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PRINT, POLITICS AND PUBLIC SPHERE : UNDERSTANDING INDIAN POPULAR PRESS

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ABSTRACT

The alternative groups such as literary circles, theatre groups and little publications after change occurred in the post 1970s in India, engaged themselves in an ideological debate to question the process of turning citizens merely into 'consumption units' in a media industrial world. The consequence of this for the culture and identity of a 'minorised' group was a continuation of the erosion of what Habermas calls the public sphere or as C Wright Mills says 'the community of publics'. This paper also deals with the political implications in the form of popular journalism which emerged during the period and became an institution of political control and enabled to 'imagine' a political community.

KEY WORDS

popular print, public sphere, Indian media

Print and Public Sphere: Understanding Indian Popular Press

Introduction:

The print medium which underpinned the concept of the *public sphere* in European modern societies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the product of a relatively mature print culture, which according to Marshal McLuhan, shaped the entire experience of Western civilization (Barker, H. Burrows, S: 2004). And the impact of invention of movable type printing as McLuhan suggests, was not restricted to technological advantages but it also restructured the modes of communication, social and cultural practices. Evolution of these new forms of political and social organization was primarily founded upon a national community of identity expressed through the medium of print (Eisenstein, E).

In Indian nation-states print provided an arena where mass could participate widely for political debate during the colonial rule. So, the growth of Indian press was based on two processes, the provision of useful information, (mainly commercial and financial intelligence to interested parties) and political controversy, which Bourdieu calls a national 'social space' .

After independence of India, in the sixties, a very few owners/editors of Indian media expressed grief over the social responsibility of newspapers which have been witnessed the loss of the sense of "mission" that was characterized language press during freedom movement. As a result of capitalism and the technological change in the form of personal computer and offset press in the late seventies Indian media especially language media business as Robin Jeffery observes 'underwent a crucial change than anywhere else' (Jeffery, R.2000) (See Table. 0.1)

The structural changes in the Indian language media business including newspaper content which bounded to have a profound effect on the organization and content of forms of intellectual work led to constitute an "alternative" in every sphere of society. The alternative groups after change occurred in the post emergency period engaged themselves in an ideological debate to question the process of turning citizens merely into 'consumption units' in a media industrial world. By looking at the divergent press practices and the debates of the seventies in India this part of the study would be discussing the factors for the emerege of popular journalism in different formats and kind of *public* it was addressing. It is also part of this study to know the nature of the popular press, public sphere and the rise of radical politics via sensational journalism and the subsequent transformation into distinctively tabloid formats in terms of style and content.

Table: 0.1

Comparative Newspaper Circulation in India

Languages	1966 circulation ('000)		% share in national Circulation : dailies			% change in Comparable circulation*
	Dailies	Total	1964	1965	1966	1965 to 1966
English	1, 651	5, 559	24.9	24.4	25.3	+3.4
Hindi	813	3,913	14.1	14.6	13.0	+2.4
Assamese	15	63	0.3	0.4	0.3	-16.4
Bengali	496	1,243	5.4	6.3	7.9	+10.1
Gujarati	498	1,447	7.6	7.8	7.9	+2.9
Kannada	221	604	3.8	3.6	3.5	+6.9
Malayalam	708	1,698	11.4	11.3	11.3	+4.3
Marathi	589	1,369	9.5	9.8	9.4	-1.7
Oriya	66	128	1.1	1.1	1.0	+5.4
Tamil	688	2,707	11.6	10.1	11.0	+1.6
Telugu	189	945	3.0	3.1	3.0	+1.1
Urdu	308	931	5.1	5.4	5.0	+0.9

Note: * includes circulation data of newspapers and periodicals common to 1965 and 1966.

Source: *Press in India, 1967, pp.5, 39, and 47* in Jyotirindra Das Gupta, *Language Conflict and National development*, p.64, Oxford University Press 1970.

Crisis of bourgeois political system: *Public*, *publicity* and *'publication'* of mass

The characteristics of Indian public sphere are primarily shaped by the dominant ideas of power elites. The origin and evolution of public sphere or *public arena* in India has the hindutva national elements 'which were partly a result of nationalist response to colonial rule' (Ali, 2001). In other words the private sphere of petty rulers and dominant castes has become the 'public' which has no space for 'other' marginalized communities as it was defined by the ideas of native elites. Thus, for the mass gatherings and collective activities like public protests, these elite groups used ***bhajanas***, ***puranas***, ***kavi sammelanas*** other traditional religious rituals and literary meets as ways and means to create public opinion.

