

FOUR

FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE GUJARATI PRESS :

PRESS BECOMES VEHICLE

FOR EXPRESSING PEOPLES' NEEDS-GRIEVANCES

IN THIS CHAPTER we propose to consider first whether the expanding trend of the Gujarati press continued. If it did, we shall attempt to find out whether that had any repercussions on the nature of the Gujarati press. If the nature of the Gujarati press could be affected by its expansion, we shall try to assess any obstacles that the former would encounter in that regard.

To begin with, we shall briefly review the position of the Gujarati press during the middle of the 1860's.

Fourteen¹ Gujarati journals were in circulation by about the middle of the 1860's as mentioned in Table (a) below:

¹ All the issues of these fourteen journals were not available for perusal. In some cases references to different journals could be found from Governmental records.

TABLE : (a)

PARTICULARS ABOUT GUJARATI JOURNALS IN CIRCULATION

BY THE MIDDLE OF 1860's.

No.	Place of Publication.	Frequency of Publication				
		Daily	Bi-weekly	Weekly	Monthly	Total
I	Bombay					
1.	Bombay Samachar.		Bombay Chabuk	Rast Coftar	Dandiye	
2.	Samachar Darpan or Vepar Vartman		-	-	-	
3.	Akhabare Saudagar		-	-	-	
4.	Jame Jamshed.		-	-	-	7
II	Surat					
1.		-	-	Gujarat Mitra	-	1
III	Broach					
1.		-	-	Broach Vartman	-	1
IV	Kheda					
1.		-	-	Kheda Vartman	-	1
V	Ahmedabad					
1.		-	-	Samsher Bahadur	Buddhi Prakash	
2.		-	-	-	Gujarat Shala Patra	
3.		-	-	-		3
VI	Rajkot					
1.		-	-	Kathiawad Samachar	-	1
Total:— 6		4	1	6	3	14

The matter published in these journals was variegated. Advertisements appeared in almost all of them. But, some of them like the Bombay Samachar and the Jame Jamshed gave more news, those like the Buddhi Prakash and the Gujarat Shala Patra confined their matter to particular articles while, the Dandiyo devoted its space to comments exclusively, and, weeklies like the Rast Goftar or the Kheda Varatman or the Gujarat Mitra published news, comments, charchapatra and some topical matter. Broadly speaking, the matter published in the Gujarati press by that time can be classified as,

1. Advertisements,
- and 2. Matter other than advertisements.

Further, the latter, that is, matter other than advertisements, can be divided into : A. News, B. Comments, C. Charchapatra, D. Miscellaneous matter. These four divisions can be classified further as follows :

A. NEWS :

a. Commercial :

- i. Price Current,
- ii. Programmes of the arrivals and departures of ships (with the names, experience and standing of their captains),
- iii. Details of the cargo of the incoming and the outgoing ships, names of their consigners or consignees,

- iv. Information about the floating and establishment of new jointstock companies, new banking and -- financial corporations, new insurance companies, new textile mills and new manufacturing concerns in Bombay,
- v. Information about the insolvency of some of these concerns and news about liquidation proceedings of such concerns in Bombay, Surat and Ahmedabad,

b. Political :

- i. News about conflicts and treaties between some of the Western countries, news about the doings of their kings and ministers,
- ii. News about some proceedings in the newly set up Indian legislatures,
- iii. News about some Indian princely states,

c. Social :

- i. News about engagements, births, deaths and -- obsequies among the Parsis, the Gujarati Hindus and Europeans,
- ii. News about some festivities and feasts among some local communities,

d. Sundry :

Sundry news included information about natural calamities in India or abroad, details about some court trials in the Bombay and the Calcutta High Courts,

B. COMMENTS :

As no columns were set apart for separate comments, editorial opinions on diverse matters were incorporated into the body of some news.² The comments were mainly pertaining to :

- a. Local municipal affairs, sanitation etc.,
- b. Manners and customs of the people, interspersed with comparisons with the Westerners,
- c. Some prevailing belief or observances. These -- comments were usually betraying a 'reformist' view point.³

C. CHARCHAPATRA (Letters to the Editor) :

- a. On some local issue, pointing out some inconvenience people were put to or pointing out some defect somewhere,
- b. On some religious or social issue --- in support of or against the reformist stand.

D. MISCELLANEOUS MATTER :

- a. Weekly almanacs, weather reports, rainfall,

² As an instance, in the Jame Jamshed (daily) dated 21-7-1866 there is news about some judicial decision. The editors have expressed their opinion along with the news. Again, in the Samachar Darpan dated 1-1-1866, there is news about the arrangements that the Bombay municipality had made for scavenging the latrines. The editors have criticised in the news-item itself the scavengers for 'their lethargy' and have advised the municipal authorities to 'levy scavenging charges equitably'. The practice of writing separate editorials in the form presently current was not adopted in those days, perhaps because the editors construed every word in their journals as betraying the editorial opinions.

³ It was a practice to say so along with the comments.

- b. Information about postings, transfers or furlough of officials,
- c. Topical articles on some festivity as Holi, Diwali, Ghahambar, Pateti. These articles included some 'advice' to the people,
- d. Poems, Bhajans, Urdu Couplets etc.,
- e. Lucky numbers securing prizes in a lottery.

While, the former, that is, Advertisements can be sub-divided as those pertaining to,

- a. Public notices issued by the Government, the Sheriff, the protho notary or by some business concern and private individuals,
- b. Auction sale of premises, land or commodities,
- c. Sale of newly imported goods,
- d. Sale of medicaments — 'wonder drugs' etc.,
- e. Sale of books,
- f. Notices to consigners etc.

