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History of Press in Amravati: Case Study of Daily Hindusthan

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Introduction:

Amravati is the second largest city after Nagpur in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. It is one of the Administrative Divisions of Maharashtra (out of six). It has mythological significance, hence the city is also known as Ambanagari. As per the 2011 census, the total population of Amravati, including urban and rural is 787056. The details are below. The sex ratio of Amravati city is 957 per 1000 males.

Population of Amravati as per the 2011 census:

	Male	Female	Others	Total
Rural	72875	67378	2	140255
Urban	330524	316257	20	646801

(http://amravati.nic.in/Primary_census/census.pdf retrieved on 17.02.2016 at 1.35pm)

Amravati is also known as an educational hub of Vidarbha. Shivaji Education Society, Shri Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal, Prof. Ram Meghe Engineering College, Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya these are some of the respected educational institutions of the city. This has led to the high rate of literacy. The total literacy rate is 81.56%.

Literacy Rate of Amravati as per the 2011 census:

	Male	Female	Others	Total	Percentage
Rural	60256	50443	2	110944	79.10
Urban	284468	259078	12	543568	84.03

(http://amravati.nic.in/Primary_census/census.pdf retrieved on 17.02.2016 at 1.35pm)

With these numbers on background, one can understand the scope of newspapers of all languages in Amravati. Though Amravati has both Marathi and Hindi language speaking communities, Marathi newspapers have more circulation collectively than Hindi newspapers in the city. (Jadhav, 2016)

Objectives of the study:

Following are the objectives of this study:

- 1) To take account of the present status of newspapers in the city
- 2) To collect data on history of Marathi newspapers in the city
- 3) To explore the history Daily Hindustan

Review of Literature:

There is not much literature available regarding to this topic.

‘Amravati Shahracha Itihas’ the book written by Bapusaheb Karanjkar has given the overall history of the city. The book also gives some brief but important information on the history of newspapers of the city.

In pre-independence era, journalism in Amravati was focused on freedom movement. It was started for social cause and it was a mission like most of other newspapers at that time. (Marathi Patrakarita: Bimb Pratibimb, 2014) ‘Marathi Patrakarita: Bimb Pratibimb’ the reference book published on the occasion of 100th birthday of Balasaheb Marathe gives information on the different aspects of journalism in general and journalism of Balasaheb Marathe in particular. The book has an article ‘Amravatichi Vruttpatra Srushti’ written by Bhalchandra Revne. He has given a brief account of weeklies started in the city before and after independence.

Research Methodology:

In depth interview is the method used for this research. To get the insights and in depth information on Marathi journalism of Amravati city, following experts were interviewed:

Vilas Marathe, Managing Editor, Daily Hindusthan

Ulhas Marathe, Editor, Daily Hindusthan

Anil Jadhav, senior journalist, currently working with Times of India

Kumar Bobade, Head of the Department of Mass Communication, Shri Shivaji College

Suresh Kachavar, District Information Officer, Amravati

History of Marathi Newspapers in Amravati City:

Amravati has a great tradition of newspapers since early 1870s. The newspapers/magazines were started to make the people aware about the freedom movement. The first weekly magazine ‘*Vharad Samachar*’ was started by Shriganesha Narayan Kolhatkar during 1867. The exact year is not available. The first printing press was also credited to him. This was an

inspiration to others. After this, another weekly was started by Rambhau Keskar as 'Pramodsindhu'. A well known thinker and freedom fighter Dadasaheb Khaparde used to contribute in *Pramodsindhu*. Another weekly 'Kartvya' had its existence during 1890s. 'Bahishkrut Bharat' was another weekly started by Nanasaheb Gavai in 1914. Nanasaheb Gavai was the member of Hindu Mahasabha. He devoted his life and this journal to the upliftment of lower castes in Hindu religion, claims a source.

In 1920, well known weekly 'Uday' was started in the city under the editorial guidance of Babasaheb Khaparde. *Uday* has contributed in the freedom movement significantly. After a few issues it became bi-weekly, this proves its popularity. *Uday* has documented the history of the Vidrabha region and all its movements with great details. Narayan Bamangavkar was its editor for many years. He was highly influenced by Lokmany Tilak's ideology and journalism. It was because of his efforts *Uday* enjoyed a great reputation as a bi-weekly and then as a daily. Arguably *Uday* was the first daily from the city of Amravati. This is the brief history of newspapers in Amravati before independence (Amravati Shahracha Itihas) .

