

5. Mass Media and History

- 5.1 Introduction to Mass Media
- 5.2 History of Mass Media
- 5.3 Why do we need Mass Media?
- 5.4 Critical understanding of the information received through Mass Media
- 5.5 Mass Media and Professional Opportunities

Think about it.

What could be the method of sending a news to Delhi if there were a famine in Bihar in the Mughal period? How much time would it take for the aid to reach Bihar after the Badshah heard the news?

5.1 Introduction to Mass Media

Mass Media contains two words. 'Mass' in this context means an aggregation of people. 'Media' means various modes of communication. Thus, mass media is a field of mass communication. We can easily send some information to a far away destination through a medium of communication. In the olden days, a crier would run in the streets beating drums and crying out important news according to the orders of the king. The news would spread among people by word of mouth.

5.2 History of Mass Media

Printing technology and newspapers were introduced in India after the arrival of the British. People started receiving printed news through newspapers. Newspapers became the first mass medium of circulating information and knowledge among people.

Newspapers : 'Newspaper' is a publication, which mainly prints news, editorials, people's opinions, entertaining or other supplementary content. It is printed and distributed regularly at a definite time.

Newspapers provide various local, national and international news. Newspapers are historical documents, which record current events.

Precursors of Newspapers : Before the beginning of the common era there was a custom in Egypt of placing inscriptions with royal decrees at public place. Emperor Asoka also resorted to similar method to reach out to his subjects. In the Roman Empire, royal decrees were written on papers and those were distributed in all regions. They also contained the information of various events taking place in the nation and its capital. During Julius Caesar's reign newspapers known as *Acta Diurna*, meaning acts of everyday, used to be placed, at public places in Rome. It was a very effective way of conveying royal commands to people. In the 7th century C.E. royal dictates were distributed among people at public places. In England hand-outs used to be distributed occasionally, giving information about wars or important events. Travellers arriving from faraway would add spice to stories from those places and narrate it to local people. The ambassadors of a king posted at various places would send back important news to the royal court.

'Bengal Gazette' : The first English newspaper of India was printed on 29th



James Augustus Hickey

January 1780. It was named as 'Calcutta General Advertiser' or 'Bengal Gazette'. It was started by James Augustus Hickey, an Irish gentleman.

'Darpan' : The newspaper, 'Darpan' was started in 1832 in Mumbai. Balshastri Jambhekar was the editor of Darpan.

Make a list.

Make a list of national leaders in the pre-independence period and the newspapers started by them.



Balshastri Jambhekar

The news printed in Darpan can be reviewed to know about the political, economic, social and cultural events of those times. Here are a few news titles as examples : (1) The Accounts of Expenditure from the Three Administrative Divisions of the East India Company (2) The Danger of Russian Attack on the Nation (3) Appointment of a Committee for Cleanliness of the City (4) Remarriage of Hindu Widows (5) The Inception of Theatre at Calcutta (6) Achievements of

Raja Ram Mohan Roy in England. Reporting of such news throws light on various historical events of those days.

'Prabhakar' : This newspaper was started by Bhau Mahajan. The history of French revolution and 'Shatpatre', the letters by Lokhitvadi (Gopal Hari Deshmukh) aimed at creating social awareness, were published in this newspaper.

'Dnyanoday' : 'Dnyanoday' printed the map of Asia in 1842 and the map of Europe in 1851. The honour of printing an illustration in an Indian newspaper for the first time, goes to Dnyanoday. The news of installation of telegraph, used for electrically transmitting a news can be seen in Dnyanoday. The news of the starting of railways in India was printed in Dnyanoday under the title, *Chakya Mhasoba* meaning 'Mhasoba with wheels'. It had also printed the news of the Indian war of Independence of 1857.

Newspapers, in those times were a very important medium of creating social awareness. A newspaper named 'Induprakash' supported widow remarriage in a big way. 'Deenbandhu', a newspaper representing the masses of the Indian society (*Bahujansamaj*), was started by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule's close associate, Krishnarao Bhalekar. We get to know about the issues relating to the masses through this newspaper.



Do you know?

Balshastri Jambhekar is referred to as the 'First Editor' by virtue of his being the editor of the first Marathi newspaper. His birth date, 6th January is observed in Maharashtra as the 'Patrakar Din' (Journalists' Day).



Do this.

Let each student in the class bring a cutting of interesting news. Create a journal from the collection of news.

'Kesari' and 'Maratha' : 'Kesari' and 'Maratha', the two newspapers are indicative of an important stage in the

history of Indian newspapers before independence. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak started these papers in 1881. They spoke about the social and political issues of that period. Kesari began to publish articles about the nationwide situations, books in the native languages and the politics in England.

