

## **Press And Public Opinion : The Role Of Kannada News Papers In Northern Karnataka Region**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Journalism was one of the earliest forms of mass communication to emerge and acquire institutional and social recognition since 15th century. Journalism was in practice since the days of Roman civilization. The vernacular journalism as opposed to distinct English journalism is one of the historical truisms. In reality the vernacular Journalism is quite promising and powerful in terms of information diffusion and public opinion formation. The present study analyses the history of journalism in India and Karnataka in particular in a historical perspective. The main objective of the study is to find out the role of press in molding in public opinion. This paper sprucely gives an overview of the role of Kannada news papers in creating public opinion in northern Karnataka region in a sociological perspective. The study has revealed many interesting findings in respect of the role of Kannada news paper in the emergence of a state and also its contribution to freedom struggle, state unification and public opinion at large in the Northern part of Karnataka and state as a whole.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Indian journalism, press in Karnataka, influence of press, social change, impact.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Communication is considered as an instinct and a characteristic of all living organisms. Mass communication is one of the most useful contributions of modern civilization. It is an important source of public information not only to individuals, but also society as a whole. Communication has been able to integrate human beings in society. Modern civilization is greatly benefited by knowledge system and its application for fostering species within the system of knowledge. Communication has been accorded greater importance in modern times and has wider usage and ramifications. Communication is a promoter in the growth of society and an important factor in the process of socio-economic development, political and national integration. Communication is perceived as an essential component of national development and political integration as well as knowledge. It has been largely influenced by communication discipline, science, literature, art, linguistics and other philosophical ideas. Communication has played a vital role in the development, preservation and dissemination of knowledge since time immemorial. The role of communication is very crucial in the advancement of education as well. Therefore, communication has multidisciplinary ideas and multidisciplinary approaches. The emotional aspect of communication has been adequately articulated in psychology and is regarded as a procedure by which one realizes himself. The role of communication is integrated to the centrality of the truth. (Sereno and Bodokin). Traditionally communication is perceived as a source of knowledge. Communication finds a supreme form of expression of human experience and beauty, i.e. satyam, shivam and sundaram. The effects of communication in modern society are multifunctional and multidimensional.

### **II. INDIAN JOURNALISM**

Journalism was one of the earliest forms of mass communication to emerge and acquire institutional and social recognition since 15th century. Journalism was in practice since the days of Roman civilization. Roman, Greek, Mesopotamian and other axis civilizations have practiced journalism in one form or the other. The dominance of Anglo Saxon power during the colonial rule is part of history. News books, Newsletters, corontos, news magazines and news papers are some of the examples in the evolutionary process of modern journalism. Modern journalism came to India as part of British legacy with the publication of Bengal gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser in the year 1780 by James Augustus Hicky. Raja Ram Mohan Roy brought a revolution in the history of vernacular journalism by publishing three vernacular news papers. News papers have rendered yeoman service to the Indian public and political service to the democratic aspirations of people. News papers have played a number of roles in performing their duties to the society. Journalism and its commitment to the public service and search for the truth in public life are exemplary.

(Nadig Krishnamurthy, 1966). The first war of Indian Independence was responsible for the introduction of Gagging Act of 1857 resulting in restriction on the Indian press. The Indian press tackled a variety of native issues such as sati, caste system, widow remarriage, anti- English sentiments, polygamy and other public problems. The Indian press vigorously promoted Indian way of life. The English press served largely the interests of English educated people. Balagangadhara natha Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo Gosh, B.B.Upadyaya, B.N.Dutta, Annie Besant, N.L.Kelkar and a host of other national leaders took to journalism in a big way. The press played a heroic role during freedom struggle after independence. The Indian press emerged as a national player and public service Institution. English journalism in India served as a propaganda instrument of British raj. On the other hand Indian language journalism reflected Indian aspirations.

