

## **PRESS AND SOCIAL CHANGE:**

### **A STUDY OF LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN SILCHAR TOWN OF ASSAM**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The importance of media, particularly the print media has been enhanced by the role of press in India's struggle for independence where the language press had to face more years of persistent struggle before it was recognized as a significant segment of the Indian press along with English or national dailies. After independence, the main challenge before the language press was to sensitise the readers towards developmental issues affecting the Indian masses. It acts as a promising medium for disseminating information and knowledge about women empowerment and many other vital issues.

The **1<sup>st</sup> chapter** of this research work is '**The Framework of the Study**' which deals with points such as introduction along with the statement of the problem, growth of newspapers in India, growth of language press and language newspapers in India. It also includes the review of literature followed by rationale of the study, scope of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and methodology. Lastly, this chapter also defines operational terms mentioned in the research study.

A society needs newspaper for the same reason as a man needs eyes. It would not be unacceptable to say that air is to living beings; the press is to the society. It moulds public opinion and acts as an agent in societal change. Because of its importance and significance it has been highly acclaimed admired and appreciated.

The press not only played a major role in creating a feeling of national integration and solidarity among the people during the freedom struggle but it has also contributed significantly to the social change and development.

Media has positively highlighted the issues like violence and crime prevailing in most of the countries. Apart from these basic issues, media, from time to time, have created a positive public opinion towards environment protection, pollution, and conservation of natural resources, health issues, and diseases like AIDS, cancer terrorism, war, oppression and above all basic human rights to all. But the process of change should

not be unduly rapid, violent and earth shaking but should be normal, gradual and a slow one (Kumar R., 2011).

A study of review of literature shows that the present study of the coverage of socio-economic development issues by the vernacular press in Cachar district of Assam is the first of its kind as the research findings are expected to provide a systematic study of the nature and extent of socio-economic development issues covered by the Bengali newspapers of this region. This study is also an attempt on the part of the researcher to bring to light the role-played by the print media in informing, educating and communicating people about various issues related to social change.

The sampling technique adopted in this study is purposive sampling. For the study the researcher has taken the period of one and half year i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> June, 2013 which includes 1094 issues of 547 days to do content analysis of the selected local language newspapers which are in larger and having more readership i.e., *Samayak Prasanga* and *Dainik Jugasankha* as well as to do descriptive and explanation of the news items and issues related to socio-economic development, issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects that causes social changes to study the role of language press as an agent of social change and also to assess the coverage of socio-economic developmental issues related to social change of the taken newspapers.

The operational definitions used in the study includes analytical coverage, article, anchor, column, column centimeter, context, editorial, features or human interest stories, hard news, informative coverage, language press, letters to the editor, middle, negative content, neutral content, news items, positive content, press and soft news.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> chapter** namely, '**The Locale of the Study**' describes the study area of this research work. Describing study area is very important because through defining locale of the research we can present an authentic document in an organised manner that could be convenient as well as helpful to understand, evaluate and describe the research work. The locale of the present study is located in Silchar Town of Assam.

Silchar did not exist prior to 1832-33. It was found in the inscriptions and various historical documents that there existed small villages like Ambicapur, Dudhpatil, etc

during pre-colonial regime, etc, which are now-a-days a part of Silchar Town. It was Captain Fisher who spotted the land on the bank of Barak to lay down the foundation of the town, (Dutta, 1996). The British colonists made up their mind to annex Cachar area after the Burma war (1824). Silchar seemed to be base of their political and military centre over the entire southern part of North-East India leading upto Manipur, Mizoram and Myanmar. A substantial portion of Silchar Town was under cantonment.

British took over and reduced the position of Cachar from a kingdom to that of a district under a provincial headquarters at Cherapunji. After the annexation, the British established the district headquarters in Dudhpatil and functioned from there for one year. To keep communication with Khaspur as well as Cherapunji by river, Dudhpatil was the ideal place. The rulers had to keep in touch with Khaspur following the annexation. Having settled the accounts with the Dimasa kingdom, Captain Fisher, found the new possibilities, crossed over the river Barak and marked a patch of land close to Janiganj to build his sadar station as well as to expand and develop into an important centre of the Barak valley, (Laskar, 1996).

