

**DAILY PRESS AND FARMERS' MOVEMENT: A STUDY OF  
THE ROLE OF AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT  
EDITIONS) IN HIGHLIGHTING BKU'S MOVEMENT IN  
WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH (1987 - 90)**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
COMMUNICATION**

**By  
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## DECLARATION

I, Brijender Singh Panwar, declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled **"Daily Press and Farmers' Movement: A Study of the Role of Amar Ujala & Dainik Jagran (Meerut Editions) in Highlighting BKU's Movement in Western Uttar Pradesh (1987 - 90)"** is the original work carried out by me under the guidance of Prof. B.P. Sanjay, Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad

The thesis or a part thereof has not been submitted for any other degree at this University or at any other Universities

Hyderabad  
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## *Certificate*

This is to certify that Mr Brinjender Singh Panwar worked under my supervision for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication His dissertation entitled "**Daily Press and Farmers' Movement: A Study of the Role of Amar Ujala & Dainik Jagran (Meerut Editions) in Highlighting BKU's Movement in Western Uttar Pradesh (1987 - 90)**" represents his own work at the University of Hyderabad and it has not been submitted for a degree or diploma elsewhere.

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Brijender Singh Panwar 15/05/03

*Dedicated To  
My  
Late Mother & Father  
Who Inspire Me  
To  
Scale New Heights*

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# CHAPTER-1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA:

Farmer's movements in different parts of the country have been studied in sociological, political, economical, socio-political or socio-economical terms. But, the role of media, especially print media, which has been the main component in creating consciousness amongst the farmers, spreading the movement and further sustaining it, has been seldom studied. "Despite the crucial importance of mass media to social movements, their role has not often been subjected to systematic examination. Movements, media and sociology alike have been slow to explore the meanings of modern cultural surroundings. Only accidentally, some theory' and research on the relation between movements and news media emerge, apparently a result of individual research interests rather than of a substantial acknowledgment of the relevance of the area within social movement or media research. In political communication research, the focus is primarily on institutional and electoral politics" (Gitlin 1980, 1). In spite of many farmers' struggles and movements over the last two decades, in-depth reports on some of the movements are found only in certain scholarly journals like Economic and Political Weekly. Irregular journals of various political groups have also attempted to analyse the movements. But systematic studies of these movements are seldom found.

The present study is an attempt to draw strong linkages between media and the farmer's movement. The study would go deep into one of the most important farmer's movement of the recent times in the Indo-Gangetic plains of the country, Bharatiya Kisan

Union (BKU) and would ascertain the impact of the media in educating, enlightening and creating consciousness amongst the farmers and in organizing them as a joint farming community to fight for their rights. Since electronic media was still emerging as a powerful media during the period of the present study, i.e., (1987-90) the focus is on the print media and that too on Hindi newspapers which are read and appreciated by the farmers of the region. The two districts of western UP, i.e., Meerut (now Bagpat) and **Muzaffarnagar** were selected for the study and the two newspapers chosen are **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** (Meerut editions). These two Hindi newspapers are the most widely read in the region. **Dainik Jagran** started its Meerut Edition in 1984 and had a comfortable circulation of around 30,000 in 1986 whereas **Amar Ujala** came to Meerut in December, 1986 and had a circulation of around 15,000.

Before going into the details of the problems of the study, it would be appropriate to outline the basic premise of our topic of research, and broadly emphasize upon the terms, 'Media', 'Communication', 'Development', and 'Movements' with the help of theoretical discussion and empirical studies.

## 1.2 CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION:

It must be realized at the very beginning that the true meaning and nature of communication and its proper role in the process of development can only be appreciated in the context of the prevailing concept and strategy of development, because the two are interrelated and inter-dependent. One cannot be understood in isolation from the other. In fact, the study of communication is virtually co-terminus with that of development. The studies originated in the West, especially in the U.S., in tandem with the study of development during the post-war period, but more particularly in the early sixties. Although

this approach is of comparatively recent origin, its present status can only be appreciated in the historical context. A brief historical survey is, therefore, called for, "not only in the context of its evolution in the west, but also in the context of India's development-experience through planning since the beginning of the planning era in the early fifties. While theoretical study of the role of communication in rural development has advanced with the growth of empirical knowledge, it has also been influenced by the evolution of the accepted ideology of development".

It has to be clearly stated at this stage that by communication we mean a comprehensive system and process which envisages three forms, namely, (i) interpersonal forms of communication which include family and the neighbourhood, markets and the washing areas, fairs and festivals, voluntary agencies, school teachers, students and rural youth, and progressive farmers, as well as traditional structure of rural communication like news and gossip, folk media including folk theatre, **Jatra**, **tamasha**, harikatha, story telling, folk festivals, **mela**, community dances, puppetry, etc; (ii) institutional networks like church or religious network, the administrative structure, the political party, the school, the police or army, government service agencies as agricultural extension, health and family planning, **panchayats**, etc; (iii) and media of mass communication in this technological age, like radio and television, films, posters, printed materials such as newspapers and pamphlets, telephone, telex or telegraph, and mail systems, video, etc. The list is illustrative and not exhaustive. "The rapid expansion of the television network, the accelerated growth of telecom, the steady as well as the advent of **Insat-IA** and **Insat-IB**, role of internet, Multi-media and Information Technology have already made electronic media an important sector of the national economy and widened the horizon of communication far beyond our expectations".

Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that the universe of communication is immensely large than the world of the modern mass media that attaches importance to the printed word, photo, film, radio, TV, advertising and public relations all by-products of the industrial era. The totality of communication includes the innumerable spoken words, songs, dances, painting, sculpture and architecture. This totality would also include religion, formal education, and non-formal education through the traditional

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communication media. Traditional media, which are an important source of mass communication by virtue of their proximity to rural people, include, for example, in Andhra Pradesh, and some other States, Burrakatha, Veedinatakam, Harikatha, and Bhagavathan. Research recently carried out in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh reveals that such traditional media have greater appeal to the weaker and poorer section of population. Being rooted in the tradition and experience of a large majority of the population, these folk media can be effectively utilized for purposes of social communication, projecting the development activities in the country, especially in the rural areas, as claimed by the Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

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As the universal condition of man's existence and the carrier of the social process, communication has truly become an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary study, transcending the traditional boundaries of psychology and sociology, and traversing such disciplines and sub-disciplines as theology and analytical philosophy, psycho-linguistics, physical sciences and cybernetics, arts and literature, journalism and political science. It is a mistake to consider the mass communication media in the modern age as the exclusive preserve of science and technology. Humanities and the social sciences have no less of involvement in the task and process of communication. However, depending on the specific thrust of a particular discipline, functions of communication have been variously

categorized. While Lass well talks of surveillance of the environment, correlation of the part of the society in responding to the environment, and transmission of social heritage from one generation to another<sup>7</sup>, Wilbur Schramm looks upon communication as the watcher, the forum and the teacher. Information and entertainment are mentioned by some as the two basic functions of **communication**, while the libertarian theory mentions six functions, namely, public enlightenment, serving the political system, safeguarding civil liberties, profit-making, serving the economic system and providing entertainment. “While an over-simplified version considers the communication process in terms of the Source Message-Channel-Receiver (S-M-C-R) model, one scholar mentions and enumerates several meanings of communication at successive dimensions the neutral dimension, the biological dimension, the psychological dimension, the engineering dimension, the metaphysical dimension and the Utopian or evocative dimension”<sup>9</sup>.

Fischer categorizes communication into original and **intermediatorial**, the former including signal (symbol, flag or sign), word and sound (**speech**, device, slogan or rumour), and arrangement (assembly, ceremony and demonstration), while the later includes press (pamphlet, leaflet, newspaper, magazine, **wall-poster**), broad-casting (radio, **television**, folk song), picture (drawing, cartoon, poster, photo), film (documentary, feature or newsreel), stage and literature (political song).<sup>10</sup> McCroske points out two dimensions of purposeful vs. accidental. From the social development point of view, stimulation and purposeful communication are the most important and significant? Campbell talks about three purposes of communication— informative, persuasive and entertainment. Juan E-Diaz Bordenave, had made a perceptive analysis of ~~ten~~ case studies of communication and rural development in ~~ten~~ countries, mostly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, on the basis of the ideological assumptions and the ideas of development at work. He traced the steady growth

of the theoretical models, right from the first, i.e., **the** telecommunications model, which mechanistically viewed communication as a process of message transmission, through communication as persuasion during the second world war.

Bordenave also introduced the marketing and agricultural extension model having preoccupation with effects, communications as a process acquired from the philosophical and scientific thinking of the times and involving such social science disciplines as anthropology, sociology, social psychology, political science, and economics, communication as a system that encouraged the diffusion of innovations with its 'dripping down' view, and right up to communication functions in terms of social structures based on the distinction between instrumental and consummatory communication and to content analysis of mass media so popular in recent times. Bordenave finds much enriched thinking in the systems approach which looks upon communication as a goal establishing system and whose chief function is to supply information about environmental needs and conditions, through information exchange, channel the systems influence on the environment, and bring back, through feedback, information about the environment's reactions and its changing needs. One very important trend growing out of this approach is an instrument for changing society. It can be an important means for achieving conscientization, organization, politicization, and **technification**, and this requires a coherent communication philosophy and methodology. While significant innovations in rural development communication are discernible with a participative **orientation**, there may be certain gaps between the models and principles developed at Universities and research institutes by communication theoreticians and researchers and the actual projects they have designed and run in the developing areas.

### 1.3 COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Early formulations in respect of the role of communication in development were pioneered by three American scholars, namely, Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and Everett Rogers, and to a somewhat lesser extent, by Inkless and Smith. Under their formulations, mass media were conceived to be a kind of 'magic multiplier' for development in developing nations. inculcators of individual modernization'. Communication research in the midsixties had come under the pervading influence of Lerner, Schramm and Rogers, and had focused predominantly on diffusion of innovation in agriculture, health and family planning. "It was a one-way, downward and hierarchical flow of communication from government agencies to the people, and the realization came much later that the role of communication in facilitating development was often indirect and contributory, rather than direct and powerful. These conceptual formulations tended to 'descend into a simplistic behavioural terms that takes insufficient account of the social and political dynamics of change and lacks an adequate conception of relationships between ideas and action, between culture and social structure". Katz's 'two-step flow'

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process, and McClelland's 'achievement motivation', also fall in this category of research.

These orthodox media theories have been criticized for their Western-centeredness, their neglect of the international dimensions of both communication and development, and their emphasis on the attitudinal rather than the structural characteristics of the underdeveloped societies. It goes somewhat to the credit of Rogers that with advancing years and experience, and with the changing development scenario, he had considerably shifted his position and modified his earlier perspective on communication and development. In 1976, looking backward, it seemed to Rogers that the considerable

potential of mass countries were largely misplaced and belied. The shift from what he calls a 'dominant model' to 'alternative paradigms' implied new, different and wider roles for communication in development. With increasing hindsight, it came to be realized by him that mass media represented an extension of exploitative relationships with U.S.-based multinational corporations through the advertising of commercial products, elitist in ownership and control, and basically propagandist in nature.

Researches by many Latin American scholars, especially by Grunig, Haven, Paulo

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Freire, Beltran, and some others point to the 'implicit' elitist bias' of the earlier approach, the atomistic and mechanistic' character of the 'components approach', and to the need for a holistic system approach that would include understanding the audience and its needs, communication planning around selective strategies, message production, dissemination, reception and feedback. With increasing concern about self-development and communication effects gap, and new technology, as well as attention to the content of the mass media, participation, mass mobilization and group efficacy, the shift of research attention was all too evident. Conscientization and dialogue now replace the earlier 'top-down' approach and technologically top-heavy bias. Scholars have now openly questioned whether television, satellites and other artifacts represent the best use of resources in poor countries, and whether they are the best means of reaching the people. This 'media imperialism' or 'cultural imperialism' is now openly challenged. At the same time, there is now an interesting realization that research has often tended to be too media-centred. Other factors have been insufficiently explored. It was previously assumed that communication information was an independent variable in the development process, and the exposure to mass media messages would be powerful enough force to generate the necessary change for development. The problems and objectives for development were defined, operationally



and measured with the largely individual psychological characteristics that are assumed in the modernization theory.

Results of research in recent years show the need to consider communication not just as a simple independent variable, but both a dependent and an independent variable in a complex set of relationship with social, economic and political structures and processes. The key issue of debate is whether the rapid expansion of media has penetrated deeply into the lives of rural people and brought consequent benefits, or whether the penetration has been uneven and irrelevant in its contents, particularly for the poorer sections of the rural population that have not benefited from this expansion. "This can be substantiated with reference to the access, exposure, content, information outcomes and social outcomes of

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such media". The role of communication in development is now understood to be more permissive and 'supportive' than in the past. In keeping with the current concern with the more equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits as the goal of development activities. Rogers has suggested a new communication strategy in terms of (a) using the traditional mass media as credible channels to reach the most disadvantaged audience, (b) identifying the opinion leaders among the disadvantaged segment of the total audience and concentrating development activities on them, (c) using change agent aides selected from this audience to work for development agencies, (d) providing means for this audience to participate in the planning and execution of development activities and in the setting of development activities, (e) establishing special development agencies that work with this audience, like the Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) in 1970 in India to provide agricultural information and credit only to small-sized farmers and (f) producing and disseminating communication messages that are of need and interest to the downtrodden and the deprived.

In the same vein, the Indonesian economist, **Soedjatmokoi** has focused on the need to

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define appropriate macro policies of culture and communication. As Edward W. **Polwan**, the then Executive Director of the International Institute of Communication, London, appropriately pointed out in a seminar in 1980 in **India**, the place and role of communication and information in the new development approaches is crucial. Thinking in the communication field must move beyond the conventional patterns, and there is a need for new approaches to the entire communication and information complex. "What is essentially called for is the transformation of the village from traditional society into an 'information community' of a new kind". It will be necessary to design and develop programmes to help increase agricultural productivity, stimulate and guide adjustment to new methods of food production, new crops, new methods of improving livestock. There must also be programs to provide access to relevant market information and to render possible the utilization of new opportunities in trade and rural manufacture. Equally important are programmes to increase the farmers' understanding of his utter dependence on, and their responsibilities for maintaining and improving environmental quality.

Among studies and researches by Indian scholars, one is struck by several factors, namely, their insignificant number, their heavy dependence on borrowed models and methodologies of the West, especially the USA, their failure to evolve and apply indigenous models to understand the Indian reality, their failure to perceive the way of a successful communication in the rural India in the context of the programmes for rural

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development. Y.V.L. Rao's study of two India Village in Andhra Pradesh in 1966<sup>1</sup> has been one of the first and pioneering efforts. The study by Kivlin, Pródipto Roy, Frederick Fliegel and Lalit K.Sen in 1968<sup>2</sup> was a two-nation comparative study on the level of knowledge, trial practices. Similarly, the comparative, cross-cultural study of two countries,

Costa Rica and India, by Prodipto Roy, F.B. Waisanen and Everett M Rogers (1969)" considered the effect of a 52-week radio forum programme, reading forum and animation training. Damle has studied the diffusion of modern ideas and kinds of knowledge in seven villages. C.R. Prasada Rao and K. Ranga Rao (1976) have studied the village communication channels in three villages in Andhra Pradesh. Singi and Mody (1976) have made a very interesting study of the communication effects gap on the basis of the hypothesis that development campaigns often benefit the comparatively advantaged sections of the community rather than the really poor, widening the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and consolidating the position of the elites/

Path-breaking studies were also made by such eminent scholars as S.C. Dube, M.S.A. Rao, Yogesh Atal, L.R. Nair and Myron Weiner during the sixties and the seventies, while a good number of empirical studies were undertaken by National Institute of Community (now Rural) Development, Hyderabad, and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi. In the middle and late seventies and the early eighties, notable studies were made by Krishan Sondhi, M.V. Desai, M.R. Dua, N.K. Jaiswal, B.Kuppuswamy, Mehra Masani, Sachidananda and N.N. Jha, Arvind K. Sinha, Biond C. Agrawal, P.R.R. Sinha, N.V. Kolte and H.P.S. Arya. A number of seminars and conferences in IIMC, New Delhi, and N.I.C.D., Hyderabad, and the Council for Social Development, Delhi, also highlighted the problems of communication in rural development in the Indian context. On December 6, 1982, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, set up a Working Group under the Chairmanship of Professor P.C. Joshi, to prepare a software plan for Doordarshan, taking into consideration the main objectives of television of assisting in the process of social and economic development of the country and to act as an effective medium for providing information, education and entertainment.

The Report of this Working Group, entitled 'Indian Personality for Television', in two volumes, published in 1985, constitutes an important document in communication planning and offers a wealth of data, even if in one sector of development communication, namely, television. Two recent works also deserve mention. One, by Paul Hartmann, B.R. Patil and

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Anita Dighe, assesses the actual and potential contribution of mass communication media to the process of development in the Third World in general and India in particular, based on intensive anthropological studies in the five villages in three Indian states. The study claims methodological innovation, based on intensive community studies. The other, by M. Seetharam, is an exploratory study to ascertain the structure and process of participation by citizens in rural development activities with special reference to the Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP) in a particular block in Andhra Pradesh.

#### **1.4 ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

A Nation's communication media develops as the nation develops. Significant changes in the scope, sophistication, and purpose of the mass media are evidences of political modification in a society. This is generally known as the "reflective theory" of media government relationships. A country's political system (stemming from the political ideology) is obviously related to the direction and speed of a country's total national development. If this basic assumption is true, and it would certainly appear to be, then media and national development join in a kind of symbiotic relationship of complex and intriguing nature. It is this symbiotic relationship that has been consuming more and more of the time and effort of researchers and theorists in the related fields of Mass Communication, Sociology and Political science about middle of the last century. All kinds of questions are raised pertaining to the relationship between political ideology and communication philosophy, between politics and national development, and between

communication and national development. Deutsch pointed out a correlation between mass communication of a country and its national spirit and action. Such correlations abound; researchers are constantly finding additional ones. A conclusion emerges: "Communication is necessary, not only for all aspects of a person's development, but also for all aspects of a nation's development"<sup>48</sup>

The nature and role of communication in any social or political system must be seen to be inseparably tagged to the prevailing concept and strategy of development. "Development has been one of the most compelling concepts of our times, provoking painful questions about values, techniques and choices. The term is sometimes, used as a euphemism for change, urbanization or growth. Though, actually, it is more complex than any of those words suggests. Apart from contrasting perceptions, there have been many

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'development fashions', over the years". "The grand schemes of the last forty years such as modernization theory, developmentalism, dependency theory and articulation of modes of production analysis, have all failed to properly diagnose the cause of underdevelopment and establish the bases for rapid, stable, and equitable growth path. The development strategies attempted during this period have, in almost all cases, either exhausted their course of action or run into serious problems of instability".

The cumulative benefits of this kind of economic growth were expected to 'trickle down' eventually to the larger numbers who lived in the rural areas in the developing nations. Import-Substitution Industries (ISI) was looked upon as the chief vehicle for bringing about this change. One line of criticism of this economic growth approach to development has been that it has transferred Western capitalist models, concept and methods to situations to which they are not wholly appropriate. The Western models of development lay within the underdeveloped nations rather than being external to it.

Intellectual ethnocentrism characterized the works of Walter Rostow. Everett Hagen, and David McClelland<sup>54</sup> who followed the trail left by the sociologist Max Weber. The linear theory of 'missing components' like capital, foreign exchange, skills or management, came under attack from economists in the 1970s. The International development strategy for the U.N. Second Development Decade (1970-79) was formulated on the premise that with some improvements in aid, growth in the developed countries would provide a dynamic international framework for economic growth in the developing countries. Experience belied this over-optimistic and misdirected premise. E.F. Schumacher, in his book 'Small is Beautiful', attacked 'high technology' and advocated 'intermediate technology' as a more useful contribution to development in the Third World countries. A redefinition of the causes of underdevelopment was set in motion in the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, the Bucharest World Population Conference and the Rome conference on Food in 1974. "The centrality of technology had already been questioned in Pakistan and the Philippines as the high watermark of technical solutions to human problems had come under heavy criticism as it widened the socio-economic gap between the smaller and the larger farmers and between the government and the people".

The U.N. Committee on Development planning called for a rethinking about the priorities of development process along two lines. It called for a new international economic order (NIEO) for a restructuring of relations between the North and the South. It emphasized equity and participation, self-reliance and structural reform, poverty removal and employment generation, and renewed efforts for rural development and attention to distressed regions and disadvantaged groups. The third Development Decade for the 1980s was ushered in along this new thinking. The U.N. Asian Development Institute suggested

an alternative strategy for Asia in their study 'Towards a Theory of Rural Development'. The U.N. Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), in a study entitled 'The Quest for a Unified Approach to Development' (1980), offered a framework emphasizing balanced development of social and economic sectors through what it described as 'authentic participation' of people.

The emphasis, therefore, clearly shifted, and development began to be regarded as a total process involving economic, social, political and cultural elements, its principal aim being to improve not only the economic but the social, cultural and environmental welfare of the nation. "Local needs and values will determine the direction development would take, and local institutions would carry it out. This development is endogenous,, and springs from the heart of each society. Decentralized, participatory development process came to be recognized as the need of the hour in the developing nations. Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline". People represent the primary source and the ultimate beneficiaries of the development process. It is not simply the result of applying the theories, models or strategies, but is an integral part of the dynamic process of society's growth as a whole. "The current strategies are strategies of egalitarian development with primary emphasis on redistribution of incomes in favour of the poor. It is a normative concept, implying choices about goals for achieving what Mahatma Gandhi had called the 'realization of the human potential". Michael Todaro indicates several qualities of development when he observes that it is a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration economic growth, the

reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. Development, in his opinion, "implies three core values: *life sustenance*, the ability to provide basic necessities like food, shelter, health and protection; *self-esteem*, the ability to be a person, a sense of

worth and self-respect; and freedom from servitude, the ability to choose, emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and from the social servitudes to nature, ignorance, other men, misery, institutions, and dynamic beliefs".

### **1.5 Conceptualization of Social Movements:**

Viewed from the social and political viewpoint no radical restructuring of the system seems to have taken place in India. Perhaps this is because we are viewing the problem in a Western context, ignoring native categories of thought. At any rate it is clear that there is no inherent conservatism of people in India, who have opted and do opt for socio-economic change rather than a well settled life. In other words, "all societies prefer a medium level of change maximum stability and minimum insatiability. But we require research into the rates of change which are acceptable at different times in different areas, as to these optimum conditions". To illustrate, for the sake of stability people accept social differentiation, hierarchy of roles, and unequal positions in terms of goals and statuses, the other inequalities - relatively speaking - are only accepted up to a point. When these go beyond a certain point and seem grossly unfair, especially at the socio - economic levels, then the existing order is strongly challenged. Hence, seeking equality - relative again - is also an essential element of society, where by from time to time it attempts to balance inequalities, gross contradiction or situations of relative deprivation. It is in this context that movements of various kinds play the role of bringing about adjustments, and their study has an important bearing on the planned changes which India is attempting since Independence.

If seeking equality - narrowing the gap between ideal values and practiced actions - is intrinsic to human beings, why is it that in several areas of the world, and in India itself, people have not revolted against their inhuman conditions - conditions of living in hunger and starvation ? Here, we are referring to the psychological dimension, and not to politico -



economic causes, and colonial or other forms of exploitations. Studies indicate that an essential element for radical change (revolt) is a consciousness of one's - the individual's or the group's - degraded position, i.e., not only of hunger as such but also an awareness of having to suffer inhuman treatment. "Hungry men seldom revolt, for they are involved in the primary act of slaying alive. A consciousness is brought about when groups or individuals compare their lives to the better life of others, or if they themselves were better off at one time and are now in a degraded position. It has, therefore, been noted that revolutions are preceded by a long period of rising expectations accompanied by a decline of gratifications. Frustration is brought about in large groups of people by a failure to gratify - relatively speaking - economic technological dissatisfaction is widespread among lower and middle classes and even sometimes among the upper classes, all of whom join in movements of various kinds. In these times of change, transitional personalities arise who have broken off their ties with the past but are uncertain about the future. The leaders of the underprivileged, therefore, generally come from a class where relative deprivation is much less - or - nonexistent - than in the lower classes".<sup>62</sup>

The factor of alienation is an important one since it causes rethinking, leading to ideas establishing a new order. This is why if individuals have close attachment to groups, extended families, or even professional groups like trade unions, the secure position of an individual acts against any revolution or social change. For instance, despite the degraded position of the untouchables and other low classes in the social hierarchy of India, there have been no revolts because individuals in these groups have at least a secure social position, especially because other classes are dependent upon them. Alienation takes place in the establishment among 'ruling' individuals, i.e., ambiguous politico-economic situation because a rethinking among certain individual that creates antagonism within the upper crust. Thus, a rethinking caused because of ideological contradiction in a society under

changing conditions throws up people who wish to bring about a better way of life. But changing situation, movements, may also arise due to charismatic leadership that causes stability or instability, and this important factor needs to be taken into account. This indicates that the role of the individual is crucial, since movements begin in the minds of men, with ideas.

"Finally, apart from the above very sketchy framework of change within which movements should be viewed, empirical studies of these historic situations require their examination over a block of time, in a given area, i.e., dissent, protest and reform movements have to be examined in their particular form, content and degree 'regionally' -

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or spatio-temporally. The movement's goals have to be measured against existing norms, i.e., in terms of what constitute the essential element of the system identity, in order to assess the type and form of change which in fact are brought about by any movement. This implies evolving methods to measure in some ways the magnitude and rates of such changes, by means of certain objective techniques of analyses whereby we may be able to categorize various movements; whether these are meant for localized objectives (for redressing particular grievances), for major reforms, or are aimed at drastic or 'radical' change. But the problem of seeking the origin remains, because movements are not always organised with specific objectives from the beginning. "Therefore, in order to identify need to be located, the expression of frustration, for instance, among the elite and the intellectuals are reliable symptoms of new social movements. Other signs of disturbance may be gauged at the level of law-breaking incidents, including crime and the way these infringements are handled either by punishment or other means by the establishment; viz., the more rigorous the law, the greater may be the disturbance, or feeling of uneasiness in a society".

## 1.6 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT:

It is hard to find a commonly agreed upon definition of social movement. Different forms of collective action, mobilization from below, mobilization from above, in various historical contexts (working class, peasant, or fascist movements) have all been called social movements. The definition varies over time depending on who says what in relation to what movement (Herberle, 1968: 438-44). A very early and lasting perspective, however, links the definition to the movements of the industrial working class. A recent development is the definition of so-called new social movements emerging gradually from the 1950s with the civil rights movements, through the student movements, to the women's and environmental movements in the 1970s. Here, a contrast is construed between 'modernist' and 'post-modernist' movements, in which the later are said to represent 'the transcendence of "material" or industrial values by a new set of postmaterial values' (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991 : 7 ).

Social movements are usually defined as organized groups of people mobilized from below in pursuit of goals that challenge the established order especially that of states and of political parties running of the state. Thus, by definition, social movements are autonomous of the state and their goal is to change society or other conflicts. They differ from local protest groups by being more permanent and also by their potential to appeal to groups of people beyond a particular locality. This definition represents the perspective of many scholars including that of Staffan Lindberg in studying the farmers' movements as social movements.

Social movements are also analyzed in quite different ways by various sociologists and historians. One approach is that of the resource-mobilization theorists: for example, the

work of Tilly (1975, 1978), Oberschall (1973) and Jenkins (1983). They concentrate on how movements are able to organize social and material resources and "stress such "objective" variables as organization, interests, resources, opportunities, and strategies to account for large scale mobilization" (Cohen, 1985: 674). His assumptions are:

1. Social movements must be understood in terms of a conflict model of collective action.
2. There is no fundamental difference between institutional and non-institutional collective action.
3. Both entail conflicts of interest built into institutionalized power relations.
4. Collective action involves the rational pursuit of interest by groups.
5. Goals and grievances are permanent products of power relations and cannot account for the formation of movements.
6. This depends instead on changes in resources, organization, and opportunities for collective action.
7. Success is evidenced by the recognition of the group as a political actor or by increased material benefits.
8. Mobilization involves large-scale, special-purpose, bureaucratic, formal organization (ibid: 675).

Research and writings on social movements have been an area of interest to sociologists and political scientists since the third decade of independence (Oommen, 1990). Social science literature has addressed questions relating to the nature and

characteristics of social movements their emergence and outcomes and their relationship to social structures. Studies on past social movements and certain ongoing struggles that have the potential to grow into movements, have been undertaken by various scholars. Issues pertaining to theoretical framework, conceptual categories methodological in the study of social movements and the concomitant limitations of biases in documenting social movements are also discussed in the available literature. Research writings on several religious, backward castes, working class, agrarian, nationalist, tribal and regional movements are also available (Basu, 1992; Rao, 1979).

Studies and writings on social movements have unequivocally related them to social change. The structural functional approach views change in terms of the three basic processes of structural differentiation, reintegration and adaptation, regards movements as temporary aberrations, indicative of transient anomies, emerging from any social deprived due to systemic stresses and strains. New and flexible systems emerge consequently, to provide mechanism for reintegration. Thus, movements are viewed essentially as adaptive mechanisms in a period of rapid social change. With adaptation, change gets institutionalized (Oommen, 1990: 29-30). This approach does not unravel the source of deprivation and agency of individuals and groups in bringing about change. As opposed to this, the classical Marxist approach would engage in examining the source of deprivation, the process of perpetuation of exploitative relations and collective action as a response to class conflict, all of which are located within the forces of production.

The symbolic interaction school of thought describes social movements in terms of behavioral aspects of individual who act together, to transform established social relations. The analytical contribution of this approach lies in the emphasis on behavioral aspects of individual in collectivity, an aspect which has received less attention in the earlier two approaches. However, collective actions are seen as pathological reactions to structural

changes, with an emphasis on what is considered as 'non-rational'. At the level of empirical studies of social movements, the need to locate the phenomena in a theoretical framework, has been articulated by Banks (1972;cf. Ra. 1979). He emphasizes the point that mere developing of topologies, taxonomies and general history of social movements has no significant value. Movements have a historical specificity to the values and ideas that exist in a society at a certain point of time and space.

Research on social movements with one or the other approaches mentioned above, generally utilize three main concepts, namely, relative deprivation, strain and revitalization. Relative deprivation, experienced at the level of collectivities and in the situational context of differential distribution of rights and privileges in different spheres of social and cultural life, is seen as a crucial force for the emergence of social movement. Relative deprivation may be caused by a gap between expectations and perceived capabilities, over three sets of values: economic conditions, political power and social status (Gurr, 1970: cf. in Rao 1979). Structural strain occurs at different levels of norms, values, mobilization and situational facilities. Revitalization is oriented on the one hand, to express dissatisfaction, dissent and protest against the existing conditions, and on the other, to offer a positive programme of action to remedy the situation. Rao (1979: 1-15) considers social movements in terms of an organized attempt towards change, either partial or total, which may include resisting change and the maintenance of status quo in relation to the existing forms of social relationships, norms, values and so on. He spells out three basic elements of social movements that are considered essential for identifying a social movement: sustained collective mobilization, the presence of an ideology and an orientation towards change.

According to Oommen (1990:30), 'social movements are mechanism through which men (sic) attempt to move from the periphery of a system to its centre. This is, movements are conscious efforts on the part of men (sic) to mitigate their deprivation and secure

justice(...) it implies voluntaristic action (...) movements are perhaps the chief mechanisms, through which the deprived categories demonstrate their power'. The role of ideology, collective mobilization, nature of leadership, organizational structure and communication are crucial for social movements. Unlike the earlier pre-independence movements, social movements in post-independent India imply a series of confrontations within groups or collectivities or with the nation-state for reallocation of societal resources-wealth, power, prestige/status or privilege, or for social transformation through violent and/or non-violent model modes. The movements that emerge with variations in goals are typified as secessionist, separatist, insultationist, welfarist and assimilationist, each or a combination of them having different impacts on the nation-state (Oomman, 1990). The goals of the movement may be radical, conservative or reformistic in kind. Mukherji (1977) classifies movements based on the quality of change, which is 'accumulative' suggesting intra-systemic change; 'alternative'; and 'transformative' suggesting systemic changes geared to create new structures.

## 1.7 NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (NSMs):

The historical conjuncture at which many of the New Social Movements (NSMs) emerged, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were characterized by, on the one hand, an ongoing crisis in post-world war ideologies and institutions, such as development, the nation-state and democracy, and on the other hand, an ability or failure of existing counter systemic movements, an institutions to address themselves to the issues raised by this crisis. As Amin (1993) points out, the organizational forms generated by the earlier movements (National liberation, working class) around the themes of class struggle and political ideology, with the objective of capture of state power, seemed to have 'exhausted their historical effectiveness.' The cracks in the notion of development, prescribed by the capitalist First World as a panacea for the post-colonial, Third World had begun to surface;

the perpetuation and exacerbation of unequal power relations, globally and within nation-states, the reckless exploitation of natural resources and the consequent ecological crisis, the destruction of Third World cultural and social forms regarded as 'primitive', and so on. The Third World state, far from living up to its promise as a guarantor of welfare and democracy, had, in the name of development and national security undermined the survival base of large sections of its citizens and curtailed their democratic rights. In recent times, with liberalization and predominance of corporate capitalism and the market, even its limited welfare function has been eroded (Anjali Monterio & Lakshmi Lingam, 1997).

The movements, (women, anti-caste, environmental, peace, and so on) that have surfaced in response to this crisis have been regarded as 'new' for the following reasons:

(1) They define their own exploitation, the system and the modes to end this exploitation in new ways. They are directed against forms of exploitation, which Marxists class analysis has not taken cognizance of, pointing to a need to rethink classical Marxist notions of the proletariat, base/superstructure and so on. The groups concerned (for example, backward castes, women, peasants) have either been ignored by traditional Marxist analysis or their exploitation is tied up with the 'new processes of contemporary capitalism' (Omvedt, 1993).

(2) These movements intervene in new areas, not traditionally within the ambit of movements environment, health, women, peace, shelter, and so on (Kothari, 1993).

They appear to throw up new conceptions of power and politics. While older movements and institutional forms, such as the left parties, view power as emanating from a small range of institutions and aim for the capture of state power, these movements have confronted various other modes of exercise of power (for example within the family, the community), broadening and redefining the scope of the political (Sethi, 1993). The capture



of state power is not the sole objective, and at times may not be an objective at all. There is a recognition of the need for continual struggle against injustice, whatever the party in power. As **Amin (1993: 87)** points out: For the choice is not 'struggle for power of struggle for something else' (what else ? ), but what conception one has of the power for which one is struggling. The forms of organization built around the dominant, 'traditional' conception of power (power equals state) are doomed to lose a good part of their legitimacy as people come to appreciate the nature of this conservative state.

(3) The movement has also thrown up new modes of organization, democratizing the political space, stressing self-government and decentralization (Kothari, 1993; Omvdet, 1993).

(4) While the movements may have varying visions of organization, many of them are premised on a critique of current development models and paradigms.

(5) These movements have often been characterized as movements around identity and symbolic/cultural spheres of action, as opposed to the 'strategic paradigm' in the resource mobilization theory (Shefner, 1995). This would be too simplistic a polarity, particularly in a Third World context, where material and technologies of power, from electronic surveillance to the mass media, are inextricably linked with the constitute an important component of present-day movements.

## **1.8 NEW FARMER'S MOVEMENTS AS NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:**

After discussing New Social Movements, we would now elaborate upon the term New Farmer's Movements. Tom Brass in his article 'Introduction: The New Farmers Movement in India' published in the Journal of Peasant Studies categorized the new farmers movements in three main themes. The first theme addresses the questions of definition. What are the new farmers' movements, and are they new? Are there parallels

with other forms of (urban) mobilisation elsewhere in the world during the 1980s which come under the general rubric of 'new social movements'? For very different reasons, and drawing very different conclusions, Lindberg, Omvedt and Brass agree that the farmers' movements are part of the new social movements that have emerged as a global phenomenon from the late 1960s onwards. Locating his analysis of the farmers' movements within a framework that combines interactionist collective identity formation with a structuralist interpretation, Lindberg eschews his earlier argument that the new farmers' movements in India are rich peasant mobilisations, and maintains instead that they are the response of a mass-based, commodity-producing peasantry to a state whose control over input/output prices affects rich, middle and (to a lesser extent) poor peasants alike. He describes such movements as new, not least because cognitively they draw on a plurality of traditions, are organisationally anarchic or postmodern, and lack a set of fixed criteria for membership. Much of this definition is shared by Omvedt, for whom the farmers' mobilisations in India are also part of the new social movement's world-wide: as with the latter, contemporary agitations undertaken by Indian peasants are non-political in form, and characterised by an anti-urban/anti-state/anti-capitalist ideological content.

In his second theme, Brass addresses questions relating to the historical back-ground and future direction of these mobilisations; in particular, the relationship between the new farmers' movements and the capitalist crisis, the fiscal crisis of the state, the Green Revolution, and the current trend towards neo-liberal economic policies.

The rise of the farmers' movements in Northern India is attributed by Gill to the decline in this area of prosperity generated by the Green Revolution (for a similar point made by Hasan, See below). Increasing market integration of surplus-producing medium - and small holding peasants made them vulnerable to price fluctuations in regard to both inputs and output. Accordingly, like the other regions of India where such mobilisations

have occurred, farmers' demands in Punjab include index-linked agricultural output prices, lower input prices, crop insurance schemes, the ending of bureaucratic **corruption**, and the imposition of rural quotas for entry into higher education and government employment. By contrast, Banaji links the farmers' movement in Gujarat to a different dynamic the interpenetration of rural and urban commercial interests, or the economic extension of Bharat into India.

The third area of interest, according to Brass, concerns the social composition of the new farmers' movements in India, an issue which raises a number of important and complex questions. For example, what kind of following, and why, do these new movements have? Is there any regional specificity to this, or do the movements in Maharashtra, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh all draw on the same kind of support? How was this support categorised in terms of class: are the farmers' movements composed predominantly of rich peasants, or middle peasants, or a combination thereof? And, most importantly, what were the attitude towards and/or the position in these movements of poor peasants and agricultural workers? If the latter did indeed support the objectives of the new farmers' movements was this conditional; if so, why, and if not, why not?

Sharing the views of Dhanagare, the contributions by Banaji, Assadi and Hasan all maintain that in terms of class composition, the farmers' movements are rich peasant organizations. Basing his argument on accounts of Shetkari Sanghatana conventions over the 1982-85 period, Banaji suggests that the Maharashtra movement is composed of better -off sections of the peasantry. For him, the Shetkari Sanghatana is an example of a rural coalition, or a mass organization led by an agrarian elite. Although the membership of the **KRRS** in Karnataka is also composed of rich peasants, Assadi points out that the latter nevertheless do not regard themselves as part of the Indian ruling class, and thus perceive themselves as unrepresented by the Indian state.

The contribution by Hasan demonstrates how in western UP the **BKU** finds support among those agrarian capitalists who are **surplus-producing** farmers operating more than eight acres. She also shows the important role they have in the production of food grains in northern India, a point also made by Lindberg with regard to peasant cultivators belonging to the BKU in both Punjab and UP. There are two crucial effect which follow from this. First, surplus-producing farmers in western UP are especially affected by government procurement schemes designed to provide cheap subsidized food for the less well off- in particular the urban proletariat. Accordingly, these farmers object to what they see as artificially low prices for their output, and consequently demand higher (or 'remunerative') prices. And second, the strategic economic importance of their position as food providers to the nation has given these surplus-producers a significant form of leverage over the Indian government.

As already mentioned, Lindberg by contrast sees the new farmers' movements as basically middle peasant movements engaged in conflict about the terms of trade between agriculture and industry. The leadership is **socio-economically** and politically heterogeneous, while the activists are drawn from the ranks of educated sons of farmers for whom there are no urban employment opportunities. A slightly different position is held by Gill, who argues that the farmers' mobilizations in Punjab, Haryana and UP have all attracted heterogeneous support, from every peasant stratum. Initially, therefore, both rich and poor peasants benefited from the Green Revolution; however, the decline in crop prices after the mid-1970s due to the deteriorating terms of trade between agriculture and industry, had a negative impact on the profits of rich peasants and the deficits of poor peasants, and it was this according to Gill that generated the farmers' movements. Like Lindberg, Gill also points to the fact that the core activists and militants of the farmers' movements in the Green Revolution belt of northern India have been drawn from farmers' sons denied urban

jobs linked to their educational attainments **and, further, that in** Punjab such cadres are also drawn from retired military and bureaucratic personnel with rural backgrounds.

## **19 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEW FARMER'S MOVEMENTS-SHETKARI SANGHATAN IN MAHARASHTRA AND THE BKU IN UTTAR PRADESH:**

The sociological imagination needs an insight into how collective identities are formed and into the social forces making those identities possible. In order to accomplish that one needs to draw not on one theoretical tradition alone, but on plurality of traditions. This could be amply demonstrated by analysing the two most active farmer's movements in the country: The Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra and the Bhartiya Kisan Union in Uttar Pradesh <sup>5</sup>.

### **1.10 Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra:**

The Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra is a modern type of organization and movement. The caste composition is very mixed, and it is hard to find any dominant caste in the movement as a whole, since the Sanghatana is found in widely different regions of the state. The leadership and cadres are drawn from among many different groups, extending from the political left to the right; participate in a second round of mobilization. Among them are found urban intellectuals from the Jaya Prakash Narayan's movement, the Lal Nishan party and so on. Local activists are often farmers' sons who have studied at colleges and universities, but have returned to take up farming because they could not find a job in the urban economy. (Ibid.)

Shetkari Sanghatana has focused its actions on one crop at a time, with the objective of enabling farmers to retain control over a substantial portion of what is harvested. This strategy, which is often thought to have been invented by Sharad Joshi, is in fact an old tactic used by the previous peasant movement: it was, for example, used by the cotton

farmers of Vidarbha district before Joshi entered the scene (Sahasrabudhey, 1989: 28-37). The particular contribution of Sharad Joshi is that he has applied the strategy with great skill to cover a large area, and has managed to make it into a national issue. Thus, the organizational form is anarchic actions rather than routing organization. There is no fixed membership, no fixed rule of organization, or strict tiers between local, intermediate and top levels in the organization. (Ibid.)