As we have already said above, there was no fixed quantum of one matter or the other published in the different journals. Besides, the types of matter varied as much as did its quantum from journal to journal. But, taking the printed matter in all the journals during the middle of the 1860's as a whole,

* The percentage of matter published in the Gujarati journals has been arrived at by the following method :

We took at random three issues of each of the fourteen journals. The pages, that is, the printed matter in each of them were measured length and breadthwise in inches. The total inches of printed matter were divided into (a) advertisements and (b) matter other than advertisements. The latter, that is, (b) was sub-divided further into the different heads mentioned above and the percentages were arrived at by taking the printed matter as 100.

we can say that the advertisements occupied about one fourth of the total printed space. The remaining three fourths of that space can be sub-divided as follows :

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| a. Commercial news | : about 40 per cent of space, |
| b. Other news (Political, social, sundry) | : about 20 per cent of space, |
| c. Miscellaneous matter. | : about 30 per cent of space, |
| d. <u>Charchapatra</u> . | : about 5 per cent of space, |
| e. Comments etc. | : about 5 per cent of space. |

Six more Gujarati journals came into existence by about the beginning of 1870. Of them, the Parsi Punch (weekly) and the Vepar Patrika (brought out on the China Mail day) were -- published from Bombay. The Neeti Prakash (weekly) was added from Broach while, Ahmedabad added three more --- the Ahmedabad Samachar, the Tikakar and the Chandrodaya. All of them were -- weeklies. The total number of Gujarati journals came to be -- twenty by the beginning of 1870 thus. That number went on -- increasing. And, the year 1871 saw twentyeight Gujarati -- journals in circulation. Bombay had added four new weeklies viz., the Indian Critic, the Sunday Review and Dandiyo, the Yazadan Parast and the Arya Mitra. One more weekly, the Surya Prakash, was brought out from Surat while, Kheda Neeti Prakash was added from Kheda. Ahmedabad added one more with the -- publication of the Gazette of Gujarat (the total number of journals issued from Ahmedabad thus being five) and Kapadwanj

was having for the first time a weekly, Chandra Prakash — bringing the total number of Gujarati journals to twentyeight and making the number of places of publication seven.

Many of these journals ceased publication, many new ones⁴ came into being, by the beginning of 1880. Yet, the upward trend in the number of publications of the Gujarati press continued to persist as mentioned in Table number 1 in the Appendix.

Along with such an increase in the number of Gujarati journals, the number of pages in each of them had also increased. The dailies contained from four to six pages per issue. The printed space was seventeen inches lengthwise and twelve inches breadthwise on each page. That was divided into four to five columns. The weeklies like the Rast Goftar, the -- Gujarat Mitra, the Surya Prakash,⁵ the Broach Varatman, the Kheda Varatman and the Hitecchhu contained from twelve to twenty four pages per issue. The printed space on each of

⁴ The Reports on the Native Newspapers mention that the weekly Mahudha Samachar was published from Mahudha (Kheda District) during 1872 and the weekly Adal Insaf was published from the same place in 1875. We note further from the same Reports that Nadiad too had a weekly publication, Duniya Dad, for some time.

⁵ It was a common practice in those days for journals in India, to publish comments in Vernacular and English. The Hitecchhu and the Surya Prakash followed that practice. The comments in the two languages were generally identical, yet, the phrases used in both differed sometimes.

them was eleven inches lengthwise and eight inches breadth- -
wise per page. That was divided into three columns each. --

This increased correspondingly the matter published --
in each of the journals. Or, to put it again, the quantum of
printed matter in circulation periodically had been augmented
further. The total contents of the Gujarati press which had
so increased can be divided into, 1. News, 2. Comments. --
3. Charchapatra, 4. Topical Reports and Articles, 5. Advertise-
ments and 6. Commercial Intelligence or Price Current. The --
price current covered quotations, not only from the Bombay Market
but also from the Calcutta, Madras, Liverpool and New York --
Markets. The news covered happenings in India, in the Asian
countries and in the European countries. Again, the news which
appeared in the Gujarati press included matter received through
the post, the sea-mail or that received telegraphically.⁶ The
comments had become more varied and elaborate. They touched
a wider range of subjects from some domestic event to some --
international occurrence. The Charchapatra were as usual on
controversial issues. Their numbers had increased so much that
the editors had to defer their publication to subsequent issues.
The topical reports and articles which were published mostly
in the monthlies and in the weeklies at times, dealt with the
local social, religious, educational or literary issues. The
advertisements had grown both in the space occupied and in

⁶ Refer to foot-note number 15.

their varieties. Some of them announced the sale of new -- products, wonder drugs, household materials and books etc.; some of them publicised the Gujarati dramatic performances being staged in Bombay; some of them gave details of newly set up lodging and boarding houses in Bombay while, some of the advertisements announced the particulars about newly floated lotteries.

Next to this increase in the number of Gujarati -- journals, in the number of pages and in the variety of matter published, there was increase, also, in the circulation of the Gujarati press. That increase has been referred to into the different Governmental reports.⁷ It appears from those reports that the aggregate circulation of the dailies had reached a total of 2090 copies per issue, while, that of the tri-weekly and the weeklies together had been more than 10,000 copies per issue. And, the monthlies had touched a total of 1705 copies per issue bringing the total number of copies per issue in circulation to 13,885 by 1880.

The overall expansion of the Gujarati press described above was brought about by several factors obtaining in Western India during that period. As before trade and commerce was one of them. After the introduction of steam-driven -- vessels and after the construction of the railways, trade had

⁷ Reports on the Administration of the Bombay Presidency (G.D. Volumes) pp. 404-406 and Report on the Native Newspapers for the week ending 3-1-1880.

grown in Western India.⁸ It received further fillip after textile mills and other industrial concerns had been set up in the presidency.⁹ This augmented commercial activity -- would create the need for sale-promotion means, advertisements in particular. That is, the manufacturers would -- advertise their goods providing more advertisement revenue to the Gujarati press. When newspapers like the Bombay -- Samachar, the Jame Jamshed and the Rast Goftar raised their advertisement tariffs,¹⁰ they could obtain still more -- revenue from the advertisements. Again, increasing commercial activity implied more job-printing (of books of trade, forms, vouchers etc.). That would provide more income to journals owning their own printing establishments.¹¹ We are not in a position, now, to ascertain the income accruing to the Gujarati press from these direct as well as indirect -- sources. We safely infer however, that the additional yields would enable many a journal to increase its pages without -- disturbing the subscription rates.¹²

⁸ Ref. Cotton Mills in India : 1854-1954, pp.3-32 and p.233. Ref.also Gadgil D.R., Industrial Evolution of India, pp. 56-57.

⁹ Ibid., There were more than 45 textile mills in Western India by 1880. These included those in Bombay, Broach and Ahmedabad.

¹⁰ From eight lines per rupee, these journals raised the advertisement rates to five to four lines per rupee per insertion.

¹¹ We have no data about the quantum of job-work done and the income received by such of the printing presses. This point has been suggested, however, by the notices published in the different journals inviting job-work and suggesting their popularity in that regard.

¹² The Samachar Darpan and the Jame Jamshed among the dailies and the Rast Goftar among the weeklies could give more pages by 1867 though their subscription rates remained stationary.

