

# Sanskrit Journalism: History and its Modern Forms

- Dr. Baldevanand Sagar

Before saying anything about Sanskrit Journalism I would like to tell all my wise readers that even though Sanskrit Journalism is not discussed as much as Hindi, English or other prevalent languages' journalism; but you will be surprised to know that today in the half of the second decade of twenty first century, most of the Indian states and some overseas countries are publishing Sanskrit periodicals and different kinds of Sanskrit magazines.

It is my humble endeavor to explain the history and modern forms of Sanskrit journalism, not only as a sincere reviewer or writer but also as a Sanskrit news editor, translator and broadcaster, having experience of more than 44 years with All India Radio and more than 22 years along with Doordarshan in these areas.

## History of Sanskrit Journalism

Whenever we talk about Hindi journalism, the reference of very first magazine of Hindi, 'Udant-martand' (1826, Editor - Pt. Jugalkishor Shukul) comes to our mind. Similarly 'Kashi-vidya-sudhanidhi' from Kashi [1st.June, 1866] is mentioned as Sanskrit journalism's first magazine. Another name of this magazine was "Pandit-Patrika".

Now when I am writing these lines, one hundred and fifty two years of Sanskrit journalism are almost complete. In view of this glorious history of Sanskrit journalism, two years back, a nationwide association of Sanskrit-lovers and Sanskritists - "Bharatiya Sanskrit Patrakar Sangh" [Regd.] had pledged to organize many workshops and seminars on Sanskrit journalism at national level throughout the year [in 2016]. This fact indicates that Sanskritists are working relentlessly to connect Sanskrit journalism with the mainstream journalism of the nation.

History of Sanskrit journalism has witnessed a difficult journey started with "Kashividya-sudhanidhi" (June 1, 1866). Broadly to understand this difficult journey, better I should mention the Marathi language's "Kesari" of Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak ji.

Many magazines' and journals' contribution have been important in the history of linguistic journalism in India. However, the magazine "Kesari" is something special in linguistic journalism of India.

With the signatures of Vishnu Shastri Chipaloonkar, Balgangadhar Tilak, Vaman Shivaram Apte, Ganesh Krishna Garde, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Mahadev Vallabha Namajoshi, the letter of aims and objectives of “Kesari” was published on Vijayadashmi-day of 1880 in Mumbai’s ‘Native Opinion’. The publication of Kesari was decided but there was capital problem for the printing. However, with practical pragmatism of ‘Namajoshiji’, publication of Kesari started on 4th January 1881 from Pune as a Marathi language weekly paper, regularly publishing on Tuesday.

The point which I want to indicate is of Great Sanskrit Scholar Panditaraj Jagannath’s famous shloka from ‘Bhamini-Vilasa’ which justifies the work and purpose of ‘Kesari’. It was selected by Vishnu Shastri Chipaloonkar and used to be published on the homepage of Kesari, is something like this-

“स्थितिं नो रे दध्याः क्षणमपि मदान्धेक्षण-सखे !

गज-श्रेणीनाथ ! त्वमिह जटिलायां वनभुवि ।

असौ कुम्भि-भ्रान्त्या खर-नखर-विद्रावित-महा-

गुरु-गाव-ग्रामः स्वपिति गिरिगर्भे हरिपतिः ॥ ”

The shloka says - O my friend! Head of the forest-elephants! Please, do not wait even for the moment in this complex forest-land, because here the Kesari (Haripati) is sleeping in the mountain cave. This cave is also similar as the elephant’s forehead, the large stone slices also pierced with its harsh nails, that Kesari is dissipated.

My humble intention is that the writers of linguistic journalism of that time, editor and publisher were either knowledge savvy or expert in Sanskrit literature or were loyal to Sanskrit and took shelter in Sanskrit’s rich literature for the dedicated work of journalism. Since it was necessary to communicate in the language of general public as to achieve the independence of Nation, there were comparatively more periodicals and magazines in various Indian languages and less in Sanskrit. But in the context of Sanskrit-periodicals and journals being published from all the states of India, the number of Sanskrit-journals could be considered more in comparison to any other provincial language or national language - Hindi,

Urdu or English. This number of Sanskrit-periodicals and journals now stands altogether between 120 to 130.

In this small article, it is not possible to cover the entire history of one hundred and fifty-two years of Sanskrit journalism, but to study some journals which were abundant and which were primarily published as research journals, continued to publish research articles, ancient texts and manuscripts. Secondly, those were published in general weekly, fortnightly or monthly magazines, which often featured the contents of all the subjects. But there is a lot of change in the situation today.

