

# SCIENCE AND CULTURE

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**EDITORIAL**

## EDUCATION AND JOURNALISM



The history of education and journalism in the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries due to the intrusion of the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British for their commercial and colonial interests. The British Government took many steps on education and journalism

in India for the development of infrastructure to uplift the country in the global scenario.

The first educational institution established in India by the British Govt. was the Calcutta Mohammedan College or Aliah Madrasha (First School) founded in 1780, at the request of several Muhammadans of distinction, by Warren Hastings. Presently, it is Aliah University (2007). The other academic institutions developed during the period of British Raj include: The Asiatic Society (the first academic institution in India, 1784 having the First Library), Indian Botanic Garden, Shibpur (1787), Fort William College (1800), Hindoo/Presidency College (1817/1855), Sanskrit College (1824), Calcutta Medical College (1835), Calcutta Public Library/Imperial/ National Library (1836/1903/1948), Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (1876), Tata Institute (1908) now known as Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and Bose Institute (1917) in Kolkata.

The first system of education in India can be traced back to ancient times through the existence of Gurukuls and Ashramas dating back to 5000 BC having residential character. Here student (shishya) and guru (teacher) used to reside in guru's ashrama (home) or in close proximity having intimate relationships of teacher-student focusing holistic approach of learning. Gradually the higher education centre like the universities of Nalanda and Taxila were established and flourished as centers of learning. Later on during the phases of development the British educational system was introduced in India giving emphasis on English.

Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay be credited for introducing modern school system and English language to India during 1830s. The British Govt. wanted to modernize education in India establishing some Acts and Commissions under British rule. The period 1813-35 was very important for India's growth academically. The Charter Act of 1813 was an important law for keeping a specific amount of Rs. 1 (one) Lakh every year just to educate Indian people for the first time by the British Govt. The General Committee of Public Instructions was set up for overall supervision of education in 1823 and the scientific equipments started arriving in the same year for the initiation of science teaching.

Lieutenant General Lord William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, the first Governor-General of India be credited for significant social and educational reforms in India with his historical declaration of introduction of western education in India (1835). The Educational Despatch also known as the Magna Carta of Indian Education of 1854 of Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control of the East India Company in Calcutta, had an impact on education in British India following the vernacular languages in the primary schools and English should be the medium for college-level education. He also laid down plan for a co-ordinated system of education from the primary stage to higher levels. Ultimately the universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established in 1857 following the model of the University of London.

Education is vital for the progress of individual, society and country. Education is a dialogue between the past, present and the future, so that the young generations receive the accumulated lessons of our heritage and scientific attributes to carry forward. Education primary, secondary and higher must gain top priority. After 77 years of independence, India as a nation, still lag in literacy and even in the field of primary education. During the course of Indian academic developments the modern universities, IITs, IIMs, technology oriented education emerged for proper growth in the broader perspectives. Now in 21<sup>st</sup> century the Indian education showed the modern pathway with online learning and digital classrooms. The Indian

education is dynamic reflecting the nation's diverse cultural heritage with the thirst of knowledge. Free and compulsory education is ensured to every child between the ages of 3 to 18 under India's Right to Education Act 2020. Literacy rate of India is 78%. In view of the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) the schooling system in India is now with 5+3+3+4 system in line involving conscious intellectual activity of a child. Providing equitable and inclusive higher education to young generation is one of the NEP-2020 priorities. NEP aims to make India a Global Knowledge Superpower. According to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore "The highest education is that which merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence"



Johann Carolus - Title page of the Relation from 1609

The press appeared in the Indian scene due to the spread of new education policy and the establishment of academic institutions in India. The first printing press was established at Goa in 1557 by the Portuguese and the first published book in India by Garcia de Orta in Portuguese treating exclusively the plants – "*Coloquios dos simples e drogas he cousas medicinais do India*" from Goa on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1563. But the East India Company had taken initiative in installing a printing press in 1674 in Bombay. Gradually the printing press were also started in other places like Calcutta, Hughli, Madras and a few other places. The Censorship of the British Press Act 1799 required the newspapers to carry the names of the printer, editor, and proprietor in every issue. Then came the Licensing Regulations Act 1823 which was opposed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy along with enlightened Indians. Charles Metcalfe Act 1835 was of a free press. Later Vernacular Press Act 1878 was proposed by Lord Lytton with a view to having better control over newspapers published in Indian languages. The Indian Press Act 1910 empowered the Govt. to demand security at the time of registration and the printer of the newspaper was required to submit two copies of the relevant papers.