Sharad Joshi is a modern leader whose message is as much directed at the evils of the rural social structure as against urban exploitation. Rural society is seen to be backward because of urban bias, which leaves no surplus for the development of agriculture and rural industries. Joshi has developed a whole world-view around this core, which he has elaborated in a number of speeches and writings (cf. Dhanagare, 1990). His language and ideology is that of economics and cultural reform, with strong reference to previous works in Marathi of social reformers like Hotiba Phule and Ambedkar (cf. Omvedt, 1991a). It must also be seen against the background of social transformations in Maharashtrian society during the last century, where the caste system has been eroded by Harijan and anti-Brahmin movements, and where gender oppression is less pervasive than in North India (Dhanagare, 1990). More recently, this emphasis on cultural reform has taken a form of endorsing anti-Brahmin religious traditions (Omvedt, 1991b; 1992b).

The movement of Shetkari Sanghatana has also been involved in furthering a broad-based process of social transformation, of which the massive mobilization of rural women is perhaps the most interesting and politicization of women. The normal pattern of feminist politics is that of urban middle-class women working in small groups, supporting peasant and working class women, but rarely generating any major movement as such. In Maharashtra, by contrast, thousands of women have participated in the farmer's agitations, hundreds have gone to jail, and tens of thousands have held women's meetings on a grand

scale, the first taking place in Chandwad in 1986 with more than 150,000 participants (Omvedt, 1993). The Shetkari Sanghatana also receives support from activists engaged in other social movements, such as the Dalits, the Science forum, health-to-the-people and

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green movements (Omvedt, 1993) .

### 1.11 The **BKU** in **Uttar Pradesh**:

Comparing the BKU movement in UP to that with the Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra, we find that they are not only different in terms of origin, but also in composition. The BKU movement is primarily centered to few districts of Western UP, though it had some support in eastern part of the state as well and is dominated by the Jat caste which has dominated the region of western UP for a very long time. Initially, other farming castes of the region like muslims, gujjars, rajputs, brahmins etc. did participate in the agitation of the BKU, but the farmer's leadership couldn't retain their interest for long

From an international and cognitive point of view, the most interesting feature of the BKU is its seemingly traditional form and content. The *Jat khap* organization (based on a clan structure) is the backbone of the movement, with one of the foremost khap leaders, Mahender Singh Tikait, as leader. Some observers (Madsen, 1991: Hasan and Patnaik, 1992) claim that it was by using his position in this traditional system that Tikait was able to take over the leadership of the BKU in 1986. Yet, local, district and state units are organized in a modern organizational form (which, as is well known, developed in the transition to a capitalist industrial society in the West starting with the clubs in towns and cities). Formal membership, annual fees, rules, and boards with chairmen, secretaries and treasurers, exist at all level from the village to the state level. Similarly, BKU members sometimes invoke Arya Samaj and argue against excessive dowry gifts occasioned by

marriage; the practice of inter-caste action. In other ways, however, the ideology of the **BKU** is highly traditional and parochial, invoking Hindu religious symbols and the virtues of traditional rural society. Social reform has little or no relevance in agitations, and women have no role in the **BKU** except as housewives and servants. ('The women are standing behind us'), is what Tikait replies when asked about women's participation in the movement and women's issues. This is also a reflection of the patriarchal gender relations in Jat society. The strength of the **BKU** is very much related to the charismatic leadership of Chaudhry Mahender Singh Tikait to the extent that it is believed that **BKU** is just nothing without Tikait. However, Tikait's dominant position is also a basic weakness: there is a constant conflict below the surface on how to conduct the struggle, what issues to take up, how to relate to political issues and parties and so on. Thus, his position seems to prevent the emergence of alternative ideologies and strategies within the movement (Staffan Lindberg, 1994).

Important reasons for the differences in the two farmer's movements discussed above are, of course, the political and cultural variations to be found between the regions, and the way social transformation have taken place. There is, however, also a very important difference of ecology and political economy. In UP and Punjab (Haryana) there are very favourable ecological conditions for the application of the green revolution strategy and a stable agricultural growth. The Indian State is very dependent on the food and cash crops produced in these states for feeding the rest of the country (Patnaik, 1991). Whereas in the case of Maharashtra, in some parts, land is not so fertile and the farmers live a primitive life because they have to depend upon rainfed agriculture. So, their basic outlook and approach is not forward-looking. These farmers neither get any support from the political lobbies nor from the farmer's movements.



## 1.12 Media & Society

A democratic society cannot function without a free media representing public interests. The democratic tradition and liberty of press go hand in hand (see Keane, 1991). Briefly, the doctrine of freedom of speech associated with the press to birth in liberal political philosophy. It was recognized that freedom of speech, especially in the form of freedom of the press, had an important political role to play in a democracy. A representative government in democracy is elected by the people. It represents the majority's interests and secures the interests of minorities. In order to choose between real alternatives, democracy also ensures the fullest possible and qualitatively best participation of interested parties. A free press in this situation performs the watchdog function of protecting against the tendency of the state to abuse the rights of its citizens, and it also performs the democratic function of providing information to the electorate on interested parties and fostering debate on issues they would be voting on (see Keane, 1991; Lichtenberg, 1990; Kelley and Donway, 1990). Early liberal thinkers emphasized more on the role of the press as a watchdog against a despotic government. They believed that "the right to a free press was a political trump held by individuals against government" or "as check upon the conduct of the ruling few" (Keane, 1991: & 16).

While the role of media in early liberal thought was defined mainly in terms of a watchdog, the expectations from this medium widened with the development of mass society. In the words of Dhalgren (1991 : 1) "as the vision of democracy has evolved historically, so has the view of the desirability and feasibility of fora where the ruled can develop and express their political will to the rulers." And media are the key vehicles through which the 'ruled' can convey their opinions to the rulers. Among the various expectations from media as outlined by Gurevitch and Blumler (1994) are : reporting developments likely to impinge on the welfare of citizens; identifying key issues of the day

and setting the political agenda; acting as spokesperson of various perspectives and interest groups; facilitating a dialogue between rulers and mass public and across a diverse range of views and so on. Hutchins Commissions, in 1947 in the US, specified the additional role of the press which was: "to provide full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; to serve as a forum for the exchange of comment groups in society and goals and values of society" (McQuail, 1994: 124). With such developments, media occupied a significant role in society.

Media scholars like Dahlgren (1991), Eley (1992) have defined media in modern society as a part of the public sphere which is available to citizens to receive information on political and public issues and through which citizens can convey their opinions to policy makers. In a very general and common-sense manner, the concept of public sphere, according to Dahlgren (1991) can be used as a synonym for the processes of public opinion for the news media themselves. The idea of defining media as a public sphere has been extrapolated from the model of the 'Bourgeois public sphere' offered by Habermas (1989). In his celebrated works on the origin and development of the bourgeois public sphere in 18th Century Western Europe, Habermas defines the public sphere as a social space between market (economy) and the state in which private citizens get together to discuss public issues and question the absolutist state. While in the 18th Century only privileged people had the right to participate in this public sphere, the democratic political system in contemporary times theoretically provides this right to all citizens to participate, in public affairs and to decide the direction of society.

Present society is extremely diverse and pluralistic in nature with different political and social groups competing to influence political definitions and decisions. Notions like 'freedom', 'equality', 'order', 'public interest', which form the foundations of democracy no longer carry homogeneous meanings. With increasing consciousness towards one's

rights, different perspectives are available on the same notions. In a situation full of complexities and confusion, it is difficult to arrive at a consensus. Therefore, citizens also look for a common platform where all interests can interact with each other in order to reach a compromise and to decide the course of society. In such a situation, the media may be defined as a "liberal, constitutional public sphere permitting a rational, well-informed conversation between equals capable of resolving their differences by non-coercive means" (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1995: 9). According to Curran (1991), accessibility to this sphere and freedom to interpret social reality can be emancipatory in many ways. On the one hand, it provides an opportunity to subordinate groups to offer their perspectives and to question understanding and tolerance among people towards alternative perspectives.

### 1.13 Mass Media & Social Movements

The importance of mass media for social movements is undeniable, not only because of the impact they have on activists, but also and more importantly - because of their role in the construction of a movement's collective and public identity. Some authors on mass media: "The modern mass media have become central to the life and death of social movements" (Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986, 72). Similarly, Molotch (1979) calls the relationship of movements with mass media "a dance of death." Although not directly intended as such, the most radical expression of the importance of mass media comes from Melucci (1988), who characterizes social movements as new media that "publicize" existing conflicts and produce a symbolic challenge to the dominant codes of society. Movements are said to operate as "signs," their existence and form themselves being politically meaningful because of their capacity to render increasingly complex structures of power visible and to reveal the inadequacies and contradictions of the social system.

Typical for the state of the art in social movement research, Melucci is not very

specific about the conditions under which social movements express their symbolic challenge. A movement's challenge cannot exist by itself, but acquire relevance and potential only through interaction with the society it originates **from**, which is characterized by complexity, specialization the mediation of communication, and the overload of information. In such societies, the communication of a movement's challenge either in the form of its latent and inauspicious existence or in its manifest and temporal mobilizations - exists within a semiotic excess of old and new, strange and familiar, common and exotic signs, and it is reconstructed by other communicators, with the mass media definitely among the most powerful.

Mass media come in different technologies, genres, and sizes and have various purposes that range from the pursuit of commercial interests to the contribution to society's cherished values. As a result, the relevance of media to social movements has many faces - popular culture raising other issues than advertising (cf. Van Zoonen 1991a). News **media**, such as newspapers, current affairs programmes, and opinion weeklies, are of most interest in this context. Given their institutional assignment to represent reality-legitimated by and expressed in media laws, professional ethics, and organizational rules about such things as equal time and fairness-definitions constructed in news media easily obtain the status of "objective" and "factual" truth. The image of movements that news media construct thus "tends to become the movement' for wider publics and institutions, who have few alternative sources of information, or none at all, about it... When the movement is similar vein, Turner and Kilian (1957 328) claim that the public identity of a movement will determine" crucially the type and tactics of the opposition with which it is confronted, the circumstances under which it may recruit members, the degree to which it may operate through legitimate means and other circumstances. "Movements group themselves have recognized the importance of news media for their public identity, and many of them have

"appointed" spokespeople and operate with some kind of perspicacity involving the issue of press releases and holding press conferences.

Despite the crucial importance of news media to social movements, their role has not often been subjected to systematic examination: "Movements, media and sociology alike have been slow to explore the meaning of modern cultural surroundings" (Gitlin 1980, 1). Only accidentally, some theory and research on the relation between movements and news media emerge, apparently a result of individual research interests rather than of a substantial acknowledgment of the relevance of the area within social movement or media research. In political communication research, the focus is primarily on institutional and electoral politics.

Most authors think of mass media as possible instruments to realize movement goals. In an overview study, Kielbowicz and Schere (1986) assume that media can be instrumental to NSMs in at least three ways. First, they are considered an important means to reach a more general public and to acquire approval of ideas (mobilization of consensus) as well as to mobilize potential participants (mobilization of action; cf. Klandermans, 1998). For instance, Oegema and Klandermans (1990) have shown that 90% of the Dutch population obtained their initial information about a petition against cruise missiles from the media. Still, people were persuaded actually to sign the petition by interpersonal communication. Second, media coverage can provide symbolic links to other political and social actors, such as political parties, trade unions, and governments. It can put pressure on political agendas, which is particularly relevant for groups who hardly have access to political elites.

Goldenberg (1975), for instance, examined the agenda-setting function of the press for local citizen's groups in Boston. She found that whereas most groups easily obtained initial access to the media, reporters seldom considered them to be established routine and

reliable sources, which made it the agenda-setting effectiveness of the Boston media turned out to be disappointing from the movements' perspectives. Third, media can be important to the internal relations of social movements, because - as some authors contend they can provide participants with psychological support: "There is also the activists' sense that what they do matters in the world (Molotch 1979, 3; emphasis in original). Such psychological support contributes to the dedication of participants and many render inconspicuous activities, such as copying and canvassing, rewarding.

Even without much research to fall back on, it seems evident that in some cases media will indeed be instrumental in mobilizing support, putting issues on the political agenda, and boosting the morale of participants. However, as the omnipresent frustration of media testifies, media can do exactly the opposite as well: demobilize participants, mobilize opposition forces, wear out the credibility of movements, and alienate other political actors. For instance, media attention can become a goal in itself, resulting in a "politics of masturbation" (Molotch 1979, 73) and creating tensions and conflicts between media celebrities and the rank and file. In such cases there are hardly beneficial effects of media coverage; they "dysfunction" and undermine rather than enhance movement goals. According to Paletz and Entman (1981), such negative repercussions of media attention are more likely to occur than positive ones because of movements' inevitable conflicts of targets and style with established institutions and practices.

The reported ambiguity can be traced directly to the functionalist, instrumentalist view of mass media that is behind such thinking about movements and media. Attention is focused solely on the positive or negative function that media can fulfill for movements: they either mobilize public opinion and new participants, they alienate public support; they either strengthen bonds among participants, or they disrupt internal cohesion. Necessarily, the model of communication implicitly employed assumes that social movements are

relatively coherent entities in which ideas, plans, and strategies are discussed in a more or less rational manner (Aug 1986). From these discussions, clear message emerge correctly and without distortion, the wider public may be mobilized as participants or as supporters. On the other hand, if the media distort the movements' message, the public as participants trust. Thus, mass media are conceptualized as transmission belts producing single positive or negative stimuli to which an equally single response of audience will follow.

In instrumentalist perspectives on movement-media relations, the complex and contradictory practices that make up movements are ignored, and the varied journalistic mechanisms that constitute the final news product are neglected. Social movements are hardly coherent entities that discuss their ideas, goals, and strategies in a rational manner. "Movement" is a catch-all phrase for a variety of opinions, groups, organizational structures, activities, and participants who share the recognition of social problem and who disagree in many other ways. Bran (1987), thinks of social movements as structurally undermined; likewise, Freeman (1975, 72) contends that " a social movement organizations' lack of legitimacy and its dependence on the kind of commitment of its social base inevitably make it much more a creature of its environment than a traditional organization." As a result, the collective identity of movements is never stable; it is a social construction, arising from symbolic negotiation within movements, as well as from interaction with their political and social environment. "Individuals acting collectively construct their action by defining in cognitive terms their possibilities and limits, while at the same time interacting with others in order to 'organize' (i.e., make sense of ) their common behavior" (Melucci 1988, 226; emphasis in original). Collective identity should, thus, be thought of as a process of negotiation and conflict that is always subject to challenge and change and that may be better characterized by the term collective identifying.

#### 1.14 Parameters of Media-Movement Interactions:

Although a movement's public identity is defined in news media, it is constructed out of the interactions between movement and media rather than produced by news media alone. These interactions should not be conceived as an unruly frequency of idiosyncratic meetings between volatile phenomena such as NSMs with news organization merely reacting to an unpredictable range of news events. Instead, the epistemological and organizational features of news organizations produce interactions with NSMs that are highly structured and framed within the limits of the hegemonic social order.

To begin with, as a socially and commercially viable product, news can only exist within a consensus about what is old and what is normal. The whole notion of news implies a difference from established, day-to-day routines, procedures, ideas, norms, and values. Before we go to the second element, let us understand what is the meaning of the term 'news'. News is often defined as a coverage of objectively important things in the world (see Tuchman, 1972), in its temporal relation to those events - that is, news is "fresh", compared to, say, history. From this definition, follows that news can happen anywhere - in the mass media, of course, but also in a two-party conversation. The question "What's new?" can, in formal terms, elicit anything. But as (Molotch and Lester, 1974) points out "anything" as contextually structured in complex and interesting ways. As a formal matter, news is about anything; as a practical matter it is not. It is artfully constructed as an interaction between two or more human beings, and it is the nature of the participants, their power relative to one another, the historic movement they share, and all other particulars so their situation that will determine what is or is not news. Therefore, it is the social context, energized by actors' purpose-at-hand, rather than the substantive content of a given event that is the practical source of news.



A second element that contributes to the structured interaction of news media and NSMs lies in the organizational imperative to produce news on a regular (daily or weekly) basis. News work can be defined as "routinizing the unexpected" as Tuchman (1973) has called it. A news organization cannot wait for news to happen but it has to take measures to guarantee a regular flow of news of economic survival. Given the daily (or weekly) basis of news production, events must fit-into the 24hour rhythm of the news room. Both Tuchman (1978) and Schlesinger (1987) contend that news organizations amply time typifications in order to manage the ongoing flow of events. Tuchman distinguishes between "unscheduled", "prescheduled", and "nonscheduled" events, whereas Schlesinger sees "immediate", "diary" and "running" stories. These typifications enable the news organization to plan the activities of editors and reporters: "At the very least it enables a city-editor to state "Jones Smith will not be available to cover spot news stories a week from Tuesday because he will be covering the Bergman trial" (Tuchman 1978, 57-8). Moreover, time typifications tell reporters "where they are" in a story - at the beginning, middle, or the end - and provide them with expectations about anticipatable end points (Schudson 1986,99).

A third factor that structures the transformation of events into appropriate news items stems from hierarchies, procedures, and the professional culture within the news organization. Despite the popular image of journalism as a profession of rugged individualists who go out on their own and "smell" the news, it involves collective rather than individual processes. Within, as well as outside, their news organizations, journalists orient themselves on the norms and performance of their colleagues. Within the news organizations, such "colleague orientation" (cf. Tunstall 1971) prevents overt and time-consuming conflicts, outside the organization it provides a measure of the quality of one's own work and the quality of one's newspapers. As a result, however, the professional

culture of journalism is relatively closed and resistant to change, as the experience of outsiders such as women, ethnic, and advocate testifies (cf. Van Zoonen, 1989).

Considerations of time, place, and internal relations do not produce a step-by-step guide on how to make news. They **find** their expression in a shared notion of what journalists ought to be and how it should be performed, a collective idea of professionalism: several studies of media production,... seem to confirm the strong feeling held by established professionalism that they know how best to combine all available factors of production within the inevitable constraints" (McQuail 1987, 171). Objectivity is the key element in current western notions of journalistic professionalism and is pursued by several means, such as presenting a diversity of viewpoints and distinguishing between fact and comment. However, these means of objectivity seldom produce "objective" reporting because they too are guided by the considerations of place, time, and internal affairs. Thus, facts are only these figures that are consensually viewed as facts, and diversity of viewpoints becomes mainly diversity of institutional viewpoints.

### **1.15 News Media and "New" Politics:**

Whereas the events by the news may be new and unexpected, they are in the hegemonic terms of the known and accepted. Therefore, to understand the interaction between news media and NSMs, it is necessary to analyze how NSMs relate to existing hegemonic interpretations and definitions of political and social struggle. Several authors have discussed this issue using different terminologies. Offe's (1986) distinction between "old" and "new" political paradigms provides a useful point of departure. He considers NSMs to be protagonist of a new politics that challenges the old political paradigm of the welfare state, characterized by regulated conflict over material issues such as economic growth and material redistribution. Despite their differences, both the traditionally left-wing

and the traditionally right-wing parties operate within the rules set themes and values, organizational forms, and political actors.

According to Offe, NSMs also differ from politics as usual in their organizational forms and procedures. Internally, movement activists avoid hierarchies, specialization, and the monopolization of expertise. Responsibilities are shared, and participants are supporters rather than paid members. By and large, the eco-stores, is organized according to such horizontal principles. In their interactions with the outside world, the translation of their latent to their manifest existence (Brand 1987), movements also depart from traditional negotiate about it. Finally, Offe argues that movement politics is now because of its participants who are recruited from various social groups and who base their support on a common understanding and recognition of a problem instead of on their shared class or religious position, as is the case in traditional Western European politics.

The distinction between the old and the new political paradigm has been coined by other authors as a distinction between institutional and grassroots politics, old and young branches of movements, traditional and autonomous politics, moderate and radical politics, and so on (cf. Dablerup 1986; Freeman 1975; Gitlin 1980; Kielbowicz and Schere 1986; Outhshoorn 1986). Offe does to expect that both paradigms will come together. They can exist alongside each other in social movements, but their internal logic is so wide apart that they will not mingle. However, other authors such as Inglehart (1977), claim that coexistence is likely. Individuals and collectives can have both materialist and postmaterialist interests and can pursue them with a combination of old and new political means.

The structural tendency of news organizations to cling to the dominant social order sets limits on outcomes of media-movement interactions. In relation to themes and values.

for instance, it would seem that the news organizations preference for clear-cut events with a predictable time table and straight-forward solutions is very much at odds with the kind of knowledge produced in NSMs: by "environment," or unfinished, and versatile long-term and broad issues, such as "the wona's question," "the environment," or "peace," which do not lend themselves to negotiation and compromise, are what concern NSMs. Traditional organizational forms with selected leaders, spokesperson, specialists, and clear responsibilities meet the organizational requirements of journalists far better than the horizontal procedures followed in NSMs. Thus, it seems that groups and collectives within NSMs that adhere to the rules of the old political paradigm stand a better chance in interactions with the media than those who follow the new politics (Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986) conclude similarly when they say that moderate elements in NSMs (practicing old politics) have a better relationship with news media than radical ones (engaged in new politics).

However, at least two tendencies undermine such a general conclusion. First, in NSMs, old and new, traditional and autonomous, institutional and grass roots, and moderate and radical politics mingle, to the extent that new themes are often discussed in old ways and with old strategies; whereas old themes are carried and media will take it quite unpredictable. Second, the news organization itself has also been subject to change and variability, not in the least because of the influence of NSMs. Whereas organizational procedures and news routines still operate in favour of the old political; **paradigm**, journalists as individuals have been influenced by NSMs, especially by the student movement. The activists turned journalist is not a rare creature, nor is the cynical professional converted by the concerns and enthusiasm of NSMs. Contributing to this process is the fact **that** journalists and NSMs activists tend to be recruited from the same social and educational circles (cf. Gitlin 1980). However, the influence of the women's or

ethnic movements on journalism has been negligible (Van Zoonen 1988, 1989). Thus, the structural tendency rooted in the **epistemological** and organizational features of news media to frame the public identity of NSMs within the limits set by the old political paradigm will not completely determine the construction of the **movement-as-news**. Several ideological, organizational, and individual factors can undermine that structural tendency, leading to the publication of alternative images of "new" movement politics. The construction of movement's public identity should, therefore, be seen as the articulation of structural and conjunctural factors, the outcome of which is an empirical rather than a theoretical question.

Let us first take our social movement, i.e., the farmers' movement of Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Western UP. Considering this movement in the light of the conditions laid down for the emergence and sustenance of NSMs, we find that it fits in the new model of NSMs. As Zoya Hasan, from Centre for political studies, School of Social Science, JNU, puts it "The decade of the 1980s witnessed the emergence of two interrelated changes in UP. The first represented an unfolding and crystallization of surplus-producing farmers as a major political force in the 1980s, and the second was the growing momentum of surplus-producing farmers as a major political force in UP. Both these developments heightened the growth of a powerful farmers' movement during the 1980s, when farmers mobilized to demand remunerative prices for agricultural and industrial sectors. All in all, farmers, politics and the agricultural sector have attracted the attention of political parties across the wide spectrum, leading to an increase in the influence exercised by surplus producers over economic policies of the state."

Analysis of the BKU's movement focuses on the structural contradiction in the polity and economy of UP that generated grievances and thus enhanced the assertion of farmer power and a willingness to act politically through the farmer's movement (as in NSMs model "They (Farmer) define their own exploitation, the system and modes to end this

exploitation in new ways.', 'These movements appear to throw up new conceptions of power and politics' and 'While the movements may have varying visions of transformations, many of them are premised on a critique of current development models').

#### **1.16 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BKU'S MOVEMENT IN WEST UP & ITS LINKAGES WITH THE PROMINENT REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS:**

In the forefront of the Farmers' movement in UP was the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), formed in 1978, with units established in Delhi, Haryana and Western UP. In 1980, the 'Punjab Khetabri Zamindar Union', a farmer's organization, was converted into Punjab Unit of the BKU. This gave a big fillip to the movement in North-west India. The UP branch failed to show much activity at the time of its formation. In fact, the BKU in UP came in prominence only in 1987, when a concerted effort was made to resurrect the organization in order to fill the political vacuum left by the death of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the leading protagonist to rural interests, Chief Minister of UP, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in the Janta Dal government (1977-79) and the non-availability of electricity to the farmers for irrigation and the high-handedness and corruption amongst the government officials.

Under the little known and illiterate farmer's leadership of Mahendra Singh Tikait, the BKU captured national attention in the initial agitation in March, 1987, and subsequently in the winter of 1988 when its supporters laid siege to Meerut in Western UP, in pursuit of demands for higher sugarcane prices, lower farm input prices, waiver of loans, higher rural investment and lowering of electricity and water rates. Thousands of farmers thronged the Commissioner's office in Meerut for over three weeks, dramatically placing the farmer's demand before the government, media and the public at large. This was followed by a massive rally in New Delhi, boat Club in 1988 itself. Both agitations were

militant in nature and received widespread support; they lasted for days, roads were blocked, and villages were closed to government officials and politicians. Farmers refused to pay taxes and electricity bills, or to clear their interests on loans from banks and credit cooperatives (Hasan, 1989). The subsequent agitations at Lucknow, Bhopa, New Delhi etc. which were attended by a large number of farmers made it apparent that the farmer's movement had struck a responsive chord in Western UP's rural areas, and captured the imagination of large sections of the rural community. Political leaders of all political parties were anxious to associate themselves with the movement, in order to be seen as the champions of the farmers. But, the BKU did not allow any politician to speak from its stage, not even members of Chaudhary Charan Singh's family were allowed to share their platform, despite the fact that this region was the undisputable base of Charan Singh's power, and the farmers consistently voted for Lok Dal/Janta Dal candidates in every election.

For the purpose of our study, the BKU's farmer's movement is divided into five main phases i.e., the initiation of the movement from Shamli in Muzaffarnagar district in March 1987, the great Meerut March i.e., the siege of Meerut Comissionary compound by about 3 lac farmers in January-February 1988, the farmer's sit-in at the Boat Club very close to the seat of power, the Parliament and the Central Secretariat in October, 1988, a local agitation in July, 1989 at Bhopa in Muzaffarnagar district, farmers panchayat in state capital Lucknow in July, 1990. These five phases cover the initiation and reaching to the peak of the farmer's movement in the North. The present study would closely study these phases of 'farmer's movement vis-z-vis the role of the two prominent newspapers of the region. Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran in propagating and sustaining the farmer's movement/vice versa'.

The two newspapers chosen for the present study, i.e., Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran

started as very small community newspapers more than 52 years ago. Since **then**, the communities they were catering to changed drastically and so did the newspapers. The population, literacy level, standard of living, transition phase from typical rural to urban ways etc., have brought a change in the readership profile of these newspapers which in turn led to the change of the newspapers policies. Today, both these newspapers have multi-editions, being published from every region of UP. Dainik Jagran and **Amar Ujala** have 12 editions each within UP and outside. In 1996, Amar Ujala was the first Hindi daily to launch Hindi economic daily newspapers from three centers **Kanpur**, Bhopal and Jaipur. But, this project did not pick up and these publication were suspended in May'99.

Amar Ujala is the most read newspaper in the rural areas of the two districts, Bagpal and Muzaffarnagar which we have selected for our study. Dainik Jagran was first to start its Meerut edition which catered to both the districts in 1984 and Amar Ujala followed in December 1986. The launching of Amar Ujala's Meerut edition which also catered to the readers of both districts coincided with the BKU's agitation which originated from the Muzaffarnagar district and established itself as a full-fledged agitation. Amar Ujala is said to have covered this movement with special focus and within two to three years of the BKU agitation it left Dainik Jagaran behind in circulation. Amar Ujala picked up circulation from meagre 10,000-15,000 in December, 1986 but, now its circulation has increased to about 2.5 lakhs (Meerut edition). Today, although BKU's movement has died down and lost its clout to a great extent, but Amar Ujala has sustained this readership amongst the farmers and the rural segments of these districts.

### **1.17 Review of Literature:**

In India, several studies of social movements have been conducted in the recent past. They have examined various processes and formations (Singh 1986). In particular, they



have focused on the national liberation struggle under which all the movements during the freedom struggle were supposed to be subsumed (Oommen 1985). They have classified various social movements as reformist movements, transformative movements and revolutionary movements (Rao 1984). According to Oommen, it is the dialectic between historicity, social structure and the urge for a better future which provides the focal point of analysis in any study of movements. Mukherjee defines movement as a collective mobilization seeking change of structure either through institutional or non-institutional means (Mukherjee 1977).

As it happened in some developed countries also, the seventies in India witnessed the emergence of grassroots movements searching for a new harmonious relationship between man and nature and man and man. These movements have given rise to a new consciousness of equality, democratization of everyday life, and a place for nature in the constitution and preservation of human life. However, little work has been done on theorizing these movements in contemporary India. One reason behind the relative neglect of the new movements has probably been the assumption that in post indictment **India**, as in a capitalist democracy in general, the master conflict is centered around the implementation of class/citizenship. Thus, most of the movements were viewed as class/citizenship movements which aimed at the mobilization of disadvantaged social groups on the basis of class, caste or region for inclusion in the democratic polity (Swagger 1986; Agarwal and Narain 1985; Das 1988). While citizenship conflicts were based on distributive inequalities between groups and classes, the ecology and nuclear energy conflicts revolved around negative externalities of industrial modernization (Joppke 1991).

The situation of peasantry in India was to be studied in relation to the historical process of colonialism. As Claude Lévi-Strauss stated in 1966, in the historical process of colonialism, one part of mankind treated another as an object. This point has been noticed

by P.C. Joshi who has highlighted the lack of concern of the salient features of colonialism which was imposed upon India by Great Britain. Anthropological studies in India lacked an anti-colonial and anti-feudal consciousness during the period before independence. Tribals and peasants were treated as objects of observation and research; and the studies were directed to suit the needs of colonization and proselytisation. European scholars who conducted field studies in one part of India or another could not make impartial studies. Many of them had bias of one kind or the other even if they had no intention to feed the colonial interests. They could not give consideration or importance to the peasants, whom they studied. Some of the European scholars are indeed quite willing to accept this limitation of their field studies conducted by Europeans in India and the studies which Indians themselves are capable of doing in their chosen districts or villages.

American anthropology had assumed two approaches to peasant studies. The first tried to understand the mental processes of peasants, with the objective of arriving at a definition of peasant values or world view. The second approach was to study the material, economic, and political process at work in peasant life. This meant the construction of a political economy of peasantry. The first approach can be linked to the cultural encounter between the country and the city; this can also be a distinction between civilization and folk or a contrast between the great tradition and the little tradition. The second approach links cultivators to the economy and polity on the one hand and to market and state on the other. What is very important in the development of peasant studies in the United States is the approach between anthropology and political economy. What we find is not the differences in definitions but the divergences in approach to the policy and state in the changing world. Wolf, in his strenuous efforts to study peasantry introduced innovative approaches. He found it necessary to distinguish between the present and the primitive cultivator. The peasant was long thought of as a primitive cultivator; and peasant looked down with

contempt upon the cultivator.

Thomas and Znaniecki (46, pp. 1367-1936) wrote of the Polish rural press around and shortly after the turn of the century. The press served to reintegrate Polish peasants into the wider community at a time when the isolation of traditional peasant communities was breaking down and individuals were being incorporated into the emerging political system of the nation. Redfield (38, pp. 1-14) analyzed the role of the press in the social change and modernization processes in a traditional Mexican village. Later Reisman (39, pp. 105-132) commented upon the socializing functions of print in the transition from traditional to inner-directed society. Although these sociologists were not discussing systemic integration effects as such, they did specify the role of media either in fostering identification and accommodation with the emergent mass society or as a process of reintegration necessary for continuity in transitional periods.

Studying a Colombian rural community, Haney (1969) found evidence that most of its farmers were encircled by poverty due to the influence of a complex set of local and national institutions that systematically eroded their earnings, savings, and investments. Drade (1971) found that Colombians located in key economic, social, and political positions in the community studied had sufficient power to use communication channels as deterrents of institutional changes. The clearly different effects of communication on Colombian farmers endowed with a managerial ability to make autonomous decisions versus those constrained by structural factors were verified by Grnig (1968a, 1968b). Parra (1966) found that 73% of the variance in adoption in one Colombian rural community was explained by two variables: access to mass communication and size of farm.

Roca (1969) demonstrated that Peruvian newspapers, directly responsive to large landowning interests, were heavily biased against movements of landless peasants. A strong influence of "patron dependence" on peasants' communication behavior and innovativeness

was identified in Brazil by Quesada (1970) and in Peru by Mejia Rodriguez (1971). To list but a few more pertinent studies of the many available, the Brazilian studies of Martins Echavarrial (1967), Fonseca (1966), and Diaz Bordenave (1966) showed the overwhelming influence of structural (socioeconomic) factors on (1) peasants' access to instrumental information, and (2) the adoption of new farm ideas.

Felstehausen (1971: 5, 7) concludes: "The roles and effect of communications is dictated by the large structure.... The manner and rate with which new technology is adopted cannot be interpreted independently from the social and economic system where that technology is introduced. It is unreasonable to expect that the burden of lifting these constraints can be borne primarily by improved communication (information and motivation) or even by more effective public administration. It is rather a question of institutional changes."

Does the underlying premises in diffusion research show up in the model's characteristics? Diffusion research has found that certain variables are positively and consistently related to the adoption of agricultural innovations: size of farm, income level, social prestige, educational level, and mass media exposure. Diffusion investigations, however, note analysts such as Cuellar and Gutierrez (1971), have not perceived the crucial influence of the general social-structural situation that may lie behind these variables. Moreover in spite of the fact that such variables were correlated positively with each other, diffusion researchers have failed to understand them as components of a far broader and more determinant factor: the power structure of society. This factor, the critics contend, is largely what defines who is an "innovator" and who remains a "Laggard". Cuellar and Gutierrez (1971) add that the diffusion model's concept of "leadership" hides "elite" or "oligarchy," that "cosmopolitaness" disguises the connection of interests between rural and urban power-holders, and that the term "reference group" may serve to dilute the reality of "internal

domination" which victimizes the peasantry. Thus, gone is "the illusion that a farmer is an individual who has access to information and makes his own decisions" (Diaz Bordenave, 1974:205).

In other words, diffusion research has shown us that those few privileged farmers who (1) own land (particularly more land than most other), (2) enjoy a high socioeconomic and educational status, and (3) have ample mass agricultural technologies. Did we not somehow know this long ago in Latin America? And, if we did not, to what use are we putting this knowledge today? To concentrate rural development energies in the service of the "easy-to-convince" minority so that it gains even more economic and social power while the peasant majority's further deprived and oppressed? The ultimate questions, then are why is this so, and what should be done about it. The answer-"structural changes"-comes through strongly, over and over again, throughout the pertinent literature.

A few diffusion researchers have been exceptionally alert and open to criticisms such as those just reviewed. One of these is Everett Rogers, whose worldwide experience with this tradition has included much work in Latin America. He readily accepted-and even encouraged-conceptual and methodological criticisms of the diffusion model. This led him to diffusion paradigm and to promote experiments with new research techniques that would insert the model in a more social-minded, relational, and cause-finding direction (Rogers, 1975a).

Much Indian work dealing with communication and change has been reported in the summary of Studies on Extension Education published in 1970 by the Indian Society of Extension Education. Several institutional inventories have also proved helpful, among them the abstracts of student and staff research reports in the graduate programme at National Chengchi University (Taiwan, China). An interesting and useful synthesis of the lessons of communications research for practitioners is available as a Unesco publication prepared by

There is considerable similarity in the focus of studies reported in all of these inventories. To a large extent, research has been media centric, dealing with the structure of the mass media, the law of messages from a source to a "user", media audiences and audience responses, and the adoption or non-adoption of recommendations that are transmitted from some central authority or source. These studies with the uneasy feeling that by focusing so heavily upon one-way communication they may actually have delayed the recognition of other communication processes that are fully as important to rural change.

Felicia no places the work that has so far been done in three major categories. The first she calls studies of the *media infrastructure*. Some are historical, some are descriptive and statistical. The data on which they are based are often speculative and inconsistent. Yet they are indispensable as bench-marks for assessing changes in the media. The second category' (studies of communicators and audiences) is the one in which most work has been done, with special attention to final step by which information reaches the ultimate user. The very extensive work on adoption of new farming practices and other modern ideas (examples are cited from India, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea and Philippines) is categorized under this heading.

The third broad category of research is tentatively called developmental-type studies. These deal mostly with the role of the mass media particularly the print media, in advancing the goals of particular development programmers in such fields as agriculture, health, family life, national integration, government and public affairs, youth affairs, etc. The author's criticism of these studies stresses their failure to comprehend the whole picture of an area of development, dealing instead with fragmentary aspects. This arises from three factors:

- 1 Limited scope of the studies.
- 2 Insufficient attention given to the form and content of the developmental

information that appears.

- 3 Where content analysis is used, there is little effort to identify or explain the important relationships between content and editorial policy, governmental policy, and audience reactions.

Most of the development communications studies Feliciano examined seem to agree on one point: the inadequacy with which most mass media cover development news. Stories of unquestioned importance to the economic or social welfare of a country often get scanty attention, and statistical data and other significant facts are often badly reported.

Other reviews of communications research in Asia are consistent with Feliciano's conclusions. The abstracts of research in Taiwan cited earlier reported a heavy emphasis on content analysis of particular media, as well as considerable attention to the mass media audience. The greatest contribution of the work cited from India has been its clarification of the adoption process and of the way in which particular pieces of information travel from a research worker or other source to the farmer. The Indian studies have done a significant service in emphasizing how much local fact-to-face communication contributes to the whole process of change in rural life. They have not, however, given a satisfactory counterweight to our media-centric habit of viewing communication as a sort of pipeline system at the end of which a thirsty public waits.

Efforts were made to find out whether specific studies were undertaken on the basic premises of our research and the two newspapers we have chosen for our study. After review of literature, it was found that no specific research of farmer's movement in terms of mass media impact has been undertaken so far. However, three studies on the content analysis of the coverage on agriculture were found to have been undertaken on Amar Ujala, one of the newspapers we have selected for our study. They are as follows:

- 1) Content and coverage of Rural News by Regional Paper Amar Ujala (Bareilly)

edition) by **Shamsul** Hasan, Junior Research Officer and Satish Roy, Department of Agricultural Communication, G.B. Pant University, Pantnagar, UP. from (January 1, 1987 to December 31, 1987).

- 2) A study of Content and Coverage of Amar Ujala (Meerut Edition), Department of Agricultural Extension. R.B.S. College, Agra University, R. **Sharma**, (1979).
- 3) A Comparative Study of Content and Coverage of Farm Information in daily Hindi newspapers (Amar Ujala, Thesis of Msc. (Agriculture), Department of Agricultural Extension. R.B.S. College, Agra University, Jaga Singh, (1984).

#### 1.18 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To understand the dynamics of the farmer's movement in Uttar Pradesh with particular emphasis upon the Bhartiya Kisan Union (**BKUs**) movement in western UP.
- 2) To trace the role of Indian language newspapers in creating awareness amongst the masses.
- 3) To study the role played by the two prominent Hindi daily newspapers of UP, Amar Ujala and **Dainik jagran** (Meerut editions) in creating consciousness amongst the farmers of **Muzaffarnagar** and Meerut (now Bagpat) districts of Western UP during the BKUs movement in the state.

The details of Research Design i.e. selection of newspapers and the period of the study, coding schedule, interviews, profile of the area of the study of research etc., has been given in the next chapter.



## Chapter-II

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Section 1. Content Analyses:

Content Analyses has been identified as an effective tool and a tested technique in Social Sciences Research. This technique is frequently used in Communication Research Studies. It is a "Multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigation of any problem in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference" (Holsti, 1969:2). It has been used for various purposes such as to study psychological state of people; to figure out the existence of propaganda; to determine the focus of the people or institutional or societal attention; to discern the trends in communication content etc. (Berelson, 1952; Weber, 1985; Krippendorff, 1980). Holsti (1969) defines "objectivity" in terms of stating explicit rules and procedures employed in research; 'Systematic' means consistent rules or procedure in selection of content or in defining categories; and 'quantitative' means recording the numerical data or frequencies (Also see Stempel, III, 1989).

According to Krippendorff (1980:21) "Content Analyses is research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context". Its "purpose is to provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts, and a particular guide to action". The major requirement of this technique, as can be deciphered from the above definitions, are an objective and systematic approach and replicability. Such requirement, according to this scholar, can be met by making the rules explicit which also ensures the reliability of the method and the research conducted. It can allow others to replicate the study in order to draw the same inferences or to check the accuracy of results. According to Krippendorff (1980:49) "explicitness about the process is required so that others may evaluate researcher's work,

replicate the process, or qualify the finding". Although, objective is a desirous feature in this technique and can be observed in Berelson's definition, some scholars like Carney (1972) and Krippendorff (1980) have also argued that objective can not be absolutely ensured. Krippendorff argues that Content Analyses looks in to the symbolic meaning of message and meaning are always subjective and not essentially shared. Message do not always carry single meaning and hence can be interpreted from various perspectives. In his words "Message may convey a multitude of content even to single receiver. Under these circumstances, the claim to have analyzed the content of communication replicates on untenable position... Although consensus or inter subjective agreement as to what message means would simplify a Content Analyses tremendously, it exists only regarding the most obvious or manifest aspect of communication, or only for a few people that happen to share the same cultural and socio-political perspective" (p.22). Thus, meaning may be interpreted within a certain context in which it occurs countering the claims of complete objectivity.

