



Role of press and The Quit India Movement in Tamilnadu

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Abstract:

Press played a vital role in the Indian National Movement. The role of the press in Indian Freedom Struggle was to; stimulate the people to convert the Quit India Movement into a mass movement. The emergence of English and Vernacular presses laid a different approach to the Indian freedom struggle. The building up of the Indian public opinion against foreign rule required the use of what was called at the time vernacular languages. With the vastness of its territories, the multiplicity of languages and the variety of cultures and sub-cultures, the imposition of new administrative rules and regulations posed serious difficulties.

Keywords: Newspapers, Vernacular, Magazines, Journals, Phamlets

Introduction:

The Quit India Movement and press mainly focuses on the role played by the media towards the historic Quit India Movement of 1942-44. The news paper has its own importance and identity in providing informative as well as current news regarding the freedom struggle to the mass. The newspapers were printed in many languages play a vital and significant role in our life as well as wonderful gift for human beings. Being fair just and accurate is their inherent characteristics which make them a reliable source of information. They write about each and every aspect of the contemporary society, new laws, Political, social, economic problems as well as they also initiate debates, therefore, they played a pivotal role in creating awareness in the society. The information regarding the freedom struggle from all over India was conveyed through the media. The article regarding American war of independence 1776, French Revolution 1789, Chinese Revolution 1911, Russian Revolution 1917, the unification of Italy and Germany etc., Were written in the newspapers which inspired and encouraged our young generation who sacrificed their lives in participating in freedom struggle leaving their job, as well as their education. The news of freedom movement events which were happening across the country become known to the masses of India through written media. The newspapers whether they were vernacular, Anglo Indian, English and underground press played their vital role in our freedom struggle. The newspaper becomes an important instrument for sharing ideas as well getting of information regarding Quit India Movement 1942-44.

Methodology:

The present work follows descriptive and analytical method from a gender perspective. It also uses sociological approach for wider understanding of the subject matter. The present article involves a critical use of both primary and secondary sources based on external and internal criticism. The paper is basically compiled with various sources like books, journals and newspapers.

Discussions:

The failure of Cripps mission created a feeling of deep disquiet in the country. Ghanthiji echoed he people when lie said” Let the British leave India either to god or to anarchy. He is congress leaders declared that the people of India would resist if there was any Japanese aggression. Gandhiji thought that if the British withdrew, the Japanese would be found to reconsider their plans. He urged the congress to raise the demand that the British must leave India immediately. Since the outbreak of the war, he had been following a policy of non- embarrassment to the British, but now he spoke of an open non- revolution.

On 14th July 1942, the Congress Working Committee approved a resolution which declared that the immediate ending of British rule India is an urgent necessity both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. It expressed its deep concern regarding the defence of China or Russia, whose is freedom is precious and must be preserved and declared that a free India civil assure the success by throwing her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism and imperialism. This resolution which came to be known as the Quit India resolution created an electric atmosphere in the country. The government fully armed with ordinances issued a secret circular to the provincial administrations to get ready with repressive measures and to launch a campaign to village the congress that the Quit India resolution amounted to an open invitation to Japan.

On 8th August the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay, endorsed the resolution by an overwhelming majority. He expressed his views in ‘Harijan Leave India in Gods’ hands, or in the modern parlance, to anarchy. Then all parties will fight one other like dogs or will when real responsibility faces, and then come to a reasonable agreement. As the Quit India resolution was passed, all the political leaders who attended the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay.

On 9th August, in Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Pandit Jawaharalal Nehru, Mrs.Sarojini Naidu, and other members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested. The President and Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee and twenty other local Congressmen were arrested that morning between 5 and 6, and taken away by special train. The leaders arrested in various parts of the city, including Mahatma Gandhi, were brought to Victoria Terminus Railway Station where a special train was standing in readiness.

Mahatma Gandhi and party, including working committee members, were taken by the special train to Poona. Among others arrested were Mira Ben and Mr.Mahadeve Desai, Gandhi Secretary and nearly twenty local leaders. By a Gazette Extraordinary issued that this morning; the Provincial Government had declared unlawful association under section 7 of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908, all Congress and subsidiary organisations throughout the province, numbering 61. These include Congress Socialist party, the Hindustan Red Army and the Umred Red Army.

