

GROWTH OF INDIAN PRESS

The history of the Indian Press had begun with the coming of the Europeans. The Portuguese were the first European nation who brought a printing press to India and the first book published in India was by the Jesuits of Goa in 1557.

In 1684, the British East India Company had set up a printing press in Bombay. But for a period of a century, no newspapers were published in the company's territory.

It was William Bolt, who prepared to publish a newspaper in India but without success.

The person who pioneered in the field of newspaper in India was James Augustus Hickey. In the Year 1780, he for the first time published a newspaper in India entitled "**The Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser**". But due to his outspoken criticism, Hickey's press was seized in 1782.

A

After the seizure of Hickey's newspaper, in the following year a number of newspapers were published such as- THE CALCUTTA GAZETTE (1784), THE BENGAL JOURNAL (1785), THE ORIENTAL MAGAZINE OF CALCUTTA OR CALCUTTA AMUSEMENT (1785), THE CALCUTTA CHRONICLE (1786), THE MADRAS CORIER (1788), THE BOMBAY HERAD (1789) etc.

At this stage, these newspapers and journals acted as the intellectual entertainment of the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians. At the absence of any press laws, the newspapers were solely depend upon the mercy of the Company's officials.

THE CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS ACT,1799

Press Censorship was imposed by Lord Wellesley in the year 1799 and imposed strict restriction on the newspapers published from India.

According to the Act:-

- The newspapers instructed to print clearly the every issue, the name of the printer, the editor and the proprietor.**
- The Publishers had to submit all the material for pre-censorship to the Secretary to the Government.**
- Breach of these rules were punishable offence.**

THE LICENSING REGULATION, 1823

As per this regulation:-

- **Every printer and publishers had to obtain a license for starting a Press.**
- **The printing or publication of any material without license Rs. 400/- penalty was imposed.**
- **The Governor General had the right to revoke a License.**
- **As a result of this restriction the newspaper “Mirat-Ul-Akbar” published by Raja Ram Mohan Roy had to stop.**

THE LIBERATION OF INDIAN PRESS, 1835

- **It was Lord William Bentinck, who adopted a liberal policy towards the Indian Press. During his administration, it was Charles Metcalf who repealed the obnoxious ordinance of 1823.**
- **Even Lord Macaulay, a true Whig, supported a free press in India.**
- **The result of this liberal Press policy, which continued till 1856, was the period of rapid growth of Indian Newspapers all over the country.**

THE LICENSING ACT OF 1857: - The situation caused by the Sepoy Mutiny, bound the Government to reimpose restriction on press.

THE REGISTRATION ACT, 1867:- This act made it compulsory to registration of printing press and newspapers.

THE VERNACULAR PRESS ACT, 1878

The Vernacular Press Act had empowered:-

- According to the Act, it was instructed to the vernacular newspapers not to publish anything that excite feelings of dissatisfaction against the British Government.
- On the above measure, the magistrate's action was final and no appeal could be made to the court.

Due to its dominating nature, the Act was known as the Gagging Act. The Act was repealed in 1882.

THE NEWSPAPER ACT, 1908:-

- **This Act empowered the Magistrates to confiscate printing presses, property connected thereto of newspapers.**
- **The Local Government was empowered to annul any declaration made by the printer and publisher of an offending newspapers.**
- **Under this obnoxious Act, the Government launched prosecutions against 9 newspapers and confiscated seven presses.**

THE INDIAN PRESS ACT, 1910:-

Through this Act, the British Government further sought to strengthen the control on the vernacular newspapers.

As per the Act, the Local Govt. were empowered to demand at the time of Registration security not less than 500/- and not more than 2,000/-.

Under the Act, action was taken against 991 printing presses and newspaper.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

? Who was the Chairmen of the Press Committee of 1921.

➤ Sir Tej bahadur Sapru.

? In which year did the Vernacular Press Act pass.

➤ 1878.

? Who was known as the “Liberator of the Indian Press”

➤ Charles Metcalf.

? Who introduced the Censorship of the Press Act and when.

➤ Lord Wellesley in the year 1799.

? Who was the pioneer of the Indian Newspaper

➤ James Augustus Hickey.

? What was the first newspaper published from India.

➤ The Bengal Gazette.