

FIVE  
POLITICS AND THE GUJARATI PRESS.

IT WAS NOTICED IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER that along with the growth of the Gujarati press some sections of the people living in the different parts of Gujarat became associated with it and, gradually the nature of the Gujarati press changed. It was found that the Gujarati press became a vehicle for expressing the needs and grievances of people. It was seen, moreover, that this aspect of the Gujarati press met with -- governmental opposition.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter an attempt will be made to depict a further change in the nature of the Gujarati press whereby it became, among other things, a vehicle for -- expression of political views. It is proposed to show that that could happen after the emergence of a group of persons with political aspirations and similar views in Western India.

---

<sup>1</sup> It was not exclusively in the Gujarati press that attacks against the authorities were made. Nor was the Vernacular Press Act passed to restrict the Gujarati press alone. We gather -- from the accounts of the Marathi press (Joshi V.K. and Kale -- R.K., op.cit.), of the Hindi press (Bhatnagar Ram Ratan : The Rise and Growth of Hindi Journalism : 1826-1945) and of the -- Indian press as a whole (Barns Margareta, op.cit.) that almost the whole of the Indian languages press in the country had -- been writing against the administration both before and after the press legislation was enacted. The Reports on the Native papers and the confidential notes appearing in the General -- Department Volumes of the Bombay Government as well mention this fact.

The formation of an all-India political body, the Indian --- National Congress, is traced then and turning to the Gujarati press it has been shown that the latter became a disseminator of political ideas and arguments supplied by that bigger -- organisation which was growing popular in the whole of India including Gujarat. It is aimed to show in this chapter that that aspect of the Gujarati press, viz., dissemination of -- political ideas etc. of the Indian National Congress, became one of the factors leading to the growth of the former. This chapter brings out once again the relation between the -- Gujarati press and the government which was affecting both, the nature as well as the growth, of the Gujarati press.

To begin with, some past events shall have to be traced. Earlier we had referred to the emergence of a section of persons which had the opportunity to receive the newly -- introduced formal education and which had imbibed thereby -- some of the Western notions. This section of persons was -- aspiring to get due recognition by seeking employments in the Government by virtue, both of their social status and of -- their educational achievements. The Company Government had formally acknowledged it when the Charter Act of 1832 was -- passed. This Charter given to the East India Company by the British Parliament for the government of India had specifically laid down that 'there should be no bar against any person in obtaining any place of power or position in the administration on account of his race or place of birth'.<sup>2</sup> But, as --

---

<sup>2</sup> Banerjes A.C., Indian Constitutional Documents (1757-1945), Vol.I,(1946), p.175.

some of the leading personalities during that period say,<sup>3</sup> that provision remained unoperative for about two decades. To remedy that some of the intelligentsia in the country as a whole united among themselves 'to ventilate their particular grievance' by forming associations etc. such as the British Indian Association in Bengal and the Bombay Association in Western India.<sup>4</sup>

The Bombay Association was started 'with the object of ascertaining the wants of the natives of India living -- under the Government of this (Bombay) Presidency and for -- representing from time to time to the authorities the -- measures calculated to advance the welfare and improvement of the country'.<sup>5</sup> It presented in early 1853 a petition to the British Parliament when the Company's Charter was about to be renewed. In that petition it was contended, among -- other things that, 'respectable and trustworthy natives -- should be absorbed in the Governmental services', and that, 'such measures would act as a great stimulus to the improvement in the country'.<sup>6</sup> The Company's Government faced a -- crisis on account of the uprising of 1857. That had subsided subsequently but soon after that the Company's rule

---

<sup>3</sup> Banerjea Surendra Nath --- A Nation in the Making --- Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life (1925), pp. 40-41; Kulkarni P.B., Nana Shankershet Yanchen Charitra, p.191; Masani R.P., Dadabhai Naoroji.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>5</sup> Government of Bombay, Source Material for a History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol.I. (1818-1858), p.133 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.,

in India was terminated and India came under the British Crown and Parliament. The Royal Proclamation issued in the name of Queen Victoria at the time of transfer reaffirmed the proviso stipulated in the Charter Act of 1833 as regards the employment of Indians in the Government.<sup>7</sup> That was followed by the Indian Councils Act of 1861, providing for the enlargement of the -- Governor-General's Council to form a Legislative Council and for the enlargement of the Legislative Councils of Madras and Bombay by prescribing the inclusion therein of atleast half the new or additional members from outside the ranks of the civil service.<sup>8</sup>

The newly constituted Legislative Council of Bombay which met for the first time on January 22, 1862, included five (nominated) Indian members. These were the Nawab of Savnoor, Sheth Premabhai Himabhai, Madhav Vitthal Chinchurkar, Rustomji Jamshedji Jijeebhai and Jagannath Shanker Sheth -- the last two being active members of the Bombay Association.<sup>9</sup>

To turn to the Gujarati press now, when in 1852 the Bombay Association was formed, the Bombay Samachar, the Jame Jamshed -- and the Rast Goftar had given publicity to the foundation of that body.<sup>10</sup> When it forwarded a petition to the British Parliament

---

<sup>7</sup> Banerjea A.C., op.cit.,

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., (Vol. II), p.31.

<sup>9</sup> Kulkarni P.B., op.cit., pp. 362-363.

<sup>10</sup> Bombay Samachar, dated 29-8-1852, Jame Jamshed dated 30-8-1852, and, Rast Goftar, dated 29-8-1852.

and particularly when some of the anglo-Indian journals such as the 'Telegraph and Courier' had been writing against<sup>11</sup> the activities of the Bombay Association, the above Gujarati -- journals had published the petition and had countered the -- criticisms of the anglo-Indian press.<sup>12</sup> When in 1862 the -- Bombay Council was constituted, the Gujarati journals reiterated these arguments and quoting the 'promises given by Her -- Gracious Majesty, the Queen Victoria', published reports about the Council proceedings.<sup>13</sup> As mentioned in the last chapter, it was during this period that the Gujarati press was becoming a vehicle for expressing the popular discontent and was being critical of the local municipal and governmental administrations. The Gujarati journals wrote in favour of the Bombay Association and in support of the Indian members of the Bombay Council just during that period. Some of the Gujarati journals at that time also called upon the people to take interest in current politics. For instance, the Dandiyo edited by Kavi -- Narmad said once, 'People in this presidency have been devoting themselves to reforms in religious, moral, educational, and familial matters ---, but they have not been attending to the contemporary political issues'.<sup>14</sup> The Sunday Review said,

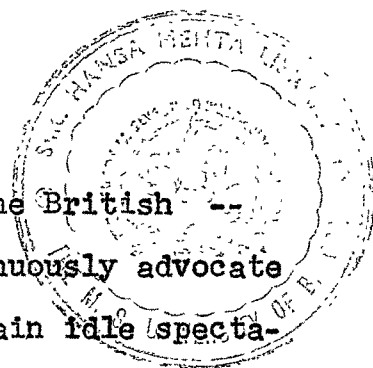
---

<sup>11</sup> Kulkarni P.B., op.cit., pp. 186-207.

<sup>12</sup> Rast Goftar and Bombay Samachar, from December 1852 to May 1853.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., dated 24-1-1862.

<sup>14</sup> Dandiyo, March 1866.



'While generous minded foreigners stand up in the British -- Parliament and other public assemblies and strenuously advocate the cause of India, should her own children remain idle spectators of their efforts ?---- We will not cease to sound a warning until they begin to perform the duty that they owe to the country'.<sup>15</sup> The Rast Goftar wrote commending the decision of the East India Association to move the British Parliament to appoint a select committee to enquire into the administration of India; it characterised the conditions in India as 'rather precarious'.<sup>16</sup> Commenting upon the policy of the Bombay -- Government, the same paper said, 'The moral atmosphere around the Government of Bombay has been bad ---- because of the -- vices that it has incorporated from the counsels that it has been getting since 1864'.<sup>17</sup> While, the Hitecchhu said, 'The policy of the British Indian Government has changed for the worse --- it is to put every possible obstacle in the way of the natives in their advancement to higher posts : to use -- every possible contrivance to draw as much money from India as possible : to give every possible encouragement to British Industries and trade'.<sup>18</sup> It complained against 'the present selfishness of Englishmen as compared with their former -- generosity'.<sup>19</sup> The Jame Jamshed contended that people were

---

<sup>15</sup> Sunday Review, dated 3-5-1868.