Kalki appeared in 1941 and was involved in many controversial principles for two years. It also took part in quit India movement in 1942. *Kalki* joined with Rajaji, in agitating against the August movement. Kalki published additional issue regarding the resolutions of the August Movement and its impact on it in a detailed manner. An editorial was written in *Kalki* (1942) a monthly Journal on “The Fire by Amery”. When leaders of the August Movement were arrested in Bombay, the British minister colonel Amery broadcasted in the BBC Radio that these leaders had many secret plans which were not Gandhiji’s. The following lines were the criticism of Kalki’s against Amery: Col. Amery’s words were not the plan of congress leaders and his words were not believable by us. Gandhiji had also written two weeks ago in the newspaper entitled *Harijan* that “secret plans would not help” Jawaharlal Nehru also stated that “we never indulge any such act against your part

in the world war” and he repeated the same ten times. But Amery’s words were able to prevent the war. There were secretly completed. We should not believe that these plans were rendered by Gandhiji and other congress leaders.

Many leaders including Gandhiji were arrested during the ‘Quit India’ Movement in 1941-42. *Indian Express* and *Dinamani* newspapers openly expressed their support for the National Movement. No-100 Mount Road the house of G. Subramania Iyer, was the office of the *Hindu* paper and some National Movements Headquarters of south India. In the same manner, for the quit India movement, the offices of *Express* and *Dinamani* acted as the headquarters of the August Movement of 1943.

Ramanath Goenga, the founder of the *Express* and *Dinamani*, extremely helped the movement more than all other people. He had rendered financial help, issued censored news and circulated them secretly. He had also issued dynamites to break the bridges of the railways. In 1942, it was planned to demolish a railway bridge before the entry of “Boat mail” by the extremists including *Dinamani* editor. For this purpose, the dynamist was supplied by the *Dinamani* founder.

In 1943, the case against Sirkali Boat mail was filed in the court. In this case, the first accused was N. Ramratinam and he was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment. He was released in the appeal but in the meantime, he spent 1½ years in the Jail. T.V. Ganesan, another assistant editor, was acquitted, but again he was arrested under police prevention act. In the same manner, S.V. Ramani, another assistant editor, was arrested. Another assistant editor, Varadhchari of Indian Express, was arrested during the Quit India Movement in 1942.

The Hindustan Times like other nationalist newspapers suffered during the various Sathiyagraha movements for supporting the congress and it put up a brave fight against the restrictions imposed by the government and the harassment it was subjected to. It was one of the leading newspapers which had news of the Sathiyagraha campaigns in bold type on its front pages to the maximum extent, an honour it shared with Bombay Cronical and Free Press journal. When the Chief Commissioner of Delhi issued an order in 1942 following the Quit India Movement disturbances directing the Hindustan Times not to publish more than three columns of news about the disturbances, the Editor Devadas Gandhi, defied it and was arrested and sentenced to a person term. This is an order *The Hindu* commented “that simply takes our breath away. It demonstrates the fact that the chief commissioner is as innocent as a new born baby of the very elements of newspapers production. By insisting that no paper shall publish more than three columns of the present disturbances the chief commissioner makes it impossible for them to fulfill their duty to the public which is to give it all the news which in their judgment.”

On 21st August police raid newspapers offices, arrested the newspapers proprietors and voluntaries’ suspended of some nationalist newspapers. The nationalist newspapers of Culcutta, Lucknow, Bombay, Madras Presidency and other important area, both English and vernacular decided to suspend publication for an indefinite period from the morning of Friday, the 21st August, as a protest against the latest restriction imposed on the newspapers by the government of India. This decision was taken at a meeting of the proprietors and editors of the various newspapers held that afternoon, with Mr. Hemandra Prosed Ghosh, editor of Basumathi, presiding. The newspapers affected by the decision are Amirtha Bazar Patrika Hindustan Standard and Ananda Bazar Patrika, Advance, Viswamitra and others.

