



LANGUAGE PRESS IN INDIA

You have learnt in your earlier lesson about the beginning of newspaper production in India. You have also learnt that the Gujarati daily Mumbai Samachar, published in 1822 from Mumbai, is the oldest existing newspaper in our country. We have also seen the cultural awakening and freedom movement that led to the growth of language newspapers.

Newspapers in India can broadly be classified into two groups - English newspapers and language newspapers. As the name indicates, English newspapers are published in English language. They are mainly published from big cities and towns.

Whereas language newspapers are published in different Indian languages. Unlike the English papers, these are available even in the interior villages of the country. Thus they have a major role in formulating public opinion across our country.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following :

- differentiate between English and language newspapers ;
- describe the history of language papers in India ;
- explain the role played by language newspapers ;
- identify news agencies ;
- understand about freelancing, cartooning and book publishing

8.1 DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

By language newspapers, we mean newspapers published in different languages spoken in the country. They are also called regional newspapers. In India, language papers are published in more than 100 languages. But the main papers are

published in 16 principal languages. Language papers vary from english papers in their style, presentation and approach.



Fig 8.1: Language Newspaper

8.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS AND LANGUAGE NEWS PAPERS

- English papers are published in one language only i.e. English, whereas language papers are published in different languages.
- English papers are mostly concentrated in big cities and major towns. Language papers are circulated all over the country.
- English newspapers cater mainly to the well-educated, middle class, upper middle class and higher income groups. Language papers are read by even lower middle class and even those below that.
- English dailies have less penetration in the rural public whereas language dailies have more penetration in the rural areas.
- English papers follow the British tradition while the language papers have evolved their own style and methods.
- More money is generated from advertisements in English papers as they circulate amongst people with better purchasing power. Language papers do not get the same amount of revenue from advertisements.
- English papers are more colourful and flamboyant. Language papers adopt a simple style.



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flamboyant : showy



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8.3 GROWTH OF LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN INDIA

At the time when India became independent, the country had only 3533 publications. Among them 330 were daily newspapers and 3203 were periodicals. After 50 years, there has been a 12 fold increase in the number of publications. In 1997, according to the data published by the Registrar of News Papers of India, there were 41705 publications among which the number of newspapers was 4719. In 2006, this has gone up to 45600 publications, in which 5600 are newspapers. At present, India has 398 major newspapers with an overall circulation of 30,772,000 copies.

India has the world’s largest newspaper market after China. While news papers are struggling in Europe and USA, in India and China there is a boom. It is interesting to note that the world’s three top countries in newspaper circulation are China with 98.70 million copies, India with 88.90 million copies and Japan with 69.10 million.

Growth of newspapers is calculated in two ways, one is by circulation and the other is by readership. One copy of a newspaper may be read by several people. If a family subscribes to a newspaper it is likely to be read by four or six members. So if a newspaper has a circulation of one lakh, its readership may be four or five lakhs.

A close study of newspaper readership in India shows that there are more readers for language newspapers. This is mainly because english newspapers are confined to cities and towns whereas language newspapers are widely circulated in the rural areas.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.1

1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word/s:
 - i) Three countries with highest circulation of newspapers are.....,and
 - ii) The growth of newspapers is calculated in two ways : and
 - iii) In India, readership is more for newspapers.

8.4 REASONS FOR NEWSPAPER BOOM

India is one of the fastest growing media markets in the world. It is not only newspapers but other media forms which are also growing at a fast pace like



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radio, television channels and internet. Let us now look into some factors that have contributed to this boom of newspapers in India.

- a) **Rise in literacy rate** : There is a steady rise in the literacy rates in all the states of our country. More and more people are being initiated into the world of reading and writing. They gradually learn to read newspapers and periodicals.

Robin Jeffrey who made elaborate studies about the newspaper revolution in India says that the fastest growth rates in newspaper circulation were in states which showed the strongest growth rates of literacy.

- b) **Expansion of the middle class** : As the Indian middle class expands, it leads to an increase in the circulation of newspapers. When a household makes economic and educational progress, they consider it as a status symbol to subscribe to a newspaper.
- c) **Untapped market** : India still has an estimated 350 million people who can read and write but do not buy any newspaper. So there is a vast segment that is still untapped as far as newspaper circulation is considered. More and more newspapers are trying to woo this section.
- d) **Education of women** : It is often said that if you educate a woman you are educating the next generation. In India women are getting more and more educated and this in turn leads to education of children. Awareness also increases along with this. It contributes a lot to the growth of readership.
- e) **Technological advancement** : In earlier days, starting a newspaper publication or establishment of a new edition was a costly affair. As technology has improved, it became easier for newspapers to start new editions. This has led to an expansion of newspapers even into small cities and towns.
- f) **Better purchasing power** : Improvement in the purchasing power of the common man is another factor which helped in the growth of newspapers. Coupled with this, newspapers also started reducing their prices. So it became affordable for the common man.
- g) **Aggressive marketing** : Newspapers and periodicals are adopting aggressive marketing strategies to attract more readers. They offer various schemes with gifts to attract subscribers. They also offer concessions for long term subscriptions. All these have resulted in an increase of newspaper sales.
- h) **Political awareness** : As people become more and more aware about political

*Untapped: unexplored**editions: versions*



developments, they show interest in reading newspapers. In India, sections of people who had earlier not shown much interest in political activities are now realizing their rights as citizens and are becoming more vigilant about their social responsibilities.