> The first was participation in collective rituals informed by an ideological framework that came to equate 'community' and 'nation'. Secondly, the creation of a public sphere in which citizens of the nation helped to shape it through the exercise of public opinion. This shift in the organization of community around the local community to one in which individuals identified with the nation was accompanied by the creation of a public sphere, which was fully elaborated and institutionalized in the 19th century. (Amir Ali:2001)

And in the post-independence period Indian state tried to convert and institutionalize this private sphere to which 'colonial state was reluctant to encroach' by using the 'multicultural' tokenism dominated by majoritarian values and norms. So, this influence continued to shape the structure of postcolonial Indian public sphere through the 'representatinal mode of government' that guaranteed all representatives of native elites as the stake holders of the state and privilege of shaping public sphere.

However, the question of 'creating' a civil society remained unanswered as the power had taken over by the elite groups (Chandhoke, N: 1998). With a differentiated ideological base several political parties, progressive/interest groups have developed; especially many have been organized on the basis of language, religion, region and caste. And this was articulated through different formats of print.

The transfer of control from colonial interests to the new authoritarian government and national business stands as one of the greatest changes in newspapers-industry clearly witnessed for the emergence of print capitalism. Due to the economic growth and the surge of computer computer/satellite digital communication, particularly regional and international and electronic networks had shaken the socio-political and cultural structures and created a new context for Indian media.

Another most important change that occurred was the emerge of new educated middle class and availability of novel form of literature which has had opened up the possibility of reading habit among newly educated/marginalized groups and housewives helped to produce an "individuality" or individual subjects in a consumer society. For buyers-libraries, clubs, households, shops, literary groups-a weekly newspaper became a reasonable investment because it was kept and read for days. Availability of printing presses and emerges of little magazines and literary journals made citizens aware about their voting capacity and accommodate them in active politics. For instance, publication of magazines -*Katha*, *Vaam*, *Samarambh* and *Samayik* was not just accident. These magazines addressed the conflict that was sharperned between democratic forces and ruling forces. So, the issues raised by these magazines had become essential for the readers and writers to show their social and political responsibilities. These magazines had also provided a space to discuss the 'New writinig' which was defined as a "device used by the writers who were committed to 'certain' ideology to create an artificial consciousness through loud-mouthed talk about "struggle', 'rebellion' 'attack', etc." (Prakash, Anand: 1972).

It is equally important to see the establishment of publication houses and public libraries as books continued to remain as an effective means of communication and a sign of giving knowledge. According to the Directory of Indian Publishers, during the seventies India has over 11,000 large, medium and small publishers in all languages. And the printing and publication of books/journals was either under the control of government or under big newspaper organizations. So, the Government of India has set up various academies/organizations to 'publish' the diverse aspects of 'national life, culture and teachings of national leaders'. And it also institutionalized the different channels of 'public communication' as initially it started using press for the purpose of state administration. Since the beginning it was a part of the journalism reporting about political speeches, gatherings, inaugurations and on visiting of ministers which can be understood as an obeying character of the press that represented the new form of 'bourgeois public sphere'.

But whereas the private publication houses/printing presses were mostly busy in publishing their newspapers/magazines and concentrating on mass circulation. So, gradually print capital helped these private houses to sell books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, fliers and other such material to people. Due to

availability of consumers these private printers/publishers survived as 'advertisers paid even more money to reach the people reading them' (Vanita, K: 2007).

Commoditization of printed material has dimmed the 'social space' of the newspapers in spite of a 'large number of literate people (mostly newly educated middle class), politically interested and able to either to buy or see a newspaper' and to receive it as a '*mass* medium' (Jeffery, R. 2000) 'in spite of governments attempts to choke newsprint supplies, to cut off power to newspapers or to censor them outright'.

