

The official favour.
two other papers
followed in



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The East India Company looked upon the Indian territories as its personal property and all Englishmen in India who were not in servants were regarded by it as interlopers and trespassers. Unofficial Englishmen in the company and were prone to find fault with the monopolise corporation. They therefore, vigorously criticised the Government and the officials, and naturally enjoyed the abuser hurled at them in the periodical press. There was thus tug of war between the officials, who not only dislinked the newspaper lent felt supreme contempt for them, and the latter who made it a point to annoy the Government and their servants, not only by fair criticism of the policy and action, but even occasionally descending to an attack on the domestic affairs and private moral, of officials both high and low. This has been fully illustrated by the early history of the period calm in India which were all written and edited by Englishmen.

In 1767 an attempt was made by bolts to start a newspaper but it was needed in the bud as Government deported in the author of the enterprise. It was only in 1780 that the beginning of press in India was made when Hickey started India's first weekly paper entitled Bengal Gazette. Soon Hickey came in conflict with Warren Hasting's because he generally criticised Hastings policy.

Hickey was arrested and imprisoned and the publication of the journal stopped in 1782. Six more papers were started in Calcutta between 1780 and 1783, and the editor of one of these was deported by John Shore. Among them India Gazette (1780), Calcutta Gazette (1784) and Hurkaru. Particularly the last named attained some distinction. In Madras, the weekly Madras courier, started in 1785, enjoyed official favour.

Two other papers followed in 1795. The editor of one of them India Herald was deported for having made libellous attacks on the Government and the prince of Wales, while the editor of the other, the weekly Madras Gazette, was prohibited from publishing copies of the General order of the Government until they had been submitted for the inspection of the military Secretary. In 29 June 1799, a general order was issued by the Madras Government requiring, the newspaper to be submitted to the inspection of the Government before their publication.

The first paper, the weekly Bombay Herald, appeared in 1789, in Bombay. Then came Bombay courier in 1790 and the Bombay Gazette in 1791. The last named incurred official wrath for a criticism of the police administration. The editor was ordered to submit every issue for censorship before publication. In 1792 his paper was amalgamated with the Bombay Herald and regained official favour. Although these papers occasionally criticised the actions of the Government, they were primarily intended for Englishmen in India, and were generally speaking of non-political character. They published orders of the Government and Indian news, letter to the Editor, personal news, and notes on fashion, parliamentary reports, newsletters, and reports from various parts of Europe.

The Censorship of the Press Act, 1799: Lord Wellesley came to India as Governor-General in 1798. At that time condition was quit critical. On the one hand Maratha were increasing their power. On the other hand sultan Tipu of Mysore was negotiating wish the French to turn out British from Indian soil. Lord Wellesley was keen to ensure that the French should not get

information about the political condition prevailing in India. So he enacted the censorship of Press Act in 1799.

It laid down that no newspaper was to be published at all until the manuscripts or proof-sheets of the whole paper, including advertisements, were submitted to and approved by the Government. The penalty for violating the regulations was the deportation of the editor to Europe. The restrictions were extended by Minto even to religious books. The penalty touched only the editors born in Europe as they alone were in the field at the time. The Europeans born in India, as well as natives of India, who gradually took up journalism since 1818, were exempt from the operations of the regulations. This anomaly induced the Marquess of Hastings to abolish the pre- censorship and drew up a new set of rules in 1818 for guidance of newspaper, with a view to private the discussion of dangerous or objectionable copies. These rules did not pass the face of law as they were not passed into regulation in a legal manner.

There was, therefore, no longer any legal restriction on Indian press.

Regulation of 1823:

In 1823, John Adam, the acting Governor-General, reversed the policy of Lord Hastings immediately after his departure. He passed certain regulations which required that- 1. Every publisher or printer had to get a licence first from the Government. The defaulters could be fined Rs.

Four hundred by a magistrate and their press should be taken over by the Government. 2. The Government had the right to cancel any licence. As a result of these regulations the publication of vernacular paper greatly

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suffered. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Mirat-ul Akbar went out publication and so did much other vernacular paper. In fact, after these regulations only three Bengali and one Persian newspaper continued their publication from Calcutta. James Buckingham, the editor of Calcutta Journal was also deported to England under these regulations. Liberation of Indian Press 1835: Under Lord William Bentinck Indian-press was somewhat liberated.

