

STUDY MATERIAL OF SEMESTER III HONOURS- PAPER- C6 HISTORY AND INDIAN MEDIA

Vernacular Press Act :

Vernacular Press Act, 1878 a highly controversial measure repressing the freedom of vernacular press. The regime of viceroy lord lytton is particularly noted for his most controversial press policy which led to the enactment of the Vernacular Press Act on 14 March 1878. Earlier, dramatic performances act (1876) was enacted to repress the writing and staging of the allegedly seditious dramas. Vernacular Press Act was aimed at repressing seditious propaganda through vernacular newspapers. Introducing the Bill the Law Member of the Council narrated how the vernacular newspapers and periodicals were spreading seditious propaganda against the government. The viceroy Lord Lytton strongly denounced the newspapers published in the vernacular languages as 'mischievous scribblers preaching open sedition'. He remarked that the avowed purpose of most of the vernacular newspapers was an end to the British rule.

The newspapers that made the government worried were Somprakash, Sulabh Samachar, Halisahar Patrika, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Bharat Mihir, Dacca Prakash, Sadharani and Bharat Sanskarak. All these papers were said to have been leading the seditious movement against the government.

The Act provided for submitting to police all the proof sheets of contents of papers before publication. What was seditious news was to be determined by the police, and not by the judiciary. Under this Act many of the papers were fined, their editors confined. Obviously, this repressive measure came under severe criticism. All the native associations irrespective of religion, caste and creed denounced the measure and kept their denunciations and protestations alive. All the prominent leaders of Bengal and of India condemned the Act as unwarranted and unjustified, and demanded for its immediate withdrawal. The newspapers themselves kept on criticising the measure. The succeeding administration of Lord Ripon reviewed the developments consequent upon the Act and finally withdrew it.

DTH :

DTH stands for Direct-To-Home television. DTH is defined as the reception of satellite programmes with a personal dish in an individual home.

DTH does away with the need for the local cable operator and puts the broadcaster directly in touch with the consumer. Only cable operators can receive satellite programmes and they then distribute them to individual homes.

How DTH differ from cable TV:

The way DTH reaches a consumer's home is different from the way cable TV does. In DTH, TV channels would be transmitted from the satellite to a small dish antenna mounted on the window or rooftop of the subscriber's home. So the broadcaster directly connects to the user. The middlemen like local cable operators are not there in the picture.

DTH can also reach the remotest of areas since it does away with the intermediate step of a cable operator and the wires (cables) that come from the cable operator to your house. As we explained above, in DTH signals directly come from the satellite to your DTH dish.

Also, with DTH, a user can scan nearly 700 channels.

DTH offers better quality picture than cable TV. This is because cable TV in India is analog. Despite digital transmission and reception, the cable transmission is still analog. DTH offers stereophonic sound effects. It can also reach remote areas where terrestrial transmission and cable TV have failed to penetrate. Apart from enhanced picture quality, DTH has also allows for interactive TV services such as movie-on-demand, Internet access, video conferencing and e-mail. But the thing that DTH has going for it is that the powerful broadcasting companies like Star, Zee, etc are pushing for it.

history of DTH in India:

DTH services were first proposed in India in 1996. But they did not pass approval because there were concerns over national security and a cultural invasion. In 1997, the government even imposed a ban when the Rupert Murdoch-owned Indian Sky Broadcasting (ISkyB) was about to launch its DTH services in India.

in 2000, DTH was allowed. The new policy requires all operators to set up earth stations in India within 12 months of getting a license. DTH licenses in India will be valid for 10 years. The companies offering DTH service will have to have an Indian chief and foreign equity has been capped at 49 per cent. There is no limit on the number of companies that can apply for the DTH license.

cable television :

cable television, generally, any system that distributes television signals by means of coaxial or fibre-optic cables. The term also includes systems that distribute signals solely via satellite. Cable-television systems originated in the United States in the late 1940s and were designed to improve reception of commercial network broadcasts in remote and hilly areas. During the 1960s they were introduced in many large metropolitan areas where local television reception is degraded by the reflection of signals from tall buildings. Commonly known as community antenna television (CATV), these cable systems use a "community antenna" to receive broadcast signals (often from communications satellites), which they then retransmit via cables to homes and establishments in the local area subscribing to the service. Subscribers pay a specified monthly service charge in addition to an initial installation fee.

Since the mid-1970s there has been a proliferation of cable-television systems offering special services. Besides bringing high-quality signals to subscribers, the systems provide additional television channels. Some of these systems can deliver 50 or more channels because they distribute signals occurring within the normal television broadcast band as well as nonbroadcast frequencies. A frequency-conversion device is connected to the television set of the subscriber to accommodate these signals of nonbroadcast frequencies. The increased number of channels allows expanded programming, including broadcasts from distant cities, continuous weather and stock-market reports, programs produced by community groups and educational institutions, and access to pay-TV program materials such as recent motion pictures and sports events not telecast by other broadcasters.

Another feature offered by more and more cable operators is two-way channel capability, which enables subscribers to communicate with programming facilities or information centres within the system. Using the cable connection, home viewers can, for example, participate in public-opinion polls or call up various kinds of written and graphic materials (e.g., citations from reference books, concert schedules, and recipes). The latter feature is offered by systems called videotex, which were first introduced in Great Britain and West Germany. Two-way cable-television systems increasingly allow subscribers with home computers to link up with computer networks, giving the subscribers access to data banks and permitting them to interact with other online users. Cable operators have also experimented with video compression, digital transmission, and high-definition television .