However the 'mainstream' press that was reaching to the newly educated middle class "consumer public" (Habermas: 1991) was systematically made to serve the interests of the state administration. But the class which state addressing was 'educated class' not the 'common man'. The social mobility of these classes and along with the apparatus of the modern state, a new section of "bourgeois" groups was emerged and they occupied the 'social space' within the public.To counter the hegemonic claims of the state the left and democratic social groups such as Communist Party of India (M), the Communist Party of India, (CPI) the Janata Party (JP), the Lok Dal, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and other secular non-party personalities had had been engaged in mobilization to create an *alternative public* against weak organizational structure of Congress party which was completely turned as a faction blindly following Indira Gandhi and supporting her regime. Using Hindutva national sentiments for its *political project* the Sangha parivar succeeded in organizing the middle-class *Hindus* and spreading the Hindu nationalism through *jathas*, cultural activities and rallies within the sphere of civil society(Elliot, M Caroyn: 2010). So, the upper and middle classes assumed the leadership of these mass movements and their hopes and ideals found expression in the literature and media of this period. As Jeffery put it:

> A "public sphere" (was) based on such "public"- ity, and the fact that such publicity became more common and accessible changed the nature of Indian politics. Other capitalist societies have passed down a similar path: capitalism needs newspapers; newspapers spread to respond to capitalism; and in doing so, they help to make people into both consumers and citizens.

Interestingly, at the end of the emergency many newspaper owners, (as Jeffery calls a transition from traders to capitalists) embraced the capitalism not only to survive but also to identify themselves with the regions as well. These regional communication 'channels' had provided an "amphitheatre of mind the "public sphere" to actively partake in the process of deepening the democracy by 'fragmentig' the production (Nair, T.S: 2003).

And technology enabled the language publications to reach their new-regional reader/s through mass-production. By the 1980s there was boom in political magazines/supplements and literary journals publishing which was estimated to be a Rs. 1.5 billion industry. (Jeffery, Robin: 2010). The clever mixture of a strictly limited amount of current affairs write-ups in an easy style and quite a few human interest stories with mixture

of sex, a gossip about private life of the notable figures and couple of short stories, a serialized novel, photograqphs, humour, sports and all this was the formula behind the success of these magazines was simple.

Silence of *mainstream media*; emerge of *popular press*

In order to prove their loyality mostly some urban *mainstream*[i] English dailies which by the time turned into commercial and fixed to profit making strove hard to applaud governments policies and gave more newsspace for publicity mostly because of manipulation of newsprint quota and licenses for import of printing machinery. Adapting themselves to the new conditions the press then developed a new editorial technique and most of the *mainstream* capitalist newspapers the very first day of the emergency called upon the employees to obey the emergency. Interestingly, in contrast to performance of *mainstream* daily press the editors of the periodical/magazines of different regions displayed remarkable guts and dragged the wrongdoings of the state before the High Court/s. Minoo Masani, the editor of **Freedom first** journal from Mumbai challeneged the censor order in the high court. Editors of **Seminar** (Romesh Thapar), **Mainstream** (Nikhil Chakravarty), **Opinion** (A.D. Gorwala), **Quest**, **Himmat** (Rajmohan Gandhi), **Sadhana**, **Maanus**, **Sobat** (Marathi weeklies) and **Bhumiputra** (C. Vaidya) either had to stop the printing of the magazines or to kept up a running battle with the government.
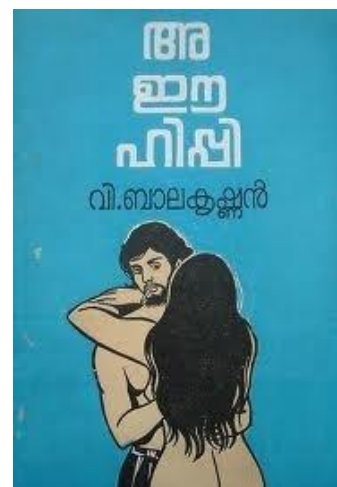

Image: 1.   Image: 2

Cover pages of Urdu and Tamil pulp novels from 1960s ands 70s.

On the other hand the phenomenon of mass killings of dalits, farmers and suppression of students' voices that took place in the decade gave rise to several questions related to caste, class and continuation of feudal rule in the public sphere. Not only these provided a context to have doubts but also paved way for launching literary and small magazines/tabloids which could address these issues that were not been published by the then mainstream newspapers. Legacy of *Little Magazine Movement*[ii] continued just as it did in the west, in the early part of the ninteenthth century.