The Chinese traveller, Huen- Tsang, in course of his trip around India happened to land by boat and found the river side stream with stone and from this discovery came the name '*Silchar*' (Dutta, 1996). The word '*Silchar*' is derived from the Bengali word '*shil*' i.e, '*rock*' and '*char*' means '*shore or bank*'. The town situated on the 24.40° N latitude and 92.48 ° E longitudes, comprising of 13.24 sq. km. of land is surrounded by river Barak in all three sides, except south.

The development of Silchar was related with the development of Bengal specially with Sylhet. In 1911, Cachar along with Srihatta and Goalpara transferred from Bangladesh to Assam. The Cachar and Srihatta together named as Surma Valley, both of which were just two sides of a coin having same language, literature, etc.

#### **After Independence:**

After independence, Silchar became the melting pot of influx of refugees from Sylhet. It became the head - quarter of Cachar district having Silchar, Halflong and Hailakandi sub-divisions. Slowly the town started to grow up. Geographically, it is

isolated from the rest of the country being surrounded by the Borail hills on the north, Mizo hills on the south, Manipur on the east and Bangladesh on the west.

### **Climatic Conditions:**

The town has the tropical humid climate as found in the rest of the state. Generally the outskirts of the town get flooded, causing extensive damage to the poor farmers. The winter is pleasant and has generally no rains. Wind below is generally from the north east in the morning and from the south east in the afternoon. About the end of February stormy weather sets in and in March there are often thunderstorms and frequently heavy fall of hails, doing much damage to the tea. In April and May these storms become mild. A fair amount of rainfall takes place in summer (March to May). The average annual rainfall at Silchar is 121 inches. June to August is generally the wettest period in the year. So, the summer reaches to extreme. The early rains in the summer bring the most needed relief to the people. Like the rest of Assam, Silchar is a seismic prone area and experiences earthquakes pretty often. In general, the climate of Cachar District is temperate (Bhattacharjee and Sen 2005: 25-26).

Floods in Silchar as in the rest of Barak Valley are more or less a regular phenomenon. Almost every year, huge tracts of land get submerged and property worth crores of rupees is damaged. The floods of 1913, 1915, 1916, 1929, 1932, 1934, 1936, 1941, 1942, 1946, 1952, 1953, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1985, 1986, 1991 and 1994 are fresh in the memory of the inhabitants of this valley. The floods of 1929 are said to have been the worst of all. In that year, the flood level is said to have risen to about 5 feet above the Silchar railway platform. The main reason for the chronic flood menace is deforestation of the catchments areas and heavy siltation of the Barak.

### **Economy:**

The town possesses no heavy industries worth the name except the few cottage industries here and there. The only organized industry that is localized around this town is tea industry. In fact, the town is encircled by a number of tea - gardens and, therefore, it was once known as tea-town. But the conditions of these tea-gardens are no more satisfactory as compared to the tea - gardens of the Brahmaputra Valley in

respect of both production and productivity. There are about 61 registered small and medium size industries like small-scale candle, hume pipe, dalmut, match stick, flour mill and brick industries. Tea, oil, bamboo, cane, rice and natural gas are the major contributions to Silchar's economy. It has largely agrarian economy and some extent of business service is done.

Economic indicators show that the Cachar district, by all accounts is economically backward. The economy of the district has a pre-ponderant agrarian bias as is reflected in the relatively large proportion of population employed in agriculture. The working force of the district accounts for around 28 % of its total population, a fact that establishes beyond doubt the wastage of human resources. In the absence of any industry worth the name, the agrarian surplus population is flocking to Silchar in search of employment. There being no avenue of employment in and around Silchar other than few Central and State Government establishments, it is no wonder that unemployment and under-employment are two serious problems of Silchar Town.

The municipal area of the town is 15.78 sq. kms. divided into 28 wards. Each ward has a ward commissioner in the board. In each ward, a commissioner is elected directly. In the Municipality Board, all the commissioners elect one chairman and one vice chairman.