Along with *Jyotiprakash*, *Nava Vidrabha*, *Sangharsh Jwala* and many other publications which started in the city and closed down soon are as follows with the name of the editor: (Revane, 2014) *Avhaan* (Madhavrao Deshpande), *Jagrut Vharad* (Bapusaheb Karanjkar) *Danka* (Suresh Bhat), *Janrajya* (Vatane) *Rangbhoomi-Chitrabhoomi* Kiran (V.D. Hambrde) *Shramjivi* (Hatole)

The other journals are: the *Gurudev Mozari* (1943), the *Jyoti Prakash* (1949), the *Shikshan Margdarshan* (1950), the *Jeewan* (1953), the *NavVidarbha* (1956), the *Sahakari Vidarbha* (1959), the *Watchal* (1963), the *Lokdarshan* (1963), the *Pragatik Sliikshan* (1963), the *Awaz* and the *Amravati Times*. (Maharashtra State Gazetteers)

Current Status of Marathi Newspapers in Amravati City

As per the District Information Office, Amravati city has 35 registered dailies and 73 registered weeklies, including all languages, and evening publications. As of now, in the city only nine dailies enjoy circulation more than 15,000 but less than 50,000. The list of those newspapers is given below. Out of these newspapers seven are in Marathi and rest two are in Hindi language. First nine are local newspapers, started in Amravati.

Daily Pratidin, local Hindi newspaper has highest circulation in the city. Daily Deshonnti has Akola, Budhana, Washim editions along with Amravati. Though Daily Deshonnti has its local edition, it does not get printed in the city. Out of 35 registered dailies 12 dailies are evening publications. Out of 73 registered weeklies, only a few are functional.

Not a single state level newspaper has its Amravati edition. Other than local newspapers, city gets Lokmat, Loksatta, Punyanagari, Times of India and Hitvada. (all Nagpur editions) and Divya-Marathi (Akola) In spite of being district place all the state level Marathi and Hindi newspapers publish four page supplement on the district news, with the main edition, which hardly covers city events in detail.

The list of local dailies in Amravati:

- 1) Daily Pratidin: (Hindi): This is the highest circulated newspaper in the city. Nanak Ahuja is the owner and editor of Pratidin. The Total circulation is over 68,000 copies which is three times more than all Hindi dailies circulated in Western Vidharbha region. Along with Amravati it has six editions including Nagpur, Akola, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim and Wardha. (latest circulation figures are not available)
- 2) Daily Amravati Mandal (Hindi): This is the highly circulated Hindi evening newspaper in the city. It has completed almost 23 years. It was started by Anil Agrawal.
- 3) Daily Hindusthan (Marathi) The history is given below.
- 4) Daily Janmadhyam (Marathi): Started on September 4, 1989 by Pradeep Deshpande. Along with Amravati it has its three editions, Akola, Wardha and Washim.
- 5) Daily Vidarbha Matdar (Marathi): Started by Dilip Yadatkar in 1983. Along with Amravati it has Yavatmal, Akola, Budhana, Washim.
- 6) Daily Matrubhoomi: (Marathi) The newspaper was started in 1963 by Brijlal Biyani. Originally it was from Akola. Shivchandra Nagar was the first editor of the Amravati edition.
- 7) Daily Lokpath (Marathi): Yash Chaudhary is the editor of the newspaper.
- 8) Daily Apla Mahavidarbha (Marathi): Kishor Nalamvar is the editor of this newspaper.
- 9) Daily Deshonnti (Marathi) The newspaper was started in 1986 in Akola. Today, along with Amravati it has maximum, 11 editions in Vidarbha region. Prakash Pohare is the Managing Director and Chief Editor of Daily Deshonnti.

Why Daily Hindusthan?

Daily Hindusthan is the oldest and highly circulated local Marathi newspaper in the city that is still running. It was started as a weekly publication and then it became a daily in 1950. The newspaper is known by the name of its founder-editor Balasaheb Marathe. It has contributed in the socio-economic and political life of the district in general and the city in particular. Hence it is selected to study.

History

Regarding the history of Hindusthan, the authentic information is not available. Bhalchandra Revne writes: Veer Vamanrao Joshi and S.K. Vharadpande both started weekly namely 'Svatantra Hindusthan'. He has not given the exact year. Then it was closed down in 1930. In 1947, Gadre was the editor of the weekly Hindusthan and it came to Balasaheb Marathe. K.V. Taare writes: during independence Amravati had three newspapers- Hraday (Narayan Bamangaokar), Svatantra Hindusthan (A.V.Nawade) and Hindusthan started by Balasaheb Marathe. (Taare, 2014) And Ulhas Marathe writes, Balasaheb Marathe took charge of weekly Svatandra Hindusthan from Gadre in 1950. Vilas Marathe writes: Balasaheb Marathe along with his friends Dr. Rajabhau Barlinge and Dr. Shivajirao Patvardhan, started new daily 'Hindusthan' in 1950. It was started on the principles of Veer Vamanrao Joshi as they were followers of him. Whatever the original date, Hindusthan started in 1950 as a daily and it still has its existence, this makes Daily Hindusthan as oldest running daily in the city.