Apart from the impracticability of complete objectivity, the technique suffers from other limitations (see Carney, 1972). Such limitations, for instance, include restricted focus, building of subjectivity into the actual procedures of Content Analyses; probability nature of inferences, and its quantitative nature. As far as quantitative nature and recording of partial messages is concerned Krippendorff (1980) seems to justify that the technique may provide only facts in recording the data. However, the facts interpreted within a certain social context become meaningful and significant. Although accumulating numerical data is the primary purpose of Content Analyses, the quantitative data may also highlight the qualitative aspects of coverage (see Holsti, 1969). Similarly, (Weber 1985:70) stress that "data do not speak for themselves, but the research must explain them in the sense that frequencies or facts can be used as an indicator of a phenomena (Krippendorff: 1980) for instance; within this study the quantitative facts of the nature of coverage would help in analyzing the attitude of media

towards farmer's issues within the wider sociocultural context of Indian society. However, while analyzing the coverage of the farmer's movement by the newspapers, I would also study and highlight the qualitative aspects of the coverage.

Content Analyses was employed for this study for various reasons. First of all, Content Analyses is the only technique which is capable of dealing with complex and voluminous data like newspapers (Carney, 1972). Since this study deals with coverage of news/issues of farmer's movement in the press, Content Analyses was considered to be suitable to generate data. Secondly, although Content Analyses is not capable of reading between the lines or digging out below the manifest content (Van Zoonen, 1994), however, in view of the dearth of the most basic empirical research in this field in India, it was decided to proceed with the preliminary question regarding the coverage of any particular issue. Thirdly, in view of the aims of this study to investigate the nature and trends of coverage of farmer's movement, to determine what themes/issues in creating consciousness amongst the farmer's are to be brought to the attention of public, and what could be possible reasons of covering certain themes/issues and not covering others within the given theoretical context, Content Analyse was considered appropriate. The purpose of Content Analyses in this study is to document the general trends in coverage and analyse them within the broader sociocultural context. However, it is also suggested that after such an initial enquiry into the general investigation of the kind of coverage further research must look into the qualitative nature of particular issues involved and provide an in-depth Analyses.

#### **A. Selection of Newspapers and time frame of the study:**

As mentioned earlier, print media and Hindi language newspapers were chosen to investigate the coverage of farmer's movement news/issues because the farmers in Western U.P. read Hindi newspapers as the region of our study is Hindi speaking. Since electronic

media was still emerging as a potent medium during the duration of our study, i.e. 1987-90, two newspapers **Amar Ujala** & Dainik Jagran having maximum readership in the region were selected for the study.

Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran (Meerut Editions), two most prominent newspapers of Uttar Pradesh, having multi-editions divides the total readership amongst themselves. These newspapers are read by the farmers, farmer movement activists and covered the movement. The Content Analyses was done in a fixed time frame, i.e. one week period each of the five important phases of the movement which covers almost all important phases of the movement at different locations. The reason for taking one week time frame was that while going through the newspapers it was felt that the activities of the farmers were covered by the newspapers, comprehensively, only during some demonstrations, dharnas etc. at various places and there was almost negligible coverage when there was no such activities. So, one week time frame of active period of agitations were considered for analyses. The five important phases of BKU's movement which were covered in this research are:

1. March, 1987 (**Initiation** of the movement from **Shamli** in Muzaffarnagar district).
2. Jan -Feb, 1988 ( **Dharna** at Meerut **commissionary** by the farmers)
3. October, 1988 (Farmers sit-in at Boat Club, New Delhi).
4. August, 1989 ( Farmer's demonstration at Bhopa in Muzaffarnagar District of U.P)
5. July, 1990 (Farmer's panchayat in the state capital, Lucknow)

In both the districts of our study i.e. Muzaffarnagar and Bagpat, two villages from each district were chosen. Out of these villages, one was a big roadside 'kasba' (small town) one isolated (away from the roadside) village. From Muzaffarnagar district 'Ailum' (Kasba) which is on the main road (Delhi-Sharanpur road) and a small village 'Kaniyan' was taken. Similarly, from Bagpat district, 'Chaprauli' (kasba) was taken and a small village on the Haryana - UP Border 'Kakoor' was considered for interviews of the farmers.

## **B. Coding Schedule:**

A coding was designed to look into the coverage of the farmer's movement news/issue in the selected papers i.e. **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** (Meerut Editions). The schedule contains usual variables like month, date, page no., picture, position of item to draw general information and trends of coverage. The major characteristics noted would be the type of the **item**, year, author of **item**, actors quoted/ referred to, items covered in magazine supplement or mainstream paper and placement of the news/photograph. Comparative Analyses of the two newspapers in terms of coverage and placement was also done. A news story was defined as a story which is event-oriented, records the facts and is objective in its reporting. It does not initiate a debate, may be exploratory in nature but is not analytical. This distinction forms one of the major criteria to determine the quality of coverage devoted to farmer's movement news / issues. Further, the author of the story reveals the importance attached to the story in terms of whether a story is reported/ authored by a Special Correspondent or general Reporter/ Correspondent. The actors quoted/ interviewed/ referred to, formed an important variable.

## **2.2 Section II. Interviews:**

While Content Analyses would be employed mainly to investigate the nature and trends of coverage, semi-structured interviews with farmers, journalists who had covered the movement, farmer activists and leaders were also conducted for a deeper understanding of the attitude of the press towards the farmer's movement and to ascertain its role in creating consciousness amongst the farmers. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions focusing on various dimensions was used to elicit information and opinions of farmers, journalists and activists on the coverage of farmer's news/issues in the newspapers. Talking

about the advantages of open-ended questions, Cohen and Manion (1994) maintain that such questions allow flexibility to the interviewer, provide a chance to probe deeper into the issue to exhaust respondent's knowledge; establish rapport; give an opportunity to assess the beliefs of respondents; are capable of providing unexpected or unanticipated information which may prove to be useful. The pattern of interview schedule contain general to specific questions. Respondents were allowed to express their opinions at length.

### 2.3 **Area of the Research Study:**

#### (a) **Profile of Uttar Pradesh:**

The State of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in Northern India has had a significant influence on the social, economic, and political history of the country. Geography alone assures its position as the agricultural heartland. UP comprises almost half the Gangetic plain, one of the most fertile tracts in the world which is popularly known as Western UP. It was the most populous State of India with a population of 13.91 crores in 1991. The population density of 473 persons per sq. Km was more than one and a half times the national average. Almost one out of every six Indians live in UP. although the state comprises only one-tenth of the country's land area (India, office of the Registrar General, Census of India, General Population Tables).

UP dominates the agricultural scene of the nation. In the 1990s, it accounted for about one-tenth of the net cultivated area in the country but one-fourth of the total irrigated area. Its contribution to total food-grain production was over one-fifth, while its share in wheat and sugarcane production were more than 35 and 40 percent, respectively (Uttar Pradesh, Department of Agricultural, Uttar Pradesh 'Ke Krishi Ankre'). Land is a basic but limited natural resource in UP and with increase in population, its per capita availability had declined from 0.34 hectares 1970-71 to 0.27. hectares in 1980-81, and further to 0.21 hectares in 1990-91.

About two-thirds of the state lies in the Gangetic plain, and 90 percent of its population lives there. This highly fertile, intensively cultivated heartland incorporate three great rivers - the Ganges, the **Yamuna**, and the Ghagra-which rise in the Himalayas and flow roughly parallel to each other before they link near the state's Eastern border. Our area of study within **UP**.i.e. the Western UP lies in this region. Western U.P consisted of 19 districts of the state accounting for about 30 percent of the total area of the state and population of over one-third with a population density of about 480 persons per square Km. (India, **office** of the Registrar General, Census of India, General Population Tables). However, parameters of agricultural performance indicate that the Western region is mostly developed. Only 75 percent of the population in Western U.P is rural compared with 90 percent in the East (Singh 1987).

In the beginning of the 20th century, in Western U.P the historical factors were acting positively towards expansion of cultivation of commercial crops: the prevalence of 'khudkast' proprietors (cultivator-owners), public investment in irrigation, availability of credits and **sugarmills** (Neale 1962; A Siddiqui 1973). Western U.P was the most dynamic region in India, with the highest rate of growth of both food-grains and commercial crops output; under a moderate khudkast system ('bhaichara' system), it enjoyed the benefits of the heaviest concentration of public investment in canal irrigation along with Punjab in whole India. At independence, the region emerged with one of the most polarized class structures and conditions were exceptionally favourable in this region for widespread adoption of cultivation of cash crops. This is not to say that it was benefiting all rural households (K Siddiqui 1998).

The Western region districts witnessed a markedly faster agricultural growth than other parts of the state. Along with Punjab and Haryana, Western UP experienced largest growth of rural capital investment. The impact of 'new technology' was greater in this region

partly because Western UP was well endowed with canals and irrigation works established at the turn of the century, as a result of which the region was transformed into one of the richest tracts during the colonial period (Neale 1962). This process of regional growth also manifested itself in the emergence of an **infrastructure** and the expansion of market towns; commercial farming also gained impetus (Pardhan 1966). As a result, Western UP differed from Eastern UP and polarization between absentee landlords and peasant producers did not occur to the same degree in Western UP as in Eastern UP (Amin 1984).

Within Western UP, our topic of research is concerned with the two districts **Muzaffarnagar** and **Meerut**, now, **Bagpat** which remained in the forefront of the **BKU** movement, both are adjoining districts and dominated by Jat farmers who were the backbone of the movement. We have taken two villages and two small towns from these two districts as the core area of our study for field survey. Farmers from these four places were selected for interviews and the four farmer leaders also hail from these two districts. A brief profile of our core area of study is necessary. Recently, Meerut district has further been bifurcated into **Bagpat** and **Meerut**, but, since, our study deals with the time frame of 1987-90, we shall take it as Meerut district, although one village and small town has now come under the jurisdiction of district **Bagpat**. Both the districts of our study lie in the plains of Western UP and are blessed with fertile alluvium soils of Gangetic region. The climate of the region is semi-arid. The annual rainfall average (1982-91), was about 801 mm and was distributed over a period of about 80 days. During the time frame of our study (1987-90), in both the districts, about 50 per cent holdings were of less than one hectare. The farmers having 1-2 hectares are about 20 per cent. The large farmers having land more than 5 hectares are only 4.56 per cent in the region and 2.87 per cent in Meerut district. The table (2.1) gives an exact picture of landholding distribution in the region.



**Table: 2.1****Land Holding Patterns in Western UP**

Size of Holding	Percentage from total holding	Permanent sown area concerned	Average size of holding
Below 1.0	58.51 (59.18)	16.08 (20.30)	0.37
1.0 to 2.0	19.52 (21.80)	19.38 (23.86)	1.31
2.0 to 3.0	9.17 (8.66)	16.52 (17.0)	2.41
3.0 to 5.0	8.24 (7.40)	23.22 (22.79)	3.77
Above 5.0	4.56 (2.87)	24.98 (15.96)	7.31

Source: ICAR TECHNICAL BULLETIN NO.5 'FARMING SYSTEM SCENARIO IN MEERUT DISTRICT.

(Figures given in parenthesis indicate these values for district Meerut).

Meerut District has a rich historical background and is well known in the history of India. The district, during the time frame of our study comprised of 18 development blocks and 912 villages spread over an area of 3911 sq. km. Out of the total geographical area about 80% was under cultivation. The total geographical area of the district was 3.92 lac hectares in 1991. Except few (4.6%) most of the crops are grown under assured irrigated conditions propagated by the network of canals, deep wells etc. The human population has increased at

an alarming rate in both the districts and urbanization had taken place at a very fast rate. During the decade (1980-90) more than 4,596 hectares of cultivated fertile land of 42 villages has been merged into urban boundaries in Meerut alone and almost the same was the case in Muzaffarnagar. Double cropping was practiced in 50.95 per cent of the net cropped area. The area under forests, orchards and permanent pastures was negligible (2.24%). However, the present trend shows a steady growth under orchard plantations. Wheat and sugarcane is the most important cropping system in the districts. In recent past, potato and mustard have also found place in different cropping systems and become important cash crops for upgrading farmers economic status. From district Meerut (now Bagpat), I took one village 'Kakoor' which is away from the main road (about 8 Km.) and one of the last villages on Haryana-UP border and one small town and block headquarter 'Chaprauli' for the study. I interviewed 18 selected farmers from these two places.

Muzaffarnagar district is an adjoining district to Meerut and falls under the same region, i.e. Western UP. The district did not have many 'zamindars' (landlords) renting out huge areas of land. Instead the agrarian structure was dominated by peasants engaged in self cultivation (Baden-powell 1972:7; whitecombe 1972). Prior to zamindari abolition 32.1 per cent of all land in the district was held as 'Sir' and khudkast (land cultivated by owners) (Neale 1962). All this means that after zamindari abolition the basis of commercial expansion was far stronger here and evidence of this can be seen in the expansion of the agricultural labour force as proportion of the total population engaged in agriculture. In Muzaffarnagar, the proportion rose in 1961-71 by 18.3 per cent and in 1971-81 by 19 per cent compared to UP average of 10.8 per cent and 6.4 per cent.

Sugarcane is the major crop in Muzaffarnagar district and the best quality of land and a large proportion of new inputs are used in its cultivation. The district accounts for 9.08 per cent of the total area and 10.6 per cent of the total production of sugarcane of the State in

1996 (District Statistical Handbook, 1997). Other competing crops grown in the district are wheat and rice. Muzaffarnagar is the second largest sugarcane producer in Western UP. About 1,91,644 hectares of cultivated land is under sugarcane and produced 1,14,72,645 metric tonnes of sugar in 1996 (Government of India 1997; on sugarmill see Baru 1990). Almost the entire area under sugarcane and wheat in Muzaffarnagar is irrigated. Likewise the intensity of cropping was higher than the average for the country. Similarly, the yields of sugarcane have improved vastly because of better irrigation, HYV seeds and chemical fertilizers. Peasants recorded yields of around 456.55 quintals per hectare in 1982-83 (Bhalla and Tyagi 1989). I took one village 'Kaniyan', away from the roadside village (about 5-6 km) from the main road and a small town 'Ailum' which is situated on the main Delhi-Saharanpur road about 85 km. from Delhi and interviewed 18 selected farmers of different categories from these two places.

## **2.4 Sample of the Farmers taken for Field Study:**

I divided 36 selected farmers from the two villages and two small towns taken from the two districts i.e. Muzaffarnagar and Meerut into small, medium and large farmers taking into consideration their landownership pattern in the area which we shall explain in detail here. Three farmers from each category were picked up at random from the list of farmers procured from the 'patwaris' of the respective villages and small towns and they were interviewed group wise by administering semi-structured interviews with open-ended questionnaires. The interviews were recorded group wise.

The ownership of land alone was not considered the criterion of selection of farmers from each group because that would not have given us the correct socio-economic position of the farmers. It is due to the differences in possession of machinery, livestock, variations in irrigation, fertility and family size that farms in any given acreage group may vary greatly

with respect to the way production is organized which in turn would affect the scale of operations and hence class status. Therefore, I decided to categorise the farmers not on the basis of land ownership alone, but, also took into account control of mechanical inputs, labour criteria and value of output produced by the farmer households.

I categorised the farmers into 'small' 'medium' and 'large' which may be useful to focus on the conditions of production that are particular to these different groups (Bharadwaj 1974: 62). The 'small' farmers possess little land relative to available family labour and depend upon hiring out their labour to supplement income from land. They possess no new machinery like tractors or tube wells and have to hire these services on payment. Quite often they are compelled to raise consumption loans to feed the family throughout the year, on numerous terms and at a high rate of interest. Small peasants own tiny plot of land (less than 5 acres) and their families participate in the process of production. Their income from the land, however, is not enough for their family needs. Therefore, apart from working in their own fields they hire out their labour power to others.

The next group of bigger holding which may be called 'medium', generally possess tube wells and some other component of 'new technology'. They produce enough to meet their consumption needs. They do not borrow money for consumption purposes. Their family labour is enough to work on their land and they do not depend upon hiring out labour to supplement income from land and generally produce a surplus over subsistence. Middle peasants own land between 5-10 acres and also some modern inputs and fully participate in the process of production. They also hire in labour power, but the labour days they hire in are much less than their family labour days put by the household in the cultivation, annually.

'Large' farmers own land between 10-15 acres and also own modern machinery. Their families participate in the process of production, apart from hiring in labour power. But the number of family labour days are less than labour days hired in by the households, annually.

The families of these large farmers may also participate very little in the production process. They may depend solely on hiring in labour power. They supervise their agricultural operations and, sometime, assist work like driving tractors, operating threshers or tubewells etc. These households also have other major source of income like they may own a brick-kiln or private bus, taxies or property in the town.

## **2.5 Selection of Journalists and Fanner Leaders for Interviews:**

In order to understand the perception and perspectives of the journalists and the farmer leaders towards the BKU farmer's movement and the role of the media in covering it, four journalists from the two newspapers and four farmer leaders from the two identified districts were selected. Two journalists from each paper who had covered the BKU farmer's movement were chosen. Care was taken to ensure that one of them would be a field Reporter who had covered all the phases of the BKU agitation taken for the present study and one at a responsible position on the desk. This was done to ascertain that the views of the journalists at the ground level, dealing with the farmers and their movement and the journalists selecting and presenting that news for the final display in the newspapers for the readers were suitably represented.

Similarly, two farmer leaders each from the two selected districts (Muzaffarnagar and Meerut) were chosen. One of them was Mahender Singh Tikait himself and the second one was Captain Bhopal Singh from Meerut district, second to Tikait. Two more farmer leaders, one each from the two districts were chosen from the second line of leadership. The feedback from these farmer leaders about the role of the press in covering the BKU movement provided new insight to the study.

## CHAPTER - III

### FARMER'S MOVEMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH

#### 3.1 Introduction:

In the agrarian sector in India, inequities and exploitation have been prevailing since the ancient times giving rise to tension and sporadic outbursts. During the pre-independence period, i.e., during the British rule, the mass of peasantry', i.e., the cultivating peasants and the agricultural labourers who worked on the land without any secure rights were exploited by the feudal landlords—the Zamindars and the Taluqdars. They appropriated the bulk of the produce of land in the form of rent, and in addition extracted 'Nazrana' (gifts) and compelled the cultivators to perform 'begar' (unpaid labour) for them. The imperialist exploitation was superimposed on this feudal exploitation. The British rulers appropriating land revenue and manipulating the terms of trade and prices to their own advantage further aggravated the hardships of the toiling peasantry. The age-old hierarchical social structure, caste and religion came handy to legitimize and perpetuate the exploitation leading to peasant protest which got entwined with the freedom struggle.

After independence, land reforms removed a major source of agrarian tension as the intermediaries were abolished and the peasantry came in direct relation with the State curbing the rapacious loot of the peasant's produce by the landlords. Unfortunately, these reforms were half-hearted, limited in their scope and purpose and their actual implementation further frustrated the proclaimed objectives. Concentration of land ownership persisted and subsequently grew across the entire country including Uttar Pradesh. But, certain steps taken by late Chaudhary Charan Singh who had a vision for the farmers did help in bringing great relief. Due to his untiring efforts, laws were passed ending the exploitation of farmers and paving the way for ending disparities. These positive developments are discussed here along

with the preparation for the farmers' movement by Chaudhary Charan Singh which generated self-confidence amongst the farmers and made them take to agitation in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The farmers movement has been studied from different perspectives and its understanding is based on the work done by sociologists and scholars from various disciplines. The ideological foundation of the movements with particular reference to its strong political backing is based on the analysis of social science scholar, Terence J. Byres who has done comprehensive work on Charan Singh. Political and economic insight into the emergence and sustenance of the BKU movement is provided by the writings of political scientist, Zoya Hasan who has written extensively on the BKU movement.

The decade of the 1980s witnessed the emergence of two interrelated changes in Uttar Pradesh. The first represented an unfolding and crystallization of agricultural transformation and the second, the growing momentum of surplus-producing farmers as a major political force in UP. Both these developments were precursors to the growth of a powerful **farmers'** movement during the 1980s, when farmers were involved to demand remunerative prices for agricultural commodities and cheaper inputs attracting the attention of political parties across a wide spectrum.

In the forefront of the farmers' movement in UP was the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), formed in 1978, with units established in Delhi, Haryana and western UP. The origins of the farmers' organisations lie in conflicts within the ranks of the ruling class. Thus both Uttar Pradesh and Haryana branches of BKU were formed in 1978 by Charan Singh after he was ousted from the Desai cabinet, and this was actually done to demonstrate his power and support. In 1980, the Punjab Khetibari **Zamindar** Union, a farmers' organisation, was converted into the BKU Punjab unit giving a big fillip to the movement in North-West India. The UP branch failed to show much activity at the time of its formation. In fact the

BKU came into prominence only in 1987, when a concerted effort was made to resurrect the organization in order to fill the political vacuum after the death of Charan Singh.

Largely because of the Lok Dal's failure to extract any major concessions from the Congress government on the issue of higher prices for agricultural produce, farmers' politics were in abeyance at this juncture. Fissures in the Lok Dal led to the emergence of two leading factions headed by Ajit Singh, son of Charan Singh, and H. N. Bahuguna, the erstwhile Chief Minister of UP, respectively. The revival of the BKU was thus another attempt to fill a political vacuum.

Under the leadership of Mahendra Singh Tikait, the BKU captured national attention in the winter of 1988, when its supporters laid siege to Meerut in western UP, in pursuit of demands for higher sugarcane prices, lower farm input prices, waiver of loans, higher rural investment and a lowering of electricity and water rates. Thousands of farmers thronged the Commissioner's office in Meerut for over three weeks, dramatically placing the farmers' demand before government, media and public at large. This was followed by a massive rally in Delhi in October 1988. Both agitations were militant in nature and received widespread support; they lasted for days, roads were blocked, and villages were closed to government officials and politicians. Farmers refused to pay taxes and electricity bills, or to clear their interest on loans from banks and credit cooperatives [Hasan, 1989]. It quickly became apparent that the farmers' movement had struck a responsive chord in western UP's rural areas, and captured the imagination of large sections of the rural community. Leaders of all political parties were anxious to associate themselves with the movement, in order to be seen as champions of the farmers.

Charan Singh, whom Tikait acknowledged as his mentor, was deeply involved in party politics. He pursued power within the existing system and through the party system, with the object of bringing about a shift in the balance of economic power from cities to the



rural areas. He challenged congress supremacy by constructing an alliance of middle and backward castes, and succeeded in marginalising the Congress in Western UP **during** the 1970s. By contrast, the leadership of the farmers' movement calculated that its effectiveness would be greatest when it acted as a pressure group outside the established party system (Gupta, 1988). Neutrality was perceived as crucial for establishing the credibility of the BKU in the eyes of the government, and also **because** Tikait had moved farmers' politics on to the streets (*Rudolph and Rudolph*, 1987).

Now, the pertinent questions are - what were developments in Indian politics and economy that caused the farmers' movement to emerge? What kind of a movement was the BKU? What was the nature of its appeal? An editorial in the *Economic and Political Weekly* attributed the rise of farmers' movements since the late 1970s to the terms of trade having moved against the rural sector (*Economic and Political Weekly*, 8 Sept. 1980).

The impact of the farmers' movement was greatest in those areas of UP where the new agricultural technology brought about a rapid increase in production and incomes. Productivity levels in UP were quite low until the early 1980s, when a major breakthrough in agricultural production was achieved as a result of introduction of new technology. The most significant improvements occurred in wheat, maize and sugarcane production; average yields increased, for wheat from 15.50 quintals per hectare in 1978-79 to 18.69 quintals in 1984-85, and for maize from 6.85 quintals per hectare to 15.17 quintals in the same period. Fertiliser consumption in the state had risen to 52 Kilograms per hectare in 1980-81, and the number of tractors in use to 107 per 1000 hectares (*Westley*, 1986). All this contributed to an annual growth rate in food grain production of 2.79 per cent from 1960-61 to 1978-79, a period during which the average food grain yield per hectare was 1068 Kilograms (*ibid.*). The growth rate of UP's economy throughout the 1980s was 3.5 per cent. Within UP itself the western region, comprising 19 districts, witnessed a markedly faster growth than other parts

of the state. Along with Harayana and Punjab, the region of UP covering Meerut, Agra, Bareilly and Moradabad divisions experienced the largest growth of rural capital investment, processing and small-scale industries in the Green Revolution era. On virtually all the indices of growth and modernisation western UP achieved considerable progress, and by the early 1980s this region was substantially ahead of other regions of the state. The impact of the Green Revolution was greater in this region partly because the western districts were well endowed with canals and irrigation work established at the turn of the century, as a result of which the *Doab* (fertile land in between two rivers) was transformed into one of the richest tracts during the colonial period. This process of regional growth also manifested itself in the emergence of an infrastructure and the expansion of market towns; commercial farming also gained impetus from the tradition of peasant proprietorship, a prominent feature of the agrarian structure in this part of the state. More importantly, class polarisation between absentee landlords and peasant producers did not occur to the same degree in the western region as it did in the eastern parts of the state.

Within Western UP, the fastest growing districts were Meerut, **Mazaffarnagar**, Saharanpur, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Moradabad, Bareilly, Bijnor and Pilibhit, with productivity of major crops ranging from Rs.1, 459 per hectare in Bareilly to Rs.2397 per hectare in Muzaffarnagar in 1980-83. Overall, by the early 1980s nearly 42 of UP's 57 districts had productivity levels exceeding Rs.1, 000 per hectare, and the majority of these were in western UP. This increase was mainly due to the extensive irrigation and cropping intensity, nearly 85 per cent of the area under wheat in UP is irrigated (*Government of India*, 1992). Almost the entire area under wheat in Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Bulandshahr and Aligarh is irrigated.

The economic discontent fuelling the farmer's movement was generally the result of increasing aspirations frustrated by the deterioration in the agriculture-industry terms of trade.

The prices of food grains relative to manufactured goods rose by 50 per cent from the late 1950s to the mid 1970s (*Mitra, 1977*). From the mid-1970s, however, there has been an adverse flow in terms of trade for the agricultural sector, as reflected in the wholesale prices of agricultural and manufactured products (*Rao, 1983; Nadkarni, 1987*). This means that, though prices of agricultural produce have been rising, they have not kept pace either with those of non-agricultural operations or with rising consumption levels. Although rich farmers were affected because the scale of profits was reduced, middle farmers with modest quantities of surplus to dispose in the market suffered more due to the sharp rise in prices of essential manufactured goods.

The aspirations of farmers were further heightened by the critical national importance of food surpluses produced in this region. North India became the main source of food supply for the urban areas. This gave farmers a bargaining power which their counterparts in western and southern India did not have at the national level. Small farmers in these regions also backed and in fact such agitations were more successful precisely where small and medium farmers were drawn to expand the support base. This was the case in western UP where sugarcane was grown by medium and small farmers, all of whom have been enthusiastic supporters of the BKU. They focused attention primarily on higher prices of sugarcane and the waiver of loans made to cane cultivators. Their agitation and militancy was strengthened by the structure of cane cultivation in UP (Table 3.1). Cane is cultivated largely by medium and semi-medium holdings and also to some extent by rich peasant households. This is evident from the large number of cultivators supplying cane to sugar mills: 25,000 to 30,000 in UP, compared to 3,500 to 4,000 cultivators in Maharashtra (*Baru, 1990*). The political and economic clout of cane cultivators was considerably enhanced by the patronage and backing given by Charan Singh to the demand for nationalization of sugar mills in UP (*Charan Singh, 1981*).

**Table: 3.1**

SUGARCANE CULTIVATION BY SIZE-CLASS OF OWNERSHIP HOLDING 1970-71 (% SHARE)

Type of Holding	Size Class (Hectares)	All-India	UP	Maharashtra
Marginal	0.0-0.5	-	6.8	2.1
Marginal	0.0-1.0	13.7	17.2	6.3
Semi-Medium	2.0-4.0	24.6	27.2	19.5
Medium	4.0-10.0	29.6	26.7	35.3
Large	10.0 and above	15.7	9.6	27.3

*Source:* All-India Report on *Agricultural Census 1970-71*, 1975.

The economic and social contradictions in the BKU movement were obscured ideologically by a farmer ideology which articulated issues in a populist style (*Dhanagare 1988*). The BKU presented an urban point of view, arguing that development was systematically biased against the countryside and this was deeply embedded in the political structure and bureaucracy which had neglected the legitimate interests of farmers. Such populism emphasised the contradiction between the rural agricultural and urban industrial sectors, rather than the differences between classes in the countryside. Tikait's struggle, therefore, was not **confined** to the acceptance of the BKU charter of demands, it was also a movement to safeguard the honour, dignity and self-respect of all farmers, irrespective of caste or class (*NavbharatTimes*. 8 Feb. 1989). The BKU variety of populism highlighted the moral character of the movement, and is summed up in the following words of Tikait: 'No dispute can ever be solved satisfactorily by legality, it can be settled only through truthfulness. The farmer must go on protesting in the hope that "some day sense will drawn on an insensitive state" (*Times of India*, 9 Aug. 1989).

### 3.2 Chaudhary Charan Singh - an 'organic' Intellectual:

Perhaps, Chaudhary Charan Singh was one of the most misunderstood leaders who have been dubbed as the leader of the jats and was at times ridiculed by the so-called intellectuals within the country, but, the work done by him was duly appreciated by the

reputed social scientists of different countries. Terence J. Byers, social scientist from University of London illustrates the intellectual disdain of the educated elites towards him by giving two concrete examples, "Charan Singh's intellectual credentials are seldom treated seriously. I recall that when, in 1982, Charan Singh's book, "Economic Nightmare of India (Singh, 1981) was sitting on my desk in London, a highly intelligent young Indian student, from a wealthy urban family, in his final year as an undergraduate, picked it up and asked, incredulously: 'Did he write this himself ?' The question was significant, in its dismissiveness of any possible credentials Charan Singh might have as an intellectual. 'Dangerous' he might be, but not a serious intellectual. More significantly, during a six-month visit to India I made in 1978-79, when I traveled extensively throughout the country, an earlier book, 'India's Economic Policy, The Gandhian Blueprint' (Singh, 1978) had recently appeared. Had it been published some three or so years earlier—before the Emergency it would scarcely have been noticed (indeed, his Economic Nightmare of India, published in 1981, received little attention outside the Lok Dal circles). But, in 1978-79, Charan Singh was there on the national scene, vying for the highest office in the land. He could hardly be ignored. I was reading it and mentioned it to several people. A common response was to suggest that he could not possibly have written it himself.

Even among the few scholars who have taken Charan Singh seriously at the intellectual level, and who are familiar with his writing, there is a reluctance to give him full credit as an intellectual. Thus, for example, Paul Brass, whose knowledge and sympathetic understanding of Charan Singh is considerable, observed in 1965: 'Charan Singh is not exactly an intellectual in politics, but he is a well-read man, with incisive intelligence which he had devoted to a continuing study of agricultural problems in Uttar Pradesh' (Brass, 1965: 139).

More than five decades of Chaudhary Charan Singh's career as a politician amply

demonstrates that he was much successful in projecting the problems and taking effective steps to solve these problems of the farmers whom he represented while in power at various levels and even while sitting in opposition. He was continuously thinking about the farmers and the ways and means to improve their lot. We now turn to his intellectual practice and later we shall be discussing his 'political action.'

### **3.3 FARMER'S MOVEMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH AND THE ROLE OF CHARAN SINGH'S POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND ACTION:**

Uttar Pradesh is known for some of the earliest stirrings among the peasants and evidences of mass participation in struggles against the foreign and native exploiters are found even in the pre-1857 civil disturbances, as well as, during the 1857 war of Indian Independence itself<sup>1</sup>. In the post-1857 period too, peasant unrest and stirrings occurred. This led the British rulers to rationalise the system of revenue assessments and take measures to regulate the conditions of the tenants. We shall be discussing the farmer's movement in two phases—pre-independence, and post-independence. Along with this movements, we would also discuss the role of Charan Singh, as a politician, in redressing the grievance of farmers in pre and post Independence eras.

### **3.4 Pre-independence Era:**

#### **(i) The 1920-22 Period:**

The period following World War I saw the re-emergence of the mass peasant movement engulfing several districts in Uttar Pradesh . The peasant movement now had acquired certain new features. Firstly, the participation of the peasants had an unprecedentedly massive character. Secondly, it was no more a spontaneous expression of anger against individual trader or moneylender but based on certain class demands and by class-based organisations, thus, assuming a general anti-feudal character. Thirdly, the peasant movement was intermingled with the mass movement for national liberation headed by the Indian

National Congress and thus acquired an anti-imperialist edge too. It strengthened and provided mass sweep to the national liberation movement and in turn strengthened **itself** .

The new setting in which the peasant movement was growing in this period was provided by the resolutions submitted by the Farmer Sabha to the Indian National Congress held in December 1919 at Amritsar. The general demands of the peasants were formulated as hereunder: That peasants all over India should be declared the actual owners of the soil they cultivate; the peasant should be subject to tax but not to rent; and in provinces where the zamindari system prevails, the ownership of lands lent the tenant should be given over to the tenants. Later, in a secret appeal to the Congress on the eve of the Ahmedabad session held in December 1921, a programme for national democratic revolution in India was presented which included the slogan of 'land to the tiller.' The appeal was signed by M.N. Roy and Abani Mukherjee and was widely distributed all over the country and given to the delegates assembled at the Congress session for adoption as a resolution . A section of congressmen in Uttar Pradesh, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru empathized with this peasant movement and sought to build up wider support for it .

A fresh round of the peasant movement called 'Ekta Movement' began Mahilabad in Lucknow District in 1921 and soon spread to Hardoi, Bahraich, Sitapur and Barabanki. The initiative for this movement came from a section of Congress non-cooperators and the khilafatists and evoked mass response. There was active participation of peasants because the local landlords led by notorious and tyrannical landlord Sant Bux Singh openly supported the British authority<sup>6</sup>.

#### **(ii) The No-Rent and No-Tax Campaign of 1930-31:**

The 1930s saw a fresh upsurge in the national liberation, as well as, the peasant movements. The great economic depression of 1929-1934 ruined the peasantry, and while the agricultural prices and wages fell, rents and revenue were on the increase. Failure to pay

up rent and revenue, when they were due, piled up arrears and invited a massive drive for eviction. In the middle of 1928, Baba Ram Chandra again started organising peasants' meetings when the Simon Commission visited India and the Indian National Congress organised a boycott and black flag campaign. Since nothing came out of this, a round of second mass political struggle became unavoidable<sup>7</sup>.

The UP Congress Committee took initiative to launch the 'no-rent' campaign in Rae Bareilly under inspiration from Pandit Nehru. The landlords were urged to stop revenue payments and the tenants were told to withhold payments of enhanced rents. Later in April 1930, when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, the two movements merged and provided strength and mutual cooperation to each other. The entire 'doab' districts from Meerut to Allahabad and the poorer and more rack-rented districts in Southern and Eastern Oudh were engulfed by it. For the first time, young Congress and Communist workers worked in unison to give organised mass character to the movement.

With the signing of the **Gandhi-Irwin** Pact in 1931, the Civil Disobedience Movement was discontinued and the 'no-rent' campaign in UP was also suspended. But, since, the Government had failed to give adequate relief to the distress-hit peasants of UP and massive repression of peasants continued, the UP Congress Committee planned to resume it. It set up an Enquiry Committee which brought out a well documented Report "Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces." This report highlighted distress of the peasantry and the atrocities that were being perpetrated by the police and the **Zamindars'** goondas on the peasantry in general and such peasants in particular who had participated in the 'no-rent-no-tax' campaign in

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1930. The 'no-rent' campaign was again launched in December 1931 by the UP Congress Committee and spread to the entire Oudh and some districts of Agra region as well. The renewed campaign gained unprecedented momentum and in the course of just seven months, about 10,000 peasants and other Congress and Communist activists were arrested and sent to



jail. The bulk of them belonged to the ranks of poor tenants and agricultural labourers. The landlords and the Government came together and tried to set up 'Aman Sabhas' to counter this movement. Sporadic incidents of violence were also reported from many districts where attack on landlords and their hirelings were made in retaliation to torture and repression of peasants. The campaign gradually lost tempo and petered out as some constitutional reforms were announced by the Government but was ultimately abandoned on a call from the All India Congress.

The second phase of the mass peasant movement which saw the Congress giving leadership, resulted in two major achievements. Firstly, the peasant problem was more deeply studied and understood and a much clearer agrarian programme was formulated. Secondly, a radical wing in the Congress committed to anti-feudal land reforms programme emerged. But to counter this move, the pro-landlord lobby also consolidated itself inside the Congress. The appeal issued by Mahatma Gandhi to the peasants not to withhold rents from landlords and stop their agitation and to the landlords assuring them that 'Congressmen will on their part see to it that 'Farmers' scrupulously fulfill their obligations to the **Zamindars** " indicates this. Mahatma Gandhi bluntly declared in his 'Manifesto to the Farmers of UP', that "we do not seek to injure the Zamindars. We aim not at destruction of property. We aim only at its lawful

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use.'

### **(iii) The Period 1936-1947:**

It has been noted earlier that the formation of Fanner Sabha in UP can be traced back to 1918. Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya took initiative for forming such an organisation and formulating a memorandum of demands to the Commission headed by Montague Chelmsford and place their point of view to counter the landlords.

The 'no-rent-no-tax' campaign of 1930's saw fairly prolonged and mass-scale participation of poor peasants and agricultural labourers over large parts of UP and helped to

create the subjective conditions for setting up an independent class organisation of the peasants. This move helped in uniting the entire peasantry on the basis of a well formulated charter of demands. The experience gained in the course of the two major peasant movements of 1920's and 1930's had amply established that the congress and the national liberation movement can gain immensely and acquire mighty striking power against the alien imperialist rule if the mass peasant movement based on their specific demands is built up and congressmen actively support and participate in it. On the other hand, the leaders of the peasants had also seen that their movement and organisation acquires strength when it gets intertwined with the national liberation movement and gets political support from the organisations and parties associated with the same.

At a meeting of the left-minded political workers held on January 15, 1936 at Meerut on the occasion of the National Congress of the Congress Socialist Party, preliminary steps were taken to convene an All India Farmer Congress. This Conference to set up the All India Farmer Congress, later called the All India Farmer Sabha, was held in April 1936 on the occasion of the Annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow under the presidentship of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. He pleaded, in his Presidential Address for collective affiliation of the independently functioning of workers' and Peasants' organisations with the Indian National Congress and exhorted congressmen to work among the workers and peasants for organising and waging struggles for their specific class demands. He personally attended the conference of the peasant workers from all over the country to set up the All India Farmer Congress and greeted its formation. But both Gandhiji and Sardar Patel were hostile and opposed to formation of independent class organisation of the peasants from the very beginning.<sup>18</sup>

A fortnightly journal 'Farmer' and a weekly 'Naya Hindustan' were published to help in this task at the UP level and a 'Farmer Bulletin' began to be brought out at the All India

level. This was the period, when radical congressmen, socialists and the communists worked together in the peasant movement with communists functioning as the most virile group. The general elections were in the offing in February 1937. The massive campaign of the Farmer Sabha had its first success in the adoption of the Agrarian Programme at the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1936, although, only three months earlier, the Bombay session of the AICC which issued the election manifesto of the Congress said nothing specific about the peasant demands. Later, the National Convention convened by the Indian National Congress in March, 1937 called upon the Congress legislators to work for the fulfillment of peasant demands as put forward in the agrarian programme adopted at Faizpur Congress. It summarised the key demands as: substantial reduction in rent and revenue; progressive income-tax on agricultural incomes subject to a prescribed minimum; fixation of tenure; relief from burden of rural debt and arrears of rent and revenues; restoration of lands and property confiscated or sold by Government during Civil Disobedience Movements; living wages; and unemployment Relief. On an appeal from All India Farmer Sabha leaders,

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Pt. Nehru also agreed to the inclusion of an interim moratorium on agrarian debts.

The Second World War commenced and the Congress Government resigned soon thereafter. The British Government launched a general round up of all communists and radical congressmen and put them behind bars. The Farmer Sabha activists down to the village level were arrested and their offices raided and sealed at most of the places. Absence of Farmer Sabha leaders from the scene, except some who succeeded in evading arrest by going underground but could now function in a very restricted manner; suspension of the operation of the **anti-ejectment** provisions of the Tenancy Act and active support of the Government and its bureaucracy enabled the landlords to carry out evictions of their tenants on a massive scale and beat up and torture those who had been actively following the Farmer Sabha and the radical Congressmen. In the course of the period between 1940-1945, some

eight lakh ejectment suits under sections 163-65, 171 175-79 and 180 were disposed off and in about 6.84 lakh cases, ejectments were allowed involving nearly eight lakh acres of land from which eviction took place. Collection of rent was resorted more ruthlessly as is indicated by the fact that during 1941-45 total amount collected as rent was Rs. 10.07 crores and 58.11 percent of the total rentals demand in the preceding quinquennium 1936-1941. The **Zamindars'** surplus of rent collected over revenue demand was the highest ever at Rs. 3.25 crores. The percentage of surplus over rent collected was also the highest ever at 32.17 percent.

The top rightist Congress leadership had earlier during 1939-1942 ensured that the radical forces are decimated under the onslaught of the British repressive machine; they had also taken inner organisational measures for the furtherance of the same ends by disaffiliating several left-oriented and mass-based provincial congress units. And now they wanted to use this large scale outbreak of disturbances as a pressure on the already concerned British authority to effect a compromise on the issue of transfer of Power. But the deeply discontented and brutally exploited mass of people - the peasantry in the countryside and the middle-classes in the urban area - took the opportunity of attacking and paralysing the British oppressive machinery. The entire struggle, however, nowhere displayed any anti-feudal edge.