In the 21st century newspapers have continued to fulfil an important role. It was acknowledged the fourth column of democracy.

Magazines and Journals : Magazines and Journals are periodical publications. This category includes publications, which are weekly, biweekly, monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, six monthly, annual, etc. There may be some chronicles which are published at no fixed time.



Do this.

In recent times many newspapers have introduced e-newspapers. The e-newspapers are being received well by the readers.

Learn to read e-newspapers with the help of your teachers.

Balshastri Jambhekar started the first monthly magazine in Marathi. It was named, 'Digdarshan'. Among the periodicals 'Pragati', now a defunct journal, was started (1929) and edited by Tryambak Shankar Shejwalkar. He wrote regularly in this historiographical journal

Let us search and find out :

Apart from the journals cited above there are many more journals related to research in history, published in Marathi, Hindi and English by various institutions and universities. Search and find out about them with the help of internet.

of Maharashtra's history and social movements.

Currently there are many periodicals devoted to Indian history. Marathi journals such as 'Bharatiya Itihas ani Samskruti' and 'Marathwada Itihas Parishad Patrika' may be cited as examples.

Electronic or Digital Journalism :

These are ultra-modern periodicals form a part of Electronic or Digital journalism. History is a prime subject of interest for these periodicals as well. Many web news portals, social media, web channels, 'You Tube', etc. make historical content available to the audience/readers.

Radio :

'Indian Broadcasting Company' (IBC), a private radio company was the first one to broadcast daily programmes. Later the same company was taken over by the British Government and named as, 'Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS). On 8th June 1936 it was renamed, as 'All India Radio (AIR)'.



After Independence, AIR became an integral part of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (India). Initially, it broadcasted Governmental programmes and schemes. It was named as 'Akashvani' on the suggestion of the famous poet Pandit Narendra Sharma. Akashvani



Do you know ?

In the British India the first English news bulletin was broadcasted on 23rd July 1927 from the Mumbai radio station of the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC). Later, the Kolkata radio station of IBC started a news bulletin in Bengali.

broadcasts various entertainment, awareness creating and literary programmes. It also broadcasts special programmes for farmers, workers, the youth and women. The 'Vividh Bharati' programmes are broadcasted in 24 regional languages as well as 146 dialects of Indian languages. Lately, various new channels like 'Radio Mirchi' are providing radio services.

Television : The 'Delhi Doordarshan Centre' was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first Indian President on 15th September 1959. Doordarshan's Mumbai centre began to telecast its programmes on 1st May 1972. Colour television was introduced on 15th August 1982. In 1991 the Indian government granted permission to private national and international channels to telecast in India. Thus, it became possible for Indians to watch international events on television.

5.3 Why do we need Mass Media?

We need mass media to facilitate free flow of information to all strata of the society. Editorials, various columns and supplements are essential parts of newspapers. Readers are also ensured of a platform to voice their opinions. Newspapers can help in making the democracy stronger.

Television is an audio-visual medium. It was possible for this medium to cross the inherent limitations of newspapers and the radio and show the actual visuals of an event to people. So far, there is no



Do this.

Collect information and write a report about the television channels in India. Do this as a group activity.

other alternative to television for watching an event as it actually happened.

5.4 Critical understanding of the information received through Mass Media

Any information received through mass media needs to be reviewed critically. The news or information in the media may not always represent exact truth. We need to scan it very carefully. There is a very famous event of unauthentic information appearing in print in Germany. 'Stern', a German weekly magazine had purchased a number of so called handwritten diaries of Adolf Hitler. It sold them to various publication companies. The diaries were verified for their authenticity and subsequently the news appeared in the print. However, later those diaries were proved to be forged. It becomes apparent from this example that we need to be very careful about the information published by the media.

5.5 Mass Media and Professional Opportunities

Newspapers have to fulfil the task of providing fresh news to its readers. It is also necessary to unfold the background of an event in the news. At such times, newspapers have to resort to history. While reporting news in detail, reporters try to compare it with parallel events, which happened in the past. The past event may be printed in a separate frame.



Thus the reader gets access to additional information and he can get better insights about the current news.

Newspapers print columns about historical information, appearing under headings such as, '50 Years Ago' or '100 Years Ago', etc. Such columns are based on historical documents or written history. These columns provide historical information about economic, social, political events in the past and also events of historical significance.



Do this.

Newspapers also publish crossword puzzles based on history. Try to create similar crossword puzzles. For example use fort names to create a puzzle.