### Now let's talk about some special Sanskrit periodicals

Sanskrit journalism is a special achievement of independence struggle of India. It has made unprecedented contribution in development of innovative ideas and nationality. Research has revealed that in 1832, the Asiatic society of Bengal published a bilingual research paper in English and Sanskrit. In this journal, the details of Sanskrit literature were supplied with the details of the ancient literature. It transmitted the new consciousness in the heart of English educated Sanskritists and awakened the pride of the nation, language and literature.

As mentioned earlier, on June 1st, 1866, Kashi-based Government Sanskrit College published a magazine 'Kashi-vidya-sudhanidhih', which was also called as 'Pandit-patrika'. Another important publication began from Kashi is 'Krama-nandini' in 1967. These two purely Sanskrit journals used to publish Sanskrit texts. However these were not symbol of pure newspaper. In April 1872, 'Vidyodayah' came from Lahore as a pure periodical of Sanskrit with new decoration in the editorship of Hrishikesh Bhattacharya. This periodical provided unique strength to Sanskrit journalism. Following this, many periodicals began to be published in Sanskrit.

Bihar's first Sanskrit magazine came out from Patna in 1878 under the name of 'Vidyarthi'. This monthly magazine published regularly from Patna till 1880 A.D. and later it was shifted to Udaipur. It was being published as fortnightly from Udaipur. After some time, it was being published from Shrinatha-Dwara. Afterwards it was being published altogether with 'Harishchandra-chandrika' and 'Mohan-chandrika' magazines of Hindi. This was the first fortnightly periodical of Sanskrit whose editor was 'Pandit Damodar Shastri'. Its content was as per need and interest of students.

In 1880, the monthly 'Dharma-niti-tattvam' was published from Patna, but there is no detailed information available about this publication.

The publication of the monthly 'Vijnaana-Chintamani' started from kuttur (Kerala) on 17 October 1884. Later on, due to its popularity, it became fortnightly, ten-dayer and finally turned as weekly. Under the editorship of Neelkanta Shastri, this publication became milestone in the development of Sanskrit journalism.

To enrich the Sanskrit education system, prestige and pride "Pt. Ambikadatta Vyas established an organization 'Bihar Sanskrit Sanjivan Samaj' in 1887. Its first meeting took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1887, which was chaired by Pope John Benjamin in which a lot of people participated from many states of India. The secretary himself was Pt. Ambikadatta Vyas. This society started a quarterly publication of 'Sanskrita-Sanjiwanam' in 1940.

A lot of Sanskrit journals were published in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 'Sanskrita-Chandrika' and 'Sahridayaa' had special place in national movement. 'Sanskrita-Chandrika' was started from Kolkata and later from Kolhapur, which earned immense fame under the editorship of Appa Shastri Rashiwadekar. Because of his political writings; he had to go to jail many times. 'Sahridayaa' played an important role in enriching and nurturing of Sanskrit language and promoting liberal views and awakening Sanskritists for national interest. 'Sahridayaa' played an important role in national movement of freedom.

In the beginning of twenty century, whole nation participated in Swadeshi movement in the leadership of Lokamanya Tilak. It was an era of praise for Sanskrit journalism. During this period, many Sanskrit periodicals were published from different parts of the country. In which 'Bharata-Dharma' (1901), 'Shri Kaushik Patrika' (1907), 'Vidya' (1913), 'Sharada' (1915), 'Sanskrita-Saketam' (1920) - these were some of the main Sanskrit periodicals. According to 'Arvachina Sanskrit literature' fortnightly, 'Mitram' began from Patna in 1918. It was published by 'Sanskrit Sanjivan Samaj'.

There were some other major Sanskrit periodicals during the days of freedom struggle. Those were - 'Anand-Patrika' (1923), 'Geervaan' (1924), 'Sharada' (1924), 'Shree' (1931), 'Ushaa' (1934) 'Sanskrit-Granthamala' (1936). 'Bharata-Shree' (1940) etc.

In the year 1938 monthly in-house publication (mouthpiece) of 'Akhila Bharatiya Sahitya Sammelan', 'Sanskrita-Ratnakar' published from Kanpur as independence struggle was going on full swing. Kedarnath Sharma was Saraswat editor of 'Sanskrita-Ratnakar'. In the year of 1943, the National Sanskrit Vidyapitha started quarterly publication of 'Ganganath Jha Research Journal'.