Though Bentinck did not revoke the licensing regulations adopted by Adams in 1823, he did give greater freedom of discussion to Indian as well as Anglo-Indian press. But it was under Charles Metcalfe, the official Governor-General from 1835-36 that the regulations of 1823 were withdrawn. For this Act he has been bestowed with the title of liberation of Indian press. It may be noted that Metcalfe received valuable support from Macaulay; the law member of the Governor-General's Council. Under a new press Act the publisher or the printer was required to make a declaration concerning the peruse account of the premises of publication. He could, also close the press by declaration to this effect. As a result of this enactment the Indian press was placed at par with the British press.

This Liberal press policy resulted in rapid growth of newspapers all over the country. The Licensing Act of 1857: The outbreak of 1857 revolt convulsed the whole India during 1857-58. It was inevitable that great deal of the bitterness and race hatred endangered by the events of these two years would be reflected in the press. So through the licensing Act of 1857 licensing restrictions were reintroduced. In addition to the existing procedures regarding registration, as laid down by Metcalfe also continued. The use of printing press without license from the Government was

prohibited. The Government was given discretionary powers to grant license or revoke them at any time. The Government could also stop or prohibit the circulation of any newspapers book on other prested matter.

Three papers Durbin, Sultan-ul-Akbar and Samachar Sudhavarshan were prosecuted for writing seditious articles. This was temporary measurement was meant only to tide over the difficult situation created by revolt of 1857. However, in actual practice in operation till 1865, In the aftermath of the mutiny, the papers owned and edited by the Indian's rapidly grew in numbers. A few of them were written in English, and the large majority in vernaculars of different provinces.

They came to play increasingly important role in the political education of the people and growth of patriotic and national sentiments among them. On the other hand, the papers owned or edited by Englishmen tended to become more and more anti-Indian in their general outlook, unsympathetic to Indian political aspirating and strong supporters of the Government. This was mainly to the memory of the mutiny. Secondly of India now represented by the crown of English which allegiance of every loyal Englishmen.

Registration Act 1867: In 1867, the Press and registration of Book Act was passed.

This Act was more of a regulatory nature rather than a restrictive measure on the press on newspapers. Under this Act a copy of every book or newspaper printed was to be submitted to the Government for record and examination. The printers and publishers were required to register their

names and every book or newspaper was required to print the name of the printer and publisher, as well as place of printing.

The publisher and the printer were required to file a declaration before magistrate regarding good conduct of the press and publications. This Act has continued to be in force till present times with certain modifications made in 1890, 1914, and 1953. Vernacular Press Act 1878: The Vernacular Press Act empowered a magistrate, with the previous sanction of the provincial Government to require a printer or publisher to deposit a security or enter into a bond binding him not to print or publish anything likely to incite feelings of disaffection towards the Government or hatred between the different races of India.

The Government was authorised to warn as well as to confiscate the plant, the deposit, etc. in the event of the publication of same undesirable matter. The printer was given the option of submitting proofs to the official censor and dropping all rejected matter and thus escape from the clutches of law. Divergent views were held with regard to the Vernacular Press Act.

While Englishmen in General and the Government of India in particular justified its enactment, the Indians condemned it in the strongest possible terms. The view of Sir A. Arbuthnot was that as a result of this legislation seditious and disloyal writings stopped completely and there was no interference with the legitimate expression of opinion. According to S. N. Banerjee, “ Within less than fifteen months, the Vernacular press all over India, save that of Madras was muzzled.

“ A big meeting was held in the Townhall at Calcutta. “ It was one of the most successful meetings ever held in India. It sounded the death-knell of the vernacular press Act.” In an article in the Times of India, Sir Ferozshah Mehta also criticised the Act. He pointed out that the vernacular press was not guilty of disloyalty of the British rule. “ The worst that could be said it was that on occasions it was guilty of angry recriminations, exaggerated generation and vulgar personalities. But such effusions conveyed no treasonable ideas to a native reading them with his natural knowledge of native modes of thought and expression.

It was at all times difficult to drove the line between severs, though just, criticism of Government and its measures, and that licentious abuse of them, bordering on the preaching of sedition and the propagation of disaffection. If the judges of distinction were to be the very men who were the objects of criticism, they would be more than human if in course of time and by gradual stages all hostile criticism was not brought within the pale of proscription. If the vernacular press was licentious the system of licensing would but aggravate and intensify its mischievous tendencies and annihilate nothing but honest and useful criticism. Particularly in the case of a press in its infancy. “ Moderate and respectable men, their functions not yet hardened into habits, would retire from the field without hardly a struggle. Violent and principled agitators would thrive on the prosecution which would furnish the very nourishment necessary for their existence.