Attempts at capturing, splitting and later at setting up of rival Farmer organisation was also made by the rightist Congressmen and Congress socialists. Earlier in 1940, when the Communist functionaries of the Farmer Sabha had been arrested, Congress socialist leader Mohan **Lal Gautam** with the backing of Congressmen, tried to capture the Farmer Sabha organisation and its offices by declaring himself as President, and nominating new office bearer and representatives on the All India Farmer Council. Later, in early 1942, Pt. Nehru, himself came out with a call to Congressmen to dissociate themselves from Farmer Sabha in

view of the political policy of the Communist, on the question of war which was contrary to that of the Congress. He advised them to organise their own work among the peasants directly on behalf of the Congress or such Farmer Sabha units as were under control of others than communists. This was, implicitly, a call for splitting and/or capturing the Farmer

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Sabha. These disruptive moves were, however, headed by the Farmer Sabha workers who had escaped arrests; they reorganised the Farmer Sabha by calling an active workers' meeting and appointing Shri S.P. Tripathi as President and Shankar Dayal Tewari as the Secretary of the UP Farmer Sabha. The release of political prisoners in 1945 after the Second World War ended, unfolded a new situation. General elections were to be held in 1946. Hectic moves for the transfer of political power were also on. The period witnessed a new upsurge in mass peasant activity under the leadership of the U.P. Farmer Sabha. With the end of war and release of political prisoners, there was scope for freely and legally working among the masses. The U.P. Farmer Sabha began its new massive mobilisation campaign for the urgent demands of the peasants by organising a 'Farmer Demands Day' in April 1946 all over UP. The demands popularised were to abolish zamindari without compensation immediately; end debts on peasants; stop repression and corruption; curb the black marketers; and arrange distribution of essential articles for rural poor through fair price shops. Public meetings, processions and demonstrations were organised in a large number of districts for the first time after a lapse of several years of total ban on open mass political activity.

Another round of protests were organised against the compulsory grain levies and bureaucratic harassment and excesses in that regard. Exposure of how Patwaris were making wrong entries regarding acreage and crops, showing no consideration for the damage to crops due to drought and putting full burden on the share-croppers was conducted. Aligarh, Meerut, Hardoi, Gonda, Bahraich, Ballia. Basti, Rae Bareilly, Unnao, Orai and several other centres reported such protest actions.

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The UP Tenancy Act, 1939 and the earlier executive order staying all ejection from Sir lands were being violated by the zamindars. The onslaught of the zamindars had been stepped up following resignation of congress ministry and ban on political and mass activity following the commencement of war. Large-scale eviction was being resorted to so that claims of old tenants are evaded and 'Nazrana' could be extracted by settling the Sir land with new tenants. A big struggle against evictions and restoration of land to the old tenants was launched. The slogans issued were (i) ejection but reinstatement of evicted Farmers; (ii) no zamindar to possess communal lands like pastures; (iii) all cultivable waste land to be given to cultivators; and (iv) increase the wage rates.

A series of district level conferences were organised on this issue. Basti, Rae Barelly and Unnao became major centres of struggle against the landlords. The landlords launched ferocious 'zoolum'. The hirelings of the sheikh of 'chetra' estate in Basti raided the village Dundwa, looted the peasants and set fire to the entire village. 'Sihorwa' village was also attacked but peasants chased off the goondas. The peasants counter-attacked by occupying Sir lands under direct cultivation of zamindars on a large scale. Social boycott of zamindars was organised so that zamindars' lands remained fallow. The battle raged in scores of villages in Bansi and Domariyaganj tehsils and a large group of villages in the chetra estate. The Sheikh of Chetra was compelled to confer hereditary right on the tenants and give over some one thousand acres of his Khudkasht lands.

Another 2,500 to 3,125 acres of land were also seized by the peasants. A big battle was also fought against the Raja of Shohratgarh. At several places agreements for wage increase were effected. 'Bataidars' were also organised to harvest their crops and carry the harvest to their home. Section 145 was promulgated by the government to check 'Bataidars' from harvesting their crops. Arrests and prosecutions under section 107 and 117 were also made and false cases registered against a large number of Farmer Sabha workers.

In Rae Bareilly, struggles were launched by the Farmer Sabha in four **estates—Kurri Sadauli, Sheogarh, Tikari and Raja Mau**. The fight was against evictions, 'begar', cutting of farmers 'trees', demolition of their huts and low wages. In Kurri Saduli, the lands of evicted tenants were restored, wages increased and 'Degari' stopped, after thousands of peasants marched and forcibly occupied the lands. The Raja of Sheogarh launched terror campaign and attacks on peasant leader Jitendra Tiwari. **Attempt** was made to arrest Munshi Kalika Prasad, the popular peasant leader of Rae Bareilly of 1920's and 1930's peasant struggles fame. Six thousand peasants held protest rally against the attack on Jitendra Tiwari and 12000 peasants rallied and foiled the attempt to arrest **Mumshi Kalika Prasad**. Ultimately the peasants won back their land. Some tenants got their land on 'batai' basis. Some notorious 'Karindas' were got sacked. 'Begar' was stopped. In Sablamau estate also 'Begar' was stopped and rights of access to forest lands were won.

In **Unnao** also fight against eviction through reoccupation of land, occupation of several hundred 'Parati' land, and fight for wage increase was organised. In spite of fierce attack of landlords on Farmer Sabha workers, raid by their goondas to burn down and destroy 'Marxnagar' and large scale repression launched by Government, the landlords' offensive was beaten back, rights over 'Parti' land won and wage increases obtained. Ram Sajiwan emerged as a hero nick-names 'Shere Samasia' for organising volunteer corps and fighting back landlords' goondas. More than a hundred activists including leaders like Ram **Ghulam Singh** and his wife, Sheo Kumar Misra and Shanker Dayal Tiwari were arrested. \* In **Unao** agitation for more irrigation facilities, cheaper and better seeds and manures and 'taqavi' loans for agricultural purposes was also launched. Success was achieved in this regard also and government distributed 'taqavi' loans, opened cheap grainships and undertook works programme to provide employment for landless labour.

The nature of the farmers problems in Uttar Pradesh evoked different reactions.

However, the response of Charan Singh is significant as he played the crucial role in the dynamics of the problems being faced by the farmers before and after independence of the country. The following section would clearly indicate the closeness between the problems of the farmers being propagated by the farmers movements leaders and the ideology and action taken by Charan Singh while occupying different positions in the government.

### 3.5 CHARAN SINGH'S IDEOLOGY:

#### (i) Anti-landlordism:

Charan Singh's hatred of the class of large and powerful landlords, or *zamindars*, ran deep, and he never faltered in his uncompromising and scathing denunciation of landlordism. Agricultural production did not depend upon the existence of the landlord class, 'who render no service to the land or the tenants' (Singh, 1947B: 15). Rent was 'a wholly unnecessary payment', made to 'a class of persons who simply live upon the labour of others, who take absolutely no part in any enterprise and whose profession is idleness' (loc. cit.). Landlordism 'reduces the toiling masses to the starkest poverty and degradation' (loc. cit.); it 'has cramped both men and crops... (and) has stood for economic inequality and political reaction' (Singh, 1947b: Ch. I, especially 14-19). In such circumstances one might advocate the reform of tenancy: with the state intervening to ensure security of tenure: the abolition of undesirable tenancy forms, like sharecropping; and 'fair' rents. Charan Singh would have no truck with that. Landlordism had to go. Charan Singh has always claimed Gandhi as his mentor (his 1978 book, *India's Economic Policy*, is subtitled *The Gandhian Blueprint*).

#### (ii) Peasant Proprietorship:

From the outset of the exposition of his position, in his first major work, published in 1947, 'Abolition of *Zamindari*: Two Alternatives' (Singh, 1947b), pre-eminent in his prescriptions was 'the system of land tenure... pleased by the well-known French social philosopher, Proudhon, a century ago, viz., peasant proprietorship, that is, ownership of the land by the



man who actually tills it' (Singh, 1947b: 22). That remained a constant in his discourse (see, for example, Singh [1959: v-vi, 1—3]; Singh [1964:v—vi, 3—6]; Singh [1978: 11—12, 16, 25, 119]; Singh [1981: 122. A detailed case is argued (Singh, 1947b: Ch.v, 127—61), which we cannot pursue here.

(iii) The Case against Collectivization and Cooperative Agriculture:

He developed a detailed and passionate argument against collectivisation, the socialist solution to the agrarian question, and a deadly threat to his ideal of peasant proprietorship. Collectivisation was anathema. In his first book, whose Preface is dated October 1946, socialism is rejected via a detailed examination of the only example he had before him, that of the Soviet Union (Singh, 1947b: Chs, ii, iii, iv, 23-126). He would refer often, in subsequent works, to the Soviet Union; and post 1949 China, too, attracted his attention. It is that first book, however, that he develops his case against collectivisation, with care and in detail. It is not possible here to convey the full scope of his argument.

In the late 1950s, he saw the introduction of cooperative agriculture, in the sense of cooperative working of the fields rather than service cooperatives, as a true threat. He supported the later, but opposed the former, with no less intensity than he did collectivisation. Indeed, cooperative agriculture was regarded at worst as synonymous with collectivisation, and at best a prelude to it.

It would create a new class of intermediaries, as bad as the hated zamindars, and 'prepare the ground for authoritarian control' (Singh, 1964: vii); it would undermine and destroy peasant proprietorship; and reduce the fanner to a mere farm hand (Singh, 1964: vi). The increase in the size of the operational unit would lead, inexorably, to a fall in output per acre; and the disadvantage of size would be compounded several times over by widespread mechanisation and its attendant evils, of pervasive unemployment, and a heavy import bill for machinery, which India could ill afford (Singh, 1964: vi-viii). The case against cooperatives,

indeed, ushered in a new concern and included a new argument against mechanisation:

(iv) **The Attitude towards Capitalism:**

Charan Singh, in true **neo-populist** style, displayed a less passionate, although firm, anti-capitalist stance which was clearly stated in 1947. It would be repeated, in somewhat different form, in the 1950s and 1960s (Singh, 1959; Singh, 1964), in the 1970s (Singh, 1978), and in the 1980s (Singh, 1981). The early statement is of particular interest. Several issues were raised.

First, there was the relationship of 'peasant proprietary' to capitalism, and here Charan Singh conducted a dialogue with Marxism. He confronted and rejected two arguments. On the one hand, there was the 'hackneyed objection.... that this system envisages a pre-capitalist society out of which Capitalism has emerged, and that its establishment or re-establishment' would mean turning back of the wheel of progress' (Singh, 1947b: 140). This he denied, arguing that 'small private property in land ... instead of being a "fetter on production" is rather an encouragement to higher production'

3.6 **POLITICAL ACTION OF CHARAN SINGH:**

**Pre-Independence Era:**

Charan Singh's first attempted legislative act on behalf of his agrarian constituents had as its target - traders. This was in 1938. He had published, in the Hindustan Times, in March and April of 1938, an article on 'Agricultural Marketing' (Singh, 1938). Later in that year he introduced into the UP Legislative Assembly, as a private member, an Agricultural Produce Markets Bill which sought 'to safeguard the interests of the producer against the rapacity of the trader' (Singh, 1986: 2). In this, his initial legislative effort on behalf of 'peasant,' he was not successful. But he was serving his political apprenticeship and acquiring rare expertise. He tells us that it was not until 1964 that such a bill was passed in UP (Singh, 1986:2).

### **A Second target, 1939: Moneylenders:**

Charan Singh was prominent, in 1939, in formulating and introducing the Debt Redemption Bill. Again, he tells us of opposition from the 'moneylenders lobby', and of his 'great disillusionment that some leading lights of the Congress Socialist Party, including, for example, Acharya Narendra Dev, who professed such great solicitude for peasants and workers from the public platform, took up a strong creditor attitude' (loc. cit.) This time he was successful, and he tells us that the bill 'brought great relief to the peasantry' (Singh, 1986:3).

### **Focus Upon Landlordism:**

Other of his action before 1947, which he draws to our attention, is worthy of note. They are none for them spectacular, or particularly successful. But they carry the seeds of future political action of considerable significance. On 5 April 1939, he brought before the Executive Committee of the Congress Legislature Party a resolution calling for the reservation of a minimum of 50 percent of public employment 'for the sons and dependents of the cultivators or agriculturists who formed the mass of our people' (Singh, 1986: 2). That was not considered, since the party resigned from the legislature in October 1939. His persistence on behalf of agrarian interests was becoming obvious, however.

Charan Singh was preparing himself politically and ideologically as the farmer champion. It was **after** 1947, however, that the fruits of that preparation ripened, and the middle and rich peasantry found in him a representative of power, political skill and effectiveness. It was the landlord class that would first feel the full impact.

## **II**

### **3.7 POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA**

#### **(i) 1947 - 1952:**

The year 1947, the year of transfer of power coincided with the campaign for abolition of zamindari. It was a common sight to see the same set of people who thundered from the platforms of rival communal organisations like the Hindu Maha Sabha and Muslim League and incited people to cut each others' throats, sitting together on the common platform of Landlords' Association and shouting for the Communists' blood who were 'instigating' the Farmers to seize their land and agricultural labourers to stop work unless wages are increased. Several other such disruptive organisations were coming up such as the Ram Rajya Parishad. The Congressmen and the Government also stepped up their activity among peasants. Series of Farmer Conferences were organised which were addressed by Govind Ballabh Pant, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Thakur Hukum Singh and Charan Singh. Anti-communist speeches were made and peasants, particularly the tenants and the share-croppers were called upon to shun them and rely the legal process for the solution of their problems rather than try to seize land or harvest the crops under Communists' 'instigation'.

The AICC resolution passed in March 1948 prohibited membership of Congress for anyone who is a member of some other party. Thus, the Indian National Congress, conceived as a mighty front of all Indians, fighting for freedom in the pre-independence period was not transformed into a party. This compelled the Congress Socialist Party to part company with the Congress through a resolution passed at their Conference held in Nasik and form a separate Socialist Party of India.

A major event of this period was the bringing out of a mighty demonstration of peasants before the UP Assembly on November 29, 1949 under the leadership of the Socialist Party and the UP Hindi Farmer Panchayat demanding early passing of the anti-zamindari law and reduction of tax burden on the peasants. The Farmer Sabha is reported to have secretly decided to join and strengthen this demonstration called by the socialist party, since their own independent activity was restricted; credence to this view is provided by the fact that among

the marchers were also contingents of peasants from the traditional communist and Farmer Sabha pockets of influence. Some 50,000 peasants from all-over the State came to Lucknow for this demonstration. Such a demonstration of peasants was seen after more than a decade, i.e., since after the famous March 1, 1938 Farmer Sabha demonstration.

**(ii) 1953-1969:**

The UP Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act was finally passed in January 1951 and got assent of President within a week of its being passed. It was enforced with effect from July 1, 1952 after the petitions of the landlords challenging the Act were finally dismissed by the High Court and the Supreme Court. The Act, in its final form, was not favourably taken by the Farmer Sabha. They were particularly critical about allowing the zamindars to have Bhumidari rights in their Sir and Khudkasht land straightaway. They were also opposed to payment of any compensation to the landlords and at such high rates. They were also highly critical and hostile to the clause requiring the Sirdars to deposit ten times of the land revenue for acquiring Bhumidhari rights. Further, they were sore that the Act did not contemplate any distribution of land among the landless agricultural labourers and had totally deviated from the accepted principle of 'land to the tiller'. The Farmer Sabha regrouped and reorganised itself by holding its seventh annual Conference in 1953 at Makur in district Unnao.

**(a) Anti-Eviction Movement:**

The struggle against landlords' drive for eviction of peasants on a mass scale was sought to be given on organised shape by holding an anti-eviction convention at Lucknow in 1953 and organising a demonstration before the UP Assembly on September 1, 1953. Mass petitions under section 31 to get the land records rectified were prepared and submitted through demonstrations before Tehsil and District headquarters. Some seventy thousand petitions were submitted in Eastern Districts alone. Several thousand meetings were held and

several hundred demonstrations were organised in the State. In **Azamgarh**, the Farmer Sabha and the Praja Socialist Party organised Satyagraha on this issue and several hundred peasants and peasant workers were jailed. In **Unnao**, this campaign could secure the support of congress, where the District Congress Committee passed a resolution supporting the demand of the peasants for stopping eviction. Some thirty four percent of these petitions were settled in favour of peasants, the records were rectified and the rights over land protected. Nearly twenty two percent of these petitions were rejected on flimsy technical grounds, mainly because the Fanner Sabha workers at the grassroots level were not tained enough in law and the formal procedure of preparing and submitting these petitions and the Patwaris and other officials were corrupt and worked under the landlords' influence.

The campaign had to face fierce offensive of the landlords; goondaism and terror to secure forced surrender of land from the Shikmis was stepped up. The Farmer Sabha issued a call to the shikmis to defend their land and the crop and refuse to surrender under pressure. Unnao, Fyzabad, Lucknow, Jahnsi and Lalitpur, **Basti**, Ballia, Varanasi, Ghazipur, Doria, Azamgarh, Herdoi became arena of bitter struggle between the landlords and the peasants for gaining/denying Sirdari rights to Shikmis. The police and the administration shamelessly sided with the landlords. The peasants and Farmer Sabha workers were subjected to intense repression, beatings and torture in thanas, murderous attacks and prosecution.

**(b) Anti-Repression Campaign:**

An anti-repression campaign was conducted. Powerful demonstrations were organised at Tehsil and District headquarters and Thanass all over UP. In Lucknow, Unnao and several other places, the Darogas were transferred. The High Court of UP declared the 'Police Special Powers Act, UP' ultra vires.

**(c) Against Increase in Canal Rates and Panchayat and District Board Taxes:**

The government increased the irrigation charges by 50 percent in 1953. The

Panchayats and **District** Board Taxes were **being** levied ever since these bodies were constituted. The Panchayat taxes and their arrears alone cast a burden of some Rs. 137 lakhs. The district Board Taxes had risen by one-and-a-quarter to two times. Regional and State Conferences were **held in** July-September, 1953 on these issues. Demonstrations were organised at District headquarters and later a mighty demonstration was organised before the UP Assembly at Lucknow on March 10, 1954 and a petition bearing nearly three lakh signatures was presented.

**(d) Anti-Chakbandi:**

The UP Farmer Sabha had declared in a resolution adopted at its Seventh Conference held in 1953 that the 'Chakbandi' drive is an attempt to bypass the basic issue of land reforms involving redistribution of land and ensuring land for the tiller. It also said that the 'Chakbandi' in its present form will harm the bulk of the peasantry who are poor and lack influence. It called for (i) a drive for rectification of land records as a priority task; (ii) no compulsory chakbandi in villages where seventy five percent of the peasants households are opposed **to it**; (iii) exemption of peasants with holdings of two acres or less from the 'chakbandi tax' and taking of land for common purposes; (iv) recognition of 'chaks' already existing without any further change; and (v) association of all Peasant organisations with the consolidation work so that partiality and corruption is curbed.

**(e) For increase in Price of Sugar Cane and Payment of Peasants' Dues:**

There were eighty five sugar mills in UP and some 36.83 lakh acres were under sugarcane in 1976-77. Some 25 to 30 lakh peasants cultivated the sugarcane and were in the main organised in nearly 135 registered cane unions which had 23.62 lakh membership in 1975-76. Though this is a major cash crop, the peasants have been exploited and fleeced by the sugar mills owners through payment of a very low price and holding up of the amounts due to them for years together. The UP Farmer Sabha was among the pioneers to take up their

cause when in 1952 it led a movement of canegrowers in Meerut and Bijnore for payment of the outstanding dues to the peasants and got some Rs. 20-30 lakhs paid to them by each of the mills in those districts. In 1953, the Cane Federation, Praja Socialists Party, Communist Party of India, UP Farmer Sabha and some congressmen combined their resources to organize the cane growers strike demanding a higher price for sugarcane and payment of bonus to the growers. Some fourteen lakh cane growers participated in the strike resulting in convening of a Tripartite Conference by the Government and grant of Rs. 0.25 per mauand as bonus by way of a share in the profits. In 1955, the UP Farmer Sabha took the lead in putting across six-point charter of demands of the canegrowers including the demand for bonus for years 1952-53 and 1953-54; increase in price of sugarcane, same price of sugarcane at outer centres; payment of cane cess for 1954-55 immediately, increase in price of Gur; and curbs the arbitrariness and corruption of cane societies. An all-parties meeting was held at Delhi and on its call a 'canegrowers Demands Day' was celebrated on October 20, 1955.

A state-level convention of canegrowers was held at Lucknow and an all India convention met at Delhi. The UP Canegrowers' Convention held on December 19, 1955 under the Presidentship of Shibhanlal Saxena gave a call for one day token strike on January 1, 1956 and a continuous strike of canegrowers from February. The UP Farmer Sabha, the Socialist Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and a section of UP Sugarcane Federation joined together in organising the token strike which was successful all over UP. Concessions were won and at the instance of cane Federation and the Praja Socialist Party, the continuous strike call was withdrawn.

(f) **For a New Food and Land Reforms Policy:**

In 1958, the Farmer Sabha took initiative for the launching of a powerful campaign for a change in this policy. It demanded (i) imposition of a ceiling of 20 acres on landholdings immediately; (ii) takeover of all surplus land including the land enclosed by



landlords but actually not brought under cultivation; (iii) distribution of all such land and the 'Parti', 'Banjar' and 'Usar' to the landless and the poor peasant; (iv) arrangement for the supply of inputs to all the poor cultivators with smaller holdings and weaker means; (v) guarantee of a better price; (vi) arrangements for the supply of essential consumer articles for the poor in the villages, and (vii) building up of a system of cooperatively regulated market for foodgrains.<sup>38</sup> Regional and district conferences were organised. Demonstrations at the district headquarters were organised all August 4, 1958. Gradually the entire state and all political parties were drawn into the movement.

## 8 POST - INDEPENDENCE ERA; CHARAN SINGH'S POLITICAL ACTIONS:

### The Assault **upon Landlordism**:

#### *(1) Enactment and Provisions of the Zamindari Abolition Act.*

Charan Singh, a long-time opponent of landlordism, designed the UP land reform legislation, whose aim was to strike a mortal blow at the landlord class: the **Zamindari Abolition Act** (Brass, 1980b: 4; Duncan, 1979:2). That, in itself, was an achievement.

The Zamindari Abolition Act's gestation as legislation, quite apart from its implementation, was prolonged. The entrenched power of landlords ensured that. Daniel Thorner refers to 'the preliminaries to, and the stately legislative progress of, zamindari abolition' (Thorner, 1956: 48). That, surely, is an accurate description. The legislative process—its preparation, which reached back to the late 1930s, and its successful conclusion—spread over more than a decade. Charan Singh, successful lawyer and practised politician, bided his time and saw the legislation through to a successful conclusion in terms of enactment. As Parliamentary Secretary of the UP Congress Government from 1946 to 1951, and as a powerful member of the State cabinet from 1951 to 1967, holding posts crucial in the sphere of agrarian relations, he masterminded the Act and took it to its final enacted form.

The Zamindari Abolition Committee in UP appointed in 1946 presented its report in

1948. The Bill based on that report was referred to a Select Committee and was passed by the State Legislature in 1950 and signed by the President in 1951. It became effective only from 1 July 1952... The UP **Zamindari** Abolition and Land Reforms Act, as enacted in 1950, and modified subsequently by amending Acts in 1952, 1954, 1956 and 1958. It now had to be implemented, in the teeth of fierce opposition.

### **The Assault upon Landlordism:**

#### *(2) Re-Organization of the Patwari System.*

The enactment of agrarian legislation, in the face of the determined and organised opposition of powerful dominant classes, is, in all conscience, difficult enough. Its implementation, however, faces yet more demanding obstacles. In this instance, a key figure was the village patwari: the keeper of the village records or, to describe him somewhat anachronistically, the village accountant (Thorne, 1956: 47; Duncan, 1979: 2). There was, in UP, a veritable army of patwaris—some 27,000 of them (Singh, 1986: 42, 44, 47). The patwari had existed since long before the arrival of the British; he normally had three to four villages in his charge; and his function in keeping village maps, and records of boundary changes, of tenancies, of levels of rent and changes therein, and of who was in possession of what land, was critical (Neale [1962: 201-2], citing Walsh [1926-51])

The patwari had for long had an apparently dual position. On the one hand, he was the servant of the landlord, who kept 'records of transactions between his master, the zamindar, and the cultivators under his master's aegis—records, that is, of all claims, arrears, advances and doubts in which the zamindar's interests were involved' (Whitcombe, 1972: 42-3). On the other, he had an allegiance to the state.

The patwari was enmeshed in the local network of power, and subject to the overwhelming authority of the local dominant class. According to one writer the patwari occupied what was 'usually (an) hereditary post' (Neale, 1962: 315). That is no doubt so.

Thomer, however, qualifies that description appropriately: to the effect that when the post fell vacant the landlords had the 'powers of nomination' of the successor (Thomer, [1956: 47], citing the Report of the UP Zamindari Abolition Committee [Whitcombe [Whitcombe, 1972: 43]).

Upon his entries in the village records hinged the determination, in this regard, of the respective rights of cultivators and landlords; while the slow progress of the legislation 'gave to the patwaris of the UP an opportunity such as had never before occurred to them, even in their fondest dreams' (loc. cit.). As Thorner drily observes: 'They did not fail to avail themselves of it' (loc. cit.). their behaviour, in this respect, was open and 'notorious' (loc. cit.). At this point, Charan Singh stepped in decisively. He had become Congress Minister for Revenue and Agriculture in 1952, and was acutely aware of the activities of patwaris in falsifying village records. In 1953, they went too far 'when they struck for higher wages' (Thomer, 1956: 48). Charan Singh acted. It was at his prompting that 'the UP Government incurred no popular displeasure by dismissing thousands of them at one stroke' (loc. cit.); and it was he who, at this juncture, 'was responsible for the reorganisation of the patwari... system' (Duncan, 1979: 2). That was a significant achievement.

### **Land Consolidation and the Rich and Middle Peasantry:**

#### *The consolidation of Holdings Act of 1953*

At this period, too, Charan Singh was largely responsible for another important piece of legislation (Duncan, 1979: 2), which smoothed the way for rich and middle peasants in particular, and especially the former (Brass, 1980a: 398). This was the UP consolidation of Holdings Act of 1953, which represented 'programme of land consolidation for individual peasant holdings' (Duncan, 1979: loc. cit.). Fragmentation of holdings, or the existence of operational holdings in more than one plot—often significantly more than one plot—was rife in UP, as in other parts of India. It is still pervasive in most of India. Fragmented Holdings

existed for rich and middle peasants as for poor peasants.

Charan Singh himself observed of the situation in the early 1950s that: 'consolidation of landholdings is a condition precedent to all and any development in the countryside' (Singh, 1986: 102). He was hardly exaggerating. Later, from the mid-1960s, when the 'new technology' became available, the case for consolidation took on added force for the rich peasantry, and this was especially so in relation to mechanisation (Brass, 1980s: 398), which was more or less non-existent in UP agriculture in the early 1950s. For the moment, the consolidation made possible by the Act of 1953 represented a significant step forward, and for that Charan Singh must take much of the credit.

It was a step that was taken far more confidently and more pervasively in western UP—where the rich and middle peasantry were an important force—and which had particular 'significance for the middle and larger landholders' (Brass, 1980s: loc. cit.)

### **Resistance to Land Taxation:**

In the 1960s, the rich peasantry emerged ever more strongly as a force to be reckoned with in north-west India. Charan Singh continued to represent their interests, along with those of middle peasants, forcefully, cleverly, and successfully. So far, our account has centred on struggle within the countryside. Now that struggle extended to a confrontation with urban interests and the central state. This was clearly so on two important fronts: taxation and food procurement.

A critical issue in the political economy of post-1947 India has been the inability of the Indian state to tax agriculture adequately, and in particular, within agriculture, rich peasants, along with the other dominant landed classes, most notably, landlords. It is an issue which has attracted considerable attention (for a brief account of the evidence up to the mid-1970s see Byres (1979: 224-7). It is one which remains unresolved.

Charan Singh had won a signal victory, on behalf, especially, of the rich and middle

peasantry. The opposition to increased land taxation was successful both because of Charan Singh's skillful advocacy and because of adroit political maneuvering. The case which he argued in a lengthy memorandum to C.B. Gupta (reproduced in detail in Singh [1986: 151-94]) is a clever mustering of evidence, a deployment of special pleading and, not least, an open political warning.

#### Food Procurement:

The Congress government fell in April, 1967 and Charan Singh took over as Chief Minister. His concern of the 1930s with the exploitative activities of traders had long since gone. This was a reflection, no doubt, of the radically altered circumstances, in which rich peasants could now look after their own interests. Poor peasants, heavily indebted and without storage capacity, remained desperately weak and subject to what Charan Singh had earlier called 'the rapacity of the trader' (cf. Duncan [1979: 4]). Middle peasants, too, were vulnerable. But not so rich peasants. With access to cheap government credit, and supplied with subsidised inputs, many of them, 'had developed a storage capacity and an experience of the market which enabled them to engage in speculative practices' (Duncan, 1979: 5). Charan Singh faced a dilemma. He would have preferred no policy of procurement. He had, in recent years, stated his opposition to government interference. But the pressures upon him to adopt such a policy could not be resisted. He had no obvious concern to defend the interests of traders. If a procurement scheme were to be forced upon him he would have preferred one that looked to the wholesale trade. He had given voice to a 'preference for the free market and for freedom of the peasant to exploit market conditions to the best of his ability' (Duncan, 1979: 7). But the central government was determined to see compulsory procurement directly from producers. He effected a compromise.

He modified the scheme which had been introduced by the previous Congress administration, and was careful to stress that he was mounting 'a limited operation dictated

by extraordinary conditions' (Duncan 1979: 7). That operation involved a levy on holdings of eight acres and above, progressively graded up to 25 acres, and the setting up of government purchasing centres throughout UP (loc. cit.).

### **(iii) 1970 and After:**

The period opened with two major events, viz., (i) setting up of an independent UP Khet Mazdoor Sabha in 1970 at a State level conference held in **Lakhimpur Kheri** following the setting up of a similar national level organisation the Bhartiya Khet Mazdoor Sabha; and (ii) the launching of the struggle for land and land reforms of 1970 launched on a national scale under the auspices of a joint committee consisting of the All India Farmer Sabha, Bhartiya Khet Mazdoor Sabha and the Communist Party of India. The 1970's marked a period of a new upsurge and wave of struggles for the redistribution of land, imposition and implementation of a meaningful ceiling law and massive peasant struggle for remunerative prices for their produce.

In the second stage of the movement, the capturing of **Birla Farm** in **Lakhimpurkheri** was planned. S.A. Dange was to lead the movement and four jathas from different directions under leadership of Jharkhande Rai, Sarjoo Pandey, Rustam Satin and Ishaqu **Sambhli** started with a view to converge on the Birla Farm on August 15, 1970. The then Chief Minister of the State, Charan Singh promulgated the Preventive Detention Ordinance and used other repressive measures. A general round up was ordered and thousands of satyagrahis were dragged out from the buses and trains proceedings towards Lakhimpur Kheri and arrested. One Jatha led by Gur Prasad and Bhikha Lal, the General Secretary of the Bhartiya Khet Mazdoor Sabha and President of UP Khet Mazdoor Sabha, respectively, managed to reach the Farm and planted the Red Flag. Another important target in UP was the five thousand acre farm of Raja of Shohratgarh in Basti<sup>39</sup> .

In this period, mobilisation of peasants and agricultural labourers for their demands

and organisation of their marches has also been successfully attempted and massive demonstrations staged such as on June 1, 1972 for agricultural labourers demands and on September 13, 1972 for Peasants' Demands Day in Lucknow the UP Assembly and on March 27, 1973 before the Parliament in Delhi. An attempt was also made to bring all Peasant organisations and workers together around a common programme and towards a united organisation. A 'Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti' was set up consisting of the two UP Farmer Sabhas (CPI and CPM), the Sarvodaya and Bhodan workers led by Mahavir Bhai, and others including some with naxalite views. On their united call, a massive state-level demonstration was again organised on December 1, 1978 to highlight the urgent demands of the Peasants and agricultural labourers. While this Sangharsh Samiti has not functioned since then, closer cooperation was developed between the two Farmer Sabha led by the CPI and CPM. The struggle for remunerative price for Sugarcane, wheat and Paddy has also been continued with increasing momentum and militancy. The movement for remunerative prices wage on All India level had strengthened the movement that had been taking place every crop year in the

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State .

Two other major movements of this period were (1) the 'Chipko Movement' in Uttarakhand, and (2) the Pant Nagar University agricultural workers' strike. The 'Chipko Movement' commenced in March, 1973 in Chamoli district to protest against the indiscriminate felling of trees by contractors who were given contracts by the authorities of the Forest Department. The strike of the agricultural labourers and other employees of the Pantnagar University for wages, better working conditions and trade union rights took place in April, 1978. There was all-in-unity of the various sections of the employees including the Farm workers under their union. The authorities of the University encouraged and abetted by the 'Terai' farmers and some Government ministers adopted repressive measures and called in the police and the PAC for maintenance of law and order. A brutal lathi charge and firing

resembling Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place ironically on the same day, April 13, of the year 1978. The solidarity of the students, teachers and support from the working class, Peasant and student organisations of the State finally succeeded in getting the vice-chancellor removed and securing their main demands.

## 9 THE KISAN RALLY ON THE EVE OF 76<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY OF CHARAN SINGH:

The 1970s found Charan Singh on the national stage. He had been Minister of Home Affairs in the Janata government, in 1977-78, and been forced to resign. After his 'expulsion from the cabinet' (Ping, 1979a: 53) he used his large peasant support—overwhelmingly from northern India, but with the strong possibility of its spreading to other parts of the country—as a sword of Damocles in the political struggle then being waged. In the seven months after his enforced resignation, in his national political maneuvering, he used the intimidating prospect of considerable peasant mobilisation, via a mass peasant rally, in his dealings with Morarji Desai and other of the Janata leaders from whom he was estranged.

In the event, the farmer rally did take place, in Delhi, on 23 December 1978, Charan Singh's 76th birthday. According to one estimate, one million farmers attended 'the largest rally in the history of the capital' (Ping, 1979a: 53). There were, it seems, no particularly large contingents from outside northern India. But, addressing the rally, along with Charan Singh, as well as the Chief Ministers of the Punjab (P.S. Badal), UP (Ram Naresh Yadav), and Haryana (Devi Lal), was the Chief Minister of Bihar (Karpooori Thakur); while a message of support arrived from the Chief Minister of Karnataka (Deviraj Urs) [The Hindu, 24, December 1978]. The numbers were sufficiently large and the regional spread sufficiently wide to make a considerable impact. Charan Singh, and what he represented, had to be taken seriously. That this was so in the Janata Party was shown when, very quickly after the farmer rally, on 24 January 1979, Charan Singh became Minister and Senior Deputy Prime Minister [The Hindu, 25 January 1979].



The farmer rally's slogan drew upon populist imagery, invoking the 'urban bias' notion, of which Charan Singh had been a powerful exponent for many years (although he did not use that expression): 'Today, India's villages are the colony of the city' [Ping, 1979a: 53]. It was observed by one commentator; with some accuracy, that the rally 'symbolised the coming of age of the kulak class as formidable political force' [Ping, 1979a: 53]. In that coming of age, Charan Singh had played an influential part. He was now the rich peasantry's leading political representative and major ideologue: a formidable adversary and skilled politician. Urban intellectuals were puzzled as to what quite was to be made of him. There he was, posturing on the national stage, and threatening urban India with an army of peasants.

## CHAPTER-1V

### LANGUAGE PRESS IN INDIA

#### 4.1 Introduction:

The Press in India, from the time of Hicky to the present day has been playing a vital role in shaping the attitudes and behavioural patterns of the people. Indian Journalism has contributed immensely for national independence, democratic evolution, national integration and progress. It continues to play a major role in public opinion formation in spite of its limited reach both in terms of geographical area and population when compared to electronic media. The printed words, however, still has tremendous credibility and impact (Guru, 1995)

Our planners have laid emphasis on participatory development. As A.S. Ramaswamy writes, "Development cannot be imposed from above. It has to be generated from within. The participatory process implies partnership in development by two parties, namely, the people themselves and the government organisations or non-government organisations. The participatory process refers to a host of development functions like collection of data, processing and analyzing, determination of needs and their prioritization, planning programmes, and budgeting, raising of resources, implementation and monitoring and impact evaluation all done in a participatory manner." Thus, development has to be engineered by mass media organisations including that of journalism since the people are deliberately kept in a state of powerlessness by the powers-that-be. Journalism could become a platform for debates, discussions, public opinion formation and enlightened participation of people in the process of nation building .

Wilbur Schramm observed: "A rural newspaper, especially a small language newspaper published from district town is one of the great movers of national development." Newspapers are indeed capable of bringing about a better spread of available information, a

wider arousal of popular interest, a forward step in personal motivation and active contribution for development. Nora, C. Quebral points out: "Development requires effective vertical and horizontal flow of information within a country and full communication to and from, as well as within and away from the village." The Language Press has come in a big way in popularizing the beneficial effects of various development projects launched at local, provincial and national levels. Organized efforts are required to bring the largest majority of the under-privileged masses into the full stream of national life. The responsibility should, obviously, fall on the Language Press, which has a responsible role to play in launching an intensive publicity campaign in support of development projects vis-a-vis Development Journalism . Before discussing the Rural Press and the Language Press in detail, let us first briefly trace the history of the Press in India.

#### **4.2 Brief History of the Press in India:**

The Indian Press had a stormy beginning and a chequered career. Paradoxically enough, it was an Englishman in the heyday of British colonial rule who sought to blaze the trail of a free Press in the country. William Bolts was the first man to conceive a plan for starting a newspaper press in India. In 1767, an attempt was made by Bolts to start a newspaper, but, it was nipped in the bud as the Government deported the author of enterprise. The Court of Directors sitting at Fort William directed that Bolts should be asked to "quit Bengal and proceed to Madras on the first ship that was to set sail from that Presidency in the month of July next in order to take his passage from there to Europe in September."

In 1780, an English adventurer named James Augustus Hicky started a weekly paper called 'Bengal Gazetter' or Calcutta General Advertiser which described itself as a "weekly political and commercial paper, open to all parties, but influenced by none." It consisted only of two sheets, about 12 inches by eight, of which much space was occupied by

advertisements. It was in the main a lampooning sheet and caused considerable annoyance to many and great commotion and excitement among the Anglo-Indian community. Hicky spared none and "missionaries, officials, the Chief Justice, the Governor-General and his wife were all in turn attacked." Hicky, however, will long be remembered by the Indian Press.

Hicky was convicted and sent to prison and his paper was discontinued. Six more papers were started in Calcutta between 1780 and 1793 and Sir George Shore deported the Editor of one of these. Among these papers, the 'Indian Gazette', the 'Calcutta Gazette' and 'Hurkaru', particularly the last-named, attained some distinction. In Bombay, the first paper, the 'Weekly Bombay Herald', appeared in 1789. Periodicals in vernacular did not appear before 1818. By 1839, Calcutta had 26 European newspapers, including six dailies and nine Indian newspapers. Bombay had ten European and four Indian journals. Madras had nine European journals and Ludhiana, Delhi, Agra and Serampur each had one newspaper. The progress of Indian journalism was maintained during the 40s and 50s, the most important edition being the Hindoo Patriot of Calcutta edited by Harish Chandra Mukherjee.

The nascent regional press fighting against heavy odds with scant resources to serve the country offered a refreshing contrast to the English press owned and run by Britishers. The English press catered only to a limited group—British residents of India—and was flippant in tone and had amusement and entertainment rather than instruction as its objective. These Papers neither represented nor defended the interests of the Indians. It is not possible to record the full story of the growth and development of the Indian Press. But it is intriguing to note that even the Establishment, wholly pro-British in its outlook, frowned heavily on the arrogance and anti-Indian stance of the Anglo-Indian press of that time. Macaulay described the state of things in the following words: "That public opinion means the opinion of 500 persons who have no interest, feeling or taste in common with the 50 million among whom they live; that the love of liberty means the strong objection which the 500 feel to every

measure which can prevent them from acting as they choose towards the 50 million". John Stuart Mill observed in his evidence before Lords Committee in 1832: "The English newspaper press in India is the organ only of the English society, and chiefly that part of its unconnected with Government. It has little to do with the natives and the great interest of India" •

The Urdu Press also flourished and the majority of Urdu journals of North India were edited by Hindus. There were, at this time-in the late 1860s-11 Urdu and six Hindi papers. The Indian Press throughout the half century that elapsed since the first freedom struggle in 1857 took a distinctive political and nationalistic turn without losing sight of the main object of supplying information and useful knowledge. We find trenchant criticism of the abuses of the British administration and the reactionary measure of the Government in the vernacular press of that period. Faced by the growing criticism of the press, Lord Lytton studied various methods of coping with the situation. The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 became law, and under this Act, "the printer and publisher of any paper in an Indian language could be called upon to enter into a bond not to publish anything likely to excite feelings of disaffection against Government or antipathy between persons of different races, castes and religions

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among His Majesty's subjects" • If a newspaper contravened this **regulation**, it was first warned, and if it recurred, its equipment was liable to be seized.

"Even more sinister than government control," wrote Dr. Beni Prashad, Professor of History in Allahabad University, "is the influence of wealth. Big business has been capturing the press and treating it as a commercial proposition. The huge cost of production and dependence on advertisements has made a large section of the press an appendage to capitalism. Newspapers have been syndicated, circulated and sold like so many mechanical plants to the highest bidder. The changing whims and caprices of press magnates have sometimes been reflected with such fidelity as to invite ridicule"<sup>6</sup> • The criticism cannot be

brushed aside lightly. There is no getting away from the fact that in sharp contrast to the crusading spirit displayed by the Indian press in pre-independence days there is the same down-to-earth commercial jargon today as well. It is now an organised industry. Newspapermen today are working journalists working for a living and striving for better conditions of service. Industrialists own newspapers as they can no longer be run on shoestring budgets.

