

LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN INDIA: A THEMATIC APPROACH OF ODIA PRESS

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Abstract: Odisha, previously Orissa (the ancient Kalinga or Utkal) is an Indian state which lies on the East coast of India. It was ruled over by Ashoke, Samudragupta, Sasanka and Harsh over different period of time. From the 14th Century, successive Muslim rulers ruled over Odisha. During the British rule in nineteenth Century, Odia speaking areas were scattered indiscriminately .The British occupied Odisha in 1803. In 1912 Odisha separated from Bengal and finally with strong fight for independence state it became a separate state province on 1st April, 1936. Odisha became the first state to be carved out on the basis of language.

Odia is one of the classic languages of India. The earliest script found in Odisha is the Brahmi which was used by Ashoke in pillar inscription at Dhauli Buddhist sanctuary near capital city of Bhubsneswar. Gradually Sanskrit, Palli and Kalinga scripts were in use. The proto odia script was developed in eleventh century AD from which the modern Odia script developed.

With advent of freedom movement and increase in literacy rate, the language press has assumed significance. Language newspapers have evolved their own pattern and guided by their own experience. They publish news and views of local interest.

Journalism in Odisha started in late in comparison to its counterparts in other languages. Still it play a pivotal role in moulding the social and political life of the state and for awakening consciousness among masses.

With this backdrop the present paper is developed to have a basic idea on odia press and to have a thematic analysis of Odia newspapers during colonial period.

Keywords: Odisha, Odia, Language newspapers, Journalism, Thematic analysis, Colonial Period.

1. INTRODUCTION

Odisha, previously Orissa (the ancient Kalinga or Utkal) is an Indian state which lies on the East coast of India. It was ruled over by Ashoke, Samudragupta, Sasanka and Harsh over different period of time. From the 14th Century, successive Muslim rulers ruled over Odisha. During the British rule in nineteenth Century, Odia speaking areas were scattered indiscriminately .The British occupied Odisha in 1803. In 1912 Odisha separated from Bengal and finally with strong fight for independence state it became a separate state province on 1st April, 1936 .Odisha became the first state to be carved out on the basis of language.

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Objectives:

The basic objective of the paper is to have an analysis of themes of Odia newspapers over the period of time. The other objectives are

- To discuss the growth of newspapers in Odisha
- To have a thematic and periodical classification of odia press
- To discuss the themes of odia newspapers during colonial period

Methodology

The present paper is a part of an extensive research work on Odia language newspapers. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected from sample readers of Odia newspapers through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data have been collected from various journals, periodicals, newspapers, books, official publication of I & B, PIB, RNI and ABC.

2. THE JOURNEY OF ODIA PRESS

The journey of journalism in Odisha is a tale of one and half century only. History repeats itself; the origin of the newspaper throughout the world always reflects the theme of suppression, oppression and repression of common people. The same story is also repeated in the history of journalism in Odisha. The newspapers always undergo with various stages and themes to make them refined and polished. From the year 1849 to 2009 Odisha has also witnessed various historical, political, economic and cultural ups and downs, which are presented in the pages of various newspapers which can be considered as the theme of the press. Though it is pretty difficult to categories the theme of the newspapers, on a broader sense, it can be divided on the basis of historical, political, economic, social and cultural changes.

The colonial rule, infect was a blessing in disguise for the origin of newspaper in India and also in Odisha. The British took over Odisha in 1803 after nearly two and half centuries of Afghan, Mughal and Maratha rule. However Odisha had no press until first four decades of the nineteenth century. Still she had in the preceding ages her own improved means of communication system giving publicity to the ideas. The several pillar inscriptions of ancient Odisha bear the testimony to the claim. Even in those days of poor period a hand written newspaper in Odia was published by one saint named Sadhu Sundar Das under the title *Kujibar Patra* towards the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ Copies of the paper were prepared on the palm leaves, where matters of Hinduism, Christianity etc. were discussed. Besides, lively articles on education, health, agriculture and the importance of music were placed in it. The paper was circulated among some ex-princely Kings. Subsequently some other handwritten papers were believed to be there in Odisha during the

Maratha rule although their names are still in darkness. These papers continued for a short span and had little influence on the locality where these were being published.²

Stages of Development

Before classifying the theme of the newspapers, the growth and the developmental stage of newspapers in Odisha should be highlighted briefly. Broadly the growth of the newspapers can be divided into two categories viz. (i) Newspapers in pre-famine Era or Missionary Era (ii) Newspapers in post famine Era.

1866 AD, the year of Na-anka (the great famine) can be regarded as a landmark in the history of Journalism in Odisha for two reasons. The first one is the great famine 'Na-anka' broke out in this year. The second one is this famine inspired the intellectuals of Odisha to publish a newspaper to tell the miserable conditions of the famine victims and the negligence of the British Government which led to the birth of *Utkal Deepika* in 1866. It is called a newspaper in true sense. But it is also observed that some newspapers were also found between 1837-1865 which can be considered as newspapers of pre-famine era or missionary era.

The various stages of development in Post Famine Era along with the time period can be categorized as below.

- i) Colonial period - 1866 — 1947 AD
- ii) Post Colonial period - 1948 — 1977 AD
- iii) Modern period - 1978 — 1990 AD
- iv) Post Modern period - 1991 — 2009 AD.

The thematic and periodical classification of Odia newspapers has been depicted in Chart 1.