The other factor which affected the expansion of the Gujarati press was the improvement of the printing technique. Formerly, most of the Gujarati journals were lithographed. The matter was written first by calligraphists and its -- impressions were re-traced subsequently from stone-beds. As the matter was in hand-written characters, it consumed more space, more time* and more money. The newly designed type-setting method facilitated the inclusion of more matter in the same space because the newly prepared machine-made types had a smaller and sharper face as compared with the lithographic characters. It was less time-consuming, less labourious and above all, it was cheaper.¹³ Next to that, there was improvement in the method of obtaining impressions. The newly introduced hand-driven and later the steam-operated printing equipment facilitated the publication of large-size newspapers more rapidly (therefore with the latest information) and at cheaper costs than before.

Now about the increase in the contents : news for -- instance. We have seen above that formerly news was gleaned from the English journals.¹⁴ Later, the Gujarati journals

* It will be interesting to note here that many times the absence of the calligraphists from the printing presses delayed publications of some journals for weeks together. Ref. Gujarat Shala Patra Vol.III January, 1864 : 'An apology for delay' --- cover page.

¹³ The calligraphists being specially trained persons would charge more as compared with type composers who needed a little skill. Besides, the stone-beds were costlier, more space-consuming and requiring more labour for movements.

¹⁴ Ref. page^{43, 45 and 58} earlier.

procured news through the post and also through the sea-mail. That was stale and scarce and would be exhausted soon. The increased frequency of the Gujarati press needed more news — more rapidly and continuously than before. That could be provided after the telegraph lines connecting Calcutta, Agra, Bombay, Peshawar and Madras were opened for general traffic in 1855.¹⁵ That could be provided, besides, after the completion of submarine telegraph lines between India and Britain in 1860 and after the construction of land telegraph lines between the two countries in 1865.¹⁶ And, more news could be collected after the Reuter's news agency began to supply news in bulk to the Indian press.¹⁷ The increase in quantity of news and matter in the Gujarati press was -- facilitated, moreover, after the postal services in India were rationalised and uniform postal rates were introduced in 1854.¹⁸ It was facilitated more, particularly when the post was carried through the Railway Mail Service,¹⁹ and when the postal rates were lowered still further.²⁰ These facilities had enabled the Gujarati press to procure a wider range of news and other matter from various places in Western India at cheaper rates and more frequently than the previous years.

¹⁵ Barns Margareta, op.cit., pp. 239-245.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 311-314.

¹⁷ Ibid., and Natrajan, History of Indian Journalism, op.cit.

¹⁸ Clarke Sir Geoffrey, The Post Office in India and Its story, pp. 32-38. (London: 1921)

¹⁹ Ibid.,

²⁰ Ibid.,

After reviewing some of the factors which affected the increase in the quantum as well as variety of matter included in the Gujarati press by 1880, we shall now proceed to see the factors which influenced the spatial expansion of the -- Gujarati press.

With the growth of population and with the increase in educational facilities in Gujarat, the number of literate -- persons had also increased. We could not obtain the exact number of Gujarati literate persons during that period because the latter had spread in Bombay and Island, in the then British territories extending from Bombay to Saurashtra and Panchmahals and in the then princely states including Sachin, Dharampur, Rajpipla, Baroda, Khambhat and many smaller states in Kathiawad. The educational set ups in all these administrative units differed. Hence differed the numbers of persons who could read and write in these areas. Yet, on the bases of the section on -- Instruction in the Bombay District Gazetteers it appears that literacy was increasing in Western India. From the reports on education (published in the Gujarat Shala Patra -- Vol.I, Nos. 1,2,3, 1861 and Vol.VII, No.5, May 1867) it appears that there were 27 schools with 1469 pupils in 1841 in the different districts in Gujarat. These increased upto 733 (642 for boys and 91 for girls) with 477841 (44085 boys and 3696 girls) during 1867-68. That is, literacy in Gujarat had increased by that time. That could create a potential readership of the Gujarati press. But, it could not actualise due to --

several reasons --- the lack of adequate transport and --- communication facilities being one of them. After 1854,-- though uniform postal rates were introduced, they did not help the press any more because the rates for carrying Indian newspapers were fixed at two annas upto the first three and a half tolas, four annas upto six tolas and so on.²¹ Such being the postal charges, the subscription rates of many -- journals had been raised and the journals used to mention -- their subscriptions net and with added postal charges per annum.²² When the postal charges were revised in 1866 (by Act XIV of 1866), newspapers could be sent upto any distance in the country at one anna per the first ten tolas of weight and so on.²³ That would enable out station subscribers to obtain their copies at cheaper costs. Not only that, the reduction in postal charges facilitated the inclusion of more pages and hence more matter in the different Gujarati journals. Journals like the Rast Goftar contained sixteen to twentyfour pages which, under the reduced postal charges, would cost an anna worth of postage.²⁴ It may be noted here that most of the Gujarati journals like the Rast Goftar had fixed one and a half rupee as additional postage per year

21 Clarke Sir Geoffrey, op.cit.

22 Rast Goftar, Jame Jamshed, Bombay Samachar etc.

23 Clarke Sir Geoffrey, op.cit.

24 We have weighed some of them and found them to be less than the prescribed weight.

after the new rates were introduced while, dailies like the Jame Jamshed did not mention extra postage charges along with their subscription rates.²⁵

All this could happen mainly after the railways were constructed in Western India. The construction work had -- commenced in 1854, it neared completion in 1864, and, by -- 1880 there were three different railway lines in the Gujarat area; one of them was the Bombay Baroda and Central India -- Railway (known as the B.B. & C.I. Railway), the other one was the Bhavnagar and Gondal State Railway and the third was the Gaekwad's Baroda State Railway. The B.B. & C.I. Railway -- covered 389 miles between Bombay in the south and Wadhwan -- (Saurashtra) in the north. It was constructed between Bombay and Ahmedabad in 1864, and was extended upto Wadhwan in 1872. In details, the railway lines connected Bombay, Vapi, Udwada, Bulsar, Billimora, Navsari, Surat, Broach, Ankleshwar, Baroda, Anand, Nadiad, Mahemdabad, Barejadi, Ahmedabad, Virangam and Wadhwan --- south-north; and, Baroda, Dabhoi, Anand, Umreth, Dakore, Thasra, Godhra, Dohad, Mehsana, Palanpur, Limdi, Bhavnagar, Dhoraji and Gondal in the interior.²⁶ And, some of these places were district headquarters while most of them were busy commercial centres in Western India.²⁷

²⁵ Jame Jamshed, Vol. XXXV., Samachar Darpan, Vol. XVIII.

²⁶ Dave Narmadashanker L., Gujarat Sarva Sangraha (a compilation from the Bombay District Gazetteers), pp. 263-264.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 261.