### **4.3 Indian Press after Independence:**

After independence, the Constitutions of other countries providing for freedom of speech and expression like the USA, UK, Germany, Switzerland etc. exerted a great influence on the framers of the Indian Constitution. In their debates, frequent references were made to the Constitution of these countries. For instance, B.N. Rau, a Constitutional Advisor, pointed out the rights declared in the Constitutions or Charter of these countries related to equality before law, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of association etc. and justified them. Similarly, Dr. Ambedkar's draft dealt with the subject of fundamental rights quite extensively. He made it clear that the fundamental rights contained in his draft has been borrowed from countries where conditions were almost similar to the one existing in India.

The importance of the free press can be judged from statements by various leaders of that period. Jawaharlal Nehru said in 1950: "I would rather have a complete free press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or a regulated press" (quoted in Sharma, 1993:7). Gajendragadkar, a former Chief Justice of India, commented "the freedom is of considerable significance in a democratic society as it gives full scope to an individual for his development and ample opportunity for propagation of his views, philosophy and ideology; and it also plays a vital role in the education, growth and development of public opinion on issues of public importance" (ibid. p.7). A free press was

considered to be an instrument of social and political change.

The press has an important role to play in a developing country like India. It is because majority of the population is grappling with the problems of basic needs as a result of inequality and stratification. Even after more than **five** decades of development India faces overwhelming "poverty bred by scarcity of known resources, ignorance, and staggering population growth" (Hardgrave and Kochnek, 1993: 4). The benefits of development have remained largely confined to top 40 per cent of the population and two-thirds of the country go to sleep on empty stomach (Srampickal, 1989). At the level of education, India is the largest producer of illiterates in the world. In such a situation, free media is expected to bring people's problems to the attention of policy makers.

Owing to the problem of illiteracy, it is again the **media/journalists** who are supposed to reach people and involve them in the democratic process as most people do not have easy access to the elite political sphere. At the same time, media needs to act as a catalyst for democratic reforms and a vehicle for transmitting ideas and bringing change in a traditional society. **Karkhanis** (1981) argues that role of the press in a developing country like India is varied. "It acts as a communicator of news, the source of information about the world, national and local events. It becomes an instrument of education and helps influence social and cultural attitudes, establish values and develops a climate for change... The press becomes an instrument of political, social and economic progress" (p. 7). But the question is: Does the press play this role effectively ? In the following section I shall highlight the structure of the press and analyze its nature of functioning.

#### **4.4 The Structure and Nature of the Indian Press:**

Haque and Narag (1983) have divided the Indian press into a) the regional press, b) the party press, and c) the English Press. There are a large number of papers published in

various parts of the country and in various languages. Although regional press leads in circulation and reach, English dailies occupy a special status in terms of prestige. In words of Caiman (1992: 85) the English press is "probably the most compelling in the short run to elite's of the central government." This is in spite the fact that just five per cent of the adults in India read English newspapers (see Joseph and Sharma, 1994). The highest readership for English publications is in four metropolitan cities of Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. The English national press continues to enjoy a position of prominence since the English language is a legacy of imperialism although confined mainly to the ruling class and the elite. Arora and Lasswell (1969) argue that in understanding the influence of English newspapers, it must be taken into account that English has been and remains an official language, and that in practice it is the preferred language of administrators and intellectuals. The journalists and editors who are all-India figures are those who are active in the English press.

The Indian press is commercial in its orientation and is run as a business organisation. Haque (1986: 84) argues that "mainstream dailies, whatever their commitment to ideology or public interest and whatever constraints they may work under, would probably try to appeal as business organizations, to the greatest number of their readers." Industrial barons own most of the prestigious English dailies and they are also profitable for political influence. Haque and Narag (1983: 37) point out that "often the part played by a newspaper in an industrial empire of jute, textiles, cement and automobiles in terms of overall financial resources is small. But a newspaper can provide important advantages to the owners. First, ownership of a newspaper makes an industrial empire less likely, if not immune, to attacks by other newspapers, as other papers know that they are also vulnerable to similar attacks. Secondly, the threat of exposure often serves to force the bureaucracy to meet owner's demands. Third, ownership acts as a deterrent to the government, as it has to be wary against action affecting the owners who have the capability and desire to widely publicize such



action and embarrass the government." (Haque and Narag, 1983: 37). As far as the government's pressure is concerned, it is directed at the proprietors rather than the editorial boards, staff members or correspondents. The press is subjected to different kinds of pressure like the loss of advertisements or reduction of newsprint allocation, etc. (see Haque and Narang, 1983).

Since the Indian press emerged in pre-independence days and played a major role in the nationalist movement, it has continued with its tradition of covering politics more than other issues. It is known to be obsessed with covering political events, local or national. (Haque, 1986, Prasad, 1992). Driberg (quoted in Haque, 1986: 85) argues that "politics remains the obsessive neurosis of the Indian press, and the type of politics one reads about is middle class politics, the power game as it appears to the middle class." Some scholars (Desai, quoted in Haque and Narag, 1983) have criticised this position of the press, that is, the importance given to politics, on the grounds that India is a developing country and the press needs to give more importance to development issues; inform people about their contribution towards decision-making processes, and debate social, economic and political issues. In a study, (Haque 1986) found that English dailies attached more importance to politics and government than development news or any other subject or category. He defines development news as "dealing with reforms and improvement of quality of life" (p. 89). It includes news relating to physical growth, and progress or problems regarding subjects included in the development category. Various issues categorized under development were: health, education, literacy, communication (transportation), agriculture, industry, housing, population training, national integration, energy and ecology.

There is, however, the other and gloomier side of the entire picture. Journalism has ceased to be a vocation. It is now a profession. But in recent years along with the amenities the professional hazards have multiplied, forces of the market economy are at work and

newspapers who cannot stay are dropping out or are being taken over by a bigger group or some enterprising industrialist for establishing closer links with politicians in the corridors of power. Newspapers, like families, are born, grow up, lead hard-working lives and often suddenly die. Some newspapers, like some families, have a long and distinguished heritage and manage to win respect and honour in their commitments, upholding that which is good and wholesome. Other newspapers, like some other families, seek only "ephemeral glories," building their foundations on the quick sands of cheap popularity, holding on only to the principle that things in business are measured solely on the money that is made and never on the influence that one can exert on the hearts and minds of men .

Newspapers, like families, have abilities. The strength of any newspaper is measured not by the quality of its machines but by the quality of the person who lays down the policy of the paper. Altogether, today's newspapers serve a very useful and sometimes necessary purpose in a community whether in the voicing of public opinion against the evils of the day, whether on the delineation of the unwritten code in upholding respect for law and order and in the preservation of the rights of individuals. More and more rights of the powers-that-be are made paramount and are arbitrarily exercised. Politicians with glib tongues explain the loss of individual rights by promising the right to "the many." The public is gullible or confused and do not know how to remedy this sorry state of affairs.

#### **4.5 RURAL PRESS IN INDIA:**

The rural Press has been conceptualized in many ways. Some think of it as papers coming out of rural areas. Others maintain that it is the content which should designate a paper as rural or urban, irrespective of its place of publication. The Indian Rural Press Association defines a rural paper as one which devotes at least 40 per cent of its editorial space to agriculture, community development, co-operation, horticulture, Panchayati Raj and the like. Rural Press may be conceived as that which highlights rural problems in preference to urban ones. Ideally, it should be the rural educator, entertainer, informer and motivator; it should help in acquiring new attitudes, outlook and skills. The Rural Press should improve reader's awareness and to promote their participation in the development process must be one of its goals. The content must reflect the needs and aspirations of the people it intends to cater to.

#### **4.6 Definition of Rural Press:**

According to a popular definition of the rural press, "A rural paper would essentially be language paper published from outside the metropolitan and big cities and most probably from a district headquarters. It is essentially a small newspaper, which as per the classification of the Registrar of the Newspapers of India (RNI) will have a circulation below 15,000 copies. It caters essentially to local issues of immediate importance to the people." According to another definition, a rural newspaper is one that, "is primarily published from a rural area, devoting at least 50% of its contents to the problems relating to the rural community, in a language akin to the idiom of rural readers."

The rural Press shares most of the characteristics of community newspapers, local newspapers and the regional Press. Several experts on the subject have, therefore, been using these terms interchangeably, notwithstanding certain differences in their circulation, subject

spread, etc. Some of the regional papers, may, for instance, have a larger circulation and cover a vast range of topics from sports to national politics, etc. In such cases, it would perhaps be too far - fetched to classify these papers as the rural Press. The following statement may, therefore, generally be most acceptable definition of the rural Press: "When we refer to the rural Press we mean small newspapers with small circulations, serving small communities and catering to their special needs and interests, that cannot be met by the urban Press". The two newspapers selected for this study started as rural newspapers.

Aldous Huxley has said, "Every man who knows how to read has to magnify himself, to multiply the way in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting." The rural newspaper, with its simple language and contents closest to the interest of its readers, reinforces this reading habit, day in and day out. Since reading is basic to the understanding of the working of a host of social, economic and political institutions, the rural Press, by cultivating and reinforcing the reading habit, performs an important role in the process of social and political awareness.

A rural newspaper provides a forum to articulate the urges of the common man. It takes up local issues and cater to the immediate requirements of the people. It gives greater importance to the problems of the masses; unemployment, scarcity of agricultural inputs, the law and order situation at the village level, etc. It is perhaps the best and most effective forum, in fact, a link between the district administration and the village. The columns of rural newspapers, through "Letters - to - the - Editor", reports and even features, highlight the various problems and issues which touch the every day life of the common man. The rural Press is best suited to act as the second level of conversion of scientific knowledge into information in a usable form for the benefit of the ultimate clientele - the farmers.

The rural Press is also expected to, and in many cases does, perform the role of a crusader on behalf of its readers. The well known journalist, **Mr.G.P. Jain**, has written about

the Rural Press in the journal, Seminar, in its issue on "The village and the Communicator":

"A rural paper, I can speak from my 25 years experience, will have a great and loyal readership, if it can also fight for its readers. Not a day passes without an injustice being perpetrated on a village community by the rich few or the underlings of bureaucracy. Like a social worker, a rural paper can win the people's confidence and trust if it takes up their causes in a crusading spirit. What the urban Press did during the independence struggle for the national cause, the rural Press can do now for the rural communities and earn their great gratitude."

According to a Unesco study on rural newspapers in Africa, the rural Press ensures a dialogue between "rural environment and urban environment". The Unesco has defined the aims of the rural Press as under:

1. To provide reading material for the neo-literates;
2. To ensure the continuing education of the rural masses, give them practical advice on production and civic rights and responsibilities;
3. To give the masses information about events concerning their environment, their region, their nation and the outside world at regular intervals;
4. To ensure a "dialogue" between the leaders and the rural masses;  
To help ensure the participation of rural masses in the economic, social and cultural development of the nation;
6. To proceed to set up a local, decentralized Press and to show the rural masses how to express themselves in the Press.  
To introduce the rural masses to the reading of newspapers.

#### **4.7 The Realities of Rural Press in India:**

India at the threshold of the Eighties had about 10,000 newspapers and periodicals, half as many again as in the mid-sixties. In 1976, the Press Registrar listed 835 dailies, 70 papers published twice or three times a week, and 2,786 *news* weeklies as distinct from specialist magazines. Such was the rate of growth of the printed word in the seventies that the 1980 totals were around 1,000, 80 and 3,200. But there must be heavy skepticism about these figures, since a check in 1973 showed that probably one in three registered dailies was no longer in existence. So, 780, 55, and 2,000 are 1980 estimates possibly closer to reality (say 3,000 altogether), and this is supported by a comparison of circulation evidence available to the Registrar at the end of 1975.

For a country of 623 million people at that time, 3,000 was a modest number of newspapers. India has perhaps as many literate citizens as the United States, yet the latter had four times the number of newspapers. An unfair comparison, of course, but it highlights the gap between the world's information-rich and information-poor. India was at the bottom of the list whichever way you look at the relationship between the size of the print media and the size of the population. For every 100 persons in 1965, India's newspapers were selling barely more than a single copy. The world *average* was nearly ten times greater.

However, we can say with some confidence that almost nine in every ten dailies in 1975 and more than ninety-six in every hundred weeklies had circulation of less than 15,000. Among Indian language, non-chain dailies, you could count on your fingers the number selling more than 50,000 copies. Fewer than three dozen sold 15,000. Most sold less than a third of that. At the other end of the market, one-tenth of the dailies have two-thirds of daily circulation: one-thirtieth of the weeklies have more than half the weekly circulation. Put it another way. There were 23 daily newspapers in 1975 with sales exceeding 100,000; and 19 selling between 50,000 and 100,000. Weeklies included, perhaps fewer than three hundred papers sold between 15,000 and 50,000 copies. The vast majority struggle along on less.

Naturally, there is a correlation, relative if not absolute, between size of readership and the size of population in the centre of publication. Thus, these 13 per cent of the country's newspapers which were published from the four metropolis Bombay, Madras, Delhi and Calcutta, account for almost 40 per cent of the country's total circulation figure, because of the size of the cities (and because many titles are sold over wide areas of the country). Another 14 per cent operated from state capitals and have 18 per cent of total sales; and some 37 per cent operate from other towns with more than 100,000 population and share 35 per cent of circulation. This leaves 35 per cent of all India's newspapers with a seven per cent share of total circulation, published from the market towns and striving against great odds to serve the rural masses. Compared with papers of comparable status and sales in the industrialised world, their quality is low and their survival rate dismal.

Thus, there is in India a 'rich press' and a 'poor press' and the gap between them is wide. The poor press, largely in the smaller towns, makes do with poor resources - low investment, inadequate management, rickety machines, ageing type, untrained correspondents. Its poverty makes it vulnerable to advertisers, politicians, crooks and temptation. "Of 14 dailies, three may be worth reading", said Shamim Shamim, at the Unesco's Agra Conference. The poor Press acts as a brake on India's media development. Its problems depress the general level of professional and keep the country back from the **take-off** point at which the quantity and quality of the media should match the demands of economic development and create the necessary critical mass for rapid growth of literacy.

In late 60's, the problems of small newspapers had been examined by a Committee of Enquiry set up by the then Minister of Information under the Chairmanship of Shri R.R.Diwakar, MP. The Committee published recommendations, but hardly any had been put into effect. Meanwhile, the gap between rich city papers and poor rural papers had widened - one more frustration for India alongside all the other ills that steadfastly refused to go

away.... Overpopulation, illiteracy, poverty and the rest.

Yet the Green Revolution in Punjab and Gujarat proves that India *can* free herself from her chains. The standard of living of rural families improved - even if it was still largely imperceptible. Scientific methods of agriculture, irrigation, low-interest loans to farmers by the nationalized banks, rural electrification, oil-powered well pumps... these and many other signs of an increase in national wealth were improving the lot of the masses and "inevitably widening the base of newspaper readership". Decentralisation of political power was a stimulus, too. District, taluka and village councillors had a greater say than ever before in all matters other than law and order, the judiciary and high-level development projects. Their work created demand for newspaper coverage and comment.

The Green Revolution did contribute towards the growth of market for newspapers. In the five years to 1975, non-metropolitan dailies increased their share of the total national daily circulation from 59.7 per cent to 64.3. If the will is there, no one can doubt that such a market can be successfully satisfied and a strong press established. The first task is to give dignity, reliability and stability to the poor press of the small towns. Their share of daily and total circulations actually fell in the same period, from 7.6 and 12.3 per cent to 6.9 and 11.3. The first requirement then is to know the size of the problem.

The picture that emerged from the pages of the 1965 Enquiry's report was bleak. Here are five comments picked at random:

- Fifty-five per cent of dailies, tri-and bi-weeklies do not subscribe to any of the four principal news agencies; most of them could not afford any news service whatsoever and relied on All-India Radio news bulletins.
- Readership was as low as 8.5 per thousand in Oriya.
- Two-thirds of small dailies are owned by individuals, societies or partnerships. Most,



said the **report**, were probably inadequately funded.

- , Representatives of a large number of small newspapers and periodicals informed the committee that they were not able to prepare balance sheets or profit - **and-loss** accounts. One of the difficulties of ascertaining the correct circulation figures of small newspapers... has been that they do not maintain accounts (or) the accounts are not clear enough to correct conclusions.
- Of 22 company-owned dailies whose books were studied, none showed a profit "capable of self-sufficient growth".
  - Some of the small newspapers and periodicals... may, owing to their financial difficulties, be driven to resorting to methods which may not be justified as healthy journalism.

Lack of reliable statistics prevents confident definitions of the terms "small newspaper" and "rural press". The 1965 Committee was twice forced during the course of its enquiries, to revise its yardstick of what constituted a "small" newspaper. At first it included all dailies and tri-and bi-weeklies selling 10,000 copies or less, plus those selling 15,000 or less and published from towns with a population of less than 300,000, and weeklies and other periodicals with sales of up to 5,000. But after arguments over the level of economic viability - one Hindi daily in Uttar Pradesh claimed that break-even point was not reached until sales of 40,000 copies was achieved - the following criteria were set:

All dailies with sales of up to 15,000 Plus those of up to 20,000 published from cities with a million or more inhabitants, of which there were eight in the mid-1960s (Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, **Bangalore**, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Madras, Nagpur)

All bi-weeklies, weeklies and other periodicals with sales of up to 5,000-Plus those of up to 10,000 in the million-inhabitant metropolis.

However, having examined examples of cost and revenue, the committee discarded the size of publication centre as a criterion and substituted a revenue factor. It decided **that** the term "small newspaper" should define:

Dailies with circulations of up to 20,000 and gross annual revenue of up to one and a quarter million rupees (12 ½ lakhs); other publications: 15,000 and **half-a-million** rupees (5 lakhs).

The definition used by the Registrar of Newspapers is simpler. He defines as a "small newspaper" as any title selling fewer than 15,000.

Most rural newspapers fall into this category of small newspapers (though by no means are most small newspapers to be categorized as rural newspapers) and are published from places with a population of less than 100,000. In 1975, 2,629 newspapers and periodicals (including 176 dailies and 1,137 weeklies) were published from places of this size.

How big is the rural readership? According to Abdur **Rahim**, an academician, metropolitan newspapers and periodicals sell barely eight per cent of their copies in rural areas. Added to the sales of newspapers and periodicals published in centers with a population of less than 100,000, this means that about 6.5 million copies serve four-fifths of India's population - the half-billion people living in the rural areas.

Many participants at UNESCO conference in Agra agreed with Ramesh Chander when he claimed that "what may truly be called a rural press is yet to be born". For, how many of these 6.5 million copies are actually read in the villages as distinct from market towns, how much of its readership is rural and how much attention is actually paid to rural problems is, as **Romesh Chander** put it, "still a matter of research". In 1966, Bhabani Sen Gupta, former editor of *Yojana*, estimated the total non-urban circulation was about 414, 000 - less than a single copy per village. In 1979, the estimated figure may not be much more

than double that. "There is no exact information regarding village-wise consumption of newspapers", **Romesh Chander** rightly reported at Agra. "Nobody can say how many newspapers go to a particular village. However, according to sample research studies it is estimated that villages within 100 to 200 miles of metropolitan cities, 80 to 100 miles of sub-metropolitan towns and 10 to 20 miles of medium and small railway stations and villages on state transport bus routes get a regular supply. Current estimates are that rural areas get from two to ten per cent of total national newspaper circulation", he said.

One unknown quantity is the size of India's "hidden readership" - millions who are informed, educated and influenced by newspapers, although they neither can afford to buy them nor could they read them if they could. This army of phantom readers is largest perhaps in the villages, where each copy of a newspaper may be read by more than half-a-dozen people who in turn convey the information to several others. Perhaps as many as half-a-dozen copies brought by the village school-teacher, the teashop owner, the largest shopkeeper or the proprietor of the toddy tavern will be shared and discussed by many who are not subscribers. "Normally one person reads out the whole newspapers, sometimes the print line also, to a large group of illiterate persons who in turn disseminate the information in homes". **Ramesh Chander** added.

What, then, is the rural press? What indeed is rural? Is there a danger of imposing an alien, western concept on to a situation that does not fit the criteria? In Tamil Nadu, hundreds of papers are published from towns with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, including specialist journals catering to the needs of villagers in Tamil and English. At the same time, one Tamil Nadu daily, **Dinamani**, published from Chennai and Madurai, is typical of many situations where the villagers are served by a paper that is printed in the city (a paper in this case which is among the 20 biggest in the country): less than 15 per cent of all copies, it is claimed, are sold in those two cities. Which of these then are urban papers and which are rural? Is the

question capable of answer? **Shamim Shamim**, argues bluntly that newspapers with a rural bias do not exist and that the nearest thing to a rural press is those papers published in district headquarter towns.

The urban concentration of a newspaper is a common feature in most countries. In India, communication structures are neither rural-based nor **rural-oriented**. According to the National Readership Survey (NRS) conducted by the Operations Research Group (ORG) the imbalance in the readership of the Press between urban and rural people continues to be as glaring as it was nearly two decades ago. About 64% of the urban population read newspapers as against hardly 5% in the rural areas. Three-fourths of all newspaper readers continue to be in urban areas. Among rural women, hardly 3% read any publication. According to the report, the readership of the Press in the rural Hindi belt (which constitutes by far the largest linguistic group) is pathetically low, with hardly 2% of rural women reading any daily with some frequency against 7.2% in the case of men.

An interesting feature, however, is that in spite of the low literacy rate and readership, papers in villages are read out on a large scale. Bhagat and Mathur (1988) have pointed out that low literacy and poor purchasing power are partly responsible for the limited reach of newspapers and magazines in the rural areas. Though circulation of newspapers in India is as little as two copies per one hundred persons, the readership per copy is much higher than in the developed countries. In spite of illiteracy, the Press has become a major institution of change in India. Farm women and village elders who are illiterate have newspaper read out to them by other members of the family. Trikha (1986) has pointed out to the growing evidence that even illiterates can be reached through the print media, as generally there is someone in the household who can, and often does, read out aloud to the other family members. It has also been found that there was considerable exposure of the illiterates to the newspapers and magazines through oral readers. A majority of farmers preserve all or some

of their copies for future use. This fact stands proved in our study. The interviews with the farmers indicated that during the course of BKU farmers movement in Western UP, one copy of a newspaper was read by at least 8 to 10 farmers and an educated person would read out the day's interesting developments for the benefit of a group of illiterate farmers.

To sum up, we may conclude that most of the big newspapers published in different regional languages, today, started as small newspapers which may have been called a rural newspaper few years back. Over the period of time, these newspapers increased their area of coverage and circulation increased, accordingly. This is equally true of the two Hindi newspapers, *Amar Ujala* and *Dainik Jagran*, taken up for the present study. Now, we would discuss the vast expansion of these- so-called rural newspapers in multi-edition publications covering big areas and read by millions of people, mostly from rural areas- as regional language newspapers.

#### **4.8 Language Press in India:**

Multi-ethnicity, **mutli-culture** and multi-language are the hallmarks of India. In fact, the country is any linguist's delight. The constitution has recognised 18 major languages but there are 1652 languages spoken as mother tongues by the people of India. While North India is considered Hindi heartland, labelled after the dominant language, South India has four important Dravidian languages, namely, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. East India has Oriya, Bengali and Assamese while Western States have Marathi, Gujarathi, Rajasthani and Punjabi. The Malayalam press tops the list of largest circulated newspapers and magazines (Nagaraj & Guru, 1997).

**Table: 4.1**

A BIRD'S EYEVUE OF THE LARGEST SELLING LANGUAGE DAILY  
NEWSPAPERS WILL CONFIRM THEIR AREA OF INFLUENCE

SL.No.	Language	Figures
1.	Malayala <b>Manorama</b> (Malayalam)	779170 copies
2.	Punjab Kesari (Hindi)	613908
3.	<b>Matrubhumi</b> (Malayalam)	60 lakh (approx.)
4.	Anand Bazar Patrika (Bengali)	484886
5.	Eenadu (Telugu)	5.0 (approx.)
6.	Sandesh (Gujarathi)	439000
7.	Dainik Jagran (Hindi)	530000
8.	Aaj (Hindi)	515000

An exhaustive survey of the National Studies Council (1995) has revealed interesting statistics. The survey covered **177** dailies and 254 magazines that included both English and Indian language publications. The increase in exposure to the press was about one per cent for dailies of all languages and a decline of two percent in the case of magazines. As already indicated, Kerala (Malayalam speaking state) is the most literate state with 84 percent followed by Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. States like Orissa (51%), UP (48%) and AP (47%) have lagged behind in this respect.

Among dailies, the languages newspapers have an edge over their English papers competitors. Of the top five, Punjab Kesari (Hindi) leads with a readership of 37.19 lakh, followed by Dina Thanthi (Tamil 35.97 lakh); Navabharat (Hindi-33.69 lakh); Times of India

(English-32.81 lakh); and Gujarat **Samachar** (Gujarati-30.95 lakh). The achievement of 'Dina Thanthi' is considered remarkable since only 1/10 of the reading public constitutes Tamil readers. The next five toppers **include-Dainik Jagran** (Hindi-30.86 lakh); Eenadu (**Telugu-**30.32 lakh); Ananda Bazar Patrika (**Bengali-**29.89 lakh); Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi-27.74 lakh); and Rajasthan Patrika (**Rajasthani-**27.42 lakh). Among the top five magazines with large readership, India Today (English) occupied the number one position. The other four are language magazines-**Grihashobha** (Hindi-49.06 lakh); Manohar Kahaniya (**Hindi-**41.06 lakh); India Today (Hindi-33.32 lakh); and Sarita (Hindi-32.45 lakh). This indicates the widening base of language journalism in the country.

India, though having an impressive circulation figure of newspapers, is one among the countries where the reading habit is quite poor. According to the World Bank Report (1996), India has a circulation of 31 newspapers per thousand of its population. Although the figure is very discouraging, the number has doubled since 1970 when it was just 15 per thousand population. During 1980-85, the number was estimated to be 26 per thousand population. The Report also said that Hong Kong, a commercially developed small region under China with business links and immense market facilities, recorded the maximum circulation of 817 newspapers per thousand of its population which is the highest in the continent. The low circulation in India was being considered due to slower pace of human resource development

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and invasion of electronic media .

Today, India is experiencing a wave of satellite broadcasting, i.e., existence of direct-to-home television services. The growth of television (1990-1995) has hindered the progress of the press so much so that in some cases it has resulted in closure of several daily newspapers. In spite of these hurdles, the press in India has been marching ahead at a considerable pace. The second Press Commission, in its findings, indicated that India had the second largest dailies in Asia and fourth in the world. The **post-Independence** era witnessed a

spectacular growth in the newspaper readership among the literate, which accounted for more than 80 per thousand, while the corresponding number was 57.4 in 1979 and 50.4 in 1960 (for dailies). Similarly, the number of daily newspapers registered for Newspapers of India (RNI) increased by 13.2 per cent during the last four years (up to 1995) from 3740 to 4236. The combined circulation of these newspapers has increased from 6,76,61,100 copies in 1993 to 7,23,02,000 copies in 1994. Towards the end of 1995, the number rose to 7,92,83,000 copies. The growth trend in newspapers has yet not drawn a satisfied readership. We have failed to achieve a standard of minimum of 100 per thousand populations as set by UNESCO for developing countries. To meet the UNESCO standard, considerable attention has to be paid to generate reading habits among literate and neo-literate in the country <sup>10</sup> .

#### **49 State of Language Press:**

The Press in India is said to be of two different kinds, the English press and the language press. English press is identified with the elite and educated readers whose intellectual interest is supposed to cover a wide canvas. The language press is **identified** on regional or local basis, having readers who are both literate and semi-literate. Obviously, it appeals to a particular language audience. English press is mainly confined in urban areas and cities. In small towns it might reach the growth centers along with major road sides. The language press is accessible only to a small majority of population based on common linguistic and cultural background of a particular region. The language press in India is regional in character. No language press claims its national character in the sense as some English newspapers claim. But, in the real sense no English newspaper in India also shows national character as it is understood to exist in the western and communist countries. The English press had faster growth compared to language press during pre-independence period. After Independence, the situation changed as the language press found a better environment



for its growth in professionalism and leadership. The only drawback or shortcoming in the case of language press in India was that barring a few, most of the language newspapers lack sound financial background and good marketing strategy (Patnaik and Bedi: 97).

#### **4.10 Growth of Language Press:**

A silent revolution has been taking place in the Indian **press**—a revolution during the course of which the two-century old dominance of the English press has been overcome by the Indian language press in terms of both the number of newspapers and their combined circulation. At the time of Independence, there were about 3,000 newspapers and periodicals, which included 300 major English and language dailies. Just after 15 years of Independence, a remarkable change was noticed. The Hindi language press overtook English press and left it behind in terms of circulation also. In 1989, the number of Hindi newspapers was nearly double to that of English **newspapers**—an indicator of steady progress and prospect of language press. In 1960, there were about 392 language dailies with a combined circulation of 36 lakhs; the corresponding number rose to 704 and combined circulation 68 lakhs in 1971, when the number of daily newspapers rose to 704. In 1960, Malayalam language daily figured among the top dailies. In 1971, all the top four dailies were Indian language dailies. The circulation of language dailies nearly doubled between 1960 and 1971<sup>n</sup>.

The above figures show that the rapid growth of language press in India was a direct outcome of increase in literacy, active participation of common people in politics and rise of economic condition of the people. Over the last 10 years as the Far East Economic Review recently noted, the circulation of western India's Gujarati language daily Sandesh grew from 1,72,000 to 4,39,000, while the Marathi language newspaper Nava-kal (New Age) saw its circulation increase six-folds, from 52,000 to 350,000. By contrast, the circulation of India's English language newspapers remained essentially stagnant (Nieman Report, V Parekh,

1996). **Kalanirnay**, Marathi is the highest circulated periodical (**34,76,819** copies), while the daily **Malayalam Manorama** (combined five editions) occupies the highest position with a combined circulation of 12,49,183 copies during 1995.

Today, political information forms the major content of the language press. The latest data (shows that there were about 37,254 newspapers published as many as in 100 languages including 18 principal languages as stated in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution). The language press accounts nearly about 85 per cent of the total number. In Indian, newspapers are published from all its states and Union Territories. Uttar Pradesh claims top position with 5,131 newspapers, followed by Delhi (4,435), Maharashtra (3,614), West Bengal (2,896), Rajasthan (2,435), Madhya Pradesh (2,420), Tamil Nadu (1,937), Karnataka (1,650), Andhra Pradesh (1,583), Bihar (1,461) and Kerala (1,411). In the case of dailies, Uttar Pradesh, again maintains its top position with 579 newspapers followed by Bihar (380), Madhya Pradesh (346), Rajasthan (343), Maharashtra (325), and Tamil Nadu (306). Of the total circulation of newspapers published in the country (67.61 million), Uttar Pradesh claims the maximum 10.355 million followed by Maharashtra (8.215 million) and Delhi (7.262 million).

Among the language press, Hindi press accounted for the highest number followed by Urdu while the second position in circulation is occupied by Malayalam press. English press since 1979 stood in the second position. The position occupied by Hindi press is mainly due to the fact that a majority of the country's population speaks and understands the language. Their hunger for news and information and varied ways of journalism practiced by the press with changing production techniques are the other main factors. The data in 1993 revealed that there were 12,529 Hindi newspapers constituting 41.3 per cent of the numerical strength and had circulation of about 27.9 million copies. Hindi dailies had a 40.9 per cent share of the total circulation of all dailies with 11,966,000 copies followed by English 3,849,000 or 13.2 per cent of the total circulation in dailies in all languages.

**Table: 4.2**

TOP LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN 1995

Language	Number	Per cent
Hindi	14517	51.57
Urdu	2458	8.73
Bengali	2163	7.68
Marathi	1691	6.00
Tamil	1611	5.72
<b>Kanada</b>	1289	4.57
<b>Malayam</b>	1192	4.23
<b>Gujarati</b>	1038	3.68
Telugu	873	3.10
Punjabi	749	2.66
Oriya	568	2.01
Total	<b>(N=28149)</b>	(99.98)

*Source: India 1996*

The prospect of other language press such as Bengali, Urdu, Malayalam, Telugu, Marathi and Punjabi are also good each having a circulation up to several lakh copies. However, Malayalam, Marathi, and Gujarati dailies have now reached new heights recording above one million circulation, a large leap from 2 lakh copies in **1952** .

## CHAPTER - V

### HINDI PRESS IN INDIA

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION:

Hindi is spoken and understood over large parts of India, newspapers which serve vast number of people in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, parts of Punjab, Delhi, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh besides a number of Hindi knowing people in Bombay, Calcutta and some other centers. Hindi newspapers have an ideal situation to succeed and thrive in these regions. The entrepreneurs had to rise to the occasion to seize this opportunity and fulfill the people's desire to become aware of what was happening around them. This naturally enabled them to take an active part in shaping their destiny and the affairs of their own states and of the nation. The appetite was growing, but, it was whetted by the emergence of the papers which fulfilled the people hunger for news, comments, interpretation and colourful presentation and also helped to raise it to a high level. This is clearly revealed by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) figures which indicates that mainstream newspapers published from Delhi have steadily lost ground. Yet, the total readership of Hindi newspapers has increased, thanks to the emergence of new regional newspapers which, with some of the established dailies have flourished.

The edition of Navbharat Times, one of the leading papers of the country, declined in terms of circulation from 251,000 copies in 1989 to 213,099 copies in 1992. The Lucknow edition of the same group was closed down after more than nine years of publication due to "heavy losses". The Dainik Hindustan declined from 133,205 copies in 1989 to 111,918 copies in 1992. Likewise, Jansatta showed a decline from 113,360 copies in 1989 to 98,930 copies in 1992. In contrast, newspapers published from burgeoning towns in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar have built up impressive circulation and they keep growing. The Rajasthan

**Patrika**, published from **five** centers in Rajasthan, went up from 231,917 copies in **1989** to 282,654 copies in 1992. The Punjab **Kesari** from Jalandhar was selling 351,826 copies in 1992 compared to **334,271** copies in 1989. What does one make of this phenomenon? What is the nature of growth registered by the Hindi print media, particularly by the regional papers? While the Hindi dailies are evidently widening their reach, has there been an improvement in their quality in news gathering and presentation? These are certain questions which needs to be probed to reach a fair conclusion .

## **5.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF HINDI PRESS:**

Analyzing the dynamics of the growth of Hindi Press, Robin Jeffrey in his well-researched article "Hindi: Taking to Punjab Kesari Line", *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 18, 1997 issue said "Between the 1970s and the 1990s, technology and economic change transformed the Hindi newspaper business" . Although Hindi was declared the national language in the Constitution of 1950, the wails of Hindi newspaper owners and Hindi well-wishers echoed through the next two decades. "Jawaharlal Nehru often sighed for a Northcliffe", wrote Chalapathi Rau (d 1983), for 30 years editor of Nehru's National Herald, "to revolutionise the Hindi language press, not because he admired Northcliffe's methods but because he felt Northcliffe had the right approach to **readership**"<sup>3</sup>. What characterised the Hindi press after 20 years of the political independence in India which had proclaimed Hindi the national language? "Bad management, poor editing, unattractive writing, lack of imagination in make-up and printing and ill-trained personnel", concluded J P Chaturvedi (1918-95)<sup>4</sup> .

According to on editor . the Hindi Press had in fact lost ground since 1947, though the evidence from circulation did not fully support such gloom. The Press Commission of 1954 estimated the circulation of Hindi dailies in the early 1950s at 3,80,000 and of English dailies at 7,00,000<sup>6</sup> . Ten years later Hindi circulation had reached 7,50,000. What was

disquieting, however, was that English the language of foreign rule, far from falling, had risen steadily to 1.3 million. "The Hindi press fought for the country's freedom", one editor wrote. It was "free when the country was not, but, I am pained to point out that in a free India it is compelled to be camp follower of its English brother". The observation contained an

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explanation .

Most newspapers of the Hindi areas of North India had been founded to propagate the national movement. They were supported by donations, voluntary labour and kindly creditors. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's 'Pratap', for example, was founded in Kanpur in 1913; it closed down in 1966, its circulation having fallen to less than 7,000. Of Hindi dailies that were not connected to English language stablemates, 'Aaj', founded in Varanasi during Gandhi's non-cooperation movement in 1920, had the largest circulation (20,000) in 1962. Other like 'Jagran', founded during the quit India movement in 1942, sold 12,000 copies from its base in Kanpur .

The debility of the Hindi press had three causes. First, the people who should have been its readers- the tens of millions of men and women of north India who spoke Hindi - were overwhelmingly poor and illiterate. Only one in five of the total population could read and write in 1961, and the proportion appears to have declined in the ensuing decade. This still left a literate audience of 36 million people, but even among them, many newspaper readers were often literate in English as well. English- language newspapers were associated with power. To be sure, there had been nationalist newspapers in English, but some of the

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most important Indian newspapers had been British-owned English- language dailies .

After Independence, the major English- language proprietors made condition more difficult for the existing Hindi press by starting Hindi dailies of their own. The Times of India (Bennet and Coleman) started 'Navbharat Times' from New Delhi in 1950, and using the superior presses and circulation arrangements of The Times of India quickly made it the only

Hindi daily in the country to sell more than 50,000 copies. Ram Nath **Goenka's** Indian Express tried and failed with a similar enterprise, '**Jansatta**', between 1952 and 1954 (successfully revived in 1983), while the **Birla** family's Hindustan Times organisation had already established 'Hindustan' in 1936. In 1960, 'Hindustan' and Nabharat Times accounted for 52 per cent of the circulation of all Hindi dailies accredited by the Audit Bureau of

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Circulations .

The main reason for introducing Hindi dailies was that the advantages of a good plant and distribution system, sustained by the advertisement revenue coming from English companion publication, enabled the major English newspaper to make Hindi a mere satellite press, "nothing but a carbon copy of its English counterpart", Hindi journalists claimed. The big English- language establishments of New Delhi and Bombay controlled the sales agents, the vital link in the distribution chain, by giving them bicycles and unfair allowances and warning them **that** all perks would be withdrawn if they promoted rival publication. And the **multi-** paged edition that the big newspapers published gave purchasers a better return when they recycled the valuable news print to the ' **Kabari-walla**' (scrap dealer). The English press was "sabotaging the development of the Hindi press"<sup>11</sup> .

Hindi newspapers people complained, to a **stultifying** lack of status and respect for them and their newspapers: "The government recognises only the English press". Hindi newspapers had "became translation sheets", most of their representatives were often not invited to briefings. The Hindi press does not "cater to the intelligentsia", one Hindi editor admitted. A Hindi daily might only have one or two journalists, the Hindi press had lost the link with the intelligentsia that it had enjoyed during the nationalist movement. Technology appeared to be part of the problem. In 1965, only 52 Hindi teleprinters were in use in the whole of India (including news agencies), though there were supposed to be more than 100 Hindi dailies alone. It was more practical to receive copy in English and have it translated

into Hindi than to get stories produced initially in Hindi .

An Editor of one of the leading Hindi dailies felt that the decline and low status among Hindi editors and proprietors resulted in part from the consequences of the nationalist movement. The Hindi press had been at the forefront. Gandhi himself promoted, wrote and published in Hindi. Immune from pressure from advertisers (they usually had none) and not widely read by the British, Hindi newspapers often opposed foreign rule more aggressively than any English-language paper could have dared. Indeed, the First Press Commission in 1954 deplored a spirit of "blind criticism of those in authority", which it partly attributed to the struggle against the British . Support for the old nationalist newspaper came from donations, voluntary labour and sales, and as long as the Hindi press was largely an opposition press, such arrangements gave it meaning, influence and readers. But once independence came, the Hindi press remained - to the dismay of its proprietors, editors and advocates of Hindi as the national language - outside the circles of influence.

Though Hindi was embedded in the constitution as the official language of India after rancorous debates in 1949. English remained largely unchallenged as the language of government. Moreover, the nationalist cause and the eager unpaid workers faded away after 1947. Newspapers now had to be run on "sound commercial lines", and it was a mark of this fact that Navbharat Times, the 'Johnny- come- lately' Hindi daily founded in New Delhi by The Times of India group in 1950, became by far the largest circulated Hindi daily within a few years. Hindi, in some ways, remained the language of opposition. "A senior editor made the startling observation", wrote T J S George in 1967, "that the most readable newspapers in Hindi were the Jan Sangh newspapers" because they had "a sense of mission" and "took interest in their work". That association between the Hindi press and Hindu chauvinist politics assumed greater significance in the 1980s when Hindi newspapers were often judged to be in line with the Bharatiya Janata Party and its Hindu militancy .



By the 1980s, the place of Hindi newspapers in the politics of North India, and the morale of owners and workers, had changed dramatically. Circulation provided the most obvious indicator. In 1961, circulation of Hindi dailies by the most generous estimate was 7,50,000 copies; English, 1.3 million- in effect, 1.7 English dailies for every one in Hindi. By 1971, little had changed: English daily circulation were 2.2 million; Hindi, 1.5 million- a ratio of 1.5 English to one Hindi. But within eight years, Hindi circulation exceeded English (3 million to 2.97 million, according to the register), a gap that widened steadily through the 1980s. By 1992, Hindi dailies claimed sales of 11.2 million to 3.9 million for English - a ratio

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of 2.9 Hindi dailies for each one in English .

Between 1961 and 1991, the circulation of Hindi dailies increased by 12 times, while the number of literate people in the Hindi- speaking states trebled. The spread of a primary school system, however rough and inefficient, itself would have led to some increases in the circulation of Hindi publication. By the mid- 1980s, the giant states of Bihar and **Uttar Pradesh** together had 1,34,000 primary schools teaching Hindi 90 per cent of them in the countryside. Schools do not necessarily subscribe to newspapers. Indeed in Bihar and U.P, few do; but school masters and mistresses, who need to know about government appointments- and want something to read when the children are memorising lessons- carry newspapers with them. The growing reach of teacher and the school also hints at the spread of the surfaced roads and the methods of communication that took teacher to villages. The length of paved road in India grew by 2.7 times between 1971 and 1991; the number of buses quadrupled; the number of motorbikes and scooters rose by 30 times. But these indicators alone do not explain the rise of Hindi dailies in the 1980s<sup>16</sup> .

