

History of Press in India during British rule

- **1780:**
 - James Augustus Hickey started 'The Bengal Gazette' also known as 'Calcutta General advertiser'.
 - This was the first newspaper published in India which was later stopped because it carried critical articles against the company.
- **1799:**
 - Governor-General Richard Wellesley enacted the Censorship of Press Act, 1799 to stop the French from publishing anything against the British.
 - This act brought all the newspapers under Government scrutiny before their publication.
 - This act was later extended in 1807 and covered all kinds of Press Publications newspapers, magazines, books, and Pamphlets.
 - The rules were relaxed in 1818 when Francis Hastings (1813-1823) assumed office.
- **1823:**
 - Licensing Regulation ordinance was brought out by acting Governor-General John Adams.
 - This regulation made press without a license a penal offence.
 - The restriction was directed mainly at Indian-language newspapers or those edited by the Indians.
 - This caused Raja Ram Mohun Roy to repeal his Persian journal 'Mirat-ul-akhbar' started in 1822.
- **1824:**
 - Raja Ram Mohun Roy protested against the restriction on freedom of the press.
- **1835:**
 - Press act or Metcalfe act, repealed the Licensing regulations of 1823.

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- Governor General Metcalfe came to be known as the ‘liberator of the press’ in India.
- The act required a printer/publisher to give a precise account of the premises of a publication and cease functioning if required by a similar declaration.
- The result of a liberal press policy was the rapid growth of newspapers.
- **1857:**
 - Licensing act was enacted by Gov. Gen Canning (later Viceroy in 1858) after the Revolt of 1857 to impose stricter restrictions on the press.
 - The right to stop the publication and circulation of any book, newspaper or printed matter was reserved with the Government.
- **1867:**
 - The registration act replaced the Metcalfe act of 1835.
 - The act was said to introduce regulations and no restrictions on the press.
 - The print media now was made to contain the name of the printer, publisher, and place of publication and a copy had to be submitted to the government.
- **1878:**
 - Vernacular Press act by Viceroy Lytton was enacted to curtail the freedom of Indian language newspapers (*this law did not apply to English language papers*).
 - This was the result of the racial bitterness that has grown between then Indians and Europeans after the incidents of 1857.
 - The district magistrate was given powers to make the printer and publisher of any vernacular newspaper enter into a bond with the Government stating not to cause disaffection against the government or antipathy between persons of different religions, caste, and races through published material.
 - The printer and publisher could also be required to deposit security which could be seized if the above offences reoccurred.

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- The magistrate's action was final and no appeal could be made in a court of law.
- A vernacular newspaper could get an exemption from the operation of the Act by submitting proof to a government censor.
- **1882:** The pre-censorship of the Vernacular press act was repealed by Viceroy Ripon.
- **1908:**
 - Newspaper (incitement to offence) Act gave the magistrates power to confiscate press property that published objectionable material likely to cause incitement to murder or acts of violence.
 - This act was triggered by the Extremist nationalist activity during and after the Swadeshi movement of 1906.
- **1910:**
 - Indian press act was a revision of the Vernacular Press Act that empowered the local government to demand a large amount of security at registration from the printer/publisher and forfeit/deregister of newspapers that considered anti-government, and the printer of a newspaper was required to submit two copies of each issue to local government.
- **1921:** The acts of 1908 and 1910 were repealed on the recommendation of the Press committee chaired by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.
- **1931:**
 - Indian Press (emergency powers) Act was enacted in the wake of the Civil disobedience movement.
 - It gave powers to the provincial government to suppress propaganda writings in the support of Civil Disobedience movement.

Important journals or newspapers vs their authors:

- Bengal gazette – J.A Hickey
- Maharatta (English), Kesari (Marathi) – Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- Hitavada – Gopal Krishna Gokhale

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- Sudharak – Gopal Ganesh Agarkar
- Voice of India, RastGoftar – DadabaiNaororji
- VandeMataram, Paridasak – Bipin Chandra Pal
- Mook Nayak, Janata, Bahishkrutbharat – Dr. B.R amberdkar
- Prabuddha Bharata – Aiyasami, B. R. Rajam Iyer, G. G.Narasimhacharya, and B. V. Kamesvara Iyer (on behest of Swami Vivekananda)
- Independent – Motilal Nehru
- Punjabi – Lala Lajpat Rai
- The leader, Hindostan, Abyudyaya, Maryada – Madan Mohan Malviya
- New India, Commonweal – Annie Besant
- Mirat-ul-Akhbar, Sambadkaumudi – Raja Ram Mohun Roy
- Navajeevan, Young India, Harijan, Indian opinion (South Africa) – M.K Gandhi
- Indian mirror – Devendra Nath Tagore
- Som Prakash – Eshwar Chand Vidyasagar
- The Hindu, Swadesamitram – G. Subramaniya Aiyar
- The Bengalee – Surendra Nath Banerjee
- Amrita Bazaar Patrika – Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh
- Madras courier – Richard Johnson