It is not intended to suggest here that as soon as the railways and the postal services were introduced the circulation of the Gujarati press increased phenomenally. Our -- contention is that after the potential readership of the -- Gujarati press was created by the increase of literacy, the railways and the postal services contributed to actualise that. Or again, when more copies of the newspapers could be printed with the improvement of the printing technique, they could be carried to, and distributed at, distant places after the provision for adequate transport and communication was made.

Lastly, we shall examine one more factor that was -- operative in augmenting the readership of the Gujarati press. That was the starting of libraries and reading rooms in -- different places throughout Gujarat.

In 1855, there were ten libraries and reading rooms in Bombay, one in Surat and one in Ahmedabad.²⁸ By the middle of the 1870's, reading rooms were started in the following places viz., Bombay, Surat and Navsari in the Surat area; Broach and Ankleswar in the Broach area; Baroda and Dabhoi in the Baroda area; Kheda, Mahemdabad, Anand, Sojitra, Thasra, Umreth, Napad, Dakor, Veersad, Kathlal, Kapadwanj, Mahudha, Petlad and Nadiad in the Kheda area; Godhra, Dahod, Lunawada and Devgad Baria in the Panchmahals area; and, Ahmedabad,

²⁸ Bombay District Gazetteers — Section on Instruction.

Sarkhej, Sanand, Barwala, Dhandhuka, Dholka, Dholera, Patan, Kadi, Mehsana, Modasa, Paldi, Sadra, Idar, Palanpur, Radhanpur, Visnagar, Viramgam, Kharaghoda, Ghogha, Amreli, Bhavnagar, -- Rajkot, Bhuj, Mundra and Mandvi in the northern parts of Gujarat covering Ahmedabad, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Saurashtra and Kuch areas.²⁹ All these libraries and reading rooms were -- procuring several Gujarati (and in some instances English) -- journals.³⁰ The existing records do not give details about the names of the journals received in these libraries and reading rooms. Nor was it possible to assess the numbers of the readers visiting the latter to peruse through the Gujarati journals. It is contended, however, that these libraries and reading -- rooms together provided a constancy of subscriptions to, as well as a multiple readership of, the Gujarati journals and they -- operated thereby to keep on the growth of the Gujarati press.

II

We shall recapitulate our discussion so far. We have seen that the Gujarati press was expanding by about the middle of 1860's. It had grown still further by the beginning of the

²⁹ Ibid.,

³⁰ Ibid., the Nadiad Library received as many as eighteen newspapers (Gujarati and English) for instance. Ref. Gazetteers, Vol. III. pp. 132-139.

1880's. As per Table number 1 (in the Appendix) the number of Gujarati journals had increased upto 33 including four dailies. The places of publication of those journals had increased upto six --- five more in addition to Bombay. The pages and the varieties of matter contained in these journals had been added to. The circulation of the journals had expanded numerically and spatially. And, above all, the readership of the Gujarati press had grown as compared with the -- previous years.

We shall attempt to see whether such a growth of the Gujarati press had any repercussions on its nature.

Since the further expansion of the Gujarati press -- began to take place, variegated interests and sections of society were being associated with it both in running and reading it. We could not trace the specific types of these sections and interests. Yet, on the basis of the accounts depicting the conditions of the people during those days³¹ and from the news items, charachapatra and comments gleaned from the press, it appears that most of these sections were growing rather uneasy with the state of affairs around them. Some of them had been rendered helpless on account of the decline in importance and value of their indigenous handicrafts after the machine-made products, mostly foreign, were put in the market. Some sections were not happy with the

³¹ Digby, Prosperous British India (1901), pp. 73-76; also Dadabhai Naoroji, Poverty and Un-British Rule (1887), 1901. (London) pp. 36-39.

newly introduced land-revenue system. They were unhappy because they had to pay their revenue dues in cash rather than in kind which was the practice prevailing before. They had no alternative but to dispose of their products at the current prices in the urban markets to obtain cash for that purpose. Some other interests and sections associated with the Gujarati press, dwelling in places like Bombay, Surat, Broach and Ahmedabad were ill at ease with the local administrations — both municipal and Governmental — due to their taxation levies.³² These conditions coupled with the political upheaval after the uprising of 1857 had changed the perceptions of the people — some of whom were connected with the Gujarati press directly and indirectly. They started making suggestions through letters to the editors that the task of ventilating peoples' grievances should be taken up by the press. They wrote to the editors that the press should express the needs of the people.³³ Subsequently, comments -- began to appear in some journals as well, suggesting the task the press should perform.³⁴ Typical among them was a comment appearing in a monthly magazine Sher-e-Delha, published from Surat. The editor of that magazine, Dinshah Ardeishar Taleyar-khan wrote in that journal,

'It is regrettable indeed that there is no

³² Tinker Hugh, Foundation of Modern Local Self-Government in India, Burma and Pakistan, p. 30. (London: 1954)

³³ Charchapatra in the Rast Goftar, Vol. XI, No. 566, Charchapatra in Bombay Samachar, Vol. XXXI, No. 239; Charchapatra in Bombay Chabuk dated 2-7-1863.

³⁴ Ref. Annual table of contents, Rast Goftar, Vol. XI.

popular newspaper in a city like Surat to express peoples' needs and grievances. Though it is not so easy a task to launch and run such a newspaper for attending to the conditions of the people, it is equally necessary, however, to do so ----. The -- grievances of the people must reach the -- ears of the authorities. The people have not got courage enough to fight for that. They badly need a vehicle like the newspaper to help them in that regard.----. Indeed, there are very few guides like the newspapers to lead the people through darkness to light ----, undoubtedly such a true and honest guide like the newspaper will prove as a boon to the people'.³⁵

Mr Taleyarkhan subsequently started a weekly, the Surat -- Mitra (later renamed Gujarat Mitra, now published as Gujarat Mitra and Darpan) from Surat in September 1863. He began to deal with the local problems therein. His comments were directed against the local municipal committee, whose 'inefficiency' led him to express dissatisfaction.³⁶

³⁵ Quoted in the Diamond Jubilee Number of the Gujarat Mitra and Darpan, (1924), pp. 1-7.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-7.