**TABLE: 5.1**

POPULATION CHANGE IN HINDI STATES (BIHAR, DELHI, HARYANA, MADHYA PRADESH,  
RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH) NEWSPAPER CHANGE IN HINDI, 1961-91

	1961	1971	1981	1991
Population (million)	185.7	229.8	290.7	366.8
No. literacy (million)	36.4	41.8	81.4	127.2
Literacy (per cent of total population)	20	18	28	35
Urbanisation per cent	15	15	19	21
Hindi daily circulation ('000)	750	1520	3680	9,310
Hindi dailies per '000	4	7	13	25

*Note: Figures are based on the 'Hindi states'-Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Not every one in these states is a Hindi-speaker, but most people are. Similarly, not every Hindi daily originates in these states, but most do. Taken over time, the figures indicates trends and turning points, hut they are rough and they need to be treated with caution. The literacy figures are based on total population number used in the PAYB for the relevant years. Urbanisation figures are from the same source, which in turn is based on the Censuses of 1961,1971, 1981 and 1991. Hindi daily circulation are based on the figures of the Registrar of Newspaper for India.*

A seminar of Hindi journalists in New Delhi in 1994 "agreed that Hindi publications generally receive a step- motherly treatment from the managements". Another view of the Hindi newspaper contended that " the proprietor... runs the establishment like he would a shop. The journalists are treated like mules and the subeditors like clerks". Poor condition, little training and constant insecurity sensitise Hindi journalists even more acutely to the

desires of their proprietors than journalists elsewhere .

The proprietorial families of the above three newspapers- and of Amar Ujala of Agra, Rajasthan Patrika of Jaipur and Rashtriya Sahara of Lucknow- "all come from background that might be loosely described as merchant caste". They are not Brahmins,

Thakurs or Rajputs, though they are "forward castes", urban- based and with strong commercial traditions. "My father started the newspaper", said Narendra Mohan, editor of Dainik Jagran, " by selling the ornaments of my mother in 1930". The families are from the same background as many supporters of the Hindu- revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its predecessor, the Jana Sangh. Their newspapers are often regarded as lining up with the BJP. For example, Mulayam Singh Yadav, the 'backward caste' politician, twice Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (1996), had a feud with Amar Uajala and Dainik Jagran that went back at least to the first confrontation at Ayodhya in 1990 .

The Times of India group had once upon a time string of Hindi periodicals under its big umbrella - the film magazine, 'Madhuri', children's magazine 'Parag', a leading current affairs weekly the 'Dinaman' and others - but which were closed down one by one when they were not found to make money or enough money. Even the 'Dharmyug', which had once a distinct place in Hindi journalism, is now closed. On the other hand, a number of independently run periodicals have managed to survive and prosper.

In the publication of dailies, the large groups, not necessarily the English groups seeking a presence in Hindi, have, however, carved out for themselves a large share of the total circulation and covered most of the Hindi speaking areas. These groups made their appearance before independence or just after it. The Aaj group which now covers large parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and had gone even into Madhya Pradesh, is a paper of pre-independence vintage. Even before its expansion, it made a significant contribution to the growth of Hindi journalism. Stalwarts like Acharya Narendra Deva, Kamalapati Tripathi and

Sriprakash used to write for it and editor like Baburao Vishnu Paradkar nursed it during the formative years. It has been UP's openheartedness that made essentially non - UP people like C.Y Chintamani, Paradkar, M.Challapathi Rau, **K.Rama** Rao, Krishnaram Mehta and others feel at home which helped their editorial and managerial abilities to flourish to its benefit. After further consolidation after independence, the Aaj began to branch out, first into some centers in UP itself and then from 1979 it covered four major centers in Bihar, Patna in 1979, Ranchi in 1984, and Jamshedpur and Dhanbad also in 1984.

**Table: 5.2**

MAJOR HINDI DAILIES (ABC MEMBERS) WITH MULTIPLE PUBLICATION CENTRES, 1998

Publications	Begun	Headquarters	Other centres	<b>Circ.</b> 1998 (thousands)
Aaj	1920	Varanasi	<b>Patna</b> , Allahabad, Ranchi, <b>Agra</b> , Jamshedpur, <b>Lucknow</b> , Kanpur, Bareilly, Gorakhpur (Dhanbad, Gwalior)	571
<b>Amar Ujala</b>	1948	Agra	Bareilly, Meerut, Moradabad, Kanpur, Allahabad, Aligarh, Jhansi, Dehradun	450
Dainik Jagran	1947	<b>Kanpur</b>	<b>Agra</b> , Bareilly Jhansi, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Meerut, Moradabad, New Delhi, Dehradun	701
Dainik Bhaskar	1958	Bhopal	Jabalpur, Gwalior, Indore, Bilaspur, Raipur, Satna (Jhansi, Jaipur)	478
Desh Bandhu	1959	Raipur	Bilaspur, Satna (Bhopal, Jabalpur)	99

Hindustan	1936	<b>New Delhi</b> (Hindustan Times chain)	<b>Patna</b>	395
Jansatta	1983	<b>Mumbai</b> (Indian Express chain)	Chandigarh, Calcutta, New Delhi	97
Navbharat Times	1950	Mumbai (Times of India chain)	New Delhi	419
Nava Bharat	1938	Nagpur	Raipur, Jabalpur, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Indore, Gwalior	465
Punjab Kesari	1966	Jalandhar	New Delhi, Ambala	780
Rashtriya Sahara	1992	Lucknow	New Delhi	189

*Notes: Circulation figures from ABC January-June 1998 and do not include all publication centres. Additional publication centres, based on INS Press Handbook 1995 (New Delhi: Indian Newspaper Society, 1995), are in parentheses. The table includes only ABC members.*

If the Jnanamandal people of the Aaj, were thus spreading themselves in all directions, the other major Hindi group, the Jagran, also cast its net wide. Jagran's U P edition now include, besides its base, Kanpur, Varanasi, Gorakpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Meerut, Jhansi, Bareilly, and Agra. It is also published from Noida, just across Delhi, and the circulation is targeted at the national capital besides serving some parts of U P. The owner Gupta family's Madhya Pradesh edition now came out not only from Rewa but also the state capital, Bhopal. As in the case of the Aaj, the Jagran attracts its readers with wide coverage of

news, attractive features, including a number of articles from feature agencies and syndicates, (some of them supply material which can be printed straightaway) use of colour, and a direct, simple style of presentation.

The State of Uttar Pradesh has yet another group, the Amar Ujala, with its base in Agra. Once upon a time the 'Sainik' was western UP's leading paper but it lost its position when its founder died. The Amar Ujala had, in the meantime, come up in Agra, since 1948, and later its Bareilly edition was also launched in 1960. In 1986, it set up an edition in Meerut and later covered some more ground in Moradabad and Kanpur. Agra is one of the focal points of the two UP giants, the Aaj and Jagran, while small local papers like the 'Jantayug' of Aligarh also managed to survive.

In Allahabad, there are papers like the 'Amrit Prabhat' of the Amrit Bazar Patrika group of Calcutta. Of course, the local edition of the Aaj and the Jagran are there to contend within a city which was once the center of activity of great editors like C.Y. Chintamani, editor of the Leader, and of Motilal Nehru's paper The Independent. Allahabad also has the 'Northern India Patrika', English daily of the Amrita Bazar group. In UP's capital, Lucknow there are, of course, the local edition of the Aaj and the Jagran, but there is a paper of some standing the 'Swatantra Bharat', of the Pioneer group, with a notable tradition of independent journalism. A Gorakhpur daily, the 'Swatantra Chetna', also has an edition from Lucknow and Allahabad.

The Uttarakhand region has a distinct identity of its own and has a number of dailies to serve the people, apart from the dailies rushing in from Lucknow, Bareilly and Delhi. The 'Uttar Ujala' set up in Nainital in 1977, is important from this point of view. The 'Rashtriya Sahara' is being published from Noida and from the state capital of Lucknow. It is being brought out by the Sahara India Finance and Airlines company and has made a mark, although it could do with more advertisement support.

There are beside a large number of small dailies in different district towns and some below that level. These include the paper coming out of **Etawah**, Dehradun, Banda, Ghaziabad, Aligarh, Deoria and Azamgarh. From 1977, a commercial Hindi daily has been published from Lucknow, the "Vyapar Sandesh". The major fact, however, is that the UP scene is dominated by the *Aj* and the *Jagran* practically spreading themselves all over the state, and the **Amar Ujala**, prominent in western and central UP.

In the nation's capital, the Navbharat Times of the Times group, which started the fashion of Indian language papers assuming English names, in whole or as a hybrid combination, the Hindustan of the Hindustan Times group, and the Jansatta of the Express, are strong rivals for one another. The *Jagran* and the *Rashtriya Sahara* make it to Delhi from nearby Noida. There are several other local papers including the 'Veer Arjun' of the Pratap group. The Hindustan has been in existence since 1936, the Navbharat Times came up after independence in 1950. Among the battery of the latter's distinguished editors, mention may be made of the well known literary figure of S.H. Vatsyayan, Akshay Kumar Jain and Rajendra Mathur who were among the people who shaped the paper and gave it a different personality, different from the Times of India. In the course of time, the paper opened edition from Bombay, Patna, Jaipur and even Lucknow. The Jaipur and Patna edition running much ahead of it. The Lucknow edition was closed in accordance with the Times group's policy of

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closing down anything which was not making money .

A 'Hindustan' not only succeeded in Delhi but it set up an edition in Patna when the Hindustan Times opened its Patna edition in 1986. The Hindi daily was designed to fill the gap caused by the demise of the 'Aryavarta and Pardeep', another Birla group daily, and not only did it fit that role admirably it overtook the English big brother in no time and became the top paper of the Bihar capital. The Patna Hindustan has outstripped its circulation in Delhi too. The *Aj*, of course, has a big presence in Patna and there are other papers, the Navbharat



Times, way behind the other two, besides several papers of local ownership. There is thus enough competition in the Bihar capital.

In the state, Ranchi (now capital of Jharkhand State) emerged as a leading center of newspaper publication with the Ranchi Express, a local enterprise, in the lead. Established in 1963, the paper has some competition from the Aaj's local edition and from the 'Prabhat Khabar'. The Ranchi Express also has its **evening**, the 'Sandhya Ranchi Express', which has a large circulation. There are, of course, a number of dailies coming out of Jamshedpur, including the 'Uditvani', 'Dhanbad- Awaz', MuzafTarpur- 'Pratah **Kamal**', Hajipur- 'Anugamini' and others.

The 'Punjab **Kesari**' was set up in Jalandhar by the Hind Samachar group in 1965. Urdu, which was **compulsorily** taught in Pakistan Punjab from where many of the Punjabis had migrated, was declining in its importance and Punjabi was emerging as the principal language but a number of Punjabi Hindus preferred to learn Hindi. Before long, the Punjab Kesari became the newspaper of the people who or whose fathers had so far read Urdu. These people, settled in Delhi, Haryana and western UP, beside Punjab itself patronised the paper which also did everything possible to **satisfy** them as a newspaper should do. With edition also from Delhi and **Ambala**, in 1983 and 1991 respectively, and its special appeal to a large number of Hindi knowing people, its front page colour feature, unrelated to the news of the day so the front pages stories go to third page, a practice being followed on some days or all days of the week by some other Jalandhar papers, the Punjab Kesari has emerged as the top Hindi daily in the country. Originally the title Punjab Kesari or lion of Punjab, was a title given to the great **Lala** Lajpatrai of undivided Punjab. It is now among the top dailies in India, irrespective of the language.

There are two other Hindi dailies of importance in Punjab, the Dainik Tribune and the Chandigarh edition of the Jansatta. The growing Hindi readership is thus well served by

papers which bring them good news coverage edition of the Punjab Kesari and some papers from Rohtak and Gurgaon. Although there are number of papers registered in the state, they cannot be said to enjoy a large readership except the Punjab Kesari. Haryana is well served by papers in Hindi and other language from Delhi and Chandigarh, which continues to be the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, apart from being a Union Territory. Papers from Rajasthan also command a circulation in the Haryana districts adjoining that state.

Rajasthan was once the land of princely states. After independence, the political process was brisk and the so-called royal houses were abolished one by one when Sardar Patel brought about a peaceful integration of the erstwhile states. For a time there were quite a few political formations but in 1956 all these areas came under the common banner of Rajasthan. This was the time when the state began to see the start of the rise of its own Press. So far, Ajmer, which was under direct British rule, had the 'Navjyoti' daily coming out from the city. Rajasthan was also serviced by paper coming in from outside, like the dailies from Delhi, but in 1956 the paper which was to grow into a distinct group and lead the rest of the dailies in Rajasthan was born in Jaipur, the state capital, with the establishment of the 'Rajasthan Patrika'. Before that the 'Rashtradoot' had come up in Jaipur and the Navjyoti had been performing its task of keeping the people of the state informed. Setup in Ajmer in 1936 it opened an edition from Jaipur in 1961 and then in Kota to continue to hold an important place in the Journalism of the state.

The Rashtradoot which was established in the state capital in 1951 struck deep roots there before moving to new pastures like Kota (1979). Bikaner (1979) and later in Udaipur also. Although the Rashtradoot was the first paper to come up in Rajasthan after independence, the Rajasthan Patrika soon began to acquire a reputation and popularity among the readers for its news coverage, analytical articles and its emphasis on informing the people. It is a real journalists venture established by its editor, Kapur Chand Kulish, a working

journalist himself. Unlike many successful papers, which owe their existence to the managing and organisational ability of their publisher the Rajasthan Patrika is a unique journalistic enterprise. With its **five** editions it has covered the whole state and acquired a reputation as a standard newspaper.

In nearby Madhya Pradesh, the growth of Hindi paper was spurred by the formation of a unified Madhya Pradesh in **1956** with Bhopal as its capital. One of the leading groups in the state, the Navbharat, had already had an edition from Nagpur set up in **1934**, when the city was the capital of the old Central Province and Berar. The Maheshwari family which runs the Navbharat enterprise had already opened an edition in Bhopal in 1938 and Jabalpur in 1950 and kept up the Nagpur edition which is even now the largest among the several editions of the paper. After Madhya Pradesh came into being, the Indore and Raipur editions came up in 1959 and the Bilaspur edition in 1985. Bhaskar is yet another group of importance in Madhya Pradesh with its base in Indore and Bhopal. This group has branched out in a big way throughout the Hindi speaking belt of the country by launching 19 editions. There are two other groups, the Deshbandhu and the Swadesh which deserve mention. Nai Dunia of Indore is still considered to be one of the leading papers of Madhya Pradesh although it has failed to branch out.

There are Hindi readers in other parts of the country too. In Bombay, the Navbharat Times and the Jansatta serve the Hindi public in the commercial capital of India. The **Lokmat Samachar**, the Hindi daily of the Lokmat of Nagpur, is published from the same city, besides, the Navbharat noted earlier. Calcutta is a home of, the 'Vishwamitra', an old established Hindi paper of the city, although its ventures in Bombay and Kanpur did not succeed. The Varanasi daily, 'Sanmarg', has a Calcutta edition which is doing well. Calcutta is also home to some Hindi dailies like the 'Rooplekha' and 'Chhapte'. Jansatta, a Hindi daily of Indian Express group **also** has an edition coming out from Calcutta.

### 53 LEADING HINDI NEWSPAPERS IN UTTAR PRADESH:

Uttar Pradesh is a vast Hindi speaking area and there are hundreds of small papers in the State which comes out from small and big towns and cities. Here, we shall be mentioning only the popular ones. The most powerful newspaper groups in Uttar Pradesh, today are the Dainik Jagran, **Amar Ujala** and Aaj. These three groups have multi-editions in the entire State. They have stepped outside the state also and are competing with each other. 'Jagran' started as a very small paper, initially, from Jhansi and, later, it came as 'Dainik Jagran'<sup>1</sup> from Kanpur. And that was true of at least twelve big newspapers of today that dated from the independence struggle or its immediate aftermath in 1948.

Describing the spread and reach of Dainik Jagran, Robin Jeffrey, in his book "India's Newspaper Revolution", gave an account of the origin of Dainik Jagran in the words of Y.M. Gupta, son of the founder of Dainik Jagran,

"My father, when he started the newspaper (in Jhansi) in 1942, himself was the editor. He was composing by himself. My mother was reading-doing proof reading. My father was operating the machine and printing it, and in the morning after printing the newspaper, he used to go for sales, and he was selling it through the help of hawkers (.....) In fact, he was all in one. So that is how he started his operation",.

Slowly, the changing nature of the business required and permitted more elaborate systems. Y.M. Gupta's account is worth following because it tells a story repeated at other newspapers:

"After independence.....we came down to Kanpur, and...then he formed a team. There (were)... three main departments... the production side, the circulation side and the editorial side. But the advertising side was not very well organised (...) He was himself doing the advertising, but, he was not able to devote much time... when I came in (to the paper about 1949),....he said, "Come to Bombay with me and I will show you another world". So, then

he showed me the marketing side of **newspapers**....**He** said, "I want that you should develop this wing of the newspaper" (....) I never concentrated on (the) Kanpur market, because..... the concept of selling....**advertising**....**was** just **taking**....**money** from somebody (as a donation) and ... (people felt they were obliging you). So, I never went to the local market because those people were not professionally enlightened on the subject and ... thinking in terms of charity",..

Table: 5.3

## READERSHIP OF LEADING HINDI NEWSPAPERS IN WESTERN U.P.

Publication	Readership (in Lakhs)	Percent of adults reading any Hindi newspaper
Amar Ujala	17.1	63.5
Dainik Jagran	7.8	29.1
Aaj	2.2	8.0
Navbharat Times	5.3	19.7
Punjab Kesari	5.4	20.1
Any Hindi Newspaper	26.9	100.0

Source: NRS - IV

*According to NRS-IV, conducted in 1990-91 about 27 lakh readers read any Hindi newspaper in urban areas of Western U.P. Of these, 64 per cent (three of five Hindi newspaper readers) read A U. The readership of Amar Ujala is much higher than the combined readership of Dainik Jagran and Aaj.*

Same is true of Amar Ujala. There was a time when 'Sainik' was Western U.P.'s leading paper, but, it lost its position when its founder died. In the meantime, Amar Ujala had come up in Agra to fill the gap, since 1948, and later its Bareilly edition was also launched in 1960. Amar Ujala has a very interesting and inspiring history. It is one of the newspaper organisation which proves many points. Firstly, it is one of the few newspapers running as a successful partnership/enterprise. Now, the third generation of proprietorship has already

joined which shows that there is a perfect cooperation and mutual respect amongst the two families of Agarawal's and Maheshwari's. Secondly, the paper, right from the beginning is running on some set principles and has never indulged in cheap gimmicks. There is a professional touch in everything, right from the publishing of a newspapers, treatment of news and sending the remuneration to contributors, recruitment, payment and training to its staff. Thirdly, the paper has very intelligently maneuvered its way upwards by taking notice of the currents and undercurrents in the market and reading the minds of its readers.

To give an example, the paper took advantage of the **BKU Farmers'** movement to make inroads in the rural areas of Western UP. by understanding the psyche of the farming community and created a readership of its own. Similarly, in the 1990's, it realised that the people of the hills were feeling cheated and ignored because the fruits of development was not reaching them. There were agitations for the demand of carving out a separate state to be called Uttrakhand for the hill population of U.P. on the pattern of Himachal Pradesh which has become a reality of late. **Amar Ujala**, after a successful experiment in the plains of UP. with the BKU agitations and its rapid spread of reach and influence, was quick to make use of the opportunity by giving more and more coverage to the people of the hills and their problems in general and the Uttrakhand movement in particular. It started a separate edition from Dehradun, the gateway to Uttrakhand. The paper curved out a special and committed readership in the hills. Earlier, in 1960, the paper realised that the readers of the Kamaon hills are being deprived of timely news because there was no paper from the region and all other papers reached there late, started its Barielly edition. However, this was not something which happened, overnight, it took 26 years to establish these editions.

**Table: 5.4****READERSHIP BY SEX**

Publication	Men		Women	
	Nos. (in Lakhs)	%	Nos. (in Lakhs)	%
Amar Ujala	14.1	66.8	3.0	51.7
Dainik Jagran	6.4	30.3	1.4	24.1
Aaj	2.1	10.0	0.1	1.7
Any Hindi Newspapers	21.1		5.8	

Source: NRS - IV.

*About 21 lakh men and 5.8 lakh women in Western U.P. read Hindi newspapers. About 14 lakh men (Two-third of men) and three lakh women (50 per cent) of Hindi newspaper readers in Western region read Amar Ujala, which shows its complete dominance amongst both men and women readers.*

The man behind the launch of this newspaper was Dori Lal Aggrawal, a softspoken, kindhearted and modest person, a perfect example to follow not only by his immediate family, but, also a larger family of Amar Ujala. He would go out of his way to help needy people. As a young boy, he started his life as a dispatcher in one of the prominent papers of his time 'Ujala' from Agra. He had a deep urge to learn and was very hardworking. Taking advantage of his placement in a newspaper, he gave a try to proofreading and with his sheer hard work became one of the most efficient proofreaders of Ujala. His preliminary lessons in Journalism were learnt in 'Ujala' when he also volunteered to do all odd jobs, the name which he never forgot, not even at a time of launching his own newspaper the 'Amar Ujala' in 1947.



**Table: 5.5**

**READERSHIP BY AGE**

Publication	15-24 Years		25-44 Years		45 Years +	
	Nos. (in Lakhs)	%	Nos. (in Lakhs)	%	Nos. (in Lakhs)	%
Amar Ujala	6.8	66.0	7.4	63.2	2.9	58.0
Dainik Jagran	3.1	30.1	3.6	30.8	1.1	22.0
Aaj	0.9	8.7	0.8	6.8	0.4	8.0
Any Hindi Newspapers	10.3		<b>11.7</b>		5.0	

Source: NRS - IV.

*Of the 27 lakh Hindi newspaper readers in Western U.P., about 10.3 lakh are in 15-24 years age group, while, 11.7 lakh are in 25-44 year age group. The remaining 5 lakh readers are in 45 years + age category. Readership of Amar Ujala is higher in the younger age group. In fact, sixty six per cent of newspaper readers in urban area in 15-24 years age group in Western region read Amar Ujala. The readership of Amar Ujala is much higher than the combined reach of competing newspapers in other age group as well. Forty per cent of Amar Ujala readers are in the younger age group of 15-24 years. Twenty five per cent are in 25-34 years age group, while, eighteen per cent are in 35-44 years age group. Seventeen per cent are elderly readers in age group of 45 years +.*

This paper was launched by four partners with a joint capital of Rs.16. Starting and sustaining of newspaper was an uphill task. So, unable to bear the initial years of hardship, two partners backed out and Dori Lal Aggarwal and his close friend Permanand Maheshwari nurtured the newspaper, together. Dori Lal Aggarwal had a knack for news, slowly, but, steadily, he expanded the base of the paper, of course, his partner was always there to support and encourage him. There was acute scarcity of capital and other resources, but, Dori Lal

Aggarwal, had a quality of winning over people to his side. He built up a good team and soon the paper was known for its integrity, honesty and sense of purpose. During the Socialist movement of 1960's, **Amar Ujala**, extended full support to the movement and earned friendship of many while paper added to its circulation. After the launch of its Barielly edition in 1960, the paper took 26 long years to start its Meerut edition in December, '86 by which time the second generation of the two families had taken over. The newspaper experienced a remarkable growth, thereafter. It started its Moradabad, **Kanpur**, Allahabad, Aligarh, **Jhansi**, Dehradun and Varanasi editions soon, thereafter, with success. In fact, during '2000, it started its Chandigarh and Jullunder editions outside of Uttar Pradesh.

Dainik Jagran which is another paper which comes under the purview of this study comes out from eleven places (13 editions) in U.P. which includes Kanpur, **Agra**, Bareilly, Jhansi, Varanasi, Gorakpur, Lucknow, Meerut, Moradabad, New Delhi, Dehradun, Chandigarh and Jullunder. This shows that there is a healthy competition between Hindi newspapers in U.P. and even outside the state. Dainik Jagran still lead in the overall circulation because it has a strong base in Eastern part of Uttar Pradesh and comes out both from the state capital Lucknow and the country's capital, New Delhi. On the other hand, **Amar Ujala** has a strong base in Western and Central parts of U.P., but both the papers have a mixed competitive readership in all the regions of the state.

## RESEARCH ANALYSIS

After giving a **detailed description** of the Language Press in India in chapter IV and Hindi Press in India in chapter V, this chapter deals with the research analysis of coverage of the five phases of **BKU** movement in the two newspapers, i.e. **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** (Meerut Editions). Before conducting the content analyses of the five phases, I have introduced each phase by giving a synoptic view of the historical background of that particular phase of the movement. The time frame of the five phases are as follows:

### PHASE -I

*First major agitation of BKU - The Karmukhera (Shamli)*

*Power House (gherao) dharna:*

(March 3,5,6,7,8,9&14, '87)

### PHASE -II

*BKU's Agitation at the Meerut Commissionerary:*

(January 29, 30, 31 & February 4, 18, 19, 20 '88)

### PHASE -III

*The Boat Club Panchayat of Farmers at Delhi:*

(October 26,27,28,29,30,31 & November 1,'88)

### PHASE -IV

*Naiyma abduction movement at Bhopa in Muzaffarnagar District:*

(August 8,12,13,17,27 - September 3 & 4, '89)

### PHASE -V

*The Luc know Panchayat of the BKU:*

(July 17 – 23, '90)

## Phase I

### 61 INTRODUCTION:

Although the Constitution of BKU was adopted in a Panchayat of the Union of November 17, 1986, but concrete action programme was finalized in a BKU meeting held at Sisauli, the native place of Tikait near Shamli on January 3, 1987. In this meeting, the issue of hike in farm electricity was discussed threadbare and it was decided that the farmers would gherao Karmukhera powerhouse from January 27, 1987 for four days to press their demands. Unprecedented hike in electricity rate was the major issue of conflict between the kisans and the government. In '81, farm electricity rate was Rs.15/- per horsepower per month. Perhaps, the farmers considered it reasonable as there was no protest from them and they regularly paid their electricity bills. In '83, the rate was raised to Rs. 22.50 per horsepower per month - an increase of 40%. The farmers silently accepted this unexpected rise because there was no farmers' organization to take up the issue. Again, in '86, the electricity rates was further increased by 28% over the '83, rates to Rs. 30/- per horse power per month, i.e., twice as much as that in '81. On top of it, there was rampant corruption and inefficiency in the electricity department. The farmers suffered due to non-availability of electricity during peak seasons because their problems of immediate repair or replacement of burnt out transformers were not taken care of by the electricity department. Their protests against faulty bills resulted in disconnecting electricity on farms and the officials paid no heed to their genuine problems until and unless they greased the palms of the corrupt government officials.

Under such pressing circumstances when the BKU took up the cause of the farmers, more than 30,000 farmers of Muzaffarnagar district gheraoed the Karmukhera powerhouse located adjoining Shamli town on January 27,'87. This dharna was carried out peacefully for four days. Obviously, all the demands put forth by the farmers were connected with electricity. These were:-

I) The enhanced rate of electricity to Rs 30/- (per H.P per month) should be resorted to Rs 22.50.

II) No penalty should be imposed on bills payable during the period of enhanced electricity rates.

III) Electricity bill payment centers should be nearer to electric sub-stations.

IV) In the event of defect in transformer, its removal to workshop and reinstallation should be their responsibility of the department. This process should not take more than three days.

V) All complaints regarding electricity should be promptly attended to.

VI) Electricity supply on tubewells should be provided continuously for 12 hours during daytime.

VII) Domestic electric supply should be given from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m. & 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. If there is load shedding it should be equally effective in urban and rural areas.

VIII) Electricity on tubewells should not be disconnected (for delay payments).

IX) Additional security surcharge (on tube well connections) should not be imposed. It should be stopped forthwith.

X) There should be no charge for electric light on tubewells.

XI) In the event of less supply of electricity there should be proportionate cut in the bill amount.

At the end of the fourth day, the District Magistrate of **Muzaffarnagar** district announced on behalf of the Government that ten demands of the farmers concerning local issues has been conceded to on the spot. Regarding the 11th demand (restoration of old electricity rates of Rs. 22.50 against the enhanced rates of Rs. 30/- per horse power per month), he promised to refer the matter to the state government as it concerned the entire state and could be considered only at the cabinet level. He asked for one month's time to get the orders implemented by the district administration. The union agreed to allow one month's

time to the administration and the four-day dharna was lifted. But, things did not improve much within the month. In fact, the problems aggravated further. The state government also slept over the District Magistrate's note on the BKU's demand for restoration of old electricity rate. The BKU had given a call to reassemble and stage a gherao again if the demands are not met within one month. The BKU organizations and its units have become very strong by this time and village-to village campaign was launched by the BKU to mobilize the farmers for the March 1, 1987 gherao. As the day dawned on March 1, farmers from all directions started pouring in Shamli huge crowds of farmers-young and old and of all communities, irrespective of caste and religion, could be seen hostling on the roads. By noon, the number swelled up to one lakh plus. The district administration was taken aback and its arrangements failed to control the crowd. The BKU volunteers, around 300, showed exceptional organisational skill in taking the situation in their control by maintaining order and guiding the enthusiastic farmers to the gherao site the Karmukhera Power House at the outskirts of the town.

Anticipating problem, the police fixed barricades, which was run over by the endless stream of farmers. Next, Police used waterjets and tear gas shells to disperse the farmers, but that also didn't work and they kept on moving to the dharna site. The district administration ordered the arrest of the BKU leaders and the mob became violent and the police truck was burnt by them. Sensing further violence, the police opened fire and there was a direct confrontation between the farmers and the police. 18-years old, Jaipal, of Lisad Village and 20-years old Akbar of Simbalak village died in police firing. Farmers carried the dead bodies, blood oozing from the wounds, on their shoulders and marched on to the powerhouse site. It was a heart-rending site. Full-throated slogans of "Long live Akbar", "Long live Jaipal" ranted the air. On their way to the power house, the farmers manhandled a commander of the state police battalion who later succumbed to his injuries. The District Magistrate and the

police chief managed to control the situation from going worse. Farmer's fury was allowed to exhaust itself by setting the power house on fire. It was reduced to ashes within no time. The last rites of the two young farmer martyrs were performed on the bank of the river Ganga at Shukratal amidst cries of over one lakh farmers gathered 'Long Live Akbar, Long Live Jaipal'. And the unity of farmers was at its peak under the BKU.

The Karmukhera firing incident coincided with intensive political activities in the region and evoked instant reaction among political parties and other local groups. Chaudhary Charan Singh, the undisputed leader of the farmers was critically ill and was in coma when the BKU agitation gained ground. His America-returned son, Ajit Singh, was struggling to take up the mantle of politics from his father and keep the Lok Dal party united. But, his efforts failed and along with the agitation of farmers, there was a political fallout in Lok Dal and it split in two parts - Lok Dal (A) headed by Ajit Singh and Lok Dal (B) lead by H.N. Bahuguna, and supported by Devi Lal Mulayam Singh Yadav and others. However, the opposition groups in the UP Vidhan Sabha raised the issue in the House demanding a statement on the incident from the ruling Congress party Chief Minister, Veer Bhadur Singh. The Chief Minister presented the government version of the whole affair. The growing influence of BKU and its leader Chaudhary Mahender Singh Tikait among the farmers of Western UP also caused a tremor among political parties, especially the Lok Dal and the Congress (I). Both tried to influence and win over Tikait to their side, but, his one-line replay to politicians were "First resign from your political party and then talk to us" This, however, didn't suit the politicians. Lok Dal (A) staked its claim over the BKU on the ground that its predecessors Bhartiya Kranti Dal (BKU) had been the first farmers supported political party headed by 'Kisan messiah' Chaudhary Charan Singh and the followers of the BKU had always supported him on the political turf. In fact, Tikait had been a fan of Chaudhary Charan Singh since '68.

### **Content Analysis:**

As **the** table (6.1) indicates, the highest coverage in **Amar Ujala** in terms of news and photographs during our time frame of the first phase of **BKU** agitation at **Karmukhera** Power Station was on March 3. On the front page, one of three main stories was the **BKU** agitation along with photographs of the farmers sitting on dharna at Karmukhera near **shamli** town. Including the main news, there were total **five** news on the front page. The back page or the last page of the March 3 issue devoted considerable space to focus the story of the highhandedness of the police and local administration. On March 5, the total coverage in the newspaper of **BKU** agitation consisted of news items which gave the details of the discussion of farmer's agitation in the UP Vidhan Sabha in Lucknow and the statements of social activists and lawyers criticizing the district administration for police firing on the farmers.

On March 6, the total space devoted to **BKU** agitation on the first page and inside pages highlighted the comments of the politicians on **BKU** agitation. The profiles of the two young farmers killed in the police firing along with their pictures were given on page 8 of the newspaper. Two **letters-to-the-editor** were published on the edit page commenting on **the** **BKU** agitation. Again, on March 9, there were two news items on page 8 which highlighted the comments of politicians and farmer leaders on **BKU** agitation. On March 14, the newspaper gave a news item along with the photograph on the front page written by its Staff Correspondent, Mr. Harishankar Joshi from Shukartal, a pilgrimage on the bank of river Ganges where the last rites of the Young farmers killed in police firing was held and attended by about one Lakh farmers.



**Table: 6.1**

**TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE FIRST PHASE (P-I) OF AGITATION AT KARMUKHERA POWER HOUSE IN MARCH 3,5,6,7,8,9 & 14, 1987**

Date	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
March, 3	280	6.86	109	2.67	389	9.53
March, 5	112.5	2.75	NIL	-	112.5	2.75
March, 6	137.5	3.37	31.5	0.77	169	4.14
March, 7	48.5	1.18	NIL	-	48.5	1.18
March, 8	67.5	1.65	NIL	-	67.5	1.65
March, 9	31.5	0.77	NIL	-	31.5	0.77
March, 14	79.0	1.93	60	1.47	139	3.40
Total	756.5	2.65	200.5	0.70	957	3.35

**NOTE:** [Content analysis has been done on the basis of news grid which in turn is related to the mechanical details. Accordingly, calculations for each paper has been made:- **Amar Ujala** page size 51x8 col. **Dainik Jagran** page size 54x8 col.]

As we proceed to analyse the coverage of the newspapers, let us discuss the coverage in a theoretical context. Salient and pervasive though media effects on society may be, few communications scholars would argue that the media exert a monolithic influence in any respect. They do not have equal influences on all people in all settings. As the research which led to the primacy of the law of minimal consequences in the late 1950s indicated, the media do not operate in a vacuum: Media and audiences are all integral parts of a larger social system. However, by providing the public with what Lippmann (1922) referred to as "the pictures in our heads," or what Tolman (1932) called our "cognitive maps," the media explain the world beyond our personal experiences. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) have referred

to this process as one of determining "social realities." They argue that it is our social realities which provide frameworks for our receptiveness to information and whether we can act on it. It is the relative adequacy of our social realities and our dependency on media information sources which explain and predict media effects on us as individuals. It is, therefore thought that the media exercise selected influence based on individual or group differences.

**PLACEMENT OF NEWS/STORIES/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION)  
DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF THE AGITATION (MARCH 3,5,6,7,8,9&14, '87)**

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	169	5.91	60	2.10	229	8.01
Inside Page	447.5	15.66	140.5	4.92	588	20.58
Back Page	140	4.90	-	-	140	4.90
Total	756.5	2.65	200.5	0.70	957	3.35

McCombs and Shaw (1972) published empirical evidence of the agenda-setting effects which mass media exert over public opinion. Although the idea of such an influence had been in the public domain for many years (Lippmann, 1922; Cohen, 1963), this attempt to bridge the gap between speculative ideas and a conceptual scheme unleashed a proliferation of related studies. Under the broad label of "agenda-setting," hypotheses usually have concerned the relationship between topics or issues deemed important by the mass media and the perceived importance of those topics or issues among media users. While there has been general agreement among researchers about an acceptable way to determine media agendas - for example, through appropriate content analysis procedures - there is little

consensus about the measurement of audience agendas. The research done to date shows a wide variety in the conceptualization and measurement of these variables.

The ability of mass media to effect cognitive change is attributed to the ongoing selective process by media gatekeepers who, first, determine which events are newsworthy and which are not, and then assign different weights in terms of such variables as length (time or space), prominence (headline size, location in the newspaper, frequency of appearance, position in the news flow), and conflict (the manner in which the material is presented) to those items which pass through the gate. Some news items are treated in detail; others are given superfluous attention; still others are completely ignored. Media very clearly reveal their assessment of the salience of an item. Agenda-setting posits that audiences adopt these media assessments and, in so doing, incorporate an equal set of weights into their own agendas.

Agenda-setting research investigates the relationship between issues and subjects prominently emphasized in the mass media ("media agenda") and the salience of such topics in the minds of the public ("public agenda"). Since newspapers and television have been viewed as the leading news outlets, they have most often constituted the "media" components in these studies. McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting study indicated no significant differences between the two media, and many researchers have subsequently assumed no differences and used aggregate media agendas (Sanders and Atwood, 1975; Carey, 1976; Hilker, 1976; Hong and Shemer, 1976). Other researchers have found that newspapers are more effective than television in their agenda-setting function. Printed agendas have often been found to better match the agenda of the public than did broadcast agendas (Tipton et al., 1975; Benton and Frazier, 1976; McClure and Patterson, 1976; McCombs, 1977c; Weaver,

1977; Mullins, 1977).

**Table: 6.3**

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS /PHOTOS IN DAINIK J AGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE FIRST PHASE (P-I) OF BKU AGITATION AT KARMUKHERA POWER HOUSE IN MARCH '87

Date	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
March, 3	192	4.44	98	2.26	290	6.70
March, 5	48.5	1.12	-	-	48.5	4.12
March, 6	12.5	0.29	-	-	12.5	0.29
March, 7	8.5	<b>0.19</b>		-	8.5	<b>0.19</b>
March, 8	NIL	—	—	—	NIL	<b>NIL</b>
March, 9	NIL	—	—	—	NIL	<b>NIL</b>
March, 14	18	<b>0.41</b>	—	-	18	<b>0.41</b>
Total	279.5	0.92	98	0.32	377.5	1.24

Coming to the analysis of our present topic of research, we find that since months, the leaders of the BKU were visiting the villages of Western U.P and holding meetings of farmers to mobilize them, but, no newspaper cared to report these activities. The media took notice of the farmer's movement, in the first week of March, '87 when thousands of farmers from the adjoining villages gathered together and agitated at Karmukhera Power Station in Shamli town. The tables displaying the analysis of coverage of the two newspapers (6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 % 6.6 ) clearly indicates that the farmer's movement was not in the "media agenda" till the farmers demonstrated their strength and two young farmers died in a police

firing on March 3. Overnight, this incident of violence brought the issue of the farmer's agitation in the "media agenda" and both the newspapers splashed the photographs and news items of the agitating farmers including the details about the families of the farmers killed.

Table: 6.4

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/STORIES/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE FIRST PHASE (P-I) OF THE AGITATION (MARCH 3,5,6,7,8,9 & 14 '87)

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	86.5	2.86	54	1.78	140.5	4.64
Inside Page	167	5.52	44	1.45	211	6.97
Back Page	26	0.85	-	-	26	0.85
Total	279.5	0.92	98	0.32	377.5	1.24

The above table indicates that 140.5 col cm. (4.64%) of space was given to the BKU news and photographs on the front page during the first phase of the agitation, out of which 86.5 col cm. (2.86%) was news and 54 col cm. (1.78%) was photographs. The inside page gave a total of 211 col cm. (6.97%), out of which 167 col cm. space (5.52%) was devoted to news whereas 44 col cm. (1.45%) was for the photographs. The back page of the newspaper during the first phase of BKU agitation gave a coverage of 26 col cm. (0.85%) consisting of only news and no photographs. The total coverage given by the newspaper to the BKU agitation during the first phase was 377.5 col cm. (1.24%) space out of which 279.5 col cm. (0.92%) was news and 98 col cm. (0.32%) was photographs. It is clear from the analysis of the placement of news/photographs given above that the coverage of the BKU agitation during the

first phase of the agitation was not very impressive. The inside pages of the newspaper gave the maximum coverage (6.97%) followed by the front page (4.64%) and the last page gave the minimum coverage i.e. (0.85%).

Earlier, in Chapter- I of this thesis, we discussed the role of media in highlighting the Social Movements (1.13, page- 43 to 52) in **considerable** details. In Chapter - III, "Farmer's Movement in Uttar Pradesh", we briefly discussed the role of the newspapers in highlighting the farmer's movement " A fortnightly journal 'Farmer' and a weekly 'Naya Hindustan' were published to help in this task at the U.P level and a ' Farmer Bulletin' began to be brought out at the All India level. This was the period, when radical congressmen, socialists and the communists worked together in the peasant movement with communists functioning as the most virile group".

Sociologists, Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang , in their original manuscript " Watergate: An Exploration of the Agenda-Building Process" commented "To say that the media set the agenda is to claim both too much and too little for the media of mass communication. There are, after all, concerns that do not originate from the media, in that they fall within most people's direct experience. Media recognition helps put these concerns into the public domain. What was a widespread concern is thereby 'politicized'. With regard to high-threshold issues, the media assume a still more important role." This is, precisely, what happened in case of farmer's agitation. The regular reporting of the agitation by the newspapers placed the issue into the public domain and its widespread concern amongst the masses forced the politicians of all political parties to recognise it as an issue which would affect them. The issue was raised in the ongoing secessions of U.P State Legislative Assembly and both houses of the Parliament. The proceedings of the houses along with the

comments of the political leaders, leaders of the farmers and social activists were covered by the newspapers. This completed the process of agenda setting of the issue for the media which recognised the issue as 'newsworthy' because it has already become a 'public agenda' for the agitating farmers, political parties and the general public who are the media users as well.

