

Essay on Role of Newspapers

"Newspaper is today regarded as a powerful source of knowledge, a vigorous critic of government actions, a social reformer, drawing the attention of public towards the maladies and abuses prevalent in the society, as the champion of freedom, justice, as the best tool of communication and so exercise a tremendous influence on the minds of public."

Through the newspaper, one can enlighten oneself with all kinds of subjects nether relating to Economics, Finance, Administration, Science, Space, Information Technology, Commerce, Sports or relating to the social problems facing our country or the world. "A careful and inquisitive reader of a few good newspapers can learn much more than the most scholars learn in great libraries," said an eminent writer. Newspaper commands such an educative value that it can mold the public opinion, it can change the attitude of the people, it can force the rulers to amend in their policymaking and force them to enact some laws, banning some social evils prevalent in the society."

"The pen is mightier than the sword." –

Lord Oxford

The newspaper does not have the brutal force of a sword, but it plays on the minds of the people and so more effective, mightier than the swords.

The beginning of the newspaper, as we know it today, was in the form of newsletter news books first published in the 1400s. The earliest of these newsletters often called currants, occurrents, or intelligencers were published in Europe's commercial centers. They

simply contained business news and news of other public events for the business community.

Official news sheets began to appear during the late 1500s. Then came the written notes, were pasted in public places in Venice, which could be read on payment of a coin, known as the Gazzetta. The first printed news sheet seems to have been the Avis Relation Oder Zeitung, published regularly on weekly basis from 1609 in Germany.

The weekly Frankfurter Journal of Germany is generally regarded as the world's first real newspaper founded by Egenolph Emmet in 1615. The Leipzig ger Zeitung was the first newspaper started daily. It was first started every week and soon became the first daily journal in the world in 1660.

The Wiener Zeitung is the world's oldest newspaper still in existence, published in Vienna Austria in 1703. Vedomosti, the first Russian newspaper, was begun in 1702, and the Daily Courant was the first daily newspaper published in the U.K., The Indian World was India's first important newspaper.

During the mid-1800s, the newspapers were able to cover news across the world faster after the invention of the electric telegraph and the introduction of international cables.

Since the 1960's many newspapers have modernized their facilities by installing computerized word processing and layout system. Today many newspapers that offer electronic newspapers are called online newspapers. With the flashing of news on television, became very common, now newspapers have started covering many aspects, like features on science, general knowledge, stories, and analytical process on various current affairs. Now the newspapers have become not only a source of news but also a source of knowledge in various

fields and subjects.

Mr. Thomas Jefferson well described The importance of newspapers, the author of the America Declaration of Mr. Thomas Jefferson describes the importance of newspapers, the author of the American declaration of independence in the following “were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter”.

Newspapers play a very important and crucial role in enlightening and educating the people. During the British regime in India, the newspapers played a very explosive role to awaken the Indian mass from their slumber and sloth, made them conscious of their right to liberty, right of self-government. The nationalists through their newspaper ignited the full resentments. The Indigo revolt by peasants in Bengal was well supported by the “Hindu Patriot” the mouthpiece of Harish Chandra Mukherjee and by the Rengalee’ of Surendra Nath Bannerjee. Similarly other newspaper and journals during that period like *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, *Kesri Voice of India*, *Indian Mirror*, *Young India*’, ‘*Yugantar*’, effectively helped in breeding sense of self-respect, nationalism, rights of freedom, created hatred against the excesses and injustice caused by the British rule. Such was an impact of newspapers during the period that the British Government came out with suppressive acts to curb the freedom of the press.

In the present era of the I.T. revolution, globalization and liberalization, Newspapers role has further strengthened and become widespread. It is the cheapest mode of communication and source of the world’s knowledge and even today it plays a role of critical opposition, necessary for the success of democracy. Newspaper is called the fourth estate of democracy. Newspapers have exposed several corrupt practices, officials, hidden deals, thus putting a

check on cancer in the form of corruption in society. Today newspapers play a very emphatic role in awakening the people against many evils that prevailed in society, like child marriage, illiteracy among the girls, killing of the girl child, dowry, sexual harassment of women, etc. thus plays a role of a reformist.

In a democracy, the newspaper can enlighten the people in the matter of their rights and liberties, can check the bureaucrats misusing their position and authority. Many newspapers have started columns like help desk which help the individual sufferers solve their problems by highlighting their grievances and problems. Newspapers have also become very important from the point of view of students for whom the question papers, guess papers for academic and competitive exams are being supplied through the newspapers.

During the election period, the newspaper plays a very important role by publishing the bio-data of candidates, merits, demerits of the candidates, criminal cases filed against the candidates, etc. which makes the general people aware of the candidate, to whom they are planning to vote.

India is a developing nation, where 70% of the population live in villages, where the facilities of TV, Internet, and other means of communications are beyond the reach of a common man so the newspapers are the only source of 'news' and knowledge of common mass. It is from the newspapers, the villagers are enlightened to the political, social, economical events happening in our country and throughout the world.

Abuses of Newspapers :

The newspapers have so far traveled a long journey of about 350 years, yet it is not regarded as a source of perfectly authentic news

or information. Prejudiced or wilful perversion of news or favoritism to a particular group or party has been seen in the news published in several newspapers thus creates doubt of the truthfulness of the news. Many capitalists hold some newspapers, many news published in such newspapers are not impartial and thus creates biased-attitude and induces the mass to believe something wrong. In the name of freedom: of the press, some newspapers, blackmail the innocent corporate, public in their own interests. And where there is no freedom of press then newspapers become tools of propaganda in the hands of governments. The press then is nothing more than a pile of lies.

But despite all the weaknesses of journalism, newspapers, it can well be concluded, that If honestly seen, impartially worked, it is one of the potential tools to enlighten the people, to check the wrongs done by the government, to make the people aware to their rights. An impartial and fearless 'press' is the basic requirement for the success of a democracy.