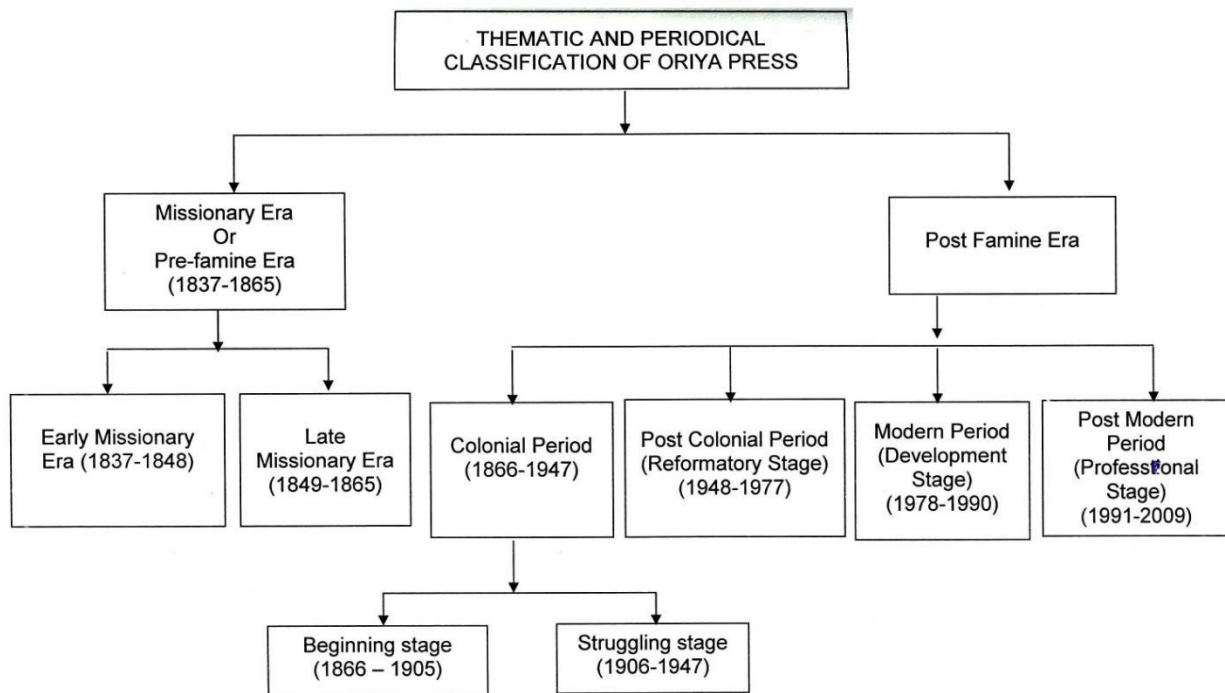


Chart 1 : Thematic and Periodical Classification of Odia Press

Pre-Famine Era

A discussion on the themes of the newspapers in the pre-famine era is done here. For the first time on 20th September, 1804 an Odia Newsletter was carved out and printed in the annual report of Fort William College³. It was in the year 1837 a missionary named Reverend C. Lacey brought a hand managed press on the request of local missionaries from Britain to Odisha which was operated in the next year with a few Odia letters brought from Serampore of Bengal⁴. The first printing press in Odisha known as Cuttack Mission Press was established in 1838 and was first of its kind in Odisha. The missionaries brought out three journals. The first Odia magazine *Jnanaruna* was published in 1849 with Reverend Lacey as its editor. The second Odia journal *Prabodh Chandrika* was published in the year 1856 and the third one *Arundoya* was subsequently published in 1861⁵ on behalf of the Indian Language Society which was mostly dealt with Christianity and the excessive power enjoyed by the British in Odisha. This was followed by the publication of many other journals, the foremost among them was the Baptist Mission in English. But the missionary journals were short lived.

Thus missionaries had taken a pioneering role to introduce the press and publish news and magazines mostly due to the spread of western education and the intrusion of the missionaries in large numbers to Odisha. But by this time missionaries had no direct relation with the Odisha politics nor did they have political influence. Moreover, people of Odisha adopted indifference attitude towards the missionaries⁶. Hence the missionaries lacked courage to give vent to difficulties, aims and aspirations of the Odias before the British authority through the press and get them redressed. To bring before the public the real difficulties of the Odia people the necessity to start a press and print newspapers was felt by a few native enterprisers. This was the theme of the newspapers in the pre-famine period or missionary era. Thus the period of 1849 to 1866 can be noted down as the early stage of journalism in Odisha.

Post Famine Era

Before describing the themes of newspapers in post famine period, another Classification of the development of Odia newspapers can be presented here. Chronologically the growth of press and newspapers may be divided in to five main divisions Viz.

- 1) Handwritten manuscripts before the arrival of printing press,
- 2) Propagation of Christianity by missionaries and fear of general public and their allegiance to the British India Company,
- 3) Protection of the interest of Odia Community and development of language and literature,
- 4) Formation of a separate integrated state of Odisha and drive for spreading National Movement,
- 5) The revival of nationalism and rights of citizenship among the mass and file for democratic up level after independence⁷.

This division also clearly reflects that the sole aim of pre-famine period or missionary era, which is otherwise known as early stage of newspaper, was to propagate Christianity among the general public.

The growth of press and language journalism in the post famine period resulted in a very significant growth of social, political, economic and cultural consciousness among the masses and putting forth their grievances through a democratic channel like newspaper. They silently nourished the bitter discontent against the British rule for a long period. Newspapers like *Utkal Deepika* (1866) from Cuttack, *Bodhadayini* and *Balasore Sambad*

Vahika (1869) from Balasore, *Sambalpur Hitaisini* from Bamanda (1889) and *Asha* (1913) from Berhampur came into existence, which were able to cater the needs of Odia people in all the ways.

