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THE ROLE OF PRINTING PRESS IN SAVING LINGUISTIC IDENTITY OF ODISHA WHILE IDENTIFYING WITH NATIONALISTIC SENTIMENT

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ABSTRACT

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the printing press played a significant role, serving as a double-edged sword, satisfying regional linguistic identity requirements while also increasing nationalistic sentiments for freedom. This vital role of the printing press, as well as its capacity for mass communication and mobilization, is discussed in this article. It is obvious that it was one of the most effective tools for recognizing Odisha's diversity and distinction from neighboring areas, as well as for uniting sentiments with the nation.

Communication between humans dates all the way back to the dawn of humanity. It is unknown when humans began to rely on a particular device or method of communication. However, it is generally accepted that non-verbal communication is the most primitive form of human communication. Numerous communication systems have begun to develop as a result of the rapid growth of Science and Technology. One of the most remarkable outcomes of the industrial revolution was the development of mass communication, and the twentieth century can fairly be considered the true era of news media development. Mass communication is still in its infancy in contemporary human history.

Mass media as a concept is a sociological phenomenon. It has a profound effect on society because it is intrinsically linked to people. Individuals, institutions, society, and culture all bear significant consequences when mass media is used as a tool of social power. A study of mass media, particularly print media, i.e. newspapers, in a particular area primarily identifies their status, growth, and impact on the populace. This article is a replication of a study conducted in Odisha. The study discusses the history, growth, and development of news in Odisha.

Western culture had a profound effect on Odia people's social lives. When the people of Odisha dreamed of developing an intellectual environment, the press, as a vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge and wisdom, came as a blessing to the Odisha soil. In 1837, the Christian Missionaries established a press in Cuttack called 'The Cuttack Mission Press' as part of their efforts to spread the Christian religion. The state was devastated by the great famine of 1866. The people's precarious situation knew no bounds, and the British government was completely incapable of resolving the crisis. To alleviate the above-mentioned intolerable situation, the people's plight was significantly impacted by the state's first-ever historic famine. The importance of a newspaper as the primary carrier of information was felt universally at the time. Gouri Shankar Ray, a well-known Odia young man, began publishing 'Utkal Dipika', the very first newspaper of its kind in the Odia language, in 1866. It continued to publish its message until 1934, despite numerous ups and downs.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Odia literature and language underwent a formative period. This time period saw a crisis not only as a result of drought, but also as a result of a cultural threat. As a result of the absence of a separate independent state, the very existence of the Odia language presented a problem for many. Thus, the neighbouring states, particularly the Bengal province, had a detrimental effect on Odisha's unified language, which had a severe effect on the state's culture. Due to the British Government's complete indifference and the Bengali language's strong influence, efforts were made to abolish the Odia language and replace it with Bengali as the medium of instruction in Odisha's schools.

Fakir Mohan Senapati, widely regarded as the father of modern Odia literature, founded a newspaper in Balasore in 1868 called 'Sambad Bahika.' During that time period, one king, Baikunthanath Dey, established a press and began publishing a newspaper called 'Utkal Darpan'. Through the publication of their respective newspapers, they both became pioneers in the development of the Odia language and literature.

Considering the effectiveness of print media and people's growing awareness of their language and reading habits, the trend toward expanding printing presses has become not only popular, but also imminent. In different towns throughout Odisha, presses such as Mayurbhanja Press (1879), Bamanda Press (1885), Jagannath Ballav Press (1887), and Utkal Darpana Press (1902) were established during that period. These printing presses were primarily concerned with the publication of periodic newspapers and magazines.

Their journals were extremely influential in the second half of the nineteenth century socio-religious ferment in Odisha. The Odia language and literature, which have come under severe attack from some Englishmen and non-Odis, may be saved through the sustained efforts of several of these journals. Establishing printing presses undoubtedly aided in the development of Odisha's national consciousness. Periodicals, which embodied the people's awakenings, addressed a variety of socio-religious and political issues.

Babu Khirod Ray Choudhury founded the "Star of Utkal" newspaper in Cuttack in 1905. From Parlakhemidi, the great seat of Odia culture, literature, and music, an English weekly titled "Ganjam News" was published to advance Odisha's cause. The other Ganjam newspapers during that era were Odia Weekly, "Odia Hitavadini" from Berhampur, "Ganjam Guna Darpan" from Digapahandi, and "Utkal Vasi" from Ichhapur (now in Andhra Pradesh), all of which were published to advocate for the establishment of a separate Odisha province based on language, culture, and literature, as well as to advance the cause of freedom.

Another publication titled 'Nava Sambad' appeared in Balasore during the Swadeshi Movement. Both Balasore's 'Nava Sambad' and Cuttack's 'Utkal Deepika' rallied to the cause of 'Swadeshi'. These two newspapers expressed their views on the Swadeshi movement's potential to stimulate the production of "Swadeshi" goods in Odisha in their respective writings dated 30th August and 2nd September 1905.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the need for the invention of the Odia typewriter was felt strongly in order to ensure the proper growth and development of Odia journalism, as well as the development of language and literature, and in the early 1940s, a brother of Sashi Bhusan, Ranganath Mahapatra of Surada, Ganjam invented the first Odia typewriter. The Odia typewriters were manufactured in

Germany and were installed in several offices shortly after the formation of the independent Odisha Province on 1st April 1936.

"Samaj," Cuttack's Odia daily, was founded as a weekly in 1919 by Pandit Gopabandhu Das to promote the country's cause of independence. Das continued his unrelenting fight against the British rulers through the newspaper's columns, never succumbing to the British Government's pressures and temptations.

The development of the press and journalism during the British period resulted in numerous changes in the lives of Odisha's people. The growth of the press and the establishment of journals and newspapers in Odisha increased public awareness of various facets of life, such as social, political, economic, and cultural. It raised public awareness about the British Government's evil rule in Odisha. Additionally, it instilled in the people of Odisha a sense of nationalism.

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