

## **Evolutionary Process of Media in India: A Study with Special Reference to Ancient India**

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### **Abstract**

There are various rudimentary needs of a man to live a positive and peaceful life in the materialistic cosmos. A bread to live is just not a successful approach of living a virtuous and a balanced human life but various approaches of life count for a better human life. It is veracity that food is the foremost demand of human body to be alive but wisdom, consciousness, communication, analytical thinking and intelligence make a man a complete human being and an intellectual being. Thus, a hunt for knowledge and information are not new phenomenon as it is an old phenomenon as the humans themselves. It is a nature of man to receive and share information and do as per the information he gets or knows. It means this interest arises to know new information or knowledge made by man about the new ideas, information, knowledge, innovation, progress and go getter of the society through communication information. This is information which brings change for the development of human being society which he had not achieved earlier.

Key words: Media, Ancient, Evolution, Communication

### **Introduction**

Media is all time a part and parcel of human life since the advent of human civilization on the ground. Furthermore, from the era of Vedic and Upanishads to the prescripts of emperors just like Chandragupta, Asoka and other kings of those days and to the era of print media, electronic media, new media and social media, mass media has performed an essential role in promoting the human society all time. The newspapers like 'Maratha' by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and newspaper 'Young India' by Mahatma Gandhi played as a public forum of the needs and demands of the general public to express their emptiness with Indian freedom fighters during the freedom struggle of India. After the Independence of India mostly in post-independence epoch, media stepped up prodigiously

## The initial stage

Origin of Indian Press during ancient period of India goes back to painting period in the caves by early man as he lived in caves in the forests. The early man had no knowledge of printing and dialect script. Then painting took place as a communication tool in the courts of kings of ancient times.

It was the era when education used to be meager and as a result it could not disseminate about the tools of mass communication and public transportation was also meager as well. The position of news was also orally through the channel of mouth. According to the Hindu mythology or Hindu belief there was a man who disseminated news orally to both the masses of earth and heaven. That man did the work of both newspaper and a reporter. That man was sage *Narada* who is considered as the first journalist as well a reporter. Sage *Narada* kept the rulers up to mark verbally with current information of life of the masses and other incidents. Sage *Narada* did the work of a messenger of the messages, and later on the messages took place in the form of written words.

The starting proof of a media organization was found in the contexts of *Manusmariti* in India. *Manusmariti* is a legendary document as Manu divided it into two internal sections namely organization of external wisdom and organization internal wisdom. In the context of external wisdom, Manu used to advise that they should appoint ambassadors who should be learned men, and even they could comprehend the signals, expression and gestures of their rulers. Next, Manu advised that internal wisdom should be constituted in dual form of external wisdom and internal wisdom. The source of news as per the dual wisdom was considered first from the administration of the king and then from the side of spies.

Another tool of communication was monks who used to visit here and there and disseminated information, messages, sermons and ideas to the public through verbal communication or oral communication. The oral method of communication in the ancient times was both the mixture of bad news and good news. Furthermore, the drumbeating and bush firing were used to disseminate information, news and views as this method was the symbol of bad news and good news. Each method of communication was used to as per the requirement of the masses to fulfill the demands of the time.

Likewise, there were various examples of communication prevalent in the society of ancient time. There was not a fixed definition of news as per the theory of communication but painting on walls was a sense of news method. But it is not clear-cut evidence about such methods of communication till the time of Indus Valley

Civilization as it is not so easy to find out those evidences of the early methods of communication. But to some extent, the States, kings and civilization of those days are the evidences of communication in the form of history and manuscripts. In olden days, inter-personal communication was much in use as the area of the kingdoms/States and small population of the subjects. So, the inter-personal communication was more in use.

To sum up, we can say that there are different ways of human communication through which the views, information, messages are disseminated from the origin source to the target destination. But main thing is that content of the message/information/views or news should be effective and authentic from the both sides of sender and receiver.

### **Press in Rig-Vedic Era**

In the Rig-Vedic era, the baton of the monarch was limited by the '*Sabha*' and '*Smiti/people's committee/People's Assembly*' which worked under the popular body of that assembly and committee. In that assembly and committee, the all people of the State were considered to be attending as an assembly and committee members. It was imperative that one individual deployed to look after the outgoing activities within the State. Moreover, the monarch deployed spies who were called '*Spasa*' to vigilance over the behaviour of the masses. The first task of the *Spasa* was to collect news/information and then disseminate it to the monarch/king. The king was also called '*Mahajan*'.