Balasaheb Marathe and his Journalism:

The interviews of above mentioned experts can be summed up with following points:

Balasaheb Marathe was knowledgeable, liberal minded, people-centric journalist. For him, journalism was social service with a cause. He had a very strong rural network of reports and readers also. Amravati has significant Muslim population. He always tried to maintain the social harmony in the city through his writings. He had deep understanding of all aspects of life be it politics or economy. He welcomed all types of political thinking and debates over many issues. Shivajirao Patvardhan, Suresh Bhat, Ram Shevalkar, Nanasaheb Gavai, Sudam Deshmukh, Panjabrao Deshmukh all these people with different ideology used to meet him regularly and

discuss many issue regarding Vidarbha. For him, development of Amravati was more important than personal inclination. He worked even on the day of his wife's demise; this shows his commitment to his work. (Athvanitale Appa, 2014) Though he was an editor he used to look after all the work of the press starting from news collection, composing and even parcels.

Major Contribution:

Daily Hindusthan has consistently followed certain issues. It has always supported and helped Tapovan, an organization for leprosy patients since its inception. Balasaheb Marathe was closely associated with Dr. Shivajirao Patwardhan, founder of Tapovan. Balasaheb Marathe supported Sanyukta Maharashtra movement and he continuously wrote on that. Another major issue which was extensively covered by daily Hindusthan is Agriculture University Movement (Krishi Vidyapeeth Andolan). During 1967-69, the movement for Agriculture University was very aggressive and daily Hindusthan has supported the issue and published detailed reports. As a result, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Agriculture University was established in 1969 in Akola. (Bobde, 2016) In 1972, the Melghat Tiger project was announced by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Many political leaders and thinkers opposed this project in the favour of native tribes of Melghat. Balasaheb Marathe wrote in favour of the project and tried to highlight the importance of this project for long term benefits. Balasaheb Marathe was very active in the agitation started to get the regular water supply from Upper Wardha dam during 1986-87. To fulfill this demand for development of Amravati, Balasaheb even started '*prayopveshan*' (sacrifice of food step by step) in July 1987. People of Amravati supported Balasahen Marathe and state government has to consider this demand. The then chief minister Shankarrao Chavan finally agreed on 3rd August 1987. This was the major success of Balasaheb Marathe and mass agitation generated by daily Hindusthan.

Present Status:

Since 2005, Vilas Marathe is the managing editor and his uncle Ulhas Marathe is the editor of the daily Hindusthan. Along with Amravati Daily Hindusthan has four editions including Akola Budhana, Washim, and Yavatmal. Daily Hindusthan has more than 73,000 circulations calculating all four editions. In Amravati district it has circulation more than 27,000 and in the city it has almost 16,000 circulation. It costs three rupees and editor and managing editor believe

that loyal readers don't mind paying this much amount because readers trust them. Daily Hindusthan claims that it is not part of cut-throat price competition. The daily gives 20 pages on weekends, unlike 12 pages on week days. Daily Hindusthan claims that it enjoys better circulation than any other local newspaper and hence there is no question of competition. When asked about competition with state level newspapers like Lokmat, Divya Marathi, Vilas Marathe confidently said that Amravatikars might start reading other newspapers but they will never stop subscribing local newspapers like Hindusthan. (Marathe, 2016) He said that the local approach is the success key. There will be always scope for local newspaper in the state like Maharashtra. Ulhas Marathe said readers has an emotional attachment with the Hindusthan because of Balasaheb Marathe, thus other newspapers will not affect the circulation of the daily. (Marathe U. , 2016) There are many challenges to sustain financially but people associated with Hindusthan believe that Balasaheb Marathe's great tradition of society centric journalism will help them to survive.

Conclusions:

Journalism is known as the first draft of history. Long running newspapers like daily Hindusthan make their mark not as chroniclers of current event but also as an historical document. Daily Hindusthan has witnessed the history and socio-political-cultural-development of Amravati in last more than 65 years. Hence it is very important to explore the history of Hindusthan. This is undoubtedly one of the important newspapers in the history of Amravati press.

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