And while the sound and healthy political growth of the people would be indefinitely retarded the Government would be deprived of all trustworthy sources of keeping itself well-informed of the real inner feelings and thoughts

of the people towards. Deprived of free and sincere criticism, it would hardly know to steer its way through servile adulation or scurrilous abuse.”

According to Mody, “ The act was utterly uncalled for, unduly repressive in character and inspired by sinister motives. It was a Draconian piece of legislation based for the most part on the Irish coercion Act of 1870 and in some respects make stringent than the latter, which was a special measure brought into existence to deal with a special emergency”. Again, “ perhaps the worst feature of the Act was that it exempted from its operation all English newspapers, though in many cases they were the greatest sinners.

As Mr. (afterwards Sir) Arthur Hobhouse, one of the most distinguished lawyers of the time, observed, it was Englishmen who said the worst things of the Govt. and said the most continually, and he condemned the distinction as “ class legislation of the most striking and invidious description at variance with the whole tenor of our policy, and only to be justified by the most cogent proofs and danger from maltreated class.” According to Sir Erskine Perry, A member of India council of the secretary of state for India, “ No imperial legislature could forge a more powerful weapon for expiring an obnoxious Press”’. Again, the Act was “ A retrograde and ill conceived measure injurious to the future progress of India”. The Newspapers Act 1908: The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon and his anti Indian Policy resulted in a lot of agitation in the country. A movement was set on foot to drive out the English men bag and baggage from the country. Consequently Newspapers (Incitement to offence) Act was passed in June 1908.

The object of the Act was to put an end to the existence of those these papers which contained any incitement to murder or any offence under the

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explosive substances Act, 1908 or any act of violence. According to this Act, district magistrate was empowered to confiscate the printing press where a newspaper containing an incitement to violence was published. The Government was also authorised to annual the declaration of the printer or publisher of the news paper under the Act of 1877. On amount of the strongest provisions of the Act of 1908, the 'Yugantar' the 'Sandhya' and the 'Bande Matram' stopped their publication. The Indian Press Act 1910: The Act of 1910 empowered a magistrate to require a deposit of not less than Rs. 500 and not more than Rs. 2000 from the keepers of news printing press and publishers of newspapers.

The Local Government was empowered to require the existing presses and publishers of newspapers to deposit not less than Rs. 500 and not more than Rs. 5000 as security. A magistrate was authorised to dispense with the deposit of any security or cancel or vary any order already issued in this connection if he had any special reasons per doing so.

The Act of 1910 defined the term 'objectionable matter whose publication was to entitle the Government to declare security forfeited to his majesty. All attempts direct or indirect, to seduce persons as employed in his majesty defence forces or to intimidate the people to give money for revolutionary work or to prevent them from giving help in discovering or publishing revolutionary crime, were include in the definition of objectionable matter. The definition of seditious publication was widened to include writing against the Indian princes, judges, executive officers and public servants. Section IV was so worded as to leave little scope for independent criticism of Government action by the press. The power of deciding whether any

particular publication did or did not offend against Section IV was given to the provincial Government and not to the ordinary courts. If the security of Printing Press or newspaper was confiscated and the keeper of the press or the publisher of a newspaper wanted to make a fresh declaration under the Act of 1867 each of them had to deposit with the magistrate a security of not less than Rs.

1000 and not more than Rs. 10, 000. If in the opinion of the Government, the printing press of the newspaper offends against Section IV of the Act, the security was to be forfeited to his majesty. The Act also authorised the custom officers and officers of the post offices to detain any pocket or parcel or consignment suspected to contain any objectionable matter and to deliver the same to the Provincial Government provision was made for an appeal to the High Court. It was to be heard by a special Bench of three judges.

The appeal was to be filed within two months of the date of order of forfeiture by the provincial Government. Criticism of the Act of 1910: The Indian Press Act of 1910 muzzled the Indian Press. There was lot of hue and cry throughout the length and breadth of the country. The Press Association of Indian exposed the shortcomings of the new legislation and tried to save the newspapers and presses from the arbitrary orders of the Government. The Act was vigorously applied during the World War 1.