As undercurrent of discontent was hidden behind the long oppressive rule of the British in the first half of the nineteenth century, it was echoed in the ears of British authorities either directly or indirectly.

Colonial Period

Previously the growth and development of newspaper is divided into four categories. The first one is colonial stage starting from the year 1866 to 1947 AD which covered almost 81 years. This colonial stage can also be classified into two sub stages viz. **i) Beginning Stage (1866 to 1905AD), and ii) Struggling Stage (1906 to 1947 AD).**

The period from 1866 to 1905 AD can be considered as the beginning stage of newspapers in Odisha. This period cover the early stage of nationalism. The period from 1906-1947 can be regarded as the struggling stage of Journalism. This period is known as the later part of nationalism. In this stage Indian freedom struggle had set out its journey. The press of Odisha was indirectly participating in the freedom struggle. Simultaneously the British Government withdrew the freedom of the newspapers and passed various acts from time to time. For example in the year 1908, Incitement of Offence Act was introduced. Just after two years in the year 1910, the Indian Press Act was enacted which granted more power to the Government for granting license to the printing press. Another act named Criminal Amendment Act was also introduced in the year 1913 which made the Indian Press Act, 1910 more rigid. The Government had taken action against 355 newspapers. It had cancelled the license and forfeited the amount and granted imprisonment to editors.

The year 1918 also gave birth to another new Act known as Indian Press Act. The premier Odia newspaper, the *Samaj* became the victim and its editor Gopabandhu Das was imprisoned.

Similarly the year 1923 yet considered as another black year in the history of newspaper in Odisha when Official Secret Act was introduced to squeeze the freedom of the press. Another Act namely Indian Press (Emergency Power) Act was promulgated in 1931. In the year 1933, four ordinances were issued on the basis of which stringent actions were taken against the press supporting the Civil Disobedience Movement. These ordinances were in force till 1939 when the Second World War broke out. During 1942, 92 newspapers were the victims of this Act.

During 1906-1947 AD, freedom struggle continued to gather momentum. The British Government was anxious to enlist the support of the press in the war efforts. But the press was inclined to go with nationalists in their struggle for freedom. During these periods newspapers supported the freedom movement. So, this period can be termed as the struggling stage

in the growth of newspapers. Last but not least, it can be concluded that during the colonial rule the theme of revolution had biased the history of newspapers in Odisha and also in India. Formation of Odisha as a separate province, Odia Language Movement, Prajamandal Movement and merger of princely states were the central theme of the struggling stage of Journalism in Odisha.

15th August 1947 is a red letter Day in the history of India. On this day all Indian became free from alien rule and they learned to live with aspiration. From that day itself the intellectuals prepared a blueprint for a better independent nation. India was searching a new path to place herself in the world of progress. Social, political, economic and cultural development of Indians was the first and foremost aim of the country. Though India was free from alien rule Indians couldn't make themselves abstain from many social stigmas like caste system, untouchability etc. The original Indian culture was hidden behind the curtain during many years of alien rule. So the intellectuals first tried to make Indians free from misbeliefs and prejudices and to change their mindset and perceptions to bring a social, cultural, political and economic reformation.

The various five year plans were initiated to strengthen the backbone of Indian economy. On the whole India was running through a process of change and reformation. The process almost remained unchanged till the national emergency. The emergency (25th June 1975 to March, 1977) was a black period both in the history of India and the history of newspapers. Emergency left an adverse impact upon press. The press all through the years was under censorship. Amalgamation of various news agencies in India brought storm and reform in history of journalism in India and Odisha. After the new Government came into power at the center in March 1977, the Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matter Act was repealed, and the Parliamentary Proceeding (Protection of publication) Act was re-enacted. The censorship on newspapers was abolished. The Constitution (45th Amendment) Act, 1978 was passed by the Parliament providing constitutional authority to Feroz Gandhi Act. A reformation in the field of journalism was held possible for this Act. So the period of 1947 to 1977 AD can be termed as the post-colonial period or reformative of journalism.

From the year 1978, the newspaper industry got momentum and a large number of language newspapers came into existence. Feroz Gandhi Act inspired and encouraged the growth of language newspapers through out the country including Odisha. The newspapers like *Nayabati* (1978), *Dahana* (1978), *Nabaprava* (1981), *Yugavarta* (1981), *Dinalipi* (1981), *Khabar Kagaj* (1982), *Lokakatha* (1983), *Sambad* (1984) etc. came into limelight in Odisha.

However, with the publication of *Sambad* in 1984 a new era of journalism started in Odisha. *Sambad* is the first newspaper, which has brought a radical change in the field journalism. In later stage it also could able to change the perceptions and attitudes of the people. It has brought and invoked a revolution in the area of journalism. It has also shown its novelty in every aspect and arrested the attention of readers by its novel ideas. *Sambad* is the first regional newspaper to adopt the modern technology in the area of printing. From the very beginning it has rejected the letterpress printing technique and adopted offset printing and also paved the way for other newspapers. It has also incorporated an idea that newspaper can be an industry and journalism can be a profession.

The four fascinating mantras of *Sambad*, which attracted readers and changed their perceptions about newspapers, are.

- ❖ Gone are the days of stale news.
- ❖ Eyes will be arrested.
- ❖ Seven to seventy: appeasements for all.
- ❖ All Sundays are days of colour.

Sambad is the first newspaper to take initiative to publish morning Daily in Odisha and for this it deserves a special place in the history of Odia journalism.