<sup>16</sup> Rast Goftar, dated 4-9-1870.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>18</sup> Hitecchu, dated 13-12-1874.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.,

losing faith in the Government,<sup>20</sup> while the Bombay Samachar called upon people to 'do something to remedy the ills perpetrated by the administration'.<sup>21</sup>

During all this period the Government had been watching the writings in the press. As we saw earlier,<sup>22</sup> the Reporter on the Native press who was submitting excerpts to the Government had been continuously writing in his despatches about 'the changes betrayed by the native press.' It was as a result of such intelligence supplied to the Government that the latter was prompted to adopt a measure in regard to the vernacular press. Meanwhile, Lord Lytton had decided to name Queen Victoria as the Empress of India and to create a new title of 'Kaisar-e-Hind' for the British Sovereign. He had convened a big assemblage in 1876 at Delhi (the Delhi Durbar as it was called) to mark the occasion and to make a formal announcement in that regard.<sup>23</sup> The Delhi Durbar had two -- implications as viewed through the press. First, it marked a formal change in the status of the British Sovereign and consequently in that of the Governor-General. Second, it was timed just when some parts of the country were faced with famine conditions. The 'Durbar' provided the press with a point to comment upon. The Rast Goftar said, 'It is rather

---

<sup>20</sup> Jame Jamshed, dated 3-6-1875.

<sup>21</sup> Bombay Samachar, dated 9-6-1875.

<sup>22</sup> Refer to page No. 141.

<sup>23</sup> Lady Betty Balfour, op.cit.

difficult to say that this change in the title of the British Queen will bring with it any benefits to the Indian subjects ----- . It is a befitting time (however) for Her Grecious -- Majesty to concede to her Indian subjects some of the constitutional rights which are being enjoyed by her English subjects at home'.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the Gujarat Mitra commented upon the -- change of the title and voiced 'a fear that confusion would -- ensue'.<sup>25</sup> The Bombay Samachar contended that 'the change -- would make the Indian administration arbitrary'.<sup>26</sup> It referred to the Government in Britain as a 'Republican' one and said, -- 'this form of rule is still obtaining in England ---- . The -- same type of government was given to India; promises were also given that it would be continued in the future too. It is -- regrettable that this form (of government) is being altered to an arbitrary one ----- , Sir George Campbell, the late Lt. -- Governor of Bengal, had told the British Parliament to consider the Viceroy of the same dignity as the Great Moghul Emperors of India----- . The statement made by Sir George Campbell exposes the conduct of the Indian authorities ----- ; it explains what type of government they want to set up now (in India)'.<sup>27</sup> The popular image of the political situation in Western India is

---

<sup>24</sup> Rast Goftar, dated 21-2-1876.

<sup>25</sup> Gujarat Mitra, dated 27-2-1876, quoted in Source Material, op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> Bombay Samachar dated 15-3-1876.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.,



reflected, further, by the comments which had appeared in the Rast Goftar, wherein it was said, 'The fraud perpetrated upon us in the name of the Legislative Council must stop now. This Council professes to associate "Independent Indians" in the Government but in fact it is a big hoax (Dhong) including as it is a majority of members who are "nominated" and who simply nod in acquiescence to whatever policies the Government adopts'.<sup>28</sup>

\*

To these comments were added similar ones on the proposed press legislation. The Bombay Samachar wrote, 'The public press of the country possesses liberty to make comments on the acts of the Government which must produce some, even if little, effect. But, there are indications to show that even that much liberty is to be snatched away. When this is the state of -- affairs, is not the Viceroy of India a Moghul Emperor?'<sup>29</sup> When things were shaping thus, some of the leading personalities such as Surendranath Banerjea, Naoroji Fardunji, Sir Jamshedji Jiji- and Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai who attended the 'Delhi Durbar' -- conferred among themselves to organise public opinion against the proposed Vernacular Press Act.<sup>30</sup> Their efforts and the

---

<sup>28</sup> Rast Goftar, dated 10-3-1878.

\* The 'Swatantratka', a Gujarati monthly, edited on behalf of the the 'Shree Sharda Pujak Mandali' by Mr Icchharam Suryaram Desai from Surat, had written a series of articles in its issues for January, February, March and April, 1878 in which it was repeatedly said, 'Indians should strive for their liberty from the foreign domination'. Ref. Source Material, op.cit.

<sup>29</sup> Bombay Samachar, March 15, 1876.

<sup>30</sup> Banerjea Surendra Nath, op.cit.

comments in the newspapers continued while the Government -- passed the measure which, as we have observed earlier, was characterised as the 'Gagging Act'.<sup>31</sup> Pursuant to their -- efforts to get the act repealed, the editors of the different Indian languages newspapers had formed an association to make representations to the Government in that regard and some of the Gujarati editors had joined that.<sup>32</sup> Again, a conference of the native press had been convened for similar purposes in Bombay. That too was joined, among others, by some of the -- Gujarati editors.<sup>33</sup>

In such an atmosphere Surendra Nath Banerjea who was a member of the Indian Association, the editor of a Bengali -- journal, and, who had joined public life after being removed from the Indian Civil Service, undertook a lecture tour of the country. He completed his tour of Northern India in November 1877. He visited Ahmedabad on December 19, 1877 and delivered a speech under the auspices of the Ahmedabad Association at the Himabhai Institute.<sup>34</sup> He then went to Surat. On the 23rd of that month he spoke at a meeting held in the central hall of the local municipality.<sup>35</sup> Thence he proceeded to Bombay and Poona. Throughout his lecture tour, Surendra Nath Banerjea

---

<sup>31</sup> Refer to page No. 143.

<sup>32</sup> Source Material, op.cit., pp. 384-388.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>34</sup> Buddhi Prakash, January 1878.

<sup>35</sup> Desai Ishwarlal I., Surat Sonani Moorat, p. 160.

spoke on 'Recruitment of Indians in the Governmental services, constitutional changes in the Indian Government' and on the press legislation, as evidenced by the newspaper excerpts -- contained in the Report on Native Papers.<sup>36</sup>

Mention may be made of two more instances indicative of the prevalent political awareness in Western India by that time. One of them was an editorial note appearing in a Gujarati monthly and the other was the publication of a Gujarati journal which claimed itself to be 'devoted to politics'. The Gujarati monthly Swatantrata in its combined issue of March-April 1879 had declared,

'We find presently in our country an increasing interest being evinced in the political happenings and the situation created thereby. It is worth noting that within a decade's time we have turned out to be better than our forefathers -- (and) that is evinced by the increasing number and the superior quality of our journals, and, also by the gradual strengthening of public -- opinion of our countrymen'.<sup>37</sup>

While, the other instance in this connection was the launching of the weekly 'Gujarati' by Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai, who had

---

<sup>36</sup> Report on Native Papers for the week ending, 1-1-1878.

<sup>37</sup> Swatantrata quoted in Source Material, op.cit.

patronised earlier the reformist weekly Satya Prakash and who was a member for some time of the Bombay Association and the Bombay Legislative Council. It is reported that Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai was contemplating 'to launch a Gujarati journal devoted to politics'. It is reported, further, that he invited Icchharam Suryaram Desai to edit such a journal. Icchharam Desai accepted the assignment and undertook to edit the proposed journal which was christened as the 'Gujarati' by Kavi -- Narmad.<sup>38</sup> It may be noted here that the Gujarati was published in the royal (folio) size with eight pages and was printed in the Fort Printing Press of Mr Ratanji Nasarvanji Antia and that in its inaugural issue dated June 6, 1880 it was declared,

'When the demand for political views is made from all sides, we shall not undermine the importance of politics ----. We shall express our feeble voice, if need be, to show how an able government can prove beneficial to the people'.<sup>39</sup>

## II

The discussion so far may be recapitulated now. In -- continuation of the previous chapter it was seen that the

---

<sup>38</sup> Desai Manilal Icchharam, Icchharam Desaina Sakshar Jeevan ni Rooprekha, (1928), pp. 9-13. (Bombay)

<sup>39</sup> Gujarati, dated 6-6-1880.

attacks against the administration which were persisting in the Gujarati press were occasional, stray and random. They were not organised systematically against the Government as such. They were turned in that direction after the emergence in Western -- India of a section of people which crystalised the unformulated popular grievances into simple propositions and tidy arguments : which formulated the people's dissatisfactions into symbols and slogans : which focused them all on to the prevalent political situation. We have noted that the nature of writings in the Gujarati press changed consequently. From being just a 'publisher' of the popular discomfitures, the Gujarati press became an adviser to the people, exhorting the latter to take interest in politics.\* And, thence it turned out to be a carrier of the political idiom : distinguishing 'Nomination' from 'Independent Representation in the Government' : Comparing the 'Republican Government in Britain' with an 'Arbitrary one in India', and, explaining the meanings of 'Liberty from Foreign Rule' and so on. We are now going to trace a further change evinced by the Gujarati press. As that could take place along with the emergence of an all-India body devoted to politics, we shall record some events preceding the formation of that body.