8.5 GROWTH OF LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

The reasons for the growth of newspapers in India that we have studied so far are equally applicable for the growth of language newspapers. But there are some other factors that helped the rise of the latter. During the early days, the language press was looked down upon as 'vernacular dailies' by the English press but with the rise and emergence of language media as a major force this impression has changed.

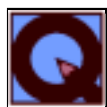
Indian economy is basically a rural economy. More than 60 per cent of our population lives in the rural areas. According to a survey by National Sample Survey Organisation, more than 16 crore households live in the rural areas.

A paradigm shift has been visible in the rural population over the past 50 or 60 years. Indian farmers, who were classified as born in debt, live in debt and die in debt, have become one of the most influential consumer groups in society now. Their income levels have increased and along with that, tastes and preferences have also shown changes. This advancement of the rural mass has resulted in the growth of language newspapers.

A marked change in the coverage of local news by newspapers is another reason for the growth of language newspapers. Earlier national and international news dominated the Indian press. But the experiment by some newspapers, especially in the southern states, of covering local news with prominence gave a big boost to their circulation. Newspapers from other parts soon copied this. Newspapers started covering issues that were concerned with the ordinary people. The rural people found that there is a medium to express their grievances and aspirations.

Starting of multiple editions was another factor that resulted in the growth of the language press. Earlier newspapers were confined to state capital cities only. But as more and more potential readers emerged from other areas, newspaper owners started editions from even district centres. Thus multiple editions of newspapers were brought out

The boom in advertising also helped in the growth of the language press. The rural mass turned out to be the biggest market for any product. For attracting them, advertisers were forced to give advertisements in local papers. This in turn resulted in an increase of revenue for the language press.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.2

- i) Give three reasons for the newspaper boom in India.

- ii) Give three reasons for the growth of language newspapers in India.
- iii) What are multiple editions?

8.6 STUDIES ABOUT THE PRESS IN INDIA

The newspaper revolution in India has always been a subject for study by researchers and different agencies working in the field. Most of the studies are done on two different periods, colonial period and after independence. Some studies further divide this into pre-emergency period and post-emergency period.

The Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI), the National Readership Council of India (NRCI) and the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) are some of the organizations which regularly conduct studies on newspapers in India. They do it as an annual exercise and publish reports. The Government of India appointed two press commissions and they have also submitted reports on the Indian media.

Apart from this, researchers and authors have done extensive studies on the newspaper revolution in India and published books. Robin Jeffrey in his book, "India's Newspaper Revolution" published in 2000 deals elaborately about the various aspects of the Indian press. "A History of Press in India" by S. Natarajan, "Journalism in Modern India" by Ronald E Wolseley, "Newspaper Circulations in India, 1998-2000" by Naresh Khanna and "Journalism and Politics" by M. Chalapathi Rau are some of the other books worth mentioning. Sevanti Ninan has written a book on the growth of the Hindi Press, called "Headlines from the Heartland". Some veteran journalists have also written articles on the growth of the Indian media.

8.7 DIVERSITY OF THE LANGUAGE PRESS

During the Independence struggle and after, the Indian newspapers had flourished and expanded, gaining wider circulation and extensive readership. Compared to many other developing countries, the growth of the Indian Press has been impressive. Apart from English language, newspapers are published in India in more than 100 languages though only 22 main languages are listed in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution.

The Registrar of Newspapers for India, in their annual report on 2006, observes:-

"In a democratic set-up, it is important that all the citizens have the right to information. The news regarding the happenings within and outside the country has to be disseminated to the people. In the past, the print media shouldered the responsibility of disseminating the news. But, today with the growth of information technology, audio and visual media are in the field with instant and wide coverage. We thought that the advent of information technology would affect



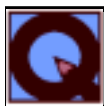


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the print media. But, it didn't happen; statistics also shows that no technology can beat the print media, which always finds its own level.

"The print media has responded to the new changes and challenges with its modernization. They have accepted the information technology, which resulted in better coverage with greater speed and affordable price. The readership of newspapers is also growing. The statistics also shows that the people prefer their regional language newspapers and that is why the regional newspapers are venturing out to bring editions from other cities where there is a sizeable population of the respective language."