**'History of the Press in Assam'** is the **3<sup>rd</sup> chapter** of this research work. This chapter is an attempt to discuss in brief about journalism in India. The chapter then proceeds to explore the changes in journalism of Assam over time in its historical, cultural, developmental and professional context.

In India newsletters containing general information of the royal court or extraordinary events from the provinces were in circulation during the Moghul Rule. But this was not for general people. It was available only to a group of nobles. Christian Missionaries brought the printing process to India in the 16th century. The British also brought printing press India augmenting the efforts of the Missionaries. Initially, the pioneers of journalism in India were English men. In India the first newspaper in the modern sense was the *Bengal Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser* which made its appearance on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1780. It was edited and published by James Augustus

Hickey. It was a weekly newspaper well-known as *Hickey's Gazette*. By the passage of 38 years an Indian language newspaper was published by an Indian, Ganga Kishor Battacharjee. He is the first Indian to bring out a newspaper; perhaps he is called the 'Papa of the Indian Press'.

During the Period from 1818 A.D to 1857 A.D, there was rapid growth of Vernacular press in Bengal. Apart from the newspapers and periodicals owned by the European missionaries, leading Bengalis also came forward to edit papers of their own. (Neogi, 1977).

The role of press in India's struggle for Independence was even more glorious and active in next ninety years. Between 1818 A.D and 1857 A.D, there appeared many dailies, weeklies, bi-weeklies and monthlies which were published from Bengal. The Bengali papers included *Sambad Kumudi*, *Samachar Chandrika*, *Sambad Prabhakar*, *Jnananvesan*, etc. The first Hindi weekly *Oodunta Martand* (1826) and first Hindi daily, *Samachar Sudha Varshan* (1854), appeared from Calcutta. The first English Journal *Satyadoota* was published from Bellary in 1836 A.D by the missionaries. The first Oriya paper *Jnanaruna* came out in 1849 A.D. The first Tamil paper was *Tamil Magazine* which appeared in 1832 A.D. The first Kannada paper *Karmada Samacher* appeared in 1832. The Malayalam newspaper *Vignayana Nikshepam* appeared in 1840. The Marathi newspaper made its appearance in 1822 followed by so many Gujarati papers like *Bombay Darpan*, *Prabakar*, *Vartaman Dipika*, etc. (Neogi 1997) It is to be noted that most of the ventures were patronized by the Christian missionaries (Ahuja, 1998).

In pre-Independence era, the Indian language journalism took its birth with the experience of English journalism behind it. Raja Ram Mohan Roy who is the founder and father of Indian language journalism. As a fighter for the rights of women, a social reformer with refined standards and as the founder of Brahma Samaj he will be remembered for all times to come in the pages of Indian history.

During the struggle for Independence, the need of national language daily was very much felt by the leaders for propagating the view of the Indian National Congress. So, on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1920, the *Aaj* was born. (Padhya 1997).

The year 1947 brought Independence to India and it heralded a new era in the history of Indian press. It witnessed not only the opening of a new chapter in its history but also saw the emergence of press with a role to play with much vigour and energy. After the Independence its role has become much more difficult and significant as it has to address itself to the task of national development and nation-building. It acquired a new dimension in both make-up and content. The scenario has completely changed in respect of publication and circulation (Natrajan, 1962).

The evolution of the Indian press from the obscure beginning in East India Company up to present time has striking features of its own. Equally significant has been the development of the press on the technical side. When country attained Independence, the days of professional and with a missionary ardour gradually reduced. The character of newspaper ownership changed fast. The newspaper proprietors evinced keenness in building up commercial position. As a result group newspaper, chain publication and trust publication emerged with a new control of newspaper readership (Kumar, 1998).

In the post-Independence period, to cope up with increased circulation it was found necessary to become self-sufficient in the matter of paper. This was done by starting factories in India. Newsprint shortage gave an impetus to new industry to manufacture newsprint in India. The most remarkable development after Independence was the formation of the Press Trust of India (PTI) in 1949.