The arrest of Gandhi in 1942, in view of the statement that it was better not to publish newspapers than to bring them out under all kinds of government restrictions, several newspapers including the national Herald, the Indian Express and the Dina Mani suspended publication. The press restriction was placed on the Heralded during the Quit India Movement in

1942. The paper ceased publication after the police raided its premises and seized the printing press and office.

An urgent meeting of the Madras Provincial Press Advisory Committee was held on 18th September, 1942, to consider the detailed proposals for prescrutiny of news relating to the Congress movement and disorders. After discussion, the Committee agreed to the proposals, subject to a slight modification. The Government of India cancelled on the 26th September, 1942, their order dated 8th August, 1942, issued under the Defence of India Rule 41(a), in its application to Madras. With effect from the same date, the Government issued orders under Defence of India Rule 41 (a) (b) requiring editors of all newspapers to submit for scrutiny before publication, of newspapers relating to the congress and disclose the measures taken by the government against them and any judicial proceeding arising out of the same.

The *Ananda Vikatan*, *Kalki* and the *Tamil Mani*, three Tamil periodicals published objectionable articles and cartoons. The Madras provincial press advisory committee considered the three cases and recommended that the editors concerned might be given a warning. The Government accepted the recommendations of the Committee and requested the convener to issue the necessary warnings to the editors with a threat of demand of security in the case of the editors of the *Kalki* and *Tamil Mani*, should they again publish objectionable articles.

The debate on India in the House of Lords had come in for sharp criticism from the nationalist press. Two newspapers called it a farce. The *Swadesamitran* pointed out: "Except, on the one issue that the War effort should go on, it is becoming clear that the Government do not reflect public opinion on any matter. They do not realise that India must be conciliated at least for winning the War. They are trying to shirk responsibility and mark time. It is clear from the debate that several peers have realised this to a certain extent. If there is a stir even in the House of Lords which is the bulwark of imperialism, it is not a matter deserving of notice."

Mr. C.Rajagopalachariar's move in regard to the formation of a National Government and the holding of General Election was welcomed by the *Swadesamitran* and *Mussalman*; the *Swadesamitran* was a Tamil daily and the *Mussalman* an Urdu daily. The *Mail*, however, criticised those portions of the plan of Mr. C.Rajagopalachariar relating to the holding of general elections, formation of national Government, exclusion of Indian Princes, etc.

A meeting of the provincial Press Advisory Committee was convened on 14th October, 1942, to consider a cartoon published in the *Ananda Vikatan*, a Tamil humorous weekly and also the leading article entitled Fustian in the *Hindu* dated 30th September, 1942. The Committee was not unanimous in its opinion as to the character of the cartoon in the *Ananda Vikatan*, but it agreed after some discussion that if the government decided to take action, it should be in the form of a final warning to the editor and that he should be informed that any lapse in the future would lead to a demand of security. As regards the leading article in the *Hindu*, the committee was again not unanimous in its opinion. After some discussion, the meeting dispersed without making any recommendation.

A meeting of the Madras press advisory committee was held on the 30th of October, 1942, when the committee requested government to withdraw (1) the letter of warning issued to the editor, *Hindu*, and (2) the order requiring security from the *Ananda Vikatan*. Government declined to comply with both the requests. A special meeting of the committee was held on 14th November of 1942 to consider the question of what method of press control should be devised and substituted for the system of pre-security of news which was in force in the province. The committee pointed out that the Governments of Bombay, Sind and central provinces had accepted the Bombay resolution of the All India Newspaper editors conference passed on the 15th of October, 1942 and requested the Government of Madras to do the same. The Government of

Madres considered the resolution passed by the plenary session of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conferences and decided to issue orders on the lines recommended by it. These orders were issued in the form of press instructions.