The publishers, under Section 19D of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, are required to submit annual statements to the Registrar of Newspapers for India. These annual statements are the principal source of data for compilation of this report. All publishers do not submit their annual statements. Hence, the report by the RNI cannot be taken as comprehensive. It can give only a broad overview on the general trend of the Indian press based on the number and circulation of the newspapers.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.3**

1. Name two books on growth of newspapers in India.
2. Name the organisations which regularly conduct studies on newspapers in India.
3. In how many languages are Indian newspapers published?

8.8 EARLY GROWTH PERIOD OF LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

According to Naresh Khanna, who studied about the trends in circulation of regional language papers, four languages showed the fastest growth between 1998 and 2000. They are Malayalam, Bengali, Hindi and Marathi. During the same period, newspapers in seven languages showed either stagnation or decline. They are Telugu, Urdu, Tamil, Oriya and Kannada.

Malayala Manorama, a language daily in Malayalam, which was started in 1890, became the largest circulated daily in India by 1980s. Malayala Manorama continued to remain in that position for more than a decade. Ananda Bazar Patrika in Bengal continued as the largest circulated newspaper published from one centre, Kolkata. But when the hindi newspapers started expanding in a big way, they surpassed all other language papers in circulation. Today Dainik Jagaran and Dainik Bhaskar are the two largest circulated dailies with a readership of more than 20 million.

Most language newspapers have shown remarkable recoveries in circulation in the late 1990s. The National Readership Survey of 2006 revealed that newspaper

readership in rural areas has grown so fast that it paralleled the readership in urban areas.

The Report says :

“As a proportion, however, press reach has stabilized in urban India at 45%. The reach in rural India has also stayed the same at 19%, needless to say, on a much larger population base. The number of readers in rural India (110 million) is now roughly equal to that in urban India (112 million).”

8.9 RECENT TRENDS

The annual report of RNI for 2005-06 gives a clear picture of the latest trend in newspaper circulation.

“During 2005-06, 2074 new newspapers were registered. Four newspapers ceased publication. As on 31st March 2006, there were 62,483 registered newspapers on record as against 60,413 at the end of March 2005. The total circulation of newspapers increased from 15,67,19,209 copies in 2004-05 to 18,07,38,611 copies in 2005-06. The number of newspapers submitting annual statements also increased to 8512 from 7225 during the year.

As per the data from Annual Statements received, the highest number of newspapers were published in Hindi (4131), followed by English (864), Gujarati (775), Urdu (463) Bengali (445), and Marathi (328). In circulation, Hindi newspapers continued to lead with 7,66,98,490 copies followed by English with 3,41,06,816 copies. Gujarati Press with 98,44,710 copies came third. Urdu and Malayalam language press closely followed with 92,17,892 and 82,06,227 copies respectively. Among language dailies, Hindi led with 942 newspapers followed by 201 in English. The languages that published more than 100 daily newspapers were - Urdu (191), Telugu (147) Marathi (130) and Gujarati (100).

8.10 STATE-WISE ANALYSIS

As per the annual statements received during 2005-06, the number of dailies published in the country was 2130. Their claimed circulation figure was 8,88,63,048 copies, 12.93% higher than that the previous year. Hindi had 942 dailies claiming a circulation of 7,66,98,490 copies, while 201 English dailies claimed 3,41,06,816 copies.

During 2005-06, the largest numbers of newspapers were published from Uttar Pradesh (1913), followed by Delhi (1133), Gujarat (817), Rajasthan (742), Maharashtra (642) and West Bengal (505). Uttar Pradesh topped in total circulation, with 3,32,91,882 in 2005-06, followed by Delhi with 3,06,03,048 copies. Maharashtra retained its third position with 2,04,72,8281 copies.



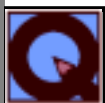


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Uttar Pradesh had the largest number of daily newspapers (384), followed by Maharashtra (206). Daily newspapers are published from all the States. However, no circulation details were made available from the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

Dailies from Uttar Pradesh with a total circulation of 1,34,92,557 copies were at the top, followed by Maharashtra with 1,05,37,174 and Delhi 88,08,045 copies.

A notable feature was that Orissa achieved the distinction of publishing newspapers in 17 major languages. Delhi and Maharashtra came next with 11, Kerala 9 and Gujarat with 6. Uttar Pradesh published the maximum number of newspapers in a single language i.e., 1608 in Hindi. Other states with notable number of language newspapers were Rajasthan 701 in Hindi, Delhi 594 in Hindi, Gujarat 741 in Gujarati, West Bengal 389 in Bengali, Madhya Pradesh 466 in Hindi and Maharashtra 312 in Marathi. It was also noticed that regional language newspapers were leading both in number and circulation in all major States.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.4**

- i) Which is the largest circulated daily in your area?
- ii) In which language is the highest number of newspapers published in India?
- iii) Which state has the largest number of newspapers published in a single language?