According to the annual report of the Registrar of Newspapers for 1982 there was an increase in the number and circulation of newspapers and periodical that raised from 18,140 to 19,144 in 1981and the circulation from 5, 09, 21,000 to 5, 11, and 02,000 (Press and Advertisers Year Book, 1984). Since All India radio, DAVP and press council were under government control and state agencies and that could control the collective behavior of masses but language press had a great propaganda potential to raise the range of debates and protest in the public sphere of democratic setup. Apart from these factors there are three major developments which characterized the changing media scene during the eigthies. The (a) 'growing strength of the new newspapers, (b) the southern media boom and (c) the emergence of journalists as stars, on par with filmstars or cricketers' (Malavika, Vir Sanghvi: 1985). For in statnce Telugu daily, **Eenadu** (launched in 1974 by Ramoji Rao), Kannada weekly, **Lankesh Patrike** (launched in 1980 by P.Lankesh,), became most controversial papers because of the daring stands taken by the editors. As the the corruption of the Congress establishment in both states reached its worst level, they devoted their energy to building up a credible alternative in the form of actor N T Rama Rao(Founder of

Telugu Desam Party) and Janata Party respectively. **Nakkheeran**, a popular Tamil biweekly being edited by R.R. Gopal has been published several investigative stories and gave voice to the underprivileged though they 'don't get the due credit' or recognized as part of standard journalism. At the national level, the impact of the Hindi press was beginning to rival that of the major English language weeklies. In the cowbelt states of Haryana, Bihar, UP and Madhya Pradesh, *Ravivar* had at least as much influence as the betterknown **Sunday** and, Rusi Karanjia, found to his surprise, that the circulation of **Hindi Blitz**, was about to overtake that of its English language parent.

Image: 3

Image: 4

Cover pages of Kannada tabloid Lankesh Patrike, (1980) and Tamil tabloid Nakkheeran.

In Bengal, despite the national eminence of the editors of **The Statesman** and **The Telegraph**, it was the language journalists, men like Barun Sengupta and Gaur Kumar Ghosh, who really moved the people (Malavika, Vir Sanghvi: 1985). Print culture had widened the audience for a written vernacular and developed regional/local languages to enhance the feeling that each linguistic community had its own specific attributes and political interests, which were directly linked to the communicative power of these languages to draw in a wider community of speakers and listeners as active participants in the nation. As people started reading about them in their own language newspapers there was a growing awareness among the language newspaper readers.

And this was supported by the literacy level between 1970's and 80s, at all Indian level rose from **34.45** percent to **43.57** per cent marking a rise of **9.12** per cent.

State-wise Literacy Rates (1970-1980, in Per cent)

Sl.No	States	Year 1970	Year 1980
1	Andhra Pradesh	24.57	35.66
2	Assam	33.94	-
3	Bihar	23.17	32.32
4	Chattisgarh	24.08	32.63
5	Delhi	65.08	71.94
6	Goa	51.96	65.71
7	Gujarat	36.95	44.92
8	Jammu & Kashmir	21.71	30.64
9	Karnataka	36.83	46.21
10	Kerala	69.75	78.85
11	Madhya Pradesh	27.27	38.63
12	Maharashtra	45.77	57.24
13	Nagaland	33.78	50.28
14	Orissa	26.18	33.62
15	TamilNadu	45.40	54.39
16	Uttar Pradesh	23.99	32.65
17	West Bengal	38.86	48.65
	All India	**34.45**	**43.57**

Source: *Economic Survey, 2011-12; Office of the Registrar General: 2011, India; M/Home Affairs.*

The post-Emergency years began to witness an unprecedented "newspaper revolution" and there were new formats of journalism emerged. A number of political and literary magazines were started in all major Indian languages. '***Indian Today*** (-in Hindi-the English version was started in 1975), ***Sunday***, ***The week*** and ***Outhlook*** emerged across the country'. Newly educated middle class generation of journalists who emerged as young, self-assured, forceful and disdainful of politicians exposed them in their writings. Sensational violence, crime and dirty politics became the main issue of even the serious newspapers. And a new style of writing also came into journalistic practice. Collective protest against the state by the men of literature, theatre and journalists become as a new site of public sphere. Interestingly, in northern India the 'split public' had influence of Hindu fundamentalism which shaped their political interest and largely result of Hindi language publications.

And few political parties had started their own mouthpieces though they did not succeed in their effort were publishing directly financed by the party. The CPI has started ***People's Age***, an Englkish weekly, the BJP has strong supporters in the Organiser, an English tabloid size weekly, and the well circulated Hindi weekly ***Panchjanya***. Congress had a number of periodicals bearing the same name published in different Indian languages. Many factors account for this expontial growth in newspapers.