It was pointed out in 1912 that the Act of 1910 had penalised over 350 presses, securities amounting to over 40, 000 were demanded from 300 newspapers, over 400 publications were penalised. Owing to the demand of security more than 200 printing presses and 130 newspapers were not

started, Newspapers like “ Amrit Bazar Patrika”, “ Bombay Chronicle”, “ The Hindu”, “ The Tribune”, “ The Punjabee”, “ Hinduvasi” etc. were subjected to the rigours of the Act. Although the public demand on impartial enquiry into the allegation, their demand was not conceded. A special bench of Calcutta High Court tried the case entitled Mohammed Ali verses Emperor and Chief Justice Jenkens and Justice Stephen passed certain structures in their judgements. In the matter of New India printing works justice Abdul Rahim made the following observations on the scope of Section 4 and the discretionary powers of the Government “ The generally speaking the terms of the section are extremely wide and comprehensive cannot be doubled. They vest the local Government with discretion so large and unfettered that the keeping of printing press and the publication of newspaper became an extremely hazardous undertaking in the country”. A press may be devoted to the publication most useful and meritorious literature or often, publication of an entirely innocent and noncontroversial nature.

Yet it will be liable of forfeiture if any matter printed in such press is considered by the Government to be objectionable within the meaning of the Act. It may be doubled if it is possible for the keeper of any printing press in the country to maintain. Such an efficient expert supervision over matters that are printed as to delete anything that might be regarded to fall within the wide spread net of Section IV. After the passing of the Government of India Act 1919 and the inauguration of the reforms. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was appointed the first Indian Law Member.

A committee was appointed under him to examine the working of the Act of 1910; the Report of the committee was that the Act should be repeated. The <https://assignbuster.com/the-official-favour-two-other-papers-followed-in/>

recommendation of the committee was accepted by the Government. The Indian Press Act, 1931: After the launching of Civil Disobedience movement by Congress in 1930, the Indian press grew very critical of the British Government and highlighted its various acts of omission and commission. It gave vast coverage to the nationalist activities and the authorities perpetuated by the British. Under the circumstances, the British Government decided to muzzle the press before it could inflame the native feelings. This resulted in the enactment of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931.

The chief objective of the Act was providing against the publication of matter likely to incite or encourage violence or murder. The keepers of printing press could be asked to deposit security. If they published any objectionable material against the Govt, the security could be forfeited. It may be noted that these restrictions applied against the keepers of the printing presses as well as publishers of newspapers. If a press worked without depositing security, it could be confiscated by the Government six months imprisonment could be inflicted for publishing unauthorised news sheets and newspapers. The Act gave extensive powers to the provincial Government to control the press. These powers were actually used by them to prohibit the publication of the names and portraits of well-known leaders of the Civil-Disobedience Movement.

The newspapers were not permitted to carry on any propaganda on behalf of Congress or publish the message of the leaders in jails. In pursuance of these powers the printers and publishers of Anand Bazar Patrika were required to deposit a security of Rs. 1000/-. Similarly a security of Rs. 3000/- was demanded from the printer and publisher of Bombay Chronicle.

The Liberty of Calcutta and free press journal of Bombay were each required to deposit a security of Rs. 6000/-. The Bombay Chronicle was even asked to pay a fine of Rs. 3000/- for publishing an objectionable article by Horniman.

Foreign Relations Act, 1932: The Foreign Relation Act of 1932 replaced an ordinance of 1931. Its objects were to penalise publications calculated to interfere with the maintenance of good relations between His Majesty's Government and friendly foreign states. The necessity of this law arose when the news papers criticised the administration in certain states adjoining the frontiers of India. The Act provided that where an offence under Chapter XXI of the Indian Penal Code was committed against the ruler of a state outside but adjoining India, or against the consort or son of principal Minister of such a ruler, as the Governor-General in-Council might make, or authorise any person to make, a complaint in writing of such an offence and any court competent in other respects to take cognizance of such offence might take cognizance of such a complaint.