A country-wide ~~country-wide~~ controversy had been created over a particular piece of legislation. Under the law as it

---

\* The fact worth noting here is that it was the poet -- Narmad, an erstwhile social reformist, who was calling upon people 'to turn to politics rather than to anything else'.

existed then (1883), Indians were held not competent in their magistarial capacity of hearing charges against the Europeans within their jurisdiction. This had made the position of -- those Indians who held judicial positions at different levels from time to time awkward and anomalous. With a view to pointing out this position, a note was prepared by Mr B.L. Gupta of the Bengal Civil Service, and, Sir Courtney Ilbert, the Law Member, introduced a bill to confer upon the Indian District Judges the same powers as were enjoyed by their British counterparts. The introduction of that bill (known as the Ilbert Bill) evoked opposition from the British living in India. The English language press which was owned and controlled by some of them wrote articles opposing the bill. The Indian owned English and vernacular press refuted the criticism : arguments continued to be exchanged through the columns of the press.<sup>40</sup> The Gujarati press also wrote favouring the bill. It gave detailed reports of the meetings held in support of the bill. It attacked the British community and found fault with the Indian Government. For instance, the Gujarati said,

'The agitated temper in which some of the Europeans are manoeuvring to prevent this measure is deplorable indeed. If they succeed in their efforts, the Indian people must realise that the distinctions between the natives and the foreigners -- between the white and the coloured -- between the victors and the vanquished -- are not going to disappear

---

<sup>40</sup> Natrajan, op.cit., p.96.

during the British regime, ----- . In such an eventuality the suppressed feelings of the Indian people must be made overt as have become those of the Europeans'.<sup>41</sup>

Lord Ripon decided to drop the enactment. That led to widespread comments in the Indian press. No sooner did the criticism of the Government in that regard subside than an -- event took place in which Surendra Nath Banerjee was involved in his journalistic capacity. Banerjee had written an article in his 'Bengalee' in which some comments were made on proceedings in the High Court involving the exposure of a Hindu idol in public. He was charged for contempt of Court and was sentenced to two months imprisonment.<sup>42</sup> Banerjee records in his autobiography that most of the Indians who were dissatisfied with the policy of the Government and who were shocked at some of the contemporary happenings, felt the need for a more comprehensive organisation than the existing ones to ventilate their grievances and to cultivate public opinion on the current issues. He adds that they convened the first all-India conference at -- Calcutta in December 1883, under the auspices of the Indian -- Association.<sup>43</sup> After that, Allen Octavian Hume, an Englishman

---

<sup>41</sup> Gujarati, dated 8-9-1883, These comments were written by Kavi Narmad for the Gujarati.

<sup>42</sup> Banerjee Surendra Nath, op.cit.

<sup>43</sup> Banerjee S.N., op.cit.

who had retired from the Indian Civil Service, appealed for --  
'fifty good men' for founding, what he called, the 'Indian --  
National Union'. It was Hume's intention that discussions --  
should be confined to social problems and that the opportunity  
should be taken for bringing men interested in politics to- --  
gether once a year. But, Lord Duffrin, the Viceroy, viewed --  
the situation rather differently. He is reported to have told  
Mr Hume that the discussion on social problems alone would not  
be adequate as it was his view that a body of persons should<sup>44</sup>  
be created which should perform the functions of an opposition.  
Then, an all-India conference was convened in December 1885.  
Attended by leading personalities from different parts of India,  
it met in Bombay under the presidency of Mr W.C. Bannerjee  
and founded the 'Indian National Congress'. It adopted nine  
resolutions including that pertaining to the expansion of the  
existing supreme and local legislative councils, to the need  
for simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service,  
and, that pertaining to the Governmental expenditure which was  
characterised as 'excessive'.<sup>45</sup>

As regards the press, the founders and editors of some  
of the Indian newspapers were also prominent among the founders  
of the national organisation. Mr Dadabhai Naoroji's 'Rast --  
Goftar' was still with him...., Mr Mahadev Govind Ranade (al-  
though he did not attend as a representative) was associated

---

<sup>44</sup> Natrajan J., op.cit., p.98.

<sup>45</sup> Besant Annie, How India wrought for Freedom, pp.1-14.  
(Bombay: 1920)



with the 'Indu Prakash' of which he was the founder editor. From Bengal came Mr Narendra Nath Sen, editor of the 'Indian Mirror'. Mr G. Subramania Iyer, the editor of the 'Hindu' of Madras, was the mover of the first resolution approving the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the working of the Indian administration. Mr W.S. Apte and Mr G.G. Agar-kar represented the 'Maratha' and the 'Kesari' of Poona. Mr Krishnaji Laxman Nulkar and Mr Sitaram Hari Chiplunkar were the president and the secretary respectively of the Sarva-janik Sabha which published a quarterly journal. Mr Beramji Malbari was the editor of the weekly 'Spectator' published from Bombay. Other papers represented by their editors were the 'Navvibhakar', the 'Tribune', the 'Naseem', the 'Hindustan', the 'Indian Union', the 'Crescent'<sup>46</sup> and the Gujarati of Bombay.

To turn to the Gujarati press now : earlier<sup>47</sup> mention has been made of thirtythree Gujarati journals in circulation by the beginning of the year 1880 (these were joined by the Gujarati --- weekly and the Streebodh --- monthly by the -- middle of that year). The aggregate circulation of these -- journals, as observed then, was 13,885 copies per issue. It was noted, moreover, that these journals were being published from six different places in Western India. The growth of -- the Gujarati press continued and, by the year 1885 fiftythree

---

<sup>46</sup> Natrajan, op.cit.,

<sup>47</sup> Refer to page number 120 , table number 1.

Gujarati journals were being published as per table number 2. It is to be noted that these fiftythree Gujarati journals included three dailies, twentyfive weeklies (including one tri-weekly) and twentyfive monthlies. The aggregate circulation of the dailies had been 2825 copies, of the weeklies together with the tri-weekly had been 11640 copies and that of the -- monthlies had reached a total of 12950 copies per issue. -- Moreover, the number of the places of publication had risen to eleven by that time. It may be mentioned here that some of the dimensions of the Gujarati press viz., (i) Publication of matter that entertains and instructs, and, (ii) Publication of news and views pertaining to different sects and castes — dimensions which were already being included in almost all the Gujarati -- journals — had been crystalised into specialised journals by that time. In particular, the latter dimension, viz., publication of news and views regarding sects and castes is evidenced by journals such as the Yazdan Parast, the Noore Ilam, the Arya Dharma Prakash, and, the Arya Gnan Varadhak which were addressed specially to the different Parsi, Mohammedan and Hindu sectarian interests, and, by the journals such as the Nagar Udaya, the Shreemali Shubhechchhak, the Audichya Hitechchhu and the Kapol Hit Vardhak — which were caste journals. The former dimension, viz., publication of matter that would entertain and instruct is shown by the appearance of journals such as the Gul Afsaana, the Foorsad, and, the Parsi Punch (humorous magazines), and, by the Streebodh (women's magazine). By the middle of the year 1886, the number of the Gujarati journals

had come to be fiftyseven as mentioned in the table number 3. The newly added four journals included one daily, the Ripon Reporter from Bombay (1000 copies), the Arya Subodh Ratnakar, a monthly from Surat (285 copies), the Praja Hit Patra, a -- weekly from Nadiad (200 copies), and, the Dharma Darpan, a monthly from Bhavnagar (452 copies). Besides, the circulation of the Bombay Samachar had been 1375 copies, of the -- Gujarati 1200 copies and of the Kaisare Hind 1410 copies per issue by that time, bringing the aggregate circulation of the Gujarati press to 30,352 copies per issue.

Having indicated the growth of the Gujarati press from the year 1880 to 1886, we shall now turn to notice its changing nature.

At the time of the first session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay, all the Gujarati journals in that city and elsewhere wrote on the inception of that body and said that they 'welcomed' it.<sup>48</sup> The weekly Gujarati brought out a whole issue giving full details of the session. It declared that, 'the ideology of the Indian National Congress shall be adopted as the creed of the Gujarati in political matters'.<sup>49</sup> It said, as did the other Gujarati journals that, 'the Congress Session was a mammoth assemblage (Mahabharat Milavdo)' and, that, --  
'political events have become the life and blood of India'.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> The Bombay Samachar, dated 31-12-1885, Jame Jamshed, dated 30-12-1885, Rast Goftar, Deshi Mitra and the Hitechohhu from 27-12-1885 to 3-1-1886.