> It was also, at this precise moment that the press in India decided to rediscover its role. To reaffirm its faith in the ideals of democracy, at the cost of risking the wrath of the government in power. Nothing was sacred any more, except truth. No person, no institution, no issue was beyond inquiry or investigation[iii]

First, the experience of government repression had created an increased interest in political matters and news, which could support more and more newspapers. Second, with an average population increase of 23 percent each decade, the actual numbers of Indians had nearly doubled from around 450 million at the time of independence to nearly 800 million by the 1980s. The increase in population signaled an increase in readers, whose demands could be met with more newspapers and greater circulations. Third, the increase in population was accompanied by an increase in literacy rates, which had risen from 19 percent in 1951 to nearly 44 percent by 1981 (*India 2004*).

The consumption of newspapers also fueled advertising boom that drove the growth of newspapers and particularly magazines. Fifth, road transport and infrastructure also played a role in the distribution of the print media. From the early years of the twentieth century until soon after independence, railway and postal deliveries were the principal means of transportation for newspapers and magazines. With the growth of road transport, the distribution contractors arranged for local vans and bicycles to deliver farther into the hinterland not accessed by the railway (Bhatt 1997).

In addition, as Robin Jeffery points out the other crucial features such as advances in technology, offset printing and computer typesetting led to the increase in both the number of vernacular newspapers and periodicals and in the circulation figures for these newspapers during the 1980s. Telephone modems also liberated the vernacular newspapers from the handicaps of distance, allowing for the successful establishment of more and more regional-language newspapers away from the big metropolises. Magazines such as ***Stardust*** even espoused the cause of "*Hinglish*" (a mixture of Hindi and English), making the reading of English simpler and more fun, particularly for those command of English was weak. Since the eighties, all magazines, including political journals, write easy-to-digest *Hinglish*, bringing to the practice a certain ethnic-urban chic. The new regional newspapers focused on local news, local events, births, marriages, and deaths, all of which was important information in the local communities.

Magazine boom and sensationalism: Understanding the popularity of magazines

The practice of sensational journalism could be traced out in the early history of Indian journalism. The founders of the then newspapers had the practice of publishing the gossips and the personal or secret relations of British offices and their misdeeds. The growth of magazines continued over the decades, with several eminent

literary figures lending their names to literary periodicals. Several publishing houses, such as the Times of India group of newspapers, offered magazines devoted to cinema (***Filmfare***), women (***Femina***), or general interest (***The Illustrated Weekly of India***). The gradual increase in magazines reached its peak in the eighties. Most of the new magazines of the decade were the consequence of greater advertising budgets from manufacturers of consumer goods. Most of the film magazines targeted an elite readership and used to promote the star persona.Soon there was proliferation of glossy film magazines that focused on the stars and their lifestyles. In addition to the growth of political magazines mentioned above, the 1980s saw the sudden rise in society, lifestyle, home decoration, and women's magazines. ***Society***, ***Debonair***, ***Gentleman***, ***Inside Outside***, ***Interiors***, ***Savvy***, and ***Women's Era*** began to compete with the older publications such as ***Eve's Weekly***, ***The Illustrated Weekly of India***, and ***Femina***. In the face of such intense competition, both ***Eve's Weekly*** and the ***Illustrated Weekly of India*** eventually ceased publication.[iv]

And in the regional languages, the most important women's magazines were ***Manorama Weekly*** (Malayalam), ***Sudha***, ***Taranga***, (Kannada), ***Grihashobha*** (in several regional languages), and *Ghar Shringaar* (Punjabi). They covered a range of subjects of interest to many women: cooking, home care, fashion, films, and gossip. In the 1980s film magazines began to comprise a very important sector of the magazine trade. The magazine with the biggest circulation was ***Filmfare***, followed by its closest rivals, ***Cine Blitz*** and ***Screen***. The more sensational ***Stardust***, belonging to the Magna Publications, transfixed the public with its scoops on stars. In addition, scores of film magazines were published in Hindi and the regional languages, particularly the four southern languages of Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. ***Filmi Duniya*** and ***Filmi Kaliyan***, both Hindi film monthlies, boasted the biggest circulations. ***Manohar Kahaniyan***, ***Maya, Apradh Katha*** and ***Satykatha*** were the some popular best-selling Hindi magazines of the deacade used to be published from Allahabad-based publishing house. Typical of this genre of magazines are ***Film City*** and ***Aar Paar*** from Mumbai, and ***Kingstyle*** and ***Filmi Duniya*** from Delhi, and they generally have low circulation figures (Dwyer 2001). Sports magazines include ***Sports Weekly*** and ***Sport World*** (from Ananda Bazaar Patrika group), and ***Sportstar*** (from The Hindu group). One of the many specialized cricket magazines is ***Cricket Samrat***, a monthly in Hindi, one of the top-selling magazines.

As Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai (then Bombay, Calcutta, Madras) and Bangalore cities which are largely colonial constructions turned as main capitalist centres and gained post-independent identities. The regional culture dominated these cities cultural and social life, whereas 'Delhi remained in the popular imagination as a sleepy bureaucratic power center with nothing to offer but red ruins of history'.

So the 'public space' that these cities had in the 1970s and 80s was mainly provided by these magazines that kept social interaction 'visible'. And typically, readers confront their public world in reports on politics and economics, descriptions of social engagements, crime stories, announcements of job vacancies and tender notices, advertisements of products and entertainment, film and theater reviews, and accounts of sporting events. In other words newspapers in this historical phase were addressing the 'consuming units' rather than politically awared readers. Because no longer this visible social space represented the 'representative publicness'

(Habermas: 1991). And these publications usually did not reach the "common reader" but at the best "educated new middle class".

Table: 1.2 Share in National Circulation (of Newspapers) By Selected States

State	1964	1978	1991	1997
Maharashtra	20.08	17.17	14.70	12.62
Tamil Nadu	17.04	9.31	6.49	3.88
West Bengal	11.28	11.73	5.72	5.20
Kerala	10.82	10.95	6.52	5.53
Uttar Pradesh	5.22	6.66	16.32	16.17
Gujarat	5.10	6.52	7.34	6.16
Karnataka	4.47	6.23	4.84	3.66
Andhra Pradesh	3.34	5.24	4.40	4.20
Madhya Pradesh	2.59	3.85	6.73	9.33
Punjab	2.44	3.21	4.50	3.59
Bihar	2.39	3.27	8.81	4.64
Rajasthan	0.37	2.57	3.64	6.19
Orissa	0.37	1.30	3.20	3.86
Assam	0.37	0.88	0.28	1.48

Source: RNI, various years in Tara S. Nair, *Growth and Structural Transformation of Newspaper Industry in India: An Empirical Investigation*, EPW, Vol.38, No. 39(Sep.27-oct.3 2003), pp. 4182-4189.

Though there is no long history of *tabloid[v] press* in India and still an evolving concept but there were considerable number of *popular* magazines in English and most of regional languages which used to play the role of tabloids in terms of content, tone and editorial style. By proclaiming *Our Blitz, India's Blitz against Hitler!* a tabloid called **Blitz[vi]** was started by Russy Karanjia on February 1, 1941. It was in English and then branched out with Hindi, Marathi and Urdu versions. It was popular for spunky loud and screaming captions and telling photographs. The paper's quality was coarse and the pictures grainy, but there was visual drama on *Blitz's* pages.

> *Blitz* both inhabited this milieu and gave it a characteristic definition. As a newsweekly, it drew on Bombay's highly developed bourgeois public sphere. A key element of this sphere was the city's newspapers in which Bombay's public life appeared as news and photographs… The editor's ideology and personality defined the tabloid. Throughout its existence under its flamboyant editor, Blitz's signature was its muckraking, over-the top stories calculated to provoke and enrage. It thrived on controversy, and Karanjia was frequently embroiled in defamation suits, which the tabloid wore as a badge of honour and showcased on its pages even when it lost. (Prakash, Gyan:2003)

Blitz appeared in an effort to break open the elite public life with a radical ideology and spunky writing. Accepting the notion of public life as the key arena of politics, the tabloid mined it for its radical potential, believing that hard-hitting, two-fisted reports could make a political difference. As a tabloid, then, Blitz dispensed with the convention of dispassionate observation and balanced opinion, and adopted a charged tone from the very beginning. It took on the role of a social investigator that dug beneath the surface of everyday life to ferret out the hidden truth that it announced loudly on its pages. Then there was a weekly tabloid called

Shankar's Weekly founded by Kesava Shankara Pillai, a well know political cartoonist in 1948. In his farewell editorial as weekly shut down on 31 August 1975, Shankar Pillai writes about the censorship imposed by the government when the very year Indira Gandhi declared Emergency.