Sambad also started a thematic revolution in Odisha in the field of newspapers or journalism. 'News' or 'information' is not the sole theme of newspapers; this concept was injected by *Sambad* for the first time. Sections like sports, entertainment, cinema based features, news on soap operas etc. got an entry to the pages of newspapers. *Sambad* also has taken attempt to serve fast and fresh news to its readers. For this reason it introduced multi edition system. It has also set an example for other Dailies in this aspect. After *Sambad*, all the premier Dailies in Odisha followed its footprint and

modern printing technology, new theme in the pages of newspapers remained the vital part of newspapers up to 1990 AD. This period can be described as the **modern period or developing stage of journalism**.

With the advent of liberalization, privatization and Globalization, a sea change has been marked in the field of journalism. The first change is found in the field of technology. In fact Information Technology revolution of nineties left positive impact on newspapers. During 1980-1985 letterpress was used by 70% of the existing newspapers. But after nineties the scenario is changed. By 2001, there was a quick shift to more innovative techniques of printing like rotary, offset and web offset modes using laser and colour technology for the newspapers. Running on line newspapers, also known as web newspaper have started existing on the World Wide Web or Internet. Modern printed newspapers all over the world are developing and running web newspapers. System of going on line has created more opportunities for the newspapers. It allows newspapers to compete effectively with broadcast journalism by presenting breaking news online in a more timely manner than printing allows. The credibility and strong brand recognition of well established newspapers and the close relationship they established with advertisers (particularly in the case of language newspapers) are also seen by many in the news paper industry. It is a positive symptom for the language newspapers to maintain their existence. The movement away from the printing process helped the newspapers to decrease costs as no printing cost is there. Besides, the online publication not only allow for instant upgrading of news stories in text but also allow equal opportunities to access for disable group as well as adding more interesting features to the viewers to drag their interest. Simultaneously, they collect more revenue by getting more opportunity for advertisement. As distinctions between modes of communication became blurred and as mass communication transforms itself everyday with innovations, anyone having a cell phone may now be in instant contact with news and world wide events instantly. Most of the leading Odia language newspapers have caught the spirit of the day. Dailies like *Dharitri*, *Sambad* and *Samay* have their online connection on the web.

Another significant development in the language newspapers of Odisha during this decade is the development of the Odia Script. Some students armed up with a good journalism degree with sound academic background entered in to this field.

This period made a significant development in various ways and contributed a lot to the field of journalism. This age can be remarked as post-modern period or the professional stage of Odia journalism.

Themes of Newspapers During Missionary Era : The Early Stage (1849-1865)

Soon after the British conquered Odisha, the Christian missionaries initiated their activities in this province. Reverend Calaudicks Buchanon, Chaplain of Fort William in Calcutta passed through Odisha in 1806 and watched the car festival of Lord Jagannath at Puri which attracted them towards Odisha. William Cary, the Baptist Missionary of Serampore brought out the Odia version of the New Testament in 1809 which was the work of an Odia scholar, named Purushottam Pandit. A number of missionaries such as William Brampton, James Pegg, Charles Lacey and Amos Sutton came to Odisha in 1820 and carried on their activities.

By translating the Christian tracts and gospels in to Odia language, the missionaries somehow initiated the development of modern language, prose and literature, although their translation was defective. Some of the missionaries wrote non-Christian books in Odia language. For example, Sutton wrote Odia Grammar, History and Geography and compiled a dictionary in Odia language. The missionaries established a printing press in Odia language⁸.

The missionaries published a magazine called *Jnanaruna*, edited by Reverend Lacey in 1849 from Cuttack Mission Press. It was followed by a second magazine *Prabodh Chandrika* edited by William Books, which came into existence on 20th December 1856. The third one, *Arunodaya* was published in 1861 on behalf of Odisha Christian Vernacular Literature Society. It dealt with religious preaching and publication of Government news bulletins⁹. The overall theme of the above magazines was socio-religious reformation. In fact the sole aim of these magazines was proselytization. For achieving that objective they wanted to inform and instruct the public about there rights and duties. They even tried to spread education among the public through newspapers. Though the central theme of these newspapers was to propagate Christianity, still it paved the ways for journalism in Odisha. Though these papers do not deserve to be called as newspapers in true sense but it has showed a green signal for journalism in Odisha.

Table 1 gives a bird's eye view of the theme and the periodicals of the missionary Era.

Table 1: Themes of Newspapers During Missionary Era : The Early Stage (1849-1865)

Themes of newspapers	Name of the journals	Edited by	Year
1. To spread education among the Oriyas.	Jnanaruna	Reverend C. Lacey	1849
2. To drag them out from the social stigma.	Prabodh Chandrika	William Brooks	1856
3. To propagate Christianity, religious Preaching, publishing Govt. news and bulletin.	Aurunodaya		1861

Themes of Newspapers During Colonial Period: The Beginning Stage (1866-1905)

The British conquered Odisha in 1803 and printing periodicals in Odisha had its arrival in 1849. Though Odisha was then under the British rule, she could not feel the adverse impact of colonialism till 1857. The year 1857 when the Sepoy Mutiny started is considered as the beginning point of nationalism. The early part of nationalism started from here. Just after a decade in 1866, *Utkal Deepika*, the first truly newspaper came in to existence, which raised its voice against the British. So in the history of journalism of Odisha the year 1866 can be considered as the beginning stage of colonial period.

The period 1866-1905 witnessed an awakening in Indian society. The awakening was basically the outcome of the impact of western civilization upon the Indian society and the English educated elite was its spearhead. Growth of Press was a major factor, which brought a renaissance in the country and also in Odisha. During this time the first and foremost Odia weekly newspapers *Utkal Deepika* emerged as an expression of public opinion in the wake of the great devastating famine in Odisha. *Deepika* started its journey from Cuttack printing press from 4th August 1866 and edited by Sri Gouri Sankar Roy, the pioneer of journalism in modern Odisha. *Utkal Deepika* was considered as the earliest newspaper of great importance in Odisha and it proved to be the most powerful forum of public life in no time aiming at socio-economic, educational and political awakening in Odisha. So Madhusudan Das, the renowned leader of Odisha has rightly remarked in the 13th conference of Utkal Sammilani that "**Utkal Deepika is the lamp of Utkal**"¹⁰.