<sup>49</sup> Gujarati, dated 27-12-1885 and 3-1-1886.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Since then (that is, since December 1885), the reports of the preparations being made for holding the sessions of the Indian National Congress at different places, and, the issues to be dealt with at such sessions were featured by the Gujarati press during December every year. These reports coupled with comments would continue to appear till about the middle of the following January. These reports were procured by the different Gujarati journals both through the post (Tapal man Aveli Khabro) and through the telegraph (Tar man Aveli Khabro) since combined post and telegraph offices had been set up in the leading cities and towns by that time.<sup>51</sup>

Along with such reports (political reports in which the news about the Indian National Congress was more elaborate and more frequent), some other features were added to the Gujarati press by the middle of the 1880's. And, these features were becoming contributive to the growth of the Gujarati press. We shall note them in some details here.

Reference was made above to a special number brought out by the weekly Gujarati to mark the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. A similar special issue full of photographs and articles was brought out by that weekly as a mark of respect to Lord Ripon when the latter relinquished the Viceroyalty of India in 1884. It is reported that extra copies of that special issue had been got printed by the 'Ripon Commemoration Committee' for distributing at large. These were five

---

<sup>51</sup> Clerke, op.cit., p.43.

hundred in number and were in addition <sup>to</sup> the usual number of copies that were gifted away to the registered subscribers of the weekly Gujarati.<sup>52</sup> Such occasional gifts were distributed by the other Gujarati journals too. For instance, the Rast Goftar had adopted the practice of gifting an -- almanac (Panchang) to its subscribers since 1878,<sup>53</sup> and the weekly Kaisare Hind had presented to its subscribers an -- album of some fortythree photographs in 1886.<sup>54</sup> No wonder that despite the passage of time the practice of presenting special numbers to the registered subscribers is being followed even today by the Gujarati press. What is noteworthy is that so early in the course of its development the Gujarati press had recognised the need and utility of such time-worn devices of attracting readers and maintaining the readership once acquainted.

Next to such gifts of the special or annual numbers or almanacs, the other features added to the Gujarati press were (i) publication of some literary work — a drama or a novel — in instalments, and (ii) presentation of such a literary work in a complete book-form as an annual gift (Bhet Pustak) to the subscribers. We have, as an instance, the publication

---

<sup>52</sup> Marshall, op.cit., p.236.

<sup>53</sup> Rast Goftar, dated January, 1878. The Weekly Gujarati was also presenting to its subscribers a 'Panchang' every year. The 'Gujarati Panchang' is being published every year till to-day though the weekly has been defunct now.

<sup>54</sup> Kaisare Hind, dated February 1886.

of a Gujarati drama 'Jaya Kumari Vijaya' in the monthly Buddhi Prakash during the year 1862.<sup>55</sup> We have another instance of the publication of a serialised Gujarati novel, 'Hind ane --  
\* Britannia', in the weekly Gujarati during 1885-1886. The -- novel was presented in a book from to the subscribers of that weekly in 1886. It was advertised in the Gujarati dated -- December 19, 1886, that its subscribers got the benefit of -- receiving a novel 'Raselas' the previous year and were to be gifted with a novel 'Ganga Govindsingh' the following year -- ' both in addition to the usual annual gift of an almanac (Panchang) covered within the annual subscription of rupees three only'.<sup>56</sup> In this connection we should like to make a few observations here :

---

<sup>55</sup> Buddhi Prakash, March 1862 onwards.

\* The novel 'Hind ane Britannia' (by Ichchharam S. Desai, editor of Gujarati) had evoked international comments as it was alleged to contain criticism of the British rule in India. The novel was commented upon by journals in Britain such as the 'Times', the 'Saturday Review', the 'St. James's Gazette', the 'Pall Mall Gazette' and the 'Leeds Mercury'. It was reviewed in America by the 'North American Review' and by journals in Russia. There was a demand from some quarters to try Ichchharam for writing such a novel containing 'seditious passages'. Two Englishmen advised the Government, however, after perusing through the novel, not to pursue the matter any further. Consequently Ichchharam, the writer-publisher of that novel, was absolved of all charges by Lord Dufferin-in-Council. Mr Natwarlal Ichchharam Desai who pointed out this information included in the subsequent editions of the novel, added that the circulation of the weekly Gujarati shot up to 1500 copies from 800 a week, immediately after this incident.

<sup>56</sup> Gujarati, dated 19-12-1886.

- (i) Almost all the Gujarati journals used to advertise (they advertise even today in some instances) that their subscription rates were inclusive of a 'gift novel (Bhet Pustak)' or a gift almanac (Panchang) or a gift special number (Khas Ank) brought out on the occasion of Diwali, Dassera, Pateti or Id. The presentation of a gift book encouraged the writing and publication of literary works of merit and helped to discover talent which might not have been recognised otherwise.
- (ii) The type-compose of the serialised novels etc. was kept standing for some time and was later used for printing the completed novel in a book-form. That minimised the composing and printing cost of the gift novels etc.<sup>57</sup>
- (iii) The gift novels and the special numbers contained several advertisements which were inserted at special rates and which

---

<sup>57</sup> Mr Natwarlal Desai, son of Icchharam Desai and Mr Parbhulal Shivilal Thakkar (81) who was running a printing press in Baroda, gave this information.

added to the income of the Gujarati journals.<sup>58</sup>

- (iv) The publication of a serialised literary work by some noted Gujarati literateur added to the prestige and popularity of some Gujarati journals.<sup>59</sup>

These practices, it may be noted, went a long way in augmenting the circulation of the different Gujarati journals and -- were contributive to the growth of the Gujarati press.

The other factor so contributive was the publication of political matter. By the year 1890, the practice of publishing news about the Indian National Congress had also changed. Instead of giving news about that body's sessions during December and the following January every year, the Gujarati journals had adopted the practice of writing on the preliminaries being -- completed for holding the sessions, on the business transacted at such sessions, and, on the activities as well as utterances of the different political leaders, all the year round.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> The different Gujarati journals used to invite advertisements on such occasions and used to publish their special advertisement tariffs for the special numbers or the novels.

<sup>59</sup> A majority of the Gujarati novels have been published as a gift novel (Bhet Pustak) of one journal or the other. The practice continues till today.

<sup>60</sup> Reports on the Native Newspapers from 1880 to 1890, and, in particular, The Bombay Samachar, the Kaisare Hind and the Gujarati for the year 1890.



By that time, that is, by the year 1890, the number of Gujarati journals had reached a total of fiftyeight as per -- table number 4. These included three dailies with a total -- circulation of 3250 copies, twentysix weeklies with 18401 -- copies, three fortnightlies with 1203 copies and twentysix -- monthlies with a total number of 13059 copies per issue. The aggregate circulation of these fiftyeight journals had been 35913 copies per issue. Again, these journals included four which were entertaining ones (the Gap Sap, the Foorsad, the Gul Afsana and the Man Ranjak), two sectarian ones (the Noore Ilam and the Arya Dharma Prakash) and three women's magazines (the Streebodh, the Stree Mitra and the Streebodh Ratna).

We shall now refer to one incident which had affected the growth of the Gujarati press and which brought out in -- clearer terms the nature of writings in the different Gujarati journals.

Western India experienced a famine to be followed by the bubonic plague by about the end of 1896. The plague -- affected Gujarat rather severely. Government had adopted -- measures to check the pestil~~ence~~. Quarantines were opened at almost all the principal cities and towns in Gujarat. The Government had imposed restrictions on the movements of people. They had issued orders to search premises to detect plague -- victims. This latter action of the Government proved rather severe. It seems from newspaper reports that people did not like the different precautionary measures of the Government.