Following are some of the major Sanskrit journals after independence - 'Brahmana- Mahasammelanam' (1948), 'Gurukul-Patrika' (1948), 'Bharati' (1950), 'Sanskrit-Bhawitvyam' (1952), 'Divya-Jyoti' (1956), 'Sharada' (1959), 'Vishwa- Sanskritam' (1963), 'Samvid' (1965), 'Gandivam' (1966), 'Suprabhatam' (1976), 'Sanskrit-Shreeh' (1976), 'Prabhatam' (1980) 'Loka-Sanskritam' (1983), 'Vraja-gandha' (1988), 'Shyamla' (1989) etc. are counted as some of the most important periodicals of Sanskrit after independence of India.

In the same period (1970 A.D.), a historical event in the field of Sanskrit-journalism was happened whose megastar was well-known Sanskrit-scholar, Girvana-Vani-Bhushan, Vidya-Nidhi, Pandit-Kalle-Nadadooru-Varada-rajayyangaarya of Mysore, ( Karnataka ), who started publishing 'Sudharma' - a daily Sanskrit newspaper from Mysore. He unfurled the flag of Sanskrit-journalism in the world of Global journalism. Though, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1907, Shri-komal-Marutacharya and Shri-lakshminand published daily Sanskrit-newspaper called the 'Jayanti' from Thiruvananthapuram [ Kerala ] and had made a phenomenal adventure, but in the absence of money and readers, this Sanskrit-daily publication was continued for a few days and later got closed. In due course of time, the daily Sanskrit-news-paper 'Suprabhatam', was also started from Kanpur. It was had to be closed in the absence of the readers and buyers.

### Modern forms of Sanskrit journalism

Sanskrit is not only cultural heritage of India but it is also pride and identity of the nation. Without going into the detail of the language policy of independent India, if we concentrate on the growing experiment in the field of Sanskrit journalism, it seems that most of the world languages are getting benefits from the scientific and mathematical vocabulary of Sanskrit. Increasingly, a lot of help has been taken from the Sanskrit language in developing and integrating computational linguistic science. Due to some reason, the slow moving Sanskrit journalism, is now establishing its utility and effectiveness in all the areas of modern communication medium.

To understand better the condition of the Sanskrit journalism in the beginning of the twenty first century, it is necessary to review the technical development process and internet revolution in the last three decades of the twentieth century in a broader context. You must have understood my point of view.

We have just, briefly observed the history of 153 years of Sanskrit journalism. Another historic incident took place in the series and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India started experiment by introducing the morning news on June 30 1974 at 9.A.M by broadcasting Sanskrit-news of 5-minutes duration from Akashawani's Delhi station. It replaced all the myths which used to say that Sanskrit can't be colloquial and technical ideas cannot be expressed in Sanskrit. The morning Sanskrit-news from All India Radio, soon became very popular and following this popularity, a few months later, an evening bulletin [at 6.10pm.] of 5-minutes in Sanskrit was also introduced from Akashwani's Delhi station. After a gap of 20 years of the beginning of Sanskrit-news-broadcast, Doordarshan's Delhi-Kendra [DDK] started weekly Sanskrit-news-telecast on 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 1994. Fortunately, the author of these lines got the opportunity of telecasting the maiden Sanskrit-news-bulletin and became the first person on this planet to telecast first TV-Sanskrit-news-bulletin. After a few years, this weekly telecast of Doordarshan was replaced in five minutes daily-telecast. Recently, by introducing half-an hour weekly Sanskrit-program - 'Varttavalee', DD had another feather on its cape.

During this period, due to still another historic event the speed of Sanskrit journalism became increasingly fast. Some of the enthusiastic youth were active in organizing Sanskrit as spoken language in these decades and were working under the nationwide campaign. There are some name such as 'Hindu-Seva- Pratishtanam', later popularly known as 'Vishwa-Sanskrita-Pratishtanam', 'Sanskrita-Bharati' and 'Lokabhasha-Prachar-Samiti', which are employed in systematically and widespread popularizing in the basic form of Sanskrit journalism by making every Sanskrit loving assured the day is not far when India's young citizen can speak fluently in Sanskrit. In this series 'Sanskrit-Bharati' started publishing monthly magazine, "Sambhashana-Sandeshah" from Bangaluru in 1999. This monthly magazine is very popular in the country and abroad due to its designing, simple language and subject diversity.