The Bombay Samachar was publishing comments and charcha-patra on the local municipality.³⁷ The Jame Jamshed was -- commenting upon that municipality's taxation policy. It -- complained frequently that the local body was not discharging its duties properly,³⁸ while, the Bombay Samachar criticised the civic body for 'neglecting sanitation in the city'.³⁹ Such criticisms of the municipal administrations became more frequent in these two journals as well as in the Rast Goftar and the Dandiyo in Bombay; in the Surat Mitra in Surat; in the Broach Varatman in Broach; in the Kheda Varatman in Kheda and in the Samsher Bahadur in Ahmedabad. These dealt with the -- local sanitary conditions, local taxes and levies and at times they contained criticisms of the members of the local municipal committees.⁴⁰

Next to the municipal affairs, the Gujarati press had started publishing popular complaints about the newly started railways and the postal arrangements. To see a few typical examples, the Samsher Bahadur of Ahmedabad said, 'It is lamentable indeed that the railway authorities do not deem it fit to give sufficient publicity to the opening of new railway stations. They should publicise such openings through announcements in the Gujarati press. The public at large remains in

³⁷Bombay Samachar, Vol.42, dated 3-6-1861.

³⁸ Jame Jamshed, Col. XXXIII, dated 2-6-1863.

³⁹ Bombay Samachar dated 6-8-1863.

⁴⁰ Ref. successive issues of these journals from 1862 to 1866.

the dark as regards starting of new railway tracts'.⁴¹ The same newspaper said again, 'The railway authorities must pay heed to the popular grievances expressed in the Gujarati -- press..... if they do not listen to what we say through these columns regarding their administration, whom else will they listen to ?'⁴² The Bombay Samachar wrote, 'we are voicing the common man's grievances that it is high time the railways did something to lessen the hardships of the railway passengers'.⁴³ While, the Jame Jamshed complained against the 'rush and congestion in the third class compartments'.⁴⁴ It was written, again, that there was no lighting arrangement inside the railway carriages,⁴⁵ and that 'the people had to keep waiting at the Grant Road station till the booking clerk arrived there',⁴⁶ and so on.

Similar comments were made regarding the postal administration. It was complained that 'the post was much delayed through the postal charges were very high'.⁴⁷ It was suggested

⁴¹ Samasher Bahadur, dated 22-12-1869.

⁴² Ibid., dated 8-1-1870.

⁴³ Bombay Samachar, dated 4-1-1870.

⁴⁴ Jame Jamshed, dated 1-9-1870.

⁴⁵ Ibid.,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 4-9-1870.

⁴⁷ Samsher Bahadur, dated 3-11-1870.

that ' a new post office should be started at Surat⁴⁸ or that 'a letter-box should be placed at the Grant Road station'⁴⁹ or that 'the postal charges should be reduced'⁵⁰ and so on. Again, it was a grievance that 'the postal charges for posting newspapers in India were very high: when they were being reduced in England, why not so in India too' ?⁵¹ It was -- asked. 'Are the newspapers not essential for educating the masses ? Why levy such high charges on them, then' ?⁵²

The present discussion pertains to that phase of the Gujarati press in which the latter had started expressing the popular needs and grievances as regards the local municipalities, the railway facilities and the postal arrangements. It is neither possible nor necessary to reproduce all of them verbatim here. Yet, on a perusal of the annual contents of these journals published since the 1860's onwards, it appears that the subjects of comments went on increasing : the space devoted to the comments was enlarged (comments began to appear separately in some of the journals such as the Rast Goftar and Bombay Samachar) and the frequency of these comments also increased. Gradually, the comments began to verge on the criticism of the Governmental administration in general and

⁴⁸ Bombay Samachar dated 2-1-1871.

⁴⁹ Ibid., dated 3-1-1871.

⁵⁰ Ibid.,

⁵¹ Ibid.,

⁵² Bombay Samachar dated 6-7-1870.

of some officials in particular. For instance, Kavi Narmad's Dandiyo or 'Exposer' had made one Mr Somers, the then deputy collector of Surat, its target of attack for, 'his inhumane and obstinate attitude'.⁵³ The Dandiyo contained comments against that official in nearly three successive issues.⁵⁴ It wrote against, what it termed as, the 'Jhulum' (high-handedness) of the magistrate of Broach. It declared,

'A great chaos is prevailing in that district. It is the duty of those who are conducting the press to keep the Government and the people aware of that. It has become essential for the press to keep itself well informed about the affairs of the different districts'.⁵⁵

The Dandiyo continued to write against the 'doings' of the district officials posted in Surat, Broach and Kheda. Many times it named the officials as a 'scourge' to the people.⁵⁶ Similarly, the Samsher Bahadur asked, 'why should the Government officials make use of the Dharmashalas (inns) which have been erected out of the charities received from the people'?⁵⁷

⁵³ Dandiyo, No. 23, 24, 25, 1865.

⁵⁴ Ibid.,

⁵⁵ Ibid., No.30, 1865.

⁵⁶ Ibid.,

⁵⁷ Samsher Bahadur dated 2-8-1860.

And, some newspapers made occasional allegations against the Government servants. For instance, the Gujarat Mitra of -- Surat accused the local police of accepting bribe from the vegetable vendors⁵⁸ while one newspaper criticised the police for 'not attending to their lawful duties simply because they were not getting bribes'.⁵⁹ Similar was the tone of the Sunday Review and Dandiyo.⁶⁰ Again, the Samsher Bahadur declared that 'the visits of the European officials were regarded by the people as those of powerful plunderers'.⁶¹ While, the -- Gujarati press as a whole wrote against the European community and the Officials, criticising the latter 'for their callous behaviour' at the time of the opening of an exhibition held in Broach in September, 1868. In that exhibition, organised by Mr Greaves and Mr T.C. Hope, some newly manufactured -- articles etc. were displayed. There was some rush at the -- exhibition gates when it was thrown open for the first time. Commotion ensued. Some persons sustained injuries during the hubhub. Commenting upon the incident, almost all the Gujarati journals criticised the organisers as well as the Government. The most typical of these comments is the following one that appeared in the Rast Goftar dated January 3, 1869. It said,

⁵⁸ Gujarat Mitra, dated 25-12-1869.

⁵⁹ Arya Mitra dated 27-1-1870.

⁶⁰ Sunday Review and Dandiyo dated 27-2-1870.

⁶¹ Samsher Bahadur dated 8-7-1870.