People would not tolerate the police and other officials entering their premises. And the restrictions on the movements as well as the hardships that people were to experience due to the quarantines, they resented.<sup>61</sup> The Gujarati press wrote against the checking and the searchings. It devoted special columns to news about the imposition of movement restrictions and the -- quarantine arrangements at different stations.<sup>62</sup>

Tilak (Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak) was editing the -- 'Kesari', a Marathi journal from Poona. As the Government reports say, 'In his papers he strongly supported the various measures adopted by the Government for the suppression of the pestilence but appears to have disagreed in regard to powers of the search parties'.<sup>63</sup> The same reports add, 'articles -- appeared in his papers which savoured of disaffection and sedition'.<sup>64</sup> Tilak was arrested and was tried subsequently for writing these articles in the press. Tilak's trial was covered extensively (running into one or even two full pages) by the different Gujarati journals published from places extending -- from Bombay to Ahmedabad. Some journals in Bombay, the Deshi

---

<sup>61</sup> Reports appearing in the Gujarati from October 1896 to September 1898. Similarly, reports published in the Deshbhakta July 1897 to September 1898. Refer also to the Biography of Sir Pherozshah Mehta who had fought against Government to lessen the stringency of the plague measures.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>63</sup> Source Material, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 208.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.,

Mitra of Surat and the Deshbhakta of Baroda (which were weeklies) used to issue special bulletins reporting the latest details obtained telegraphically about the court proceedings.<sup>65</sup> Eye-witness accounts say that people throughout Gujarat awaited their copy of the Gujarati journals giving news about the Tilak-trial and that this incident helped maintaining the growing -- trend of the Gujarati press. It would have been arrested on account of the migrations and upheavals caused by the plague, but for the trial episode. And, in fact, it did decline after the Tilak-trial concluded. This is borne out by comparing -- press-figures for 1890 and 1897 (table numbers 4 and 5) and for 1897 with those of 1898 (table numbers 5 and 6 --- Appendix).

Tilak was convicted and was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment under the amended act on sedition (Sections 124-A of the Indian Penal Code).<sup>66</sup> That the nature of writings in the different Gujarati journals became more pointed is indicated by the comments as summed up below :

- (i) It is unnecessary to retain on the statute book such acts,
- (ii) Such acts are in existence because India is under a foreign domination,
- (iii) Efforts must continue to be made to free India from subjugation so as to remedy that.

---

<sup>65</sup> Refer issues of these journals during October 1896- September 1898.

<sup>66</sup> Karandikar S.L. Lokmanya Tilak, pp. 155-157.  
(Poona 1957)

III

Thirtysix Gujarati journals including four dailies and thirtytwo weeklies including tri and bi-weeklies and fortnightlylies were in circulation by the year 1900 as per table number 7. The total number of the Gujarati journals would have been still more, if the number of prevailing monthlies be added to the above figure. But, neither the Government Reports have referred to them nor could we procure all of them for perusal. Hence we have taken the above figure -- ( viz., thirtysix ) for our consideration. The aggregate circulation of these thirtysix Gujarati journals had gone upto 37242 copies per issue and the growth of the Gujarati press effected by the year under reference is indicated by the table below:

| Year. | Frequency, Number and Copies per issue, of journals. |            |              | Total.              |                   |
|-------|--|------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|       | Daily  | Weekly     | Fortnightly. | Number of Journals. | Aggregate copies. |
| 1880  | 4 : 2090   | 22 : 10090 | 00 : 00      | 26                  | 12180             |
| 1890  | 3 : 3250   | 26 : 18401 | 3 : 1203     | 32                  | 21854             |
| 1900  | 4 : 10700  | 29 : 25182 | 3 : 1360     | 36                  | 37242             |

We shall proceed to examine the Gujarati press from the year 1900 onwards now.

By that time, Western India had become more active politically on account of the provincial conferences which were held annually at different places as appendages to the Indian National Congress. The Gujarati press was giving regular and wider coverages of these conferences. In continuation of that trend of writings one Gujarati journal, the Gujarati Punch of Ahmedabad, wrote that one of the sessions of the Indian National Congress be held in some town of Gujarat when the seventeenth session of that body meeting at Calcutta resolved to hold the next — eighteenth — session in the Bombay Presidency. The Gujarati Punch wrote a series of articles for about eight months during 1902, requesting the leaders of the Congress to hold the eighteenth session in Ahmedabad so as 'to foster political -- consciousness in Gujarat' as it put it.<sup>67</sup> It is reported that to make these articles effective, the editor of the Gujarati Punch had made arrangements through Tilak to publish them in Marathi and in other vernacular journals. It is reported -- further that the Congress leaders' attention was drawn to those articles and it was decided to hold the eighteenth session of the Indian National Congress in Ahmedabad.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Shah Ambalal N., Punyatma Somalal 'Punch', pp. 13-17.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.,

The session met under the presidentship of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea\* during the last week of December 1902. Along with that an industrial exhibition was also held and Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad Maharaja of Baroda, inaugurated that. Prior to the Congress session preliminary elections were held in different parts of Gujarat to elect delegates to the all-India body. -- According to the official records of the Congress, out of 471 delegates attending the Ahmedabad session 378 were Gujaratis.<sup>69</sup>

Since the decision to hold the Congress session and the industrial exhibition in Gujarat was announced, the Gujarati press wrote a series of articles welcoming and also explaining the implications of both. It gave extensive coverage to the news about the delegates' elections and to the other preparations being made on the occasion, and finally, quoting Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad and Ambalal Sakarlal Desai the chairman of the local reception committee, all the Gujarati journals wrote on :

- (i) The revival of India's old industries,

---

\* Eye-witness accounts say that Banerjea who was named as the president of that session had a stentorian voice and was audible to the last man at any meeting where loud-speakers were not in vogue. The absence of loud-speakers would have necessitated more detailed and elaborate coverages of the speeches etc. at such sessions so as to cater to the needs of those who could not catch the words of the speakers due to poor audibility. Again, the business at such sessions would be transacted in English. That too would necessitate elaborate reportings in Gujarati.

<sup>69</sup> Report of the eighteenth session of the Indian National Congress held at Ahmedabad, 1902.

- (ii) A reassessment of the taxes,
- (iii) The remission of some of the taxes characterised as pressing heavily upon the poor.
- (iv) The stoppage of the 'drain' (of India's wealth by foreigners) and the adoption of necessary administrative measures in that regard.

They wrote, also, on the Salt-Tax, Public Services, Cotton Excise Duty and the Currency Legislation.

By the beginning of the year 1903, the number of the Gujarati journals (monthlies not included) had reached the figure of fortyone with seven dailies plus thirtyfour other periodicals such as tri and bi-weeklies, weeklies and fortnightlies together, as mentioned in table number 8. That the further growth of the Gujarati press had taken place by that year and subsequently is indicated by comparing press-figures for the year 1900 (table number 7), 1903 (table number 8) and 1905 (table number 9). It is noticed that in the year 1903, there were fortyone Gujarati journals with an aggregate circulation of 42620 copies as against thirtysix journals with a total number of 37242 copies per issue in circulation in 1900. Again, the press-figure for 1905 -- indicate that there were forty Gujarati journals with a total number of 47300 copies per issue in circulation. As we are

delineating this trend of the Gujarati press, we shall refer to one event that had affected its growth. But, first an attempt will be made to depict a change evinced by the Gujarati press in its nature as well, consequent ~~on~~ that event.

The Viceroyalty of India was held by Lord Curzon at that time. When he had assumed that office in 1898, the Congress session meeting at Madras had 'welcomed' that appointment. The press also welcomed Lord Curzon by expressing the hope that 'the best traditions of British rule in this country would be followed during his Lordship's tenure of office in India'.<sup>70</sup> But, after a Durbar was held at Delhi to mark the accession of King Edward VII, the perceptions of the Indian leaders as well as of the press were changing.<sup>71</sup> The latter wrote on the 'extravagance of the 'Durbar' at a time when some parts of the country were experiencing a dire famine'.<sup>72</sup> Quoting Lal Mohan Ghosh, the Congress president, the press said, 'Lord Curzon saw the hand of Providence in the extension of the British rule in India. He said that everyone would admit it to be for his good. But, Providence was too often appealed to, both by the governing classes and by the leaders of the masses'.<sup>73</sup> Subsequently Lord Curzon had made some remarks on the character of

---

<sup>70</sup> Jame Jamshed, Bombay Samachar, Gujarat Mitra and Praja-bandhu during December 1898.

<sup>71</sup> Gujarati, dated 13-1-1903. It may be noted here that Tilak writing in the 'Kesari' had described the 'Delhi Durbar' as a 'Rajsuya Yagna'.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., dated 27-11-1903 and Hitechhu dated 3-12-1903.

<sup>73</sup> Report on Native Papers for the week ending January 7, 1904.



the Indian people while speaking at the Calcutta University Convocation.<sup>74</sup> These remarks evoked widespread comments, both from the Indian leaders and the press. The Kaisare-Hind of Bombay writing in its issue dated February 2, 1905 said,

'The Viceroy is ill-advised and intemperate-----.  
He forgets who he is -----. His utterances have left no doubt that his Lordship by temperament and hereditary proclivities is incapable of becoming a ruler of men either in this country or in any other. He is everything else except what a Viceroy should be'.<sup>75</sup>

The Rast Goftar commented that 'His Excellency has displayed a singular lack of statesmanship',<sup>76</sup> and the Prajabandhu said that 'Lord Curzon is one of the most powerful enemies of the real progress of this country'.<sup>77</sup> When such

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., for the week ending 27-12-1904.