On the part the history of the press in Assam forms a fascinating study. The history of the printing press in Assam is only ten years older than the history of Assamese journalism. The first printing press in Assam was brought by an American Baptist Missionary in Sibsagar in 1836. (Murthy 1966: p. 284). The first Assamese periodical *Orunodoi* (Dawn) made its appearance in 1846.

Many newspapers in Assamese language were published but they have all ceased to appear. Journalism in Assamese language has not developed for want of literacy and financial support. But now Assamese people have begun to take great interest in their language and they are now feeling the importance of newspaper in Assamese language too.

It is an acknowledgement fact that Bengali language and culture played a dominant role in the affairs of Assam for a good part of the nineteenth century. The Indian press, by and large, was the by-product of British rule and it appeared first in the form of the Bengal press. Obviously, enlightened sections of the Assamese opted for taking advantages from the Bengal press. Later on, indigenous efforts received a great flip when Assamese was restoring to its rightful place. Since the days of *Samachar Darpan* wide circulation of Bengali papers in Assam put some hurdles in the natural growth of press in Assam.

Until 1979, the editor and the reporter used to treat journalism as an instrument of social change and thus, the newspapers and magazines in Assam were mainly focused on social themes. But the student agitation of the 1980s changed the face and picture of journalism. Print journalism became more aggressive and started concentrating on investigative reporting. Amidst all the turmoil and social chaos, the local media emerged.

Recently many newspapers and periodicals are published from Assam in different languages. Among the English dailies- *The Sentinel*, *The Assam Tribune*, *The NorthEast Times* and *The Eastern Chronicle* are the few which are very popular and have multiple editions. Among the prominent Assamese dailies *Dainik Janambhumi*, *Dainik Agradoot*, *Dainik Batori*, *Dainik Janasadharan*, *Dainik Asom*, *Asomiya Khabar*, *Asomiya Pratidin*, *Amar Asom*, *Aji Edinor*, *Sangbad* have more than one edition to fulfill the readers demand in the nook and corner of Assam. *Dainik Jugashankha*, *Samayik Prasanga*, *Dainik Samay Prabha*, *Prantojyoti Dainik*, *Dainik Janakantha* is some of the prominent Bengali dailies. *Purbanchal Parahari*, *Dainik Puvoday*, *Pratah Khobar*, *Sentinel* is among the few Hindi dailies widely circulated in Assam.

The **4<sup>th</sup> chapter ‘Press in Cachar’** talks about the history, origin and growth of the press in Cachar district of Assam along with brief profile of the press in Barak Valley of Assam.

Like other places of India, the air of journalism started blowing in Barak Valley since the last part of nineteenth century after the establishment of a printing press in Silchar.



As Bengali is the main language of the valley so the newspapers being published from here are mostly in Bengali and till today, Bengali is the key language of the valley's journalism. Prior to that, some newspapers are also brought out in other Indian languages such as English, Hindi, Manipuri and Dimasa.

Origin of journalism in Barak Valley was quite different from rest of the other country due to political and topographical distribution. The valley was undivided in the pre-independence era and was known as the Surma Valley, covering Cachar and Sylhet (now in Bangladesh). The commencement of journalism was from Surma Valley. The history of journalism in Barak Valley is closely linked with the journalism of Surma Valley. The Sylhet district was a heart of Surma Valley. The first vernacular newspaper of Surma Valley saw the light of the day from Sylhet with the publication of *Srihattaprakash* under the editorship of renowned poet Pyari Charan Das in the month of January, 1876.

The first newspaper of Barak Valley was a Bengali weekly *Silchar* which started publishing in Cachar district in the year 1889 with Bidhubhusan Sen as its editor.

During the pre-independence period another district of Barak Valley, Karimganj also contributed some weeklies and fortnightlies which played a vital role in the freedom struggle. (Paul, 2011)

Some other newspapers also started publication from Silchar and Karimganj but Hailakandi had a very little contribution in this regard. Though the contribution of journalism was very important but the newspapers of Barak Valley could not impress the people deeply, except the two noteworthy names *Silchar* and *Surma*. Since 1889 the development of journalism in Barak Valley was a mixture of unique mission freedom.

