

BRITISH PRESS POLICY TILL 1857

WARREN HASTINGS (1772-85)

Hicky was the first to start a weekly paper “**The Bengal Gazette**” in 1770 AD. Hicky may rightly be called the pioneer in the history of journalism in India. Within a very short period, this paper became popular and many other papers were published. But Hicky could not run his paper peacefully. He was in conflict with Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal (1772-73 to 1785). He criticized Mrs. Warren Hastings and the policy of Governor-General in his journal. He was arrested and imprisoned. His press was seized in 1782.

In fact, Warren Hastings was not favorable to press. Even though he could not check the progress of the Indian press? During his last two years of rule three important papers were published. They were: **The Calcutta Gazette** (1784), **The Bengal Journal** (1785) and **the Oriental Magazine of Calcutta or Calcutta Amusement** (1785).

JOHN MACPHERSON (1785-86) AND CORNWALLIS (1786-93)

During the time of Sir John Macpherson and Cornwallis many papers came into publishing. The chief among them were “**The Calcutta Chronicles**” (1786), **The Madras Courier** (1788), **The Bombay Herald** (1789) etc. the promoters of these new publications profited from Hickey’s bitter experience and avoided clash with the authorities.

But Cornwallis had conflicts with Mr. Duane who had also started his paper; **The Indian Work** in his (Cornwallis) tenure. Mr. Duane criticized Cornwallis for his policies. He was arrested and humiliated and ultimately deported to Europe.

JOHN SHORE (1793-98)

Makonley, the editor of **The Telegraph** made certain allegations against some Government officials in 1896. He was reprimanded for that; the editor of **the Calcutta Gazette** was censured the same year for referring to certain communications between the Court of Directors and the French Republic.

WELLESLEY (1798-1806)

In 1798 A.D. when Wellesley came to India as the Governor-General, the political situation was very critical. The French influence had firmly rooted in the courts of Indian princes who were clamoring to put an end to the British authority. Sultan Tipu of Mysore was carrying

on negotiations with the French to turn the English out of India. He was also in communication with the rulers of Arabia and Kabul. The Marathas were trying to increase their power.

Wellesley could not tolerate the publication of any matter which might have the effect of weakening his influence vis-à-vis his Indian adversaries or the French.

The Censorship of Press Act, 1799, imposed almost wartime restriction on the press. The regulations required: (a) the newspaper to clearly print even issue the name of the printer, the editor and the proprietor; (b) The publisher to submit all material for pre-censorship to the Secretary to the Government.

In this way Wellesley was the first man to exercise strict control and censorship over the Indian Press. Every time of news as well as every comment was first submitted to the censor and then alone could it be allowed to be published.

He made a number of regulations to prevent communication of any news to the French, who were the bitterest foes of the British at this time. It was under those laws that Charles Maclean, the editor of the **Bengal Kirkaru** was transported to England. He had adversely commented on the proceeding of the court of justice and had censured the conduct of a public or acts done his official capacity.

MINTO (1807-1813)

During the period of Minto no appreciable changes were made in the policy of Government towards the press rather he imposed further restrictions on the press.

HASTINGS (1813-23)

Hastings was the first Governor-General who realized the importance of a free press and encouraged newsmen to perform their function in a responsible manner. He slightly modified the censorship regulations in 1813. The censorship was abolished in 1818.

However, this does not mean that the press in India became absolutely free. Fresh regulations were issued. These required the editors to desist from publishing adverse comments on the proceedings of Indian authorities in England and offensive remarks on the public conduct of judges and the Bishop of Calcutta. The papers were not to publish anything likely to create alarm or suspicion among the natives regarding intended interference with the religious of the people or anything likely to affect the British power and reputation in India.

One of the results of the abolition of censorship in 1818 was that new journals came into existence. J.K. Bucingham started the “**The Calcutta Journal**” in 1818. He criticized the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Governor of Madras and the Lord Bishop of Calcutta. Like Hicky and Duane, he was deported from the country. This man made a great name for himself in England later on. Not only the English Press made rapid progress but many dailies and weeklies in vernacular also appeared in the market. The **Samachar Darpan** and **Sambad Kaumudi** were the important ones amongst the Vernacular papers.

METCALF (1835-36)

With the active assistance of his law member Macaulay, Charles Metcalfe in 1835 cancelled the regulations of 1823 A.D. The result was that the Indian press became as free as its counterpart in England. One of the effects of this action was the British East India Company recalled Charles Metcalfe from India.