Image: 5

Image: 6

Cover pages of *Blitz*, October 17, 1959   and *Shankar's Weekly*, 1974.

By mocking at the political system a group of cartoonists used to write the stories along with the cartoons with some gossip, titillation and amusement that used attract the readers' attention. *Shankar's Weekly* was perhaps the only magazine in India fully devoted to cartoons and humorous articles which were much appreciated. The weekly was popular because of comic drawings and reports on politicians that made a household name and a synonym for humor.
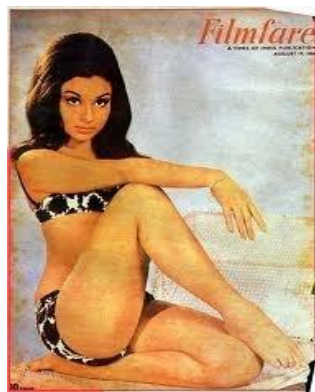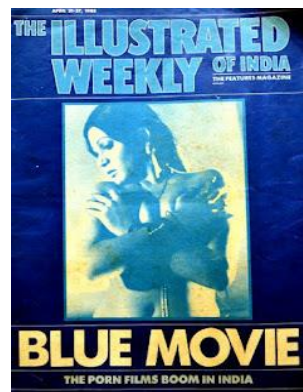

Image : 7

Image: 8

Coverpages of *Filmfare*, 1966 and *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, April 21-27 1985

The Illustrated Weekly of India was another important English language weekly tabloid started publication in 1880 (started as Times of India Weekly Edition, later renamed as The Illustrated Weekly of India in 1923) and stopped in 1993. It was known as *Weekly* by its readership and considered to be an important English language publication in India for over a century. The tabloid tone of the weekly influenced other publications for its

adoption of popular address and content. The weekly which was edited by A.S. Raman, Khushwant Singh, M. V. Kamath, and Pritish Nandy was arguably illustrative of the Indian style of tabloid journalism of the period. The distinguishing features of the tabloid newspaper included not only its content and tone (e.g. sensation, human interest and sentimentality) but also the coverpage design, defined the reading habits of young English readers during seven ties and eighties. *Weekly* featured well researched articles, cartoons by Mario and R.K. Laxman, party jokes, western cartoons like Phantom, and semi-nude models. A series "The India You Do Not Know" on different states of India and another on different communities of India became very authentic sources of reference during this period.

In the mid sixties Rajinder Puri, a cartoonist, columnist and political activist launched a new-look tabloid called *Lok*, which was closed down as financiars lost interest and so there was no real chance to test it's test. Thoguh news presented in these newspapers primarily for entertainment but they allowed the readers to have fun and still be informed. The decade has also witnessed the boom of *pulp*[vii] novels that assorted various themes and was considered as major source of pass-time and entertainment. The publications with lurid cover pages and provocative content that were considered too vulgar for urban middle-class consumption and was never considered as part of mainstream literature. And they were cheap, sensational fiction aimed at working-class adolescents- and given a regional context, usually featuring a cast of loose women, thieves and detectives. Not only through magazines and movies there was also a trend during the decade that several bands and individuals from the punk-related straightedge subculture took interest in the doctrines, leading to a number of prominent straightedger's becoming official members of the movement. And films like ***Hare Rama Hare Krishna*** (1971), centered on the hippie invasion had reflected the time and counterculture of the early seventies.

Conclusion:

Though pulp fiction was considered as 'cheap and trash' and mostly relegated to the realm of mere '*railway platform pe bikne wale*' (that which is sold on railway platforms) for 20-50 rupees on pavements and were never advertised as 'bestsellers' but the same pulp was received and acclaimed in its cinematic transformation by the general public-at-large. Hindi pulp has to rest content with shoddy prints, published in few hundreds and being (Gagan Rism: 2011)[viii] To exploit the time and the trend in 1974 Russy Karanjia's daughter Rita Mehta started the ***CineBlitz*** magazine which was basically a film and gossip magazine published in English and Hindi. Unlike other popular film magazines ***Cine Blitz*** was based out of Mumbai and was famous for its star attractions. The magazine came into limelight when it triggered the controversy of pulishing the nude photos of Protima Bedi, in Mumbai.