'Who shall be condemned for the gross insult done to the native visitors at the opening ceremony of the Broach Exhibition ? The -- native visitors did nothing whatsoever to deserve such outrageous treatment at the hands of the managing Committee of the exhibition The exhibition has produced a widespread and intense discontent and indignation in the country. We must humbly call on the Government of Sir Seymour Fitzgerald to make a full and searching inquiry into this grave matter and to mete out full justice to all concerned.... Not only we but the whole of the native population are eagerly awaiting to see what measures the Government mean to take in this regard'.⁶²

In addition to such topical issues, the Gujarati press took up the issue of taxation. It criticised the Government for their taxation policy. For example, the Rast Goftar -- commented upon the imposition of new taxes and recalled what 'Dadabhai Naoroji was telling regarding the plight of the people due to the tax burden'.⁶³ The Sunday Review of Bombay

⁶² Rast Goftar, dated 3-1-1869.

⁶³ Rast Goftar, Vol.XV, No.769.

called upon the native merchants 'to fight for their just -- cause'.⁶⁴ The Prajabhilash of Ahmedabad said, 'If a man wishes, he may sell any article he possesses to any one at any price that suits him. Why should he be compelled to sell it at a price against his wishes?'⁶⁵ When the export duty on opium was enhanced, the Gujarati press took up that issue. The Prajabhilash said, 'this duty is calculated to add to our growing misery'.⁶⁶ The Jame Jamshed⁶⁷ criticised the duty and the Bombay Samachar advised the Government to 'cut down their expenses rather than enhance the tax-burden on the people'.⁶⁸ Similarly, on the proposed enhancement of the income-tax almost the whole of the Gujarati press -- commented. The Jame Jamshed said, 'the proposed imposition of an additional income-tax is not only improper it is also detrimental. It will add to the distress of our people in these days of soaring prices'.⁶⁹ The Kheda Varatman said, 'the income-tax is thoroughly improper. It robs the ryots. What is more, people in this district (Kheda) have to walk a distance of more than ten miles just to pay off their --

⁶⁴ Sunday Review, dated 3-5-1868.

⁶⁵ Report on the Native Newspapers for week ending 10-6-1868.

⁶⁶ Ibid.,

⁶⁷ Ibid.,

⁶⁸ Ibid.,

⁶⁹ Ibid.,

income-tax dues to the Government coffers. We request the collector of this district to make arrangements in the Kheda town itself for collecting these dues'.⁷⁰ The Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash criticised the tax in similar words.⁷¹ The Jame Jamshed advised the Government to go slow in their taxation policies.⁷² The Rast Goftar enumerated several reasons why the taxation policy needed a change. It declared, 'the natives would not endure any more such a burden of heavy taxation'.⁷³ The Bombay Chabuk voicing similar views asked, 'why should the native mercantile community remain so silent over the issue of the propriety of the taxation policies of the Government ? We notice that the Government has come forward now with a new measure, namely, the income-tax. The people have been clamouring against that levy. They expect the -- public associations not to remain indifferent to such issues which affect us so closely. If they remain inactive, what would the Government and the European community think about our public spirit ? What impression will they carry about our interest in public issues ?'⁷⁴ Again, the introduction of

⁷⁰ Ibid., week ending 16-2-1870.

⁷¹ Ibid., week ending 4-7-1870.

⁷² Ibid.,

⁷³ Report on the Native Newspapers for the week ending 1-2-1871.

⁷⁴ Ibid.,

the stamp fees (under the Stamp Act) had evoked similar -- comments. The Gujarati Mitra of Surat asked, 'Does the -- Government want us to be slaves to their wishes' ?⁷⁵ So-- said the Rast Goftar, the Bombay Samachar, the Jame Jamshed, the Samsher Bahadur and the Kheda Varatman.⁷⁶

As we have been observing, the Gujarati press was -- devoting a good deal of space to publi^{ci}se the needs and -- grievances of the people. Its main preoccupation was, however, the taxation policy of the Government. It criticised the income-tax, disapproved the excise duty on opium and -- wrote against the stamp-act. The space devoted to the -- expression of public disapproval of the taxes was increasing every year. The number of letters to the editors on that -- issue had also increased. And, the year 1878 saw that almost all^{*} the Gujarati journals wrote on the taxation problems in each of their issues allocating more and more space to the subject. Meanwhile, the Bombay legislature passed the Traders'

⁷⁵ Ibid.,

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

* The Buddhi Prakash, the Gujarat Shala Patra and the Kathiawad Samachar kept out of the controversies throughout. The first two were somewhat specialised journals, and, therefore, not much concerned with the policies of the Government. Besides, as we had seen earlier, the Buddhi Prakash was run by the Gujarat Vernacular Society subject to the Society's resolution not to publish political matters in it. The third one, that is, the Kathiawad Samachar, was unconcerned, -- probably because the area (the princely states of Kathiawad) where it was mainly circulating was unaffected by the new taxes etc.

License Tax Bill in the first week of February 1878. The tax was to be operative from the first week of April that year. Under the new levy, every trader had to obtain a license for his trade and had to pay from Rs. 21 to 200 according to categories graded from one to fifteen. The Gujarati press with one voice pitched itself against the proposed tax. The Rast Goftar wrote, 'Many a retail trader will be heavily burdened due to this tax. We question the very propriety of such a tax ---- when people have been tormented economically how are they going to bear such levies' ?⁷⁷ When Bombay's Gujarati press was writing against the license tax, the people of Bombay called for a protest meeting through the city's sheriff. The Gujarati press exhorted people to attend the protest meeting. Meanwhile, the authorities refused permission to hold that meeting in the town hall. It had to be shifted to a big tent of some American circus Company which was then camping in -- Bombay. The meeting passed resolutions protesting against the license tax. It also demanded withdrawal of the duty on salt.⁷⁸ Similar resolutions were passed by protest meetings held in Ahmedabad and Kheda. Giving details of the meeting the Praja-bhilash said, 'It is gratifying indeed that the people have realised their plight resulting from such taxes'. 'It is

⁷⁷ Rast Goftar dated 20-12-1878.

⁷⁸ A Report on the Surat Riot case with the opinion of the Public Press (1879). *Bombay*.

gratifying still more that they are meeting in such large numbers to protest against the different features of the present taxes'.⁷⁹ In Surat the local municipality had introduced the house-tax and the shop-tax.⁸⁰ Then came the enhancement of duty on salt and the proposal to introduce the license tax. It is reported that rumours were afloat that every shop-keeper, even a vegetable vendor, would have to pay the license tax.⁸¹ The local people went in a procession to the secretary of the local Praja Samaj. They told him, 'We have already been starving : how are we to bear the burden of heavy taxes any more' ?⁸² The people prevailed upon him to forward their petition opposing the tax to the Government.⁸³ They called for a protest meeting through the Nagar Sheth (the Chief Citizen who is generally the leading member of the city's traders' organisations).⁸⁴ The Nagar Sheth issued in his name a pamphlet on February 27, 1827 in which it was said,

'There are numerous levies and taxes imposed upon us by the Government. Still more, the

⁷⁹ Prajabhilash quoted in Report etc. for week ending 19-12-1878.