During this era there are various proofs of communication as the monarch used to deploy the spies to watch over the kingdom and those spies collected information/news and send it to their king in the context of happenings/incidents outgoing in the kingdom. Furthermore, the *head* of the village and the members of the *Sabha* and *Smiti* were used to be as a link between the monarch and the subjects regarding the information/news incidents in the kingdom while the village heads were reputed persons and assumed reputed office regarding convey the messages or news from king's behalf to the subjects of the kingdom.

There was three-tier way system of communication in this period. The monarch was at the center point of communication, spies and the stewards were at the other point of conveying communication. The one weak aspect of it was that the proceeding of the communication way was not as fast as it dependent on the nature of the State but it was for the sake of the public.

### Press in the Epic period

During the Aryan times, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were the holy epics of the Hindus as they are today. The epic *Ramayana* is pertaining to *Treta-yuga* while the epic *Mahabharata* is pertaining to the *Dvapara-Yuga*. The main thing of the both era was it that news/informations/messages were collected through the news agents who were spies and they disseminated news/informations orally. In the Ramayana times, *Hanumana* was an ambassador to the levee of *Ravana* in the context of disseminate the message from the side of *Lord Sri Rama* in order to return back *Sita*, the wife of *Lord Sri Rama*.

On the other side, Mahabharata is full of miracles powers and many tales of the lives of mythological humans of epic period. Mostly verbal communication was in use during that era of Mahabharata. That verbal communication had its influence over the humans of that time.

No doubt, there was plethora of communication through the secret communicators who used to communicate information and messages to the king but messages were disseminated by ambassadors in general.

### Period of Mauryan

According to Kautilya, as he remarked in his creation '*Arthashastra*,' there were ten kings in the Maurya dynasty. Those kings ruled from 320-185 B.C., and Kautilya also mentioned that there were 18 wings of administration in the Mauryan regime. He also remarked that intelligence was one of those genres of the Mauryan administration. The common public was informed through the messengers of Mauryan regime. Those messengers disseminated the messages of the king to the public and the feedback of the public opinion was provided to the king as well. There were spies who disseminated messages through writing mode, codes and folk-lore or songs but messages or code-messages were kept hidden within the musical devices and dresses. Drum-beating communication was also in use to disseminate message to the subjects of the Mauryan Empire.

Maurya Empire was one of the mighty Hindu Empire. The Great Asoka, the grandson of the Chandragupta of Maurya Empire, formed his own tools of communication for the sake of his subjects. The declarations made by the monarch of Maurya Empire were remarked on the edicts, stone pillars and royal copper plates on way to the palace. The day to day news/information was published in the form of picture mostly on the walls of the temple building. Those pictures were published in ink or colored. The messengers of the King communicated

messages of the king to the gathering of the people by beating drum. Those messages were used to the new policies made by the ruler.

The king Asoka had appointed his spies and supervisors who gave report to the king about all activities of the officials and departments of the kingdom, and those spies and supervisors were deployed in each department of the kingdom. Those spies and supervisors who did the work of a reporter were most respected in the court of the king, and king also heard them carefully.

Many regulations made by the great king Asoka (c.273-236BC) were embossed in the rock edicts. This news process was just like the modern style of news. The great king Asoka used the same method of communication as the modern government use media for disseminating government's policies to the public but there is no evidence of censor of news by royal law. There it is mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra that there was a provision of punishment to those who did ramification of fake or false news or rumours in the empire of Chandragupta Maurya (c.324-300BC). The spies and reporters also find mention in Arthashastra and the Rock Edicts.

In the Maurya period, the communication was in the mode of popular communication as communication was ushered between the king and the public through instructions and royal messages to the public. The messages were disseminated according to the description of the news content and the onlookers. There were various modes of news or messages as coding messages through coding language and songs. Next, drum-beating was in use for disseminating information/messages to the subjects.

This is the Mauryan Period which witnessed India as a communication centre to other communities across the world. The messengers and reporters were in touch with in the context of information, news and messages to the subjects and other foreign kingdoms. That is why the reputation of India reached to the other kingdoms of the world.

### **Sum-up**

India has a rich heritage and legacy as far as its contribution to media and communication is concerned. Especially in Ancient India there is reference of Media organizations and media professionals contributing towards the evolution and development media in India. One finds a thin line of systematic development of

Media as a tool of communication in Ancient India. This contribution later on developed into a strong structure as is evident from media of modern times in India.

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