Similarly, there are some other Sanskrit-periodicals - 'Samvit' ( fortnightly ), 'Sanskrita-Bala-Samvaadah' [ Monthly ], Geervaani' [

Monthly ], ‘Mahaaswini’ [ Half-yearly ], ‘Aaranyakam’ [ Half-yearly ], ‘Sanskrita-Sammalanam’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Arvachina-Sankritam’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Aarsha-jyotih’ [ Monthly ], ‘Sanskrita-Pratibha’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Sanskrita-Manjari’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Sanskrita-Varttaa’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Sanskrita-Vimarshah’ [ Yearly ], ‘Abhivyakti-Saurabham’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Atulya-Bharatam’ [ Monthly ], ‘Sanskrita-Vani’ [ Fortnightly ], ‘Sanskrita-Samvadah’ [ Fortnightly ], ‘Sanskrita-Ratnakarah’ [ Monthly ], ‘Disha-Bharati’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Deva-Sayujyam’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Sanskrita-Vartamaana-patram’ [ Daily Sanskrit-newspaper ], ‘Vishwasya Vrittantam’ [ Daily Sanskrit-newspaper ], ‘Sanskrita-Sampratam’ [ Monthly ], ‘Nihshreyasam’ [Half-yearly ], ‘Shrutasagarah’ [ Monthly ], ‘Setubandhah’ [ Monthly ], ‘Hitasadhika’ [ half-yearly ], ‘Divya-Jyotih’ [ Monthly ], ‘Raavaneshwar-Kananam’ [ Monthly ], ‘Rasana’ [ Monthly ], ‘Doorwa’ [Quarterly ], ‘Natyam’ [Quarterly ], ‘Sagarika’ [Quarterly ], ‘Ritam’ [Bilingual [ Hindi-Sanskrita monthly ], ‘Sragdhara’ [ Monthly ], ‘Amrita-bhashaa’ [ weekly ], ‘Priya-vaak’ [ Bimonthly ] ‘Dig-darshinee’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Vasundhara’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Sanskrita-Mandakini’ [ Half-yearly ], ‘Loka-Prajna’ [ Yearly ], ‘Lokabhasha-Sushreeh’ [ Monthly ], ‘Loka-Sanskritam’ [ Quaterly ] ‘Vishwa-Sanskritam’ [ Quaterly ], ‘Swara-Mangala’ [Quaterly ], ‘Bharati’ [ Monthly ], ‘Rachana-Vimarshah’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Saraswati-Saurabham’ [ Monthly ], ‘Sanskrita-shreeh’ [ Monthly ], ‘Vak’ [ fortnightly ], ‘Ajsraa’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Parishilanam’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Prabhatam’ [ Daily Sanskrita Newspaper], ‘Vraja-Gandha’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Sangamani’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Vishwa-Bhasha’ [ Quarterly ], ‘Bhaswati’ [Half-yearly ], ‘Kathasarit’ [Half-yearly ], ‘Drik’ [Half-yearly ], ‘Vakovakeeyam’ [Half-yearly ], ‘Vaidik-Jyotih’ [Half-yearly ], ‘Abhisechanam’ [Half-yearly ] ‘Abhyudayah’ [ Half-yearly ], ‘Satyanandam’ [ Monthly ], ‘Sanskrita-Sahitya-Parishat-Patrika’ [ Quarterly ] etc.

These periodicals have made the field of Sanskrit-journalism more active. Apart from this, there is a news-agency in Sanskrit - News in Sanskrit [News agency] Hindustan-Samachar. It has been reported that from the past few days, daily Sanskrit-Newspaper as ‘Srijana-Vani’ is being published from East Delhi.

My heartily greetings and good wishes to all these Sanskrit-journalists and Sanskrit workers.

There are many E-journals in which ‘Prachi-Prajna’ (Monthly E-magazine), ‘Jahanvi’ (Quarterly E-magazine), ‘Sanskrita-Sarjana’ (Quarterly E-magazine) and ‘Daily Sanskrita-E-portal’ ‘Samprati-

vaarttaa'. Nowadays, 'Samprati-vaarttaa' has started a campaign to introduce young students to anchor Sanskrit-news on TV and it has completed more than 80 such bulletins till now. [Dec'2018]

Readers will be pleasantly surprised to know that for the last four years, there is a twenty four hour online radio broadcasting Sanskrita linguistic programs in the name of [www.divyavani.in](http://www.divyavani.in), which is under the leadership of Dr. Sampadanand Mishra from Pondicherry, is being managed.

Institutes and universities like Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapith and Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan has started Sanskrit journalism course.

During the period of last three years, four short films in Kerala have been made in Sanskrita language and have been shown to the audience at different places. 'Janam-TV' from Thiruvananthapuram has started Sanskrita-news-telecast of 15 minutes duration daily from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 onwards. Keeping in view all these facts, I can proclaim with full confidence that the future of Sanskrita-journalism is positive and bright.

\*\*\*

- डॉ. बलदेवानन्द सागर

E-mail- [baldevanand.sagar@gmail.com](mailto:baldevanand.sagar@gmail.com)

Cell - 9810 5622 77