⁸⁰ Surat Riot Case, op.cit.

⁸¹ Surat Riot Case, op.cit.

⁸² Ibid.,

⁸³ Ibid.,

⁸⁴ Ibid.,

Government deem it fit to burden us with a license tax which is as punitive as the income-tax is'.⁸⁵

Calling upon the people to attend a public meeting to be held 'to consider a memorandum to be presented to the Government in England', the pamphlet continued,

'Such a memorandum has been sent by the -- Mahajan (traders' guild) of Poona. The -- people of Bombay also have made a representation. They have virtually closed down their business. A small moffusil town like Kheda has not lagged behind in this matter. In Ahmedabad too, more than 11,000 persons have closed down their business. They have also forwarded a memorandum'.⁸⁶

A public meeting was held in Surat, attended, it is reported, by more than 15,000 people. It adopted resolutions opposing the proposed license tax.⁸⁷ The local press gave lengthy accounts of the meeting. The Gujarat Mitra asked, 'Is the Government not going to pay any heed to the popular wishes'?⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Source Material.

⁸⁶ Ibid.,

⁸⁷ Surat Riot Case, op,cit.,

⁸⁸ Report on the Native Newspapers for the week ending 28-2-1827.

The Swatantra wrote,

'The highhandedness that the Government have been practising is much agonising to the independent persons ----- . The people have no alternative but to do whatever the Government wish. It is gratifying that the people of Bombay have been attempting to prevent such encroachments. Should the Government not pay due respect to the views of the people in this regard ? ---- The license tax has alarmed the people ----; people have realised where they stand now'.⁸⁹

The license tax came into effect as scheduled. In Surat, the local municipality was entrusted with the task of getting the proforma for the tax purposes filled in. Meanwhile people called for a protest strike. Some clash ensued between the municipal clerks and the people when the former went round with the proforma. It is reported that crowds serged on the main streets and in some scuffle the clerks received some injuries. The police opened fire on the crowds. That evoked wide-spread comments from the Gujarati press. Some newspapers said, 'The Government should not have taken such stringent measures --- why should they force the shopkeepers to open their shops ?'⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Source Material on the History of Freedom Movement in India
Govt of Bombay, Vol.I. 1818-1885. (1956 Bombay.)

⁹⁰ Surat Riot Case, op.cit.

Some newspapers asked, '--- but why should the Government impose such taxes afterall' ?⁹¹ The Rast Goftar said, -- 'firing had been resorted to without duly proclaiming the riot act!'.⁹² Similar comments appeared in the other newspapers from Bombay, Surat, Kheda and Ahmedabad.⁹³

When these controversies were being raised, the D-Surat police arrested on May 11, 1878, Gulabdas Bhaidas, Manchharam Ghelabhai --- editor of the weekly Deshi Mitra, Kikabhai Parbhudas of the weekly Gujarat Mitra, Ganpatram Ambaram, Harjivandas Khushaldas and Narayanchandra Chandrashanker for alleged incitement of the people to indulge in violence. The police quoted in support of their action, articles which had appeared in the Gujarat Mitra, the Deshi Mitra and the Swatantrata. It was the contention of the -- police that 'the arrested persons were the ring-leaders who had excited the people through inflammatory writings to -- observe the strike and to beat up the clerks'.⁹⁴ The arrests caused a widespread protest. The press began to write against the police action. It made out an issue that 'the arrested persons included two journalists and that the Government were determined to retaliate against the vernacular press because

⁹¹ Ibid.,

⁹² Ibid.,

⁹³ Ibid.,

⁹⁴ Ibid.,

it was voicing the peoples' grievances'.⁹⁵ The Rast Goftar in its issue dated May 23, hinted at that. So did the Bombay Samachar, the Jame Jamshed and the Kheda Varatman.⁹⁶

The trial of the arrested persons was conducted in -- Surat for about four months. The Gujarati press gave extensive reports of the day to day proceedings of the case which became known as the 'Surat Riot Case'. Finally, the accused were acquitted on September 23, 1878 by Mr Pollin, the Sessions judge. The judge observed in the course of his judgment that he 'did not find anything inflammatory or seditious in the -- alleged articles'.⁹⁷ This was given a wide publicity to by the Gujarati press. The English language press also joined the latter and went a step further in suggesting that 'the accused being journalists, they had been incriminated wrongfully. Their suffering was for a public cause. As a token thereof, the people should create a fund and should render monetary assistance to them'.⁹⁸ The 'Surat Riot Case' incident brought the Gujarati press in closer connections with the Indian press, it may be noted here.

⁹⁵ Ibid.,

⁹⁶ Ibid.,

⁹⁷ Ibid.,

⁹⁸ Ibid.,

III

The above accounts which had perforce to be rather -- brief and rapid are typically indicative of a change in the nature of the Gujarati press. The Gujarati press had already been, as we saw earlier, a campaigner on social reformist -- issues besides being a communicator of information. It then turned out to be a vehicle to express the needs and to ventilate the grievances of the people. Its changing nature is illustrated by the writings that we have reviewed so far. It is indicated again, by the titles which were adopted for the newly emerging Gujarati journals. To take a few among them, we find that there were Satya Mitra, Lok Mitra, Deshi Mitra, Gujarat Mitra and the Arya Mitra — that is, Friend (Mitra) of Truth, of the people, of the Natives, of Gujarat and of Aryavart (India); we find that there were the Swadesh Vatsal and the Swadesh Mangal — the Lover and Benefactor of One's Country; we come across the Datardun (Sickle) which stood as a symbol of scripping off useless things and the Tikakar — Critic; we saw the Prajabhilash — Aspirations of the People, the Hitechhu — the Well-wisher (of the people); the Nyaya Prakash — the Light of Justice and finally, the Swatantrata that is Liberty. The process of transformations in the nature

of the Gujarati press was continuous and speedy. From begging small concessions and facilities for the people, the Gujarati press grew bold to cast aspersions on some Government officials. From implied and indirect references to the local authorities, it began to inflict harangues on the Governmental machinery as a whole. The finale of this changed nature of the Gujarati press is indicated by the 'Surat Riot Case' episode. What is particularly noteworthy in this regard is that the Gujarati -- press was conscious of its changed nature: was aware --- and proudly so --- of what it was doing. It seized opportunities to proclaim that, occasionally. The Dandiyo, for instance, said when the sadra amin of Broach was transferred to some other district, that it was as a result of its writings.⁹⁹ Similarly, the Bombay Samachar said,

'The criticisms that we have been levelling should not be construed amiss. As we have been voicing the popular feelings, our popularity is also increasing. Our popularity is amply indicative of the justification of our attacks'.¹⁰⁰

And again, the Chandrodaya wrote, 'It is really a matter of great rejoicing that an independent native press which takes

⁹⁹ Dandiyo No. 32, 1865.