Distribution of objectionable literature and pamphlets continued. A big haul was made by the Police in Chingleput district. A house in Mambalam was searched on the evening of 11.12.1942 and M.J. Ramalingam, editor of the *Hanuman*, a Congress Tamil weekly was arrested while he was working on a cyclostyle duplicator, preparing copies of prejudicial leaflets for distribution. Many bundles of objectionable pamphlets, badges, blocks and stencil plates were recovered from his house. A list of more than 150 addresses was also seized, and the C.I.D. was investigated into the affair. This appeared to have been one of the main centers of distribution for the Tamil districts of the Presidency.

The demotion of Sir Stafford Cripps was looked upon practically by the entire Indian owned English newspapers as a blow to Sir Stafford Cripps and a success to the Conservative Party. The exclusion of Sir Stafford Cripps was therefore a triumph for Mr. Churchill. He had elbowed out, it was said, a possible rival who was forced on him and he had succeeded in making his Cabinet ideologically more homogeneous.

There were two views held about His Excellency the Viceroy's refusal to allow Mr. C. Rajagopalachari to interview Mr. Gandhi. *The Indian Express*, for instance, was not inclined to look upon this as a calamity. "We wonder," it wrote "if the Viceroy has unconsciously not done a service to India by rejecting C.R.'s request for permission to see Gandhiji as otherwise he too would have failed like Cripps and termed a failure because of the much-advertised complexity of the Indian problem." On the other hand, the *Mussalman* wrote: In consideration of the existing delicate situation, H.E. the Viceroy could have permitted Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar to meet Mr. Gandhi. Success of the former in bringing the League and the congress together would have arrayed the whole country on the side of the United Nation. Mr.C.Rajagopalachariar is not a person who would have fanned the flame of the present dissension. His failure in his mission would not have worsened the situation.

The resignation of Shyama Prasad Mukerjee proved according to the Indian section of the Press that even in provinces which were working under, the system of responsible government is really the Governor that rule. Mr.Mukerjee's statements on the opinion of these newspapers unmistakably show that Provincial autonomy was a farce. Ministers were not consulted on important questions and permanent officials were having their own way Mr. Savarkar's speech at Cawnpore as President of the Hindu Maha Sabha was generally welcomed not for its pro Hindu' sentiments but for exposing the dangers of Pakistan and the division of India into Provinces giving them the right to secede from the Centre.

The speeches made at and the resolutions passed by the session of the Hindu Maha Sabha at Cawnpore had come in for wide comment. Generally speaking, the nationalist press had agreed with its opposition to the denunciation by Mr. Savarkar, of Pakistan, but Mr. Savarkar's criticism of the Congress was not acceptable to some of the newspapers. The Hindu said: "Whatever may be the domestic difference between the various sections of the Indian people, Dr. Mookarjee himself has pointed out practically all parties have demanded immediate independence. When that the case, it is just or proper to allow oneself to be so overborne by one's indignation against the Muslim League intransigence as to go to the length of clubbing it with Great Britain in a comprehensive indictment and urging application of the same kind of sanction against both. Without going into the merits of direct action as an instrument of the policy, we would point out that it is mere commonsense that only united pressure by all major interests in the country can compel Britain to part with power, while on the contrary, the frittering away of national energies in mutual bickering can only strengthen Britain's hands."

Conclusion

Thus the May conclude that all the so called mainstream media, the major newspapers The Times of India, Statesman, and pioneer were pro-British. The pro-Government newspapers, Journals, magazines and periodicals were directed by the British Government to take a strong line against the congress. Some of the vernacular newspapers and Journals totally disapproved the program by congress at such a critical Juncture. The Muslim press The Dawn, Eastern Times of Lahore, also adopted a different line and strongly satirized the attitude which the congress had adopted. The newspaper of communist party of India, The war peoples also condemned the Quit India Movement. The nationalist newspapers of Harijian, Harijian Sevak, Harjian Bndu, The Turibune, Eanadu in Andhra Pradesh Amrita Bazaar Patrika in Culcutta a played a vital role in inspiring as well as motivating the people of India especially the youth about the plans and adjectives of the Quit India Movement. Therefore we can conclude that nationalist and patriotic journalists fought not only just for freedom of the press but also for the independence of the nation.

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