Thus the year 1866 is considered as the beginning stage of journalism. The stage ended in 1905 with division of Bengal by Lord Curzon and initiation of Swadeshi Movement.

The period between 1866 and 1905 witnessed the emergence of national social forces in Odisha and the following decades marked the stage of its vigorous development in this process of consolidation and determination. Newspapers were spearheading of all the educational and social movements in Odisha in this period. All most 35 newspapers were published during this period. The period has witnessed the following major incidents, which are treated as the theme of the newspapers of that period –

a) Growth of Socio-political Consciousness b) Literary Renaissance c) Odia Movement d) Socio-cultural and Religious Reforms, e) Educational Reforms f) Telugu Expansionism. All those 35 newspapers were treating the problems and prospects of those incidents as the theme of their newspapers and tried to make the people conscious about

This period also witnessed a deliberate attempt to stifle the Odia language both in Bengal and Madras through official and non-official mechanism. This was a serious attempt on the part of the non-Odias to dominate the thought of the leading Odia elites and bureaucrats John Beams and T. E. Ravenshaw who were considered as well-wishers and were sympathetic towards cause of Odias came to their rescue and saved the language from the danger of total obliteration¹¹.

The language controversy between the Odia and Bengalee created acute tension in the public life thereby affecting their relationship to some extent. The controversy took a serious turn due to the non co-operative and uncompromising attitude

of the Bengalees. Through the Cuttack debating society and *Utkal Hiteisini*, a weekly paper edited by Kalipada Bandopadhyaya who was partisan enough to champion the cause of the Bengalees obviously counteracted this pro-Bengalee and anti-Odia writings. *The Utkal Deepika* and *Sambad Bahika* championed the cause of the Odias. Thus the press and newspapers fostered a strong sense of racialism and consciousness while relaying the voice of these patriotic leaders.

The reaction against Telugu expansionism and exploitation in the southern part of Odisha also took a similar path, which was natural. At this stage the press took up the issue and the Odia movement was started in Ghumsur, the home of the present form of the Odia language.¹²

In 1870, Janardhan Das of Ghumsur appealed against the local Odias being harshly treated by Telugus. *The Utkal Deepika* while publishing this news item also suggested for a concentrated action of all Odia speaking people against maltreatment of Odias in the Ganjam district.¹³

In 1874 the tune of Odia press became more strident when there was a move to write Odia in Telugu scripts in Ganjam just like the attempt taken by the Bengalees in northern part of Odisha. The press vehemently opposed and wanted the Government to appoint Odia knowing officers to protect the interest of Odias, otherwise people would united appeal to the Government of Madras and India for revocation of such an unpopular measure.

The important Odia journals, of the period were *Utkal Deepika* (1866), *Bodhadayani* (1868), *Baleswar Sambad Bahika* (1868), *Utkal Putra* (1873), *Utkal Darpan* (1873), *Sevak* (1883), *Sanskarak* (1883), *Sambalpur Hiteishini* (1884), *Utkal Prabha* (1891), *Bijuli* (1893), *Utkal Sahitya* (1897), and *Mukur* (1906). The themes of the newspapers during this stage and the list of papers highlighting those themes are depicted in Table 4.2

Table 2: Themes and List of Newspapers During Colonial Period : The Beginning Stage (1866-1905)

Themes of Newspapers	Name of Journals & Papers	Edited By	Year
a) Devastated famine of 1866.	Utkal Deepika	Gouri Sankar Roy	1866
	Bodhadayani 'O'	Fakir Mohan Senapati	July, 1868
b) Growth of social, Political, Consciousness.	Sambad Bahika.		
	Sahitya Samachar	Ramakanata Panda	1867
c) Literary Renaissance	Kalinga Sahayak 'O' Dharma	Surendra Mohanty	1868-69
	Bodhini		
d) Oriya movement			
e) Telugu expansionism	Utkal Hiteishini	Kalipada Benarjee	1869
	Utkal Darpana	Indra Ballav Bhattacharya	January 1872
f) Educational reformation.			
	Aguani	Rev. J. Philiips	Aug. 1872
g) Social, cultural and religious revival.	Dharma Bodhini	Madhu Sudan Rao	1873
	Bideshi	Dinanath Benarjee	1873
	Utkal Putra	Acharya Pyari Mohan	16 April, 1873
	Utkal Sanskar	Neelkamal Dutta	August 1874
	Chandrika		Sept., 1874

	Swadeshi	William Mohanty	5 th January, 1876
	Utkal Madhup	Krushna Ch. Pattanaik	April 1878
	Praja Bandhu	-	1882
	Sevak Sanskarak	Bhabagrahi Das, Chaturbhuj Pattanaik	1883
	Nava Vidhan	-	Nov., 1884
	Dhumaketu	Dwarikanath Das Siva Narayan Nayak	1884
	Samyabadi	Lalit Mohan Chakraborty	1886
	Nab Sambad	Bhutanath Basu	1886
	Sikshya Bandhu	Bhaktakabi Madhu Sudan Rao	1886
	Odia	Dwarikanath Das	1887
	Asha	Sadhu Charan Roy	1888
	Sahitya Sammilani	Chaturbhuj Pattanaik	1889
	Sambalpur Hiteishini	Nilamani Vidyaratna	30 th May, 1889
	Utkal Prava		1891
	Utkal Patrika	Trailokyanath Mukherjee	1891
	Bijuli	Patron Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev	Sept., 1893
	Indradhanu	Lala Ram Narayan	Aug., 1893
	Pravati Tara	First Editor will kims	1896
	Ganjam News	Shyam Sundar Rajguru	1896
	Utkal Sahitya	Biswanath Kar	1897

