and Diffusion of Ownership and Control. In the Abstract of Recommendation, the Commission noted : "It appears to us that a very significant part of the Press in the Country in general, and a major portion of all important daily Press in particular, is controlled by persons having strong links with other business or industries."

The Commission noted that the Press is the most vital instrument in our country for educating the citizens in matters of public importance so that they may form an independent judgement to play their role as the ultimate governors of the country. It can hardly be disputed that the ownership structure of newspaper establishments, determines the character

and style of news report and news display as also the editorial viewpoint and other comments on the events of the day.



The Commission observed that “the joint stock company is the predominant type of ownership of newspapers in our country. It means generally the dominance of a few share holders. The pattern of editorial working follows the pattern of ownership. When an industrialist owns a paper, it is subsidiary to some other industrial, business or commercial interest”.

The Commission recommended as follows : “we think that in the interest of the public it is necessary to insulate the Press from the dominating influence of other businesses. We propose the enactment of a law in the interest of the general public making it mandatory for persons carrying on the business of publishing a newspaper to sever their connections with other businesses to the extent indicated hereinafter by us.” Among the many details that followed, the most significant point was that the Commission’s suggestion that in the first instance this proposed legislation “should be enforced in the case of all persons who are in a position of controlling the publication of one or more daily newspapers with the same or different titles, in one or more languages, the circulation of which, taken singly or cumulatively, exceeds one lakh copies per day”.

Check Your Progress 5

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

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

1) What was the important observation made by the second Press Commission on the ownership pattern of newspapers in India ?

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2) What was its suggestion ?

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

It will be clear to you now that a newspaper/magazine unit has to be a well organized and effectively managed institution, to make a success of the venture. As stated earlier, the business environment is changing very fast. Since the newsfall, reporting and editing are undergoing rapid transformation, the management pattern and also the organizational models have to stay in tune with these. The changes on two fronts must harmonize well. Thus, in summing up, we can say that :

- proper and effective management of a newspaper unit is necessary for its survival ;
- for this purpose, the newspaper owners and proprietors have resorted to various patterns of management and organization;
- these diverse ownership and management patterns have their own advantages and demerits ;
- a newspaper proprietor generally adopts that pattern of management which he finds more suitable to his needs and appropriate to the size and volume of the business of his enterprises ; and
- it is generally the effective and efficient type of management of a newspaper unit which helps its editorial department to produce that type of a paper which sells, and meets the readers' needs and aspirations.

Finally, we noted the observations of the second Press Commission on the issue of ownership pattern.

1.7 FURTHER READING

- 1) *The Professional Journalism* by John Johensberg, 1978, Oxford and IBH, New Delhi.
- 2) *Newspaper Economics and Management* by T.N. Sindhvani, 1979, Ankur Publishing, New Delhi.
- 3) *Strategic Newspaper Management* by Courad C. Fink, 1988, Random House, New York.

1.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) ● The readership has increased manifolds...thus the volume of the production of newspapers and distribution has increased.
● The inclusion of advertisements to make the newspaper industries economically viable.
- 2) Location : Most of the Indian newspapers are concentrated in urban areas.
Ownership : They are mostly owned by big business firms.

Check Your Progress 2

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|----------------------|---|
| 1) Column-A | Column-B |
| —A Single individual | —means a single individual who hold 100% of stocks in a company |
| —A Trust | —is a non-profit organisation |
| —A Partnership | —is a small group of individuals holding all the stocks |

- 2) ● Editorial section
- Printing and Production Section
 - Business Section
 - Equipment and Engineering Section
 - Personnel Section

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) ● Newsroom to process news
- News gathering to ensure the collection of all important news items
 - Views and opinion to reflect the policy and philosophy of the newspaper
- 2) ● Current national and local news
- Foreign news
 - Business and Commerce
 - Editorials and Opinions and
 - Sports

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) ● The Business Department: This department looks after the collection of advertisement revenues and promotes circulation and distribution.
- Printing and Production: This department looks after the printing and production of the newspaper.
 - Engineering Equipments and Store : This department looks after the procurement and maintenance of the hardware.
 - Personnel Department : Looks after the recruitment and benefits of the employees in the organisation.
- 2) Each newspaper has its own style of functioning. The management structure is evolved in an organisation over a period of time and keeps on improving as per the requirements and technological innovations. Hence, newspaper organisations may not have an identical structure but can have similar functional arrangement.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) The Second Press Commission observed that a large number of the dailies were published by those who were either owners or partners of other big business establishments.
- 2) It suggested that persons owning newspaper or newspapers with a total circulation of more than 1 lakh should be asked to delink with other types of businesses.