### **III. THE PRESS IN KARNATAKA.**

Kannada journalism is an important segment of Indian journalism. The vernacular journalism as opposed to distinct English journalism is one of the historical truisms. This may be seen in the contemporary growth of Indian Journalism with the numerical dominance of language press. In reality, the vernacular Journalism is quite promising and powerful in terms of information diffusion and public opinion formation. The German Missionaries and Christian scholars established the first printing press and publishing centers in Karnataka. Kannada newspaper has a legacy which reflects patriotism, public service and professional excellence. Kannada press has contributed immensely for the national independence, unification of Karnataka, democratic evolution, social change, economic development, cultural revolution and all-round progress of the state, The

public at large have actively patronized the professional Journalism in Karnataka. Many stalwarts have sacrificed their lot for the development of the Kannada Press. Prominent among them include-Henry Moegling, M. Venkatakrishnaiah, YajamanVeerabasappa, Dr.D.V. Gundappa, T.T. Sharma, P.R. Ramayya, B.N. Gupta, Moharay HanumathaRao, R.R. Diwakar, N.S.Hardikar, B. Puttaswamaiah, T.S. Ramachandra Rao and a galaxy of other media personalities. The emergence of vernacular journalism in all the Indian languages is an important development in the history of Indian journalism. It is evident that news papers encouraged almost simultaneously due to British influence in all the Indian languages. The numerical dominance, growth and influence of language journalism in India would testify the emergence of press in the languages including Kannada press. Kannada journalism was largely influenced by the active interest and the participation of many distinguished editors who were also eminent writers in Kannada language. The influence of English press and vernacular journalism was tremendous.

The growth of press in Mysore, Bangalore, had its impact on people of Mumbai-Karnataka also Hubli, Dharwad, Belgaum and a few important centers saw the growth of press in Mumbai-Karnataka. It is recorded that the first news paper to be started in Mumbai-Karnataka was the Subuddi Prakashika in 1849. The well known writer Dr.D.V.Gundappa was the first to write a brief outline of the development of Kannada journalism in Mysore state. In his book *The Press in Mysore state*, Dr.D.V.Gundappa had observed that Karnataka prakashida was the first news paper started in old Mysore state in the year 1859 at Mysore city. Dr.D.V.Gundappa estimates that the Kannada journalism emerged in Karnataka due to the active participation of many eminent journalists like Bhasym Bhasyacharya, Venkatakrishnaiah and soon. Dr.Nadig Krishnamurthy in his book *Indian journalism* writes that the first news paper ever to appear in Karnataka was an Urdu news paper. The first Kannada news paper according to Nadig Krishnamurthy was Kannada Samachara, which was started at Bellary in the year 1843. The early Kannada news papers were started by Christian missionaries. According to him early Kannada news papers were benefited by the efforts of Christian missionaries such as Basel, Wesleyan and other Catholic Christian service institutions dedicated to the religious and educational services. Hosagannadadha Arunodaya by Dr.Sreenivasa Havanoora is the first serious research work which has established that the first Kannada news papers ever to be published in Karnataka was the Mangalooru Samachara by Basel mission in Mangalore city first. (Nadiga Krishnamurthy, 1966) Sreenivasa Havanoora clearly provides historical evidence to prove that the very first news paper of Kannada was Mangalooru Samachara in 1843. Kannada Samachara was another news paper started by the same missionaries at Bellary later.

Sreenivasa Havanoora also confirms that Christian missionaries were responsible for establishing a printing press, publishing Kannada books and starting journalism first in Karnataka. Kannada journalism flourished later in Bangalore, Mysore, Hubli and other small towns. (Sreeivasa Havanoora,1974) With the starting of the Karnataka Prakashika. Kannada press emerged as an important purveyor of public opinion in the princely Mysore state, Mysore Gazette (1866), Hitabodini (1881), Vritanta Chitamani (1885),

Vrithanta Patrike (1887), Suryodaya Prakashika (1888), Karnataka Kesari (1888), Kannada Nadegannadi (1895), Mysore star (1900), Vokalgara Patrike (1907). Samacahara Sangraha(1907), Mail (1908), Hero (1910), Mysore Times (1910), Karnataka (1913), Viswa Karnataka (1921), Tai Naadu (1926), Janani (1934), were some of the other important news papers of old Karnataka . News papers also appeared in Kodagu, Mangalore and other districts under Madras presidency. Mumbai Karnataka emerged as one of the primary arena for state unification. A number of news papers appeared as an answer to the growing popularity of Marathi news papers in Belgaum and Hubli - Dharwada region.