Table: 6.5

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE FIRST PHASE (P-I) OF BKU AGITATION AT KARMUKHERA POWER HOUSE IN MARCH '87

Date	Am'r Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
March, 3	280	6.86	109	2.67	389	9.53	192	4.44	98	2.26	290	6.70
March, 5	112.5	2.75	NIL	—	112.5	2.75	48.5	1.12	-	-	48.5	1.12
March, 6	137.5	3.37	31.5	0.77	169	4.14	12.5	0.29	-	-	12.5	0.29
March, 7	48.5	1.18	NIL	-	48.5	1.18	8.5	0.19	-	-	8.5	0.19
March, 8	67.5	1.65	NIL	—	67.5	1.65	NIL	—	—	—	—	NIL
March, 9	31.5	0.77	NIL	—	31.5	0.77	NIL	—	—	—	—	NIL
March, 14	79.0	1.93	60	1.47	139	3.40	18	0.41	—	—	18	0.41
Total	759.5	2.65	200.5	0.70	957	3.35	279.5	0.92	98	0.32	377.5	1.24



On March 5, **Amar Ujala** devoted 112.5 col cm. space (2.75%) for news with no photograph whereas Dainik Jagran gave 48.5 col cm. space (1.12%) with no photograph. Again, on March 6, there was vast difference between the coverage, Amar Ujala devoted 137.5 col cm. (3.37%) in comparison to 12.5 col cm. (0.29%) in Dainik Jagran, whereas Amar Ujala gave 31.5 col cm. (0.77%) to photographs Dainik Jagran didn't give any photograph. On March 7, Amar Ujala devoted 48.5 col cm. (1.18%) to news with no photograph on that day in comparison, Dainik Jagran, gave 8.15 col cm. (0.19%) space to news with no photographs. On March 8, Amar Ujala highlighted news in 67.6 col cm. (1.65%) with no photograph whereas Dainik Jagran didn't give any coverage on this day. On March 9, Amar Ujala devoted 31.5 col cm. (0.77%) space for news with no photograph in comparison to any coverage from Dainik Jagran. On the last day, i.e. March 14, Amar Ujala covered news in 79 col cm. (1.93%) in comparison to 18 col cm. (0.14%) space of Dainik **Jagra**, Amar Ujala gave 60 col cm. (1.47%) space for photographs whereas Dainik Jagran didn't give any photograph. Overall, Amar Ujala, gave total 957 col cm. (3.35%) space to **BKU** agitation during the first phase, out of which 756.5 col cm. (2.65%) was news and 200.5 col cm. (0.70%) was photograph whereas Dainik Jagran devoted total 377.5 col cm. (1.24%) space, out of which 279.5 col cm. (0.92%) was news and 98 col cm. (0.32%) was photographs.

**Table: 6.6**

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITIONS) IN THE FIRST PHASE (P-I) OF THE AGITATION (MARCH 3,5,6,7,8,9 & 14 '87)

Page	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Front Page	169	5.91	60	2.10	229	8.01	86.5	2.86	54	1.78	140.5	4.64
Inside Page	447.5	15.66	140.5	4.92	588	20.58	167	5.52	44	1.45	211	6.97
Back Page	140	4.90	—	-	140	4.90	26	0.85	-	—	26	0.85
Total	756.5	2.65	200.5	0.70	957	3.35	279.5	0.92	98	0.32	377.5	1.24

Comparative analysis of Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran in terms of placement of news/photographs during the first phase indicates that Amar Ujala's presentation of news was much better than that of Dainik Jagran. The front page coverage given to the BKU agitation by Amar Ujala was 229 col cm. (8.01%) space, out of which 169 col cm. (5.91%) was news and 60 col cm. (2.10%) was photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran total space devoted was 140.5 col cm. (4.64%), out of which 86.5 col cm. (2.86%) was news and 54 col cm. (1.78%) was photographs. The total coverage given by Amar Ujala in the inside pages was 588 col cm. (20.58%) space, out of which 447.5 col cm. (15.66%) space was for the news and 140.5 col cm. (4.92%) was devoted to photographs whereas in comparison Dainik Jagran gave total coverage of 211 col cm. (6.97%) space to the BKU agitation during the first phase of agitation in the inside pages which consisted of 167 col cm. news (15.57%) and 44 col cm. photo (1.45%). Similarly back page or the last page of the newspaper which is considered as a prominent place in a newspaper, Amar Ujala gave a total space of 140 col cm. (4.90%) to the news with no photographs whereas Dainik Jagran gave 26 col cm. (0.85%) to news with no photographs.

## 6.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST PHASE:

After dealing with the quantitative aspect of coverage of the first phase, let us now turn to the qualitative analysis of news and views covered by Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran during this period. The first thing to take notice of was that the BKU agitation became news for the two papers only after there was violence and two young farmers died in police firing. Next day, there were report in the newspapers. Thereafter, both the newspapers started reporting about the activities of the Union. On March 5 issue of Amar Ujala, there was hard-hitting editorial criticizing the government and sympathizing with the farmers and their cause. This showed the inclination of the Amar Ujala towards the farmers. On the very same

day i.e. March 5, there was another significant news of the division of Lok Dal into Lok Dal (A) with Ajit Singh as its leader and Lok Dal (B) as HN Bhauguna the leader. So, the newspapers gave coverage to both these developments. Perhaps, BKU agitation may have received more coverage if these political developments would not have taken place, simultaneously.

Except on the first day, i.e. March 3, '87, the newspaper (Dainik Jagran) had given a casual coverage to the BKU agitation. It seems that farmer's agitation was not taken very seriously by the paper. On March 6, there was an Edit on the farmer's problem of not getting power for irrigation, but it was not linked with the BKU agitation. This On March 8 & 9 there was no news of BKU agitation.

Comparison of the coverage of BKU agitation during the first phase by the two newspaper, Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran, clearly reveals that in terms of overall coverage Amar Ujala was much ahead of Dainik Jagran. On the first day, i.e. March 3, Amar Ujala, covered BKU agitation news in 280 col cm. (6.86%) whereas Dainik Jagran devoted 192 col cm. (4.44%) space for news, Amar Ujala gave 109 col cm. (2.67%) four photographs whereas Dainik Jagran gave 98 col cm. (2.26%) for photographs. The total coverage given by Amar Ujala on March 3, was 389 col cm. (9.53%) which was more than that of Dainik Jagran's 290 col cm. (6.70%). However, the front-page coverage of Dainik Jagran on March 3, was much impressive than that of Amar Ujala, Dainik Jagran devoted 86.5 col cm. space for news on the front page with four news items whereas Amar Ujala gave 80 col cm. space for news with five news items. Similarly, in terms of photographs, Dainik Jagran published four photographs covering 54 col cm. space whereas Amar Ujala gave only one picture measuring 30 col cm. But, in the subsequent inside page (P-8) Amar Ujala gave four photographs of 79 col cm. size and went ahead of Dainik Jagran. Both the newspapers didn't take much notice of the BKU activities before

the farmer's agitation flared up and two young farmers were killed in police firing. Another point which comes to notice in the front page coverage of both the newspapers was whereas Dainik Jagran gave two byline **stories** by its staffers, except one news item **Amar Ujala** used agency copies.

To conclude, we can safely say that though both the papers didn't take the **BKU** agitation seriously in the initial stage, but, the coverage given by Amar Ujala was much more impressive than that of Dainik Jagran. This is more so because Amar Ujala had started its Meerut Edition just three months ago whereas Dainik Jagran was there in the region for more than two years. This is apparent from the news items, many news items used by the Amar Ujala came from the agencies and limited number of them came from its own Correspondents. Despite of this, Amar Ujala showed inclination of highlighting the problems of the farmers, perhaps, sensing that it could **find** a permanent readership amongst the farmers of the region. The editorial written by the Amar Ujala, supporting the cause of the farmers and criticising the state government and local administration on March 5 clearly shows the stance of the newspaper and the two ~~letters-to-the-editor~~ written to the newspaper by the reader farmers shows that the readers appreciated the coverage of the paper. Except on the first day, i.e. March 3, Dainik Jagran, showed a casual attitude towards the coverage of the farmer's agitation.

## Phase II

### 63 INTRODUCTION:

Exactly one year after the launching of the first agitation at Karmukhera Power House near Shamli, the second major offensive of the BKU was the call to gherao the Divisional Commissioner's office at Meerut on January 27,'88. The unique trend of this agitation was that neither pamphlets were displayed or distributed nor any other means of mass communication was made use of to propagate and advertise about the gherao of Meerut Commissioner amongst the farmers of the region. The usual Panchayats and a passing off information by word of mouth was the most effective mode of Communication, which disseminated the message timely and effectively. On January 27,'88, right from the early hours of the morning, highly motivated and organised surge of farmers, big and small, of all caste and communities started descending in the city. Again, not learning from the earlier agitation, the district administration seemed baffled at the concentration of such an unexpectedly large number of farmers at Meerut. Its estimate of 20-30 thousand farmers gathering had gone away as by mid-day nearly 70,000 farmers had already gathered in front of the Meerut Commissioner and more and more of them kept on pouring in during the night. The BKU leader and the chief architect of the movement, Chaudhary Mahender Singh Tikait, started from his village, Sisuali, in the morning of January 27 with a long caravan of 300 tractors and trollies carrying about 20,000 farmers and reached Meerut via Budhana and Khatauli by afternoon. Initially, the gherao of Meerut Commissioner was planned as a four-day, non-violent, peaceful demonstration, but due to the overwhelming support it received from the farmers and various other factors, the agitation prolonged to 24 days. Farmers from 21-districts of Western UP, majority of them from Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Mathura, Bijnore and Moradabad responded to the call,

enthusiastically.

On January 27, a nine-member BKU delegation presented its charter of 35 demands to the Divisional Commissioner with a rider that these demands should be accepted within two hours failing which the assembled farmers would lay siege to the Divisional Commissioner's office. Unable to receive any response from the Divisional Commissioner till next morning, i.e. January 28, the farmers surrounded the Divisional Commissioner's office and named the two gherao sites of CDA maidan and the Divisional Commissioner's office as 'Ram Garh' and 'Hanuman Garh', respectively. However, on January 28, the district administration sought extension of time to reply to BKU demands by 12 noon on January 29 and also conveyed their decision in writing to Tikait, accepting 13 of the 35 demands, on the spot. But, Tikait returned the paper saying that all the 35 demands should be accepted. On January 29, a three member BKU delegation met the Divisional Commissioner and presented a charter of five main demands acceptance of which would act as a prelude for lifting the gherao. These demands were:

- 1) To write off last six months electricity dues of all farmers of UP.
- 2) To withdraw criminal cases registered against BKU workers following the March 1, '87 rally at Shamli.
- 3) To waive off six months' land revenues of all farmers.
- 4) To reduce fertilizer price from Rs 105/- to Rs 85/- per bag at cooperatives, and
- 5) To fix sugarcane price at Rs 35/- per quintal.

The district administration expressed its inability to accept these demands. After four days of peaceful gherao, on January 30, Tikait warned the government that the farmers' patience had reached a breaking point and if by January 31, the Prime Minister or the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or Chief Minister or any other responsible person in the government didn't

discuss the problems with them, the **BKU** would give a 'rail roko, rasta roko' call. At this juncture, the district administration's strategy was to assess the limits of patience of the farmers by showing an attitude of 'no concern' towards them and over a period of time, the farmers would get frustrated and return to their villages. But, this was not to be. In fact, with the passage of time, this strategy boomeranged and the morale of the farmers was all time high. The wide coverage of the movement in the newspapers and visits of almost all stalwarts of the opposition parties and other social group activists further boosted their morale. Other important factors which gave boost to the movement were large number of floating 'kisan jathas' which kept on pouring in and out of Meerut everyday. These jathas came from within the state as well as other states of the country even from the Southern, Eastern and North-Eastern states. Apart from farmer's leaders from various states like Sharad Joshi, Prof. N.D. Nanjundaswamy, Bhupender Singh Mann and others, about 62 state level professional associations, trade unions and socio-cultural organizations extended full cooperation and moral support to the cause of the farmers. Business establishments, courts, school and colleges in Meerut observed token 'hartal' in support of the **BKU** movement.

Since there was no response from the state government the farmers, decided to meet political leaders in Delhi. On February 2, a five-member delegation met the Chief Minister at UP. Niwas in Delhi and appealed to resolve farmer's problems. The delegation also presented a memorandum in the offices of Lok Sabha Speaker and the Prime Minister. On February 3, the first batch of 31 farmers sat on fast unto death in support of their demands at the Divisional Commissioners office. They were joined by the students of Meerut College. Another group of 101 farmers joined them on the following day. However, Tikait, requested them to abandon the fast. During the next 10 days, despite drizzling and bad weather, farmers continued to pour in and out of the dharna site. New jathas from different districts of U.P. and other states continued visiting Meerut, Each morning 15-20 jathas would join the rally when



an equal number of them return to villages to attend to farm operations. Thus, the strength of the farmers on the site of dharna remained nearly stable-between 2 to 2.5 lakhs. Nearly 2,000 farmer volunteers been deployed to man 'watch and ward' duties, to work as a guide to had helped the administration in maintaining law and order at the dharna site. Tall, bonny, wheatish-complexioned and handsome looking farmers sons of the 'Ganga-Yamuna doab' with BKU caps on their heads and long bamboo sticks in their hands, received words of praise from one and all. Their devotion to duty and discipline created awe and surprise among all including the district administration. People were pleasantly surprised at the remarkable discipline and commitment exhibited by the farmers. Not a single case of disorder or even a minor crime had been reported during the 24-day long historic dharna.

On February 13, in one of his regular addresses to the farmers, Tikait announced his next move. He exhorted fellow farmers to intensify the agitation for an indefinite period. Thus, kisan shanties mushroomed at the Ram Garh and Hanumangarh sites giving it a look of temporary village. Tikait announced that no taxes, revenue, electricity bills, irrigation charges, repayment of loans, should be made; government officials should not be allowed to enter villages; if the government does not sanction tubwell electricity connections, farmers should take direct line from electric poles and lastly, don't fear arrest. The new programme of action should remain peaceful and non-violent. On February 14, the nineteenth day of the peaceful movement, incidents of 'rasta roko' (road blockade), 'rail roko' (stoppage of trains) were reported from Muzaffarnagar and Meerut districts. But, the agitation couldn't remain non-violent, cases of violence started in rural areas of Meerut and Muzaffarnagar districts. In Bijnore and Moradabad districts, railway lines were damaged, telegraphic lines cut, roads blocked, railway stations set on fire. Following Mawana Khurd incidents, two kisans were arrested under National Security Act (NSA). Their arrest flared up violence in the near district of Bijnore and Moradabad. In Rajabpur village of Moradabad district CRPF and PAC

sprayed bullets on agitation farmers. Five farmers on the spot, 108 suffered injuries and about 200 were arrested. The BKU appointed an inquiry committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Mahavir Singh to enquire into police firing on farmers at Rajabpur on February 16.

Under such circumstances, in response to the call of BKU, for the announcement of the next programme of action nearly 2.15 lakh farmers thronged the site of gherao on February 19. After few speakers spoke about the success of the movement in showing the unity of the farmers and their sense of discipline, Tikait announced the postponement of the agitation till the next line of action was chalked out which was endorsed by the farmers present. Thus, ended the 240-day long BKU agitation at Meerut and as the farmers packed to get back to their villages, they were looking as happy as they were on January 27, i.e. the first day of the agitation.

#### Content Analysis:

As it is clear from the table (6.7), the biggest coverage in terms of news and photographs during one-week time frame of our second phase of BKU agitation, i.e. siege of Meerut Commissioner's office by farmers was on January 30/88. The total space given by the newspaper to BKU was 1,071 col cm, i.e. (26.25%), out of which 815 col cm., (20%) was news and 256 col cm. (6.25%) was photographs. On the front page, the main headline banner story carried one photograph of Tikait addressing the gathering of farmers. In the second story, Tikait disowned his statement published in the paper saying that the farmers would disrupt the supply of essential commodities like milk, vegetables etc. to the cities. There were news items announcing that the farmers belonging to nine different farmers' organizations in the country reached Meerut to demonstrate their support to the farmers' cause and that womenfolk were eager to participate in the BKU agitating in a big way. On page-4 of the newspaper, which is the Edit page, there was a main article on 'Gandhi, farmers and

Government' measuring 24.5 col cm., written by a senior journalist of **Amar Ujala**,

Dr. Radhey Sham Shukla, giving insight on farmer's movement.

**Table: 6.7**

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION)  
IN THE SECOND PHASE (P-II) OF BKU AGITATION AT MEERUT COMMISSTONERY  
OFFICE, JAN-FEB'88.

Date	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Jan, 29	398.50	9.77	149.50	3.66	548	13.43
Jan, 30	815	19.98	256	6.27	1071	26.25
Jan, 31	565	11.54	291	5.94	856	17.48
Feb, 4	643	15.75	225.50	5.53	858.50	21.28
Feb, 18	373	9.14	26	0.63	399	9.77
Feb, 19	370	9.07	NIL	-	370	9.07
Feb, 20	359	8.80	30	0.73	389	9.53
Total	3523	11.99	978	3.33	4501	15.33

After discussing the media agenda and the public agenda, now, we shall discuss the concept of news and its impact on the media users. Let us start with a question — 'What is news'? As pointed out by scholars, "the reporter does not go out gathering news, picking up stories as if they were fallen apples" (Chibnall, 1981: 76). Or the world is not "sitting quietly out there waiting to be discovered" (Hartley, 1982: 12), rather it is a result of social construction, journalistic practices, bureaucratic processes and so on. Within the nature of news also, as argued by Lippman (1994: 37) "the news does not tell you how the seed is germinating in the ground, but it may tell you when the first sprout breaks through the surface. It may even tell you what somebody says is happening to the seed under ground. It may tell you that the sprout did not come up at the time it was expected". In a similar vein, Galtung and Ruge (1981: 53) argue that "the building of a dam goes unnoticed but not its inauguration". The efforts to define news, as pointed out by Roshco (1975), tend to dissolve

into a list of news making events. The best-known definition according to Roshco only describes what is alleged to be an unmistakable news event: "When a dog bites a man, that is not news; but when a man bites a dog, that is news" (p.9). Invariably, the **definition(s)** of news point towards certain characteristics or nature of news. In short, news is about events and people who are newsworthy. But argues Hartley (1982) events do not get into the news simply by happening. They "need to be known and recognised, coming from a known and trusted - preferably a representative - source".

Table: 6.8

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS/STORIES IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE SECOND PHASE (P-II) OF THE BKU AGITATION AT MEERUT IN JAN - FEB,'88.

Page	News	%	Photos	%	Total	%
Front Page	9.66	33.82	245.00	8.57	1211.00	42.40
Inside Page	1429.00	50.03	479.50	16.78	1908.50	66.82
Back Page	1128.00	39.49	253.50	8.87	1381.50	48.37
Total	3523.00	20.00	978.00	3.33	4501.00	15.33

A definition of news should encompass both 'negative' and 'positive' news, making possible an explanation of why an armistice has as much news value as a declaration of war and why a moon-landing rates as large a banner headline as the dropping of an atomic bomb. Such a definition promotes understanding of the news making process. It also provides insight into why, in daily practice, conflict and crisis are the stuff of front-page stories more often than amity and success, regardless of the social and political values of individual journalists.

As a journalist turned sociologist, Robert E. Park pointed out, in an early effort to

analyze the nature of all news, published or not, it is “ one of the earliest and most elementary forms of knowledge”. Any division of labour requires individuals to inform themselves about the activities of others, making news an inherent part of organized social life. The technology of modern communication did not change the intrinsic nature of news. But, it did enlarge the quantity of news that is collected and disseminated , speed the pace at which it is transmitted, and create diverse means of presenting it to the public. News is constantly sought and offered in the course of social communication because it is necessary, and therefore valuable, commodity of social exchange. The urgent need for news arises in every social organization, from the nuclear family to a complex bureaucracy. Within groups, up-to-date information regarding adherence to social norms is a requisite for exercising social control and maintaining social cohesions. Between groups, either conflict or cooperation is dependent upon news of the attitudes and behaviour of groups with whom there is interaction.

Table: 6.9

**TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE SECOND PHASE (P-II) OF BKU FARMERS AGITATION AT MEERUT COMMISSIONARY OFFICE IN JAN-FEB, '88.**

Date	News	%	Photos	%	Total	%
Jan, 29	360.50	8.34	348.00	8.06	708.50	16.40
Jan, 30	479.00	11.08	248.00	5.74	727.00	16.82
Jan, 31	384.50	8.90	276.50	6.40	661.00	15.30
Feb, 4	502.50	11.63	196.50	4.55	699.00	16.18
Feb, 18	564.00	13.05	179.50	4.16	743.50	17.21
Feb, 19	492.00	11.39	28.50	0.65	520.50	12.04
Feb, 20	493.00	11.39	154.50	3.57	647.50	14.96
Total	3275.50	10.83	1431.50	4.73	4707.00	15.56

As mentioned earlier, the media took notice of the farmers agitation after the mobilisation of the farmers and their clash with the police in which two farmers were killed. This issue was in the media agenda and the newspapers highlighted the developments, regularly. By now, the farmers who were unaware of any other means of communication except inter-personal mode and through the regular panchayat meetings, had also realized the power of the media and have started reading the newspapers for the latest news about the farmer's agitation. However, as indicated by the farmers in their interviews, most of them were not regular readers of the newspapers, earlier. During the second phase of farmer's agitation which took place after one year of the first agitation in January '88 in Meerut, there was a massive gathering of farmers. All this happened because of the wide coverage of the events related to the farmers agitation provided by the newspapers. The second phase of the farmer's agitation in Meerut which was prolonged to 24 days was covered by other newspapers and the two newspapers under study in a big way. There was a healthy competition between both the two newspapers in highlighting the movement. The farmers participating in the agitation in Meerut and their families back home eagerly awaited the day's newspapers to find out about the latest news. Many farmers who otherwise had not ever thought of getting any media coverage were excited to see their pictures and names in the newspapers. They thought that they and the cause for which they were agitating was important. The leaders of the farmer's movement also felt encouraged to find their pictures and detailed account of the agitation on the front pages of the newspapers. They were convinced that the media had taken up their cause and was helping them to communicate their grievances to the ruling governments, both at the state and centre level and also to the opposition leaders of various political parties who built up pressure on the government to solve the problems of the farmers. The media coverage generated new hope amongst the farmers and their leaders that their problems would be solved.

Other important factors which gave boost to the movement was because the newspapers including the two newspapers under study highlighted the following news :- (1) the large number of groups of farmers which began pouring in thousands everyday. These groups came from neighbouring districts of UP. and even from other states such as Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Bihar and Orissa, (2) state level kisan leaders from different states of the country extended their support to the BKU movement, (3) state level professional associations, trade unions and socio-cultural organizations extended full cooperation and moral support to the BKU cause. About 62 such organizations including those of teachers, doctors, lawyers, religious bodies, trade organizations, students and labour unions resolved solidarity with the kisan cause. Business establishments, schools and colleges observed token hartal in support of the BKU movement. This media coverage helped in propogating the BKU farmers' movement throughout the country.

Let us summarize the part played by the news media. First, the news media highlight some events, activities, groups, personalities, and so forth to make them stand out. This was done by the newspapers by providing coverage to the initial phase of the agitation in March '86, monthly panchayats of there farmers and the current phase of the agitation in Meerut in January '87. Different kinds of issues require different amounts and kinds of coverage to gain attention. This common focus affects what people will think or talk about. Second, the object that is the focus of attention still needs to be framed. It must come to stand for something - some problem or concern. The media can play up or down the more serious aspects of a situation. This aspect was also taken care of by the media by keeping the farmer's agitation as a central issue throughout ands highlighting the grievances of the farmers. The third step in the buildup links the object or event to secondary symbols, so that is becomes a part of the recognized political landscape. Something like interest aggregation is

involved, since the line of division on the particular issue does not always coincide with the cleavage between the organized political parties or between other sharply defined groups. The media tend to weave discrete events into a continuing story, often a political one. Finally, spokesmen who can articulate demands must make their appearance. Their effectiveness stems in good part from their ability to command media attention. As the analysis of coverage and placement of news in the second phase of agitation indicates the issues concerning the farmer's movement were covered by the two newspapers under study and the spokesmen of the farmers were given wide coverage so that the problems of the farmers could be articulated and reach the ruling elites.



**Table: 6.10**

**PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHERS/STORIES IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE SECOND PHASE (P-II) OF THE BKU AGITATION AT MEERUT IN JAN-FEB, '88.**

Page	News	%	Photos	%	Total	%
Front Page	1115.50	36.88	186.00	6.15	1301.50	43.03
Inside Page	1354.50	44.79	883.00	29.19	2237.50	73.99
Back Page	805.50	26.63	362.50	11.98	1168.00	38.62
Total	3275.50	10.83	1431.50	4.73	4707.00	15.56

The above table clearly indicates the placement of news and photographs during the second phase of BKU agitation. It shows that the paper gave a total coverage of 1,301.5 col cm. to BKU on the front page which comes to 43.03% in terms of percentage, out of which 1,115.5 col cm. was news (36.88%) and 186 col cm. was photographs (6.15%). The inside pages gave still more impressive coverage to the movement devoting 2,237.5 col cm. which comes to 73.99%, out of which 1,354.5 col cm. was news (44.79%) and 883 col cm. was photographs (29.19%). Likewise, the back page of the newspaper gave a total coverage of 1,168 col cm. which was 38.62%, out of which 805.5 col cm. (26.63%) was news and 362.5 col cm. (11.98%) was photographs. The overall coverage given by the newspaper to the farmers agitation was 4,707 col cm.i.e. 15.56%, out of which 3,275.5 col cm.i.e. 10.83% was news and 1,431.5 col cm.,i.e. 4.73% was photographs. The overall analysis shows that the newspaper had given good coverage to the farmers agitation, but, its main focus was on photographs and there was no balance between news and photographs. The highest percentage of news/photographs was covered in the inside pages (73.99%), followed by the front page (43.03%) and the back page (38.62%).

Mr. Girilal Jain, an eminent journalist writes on the organizational wisdom of the

agitating farmers in Meerut (The Times of India, Delhi, 1988 February 10. p 6), as follows :-

"The sight of couple of lakh peasants sitting quietly day after day in an open ground and thousands of volunteers bringing food for them from neighbouring villages and distributing it in an orderly fashion must amaze anyone who is familiar with the behaviour of Indian crowds, small or big. The whole exercise has been breath-taking. The peasants and their leaders, especially Mahender Singh Tikait, cannot but command our admiration, regardless of whether or not we regard their demands as just".

**Table: 6.11**

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITIONS) IN THE SECOND PHASE (P-II) OF THE BKU AGITATION AT MEERUT IN JAN-FEB'88.**

Date	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Jan, 29	398.5	9.77	149.5	3.66	548	13.43	360.5	8.34	348	8.06	708.5	16.40
Jan, 30	815	19.98	256	6.27	1171	26.25	479	11.08	248	5.74	727	16.80
Jan, 31	565	11.54	291	5.94	856	17.48	384.5	8.90	276.5	6.40	661	15.30
Feb, 4	643	15.75	225.5	5.53	868.5	21.28	502.5	11.63	196.5	4.55	699	16.18
Feb, 18	373	9.14	26	0.63	399	9.77	564	13.05	179.5	4.16	743.5	17.21
Feb, 19	370	9.07	NIL	—	370	9.07	492	11.39	28.5	0.65	520.5	12.04
Feb, 20	359	8.80	30	0.73	389	9.53	493	11.39	154.5	3.57	647.5	14.96
Total	3523	12	978	3.33	4501	15.33	3275.5	10.83	1431.5	4.73	4707	15.56

As the above table indicates, in the comparative analysis coverage of second phase of BKU agitation by the of the two newspapers the overall coverage provided by Dainik Jagran was more than that of Amar Ujala. Dainik Jagran devoted 4,707 col cm. space to BKU which consisted of 15.56% space, out of which 3,275.5 col cm. (10.83%) was news and 1,431.5 col cm (4.73%) was photographs whereas Amar Ujala devoted the total space of 4,501 col cm. which comes to 15.33% space, out of which 3,523 col cm. (12%) was news and 978 (3.33%) was photographs. Considering the day-to-day coverage of the two newspapers, we find that in the case of Amar Ujala, the highest coverage was on January 30 when the newspaper gave the total coverage of 26.25%, out of which 19.98% was news and 6.27% was photographs whereas Dainik Jagran's highest coverage was 17.21% on February 18, out of which 13.05% was news and 4.16% was photographs. The second largest coverage in Amar Ujala was on February 4 consisting of 21.28% space, out of which 15.75% was news and 5.53% was photographs whereas the second highest coverage in Dainik Jagran was on January 30 when 16.28% space was devoted to BKU, out of which 11.08% was news and 5.74% was photographs . The third highest coverage in Amar Ujala was on January 31, the edition had 12 pages, two pages more than the usual 10, in which the total BKU news covered was 17.48%, out of which 11.54% was news and 5.94% was photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran, the third highest coverage was on January 29 when the paper gave total 16.04% coverage to BKU agitation, out of which 8.34% was news and 8.06% was photographs. Analyzing the highest category three days coverage of the two newspapers, we find that the coverage of Amar Ujala was much impressive in comparison to Dainik Jagran, the lowest of Amar Ujala 17.48% on January, 31 was more than the highest of Dainik Jagran i.e. 17.21% on February, 18. If we consider, the news-photographs ration in this category of coverage, it comes out approximately, 3:1, 3:1 and 2:1 in Amar Ujala (descending order,i.e highest to lowest) and 3:1, 2:1 and 50:50 (descending order) in case of Dainik Jagran. So, it is

clear that Dainik Jagran made use of more photographs. The medium category coverage in case of two newspaper was manifested in the single day coverage of Amar Ujala on January 29 giving 13.43% space to BKU, out of which 9.77% was news and 3.66% was photographs and in case of Dainik Jagran, total coverage on February 4, giving 16.18% space to BKU, out of which 11.63% was news and 4.55% was photographs. In this case, Dainik Jagran was better placed than Amar Ujala. However, it was the last segment, i.e. the lowest coverage category which saw Dainik Jagran surge much ahead of Amar Ujala in both news and photographs category. The highest coverage in the category of Amar Ujala, i.e. 9.77% on February 18 was much lower than the lowest coverage of Dainik Jagran 12.04% on February 19

**Table: 6.12**

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE SECOND (P-II) PHASE OF THE BKU AGITATION AT MEERUT IN JAN-FEB, '88.

Page	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Front Page	966	33.82	245	8.57	1211	42.40	1115.5	36.88	186	6.15	1301.5	43.03
Inside Page	1429	50.03	479.50	16.78	1908.5	66.82	13545.5	44.79	883	29.19	2237.5	73.99
Back Page	1128	39.49	253.50	8.87	1381.5	48.37	805.5	26.63	362.5	11.98	1168	38.62
Total	3523	20.00	978.00	3.33	4501	15.33	3275.5	10.83	1431.5	4.73	4707	15.56

Comparative Analysis of Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran in terms of placement of News/Photographs during the second phase of BKU agitation indicates that the overall coverage of Dainik Jagran was better than Amar Ujala. The front page coverage given to the BKU agitation by Dainik Jagran was 1,301.5 col cm. (43.03%), out of which 1,115.5 col cm. (36.88%) was news and remaining 186 col cm. (6.15%) was photographs whereas in case of Amar Ujala total coverage given on the front page was 1,211 col cm. (42.04%), out of which 96 col cm. (33.82%) was news and 245 col cm. (8.57%) was photographs. In the inside pages, the total coverage given by Dainik Jagran was 2,237.5 col cm. (73.99 or 74%), out of which 1,345.5 col cm. (44.79%) was news and 883 col cm. (29.19%) was photographs. In case of Amar Ujala, the total coverage given in the inside pages was 1,908.5 col cm. (66.82%), out of which 1,429 col cm. (50.03%) was news and the remaining 479.5 col cm. (16.78%) was photographs. When we take the coverage given on the last page, Dainik Jagran gave a total coverage of 1,168 col cm. (38.62%), out of which 805.5 col cm. (26.63%) was news and 362.5 col cm. (11.98%) was photographs. On the other hand, Amar Ujala gave the total space of 1,381.5 col cm. to BKU news which comes out to 48.37%, out of which 1,128 col cm. (39.49%) was news and 253.5 col cm. (8.87%) was photographs. Considering the overall coverage in both the newspapers, we find that Dainik Jagran gave more space to photographs in inside pages and the back page, 29.19% and 11.98%, respectively, in comparison to Amar Ujala's inside pages 16.78% and back page 8.87%. In the overall analysis also Dainik Jagran gave 4.73% space to photographs whereas Amar Ujala gave 3.33%. This factor of more coverage of photographs makes Dainik Jagran more prominent in overall coverage.

#### 6.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND PHASE:

The second phase of BKU agitation makes an interesting reading because it was the longest agitation of the farmers which lasted for 24 days. By now, both the newspapers had realized the potential of the BKU movement and ensured the best possible coverage of this phase. There was healthy competition and both the papers gave highest and their best coverage both in terms of news and photographs. This was the only phase amongst all the five phases in which Dakinik Jagran gave more overall coverage than Amar Ujala to the BKU activities. But it was highest only in photographs and not in news. Amar Ujala was ahead in coverage of news. Dakinik Jagran surged ahead of Amar Ujala by giving more space to photographs.

However, the quality of news, its presentation and placement was better in Amar Ujala. During all the seven days, Amar Ujala gave a main headline stories on the BKU farmers movement with rich reading material and catchy photographs. The layout of the paper was also impressive. The paper gave three editorials on January 29, February 4 and February 18. All these editorials were very stimulating and inspiring to the farmers and were critical of the government, accusing it to ignore the genuine demands of the farmers. In this phase, the paper maintained a perfect balance in presentation of the coverage by keeping the ratio of news and photographs balanced. The focus of coverage was the leader of the movement, Mahender Singh Tikait, whose photographs were splashed in all the issues of the newspapers. Amar Ujala also focused its coverage on the social aspects like the activities of the farmers at the site of the agitation, response of the local people towards the BKU agitation, the feelings of the families of farmers back home etc. The paper highlighted the hardcore issues of the agitation. Consequently, it got the feedback from the readers in the form of Letters - to - the - Editor which were suitably highlighted in the issues of the newspapers.



Although **Dainik Jagran's** overall coverage was impressive in terms of space, **but** focus was on splashing more photographs. The paper tried to make up for the less space given during the last phase of the agitation. The selection and presentation of news was weak and unsystematic in comparison to Amar Ujala. The photographs of incidents of violence during the agitation were highlighted prominently. The photographs of the fanners at the site of the agitation were presented in a casual manner. At times, the captions given to the photographs were funny and lacked depth. There was not much of planning and research in the presentation of news. The senior Correspondents of Dainik Jagran did give some good stories, but their projection and placement were not proper. The front page coverage of the paper was also weak in comparison to Amar Ujala. Dainik Jagran gave two editorials on January 29 and February 18. Both the editorials lacked depth and punch. First editorial was wavering as if the newspaper was unable to make up its mind whether to adopt the line of supporting the farmers' movement or to oppose it. The second editorial was clearly against the farmers, criticizing their action and urging the government to deal with the farmers strictly. The feedback from the farmers in the form of Letters - to - the - Editor was missing.

## Phase III

### 65 INTRODUCTION:

Taking notice of the emerging farmers movement in Western Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Mahender Singh Tikait after the initial **Karmukhera** Power House dharna of the **BKU** and subsequent events, the farmers' organisations throughout the country established contact with Tikait. He was invited to attend the Inter-State Coordination Committee meeting of farmers organizations from 14 states at Delhi in September,'87. The second meeting took place at Panchamba, Bagusarai in Bihar in the First week of June,'88 and third meeting was held in Chandigarh in August,'88. On the invitation of Tikait, the representatives from other states turned up at his native village, Sisuali in September'88. It was in the Sisuali meeting that **BKU** decided to hold a farmers panchayat at Delhi on October 25,'88. The reason for choosing this date for the agitation was that the farmers' representatives from different states felt that it was an appropriate time to strike because the ruling government can't ignore the farmers at a time when the elections were round the corner. Thus, the Delhi Boat Club Panchayat of Farmers was the outcome of year-long efforts of the Inter-State Coordination Committee of the farmer's organisations.

In response to the call of **BKU**, by word of mouth, about 3 lakh farmers both men and women, not only from Western U.P, but also from other states like Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra reached the Boat Club grounds near India gate on October, 25,'88. The seven member Panchayat of the farmer leaders presided over by Tikait was held under the shade of a 'Jamun' tree nearby and it was decided that the farmers would carryout an indefinite sit-in till its five-point charter of demands was accepted. On the same day, in the evening, the mammoth gathering of farmers was addressed by representatives of different farmers organisation which included the Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra, Kheudt Samaj

of Gujarat, Krishak Samaj of Karnataka, Royyat Sangathan of Andhra Pradesh, Bharat Krantikari Sangh of Bihar, Vivasiyagal Sangam (TVS) of Tamil Nadu, Utkal Krishik Samaj of Orissa, Krishak Sangh of Bengal, Kisan Sanghatana of Madhya Pradesh, Bhartiya Kisan Union of Punjab, Kisan Sangh of Delhi, Bhartiya Kisan Union of Haryana, and Rajasthan Kisan Sangh of Delhi, Bhartiya Kisan Union of Haryana, and Rajasthan Kisan Sangathan.

The eleven member Co-ordination Committee of the Farmers organisations drafted the five point charter of demands which were duly endorsed by the gathering of farmers. The five demands in this charter of demands were as follows:-

- 1) Remunerative prices of farm produce.
- 2) Waiving of all kinds of loans-government loans and loans of cooperatives societies.
- 3) Uniform power tariff, for bank loans and cooperative loans policy all over the country.
- 4) Unconditional release of all farmers arrested during demonstrations and also withdrawal of court cases pending in any part of the country.
- 5) Waiving of irrigation charges and land revenue payable during drought years.

The resolution further added that if the government did not accept the demands of the U.P. farmers, their counterparts in other states would also not pay government dues as a mark of solidarity.

On the second day of the sit-in at Boat Club, efforts were made by the BKU to get in touch with the bigwigs in the Central Government and convince them of the acceptance of their demands. A 12-member BKU farmer's delegation under the leadership of Tikait called on the President and the speaker of the Lok Sabha. The delegation apprised them of the problems of farmers and the Chief Minister of U.P was also involved in the discussions. Again, another farmers delegation met Mr. Ram Niwas Mirdha, Union Minister of State for Textiles and Mr. Shyamlal Yadav, Minister of State for Agriculture. Another eight-member

delegation met Shri Buta Singh, Union Minister for Home. However, nothing concrete came out of these meetings. The **BKU** exhausted all means of reconciliation and was left with no other option except to continue with their sit-in at the Boat Club. In the second round of negotiations, the delegation of the Union was assured that its memorandum was being looked into. Various meetings were held in which Ms. Sheila Dixit, Minister of State attached to the Prime Minister's office, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, Transport Minister and Mr. Bhanjan Lal, Union Minister for Agriculture were also associated. At the end of the exercise, the Union Government expressed sympathy with the cause of the farmers, but, no concrete decisions were taken. The talks fizzled out.

On October 27, the third day of the sit-in, there was a tense atmosphere at the Boat Club, when a fifty-five years old farmer, Bhoop Singh, died of cardiac arrest and there was mixed feelings of excitement and rage amongst the farmers. The presence of the opposition leaders at the rally site made the situation still more critical for the administration. As the news of the farmers death reached the villages, thousands of farmers thronged the dharna site and by the evening of October 28, nearly one Lakh farmers were added to the thousands already present and the police administration had a tough time controlling them. In view of the **BKUs** continued 'siege'<sup>1</sup> of the Boat Club Lawns, the Congress(I) on October 29 decided to shift the venue of its October 31 rally on the eve of Smt Indira Gandhi's anniversary day celebration to the Red Fort grounds. The **BKU**, on the other hand, apprehending the use of might by the police force the agitating farmer at the Boat Club for eviction, spread message to the villages to send more farmers for demonstration on October 31. Meanwhile, the **BKU** made the last bid to open negotiations with the government but, nothing worthwhile came out of it.

In order to evict the farmers from the Boat Club grounds, the Delhi Administration evolved a two - phased strategy, One, all facilities, i.e. first aid, water supply etc. were

withdrawn so that farmers may be forced to quit. Two, plying of tractors trollies in the capital was banned and all entry points at the Inter-State borders were sealed. Opposition parties condemned this barbaric and inhuman treatment meted out to the farmers. On October 30, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Delhi Administration on a petition seeking immediate supply of water and provision of other civic amenities to the farmers sitting on dharna. The petitioner alleged that water supply to the farmers had been discontinued since October 29, affecting the farmers life guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution. The farmers from the neighboring districts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh started reaching the boat club carrying food for their brothers. In view of the prohibitory orders, police had blocked all routes to Delhi in a bid to cut off food supplies to the agitators. About 10 tractors-trollies carrying men and food were not allowed to enter Delhi and there was a scuffle between the police and the farmers and in the resultant firing by police, two farmers were killed.

It was on the night of October, 30-31 that the Surface Minister, Mr. Rajesh Pilot had a meeting with the BKU delegation headed by Tikait and reached some sort of an agreement with them and an understanding of withdrawal of the agitation was worked out. Early morning on October 31, there was a meeting of the Inter-State Co-ordination Committee in which Rajiv Gandhi's speech at the Red Fort rally was reviewed and it was decided that the BKU should unilaterally withdraw the agitation. Thus, the curtain came down on the third phase of the BKU agitation.