¹⁰⁰ Report on the Native Newspapers for the week ending 1-6-1868.

up public issues is growing in this country'.¹⁰¹ While, -- similar observations were made by the Gujarat Mitra. It said,

'When the Gujarati press makes statements or criticisms which are found to be unpalatable by the Government officials, the criticisms should not be supposed to have been made from any personal ill-feeling towards the officials. The criticisms are made with a sincere desire to serve the public; with the best intentions to serve truth indeed'.¹⁰²

Apart from these claims of the Gujarati press, the Government had already been watchful of the Indian press in general and particularly of the vernacular press since the uprising of 1857. They had prohibited publication of the Jame Jamshed and the Bombay Chabuk for a few days during March and May 1858, when they found that these two newspapers could incite the public.¹⁰³ The Government became still more restrictive when in 1867 they passed the Act for the Regulation of Printing Presses and Newspapers (Act XXV of 1867). According to part II of that act, the printer and publisher of a newspaper had to print their names etc. on the newspaper. The printer had to make a 'declaration' --

¹⁰¹ Ibid., for week ending 6-8-1873.

¹⁰² Ibid.,

¹⁰³ Marshall R.R., Gujarati ^{Patrakaritvan} ~~Vruttapatrons~~ Itihas, p. 75.
Surat 1950.

regarding the publication. So too had the editor to 'declare'.¹⁰⁴
Within a year from that, that is in 1868, the post of a --
'Reporter on Native Press and Registrar of Native Publications'
was created in the Bombay presidency. It was the task of this
official to prepare weekly abstracts of the vernacular journals
and to keep Government informed of their nature.¹⁰⁵ To supple-
ment this arrangement, it was decided by the Government since
1870, to include in the Reports on the Administration of the
Bombay Presidency, an assessment of the contents and trends of
the Vernacular (Gujarati and Marathi) press.¹⁰⁶

Arrangements to prepare the abstracts and reports might
not have produced immediate effects on the Gujarati press. --
They are indicative, however, of the perception that Government
had of the latter. The report for 1870-71 mentions the 'attacks'
which the Gujarati press levelled against some officials' but
characterised the press as 'on the whole realising the benefits
of the British rule'.¹⁰⁷ The report for 1875-76 mentioned that
'the press continued to voice grievances on some local matters;
it generally criticised the Salt Act, the Toll's Act, the --
Bombay Revenue Jurisdiction Act, the new Tariff Act and the --

¹⁰⁴ Barns Margareta, op.cit., pp. 263 b.

¹⁰⁵ Reports on the Administration of the Bombay Presidency,
(G.D. Volumes) from the year 1871 onwards.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.,

Factory Act'.¹⁰⁸ The report mentioned further, 'the press was particularly critical of the alleged attempt of Manchester to procure the repeal of the import duty on cotton goods'.¹⁰⁹ The reports for 1878-79 and '80 said, 'The general tone of the -- native press is fault-finding; it carries no weight yet, it -- should be held to be useful in occasionally pointing out local grievances'.¹¹⁰

While these reports have an air of nonchalance, it was significant that these and similar reports from other parts of the country were reaching the Government of India. Lord Lytton was the Governor-General at that time. As narrated by his -- daughter, Lady Betty Balfour,¹¹¹ "He was persuaded to do -- something about the vernacular press. He got a bill drafted, therefore, with the Irish Act as a possible guide and telegraphed to the Secretary of State for permission to introduce it. The introductory part of the telegram said, 'the increasing seditious violence of the native press now directly -- provocative to rebellion has been for some time pressed on our attention by the local Governments, who except, Madras, which has no vernacular press of any importance, all concur as to the necessity of early and stringent legislation-----'. It is

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.,

¹¹⁰ Ibid.,

¹¹¹ Lady Betty Balfour : History of Lord Lyttou's Administration, p. 396.

thus essentially necessary for Government in the interest of public safety to take early steps for checking spread of seditious writings".

Accordingly, a bill was introduced in the Council by Sir Arbuthnot to deal with the Vernacular press. It became Law as Act number IX of 1878 in March that year — An Act for the better control of publications in the Oriental -- languages. It empowered any magistrate of a district or a commissioner of police in a presidency town, to call upon the printer and publisher of a newspaper to enter into a bond -- undertaking not to publish certain kind of material, to demand security and to forfeit it if it was thought fit, to confiscate any printed matter if it was found objectional and so on. It was provided in the Act that no printer or publisher against whom such action had been taken could have recourse to a court of law.¹¹²

The Vernacular Press Act created widespread dissatisfaction in the Indian press circles. These circles made -- representations to the Government and wrote articles requesting the latter to repeal that Act. Even more. Some of the journals named it as the 'Gagging Act'.¹¹³ Among the Gujarati journals, the Rast Goftar, the Bombay Samachar, the Hitecchhu,

¹¹² Barns Margareta, op.cit.

¹¹³ Source Material on History of Freedom Movement, op.cit.

the Swatantra and many others criticised the measure as an obstacle to the further growth of the native press.¹¹⁴ The Swatantra wrote,

'The Government have snatched away the freedom of the Vernacular press by alleging that the latter spreads dissatisfaction among the populace. A precarious situation has been created by enacting restrictions and by destroying the element of freedom of the press which is the life and blood of its growth'.¹¹⁵

That brings to an end our present discussion pertaining to the obstacles that the Gujarati press had to face -- after its nature had changed as delineated above. Now to a final summing up of the observations made in this chapter so far. We noted that the expanding trend of the Gujarati press continued along with the modernisation of the printing technique and with the improvisation of means of transport and communication. We saw that the expansion of the Gujarati press in this instance meant a change in its nature -- a change wherein the Gujarati press became, among other things, a reflector of popular feelings. We found finally that such

¹¹⁴ Ibid.,

¹¹⁵ Source Material, op cit.

a change in its nature had to meet certain handicaps created by the Government. We shall now proceed to the next chapter. In that we propose to examine the turn that the Gujarati -- press took while expressing the popular discontent.