After independence in 1947 many periodicals and dailies were launched. This was the era when journalism spread throughout the valley and the mission of journalism became a profession. The young journalists took journalism as a serious profession, new trends were set up and some other developments occurred.

Also, after independence some renowned and eminent journalists of Sylhet came to India with their press and publication. (Bhattacharjee, 1942).

Before and after independence comparing to other district, Silchar was leading in the newspaper publications in the history of Barak Valley journalism. It earns the credit for the first daily newspaper of the valley. After independence it contributed a lot of periodicals and daily newspapers with their noteworthy contribution. Till today, the daily newspapers of Silchar dominate the valley.

In the history of journalism of Barak Valley a notable name *Sonar Cachar* was launched as a bi-weekly on May 1975. Its founder-editor was Ranobir Roy. The age of renowned newspaper *Sonar Cachar* can be considered as the golden age of the Barak journalism. Within a few years of its publication it emerged as the largest circulated newspaper in the North- East but later due to financial instability the paper ceased its publication.

A new development in the post-independence period was the growing of commercialization of the press in Karimganj. It was that period when people came forward to take journalism as profession. The importance was given to advertisements. Thus, it can be said that before the independence the newspapers were not commercial but after the independence because of the professional attitude emphasis on commercials increased.

The first successful commercial weekly from Karimganj is *Jugashakti* which actually made its appearance on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1936 from Sylhet. In 1947 after the partition of India, the paper was shifted to Karimganj.

There were some other publications from Karimganj which couldn't continue its publication after a few issues. They are *Samayer Ahban*, *Sangbad Davani*, *Mahanayak*, *Aganiban*, *Ghar Ghar* and *Sjingla Prabaha*. It has been found that at present there is no daily newspaper in Karimganj. All the newspapers published from Karimganj are weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Before independence Hailakandi District could not provide any contribution regarding the newspapers. In the year of independence the first newspaper, *Janamat* came into existence.

The newspapers published from Barak Valley are *The Eastern Chronicle*, *Preranabharati*, *Dainik Jugashankha*, *Samayik Prasanga*, *Dainik Gati*, *Prantojyoti Dainik*, *Nabobarta Prasanga*, *Jugashakti*, *Dalim*, etc.

**‘Press and Social Changes: A Content Analysis’** is the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of this research work which deals with the content analysis of socio-economic developmental issues, social aspects issues and cultural aspects issues related to social change that is published in *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* during the period of study. The data collected by both quantitative and qualitative analysis are presented in tabular format to make an objective analysis. Further pie charts and bar diagrams are included for clear and better interpretation of data. Also this chapter includes some scanned copies of news issues published in the two sample newspapers taken for analysis.

In quantitative analysis includes 547 issues each from the respective newspapers focuses on socio-economic developmental issues, issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects. Thus, in total 1094 issues of these two newspapers are examined under the variables like ‘extent in terms of total space in column centimeters’ and ‘frequency in terms of number of items’ on socio-economic developmental issues, issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects.

In qualitative analysis socio-economic development issues of the two newspapers are examined under the variables like placement, nature, format, context and types of coverage and the issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects are examined under the variables like placement and context.

The last chapter **‘Summary and Conclusion’** of this research work summarizes the findings of the research study and draws conclusion by generalizing the research findings.

The content analysis of socio-economic development news coverage of two leading language newspapers namely, *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* shows that in quantitative aspect the news items that have got extensive coverage in these newspapers is that terrorism (16812.21 col. cm. and 17211.45 col. cm.), violence and crime (14211.12 col. cm. and 13819.01 col. cm.), women empowerment (5113.02 col. cm. and 4821.82 col. cm.), domestic violence (4127.61 col. cm. and 2931.12 col. cm.), human rights (2992.78 col. cm. and 2520.10 col. cm.), respectively.