Lord Curzon had said, "I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a Western conception ----- . In your epics truth is often extolled as a virtue; but quite as often it is attended with some qualification and very often praise is given to successful deception practised with honest aim." Quoted by the Rt. Hon. Earl of Ronaldshay, in The Life of Lord Curzon, Vol. II, p. 363; and also in Speeches of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol. II, pp. 271 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Kaisare Hind, dated 2-2-1905.

<sup>76</sup> Rast Goftar, dated 19-2-1905.

<sup>77</sup> Prajabandhu, dated 19-2-1905.

a climate of opinion was prevailing, Lord Curzon's Government issued a notification announcing a partition of the province of Bengal from October 1905.<sup>78</sup> This led to a wave of indignation in Bengal in particular and in the country as a whole. Meetings were held throughout the country opposing the partition.<sup>79</sup> The twentieth Congress session meeting at Bombay -- during December 1904 had already adopted a resolution protesting against the proposed partition of the province of Bengal.<sup>80</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale, speaking as the president of the twenty-second session of the Congress held in Banaras had said, 'I -- think even the most devoted admirer of Lord Curzon cannot claim that he has strengthened the foundations of British rule in India'.<sup>81</sup> Gokhale named the partition of Bengal as a 'cruel wrong' and paid tributes to Bengal and to the country as a whole 'whose national consciousness was growing' he said.<sup>82</sup>

The agitation against the partition of Bengal was called as the 'Bang Bhang Chalwal'. It had spread in almost all parts of India. So too in Gujarat. Eyewitness accounts of the agitation say that meetings were held in some of the cities of Gujarat where resolutions were adopted condemning the partition.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> The Indian Review, Vol.VI, January-December, 1905.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>80</sup> Besant Annie, op.cit., p.412.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 417.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>83</sup> Yagnik Indulal, Atmakatha, Part I. (Ahmedabad: 1955.)

The Gujarati press which had already criticised Lord Curzon's rule echoed the views of the leaders and commented upon the partition.<sup>84</sup> The main points of these comments were :-

- (i) Self-Government has become inevitable for India now,
- (ii) The Home Government (Government in Britain) should not hesitate now to grant that to India,
- (iii) The Home Government should keep a closer watch on the Governmental actions in India,
- (iv) Lord Curzon has injured Indian feelings several times.

Along with the movement against the partition of Bengal had emerged certain other ones. These were (i) A call for -- Swaraj -- Self-Government, (ii) A call for National Education, (iii) A call for boycotting foreign goods and (iv) A call for Swadeshi (i.e. use of indigenous products only). The different movements were associated with the cry of 'Vande Mataram' (Hail Motherland).<sup>85</sup> The Congress leaders who were organising these movements justified them as 'a political weapon' against foreign

---

<sup>84</sup> Vide, Report on Native Papers from June 1905 onwards.

<sup>85</sup> Besant Annie, op.cit., pp. 412-461 and Source Material op.cit., Part II, pp. 605-632.

rule.<sup>86</sup> Commenting upon these movements the weekly Gujarati wrote, 'The Swadeshi movement is gathering greater strength everyday ----. The authorities in England should put an end now to the policy of reaction and repression which has been inaugurated by Lord Curzon and which has done much to widen the gulf between the rulers and the ruled'.<sup>87</sup> Other journals -- commenting in similar terms devoted space to the news about (i) bonfires of foreign goods at different places and (ii) Vows taken by people at different places 'to use exclusively the Swadeshi products'.<sup>88</sup> The Gujarati Punch and the Jame Jamshed assessed the Swadeshi movement in these words, 'It is less than two years since the roar of Swadeshism rent the sky. It is in such a short time that we have been able to cripple the Lancashire cotton trade -----. Indeed the Swadeshi movement will enthuse the people even as it will wake up the -- Government from its deep slumbers'.<sup>89</sup>

The above being a depiction of the change in nature of the Gujarati press, we shall now put forth evidence indicating the growth of the latter by the year 1906. It can be observed from table number 10 that there were fortyseven Gujarati -- journals (six dailies, thirtyseven weeklies and bi-weeklies

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>87</sup> Gujarati, dated 5-11-1905.

<sup>88</sup> Report on Native Papers for the week ending October 11, 1905.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., for the week ending July 7, 1907.

<sup>89</sup> Report, op.cit., for week ending 6-1-1907.

together and four fortnightlies : figures for the monthlies being not traceable) in publication by that time. The aggregate circulation of these fortyseven Gujarati journals was 52015 copies per issue (six dailies with a total circulation of 17300 copies and the remaining fortyone Gujarati periodicals with an aggregate circulation of 34715 copies per issue. Attention needs to be drawn here to the fact that the circulation figures for the dailies had increased by 1300 copies a day within a year --- a fact, reference to which shall have to be made in subsequent analyses. We should like to mention -- here that the readership of the Gujarati press had grown still more than the number of copies in circulation at that time. -- That could be so on account of a new movement for starting ---<sup>90</sup> libraries and reading rooms (called the Mitra Mandal Libraries) which was launched in Gujarāt by the late Mr Motibhai N. Amin in 1906. The exact figure of such libraries or even of the total number of libraries and reading rooms in existence in Gujarat at that time is not available, however, evidence<sup>91</sup> is there indicating an overall increase in that regard.

Now again to the nature of the Gujarati press.

In our discussion so far we found that the political news and similar comments pertaining to the Indian National

---

<sup>90</sup> Pustakalaya (monthly magazine of the Library movement in Gujarat), dated, June 1931.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.,

Congress, and with special reference to the Swadeshi movement, were being prominently featured by the Gujarati press by about the year 1907. We shall mention here one incident to particularise the nature of political writings in the Gujarati press, even with reference to the Indian National Congress.

The twentythird session of the Indian National Congress was scheduled to meet at Surat in December 1907. This was the second occasion (in fact, very shortly after the Ahmedabad -- session) when the national body was holding its session in a town in Gujarat. The Gujarati press welcoming the session said, 'The forthcoming Congress meeting at Surat indicates the national spirit reverberating in Gujarat'.<sup>92</sup>

The Gujarati said, 'None can deny that our national -- consciousness is being augmented progressively'.<sup>93</sup> It added, 'Is that not indicated by the fact that the circulation of the weekly Gujarati has surpassed the total of seven thousand -- copies per week from a mere 145 when it was started ? We won't be surprised if the rising political consciousness of the -- Gujarati people takes that total even to 27000 copies a week'.<sup>94</sup> Similar views were expressed by the <sup>9</sup>Mame Jamshed, the Deshi Mitra, the Prajabandhu and the Gujarati Punch.<sup>95</sup> It is very

---

<sup>92</sup> Report, op.cit., for week ending 6-1-1907.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., for week ending 13-1-1907

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.,

significant that the growth of the Gujarati press was linked in the minds of the men who ran this institution of public opinion with the rising tempo of national consciousness, of the awakening of the Indian middle class to its own importance as the vanguard of a movement to restore the greatness of their motherland, and, bring about an improvement in their material and 'spiritual' existence. What is to be stressed is that the editors put the national cause first and circulation of their journals afterwards, as a consequence of the former.

But, almost all the Gujarati journals were expressing 'an apprehension about the controversy that had been created between the "moderate" and the "extremist" sections in the Congress organisation. The Gujarati, for instance, had referred to that in several issues.<sup>96</sup> But, the most typical of all were the comments made in the Vasant edited by A.B. Dhruva, a scholar and leading figure in Gujarat. The Vasant wrote on the 'triumph of the "moderates" in the twentysecond—Calcutta—session of the Indian National Congress (December 1906) where—in Dadabhai Naoroji was summoned to preside'.<sup>97</sup> It wrote -- again on the two sections in the Congress, coining two Gujarati words — 'Vineet' and 'Uddam' for the 'moderates' and the -- 'extremists' respectively.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Gujarati from December 1906 to February 1907.

<sup>97</sup> Vasant, February, 1907.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., August, 1907.

The Congress session met at Surat as scheduled during the last week of December 1907. It ended in a commotion due to differences of opinions between the 'extremists' including Tilak, B.C. Pal, Arvind Ghosh, Lajpatrai and Khaparde, and, the 'moderates' including Pherozshah Mehta, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Ambalal Sakarlal Desai and others. The news about the factions and confusion in the Congress pandal was reported by the press with comments. The Gujarati featured the news under dark black linings and with a caption 'a lamentable death'. It said that 'extremism' was 'anti-national'.<sup>99</sup> The Vasant wrote, 'Extremism is a disruptive policy. We advise our Gujarati brethren to depend entirely upon the 'moderates'. We advise them to exert themselves to have the 'moderates' emerge victorious wherever and whenever the Congress meets next'.<sup>100</sup> A similar magazine, the Samalochak said, 'Balwant-rao Tilak has brought blemish to the Congress by advocating extremism'.<sup>101</sup> However, the focal point of the press comments continued to be as follows :

'Extremism may be and is deplorable; however, it has emerged due to the highhanded policies of the persons like Lord Curzon and due to the failure of persons like Morley'.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Gujarati, dated 29-12-1907.