Any book, newspaper or other document containing such specified defamatory matter which tended to prejudice containing such specified defamatory matter which tended to prejudice the maintenance of friendly relations between his Majesty's Government and the Government of such state, could be retained in the same manner as seditious literature. In January 1933, four ordinances were promulgated which conferred certain powers for the maintenance of Law and Order and particularly widened the operative section of the press Act so as to permit action against the publication of matter calculated to encourage the civil disobedience movement. Indian States (Protection) Act, 1934: The object of this Act was to

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prevent unreasonable attacks on the administration of Indian states in the newspapers of British India and provide authorities in British India with powers to deal with bands or demonstrators organised on semi-military lines, for the purpose of entering and spreading disaffection in the territories of the Indian States. The above laws continued to remain in force upto 1939 when the World War II broke out. In order to meet the difficult situation, the Government of India was forced to pass the Defence of India Act. The Government also framed rules known as the Defence of India Rules. These rules enabled the Government to control the Indian press for six long years.

Action was taken against those newspapers which dared to violate the above rules as laws. However, the Act and the Rules lapsed after the ending of the World War II.

Press Trust of India Ltd:

The most notable event in Indian journalism in 1948 was the formation of the Press Trust of India Ltd. This organisation took over the supply of news to and from India. This was done on the basis of an agreement with the Reuters. This agreement enabled the Indian press to get complete control over its own internal news supply.

The press trust is a non-profit-making concern and membership is open to all newspapers of India. The P. T. I.

has now become Independent of the Reuters.

Press Laws Inquiry Committee, 1948:

The Government of India set up a Press Law Inquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Ganganath Jha. The committee was required to review all the existing press laws of India and made recommendations as to what directions in which the law required to be modified. The central Legislature nominated some members to the committee. Three editors were also recommended by the Indian Newspaper Editors Conference. The Committee made the following recommendations: 1.

An explanation should be added to Section 153 A I. P. C. to the effect that it does not amount to an offence under that section to advocate a change in the social or economic order provided such advocacy does not involve violence.

2. Repeal of the Indian States (Protection) Act of 1934. 3. Repeal of the Foreign Relations Act of 1932. 4.

Before taking action against the press under emergency legislation, provincial Government should invariably consult the Press Advisory Committee or similar body. 5. Repeal of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1932 was recommended but it was also suggested that certain provisions of the Act, which did not find a place in the ordinary law of the country, should be incorporated into that law at suitable places. 6. Section 124 A I. P.

C. relating to sedition should be amended so as to apply only to acts or words which either incite disorder or are intended to end to incite disorder.

7. Section 144 Cr. P.

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C. should not be applied to the press and separate provision should be made, if necessary, for dealing with the press, in urgent cases of apprehended danger. 8. Necessary provision should be made in the law to empower courts to order the closing down of a press for a special period in cases of repeated violation of law.

The Indian Constitution:

Article 19 of the new constitution of India which came into force on 26th January 1950 provided for the freedom of expression.

However, it was found from experience that the right to freedom of expression was held by some courts to be comprehensive that no action could be taken against any individual who advocated murder and other violent crimes. Consequently, the constitution (First Amendment) Act was passed in June 1951. It was provided that the right to freedom of speech was to be subject to all laws imposing restrictions with regard to the security of the state, friendly relation with foreign states. Public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation and incitement of offences. Press (Objectionable Matter) Act, 1951: In the course of the debate in parliament on the constitution (First Amendment) Bill, the Government of India promised to introduce a press Bill which was free from the objectionable features of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931 and which was in accordance with the new constitution of India.

Such a bill was introduced in parliament on 21st August, 1951 and was named as the Press (Incitement to Crimes) Bill. However, its name was changed later on with a view to dissociating this Bill from the Act of 1908

which had a similar title. The amended Bill was passed by the parliament and received the assent of the president in October 1951. According to the objects and reasons of the Act, the new law was directed against the encouragement of violence or sabotage of certain other very grave offences and the publication of scurrilous matter. No precensorship was imposed on any newspaper. No action was to be taken against newspaper unless it actually abused its freedom by the publication of some objectionable matter.

Security could not be demanded arbitrarily. That could be done only after proof of the actual abuse of the freedom of the press by the publication of objectionable matter. Even in their case, the demand of security on its forfeitures was not to be provided by the executive, but by the session's judge.

The session's judge was to pass orders only after a full trial. He was to hear both the Government and the keeper of the press or the publisher of the newspaper. The publisher or the keeper could claim the right to be tried by a special jury composed of persons particularly qualified to sit in judgement over case of the abuse of the freedom of the press by journalistic experience or by an association with public affairs. A right of appeal was provided to the High Court on all points involved in every case. The amount of security was not to be excessive and in no case more than the amount specified in the complaint made by the competent authority was to be ordered. Provision was made for the return of the security. If no further action was taken in respect of the press of the newspaper or news sheet for a period of two years from the date of deposit. Provision was made against double penalty.