In terms of frequency it was found that during the period of study the number of occurrence of all these socio-economic development issues is also similar.

The content analysis of issues related to social aspects of two leading sample newspapers shows that in quantitative aspect the issues that have got extensive coverage in these newspapers is that politics (6423.18 col. cm. and 6564.21 col. cm.), economy (2911.34 col. cm. and 2522.35 col. cm.), fashion (0123.59 col. cm. and 0122.12 col. cm.), respectively.

Also, in terms of frequency issues related to social aspects in both the newspapers are also similar.

On the other hand, the content analysis of issues related to cultural aspects of both the newspapers shows that in quantitative aspect the issues that have got extensive coverage in these newspapers is that festivals (1424.22 col. cm. and 1446.41 col. cm.), worship of God and Goddesses (1214.55 col. cm. and 1191.11 col. cm.), fair (0020.16 col. cm. and 0019.95 col. cm.), respectively.

Similarly, in terms of frequency issues related to cultural aspects in both the sample newspapers are also similar.

Thus, the quantitative analysis reveals that coverage in terms of column centimeter and frequency both the newspapers are almost same with each other so far as socio-economic issues, issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects are concerned.

Placement analysis of socio-economic development issues in terms of space reveals that both the newspapers have more or less the same patterns of coverage so far as news stories on socio-economic development issues are concerned. While *Dainik*

*Jugasankha* devoted 12.98 % of its space in the front page to socio-economic development issues, on the other hand *Samayik Prasanga* devoted 11.91 % in the front page. In contrast, the remaining stories that appeared in the inside pages are 87.02 % and 88.09 % respectively in both the newspapers.

Thus, the researcher observes that both the newspapers *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* are similar in their approach to the placement of socio-economic development issues.

On further analysis the socio-economic issues that got prominence in the front and inside pages in both the newspapers, the data reveal that *Dainik Jugasankha* has given more prominence to terrorism 24.01 % followed by violence and crime 15.26 %, domestic violence 11.21 %, human rights 9.35 % and so on. Also, almost similar findings have been revealed after analyzing the news stories of *Samayik Prasanga*, top lists with terrorism 26.08 % followed by violence and crime 14.32 %, domestic violence 10.64 % and human rights 8.82 %.

The study on nature of socio-economic development news coverage shows that 21.28 % of news contents in *Dainik Jugashankha* are positive in nature, 8.09% are negative whereas, 70.63 % news contents are neutral in nature. On the other hand, the analysis of *Samayik Prasanga* reveal that 19.21 % of the news contents are positive in nature, 9.04% are negative whereas, 71.75 % news contents are neutral in nature.

Thus, the analysis shows that both the newspapers *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* contribute the highest percentage of neutral news contents.

After comparing the data regarding format of the news stories the data shows that 51.55 % hard news are published in *Dainik Jugasankha* while 53.21 % are found in *Samayik Prasanga*. Amount of soft news published in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 29.02 % compared to 28.92 % in *Samayik Prasanga*. The amount of features found in *Dainik Jugasankha* 6.25 % while *Samayik Prasanga* possesses 7.13 %. 5.36 % and 4.92 % of editorials are found in *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* respectively. Letters to the Editor found in both these newspapers are of 2.26 % and 1.96% in *Dainik Jugashankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* respectively. Columns published in

*Dainik Jugasankha* are 2.12 % compared to 1.06% in *Samayik Prasanga*. Middle, Articles and Anchors are found in negligible amount as compared to other formats.

Format analysis reveals that hard news is the most common format adopted by both the newspapers in covering socio-economic development issues.

While comparing the data regarding the context of news stories in terms of its place of origin it was found that 37.19 % local news are published in *Dainik Jugasankha* compared to 38.12 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*. Amount of regional news published in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 20.02 % compared to 18.04 % in *Samayik Prasanga*. National news amounting to 23.92 % is found in *Dainik Jugasankha* compared to 27.06 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*, while the international news devoted in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 18.87% and *Samayik Prasanga* 16.78 % respectively.

Thus, context analysis reveals that both the language daily namely, *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* in their socio-economic development issues focused mainly on local news.

