



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: LL.M. 1st Semester

GROUP: Constitutional Law

SUBJECT: Media Law

SUBJECT CODE: LL.M. 110

NAME OF FACULTY: Ms. Anjali Dixit

Lecture-1



LECTURE 1: Evolution of Media

History of Media

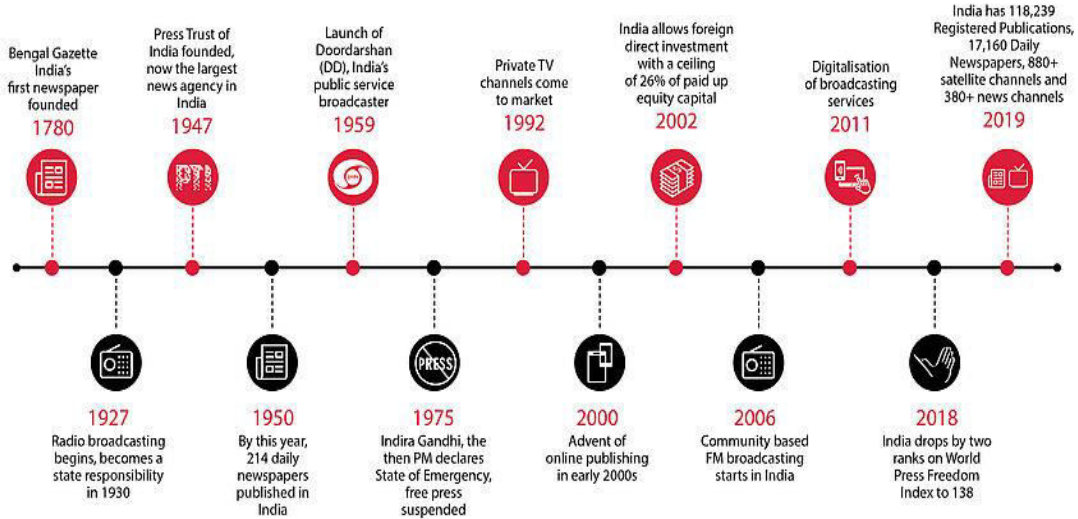
The Indian media has a long history spanning from the colonial past in the second half of the 18th century to the present as the largest functioning democracy of the 21st century.

When the British were firmly entrenched in the country and the Indian freedom movement was still in its nascent stage the newspapers of the late 18th century entered the country not only through the rulers but also to, a great extent, for the British readers in India and abroad. Back then, publishing houses were created as private commercial enterprises, which has not changed much throughout the years. The Indian newspaper saga started with an Irishman - James Augustus Hicky. Hicky launched the “Bengal Gazette” in 1780, India’s first newspaper, in English. Before that, the British East India Companies’ rules did not encourage the establishment of newspapers in India. Just to make sure that his paper was perceived as “independent”, Hicky added a line to his masthead – “A weekly Political and Commercial Paper - Open to all parties, but influenced by none”. Hicky’s paper was a bit tabloid, and a bit satire paper. It lacked the tone of overly “serious news” evident in other British papers of that time. He initially used the paper to take on personal adversaries by usually mocking them. Copying the British newspaper style, it initially targeted only the British residents as readers. A campaign against the first Governor General of India however caused what can be pointed out as the first censorship in India when the “Bengal Gazette” was banned from circulation through official channels. It was that incident that reportedly sharpened Hickey’s perception of how free the press should be to be able to serve its purpose. He devoted lots of space to social issues and anti-war content, including the voice of the general public. After a period of fighting back, delivering his newspapers in neighbourhoods, even keeping the publishing going during him being arrested, the first newspaper of India was finally crushed by the previously targeted Governor General and the Supreme Court in 1782. Although the reach and its time of existence were limited one can say it inspired others to launch newspapers, too. Alongside the Bengal Gazette newspapers like the ‘Bombay Herald’ and ‘Bombay Courier’ in 1789 and 1790 respectively, and ‘Bombay Gazette’ in 1791 entered the market. But soon the government clamped down on the freedom of press, obviously rattled by extensive criticism by the latter. For more than two decades after that, the gagging of the press continued as successive Governor Generals in India refused to cede freedom to the press.

TIMELINE: HISTORY OF MASS MEDIA IN INDIA

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SELF-TEST QUESTIONS

S.NO	Question	Option (a)	Option (b)
1.	The Indian newspaper saga started with an Irishman - James Augustus Hicky. Hicky launched the "Bengal Gazette" in 1780, India's first newspaper, in English.	True	False
2.	British East India Companies' rules did not encourage the establishment of newspapers in India.	True	False
3.	First censorship in India when the "Bengal Gazette" was banned from circulation through official channels.	True	False
4.	Hicky's paper was a bit tabloid, and a bit satire paper	True	False
5.	Governor Generals in India refused to cede freedom to the press.	True	False

Answers: 1-(b),2-(a), 3-(a),4-(a),5-(a)