DRAIN OF WEALTH

PART – I – INTRODUCTION

1. One important feature of the economic history of India in the decades following the battle of Plassey was the flow of a vast amount of her wealth out of the country with no equivalent return. This economic drain was an integral feature of the East India Company's administrative and economic policies.
2. It also illustrates the character and methods of the Company's servants who founded the British Empire in India. It affected Bengal much more than Madras and Bombay because the incomes of these two Presidencies were less than their actual needs.

PART – II – FORMS AND CONSTITUENTS OF DRAIN

1. The three important constituents of the drain were the Home Charges, the salaries paid to Englishmen employed in Indian administration and the profits of private British capital invested in trade and industry in India. The last item swelled during the last quarter of the 19th century as a result of the extension of railways, growth of internal and external trade and setting up of plantations, mines, cotton and jute mills, engineering works, etc. India had an export surplus which served as the channel for payment of Home Charges and transfer of private profits.

2. The economic drain had several forms. Whether there was a heavy drain from Bengal in respect of direct export of bullion is a controversial point. Probably the direct export of silver was on the whole, negligible; but private fortunes obtained by the Company's servants and other Europeans in India were remitted to Europe through various means. During the Years 1757-1766 individual Englishmen received from the princes and other persons in Bengal no less than 50 million of current rupees in the form of illegal presents and perquisites. The practice continued even after the prohibition imposed by the Court of Directory in 1766. Among the person against whom charges covering the post 1766 period have been made on this ground are Warren Hastings and his supporter in the Council, Barwell. Secondly, the Company's servants earned large incomes through their participation in inland trade. Thirdly, the British Free Merchants made fortune through their private trade.
3. Two methods were generally adopted by the Company's servants for remitting their private fortunes to England. One of these was sending of diamonds to Europe – a method followed by the British Free Merchants as well. The other was to issue bills of exchange on the East India Company or any of the other European Companies.
4. For the most serious drain on Bengal's capital the East India Company itself was directly responsible. First, the Company purchased its investments from Bengal out of the surplus territorial revenues of this province after the acquisition of Dewani (1765). It became the supreme ruler of a rich and fertile kingdom and used its revenues partly for purposes with which its people had no concern. Secondly, the Company's Government in Bengal frequently provided financial assistance to the Governments at Madras and Bombay for their ordinary civil purposes as also for their wars – the First and Second Anglo-Mysore Wars and the First Anglo-Marathas War for instance. Thirdly, the Company's China trade was fully financed from Bengal, although this province gained nothing in return. This drain took the form of export of bullion. One pernicious effect of this export was scarcity of silver in Bengal which was largely responsible for the currency muddle in the province in the second half of the 18th Century.

BRITISH FAMINE POLICY

1. **Colonel Baird Smith Committee** – 1860-61 – During Famine in Delhi and Agra region in 1860-61 – First committee on Famine.
2. **George Campbell Committee** – 1866 – During Famine in Orissa in 1866

3. **Richard Stratchy Commission** – 1878 – During Famine in UP, Punjab, Bombay and Madras in 1876-78 – By Lytton – Report in 1880 – Recommendations: (a) Formulation of Famine Code, (b) Suspension / Remission of Land Revenue, (c) Duty of States to offer relief, (d) Collection of information about condition of peasants – This Committee provided background for Famine Policy
4. (a) Creation of **Famine Fund**
(b) Incorporation of a New Head in Budget: **Famine Relief and Insurance**
(c) Provision of Rs. 15 million every year for his purpose
5. Formulation of **Famine Code** in 1883 – It was implemented in 1886 – It had four major parts: (a) Part – I – Precaution during normal times, (b) Part II – Relief campaign, (c) Part III- Duty during relief work, (d) Part IV – Division of famine affected areas
6. **James Lyall Commission** – 1898 – By Elgin – During Famine in almost all provinces in 1896- 97
7. **Anthony Macdonnel Commission** – 1900 – By Curzon – During Famine in almost all provinces in 1899 -1900 – Important recommendation: (a) Appointment of Famines Commissioner, (b) Opening of Agriculture Banks, (c) Improvement of irrigation facilities, (d) creation of better transport facility, (e) Revision of Famine Code, (f) Introduction of moral strategy
8. **Colin Scott Commission** – 1901 – By Curzon – For improvement of irrigation facility
9. **Moral strategy** was into practice during famine 1907-08
10. **John Woodhead Commission** – 1943-44 – During famine in Bengal in 1942-43 – Important recommendations: (a) Creation of All India Council, (b) Increase in Production of Food Crops, (c) Amalgamation of Department of Food and Agriculture.