While analysis on types of coverage on socio-economic development issues it shows that *Dainik Jugasankha* published 43.06 % analytical news items while *Samayik Prasanga* published 40.53 %. On amounting informative news items it was found that *Dainik Jugasankha* devoted 56.94 % while *Samayik Prasanga* devoted 59.47 % respectively.

Thus, the analysis shows that *Dainik Jugasankha* publishes the highest number of analytical news items than *Samayik Prasanga* while *Samayik Prasanga* publishes the highest number of informative news items than *Dainik Jugasankha*.

While *Dainik Jugasankha* devoted 08.97 % of its space in the front page to issues related to social aspects. On the other hand, *Samayik Prasanga* devoted 09.21 % in the front page. Thus, in contrast, the remaining stories that appeared in the inside pages are 91.03% and 90.79% respectively in both the newspapers.

Thus, inferences can be drawn that both the two leading newspapers of Silchar town have the same patterns of placing issues related to social aspects in front and inside pages.

On further analysis the social aspects issues that got prominence in the front and inside pages in both the sample newspapers, the data reveal that *Dainik Jugasankha* has given more prominence to politics 48.31 % followed by economy 22.37 %, family/kinship 15.78 %, and so. After analyzing the news stories of *Samayik Prasanga* almost similar findings have been revealed, top lists with politics 49.49 % followed by economy 22.07 % and family/kinship 15.45 %.

Comparing the data regarding the context of issues related to social aspects in terms of its place of origin the data reveals that 46.61 % regional news are published in *Dainik Jugasankha* compared to 40.89 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*. National news amounting to 29.42 % is found in *Dainik Jugasankha* compared to 32.43 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*. Amount of local news published in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 15.78 % compared to 16.71 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*, while the international news devoted in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 8.19 % and *Samayik Prasanga* 9.97 % respectively.

Thus, context analysis of issues related to social aspects reveals that both the sample newspapers focused mainly on regional news.

Similarly, placement analysis of issues related to cultural aspects in terms of space reveals that both the newspapers have more or less the same patterns of coverage so far as news stories on cultural aspects are concerned. While the data revealed that *Dainik Jugasankha* devoted 04.28 % of its space in the front page to cultural aspects. On the other hand, *Samayik Prasanga* devoted 04.36 % in the front page. In contrast, the remaining stories that appeared in the inside pages are 95.72% and 95.64 % respectively.

Thus, inferences can be drawn that both the two leading newspapers of Silchar town have the same patterns of placing cultural aspects in front and inside pages.

On further analysis the cultural aspects issues that got prominence in the front and inside pages, it was found that *Dainik Jugasankha* has given more prominence to

worship of God and Goddesses 54.02 % followed by festivals 33.21 %, fair 9.44 %, and so on. After analyzing the cultural aspects news stories of *Samayik Prasanga* almost similar findings have been revealed i.e., worship of God and Goddesses 53.76 % followed by festivals 34.94 % and fair 8.10 %.

Regarding the context of issues related to cultural aspects in terms of its place of origin the data shows that 52.29 % local news are published in *Dainik Jugasankha* compared to 51.67 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*. Regional news amounting to 41.69 % is found in *Dainik Jugasankha* compared to 43.56 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*. Amount of national news published in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 5.02 % compared to 3.86 % found in *Samayik Prasanga*, while the international news devoted in *Dainik Jugasankha* is 1.00 % and *Samayik Prasanga* 0.91 % respectively.

Thus, context analysis of issues related to cultural aspects reveals that both the sample newspapers focused mainly on local news.

Hence, inferences can be drawn from the above discussion that so far as placement is concerned both the two leading newspapers of Silchar town have the same patterns of placing socio-economic development issues, issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects in front and inside pages.

Regarding the context analysis it reveals that both the language daily namely, *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* in their socio-economic development issues and issues related to cultural aspects focused mainly on local news. But, context analysis of issues related to social aspects reveals that both the sample newspapers focused mainly on regional news.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study seem to prove that though both the newspapers namely, *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* give almost the same coverage with each other so far as socio-economic development issues and issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects is concerned in terms of column centimeter and frequency yet socio-economic development news coverage and coverage related to social aspects and cultural aspects is not very significant in Indian newspapers.