Themes of Newspapers During Colonial Period: The Struggling Stage (1906-1947)

The later part of the nationalism in India started just after 1905 with happening of two remarkable incidents viz. i) Partition of Bengal and ii) Swadeshi movement, which had also influenced the Odias. Nationalist feeling in the heart of Indians was infused by the nationalist leaders. So Indians felt repressed under the British and they made themselves

prepared for a struggle against the British rule. The newspapers were the pathfinders in this area. With publication of *Mukur* in 1906 by Braja Sundar Das the struggling stage of newspapers in Odisha initiated. It is the first literary magazine, which was the creator of nationalistic literature. In the meantime some young intellectuals started their literary career through this magazine.¹⁴ which was marked as **Satyabadi Era**. This year is regarded as the beginning of struggling stage of newspapers. The theme of this stage was abundant. During this period India really created history and history chronicles these times because it acted as a beacon light to the posterity. These eventful times came as a sequel of long standing, cumulative process and carries immense potentialities for the future. This period reflects the spirit of the mass mind, that has been waiting since long for finding an out let to release its emotions and expectations accumulated over the years. Such a movement came into the life of our nation after 1905 with partition of Bengal. Indian masses took up their wrath against the long oppressive British rule in India. Newspapers played significant role during this stage. The main themes of this period, treated by various newspapers were as follows: -

- ❖ Language controversy.
- ❖ Growth of Odia nationalism.
- ❖ Agitation in Sambalpur.
- ❖ Formation of province of Odisha.
- ❖ Agitation in Ganjam, Singhbhumi, Sareikala and Kharasuan.
- ❖ Mont ford report on Odisha.
- ❖ Gandhian era : Non Co-operation Movement.
- ❖ Civil Disobedience Movement.
- ❖ Socialist movement.
- ❖ Formation of ministry under provincial autonomy.
- ❖ Continued peasant unrest.
- ❖ Formation of Coalition Ministry.
- ❖ Quit India movement.
- ❖ Praja Manda l movement and merger of Princely States.

A number of newspapers had grown up during this period of which detail descriptions have been given in chapter III.

The Utkal Deepika, *The Samaj* and *The Asha* were the important trio dealing with Political consciousness and Odia nationalism¹⁵ *Utkal Deepika*, the leading journal, under the sterling editorship of Gouri Sankar Ray fought tooth and nail consolidating the public opinion for nationalistic movement by removing all differences of opinion on caste, creed, religion and community that was clandestinely eating into the very vital of socio-political fabric of Odisha. The concept of Swadeshi was not only an off spring of anti-partition agitation in Bengal but also was militant manifestation of patriotism to weaken the British market in India and rouse self-sufficiency and self esteem in Indians. The press carried the fiery message of Swadeshi and promoted the public to set fire to the foreign clothes and other articles at different public places to display their indignation at the British rule. Besides *Utkal Deepika* the other periodicals of the time did their best to ignite patriotic passion of the public. The response and reaction of masses was unprecedented and historic.

The early part of the twentieth century witnessed the formation of **Utkal Union Conference** under the leadership of Madhusudan Das to cater the needs of the people of Odisha by unifying the scattered tracts on language basis under one administration. This movement was popularly known as Odia Movement and it marked the origin of the idea of creation of linguistic provinces in India. The unique feature of the movement was totally non-violent, constitutional and democratic in character, moreover aimed at sustaining and furtherance of the cultural and sentimental unity of Odias.

The year of 1920 was a landmark in the political history of India and it was also a turning point in the political history of Odisha. In view of the changing political scenario of India the said year had considerable importance in the context of Odisha also. Apart from UUC, the provincial unit of INC was constituted to bring the former back to the national mainstream. The Nagpur session of Indian National Congress opened a new page in the annals of Indian freedom movement by resolving to launch the non-violent and non-cooperation movement against the British regime, under the leadership of Gandhiji with his philosophy of Satyagrah. At Chakradharpur session of Utkal Union Conference following the Nagpur session, Odisha INC held in the last week of December 1920. A good number of seminal decisions were made

under the leadership of Gopabandhu Das. This session became a landmark in the history of the conference, because in addition to the provincial objectives the conference adopted the congress creed and goals to mingle with the mainstream of national movement and this offered the heart and soul to pull it off. In political life of Odisha a new leadership emerged with Gopabandhu Das as the father of congress movement in Odisha. Under his leadership a new thrust of enthusiasm for freedom struggle brimmed all over Odisha. Moreover Gandhiji's visit to Odisha in March 1921 accelerated the pace of national activities. *The Samaj* and the *Utkal Deepika* discriminated and propagated the ideas of congress and messages of Gandhiji and gave wide publicity to the revolutionary activities of Odisha. *The Swaraj Samachar* from Balasore also did a commendable service in ventilating the messages of non-cooperation.

Being considerably influenced by press, people from all walks of life including government officials, lawyers, students and women dived head long into the pit of the movement. The peasant resistance movement in princely states like Kanika and Bamara against the oppression of the Rajas (Kings) and Zamindars (Landlords) was fuelled by non-cooperation movement in 1921. The harrowing tales of suffering of the subjects were vividly depicted in the periodicals like the *Samaj* and the *Utkal Deepika*. Defamation suit was filed against Gopabandhu Das for his critical and censorious editorials. He was ultimately thrown into the prison of Hazaribag which prompted his creative acumen to write *Bandira Atmakatha*, a poem of a rare quality, narrating the woes of the down trodden and the ruthless oppression of the rulers of Kanika.