<sup>100</sup> Vasant, January, 1908.

<sup>101</sup> Samalochak, January-March 1908.

<sup>102</sup> Especially Gujarati, dated 5-7-1908.



It was in such an atmosphere that 'extremist' sections in the other parts of the country continued their activities. A country bomb was hurled at Muzffarpur on April 30, 1908. That resulted in the death of a woman and a child. Khudiram Bose was arrested for that. Tilak commented upon that incident in an editorial in the 'Kesari' dated May 12, 1908. The Bombay Government arrested Tilak on June 24, 1908 and launched prosecution against him under secs. 124-A and 153-A of the I.P.C. for his writings.<sup>103</sup> The news of the arrest, trial and subsequent sentence passed on Tilak on July 22, 1908 was -- featured by the Gujarati press more extensively than before. Almost all the Gujarati journals quoted these words of Tilak,

'All I wish to say is that, inspite of the verdict of the Jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free'.<sup>104</sup>

The sentence passed on Tilak and his famous remarks in the court had created quite a flutter in the country. They had repercussions in Gujarat too and eye-witnesses accounts

---

<sup>103</sup> Karandikar S.L., op.cit.

<sup>104</sup> Report on Native Papers for week ending 30-7-1908.

say that when Tilak was removed to the Sabarmati jail in --- Ahmedabad, a 'hartal' was observed and processions were taken out protesting against the sentence.<sup>105</sup> The same accounts -- indicate that the Tilak trial episode had changed the perception of many a Gujarati journal as regards the tie between -- the 'moderates' and the 'extremists'.<sup>106</sup> A Gujarati journal, the Shakti, was started to propagate the 'extremists' views. It wrote against the 'moderates' and said, 'the split between the 'moderates' and the 'extremists' is nothing else but one between those who do not want to suffer for the motherland and those who want to suffer for her'.<sup>107</sup> ~~As a result~~ This change in the nature of writings in the Gujarati press pursuant to the trial of Tilak, also assisted its growth. We find as per table number 11 that there were fortyseven -- Gujarati journals with an aggregate of 59990 copies per issue in circulation by 1909 and that the dailies which used to -- publish the latest and elaborate news about the trial recorded an increase of copies in circulation.

Now we shall turn to see how the Government took at the change in the nature of the press. Government had been watchful of the press since 1897. They had amended the Indian Penal Code to make the sections on sedition more comprehensive.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Yagnik Indulal, Atmakatha, Part I, p.126 and in an interview.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>107</sup> Shakti, dated 12-12-1908.

<sup>108</sup> Menon K.B., The Press Laws of India (1937), pp.1 to 4.

Again, they amended in December 1903 the Official Secrets Act of 1889, placing civil matters on a level with naval and military matters.<sup>109</sup> In June 1908 was passed the Newspapers -- (Incitement to Offences) Act VIII. This act had empowered the authorities to take judicial action against any editor of any paper which published any matter which in their view was an incitement to an offence.<sup>110</sup> Early in 1910, Act No.1 of 1910 (An Act to provide for the Better Control of the Press) was placed before the reformed Council by Lord Minto and was passed by that body. Under the new act Government was empowered to instruct their solicitor to go before the Presidency Magistrate to demand security from any newspaper publishing matter considered 'offensive'.<sup>111</sup> Subsequently, proceedings were -- started against many journals under one section or the other of the new act. The press in the country criticised the -- proceedings and wrote continuously against the 'press restrictions'. The Gujarati Punch and the Gujarati, among the Gujarati journals, made frequent attacks against the Government. The -- Government of Bombay demanded a security of Rs.2500 from the -- editor of the latter for writing allegedly inflammatory articles.<sup>112</sup>

---

109 Ibid.,

110 Ibid., pp.5-6.

111 Ibid., pp. 6-11.

112 Desai Manilal I, in the biographical note on his father p.37. Icchharam's son Natwarlal says that the Government was watching his father's activities since Icchharam migrated to Bombay in 1880. When Icchharam presented a purse of rupees four thousand that he had collected and a silvery salvar (tight pent) to Sir Henry Cotton, the president of the twentieth Congress which met during December 1904 at Bombay, the Government became more watchful of Icchharam and of the Gujarati.

We shall finally refer to two events which had repercussions on the growth of the Gujarati press and which further crystalised the nature of writings in it. One of these events was the world war I and the other event was the political movement, known as 'Home Rule Movement', launched in the country by Mrs Annie Besant. We shall first deal with World War I.

Hostilities broke out in August 1914 between Britain -- and Germany and India was made a party to the war. At that time there were altogether fortyone Gujarati journals (excepting the monthlies, the particulars about which are not available) in circulation as mentioned in table number 12. It -- appears from this table that these fortyone Gujarati journals included eight dailies with a total circulation of 22400 -- copies per issue and that there were thirtythree bi-weeklies, weeklies and fortnightlies together, with a total number of 43875 copies per issue in circulation. That is, by the year 1914 there were in all fortyone Gujarati journals with an -- aggregate of 66275 copies per issue in circulation. Now, -- these, as even all the journals in India, were subjected to a paucity of supplies of printing equipment on account of war-time import restrictions. Almost all the Gujarati journals were referring to the scarcity of printing material and were saying, 'we are handicapped on account of a lack of supplies of paper, ink etc., yet we are making every effort to maintain the size and standard of our journals though many a

smaller journal has been closed down or has dwindled in size'.<sup>113</sup>  
As a result of that many Gujarati journals had reduced their  
number of pages while smaller journals which were just started  
had to cease publication.\* Yet, the upward trend of the growth  
of the Gujarati press continued and we find as per table number  
13 that by 1915 there were thirtyeight Gujarati journals includ-  
ing six dailies with an aggregate circulation of 22,600 copies  
and thirtytwo of the other periodicals (bi-weeklies, weeklies,  
and fortnightlies) with a total number of 48,650 copies per --  
issue in circulation. That is, the aggregate circulation of  
these thirty eight Gujarati journals was 71250 copies per --  
issue.

The continuity of the growth of the Gujarati press in-  
spite of the meagre and costlier supplies was due to the re-  
porting of the war-news that was done by the Gujarati Journals  
— especially by the weeklies which were giving elaborate --  
news and comments on the war situation. The nature of those  
reports is indicated by captions such as :

- (1) Moti Ladhai ni Khabro  
(News about the great war),

---

<sup>113</sup> Gujarati, Hindustan, Bombay Samachar and others, Diwali Numbers during 1914, 1915 and onwards till 1919. Also, Barns Margareta, op.cit., p. 336. The Gujarati dated 22-10-1916 said that the prices of imported printing paper had gone up three times the pre-war level.

\* The daily Ahmedabad Samachar and the daily Gujarat Times had to close down.

- (ii) Europe ni Mâti Ladhâi  
(the great European War),
- (iii) Europe ni Mahabharat Ladhâi  
(the Mahabharat-like war in  
Europe).

The contents included elaborate details about the belligerent<sup>e</sup> countries, such references being, Austria ni Chadti Padti no Itihas (an account of the rise and fall of Austria) or German Shahenshahat (the great German Empire). These reports also contained information about those places which figured in the war-news from time to time. The tone of writings on the war in the Gujarati press is indicated by the following quotations :

- (i) Fateh Mate Bandaîi  
(Prayers being offered for the British victory),
- (ii) German Sudharo ke Jangali Kudharo ?  
(German reforms or barbarism ?),
- (iii) Germany ni Har-jeet no Sarvalo  
(An assessment of the victories and defeats of  
the Germans).

But the Gujarati journals writing on the Indian political situation said,

- (i) Hindi Congress ane Hind nun Swaraj  
(The Indian National Congress vis-a-vis the  
Independence of India),

(ii) Shahenshat man Hind ni Jago.

(The place of India in the British Empire),

(iii) Hind Shun Zankhe Chhe ? Swaraj.

(What does India aspire to ? Independence).