It also showed that both the sample newspapers covered less women related issues. Comparing to other socio-economic development issues women related issues get the lowest priority in these newspapers. Socio-economic development issues are of vital importance to a developing country such as India in general. But Assam, in particular and especially in Silchar women related issues is very poorly represented in the newspapers.

Further, it shows that regarding social aspects issues, politics gives extensive coverage but issues such as family/kinship, government schemes gets very least coverage. Thus, it can be conclude that people in Assam takes interest in political affairs but when it comes the matter of family/kinship, government schemes, etc. they shows very least interest which actually hindered the development of the state.

Further, it also shows that regarding cultural aspects, issues such as worship of Gods and Goddesses get the highest priority but on the other hand, issues such as worship of deities of specific diseases get the lowest priority. Thus, the researcher can draws a conclusion that people in Assam have faith and belief in God but at the same time they are little far away from superstition belief.

The study also shows that in language newspapers, issues related to socio-economic development and issues related social aspects and cultural aspects finds its place mostly in inside pages. It emphasizes that both the sample newspapers namely, *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* publishes maximum number of socio-economic development issues, social aspects and cultural aspects issues in inside pages and minimum numbers in front pages.

The researcher also finds that both the newspapers have the same patterns of placing socio-economic development issues, social aspects and cultural aspects issues in front and inside pages.

Moreover, the study also shows that the local language daily, *Danik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* adopts a neutral attitude in giving coverage to socio-economic development related issues. Thus, the study concludes that the language dailies are more vocal in highlighting neutral aspects of socio-economic development.

From the study the researcher finds that hard news is the most common format of socio-economic development issues. In each of the two newspapers the highest number of socio-economic development issues appears in hard news format. Also some amount of the presence of socio-economic development issues on which the study has been undertaken can be seen in editorials, letters to the editor and features. But however, it can be concluded that both these language newspapers have a long way to go so far as editorials and opinion pieces on socio-economic development issues are concerned.

The study also shows that the local language dailies *Dainik Jugasankha* and *Samayik Prasanga* in their socio-economic development issues and cultural aspects issues focused mainly on local news but regarding social aspects issues both the sample newspapers focused mainly on regional news.

It also emphasizes that *Dainik Jugasankha* publishes the highest number of analytical news items than *Samayik Prasanga* while *Samayik Prasanga* publishes the highest number of informative news items than *Dainik Jugasankha*.

The findings also revealed that these language newspapers are usually considered to be indifferent to most pressing social concerns and in the process neglect social obligations, likewise the regional newspapers of this part of the country also do not give reasonable importance to various socio-economic development issues, social aspects issues and cultural aspects issues. This is not the scenario in the whole wide spectrum of socio-economic development issues or issues related to social and cultural aspects. This shows that regional language newspapers in this region are very less conscious of their social responsibility thrust upon them and their editorial policy shows the sign of being only to a limited extent aware of their responsibilities towards the society and readers. There have been many a occasion when newspapers have been known to be a little carried away by their proclivity to set an agenda on a particular issue, but in case of Silchar language newspapers, it is found that both the newspapers have tried to show restraint in terms of pursuing any particular line on the issues discussed earlier. Both the newspapers are seen to have adopted a balanced approach in their lack of presentation of socio-economic development issues and

issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects are concerned and it also acts as a pointer to the existing competitive environment.

On the whole though these language newspapers have been able to establish a healthy set of journalistic practices in an age of cut-throat competition but still the study shows that these newspapers are lagging behind in performing their duties. Thus, the newspapers have a long way to go so far as coverage of various socio-economic development issues and issues related to social aspects and cultural aspects are concerned. Also, since language newspapers are mainly read by common people and it influences the common people hence, it possesses great potential to aware people about various socio-economic developmental, social and cultural needs in our society.

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