> The streaking was meant to be a liberated, progressive statement endorsing the view that one is free to express oneself how one wants. But when Protima saw that her freedom of expression was looking like a publicity stunt for a magazine, she probably backtracked and gave the version that the picture was taken when she was part of a nudist camp in Goa and later the image was superimposed on a backdrop of a beach in Bombay.

Within few years magazine became one of the favorites and India's leading glamour and gossip magazines. The catchy tagline overwhelming popularity of Amitabh Bachchan, *"C to Z of Hindi Films- Everyone covers AB"* made magazine even more famous in Indian popular media. Compared to other magazines of the period the *Cine Blitz* used publish the variety of articles, news events, interviews of the leading actors, directors, producers and other people of the film film industry. The emergence of tabloid practices in Indian language journalism which changed the media landscape in post-independence period should be understood against the changed socio-political context in the country. And as counter-perspectives from cultural studies, scholars have included arguments that 'tabloids undermine the high culture and low culture hierarchy, provide a voice to marginalized publics and serves a site for resistance against cultural hegemony' (Fiske, J: 1989).

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Notes:

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[i] Among the metropolitan English dailies such as Hindustan Times owned by K.K Birla, The Times of India
group of Shanti Prasad Jain, The Hindu of Madras (now Chennai), Amrita Bazar Patrika, Anand Bazar Patrika of Culcutta (now Kolkatta) and Free Press Journal of Bobay (now Mumbai) had a self censorship of their own. But whereas The Statesman and the Indian express challenged the government's orders and High Court ruled in their favour.

[ii] A periodical is loyal to literature in a panoptic sense. Whereas Little magazines are those generally publish short stories, poetry and essays together with literary criticism, book reviews, biographical profiles of authors, interviews and letters. Movement was considered as a mass literary popular movement that had first made its instigation in the fifties and sixties in several regional languages like Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam and Gujarati.

[iii] After emergency more colourful journalists didn't last either. Rusi Karanjia made his name as a special correspondent at *The Times* and who eventually to started *Blitz*. During the 1971 Lok Sabha election, *Blitz* became an unofficial Congress party mouthpiece in the popular press and its editor Rusi Karanjia was befriend of Indira Gandhi.

iv As publication of little magazines which were exclusively devoted to literature got decreased many publishers started periodicals exclusively devoted to cinema

v The word *Tabloid* was introduced into the world of media by Alfred Harmsworth, who picked the term from trademarked by a pill manufacturer; originally coined out of the words tablet and alkaloid.

vi Gyan Prakash writes ...Week after week, Blitz exposed truths allegedly buried beneath the surface of random and fragmentary events. The embezzlement of public funds, prostitution rackets, sordid stories of seduction and sex in the name of spiritualism, dark political designs behind high-sounding rhetoric, and the fleecing of the poor by rich industrialists and property developers were staples in the weekly. Even the sports column, called 'Knock Out', took on the racket-busting posture. It was written by A.F.S. Talyarkhan, whose bearded, pipe-in-mouth, face on the page appeared to lend gravity to the charges of malfeasance he made against sports authorities.

vii Pulp magazines or pulp fiction refers to fiction magazines which were printed on cheap paper and were inexpensive. The name pulp comes from the cheap wood pulp paper on which magazines were printed.

viii See *Why Hindi Pulp Is Not Literature?* on Countercurrents.org by Gagan Rism, dated 21 March, 2011. He writes how the works of writers like Gulshan Nanda, the top pulp writers in 1960-70s saw reproduction to some major classics of Hindi cinema at that time. 'More than a dozen of his novels were turned into movies including hit-makers like Patthar Ke Sanam (1967), Neelkamal (1968), Khilona (1970), Kati Patang (1970), Sharmili (1971), Jheel Ke Us Paar (1973), Daag (1973), Hanste Zakham (1973), Ajnabee (1974), Mehbooba (1976)'.

Images have been taken from different sources such as

Gagan Rism article *Why Hindi Pulp Is Not Literature?,*
http://luthfispace.blogspot.in/2011/05/ibne-safis-jasoosi-duniya-in-english.html

http://dspace.wbpublibnet.gov.in:8080/jspui/simple-search?query=Illustrated+weekly+of+India&sort_by=0&order=DESC&rpp=10&etal=0&start=20