We should like to mention here that the newspapers in India which were working under different restrictions stipulated in the press laws as also in the various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, were now additionally controlled, under the Defence of India Act -- passed by the Government to meet, what the Government called, the 'emergency situation created by the War'.<sup>114</sup>

That concludes consideration of the nature and growth of the Gujarati press in relation to the first event viz., World War I. The second event viz., the 'Home Rule Movement' shall be dealt with now.

Mrs Annie Besant was prominent among the Indian political leaders at that time. She had come in contact with many persons in Gujarat on account of her political activities and due to the Theosophical movement that she headed.<sup>115</sup> She was propagating her views on the 'Home Rule Movement' that she had thought of and which, she claimed, 'would secure for India a

---

<sup>114</sup> Menon K.B., op.cit., pp. 11-16.

<sup>115</sup> Speeches and Writings of Mrs Annie Besant, p. 33.  
(Bombay. 1920)

legitimate place in the British Commonwealth'.<sup>116</sup> She was editing the 'New India' (it was an English journal known -- earlier as the 'Madras Standard') and was campaigning through it for 'Home Rule for India'.<sup>117</sup> She had set up for the -- conduct of that movement a 'Home Rule League' with branches at different places.

As regards the Gujarati press and that movement, it appears on a perusal of the contemporary Gujarati journals that the new movement had created a mixed reaction in the Gujarati press. Though full coverage to the news and statements pertaining to the movement was given by the latter, the nature of writings betrayed diversities. For instance, the Jame Jamshed wrote an article under the heading 'Mr Tilak Ane Home Rule' in which that paper said, 'the Home Rule Movement cannot be supported by us unless the "extremists" and the "moderates" in the Congress join hands'.<sup>118</sup> The other Gujarati journals such as the Kaisare Hind, the Bombay Samachar, the Gujarati and the Parsi also expressed similar views.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., and Besant Annie, The India that shall be, p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., and Barns Margareta, op.cit., pp. 335-336.

<sup>118</sup> Jame Jamshed, dated 17-5-1915.

<sup>119</sup> Kaisare Hind, dated 6-6-1915, Parsi, Bombay Samachar and Gujarati, dated 15-6-1915.



While, the Hindustan run by Mr Ranchhoddas Bhavan Lotwala wrote a series of articles in support of that movement.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, the Navjivan Ane Satya edited by Mr Indulal Yagnik gave support to the movement by writing articles to that -- effect and by publishing a monthly round-up of the meetings held or funds collected in connection with the Home Rule Movement in Gujarat.<sup>121</sup>

Attention needs to be drawn here to the fact that the organisers of the Home Rule Movement in Gujarat had started a library movement for subsidising new libraries and reading rooms which were being set up in some of the villages and -- towns of Gujarat. These libraries and reading rooms were to be known as 'Gokhale Vanchanalaya (Gokhale Libraries)' and under the new scheme, monetary assistance was to be provided for subscribing to newspapers.<sup>122</sup> Mr Indulal Yagnik and Mr Shankerlal Banker who were organizing the 'Gokhale Libraries' movement as also the 'Home Rule Movement' and who were associated with the Gujarati press inform that they had provided such assistance to about fortyfive libraries and that every library and reading room so helped could subscribe to six to ten -- Gujarati journals.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> Yagnik Indulal, Life of Ranchhoddas Bhavan Lotwala, p.31.

<sup>121</sup> Navjivan Ane Satya, issues from September 1915 onwards.

<sup>122</sup> Yagnik Indulal, Atmakatha, part II, p.16 and in an interview.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.,

The world war I came to an end in 1918 and the country which was convalescing from its aftermath was drawn into a new phase of political occurrences from that year onwards. We propose to discuss these occurrences in relation to the Gujarati press in the following chapter in detail. As regards the Gujarati press, however, in 1918, we find from table number 14 that there were six Gujarati dailies with a circulation of 24000 copies and that there were twentynine bi-weeklies, weeklies and fortnightlies together, with a -- total number of 50900 copies per issue in circulation bringing the aggregate circulation to 74900 copies per issue. -- Again, from table number 15 we find that by 1919 the six -- Gujarati dailies had attained a circulation figure of 25700 copies and the rest thirty Gujarati journals had reached a total number of 56346 copies per issue in circulation. The following table provides once again the growing trend of -- the Gujarati press from the year 1900 to the year 1919.

Table showing the Growth of the  
Gujarati press from 1900 to 1900

| Year.   | <u>Periodicity and Circulation</u> |        | Aggregates |
|---------|------------------------------------|--------|------------|
|         | Dailies                            | Rest.* |            |
| 1900    | 4                                  | 32     | 36         |
|         | 10700                              | 26542  | 37242      |
| 1905    | 5                                  | 35     | 40         |
|         | 15800                              | 31500  | 47300      |
| 1909-10 | 7                                  | 40     | 47         |
|         | 19300                              | 39690  | 59990      |
| 1914    | 8                                  | 33     | 41         |
|         | 22400                              | 43875  | 66275      |
| 1915    | 6                                  | 32     | 38         |
|         | 22600                              | 48650  | 71250      |
| 1918    | 6                                  | 29     | 35         |
|         | 24000                              | 50900  | 74900      |
| 1919    | 6                                  | 30     | 36         |
|         | 25700                              | 56346  | 82046      |

\* Rest include tri-weeklies, bi-weeklies, weeklies and fortnightlies but not monthlies as complete information pertaining to the monthlies was not available since the year 1900.

To conclude then, we have noticed that from thirtythree Gujarati journals including four dailies, twentytwo bi-weeklies and weeklies together, and, seven monthlies with a total circulation of 13885 copies (dailies : 2090 copies, bi-weeklies and weeklies together : 10090 copies and monthlies : 1705 copies) by the year 1880, the Gujarati press grew to the extent of thirtysix journals(excluding the monthlies because their -- particulars were not available) with 82046 copies (six dailies: 25700 copies and the thirty tri-weelies, weeklies and the fortnightly together : 56346 copies) per issue in circulation by the year 1919. We have also found that the nature of writings in the Gujarati press changed from mere publication of political views to participation in political controversies by that time. Now, apportionment of the effects of the different -- factors on the nature as well as on the growth of the Gujarati press during the period under reference is not possible. Some of these factors can, however, be just indicated here.

One of them was the emergence of a political organisation and the growth of political consciousness in India including Gujarat since the middle of the 1880's. It was this political consciousness which fostered the Ilbert Bill controversy and which led the people of Gujarat to support the Bang Bhang (anti-partition of Bengal), Boycott, Swadeshi and the Home Rule movements. And, that in turn changed the nature of writings in the Gujarati press and particularly effected its

growth. The holding of the sessions of the Indian National Congress in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Surat spurred the press to move further in those directions. The other factor was the practice of publishing serialised literary works in the -- Gujarati journals, and particularly the practice of giving annual gifts to the subscribers --- practices which many -- sections of the Gujarati press have been following to this day. We cannot say to what extent these were contributive to the growth of the Gujarati press, yet, the fact remains that the above practices provide an incentive to more people to read and even to subscribe to the different Gujarati journals. The third factor in this regard was the starting of libraries and reading rooms in Gujarat. These provided the Gujarati -- press with a stable clientele and in particular with a multiple readership.

Closely related to all these factors affecting the -- nature of the Gujarati press as also its growth were the -- increase in the population of the Gujarati speaking people and the increase of literacy in Gujarat. In 1880, the Gujarati -- speaking people numbered around ~~then~~ 90 lakhs while, by 1920, their population reached a total of more than 98 lakhs. Again, literacy among the Gujarati speaking people\* went on increasing as we find from table below. And that, that factor had far-reaching overall effects on the Gujarati press, hardly needs to be emphasised.

---

\* Gujarat proper -- excluding the city of Bombay.

PROGRESS OF LITERACY IN THE NATIVE STATES AND  
THE REST OF GUJARAT

|                    |     |     |     | Number per 1,000 who were literate |       |      |       |      |       |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|
|                    |     |     |     | 1901                               |       | 1911 |       | 1921 |       |
|                    |     |     |     | Men                                | Women | Men  | Women | Men  | Women |
| Baroda State       | ... | ... | ... | 163                                | 8     | 175  | 21    | 210  | 40    |
| British Districts  | ... | ... | ... | 206                                | 16    | 201  | 26    | 223  | 42    |
| Saurashtra         | ... | ... | ... | 186                                | 13    | 178  | 20    | 185  | 36    |
| Palanpur Agency... | ... | ... | ... | 80                                 | 3     | 74   | 5     | 86   | 8     |
| Mahikantha Agency  | ... | ... | ... | 121                                | 3     | 90   | 5     | 100  | 9     |
| Revakantha Agency  | ... | ... | ... | Not available                      |       | 73   | 6     | 80   | 13    |