#### **IV. THE INFLUENCE OF PRESS:**

The influence of press in Mysore and Bangalore citees was felt in this region also. The Indian war of Independence had its impact in Karnataka including Mumbai Karnataka. A few important revolutionary news papers in the manu script format also appeared in the small towns of Mumbai Karnataka, such as Naragunda, Ramadurga, Jamakhandi, Gadag, Dharawad, Hubli and a few other nearby small towns. Young nationalists used news paper handouts in order to fight against the East India Company. Some of the leading news papers during this time were Lokashikshana, Karnataka vrita, Lokabhandu, Rajahamsa, Dhanajaya, waged a war against the British government and administration, negative impact of Marathi on Kannada language literature and fractionalization of Karnataka state. Mudaveedu Krishna Rao who started Karnataka Vrita took the lead in moulding public opinion in establishing a unified Karnataka state. Mudaveedu Krishna Rao is considered to be the doyen of journalism in Mumbai Karnataka region. The press did not emerge in Hyderabad Karnataka region, such as Rayachuru, Gulbarga and Bidar districts. News papers from Hubli, Dharwada, Belgaum and Hyderabad were circulated in this region also. Subudhi Prakashaa was the first news paper to be published from Belgaum in 1849, Hithechu (1880); Vijay, Raja Hamsa, Karnataka, Chandrodaya and Karnataka Patra (1884), Lokashikhana (1885), Karnataka vrita, Kannada Kesari, Karnataka Vibhava (1895) were some of the historically significant news papers of the region. Karmaveera (1921), Samyukta Karnataka (1929) two prominent news papers appeared in Hubli. The weekly Samyukta Karnataka was converted in to a daily news paper in 1933 and the Lokashikshana Trust took complete control of the paper in 1948. Mohare Hanumata Rao and R.R.Diwakar, Narayana Rao Joshi was the prominent editors who were responsible for the growth of the news papers. The press played a crucial role in public life of Hubli, Dharwad, Belagaum and Gulbarga region. It is in this context that the Lokashikshana trust in Hubli region emerged as a revolutionary modern professional publishing house. This publishing house published a number of historically significant news papers in Karnataka. The paper Samyukta Karnataka emerged as a house hold name and a great voice of North Karnataka region. The paper became a major national institution and a training ground for some of the leading journalists of Karnataka.

#### **V. DISCUSSION**

Kannada language has a rich legacy, so is its literature. Kannada literature is much older than Kannada journalism. Though Kannada is a classical language of south India, its journalism is hardly 170 years old. Kannada journalism has earned a great name today at the all India level. A few prestigious news papers of the county are being published in Kannada. More than 125 books relevant to the present study have been reviewed in order to construct a comprehensive historical overview of the growth and the status of press in Karnataka in general and Kannada journalism in particular. Primary sources, most of the available books, all the back volumes of available Samyukta Karnataka news paper copies have been reviewed in order to understand and classify the data on the historical role played by the Samyukta Karnataka in the public life in our state. The original writings of Mohare Hanumantha Rao, R.R.Diwakar and other leading journalists of the time have been reviewed. The important articles published in the sister publications such as the Karma Veera, the Kasturi and other journals and books have been reviewed for the purpose of present study. The major issues addressed by the Samyukta Karnataka paper was content analyzed and editorial contents was reviewed in order to evaluate the performance of the Samyukta Karnataka. All the credible primary sources were reviewed to develop an insight in to the historical emergence of press as an institution.

The history of Indian journalism has been chronicled in the three important books namely, 'The Indian press: A History of the growth of Public Opinion in India', by Margarita Barns. B.M.Sankhder's Press, Politics and Public Opinion in India and J.Natarajan's History of Indian Journalism. Another land mark book, Press, Politics and Public Opinion in India by Dr. B.M.Sankhder which has given a detailed account of the emergence of press as an instrument of public opinion and as a public institution in India since the days of William Bolts. Dr.B.M.Sankhder was the first historian to scan the original pages of early news papers of India and reflect on the historical relevance, contents and social values of the period.

He has given a detailed reports and account of how Journalism was practiced and how public contents responded to the news during that period which has a pastime to the elites more than anything else. He has also analyzed the major undercurrents of public opinion in India. (Shankhder. B.M -1985). J. Natarajan s account of Indian journalism is an official interpretation of the emergence and back ground to Indian Press. The book has depicted the chronological data pertaining to news papers in India till 1947. Many of the original pages of press history have been reprinted in this book. ( J.Natarajan,1962). Dr.Nadiga Krishna Murthy in his classic reference book on Indian journalism has offered a systematic outline and the growth of the press in India with a detailed reference to Indian language journalism. Dr.Nadiga Krishna Murthy has maintained that English journalism was the first to emerge in India where as language journalism became popular later. He is the only one author who has given an excellent account of this growth of journalism in all the Indian languages from its origin. In this book he has offered a bird's eye view of the growth of Kannada journalism. According to Dr.Nadiga Krishnamurthy, Kannada Samachara was the first to emerge in Bellary and also he has maintained that pure public service and nationalism were promoted by the Samyukta Karnataka news paper in North Karnataka region. (Dr. Nadig Krishnamurthy,1966).