The year 1930 was marked as a turning point in the history of freedom struggle in Odisha as the civil disobedience movement was launched in this year. The main objective of this movement was Purna Swaraj or complete independence. The special features of this new movement were resignation from government jobs, boycotting further elections, non-payment of taxes and flouting of the government laws and directives in general. Leaders like Gopabandhu Chaudhury, H.K. Mahatab and Surendra Nath Das broke the salt law and courted arrest following the breaking of Salt Law by Gandhiji at Dandi on April 6, 1930 in Gujarat coast. Salt Satyagraha was the most striking phase of the movement, which became the most powerful and popular weapon among the masses. The places like Inchudi, Balasore, Bhadrak, Astarang, Chilika and Kujanga on the seacoast of Odisha turned into frying cauldron of Mass agitation. The press played a very potential role in stimulating the public discontent against the oppressive British rule during the mass upsurge. *The Samaj*, the mouthpiece of the national movement in Odisha played a very dominant role in propagating the congress news and views of the mass movement. Besides, *the Prajatantra*, *the Asha* and the *Utkal Deepika* also deserved due acclaim for their ceaseless contribution to this movement. The revolutionary literature was a plenty to galvanize the movement during this period.

The most striking feature of the national struggle for independence in Odisha was marked by its slight departure from the main stream for its insistence on the formation of the linguistic province of Odisha. Of course, in post independent India this parochial, linguistic stand of Odias became a sine-qua-non in forming new provinces on language basis. This linguistic movement spanned from the British conquest of Odisha in 1803 to the formation of new province on 1st April 1936. The injustice and torture meted out to dismembered Odias living in microscopic linguistic units in other provinces knew no bounds. The abject misery, ill treatment and suffering they were grueling in were the headlines of the day. John Beams, the then commissioner of Odisha appealed for the merger of Odia speaking units into a district linguistic unit. The leaders like Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Das, Maharaja of Paralakhemundi Krishna Chandra Gajapati and Harekrushna Mahatab were unflinching and unrelenting in their stand. The leading newspapers like *the Utkal Deepika*, *the Samaj*, *the Prajatantra* and *the Sambalpur Hiteishini* vociferously mouthed the views of the leaders for amalgamating and unification of Odia speaking segments.

There arose unpredictable gloomy billowing clouds floating erratically across the Indian political firmament with the World War-II gaining momentum. The failure of Cripps Mission, the danger of Japanese invasion looming large in the horizon of Odisha, provided sufficient impetus to Indian nationalist leaders to strike the blow when the iron was red hot. Out of a stormy global political scenario Indian wanted to take an advantage. The Quit India Movement was the final blow or the last struggle for independence. Although the strategy and style of execution of principles was based on non-violent lines, the irrepressible, irresistible desire for freedom made it an all consuming conflagration for sacrifices from within and without. The stern repressive measures taken by the British Government to strangle the revolution ignited the fire leading to large scale demolition of roads and bridges, attacks on police stations and post offices, strikes in schools and colleges, snatching and burning of chowkidari uniforms, damaging the telegraph and railway lines and so on. An all out effort was made to paralyse the British Raj on Indian soil at any cost. The movement touched even every ordinary Indian to the core and the villages became the heels of the revolutionary activities.

It was the great mass upsurge that India had ever witnessed. Odisha was sizzling with fire and fury against the Raj. The participation was unprecedented. People from all walks of life even the hill tribes of Koraput did not shirk the lofty duty of dedicating themselves at the sacrificial altar of last struggle for freedom. The participation from the lower middle classes, including peasants, labourers and students was enormous. Thus it was popularly called the Peasant-Student Movement.

The **Prajamandal Movement** of Odisha especially in some princely states burst out due to extreme torture of the subjects at the hand of feuds, zamindars and rajas under the aegis of the British rule. It came as a natural corollary to quit India movement in response to clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi. The general condition of the subjects of the princely states was worse than that of their counterparts in British Odisha and this comparison made native ruler the butt of their anger and agitation. The people of these oppressive states also derived strength and morale to fight against the Zamindar. However these movements were recharged and refueled by the untiring activities of both local and national press which condemned the oppression of the rulers in the states in most caustic terms. Some prominent newspapers like *the Sambalpur Hiteisini*, *the Sambad Bahika*, the New Odisha and *Kohinoor press* rendered remarkable service in rousing the public consciousness and enthusiasm to accelerate the movement. The more the feudatory chiefs tried to extinguish the fire of revolt, the more untamable and inflammable it turned out to be with the rare courage, determination and patriotic zeal of the people and press.

Despite the imposition of restrictive measures the press still continued its seditious activities undaunted and unabated. Being incensed by this, the government was forced to promulgate a series of prohibitory Acts to curb the freedom of press. The provincial Governments were also directed to crack down on newspapers and journals circulating prejudicial news against the British regime. Even some of the Dailies with strong patriotic inclinations were temporarily closed due to constant harassment and punitive measures taken by the Government. But however all these could not subdue the spirit of freedom for all times to come. The prohibitory measures restricting the freedom of press to foil the movement rather made the subterranean current more strong and formidable. As a result, a number of secret congress bulletins were issued from Utkal Congress Press addressed to students, peasants and labourers.