In the United States, government deregulation of the cable-television industry in the 1990s allowed cable companies to experiment with telephony and allowed telephone companies to distribute cable-television programming.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the reformist, journalist :

Ram Mohan Roy was born on 22 May 1772 in Hindu Brahmin family in Hooghly, Bengal. Roy held various positions of eminence throughout his life, as he pioneered the first wave of reform in the country. He worked as a munshi in Murshidabad and later as an assistant to an official at British East India Company. It was in 1829 that the Mughal ruler of Delhi gave him the title of Raja, although it wasn't recognised by the British.

While Roy is remembered for the role he played in abolishing the social evils of sati and child marriage in India.

Roy's foray into journalism, too, was one of his many attempts to bring about a change in the socio-cultural landscape of the country through learning and education.

He started the first Bengali language weekly newspaper and the first newspaper in an Indian language, called Sambad Koumudi, in 1821. The weekly newspaper advocated reading habits, the importance of discussion as well as the need for education for all. In 1822, he also published a Persian journal, Mirat-ul-Akbar.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy was described by Jawaharlal Nehru as a founder of the Indian press. Roy's contribution to Indian language journalism is unparalleled. Ram Mohan Roy stood for a free press. He founded the Sambut Kaumudi (moon of intelligence) in 1821 in Calcutta. Due to the success of another rival newspaper named Samachar Chandrika Roy was forced to close it down in 1822. However it was revived the following year. Roy also started a newspaper in Persian 'Mirut ul Akhbar'(mirror of news)in 1822, but shut it down in 1823 due to protests against the Press Regulations Act of 1823. He also brought out a religious periodical, the Brahminical Magazine, to counteract the missionaries propaganda. Three journals, all connected with Rammohun Roy, the Reformer, the Inquirer and the Gyan Auneshun representing the school of progressive Hindu journalism held the field in Bengal till as late as 1891.

Amrita Bazar Patrika :

In 1878, the British enacted a draconian law called the Vernacular Press Act in a bid to curtail criticism of the government in the local language press. One Bengali bilingual publication, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, refused to be cowed down. As the Act applied to publications in Indian languages, the way out would be to publish the paper exclusively in the English language. And that's precisely what it did.

The day after the Act was promulgated, the newspaper started publishing only in English and continued, with no change in content or stance, to challenge and critique the colonial government.

The legendary Amrita Bazar Patrika and its journalists were at the forefront of India's struggle for Independence, and early proponents of the concept of press freedom. Many even claim that the Vernacular Press Act was mainly targeted at the Amrita Bazar Patrika since its sharp criticism of the British was making the colonial government uncomfortable.

The English language press, by and large, would favour the British Raj.

Amrita Bazar Patrika was first published on 20 February 1868 by two brothers in undivided Bengal's Jessore district, now in southwestern Bangladesh.

Sisir and Motilal Ghosh belonged to a rich Bengali merchant family. They first published Amrita Bazar as a weekly and the paper began to roll out from a wooden press that, at that time, cost the brothers Rs 32.

According to a report in ScoopWhoop, one of the first issues the newspaper took up was the struggle of the indigo farmers against the oppressive fiscal policies of the British.

In 1871, the paper had shifted its base to Kolkata from Jessore and started to publish as a bi-lingual Bengali and English weekly. From 1891, Amrita Bazar became a daily.

After the retirement of Sisir Ghosh, his son Tushar Kanti Ghosh took over. He began to oversee the running of the paper from 1931 and was its editor till the very end — till 1991. An editor for 60 years, Ghosh is known as the 'dean' of Indian journalism.

The paper finally shut its press in 1991 after a run of 123 years.

Jugantar Patrika :

Jugantar Patrika was a Bengali revolutionary newspaper founded in 1906 in Calcutta by Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Abhinash Bhattacharya and Bhupendranath Dutt. A political weekly, it was founded in March 1906 and served as the propaganda organ for the nascent revolutionary organisation Anushilan Samiti that was taking shape in Bengal at the time. The journal derived its name 'Jugantar' from a political novel of the same name by Bengali author Shivanth Shastri. The journal went on to lend its name to the Western Bengal wing of the Anushilan Samiti, which came to be known as the Jugantar group. The journal expounded and justified revolutionary violence against the British Raj as a political tool for independence, and denounced the right and legitimacy of the British rule in India. It was also critical of the Indian National Congress and its moderate methods which was viewed as aiding the Raj. Its target audience was the young, literate and politically motivated youth of Bengal, and was priced at one paisa.

The paper rapidly acquired a broad popularity, at one time having a readership of 20,000. Bhupendranath Dutt served as the editor of the newspaper till his arrest in 1907, although it also published articles from a number of noted Bengali revolutionaries including Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Aurobindo Ghosh. It faced prosecution a number of times by the British Indian government for publishing seditious articles. Bhupendranath Dutt was arrested in 1907 for publication of articles "inciting violence against the Government of India", for which he was sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment. The paper was ultimately forced to shut down in 1908, amidst financial ruins following the prosecutions, and after the passage of The Newspapers Act in June 1908 which made its position vulnerable.