The press played a crucial role in India's nationalistic movement showcasing the fight for freedom of expression. The first signs of the origin of the press in India was the writing on the walls and on stones dating back to several centuries. Later, paper and writing materials were invented, and the official records in the form of messages were maintained in its rudimentary stages. Journalism is the activity or profession for collecting, writing and editing of news/reports designed for publication in newspaper or

magazine, presentation through media and arranging them systematically to have the popular taste for public interest. Newspapers and the Magazines have always been the primary medium of journalists since 18<sup>th</sup> century, radio and television in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the internet in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Govt. of Venice first published the monthly *Notizie scritte* (Written notices) in 1556, the name eventually came to mean "Newspaper". These were handwritten newsletters used to convey political, military and economic news quickly in Europe during the early modern era (1500-1800). The first newspaper was the weekly *Relation aller Furnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien* published from Strasbourg in German-language from 1605 by Johann Carolus. The first English-language weekly magazine "A Current of General News" was published in 1622 and distributed in England in an 8 to 24-page quarto format. The first English newspaper was published in 1665 in Oxford, England known as *The Oxford Gazette* and was renamed as *London Gazette* in 1666 due to its transfer of place to London having english news printing, echoing the coranto format of two columns, a clear title and a clear date twice a week.



Hicky's Bengal Gazette front page of the paper.

The first Newspaper in India was published on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1780 under the editorship of James Augustus Hickey named *Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser* in English weekly. The first Indian vernacular journal was the Bengali monthly, the *Digdarshan* published in April 1818 followed in the next month by a Bengali weekly newspaper, the *Samachar Darpan*, published on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1818 edited by John Marshman, the famous Christian Missionary of Serampore near Calcutta. The first Indian Raja Ram Mohan Roy started publishing two newspapers in India in two different languages i.e. *Sambad Kaumudi* in Bengali meaning The moon of intelligence in 1821 and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* in Persian meaning the mirror of news in 1822. Robert Knight founded two English-language daily newspapers in India, *The Statesman* in Calcutta on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1875 and *The Times of India* in Bombay on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1838. Some of the other significant newspapers were Bombay Samachar (1822), Indian Mirror (1861), Amrit Bazaar Patrika (1868), Bangadarshan (1872), The Hindu (1878), Yugantar (1906), Young India (1916), The Independent (1919), Anandabazar Patrika (1922), Harijan (1933). These Indian sponsored journals and newspapers





Indian Science News Association

showed the expression of strong emotion of Indian feelings criticizing British rule. These examples brought the Indian intelligentsia into journalism. These early newspapers of India having unique objectives played the most vital role in spreading information and expressing dissent against British rule for independence. It is noteworthy to mention that the Press acts as the chief instrument for the nationalist minded Indians to spread the message of patriotism and modern economic, social and political ideas creating an all India consciousness.



Science and Culture first issue 1935

Some educated Indians, however, challenged the English claims of superiority of science and felt the need for an association where scientists and other educated Indians could interact and exchange ideas to promote science and instill a scientific temper among the masses to reap the benefits of science. In order to give these into a shape the Indian Science News Association (ISNA) was established in 1935 by Acharya

P. C. Ray, as the founder president, Prof. Meghnad Saha and Dr. B.B. Ray, as the founder secretaries, and Prof. N.R. Sen as the treasurer along with some other distinguished thinkers and personalities like Sir U.N. Bramachari, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, etc. with the prime objective of “Dissemination of scientific knowledge amongst the public.” ISNA introduced the journal; *Science and Culture* in 1935. Interestingly, the first issue of *Science and Culture* was published in June 1935 with M.N. Saha and B.B. Ray as the editors, while the ISNA was founded on July 9, 1935. *Science and Culture* is not just a journal of natural science, but also a journal of cultural science. Its holistic founders believed that one discipline could not be completely divorced from the other, preferring to focus on research and development of science, society and culture, making it a unique and truly multidisciplinary science journal. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister and the architect of modern India in his message stated: “Science and Culture are the essence of life today, in war and peace, and any periodical which serves the cause of science and culture performs a service to India and humanity.”



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Scientifica Communica, first issue 2021 (e-paper in English)



Bigyan Kahon, first issue 2021 (e-paper in Bengali)

*Science and Culture* has an unbroken continuity in all these years. □

Presently, the Journal is listed in Thomson Reuters Master List, UGC-Care List Group-II and also indexed in UK-based CAB Abstracts, Web of Science, Science citation index Expanded Category.

The ISNA is conducting a 12 week Training Programme on Science Communication and Media Practice course since 1980. A few years ago, Vigyan Prasar of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India started, collaborating with ISNA. The course is very popular and a number of participants has subsequently found jobs in various media.

Recently ISNA is also publishing two e-papers - one in English, viz. *Scientifica Communica* (since 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2021) and the another in Bengali, viz. *Bigyan Kahon* (since 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2021) to have the holistic approach of Science awareness to young students and general public.

This is how ISNA completed ninety years of its existence being nurtured and nourished in the hands of the cream of intelligentsia of Bengal and a number of quality scientists and academicians from the rest of India. The 90 years were a long journey with struggle to balance the budget and to publish *Science and Culture* regular. The Editorial Board of the Journal *Science and Culture* gratefully acknowledges the publication of 38 special issues on selected modern scientific topics sponsored by the universities/institutes funded by UGC, DAE, DST, CSIR, ICAR and ICMR since 2005. The Sailee Press Pvt. Ltd. deserve special credit for their devoted service in printing Journal *Science and Culture* for last four decades. It's our proud achievement of the ISNA that

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