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The present study has revealed many interesting findings in respect of the role of Kannada news paper in the emergence of a state and also its contribution to freedom struggle, state unification and public opinion at large in the Northern part of Karnataka and state as a whole. Mumbai Karnataka was a popular expression refer to North Karnataka region until the state unification was don as part of visala Mysore region. Hubli-Dharwad, Gadag, Gulberga, Belgaum, Bidar, Raichuar were some of the major towns which played a very major role in the formation of public opinion during freedom stugle and the state unification. The press in Hubli-Dharwad, unique and indipendent acted as purviear of public opinion. The press in North Karnataka region is more than 157 years old. However a Marathi weekly called Dharwad vritha was the first paper published from Dharwad city. The early newspapers were published in Marathi and some of their bi-lingual like Kannada and Marathi. Dharwad was the cradel of early press as the region was ruled by Peswas and later British, Dharwad was the hedquarters of the southern maratha country. Marathi news papers were encoureged and developed very early as the lingua -franka was Marathi. The schools and colleges used Marathi language of institution. The language of administration was largely responsible for the emergence of marathi news papers in Mumbai Karnataka region. Dr.R.V.Dharwadkar a noted Kannada literey historian has documented in his book Patrika vyavasaya ( proffesion of journalism) published in 1947. That Chawa was published from Dharwad town in 1840. Dharwad vritha another Maratahi weekly was also published in this time. Chabaku of Trayambja Ramachandra Padaki, Chandrodaya by G.H.Honnapur matta, appeared around this time.

Belagaum Samachar a Marathi weekly, Karnataka Mitra, Janodaya were some of the early Marathi news papers to appear from Belgaum. Shubuddi Prakashana the first kannada weekly was published from Belagaum. The Samyukta Karnataka was the first important news paper founded by Lokashikshana Trust to make a mark first in Belagaum and later at Hubli. The Samyukta Karnataka though had humble beginnings has contributed historically for the freedom movement and assumed leadership roles on a variety of social, political and public affairs. The growth of nationalism in Karnataka was largely supported by the founders of the Samyukta Karnataka such as Mohare Hanumantha Rao, R.R.Diwakar, V.B. Joshi, H.R. Purohit and a host of other prominent journalists who were associated with the growth of the Samyukta Karnataka news paper. More than any other news paper it was the Samyukta Karnataka which was in the forefront of freedom movement, strove hard for state unification as Kannada speaking people were fragmented in five different language-administrated areas of south India. The Samyukta Karnataka enjoyed immense popularity by its experiment in its news coverage, localization and national outlook. The Samyukta Karnataka was the single news paper which made a mark at the national level until 1960 s as its two prominent editors were associated with the national media industry, professional organizations and also political and public life.

Historical data has revealed that there is a correlation between state unification, movement and supportive editorial contents in Samyukta Karnataka. The Samyukta Karnataka took the leadership role in uniting the Northern Karnataka region with the main stream Karnataka. (Vishala Karnataka). Various developmental schemes were taken up by the government for the reconstruction of neglected parts of North Karnataka region. The Samyukta Karnataka news paper waged a crusade for the overall growth of the North Karnataka region and also Kannada language. It crusaded in the political unification of the state and kannada language development. The Samyukta Karnataka strove hard for the economic development of the region by encouraging the government and other privet sector banks. The news paper also supported the cause for good education in the region by encouraging starting of new educational institutions.

The Samyukta Karnataka struggled hard for the unification of the state, not only politically but also encouraging integration of rail and road network with the rest of state in the country. The Samyukta Karnataka news paper also created awareness about the importance of .The Samyukta Karnataka has championed a number of issues pertaining to socio - economic development and reconstruction agenda of the state. The Samyukta Karnataka emerged as a news paper par excellence which contributed to the growth of the state in general North Karnataka region in particular. The agenda set by the Samyukta Karnataka paper successfully generated positive public opinion not only in North Karnataka but also outside the state. It is to the credit of the news paper that a number of technological achievements were in corporated by the news paper and emerged as an ideal media institution in our country.

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