8.11 CIRCULATION AND READERSHIP LEVELS

Which is the newspaper you are subscribing in your house? Is it an English newspaper or a language newspaper? How many people read the newspaper in your house? Have you observed that one copy of a newspaper which is reaching your house is read by more than two or three people. In some houses, it may be read by even five or six people. You may also find that your neighbours also read the same paper. Have you ever visited a library? There you will find one newspaper being read by several people.

You have to learn two aspects from this. One is the subscription or circulation of a newspaper. The second one is its readership. You must know that even if only one copy of a newspaper is subscribed in a house, it may be read by many people. Therefore, a newspaper having one lakh circulation may actually be read by about five lakh people.

Let us see how the circulation and readership of a newspaper is calculated? In India there are two primary institutions which maintain a record of circulation and readership of newspapers. Let us list them. 1. The Registrar of News Papers for India (RNI). 2. The Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC).



- **The Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI)** : The government of India established the RNI in 1956 on the recommendation of the first Press Commission .The RNI oversees the activities of the press in India. They annually publish Press in India reports which gives an idea of circulation as well as readership figures. As per the advertisement policy of the government of India for the release of government advertisements, a newspaper should have a minimum circulation of 2000 copies. RNI has a website <http://rni.nic.in> from where all details are easily accessible.
- **The Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)** : is not a government organisation. It was established in 1948 by the association of publishers and advertisers. The Audit Bureau of Circulation has established the National Readership Studies Council (NRSC) which is constituted by the Advertising Association of India, ABC and Indian News Paper Society. They conduct readership surveys of newspapers and weeklies in India every six months.

ABC has a website www.auditbureau.org .

- National Readership Studies Council (NRSC) also has a website www.nrsc.in



Activity 8.1

Go through the websites of RNI, ABC and NRSC and find out the ten largest circulated newspapers in the country. You may also find out ten newspapers with the largest readership as well as the ten largest circulated weeklies in the country. Prepare a chart with all these details for future reference.

8.12 SOME UNHEALTHY TRENDS

Though growth of language newspapers is a welcome sign there are also some areas of concern. This is because intense and fierce competition often results in unhealthy practices. One such practice is predatory price wars. One Newspaper reduces the price resulting in an increase of its circulation. But this will soon be retaliated by further price cut by rival papers. One good outcome about this price war is that readers benefit by reduced prices, but small and medium newspapers suffer because they cannot afford to have price cuts to increase circulation.

Excessive dependence on advertisement revenue is also not good for newspapers. Government advertisements account for more than 50 per cent of all advertisements in Indian papers. This monetary incentive makes newspapers to limit criticism of the government policies. Cut-throat competition is also a threat to journalistic norms and values. There are instances of media excesses and media trials, fake sting operations, criminal trespassing of privacy, glamourization of criminals and mafia dons, promotion of hatred among communities and inflaming of raw emotions. Media houses also resort to mud slinging through advertisements to show that their publication is superior and the products of rivals are inferior.

Media houses sometimes try to woo more subscribers by offering gifts and concession coupons.



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8.13 FUTURE OF THE LANGUAGE PRESS IN INDIA

India is one of the fastest growing economies. One significant feature of this growth is the narrowing of the urban and rural divide. Globalisation also leads to this transition. The rise in literacy, more educational opportunities, growth of industry, emergence of a new middle class, modern communication systems and enhanced purchasing power, have all combined to help in the increased circulation of language papers.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.5

- Mention two unhealthy trends in the newspaper industry
- Give two examples of price wars.
- What is the future of language newspapers in India?



8.14 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Definition of language newspapers
- Differences between English and language newspapers
- Growth of language newspapers in India
- Reasons for the newspaper boom in India
- Factors which helped the growth of language papers
- Recent trends in circulation of papers
- Some unhealthy trends in the newspaper industry
- The future of language newspapers in India



8.15 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- What are the differences between English papers and language papers.
- Analyse the reasons for the newspaper boom in India.
- What are the factors which helped the growth of language papers.
- Give an account of recent trends in circulation of papers.
- Discuss about some unhealthy trends in the industry.
- How do you see the future of language newspapers in India ? Explain.

**8.16 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- 8.1** 1. i) China, India and Japan
ii) circulation and readership
iii) language
- 8.2** i) Refer to section 8.4
ii) Refer to section 8.5
iii) Refer to section 8.5
- 8.3** i) Refer to section 8.6
ii) Refer to section 8.6
iii) more than 100 languages
- 8.4** i) the answer would vary from learner to learner.
ii) Hindi
iii) Uttar Pradesh
- 8.5** i) Refer to section 8.12
ii) Refer to section 8.12
iii) Refer to section 8.13

**Notes**