Any offence punishable under the Act and any abetment of such offence was made cognisable and bailable. This Act repealed all other laws relating to the press. It seems desirable to define the term “ objectionable matter” as this term is very prominent in the Act itself. According to Section 3 of the Act, the expression “ objectionable matter” means any words, signs or visible representations which are likely to incite or encourage any person to resort to violence of sabotage for the purpose of over throwing or undermining the Government established by law in India or any state thereof or its authority in any area, or incite or encourage any person to commit murder, sabotage or any offence involving violence, or incite or encourage any person to interfere with the supply and distribution of food or other essential commodities or with essential services; or seduce any member of any of the army forces of the union or of the

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police forces from his allegiance to his duty, or prejudice the recruiting of persons to serve in any feelings of enmity or hatred between different sections of the people of India, or which are grossly indecent or scurrilous or obscene or intended for black mail. It is well-known that when the above Bill was on the Legislative will, a lot of hue and cry was raised by the Press. However, the Government gave an assurance to the press that it would not abuse these powers and that the matter would be discussed once again after the lapse of two years.

The life of the Act was extended for two years in 1954 and the same has been allowed to lapse now.

Press Commission of 1952:

The Government of India appointed on 23rd September 1952 a press commission consisting of 11 members. The Chairman of the commission was Justice G. S. Rajadhyaksha. The commission submitted its report in August 1954.

The Commission recommended the establishment of an all India Press Council. The Council was to consist of 25 members of whom 13 or more were to be working editors, journalists of standing in the profession, including working editors. It was to have in addition a chairman who should be either sitting or a retired judge of a High Court. He was to be nominated by the Chief justice of India. The following were to be the objects of the press council: 1. To safeguard the freedom of the press and to help the press to maintain its independence. 2.

By censoring objectionable types of journalistic conduct and by all other possible means to build up a code in accordance with the highest professional standards. 3. To keep under review any development likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance. 4. To encourage the growth of the responsibility and public service among all those engaged in the profession of journalism. 5.

To study development on the press which may tend towards concentration or monopoly and it necessary to suggest remedies therefore? 6. To publish reports, at least once a year, regarding its work and reviewing the performance of the press, its development and the factors affecting them. 7. To improve methods of recruitment education and training for the profession

by the creation of suitable agencies for the purpose such as a press institute. The press registrar is to keep a close watch on the conclusion that in a particular area or in a language, a monopoly has developed; he is to bring it to the notice of the Press Council who will conduct an investigation into the existence of the monopoly. Whether that had acted against public interest. Whether undesirable practices had been resorted to for eliminating competition and what measures, if any, were necessary to deal with the situation. The state trading corporation for Newsprint was to be entrusted with monopoly of imports and could take over the entire output of Indian mills on a fair basis and sell the same along with imported newsprint at equated prices.

The commission recommended that the publication of newspapers and periodicals should be made a central responsibility and suggested the banning of crossword puzzle competition forms. It recommended the introduction of price-page schedule for newspapers and suggested that advertisements should not cover more than 40% of the total space. The commission favoured single unit papers and recommended that in case of multiple editions each unit should be separated from the others in the matter of accounts. Where a chain consisted of a number of groups, each group was to be separated from the other. The adoption of a strict code of advertising by an association of publishers was recommended. The commission recommended the enactment of legislation to regulate the newspaper industry which should make it punishable with fine or imprisonment to give fraudulent advertisement.

The commission found considerable degree of concentration in the ownership of Indian newspapers and felt that there was danger that the tendency might develop in the future. The proposed press council was to review at the end of 5 years all the consequences of newspaper ownership in the light of circumstances then existing and to make appropriate recommendation. The news agencies should not be owned or controlled by the state and any assistance from the state to the news agencies should be without strings attached. The states should have no voice in the control of the agency either editorially or administratively. The commission recommended that a public corporation based on the existing organisation but controlled by a Board of Trustees under chairman to be appointed by the Chief Justice of India should take up the management of the Press Trust of India. No organisational changes were prescribed for the united press of India. The employees should have representation on the Board of Trustees.

In recent years, the Indian Parliament has passed a few laws concerning the press in India. The name of some of them are the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act 1954, the Working Journalists' (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, the Newspaper (Price and Page) Act, 1956, Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publication) Act, 1960, etc.