Newspapers occasionally publish supplements to the regular edition or special issues. For example, World War I commenced in 1914. Year 2014 marked the 100th year of this event. In order to be able to publish a newspaper supplement or a special issue to commemorate the occasion, one needs to review its history. In 2017, seventy five years were completed after the announcement of 'Quit India' movement. On such occasions newspapers highlight the event through various articles, editorials, columns like 'what happened in history on this day', reviews, etc. The knowledge of history is essential for writings of such type.

Try to do this.

Try to collect information about the role of underground radio centres in the 'Quit India' movement of 1942 with the help of your teachers.

History is also essential in planning radio programmes. For example, Akashvani has preserved recordings of all the speeches delivered each year by the prime ministers of India on 15th August.

Akashvani invites historians as experts for discussions on various occasions such as the anniversaries of birth or death of national leaders, anniversaries of historical events, etc. Lectures on the contribution of various national leaders need to be supported by historical information. Programmes like 'On This Day in History' are also an integral part of the daily programmes of Akashvani.

Television channels also telecast programmes based on history. Doordarshan and other television channels help in creating interest in history among people through their historical shows and serials. The mythological and historical serials like 'Ramayana', 'Mahabharata', 'Bharat ek Khoj' and 'Raja Shivchhatrapati' attracted a very large audience. While producing this type of programmes, maintaining accuracy with regard to the presentation of environment, outfits, weaponry, life styles, lingual expression, etc. is essential. One needs to have a deep understanding of history of the concerned period.

Currently channels like 'Discovery', 'National Geographic', 'History', etc. have opened a rich treasure of global history for the audience. It has enabled people to view the historical and geographic wonders at home. To make such programmes more entertaining some parts of the serial are actually enacted by actors such as the characters of heroic men and women, sportsmen, army chiefs, etc. Beside these serials about ancient monuments, forts, histories of empires and also the history of culinary arts are watched by a large number of people

with great interest.

People with deep knowledge of history

in the respective field are sought out in all the fields mentioned above.

You would find this interesting :

‘Bharat Ek Khoj’, a serial telecasted by Doordarshan has a special place in the history of Indian television serials. It was based on ‘Discovery of India’, a book written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was directed by Shyam Benegal. This serial presented the history of India from the ancient to the modern period, throwing light on social, cultural and political history of respective periods.

It effectively portrayed many aspects of Indian history like Harappan Civilisation, Vedic history, interpretation of Ramayana and Mahabharata, Mauryan period, Turk-Afghan and Mughal invasions, Mughal period and

the contributions of Mughal emperors, *Bhakti* Movement, Role of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, movements of social reform and Indian struggle for independence, etc.

Roshan Seth, the actor who played Pandit Nehru’s role in this serial also appeared as a narrator, introducing and explaining various parts of the story by dramatising them, using folklore and informative speeches. The serial was admired in all parts of India because of the comprehensive historical perspective of Pandit Nehru and its equally comprehensive visual presentation.



Exercise

1. (A) Choose the correct option from the given options and complete the statement.

- (1) The first English newspaper in India was started by
(a) James Augustus Hickey
(b) John Marshall
(c) Allen Hume
(d) Balashastri Jambhekar
- (2) Television is anmedium.
(a) visual (b) audio (c) audio-visual
(d) tactile

(B) Identify and write the wrong pair in the following set.

- (1) ‘Prabhakar’ – Acharya P.K. Atre
- (2) ‘Darpan’ – Balshastri Jambhekar

- (3) ‘Deenbandhu’ – Krishnarao Bhalekar
- (4) ‘Kesari’ – Bal Gangadhar Tilak

2. Write short notes :

- (1) The role of newspaper in the Indian struggle for independence
- (2) Why do we need mass media?
- (3) Mass Media and professional opportunities.

3. Explain the following statements with reasons.

- (1) Any information received through mass media needs to be reviewed critically.
- (2) Knowledge of history is essential for newspaper articles.
- (3) Television is the most popular medium.

4. Read the following extract and answer the questions.

Radio : 'Indian Broadcasting Company' (IBC), a private radio company was the first one to broadcast daily programmes. Later the same company was taken over by the British Government and named as, 'Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS). On 8th June 1936 it was renamed, as 'All India Radio (AIR)'.

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- (1) Akashvani (AIR) is an integral part of which ministry?
- (2) What was the new name of IBC?
- (3) In how many regional languages and local dialects are 'Vividh Bharati' programmes broadcasted?
- (4) How AIR was named 'Akashvani'?

5. Complete the following concept chart.

	Newspapers	Radio	Television
Beginning/ Background			
Nature of information/ programmes			
Functions			

Project

Write a review of a historical serial that you have watched.