Another important facade of the Quit India Movement was the underground activities of congress socialists under the leadership of Surendra Nath Dwivedi who evaded the arrest and planned to continue a guerrilla movement through secret bulletins, pamphlets and leaflets. The people accepted these bulletins as authentic mouthpiece of Congress guidelines and acted out accordingly.

Seikh Aminulla Islam, an illustrious poet, publisher and revolutionary had to encounter a lot of hardship and harassment for his perpetual publication of patriotic anti-British poems from his Kohinoor Press. His anthology of revolutionary poetry styled as '*ram Atyachar*' put the British government in lurches by its strong, vivid and heart rending narration of '*Eram Tragedy*' taking a heavy toll of innocent lives which inflamed the public more violently against the activities of British Raj.

Though ideologically differ from the Congress and Gandhiji, the role played by Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army was peerless in the annals of patriotism. The Naba Bharat press of Nilakantha Das was the mouthpiece of All India Forward Block of Odisha branch. The book *Biplabi Subhas* authored by Balaram Mohanty was banned and the author and publisher were prosecuted under the defiance of India rules. The pamphlet *Bidrohi* (the rebel) announced armed revolution against the British and incurred the wrath of the later.

After the World War-II, most of the nationalistic leaders championing the cause of the mass were behind the bars. The repressive measures of the government, the inhuman suffering of the accredited leaders in jails and suffering of the common man due to repercussion of war was passed unheeded and unmitigated. As the top leaders were in jails, the press took up the reins of the movement and criticized the government policy in unison and demanded the early release of Gandhiji from the prison. Mahatma Gandhi was released from prison in 1944.

The Labour party assumed power in England in 1945 after the end of World War II. In Odisha a congress ministry was formed in 1946 under the leadership of Hare Krushna Mahatab. The Atlee Government in England sent Lord Mount Batten to India as Viceroy to offer transfer of powers to Indians. The long cherished goal was realized on 15th August 1947. The partition between India and Pakistan marred the spirit of a hard-earned freedom. But however there were much fan fare and rejoicings to mark the birth of a new Nation in Asia. The people of Odisha also celebrated the occasion with mass euphoria.

Hence the introduction of Printing press in India was a historic event of revolutionary significance in the life of Indian people. The history of Indian freedom struggle is the history of Press and journalism. Freedom and press go together, sink and swim together with the pressure and need to the time. They are mutually inclusive and one cannot survive in the absence of the other. They are creators of one another.

Thus the press played a vital role in socio-political awakening of the people of Odisha on the broad canvass of nationalistic movement spanning over a century. Though press in Odisha made a very belated appearance, it held its sway very quickly and influenced the people more profoundly than before.

The press and journalism gathered momentum in keeping pace with the nationalistic movement since its inception. From the language agitation in the second half of the nineteenth century to the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement in 1940, the activities of press in augmenting and escalating various movements and agitations was indispensable and indisputable. In spite of stringent censorship imposed by the British Government during the Quit India Movement the press zoomed past all hurdles and barricades to reach its goal. From *Kujibar Patra* to *Iram Atyachar*, from *Utkal Deepika* to *the Samaj*, press took a long strenuous stride in educating and metamorphosing the people of Odisha out of their hibernating sloth and complacency to achieve their long cherished freedom. The theme and list of newspapers during the struggling stage is reflected in table -3

Table 3: Themes and List of Newspapers During Colonial Period: The Struggling Stage (1906-1947)

Themes of Newspapers	Name of Journals & Papers	Edited by	Year
❖ Language controversy.	Mukura	Braja Sundar Das	1906
❖ Growth of Oriya nationalism.	Sanatan Dharma	Bidyadhar Mishra Braja Bandhu Mishra Pitambar De.	1906
❖ Agitation in Sambalpur.	Pravat	Smt. Reba Roy	1909
❖ Formation of Orissa province.	Asha	Sashi Bhusan Rath	1913
❖ Agitation in Ganjam.	Utkal Sevak	Swapneswar Das Biswakesan Bahidar Nityananda Bahidar	1913
❖ Agitation in Singhbhum, Sareikala, and kharsuan.	Pradeepta	Sashi Bhusan Rath	October 1916
❖ Montford report on Orissa.	Samaj	Utkalmani, Gopabandhu Das Nilakantha Das Godabarish Mishra	October 1919
❖ Gandhian Era : Non-cooperation Movement.	Sanskar	Laxmi Narayan Sahoo	1919
❖ Civil Disobedience Movement.		Balakrushna Kar	
❖ Socialist Movement.	Hirakhanda	Swapaneswar Das	1919
❖ Formation of ministry under provincial autonomy.	Panchamruta	Chintamani Acharya	1920
❖ Continued peasant unrest.	Chhatra Sathi	R. Sarangi	1920
❖ Formation of coalition ministry.	Seva	Nilakantha Das Bhagirathi Mishra	1921
❖ Quit India movement	Sadhana	Swapneswar Das	1921
❖ Prajamandal movement and merger of princely states.	Garajat Basini	King of Talcher	1922
	Shakti	Purnachandra Das	1922
	Gandhi Samachar	Niranjan Pattanaik	1924

3. CONCLUSION

The themes of newspapers were always depended upon the various incidents and accidents i.e. political, social, economical, cultural, happenings of the nation or the state. It is marked that in the reformative stage the political theme dominated the scenario, while in the developing stage themes like economic and social incidents made an entry to the pages of newspapers. Themes were served by the newspapers in various forms like features, interviews and articles, etc. But the scenario totally changed in the professional stage when India tried to be liberated from poverty and journalists were paid respectable amount of remuneration. Investigative reporting took its root and human interest and economical news deserves to be placed as the front-page news item.

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