#### Content Analysis:

The table below (6.13) shows that the highest coverage given by the newspaper, Amar Ujala, to BKU agitation phase three (P-III) was on October 31, '88. On the front page of the issue (Oct. 31), there were eight news items and two photographs. On page four, i.e. the Editorial page, there was one and the only edit measuring 59 col cm. criticising the role of the

government in dealing with the farmers agitation and the use of violence including firing on the farmers. On page nine, there was an impressive coverage with a perfect layout. The second highest coverage was on October 27,'88. On the front page, there were three news items and two photographs. On page four, i.e. the Editorial page, there was one edit measuring 65 col cm. justifying the farmer's agitation and their demands. On page nine, there was an impressive coverage, almost the entire space except few news items measuring 75 col cm. was devoted to the BKU sit-in at Boat Club. By now, we have already discussed the agenda-setting process and the concept of news and its impact on the media users. We shall now discuss the process of news selection and its presentation in the newspapers.

**Table: 6.13**

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE THIRD PHASE (P-III) OF BKU AGITATION AT BOAT CLUB, NEW DELHI FROM OCT 26- NOV 1/88

Date	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Oct 26	326	7.99	234	5.73	560	13.72
Oct 27	439.5	10.77	199.5	4.89	639	15.66
Oct 28	290	7.11	261	6.40	551	13.51
Oct 29	432.5	10.60	143.5	3.52	576	14.12
Oct 30 (12 pages)	500	10.21	180.5	3.68	680.5	13.89
Oct 31	435.5	10.67	258.5	6.33	694	17
Nov 1	150	3.67	28.5	0.70	178.5	4.37
Total	2573.5	8.76	1305.5	4.44	3879	13.20

The studies on news production point towards various factors which go into the

process of news making. It is argued that the news organisations cannot define their criteria of news selection every morning and hence they routinise their task to manage the news of the day in terms of its own organisation, practices, sources, beats, and structure of news (see Tuchman, 1978; Gans 1979; Fishman, 1980; Roshco, 1975). Galtung and Ruge (1981) have listed various conditions which need to be fulfilled for events to become news. They are: frequency; threshold; unambiguity; meaningfulness; consonance; unexpectedness; continuity; composition; elite nations; elite people; personalisation; and negativity. To elaborate them briefly, similarity between the frequency of the event and frequency of the news medium is an important criteria for selection of news. It is because a newspaper has to come out in a day's time, therefore it needs to catch those events which match with its own pace. Frequency here means time-span required for an event to unfold itself and to become meaningful.

Gans (1979) provides a useful summary of the theories about story selection which are: journalist-centred; news organisation; event-centred. The journalist-centred theory seems to attach importance to the autonomy of journalists when it argues that news is shaped by the professional news judgment of journalists. The theory on news organisation argues that story selection is affected by the organisational requirements and routinisation. Event-centred approach argues that events determine story selection, and that journalists simply reflect the mirror of society. Apart from this there are other determinants like technological, economic, ideological, and cultural factors which affect the selection of news.

**Table: 6.14**

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/STORIES/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION DURING THE **THIRD** PHASE (P-III) OF THE AGITATOIN, FARMERS SIT-IN AT **BOAT** CLUB, NEW DELHI FROM OCT 26-NOV 1/88.

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	1088	38.09	458	16.5	1546.5	54.14
Inside Page	1380	48.31	847	29.65	2227	77.96
Back Page	105.5	3.69	-	-	105.5	3.69
Total	2573.5	8.76	1305.5	4.44	3879	13.20

Many scholars (Tuchman, 1978b; Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979) point out that organisational requirements shape the news. Within this paradigm, professionalism serves organisational interests (Tuchman, 1978b), and does not leave much scope for the news workers to infuse their biases or concerns into news. The purpose of a newspaper is to sell news and it has to come out every 24 hours. Therefore, a newspaper organisation cannot depend upon the reporters wandering around the city in search of news. The journalists or reporters are placed in locations where stories might occur. Such locations include police station, courts, hospitals, corporations, political chambers, or other legitimated governmental institutions. The news net is effectively spread over these locations by creating beats which assures the continuous flow of news. Thus, the news is constructed within the parameters of a bureaucratic universe (Fishman, 1980) which defines certain practices for the reporters, determines sources and events, and emphasises the time constraints. In Fishman's (1980: 143) view "newspapers need bureaucracies because the journalistic system of account production is itself bureaucratically organised. The news organisation needs reliable, predictable, scheduled quantities of raw materials because it is set up to process these in reliable, predictable, schedule ways in order to turn out a standard product at the same time everyday".



**Table: 6.15**

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE THIRD PHASE (P-III) OF BKU AGITATION AT BOAT CLUB, NEW DELHI FROM OCT 26-NOV 1/88.

Date	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Oct 26	323	7.47	260.5	6.03	583.5	13.50
Oct 27	329.5	6.35	171.5	3.31	501	9.66
12 pages ed.						
Oct 28	558	12.91	178	4.12	736	17.03
Oct 29	500.5	11.58	195.5	4.53	696	16.11
Oct 30	377.5	8.74	125	2.89	502.5	11.63
Oct 31	471	10.94	162.5	3.76	633.5	14.66
Nov 1	253.5	5.86	61.5	1.43	315	7.29
Total	2813	7.25	1154.5	2.97	3967.5	10.22

As emphasized in Chapter- IV " Language Press in India," and Chapter V "Hindi Press in India," the circulation and readership of the regional newspapers have been increasing over the years. This has helped in creating awareness amongst the rural masses. The managements of the regional papers including Hindi newspapers also realised their true strength. " The edition of 'Navbharat Times', one of the leading papers of the country, declined in terms of circulation from 251,000 copies in 1989 to 213,099 copies in 1992. The Lucknow edition of the same group was closed down after more than nine years of publication due to "heavy losses". The '**Dainik Hindustan**' declined from 133,205 copies in 1989 to 111,918 copies in 1992. Likewise '**Jansatta**' showed a decline from 113,360 copies in 1989 to 98,930 copies in 1992. In contrast, newspapers published from burgeoning towns in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar have built up impressive

circulation **and** they keep growing. The 'Rajasthan Patrika,' published from five centres in Rajasthan, went up from **231,917 copies** in **1989** to 282,654 copies in 1992. The '**Punjab Kesari**' from Jalandhar was selling 351,826 copies in 1992 compared to 334, 271 copies in 1989.". This was also true for '**Amar Ujala**' and '**Dainik Jagran**' in U.P. The **BKU Farmers'** movement also gave a boost to the circulation of these newspapers, especially to Amar Ujala in Western U.P.

**Table: 6.16**

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/STORIES/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) DURING THE THIRD PHASE (P-III) OF THE AGITATION, FARMERS SIT - IN AT BOAT CLUB, NEW DELHI FROM OCT 26 - NOV 1, '88.

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	1196	39.55	371	12.26	1576	51.81
Inside Page	1616.5	53.45	783.5	25.90	2400	79.36
Back Page	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	2813	7.25	1154.5	2.97	3967.5	10.22

The above table indicates the placement of news/photographs in the newspaper during **the** third phase of the agitation. The paper gave total 1,576 col cm. space on the front page which comes to 51.81% coverage, out of which 39.55% was news and 12.26% was photographs. In the inside pages, the paper gave a very impressive coverage of 2,400 cool cm. which was 79.36% in terms of percentage, out of which 53.45% was news and 25.90% was photographs. However, the paper drew flank as far as the coverage of back page was considered. There was no coverage on the last page during the entire time frame of the third phase of **the** agitation.

As pointed out, earlier, "organisational requirements shape news". By now, it was very clear to the managements of both the newspapers that the untapped readership in rural UP could be added to the circulation if the issues of the farmers were highlighted. And as the comparative data of both the newspapers clearly indicates they competed with each other to grab this opportunity of giving wide coverage to the farmers' movement. So, the coverage of the movement was guided by news organisation and event-centred theories explained in detail, earlier. The managements of both the newspaper were, initially, reluctant to admit that this agitation of farmers would turn into a movement. But, the situation was clear after the first phase of the agitation and both the newspapers made advanced preparations to cover the second phase in Meerut. The comparative data of the coverage done by both the newspapers show that the newspapers gave maximum coverage during the second and third phase of the agitation in Meerut and New Delhi. Colourful photographs of the farmers were displayed on the front pages of both the newspapers.

The newspapers highlighted such comments "Among the vast multitude of farmers, there were about two thousand 'kisan women'. No pressman would miss to talk to them. Their knowledge of kisan problems was no less than of their male counterparts. They were not just like women who had accompanied their husbands or sons but they were kisan in their own right. They were active members of the BKU. Women participation in the BKU movement has been a distinctive feature of the Union. Krishni Devi of Haryana, Baljori, Ram Dei and Kamlesh of Meerut could put forth well considered views about kisan problems. Ram Dulari of Patti Sahwajpur in Moradabad district with winsome smile said, ' we have come to the capital to let the whole world know who the real women of India are'. The farmers at the rally also seemed to be well informed about the farm economics,". The newspapers projected the real countryside life and culture in Delhi by publishing the

photographs of farmers having a dig at their "hookas" which is a symbol of social gathering and brotherhood amongst the rural community. A much more serious, sanctimonious and moving event was enacted by the newspapers by presenting the 'pugree' (turban) presentation ceremony. The 14 kisan organizations presented massive green 'pugrees' to Tikait. 'Pugree' as per Hindu custom is much more than a mere headgear. It is a symbol of authority and of supremacy. All these images were projected by the newspapers through news items and photographs.

Table: 6. 17

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITIONS) IN THE THIRD PHASE (P-III) OF  
BKU AGITATION AT BOAT CLUB, NEW DELHI FROM OCT 26 - NOV 1/88.

Date	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Oct 26	326	7.99	234	5.73	560	13.72	323	7.47	260.5	6.03	583.5	13.50
Oct 27	439.5	10.11	199.5	4.89	639	15.66	329.5	6.35	171.5	3.31	501	9.66
Oct 28	290	7.11	261	6.40	551	13.51	558	12.91	178	4.12	736	17.03
Oct 29	432.5	10.60	143.5	3.52	576	14.12	500.5	11.58	195.5	4.53	696	16.11
Oct 30	500	10.21	180.5	3.68	680.5	13.89	377.5	8.74	125	2.89	502.5	11.36
(12 pages)												
Oct 31	435.5	10.67	258.5	6.33	694	17	471	10.94	162.5	3.76	633.5	14.66
Nov 1	150	3.76	28.5	0.70	178.5	4.37	253.5	5.86	61.5	1.43	315	7.29
Total	2573.5	8.76	1305.5	4.44	3879	13.20	2813	7.25	1154.5	2.97	3967.5	10.22

Analysis of the total coverage of BKU news/photographs in Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran (Meerut Edition) during the third phase of BKU sit-in at Boat Club clearly indicates that the coverage provided by Amar Ujala was more than that of Dainik Jagran. Amar Ujala covered the BKU agitation in 3,879 col cm. space which comes to 13.20%, out of which 2,573.5 col cm. (8.76%) was news and 1,305.5 col cm. (4.44%) was photographs whereas Dainik Jagran devoted a total space of 3,967.5 col cm. (10.22%) out of which 2,813 col cm. (7.25%) was news and 1,154.5 col cm. (2.97%) was photographs. So, it is apparent that both in terms of news as well as photographs the coverage of Amar Ujala was better than Dainik Jagran. The highest coverage of Amar Ujala was on October, 31 (17%) was slightly lower than the highest of Dainik Jagran on October 28 (17.03). Amar Ujala maintained the highest on October 31 which was 17%. Except one lowest coverage of 4.37% on November 1, Amar Ujala maintained its level of coverage and it focused on the coverage of photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran, the lowest coverage was 7.29% on November 1 and the highest was 17.03% on October 28.i.e. the first day highest and the last day lowest. In this phase of coverage, Dainik Jagran has improved in coverage of news whereas the space given to photographs was comparatively less.

**Table: 6.18**

**PLACEMENT OF NEWS/STORIES/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) DURING THE THIRD PHASE (P-III) OF THE AGITATION, FARMERS SIT-IN AT BOAT CLUB, NEW DELHI FROM OCTOBER 26 -NOVEMBER 1, 1988.**

Page	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News (in col cm.)	%	Photo (in col cm.)	%	Total (in col cm.)	%	News (in col cm.)	%	Photo(i n col cm.)	%	Total(in col cm.)	%
Front Page	1088	38.09	458	16.05	1546.5	54.14	1196	39.55	371	12.26	1576	51.81
Inside Page	1380	48.31	847	29.65	2227	77.96	1616.5	53.45	783.5	25.90	2400	79.36
Back Page	105.5	3.69	—	—	105.5	3.96	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	2573.5	8.76	1305.5	4.44	3878	13.20	2813	7.25	1154.5	2.97	3967.5	10.22

Comparative analysis of **Amar Ujala** and Dainik Jagran in terms of placement of news/photographs during the third phase of **BKU** agitation indicates that the overall coverage of Amar Ujala was better than that of Dainik Jagran. The front page coverage given by Amar Ujala was 1,546.5 col cm. (54.14%), out of which 1,088 col cm. (38.09%) was news and 458 col cm. (16.05%) was photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran the total coverage on the front page was 1,576 col cm. out of which 1,196 col. cm. (39.55%) was news and 370 col. cm. (12.26%) was photographs. Here, it is clear that in terms of news **Dainik Jagran** did better than Amar Ujala on the front page, but, in terms of photographs Amar Ujala was much ahead. In the inside pages coverage, Dainik Jagran did better than Amar Ujala. It gave total 2,400 col cm. (79.36%) space, out of which 1,616.5 col cm. (53.45%) was news and 783.5 col cm. (25.90%) was photographs. In case of Amar Ujala, the total coverage was 2,227 col cm. (77.96%), out of which **48.31%** was news and 29.65% was photographs. Here, again, Dainik Jagran had done better in news coverage, but, lagged behind in coverage of photographs. The back page coverage of Amar Ujala was poor, but, better than Dainik Jagran which didn't cover anything at all. Amar Ujala gave only 3.96% news at the back page.

## 6.6 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THIRD PHASE (P-III):

The comparative analysis of the third phase of the agitation in qualitative terms indicate that overall coverage of Amar Ujala was much better than that of Dainik Jagran both in news and photographs category. The presentation and projection of the news and photographs of Amar Ujala was also better than that of Dainik Jagran. The data above clearly indicates that Amar Ujala increased its space on photographs which was much more than that of Dainik Jagran. However, in this phase of coverage, Dainik Jagran has improved in coverage of news in comparison to other two phases, but, lost to Amar Ujala in space given to photographs.



However, the main lead which **Amar Ujala** took over Dainik Jagran was its highest coverage category, i.e. on October 31, (17%), October 27, (15.66%) and October 29, (14.21%). On all these three days, the paper gave Editorials on BKU agitation. They were pro-farmer and highlighted the basic problems being faced by the farmers. The Amar Ujala raised the issues of farming community prominently and effectively. All the main lead stories during these days were also on the BKU agitation. This made all the difference in favour of Amar Ujala. On the other hand, out of the two Editorials published in Dainik Jagran on October 28 and October 31, one was in favour and the other one against BKU agitation and farmers. However, Dainik Jagran published some byline stories by its Correspondents.

In terms of placement of news also Amar Ujala was better placed than Dainik Jagran, especially in terms of photographs which were of better quality and the issue projected were well presented. The paper gave prominent space to news items pertaining to the BKU agitation. For example, the coverage given by Amar Ujala on October 31 highlighting the appeal of Tikait to the farmers to reach Boat Club in large strength was very appealing and the quality of coverage was also good. Overall, reporting of the Amar Ujala, covering events related to farmers in the district was also impressive.

## Phase IV

### 6.7 INTRODUCTION:

On May, 2,'89, an extremely beautiful Muslim girl Naiyma who was married only a few months earlier, was abducted at midnight by seven rifle wielding men from her house in village Sikri in Muzaffarnagar district. Naiyma's mother visited the police station for two months and requested the authorities to trace her daughter, but, due to some political pressure the police didn't take any action in this case. At last, the harassed mother of Naiyma, Mrs. Jamila, met Chaudhary Mahender Singh Tikati and requested him to take up her cause. Her case was discussed at the BKU monthly Panchayat on July 17,'89 and it was decided to 'gherao' Bhopa police station from August 2 until Naiyma was recovered. The BKU held a Panchayat on the banks of Ganga Canal near Bhopa police station on August 2,'89. It demanded immediate arrest of Naiyma's kidnappers, one of them a village pradhan (headman) whose hand was suspected in the abduction and an enquiry into the case by a judge of the Supreme Court. Thousands of farmers surged ahead towards the police station to lay a siege, the police and the PAC resorted to lathicharge, but, were helpless in front of the big gathering of farmers. Apprehending trouble, the police opened fire upon the farmers, about 200 farmers and 20 policemen were injured. In the confusion and while being chased some farmers jumped into the canal and while trying to swim across the canal two of them were drowned. Farmers field leaving behind their tractors, three of these tractors were pushed by policemen in the canal as retaliation against the farmers.

Tikait came to learn about the incident and on the morning of August 3,'89 and he immediately reached the spot. He constituted a five-member committee to negotiate with the district administration on the issue arising out of the August 2 firing and lathi-charge on the farmers. The Committee demanded the suspension of the police officer who had ordered the

firing and unconditional release of the arrested farmers. It was also decided to start the agitation at Bhopa. The first Jatha of 320 farmers courted arrest amidst chanting of mantras, offering of *tilak* and *arti* by womenfolk. The district administration was in a tight spot. It ordered a CID inquiry in the firing incident and there was a frantic search of Naiyma and her kidnappers. In a panic of getting caught by the police, the abductors of Naiyma murdered her. The dead body was found in the jungle of a nearby village on August 10. More than one lakh farmers, Hindus and Muslims, buried the body of Naiyma wrapped in a BKU flag and it was a perfect scene of communal harmony when thousands of Muslims and Hindus shouldered her cortege amidst chanting of 'Allah-O-Akbar, Har Har Mahadev' on August 11, '89.

The district administration expected that it would be the end of the BKU agitation, but, the BKU leaders thought otherwise. They continued the 15-day dharna further and on August 17, about three lakh farmers turned up in response to the call of BKU and 1760 of them courted arrest. The "Jail bhara" movement picked up and even women and children came forward to court arrest. More than 100 farmers courted arrest, every day. However, in between the 'jail bharao' movement, some difference of opinion arose between the two groups of farmers regarding conducting the agitation and some farmers backed out from the agitation. Realising the gravity of the situation, Tikait took three sacred oaths. One, he would immolate himself, if farmers failed to turn-up to court arrest during the 'Jail bharao' movement. Second, he would sleep on the ground until government redeemed farmer's self respect, i.e. tractors submerged in the canal was to be replaced on government expense and, lastly, he would not eat from the 'thali' (brass plate) until the government agreed to the BKU's long standing demands and reached an amicable agreement with the Union. This action of Tikait created immediate reaction and more and more farmers from far and wide started coming and courting arrest. About 3000 farmers courted arrest everyday during last week of August and more than 10,000 in September 1, and, later in the first week of

September thousands of them courted arrest. The government was eager to strike a settlement with the farmers.

Tikait presented his 14-point charter of demands which along with other demands asked for writing off all agricultural loans, irrigation and power dues of the past two and half years, right to cut trees grown on farm land, suspension of the police officer -in-charge of the Bhopa police station, award of compensation to farmers whose tractors had been pushed into the Ganga canal by policemen and release of all farmers arrested during the movement. Acceptance of these demands would put an additional burden of more than 450 crores on the State exchequer. The, then, Chief Minister, of U.P, Shri N.D. Tewari decided to accept the demands of the farmers and the settlement was reached at between the representative of the Government, Narender Singh, State Power Minister and the representative of BKU and its General Secretary, Harpal Singh. The nine demands acceded to by the State Government were as follows:

1. All criminal cases filed against the farmers barring those of arson and violence **since '88** would be withdrawn;
2. The two year period of '87 and '88 would be declared as drought affected period in Western U.P. Farmers would be exempted from paying electric bills and land revenue for these years;
3. A state level committee would be set up by the government which would include BKU representatives also to submit its report on the steps to be taken to recover the dues pending from the period of farmers movement till August 31, '89.

4. Planning new power connections in a systematic manner and take help of the BKU to strengthen the power distribution system.
5. The BKU would appeal to the farmers to deposit all payable taxes, including electricity bills from September,'89 onwards as usual.
6. The state Government would take action regarding the problems of women, specially for making proper arrangements for lavatories in villages.
7. The Government would expedite inquiries arising out of complaints made by the BKU against police officers connected with the Bhopa incident. It would also recommend an inquiry by the **Naiyma** kidnapping and murder case.
8. The Chief Minister and the BKU Chaudhary would meet every third month to sort out the problems and other demands of the farmers.
9. Farmers whose tractors were drowned in the Ganga Canal would be given new tractors.

This term of agreement was agreed upon by both the sides, i.e. the BKU and the State Government and the Minister of Power, U. P. Mr. Narender Singh made a public announcement by accepting the demands in a meeting of farmers on September 10. He also handed over a cheque of Rs three lakhs to the mother of Naiyama. Thus, the agitation started by the intervention of the BKU in a case of kidnapping of a Muslim girl culminated into a movement which led to the unity of Farmers, Hindus and Muslims for a just cause and resulted into a major farmers agitation which continued for 39 days. The farmers got some of

their demands accepted for which they were agitating for years. In his usual characteristic style, Tikait declared in the farmers Panchayat that the Bhopa agitation had been suspended, but, the Non-Cooperation movement would continue because the Government had accepted only limited demands of the farmers.

#### Content Analysis:

It is clear from the table (6.19) that the highest coverage provided by **Amar Ujala** to the **BKU** agitation during phase-IV was on August 8, '89. The total space devoted on this day to **BKU** was 537 col cm. (13.16%), out of which 414 col cm. (10.15%) was news and the remaining 123 col cm. (3.01%) photographs. On the front page of the newspaper there were four news items including a banner headline, all from Bhopa (**Muzaffarnagar**). On page six of the issue, there were four news items, all from Bhopa dateline and by AU Correspondents. The three photographs on the page were by AU Staff Photographer. Page six was normally a Sports page, but, **BKU** agitation news was adjusted on this page. On page eight of the newspaper, the total coverage given to the agitation measured to 148 col cm. The second best coverage was on August 13 when the newspaper had 12 pages issue instead of the normal 10 pages. On the front page, there were two news items, both from Bhopa and by AU Correspondent and one photograph by AU Staff photographer, **Sunil Chaya**. On page nine, there were three news items, all from dateline Bhopa and by AU Staff Correspondents and there were three photographs, all from AU Staff Photographers. In the following discussion, we shall deliberate upon the focus of news in terms of individuals, people, organisations and their projection in the media.

**Table: 6.19**

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION)  
IN THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV) OF BKU AGITATION AT BHOPA, MUZAFFARNAGAR  
FROM AUGUST 8 - SEP 4, '89.

<b>Date</b>	<b>News (in col. cm)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Photos (in col. cm)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total (in col. cm)</b>	<b>%</b>
Aug 8	414	10.15	123	3.01	537	13.16
Aug 12	207.5	5.08	94.5	2.32	302	7.04
Aug 13 (12 Pages)	300	6.12	195	3.98	495	10.11
Aug 17	164.5	4.03	177	4.34	341.5	8.37
Aug 27	167	4.09	58	1.42	225	5.51
Sep 3 (12 Pages)	115.5	2.35	105	2.15	220.5	4.50
Sep 4	126	3.09	80	1.96	206	5.05
Total	1494.5	4.95	832.5	2.76	2327	<b>7.71</b>

There is no doubt that the media organisations need to meet the requirements of a bureaucratic system that provides regular accounts which serve as the raw material for journalists. For example, since reporters cannot be present at all the crime scenes, they mostly rely upon record-keeping apparatus of police for crime news (Hall, 1981; Chibnall, 1981). It indicates towards a direct relation between the certainty of news and the system of record, according to Lippman (in Graber, 1994). In his (ibid.) view, news which requires trouble to be obtained is beyond the resources of a daily press. Various pressures behind routinisation are: the economy of noting only stereotyped phase of situation; difficulty of finding journalists who can see what they have not learned to see; difficulty of finding sufficient space; economic necessity of catching readers' attention and economic risk involved in not

doing so; and offending reader with clumsy news. "The press can normally record only what has been recorded for it by the working of institutions" (*ibid.* p. 42).

This process of news gathering and selection indicate towards economic constraints, timeliness, deadlines, story quotas which are some of the factors obstructing long procedures and moulding a news organisation into a system of routinisation because it needs less journalistic efforts (Fishman, 1980). It omits those events which take place outside the purview of reporters. The news net is cast only over certain locales and sources, assuming that people are interested only in specific people, organisations, issues, and activities (Tuchman, 1978b). It obviously implies that ordinary people have only a remote chance of being caught in the news net and they do not have access to the media. It is mainly the 'knowns' who **find** place in the news. 'Unknowns' like protesters, victims, voters, and many other categories of people get into the media only when involved in unusual activities or in natural disorders and calamities (Gans, 1979).



**Table: 6.20**

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION) DURING THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV) OF BKU AGITATION AT BHOPA, MUZAFFARNAGAR IN AUGUST - SEPTEMBER/89.

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	509	17.82	222.5	7.79	731.5	25.61
Inside Page	928	32.49	656	22.96	1584	55.46
Back Page	11.5	0.40	—	—	11.5	0.40
Total	1494.5	4.95	832.5	2.76	2327	7.71

In the case of coverage of farmer's movement in Western U.P, the two newspapers under study realised the importance of the ongoing movement and deputed special representatives in rural areas to cover the agitations of the farmers. As the interviews with the journalists indicate, Amar Ujala deputed Correspondents with rural background who developed an affinity with the agitating farmers and gave them better coverage because they were aware of the problems being faced by the farmers. But, this factor was not really working in case of the journalists of Dainik Jagran who were mostly from urban backgrounds. However, the managements of both the newspapers were convinced that the agitation should get coverage as an important event.

Bernard Roshco in his book "News making" (p-53-54) explains that interpretation and objectivity are not incompatible in either natural or social science, where the researcher must offer explicit conclusions, based upon objectively derived and evaluated evidence, as to what his data demonstrate. Interpretation and objectivity need not, therefore , be incompatible in news reporting - so long as there is no logical distinction between the nature of the objectivity

required in interpretive or investigative news coverage and the objectivity employed for researching and reporting in other fields of knowledge. True, reportorial objectivity is practiced under different conditions from the objectivity of, for example, laboratory scientists. But, the logical criteria for evaluating the objectivity of a reporter's or a scientists role-performance can be the same.

Table: 6.21

**TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV) OF BKU AGITATION AT BHOPA. DISTRICT MUZAFFARNAGAR IN AUGUST - SEPTEMBER, '89.**

Date	News	%	Photos	%	Total	%
Aug 8	219.5	5.08	219	5.07	438.5	10.15
Aug 12	130.5	3.02	36	0.83	166.5	3.85
Aug 13	156.5	3.62	60	1.39	216.5	5.01
Aug 17	248	5.74	35	0.81	283	6.55
Aug 27 (12 Pages)	181	3.49			181	3.49
Sep 3	40.5	0.93	-	-	40.5	0.93
Sep 4	84.5	1.96	14	0.32	98.5	2.28
Total	1060.5	2.73	364	0.94	1424.5	3.67

The core of the concern with the unobjectivity of interpretation in reporting is that if a reporter supplements objective attribution with interpretive information of his own selection, he will inevitably prefer data that reflect his personal biases. Whatever the way objectivity is

defined and practiced, bias is inevitable - in scientific research as well as in journalistic reporting. Much of the difficulty in dealing with the question of objective reporting lies in the confusion between bias and objectivity. As Rosten showed, reporters are biased by their perception of their editors' preferences as much as by their own life histories. For newsmen, the essence of the problem lies in unrecognized, hence uncorrected, bias, as the American philosopher, educator, and historian, William Ernest Hocking (1873-1966), pointed out :  
“**Like** the rest of mankind, editors are presumably biased, by personal experience and training, also by their professional habits. But there are special biases to which a large part of the contemporary press is liable because of its character (i) as a commercial enterprise whose terms of success are set by the business management, in view of the existing economy and the state of the public mind; (ii) as a large-scale enterprise interlocking both in finance and in personnel with the big industry of the nation; (iii) as an owner's enterprise in which much editorial ability is retained in the **hire-and-fire** relation of dependence; and (iv) as a competitive enterprise which through its growth and concentration tends to squeeze out of the productive picture many potential contributors of lesser stature or divergent trend.

As Elmer Davis and other journalistic proponents of interpretation have acknowledged, the reporter's opportunity to slant news increases with his freedom to interpret. Yet there is no reason for assuming that the freedom to interpret may not serve to free the reporter from the biases of sources, editors, and publishers at least as much as they **permit** him to give freer play to his own. Objectivity resides not in the quality of the product but in the mode of the performance. Objectivity is a value and therefore requires an ethical commitment to perform objectively; it is a method and therefore requires the employment of techniques that serve as a means to other ends. In news reporting as well as scientific

research, therefore, it is objective to disprove but unobjective to falsify. In both types of endeavour, it is objective to introduce all the applicable and verifiable data known to be available. These judgments as to relevance and validity can be objectively refuted. Though it is not objective to omit relevant data deliberately or to publish inaccuracies knowingly, one is not guilty of being unobjectively, ipso factor, as a result of unwittingly presenting evidence that is incomplete or inaccurate. If being in error automatically indicated lack of objectivity, a scientist would remain objective only so long as his hypotheses did not happen to be disproved, which means there could be no objective standards of objectivity, hence no possibility of objectivity.

Table; 6.22

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) DURING THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV) OF BKU AGITATION AT BHOPA MUZAFFARNAGAR IN AUGUST - SEPTEMBER/89.

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	457.5	15.12	197	6.50	654	21.62
Inside Page	603	19.94	167	5.52	770	25.46
Back Page	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1060.5	2.73	364	0.94	1424.5	3.67

Coming back to the coverage part, the above table shows the placement of news/photographs in Dainik Jagran (Meerut Edition) during the fourth phase of BKU agitation at Bhopa. In the first **category**, i.e. the front page coverage, the paper gave total 654 col cm. (21.62%) space to the agitation, out of which 457.5 col cm. was news which was (15.12%) and 197 col cm. (6.50%) was photograph. In the inside pages of the newspaper, the newspaper

gave a total coverage of 770 col cm. (25.46%), out of which 603 col cm. (19.94%) was news and 167 col cm. (5.52%) was photographs. There was no coverage on the back page at all. So, it was very clear that the highest coverage was in the inside pages 25.46% whereas in terms of news coverage, highest coverage was given by inside pages, i.e. 19.94%, but, in terms of photograph front page coverage was better, i.e. 6.50%. The coverage on the last page was disappointing. We shall, once again, switch over to the theoretical discussion on objectivity of news.

Logically, there is as much validity in equating interpretation with objectivity as in considering the pairing of contradictory assertions to be objective. In either case, the reporting may be objective or not, depending upon the reporter. In the latter case, however, the effort is more visible. Under the conditions of daily news-gathering, it is difficult for a reporter to demonstrate ethical intent and valid judgment if he incorporates into his story additional data that were selected outside the criteria that constitute the ideology of objective reporting. Objective impartiality is much more easily demonstrated, first to the editor and then to the audience. For most reporters, it is safer, as well as easier, to follow the time-honoured norms of noninterpretive reporting. In most cases, it is also the only mode of role-performance that editors allow; and, given the media's demands upon their reporters in carrying out daily assignments, it is often the only feasible mode of role-performance.

Just as institutional dilemmas opened the door to interpretive reporting, institutional requirements cause most reporting still to be conducted within the restrictions imposed by the traditional definition of reportorial objectivity. Herbert Gans, who has studied various news-gathering organizations, has pointed out that the traditional definition accommodates news-gathering procedures to the prevailing institutional needs of the mass media:

"Viable substitutes for objectivity (that is, objective acquaintance-with) can be

formulated, but they require reporters and editors far more knowledgeable — able to generalize about and evaluate the data they gather — and fewer generalists — with more time to gather and report the news — which will raise the cost of the news considerably. Until the audience or someone else (e.g., the government) is willing to provide the necessary funds, however, we will have to rely on relatively low-cost news, and for this reason alone objectivity is likely to remain an important guiding principle of journalistic method,".

**Table: 6.23**

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION)  
DURING THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV) OF BKU AGITATION AT BHOPA, MUZAFFARNAGAR IN AUGUST - **SEPTEMBER, '89.**

Date	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Aug 8	414	10.15	123	3.01	<b>537</b>	<b>13.16</b>	<b>219.5</b>	5.08	219	5.07	<b>438.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Aug 12	207.5	5.08	94.5	2.31	302	7.40	130.5	3.02	36	0.83	166.5	3.85
Aug 13 (12 Pages)	300	6.13	195	3.98	495	10.11	156.5	3.62	60	1.39	216.5	5.01
Aug 17	164.5	4.03	177	4.34	341.5	8.37	248	5.74	35	0.81	283	6.55
Aug 27	167	4.09	58	1.42	225	5.51	181	3.49	—	—	181	3.49
Sep 3 (12 Pages)	115.5	2.35	105	2.15	220.5	4.50	4.50	0.93			4.50	0.93
Sep 4	126	3.09	80	1.96	206	5.05	84.5	1.96	14	0.32	98.5	2.28
Total	1494.5	4.95	832.5	2.76	2327	7.71	1060.5	2.73	364	0.94	1424.5	3.67

Analyzing the total coverage of **BKU** news/photographs in **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** (Meerut Edition) during the fourth phase of **BKU** agitation (P-IV) at Bhopa in Muzaffarnagar, it was very clear that the coverage of **Amar Ujala** was much better than that of **Dainik Jagran** both in terms of news as well as photographs. In fact, the coverage in **Amar Ujala** was double than that of **Dainik Jagran** in this phase. **Amar Ujala** provided a total coverage of 2,327 col cm. (7.71%) out of which 1,495.5 col cm. (4.95%) was news and 832.5 col cm. (2.76%) was photographs whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran**, the total coverage given by the newspaper was 1,424.5 col cm. (3.67%), out of which 1,060.5 col cm. (2.73%) was news and 364 col cm. (0.94%) was photographs. Comparing the day-to-day coverage **find** that the highest coverage given by both the newspapers was on August 8, when **Amar Ujala** devoted **13.16%** total coverage, out of which 10.15% was news and 3.01% was photograph whereas **Dainik Jagran** provided total coverage, of 10.15%, out of which 5.08% was news and 5.07% was photographs. The news coverage of **Amar Ujala** was just double that that of **Dainik Jagran**, but, **Dainik Jargran** did better in photograph coverage. The second best category for **Amar Ujala** was on August 11 when the newspaper gave 10.11% total coverage to the agitation, out of which 300 col cm. (6.13%) was news and 195 col cm. (3.98%) was photographs whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran** the second best was on August **17** when the paper gave a total coverage of 6.55 col cm., 5.74% was news and 0.81% was photograph. Here, we find that although **Dainik Jagran** did comparatively better in news, its photograph coverage was very low. When we compare the lowest coverage of both the newspapers, we



find that September 3 was a common day for both the paper. **Amar Ujala** gave the lowest space of 4.50%, out of which 2.35 per cent was news and 2.15% was photographs whereas Dainik Jagran gave only 0.93% coverage only in terms of news which was extremely low. So, comparing day wise as well as in total, Dainik Jagran stands nowhere in comparison to Amar Ujala. In fact, some good stories were done for Dainik Jagran, but, they were not given better placement and were dumped in inside pages. None of the newspaper gave any editorial during this phase of agitation in the time frame of the study.

Table: 6.24

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PLACEMENT OF **NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS** OF AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITIONS)  
DURING THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV) BY BKU AGITATION AT BHOPA, MUZAFFARNAGAR IN AUGUST - **SEPTEMBER, '89.**

Page	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Front Page	509	17.82	222.5	7.79	731.5	25.61	457.5	15.12	197	6.50	654	21.62
Inside Page	928	32.49	656	22.96	1584	55.46	603	19.94	167	5.52	770	25.46
Back Page	<b>11.5</b>	0.40	—	—	11.5	0.40	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1494.5	4.95	832.5	2.76	2327	7.71	1060.5	2.73	364	0.94	1424.5	3.67

Comparing the analysis of placement of news/photographs in **Amar Ujala** and Dainik Jagran (Meerut Editions) during the fourth phase (P-IV) of the **BKU** agitation, we found that on the front page coverage, Amar Ujala provided more space 25.61% out of which 17.82% was news and 7.79% was photographs in comparison to Dainik **Jagran's** total coverage on the front page 21.62%, out of which 15.12% was news and 6.50% was photographs. In case of inside pages, the total space provided by Amar Ujala devoted total 55.46% space, out of which 32.49% was news and 22.96% was photographs in comparison to the total coverage of 25.46% of Dainik Jagran, out of which 19.94% was news and 5.52% was photographs. In case of the back page coverage, both the newspapers gave a poor show, Amar Ujala being slightly better by giving 0.40% space to news with no photographs whereas Dainik Jagran giving no space at all.

#### 6.8 **QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTH PHASE (P-IV):**

During the fourth phase, Amar Ujala gave a better coverage than Dainik Jagran both in terms of news and photographs. In fact, Amar Ujala devoted just double the space than that of Dainik Jagran. The field reporters of Amar Ujala wrote special articles highlighting the unity amongst the Hindu and Muslim farmers. The paper gave impressive full page coverage of the **BKU** agitation in the Sunday supplement of the newspaper. Amar Ujala also gave wide coverage to the incidents of atrocities of the police upon the farmers by opening **fire** and forcing the farmers to dive in the canal which led to the death of few farmers by drowning.

Although Dainik Jagran also provided overall good coverage. But, again, proper planning in presentation of news was lacking. The correspondents of the paper gave good stories but they were not given prime place. The reception and treatment of the stories on the desk seems to be weak in DJ. The photographs given by DainikJagran was also not as good as that of Amar Ujala. There was no balance of stories in terms of news and photographs

presentation.

Amar Ujala's presentation of stories and their placement was better than DainikJagran. The basic issues like the kidnapping of **Naiyma**, Hindu - Muslim unity, overwhelming response of the farmers and labourers of all communities were the main highlights of the coverage of Amar Ujala. The paper used its broad network spread in the rural areas to project the **abovementioned** issues. However, Dainik Jagran gave more byline stories, **but**, its coverage was not focused. None of the papers wrote any editorial on the days selected for analysis during this phase of agitation.

## Phase V

### 6.9 INTRODUCTION:

The unity and 'sense of purpose' amongst the farmers of Western U.P. was evident during the course of various BKU agitations from March, '87 to the years '89 when the General Elections were held in the country. The main reason for the success of the BKU movements was because the farmers of the region were politically conscious and enlightened about their rights. This was because of the untiring efforts of the visionary leader of the farmers, late Chaudhary Charan Singh, who had a stronghold on the entire farming community. These farmers were, now, the BKU activists. Since independence, in all the elections, the region of Western U.P. had voted for the Lok Dal, Chaudhary Charan Singh's party. However, in '89 elections, in the first elections after the demise of Charan Singh, his son, Ajit Singh, a Janta Dal leader, was wooing for the vote bank of his father. The result of this election proved many political analysts wrong who had predicted that the formation of BKU would disturb the political equation of the region and the vote of farmers would be divided. In fact, the farmers who were apolitical on the platform of BKU had already made up their minds to extend overwhelming support to Ajit Singh and Janta Dal. Of the 85 parliamentary seats in Uttar Pradesh, 31 came under the BKU dominated districts and in almost all of them, the candidates of Janta Dal won. Same was the case in the 82 Assembly segments falling within these Parliamentary constituencies.

The farmers had supported the Janta Dal and one of its important leaders, Ajit Singh, with great expectations. They waited patiently for almost a year, hoping that the new Government would take positive action towards their demands. But, there was no response from the New Chief Minister of U.P. Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav. The political commentators felt that this delay was deliberate and well calculated. They saw in it a show-

down between the then Chief Minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav and the Union Industries Minister, Ajit Singh. The former saw the latter as his most potent rival in Janta Dal politics. His policy was to neglect the **BKU**, create resentment amongst the supporters of Ajit Singh and put a check on the growing stature of Ajit Singh who had already emerged as an alternative in this region. Mulayam Singh Yadav wanted to engage Ajit Singh in his own area, so that he gets a free hand in manipulating the situation to his advantage. He had also not deliberately allotted any berth in his cabinet to numerous MLA's of the **BKU-dominated** region who were the supporters of Ajit Singh. This political tussle was very clear to the BKU activist farmers. They lost patience and on June 17 Panchayat of the BKU, a decision was taken to hold a Panchayat at Lucknow on July 15, '90. The farmers of Eastern U.P. would also participate in this panchayat which would be a one-day affair, but, may be extended.

Mahander Singh Tikait, the BKU Chief, received a letter from the Chief Minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav in which he elaborated upon the steps his government had taken for the welfare of the farmers and requested that the BKU should keep patience for some more time and cancel its Lucknow Panchayat. But, Tikait, made it very clear to the Chief Minister that the programme of BKU Panchayat at Lucknow was final and can't be changed. The Government viewed the Panchayat as a law and order problem and decided to handle it strictly. It refused permission to BKU for holding a Panchayat at **Beghum Hazrat Mahal Park** in Lucknow. Throughout the state, on July 13, 14, district administration of various districts, had a tough time in dealing with the farmers boarding trains at different railway stations for Lucknow. In response to the call of BKU, farmers from every nook and corner of the State had begun moving for Lucknow in jathas, by rail and road. Police force was used in detaining them. The dharnas of the farmers on railway lines and on roads created chaotic traffic conditions on all routes in the state. It resulted in a series of clashes between the police and the BKU activists. The first such incident occurred at Moradabad on July 13 when 1,500

farmers had direct confrontation with the police. They were detained in jail. Still 2,000 farmers were successful in reaching Lucknow, but, they were arrested on the station itself.

On July, 14, Tikait along with about 200 BKU activists started from his native village, Sisuoli for Lucknow. His convey of 50 buses and 40 other vehicles was allowed to travel through the BKU dominated districts of **Muzaffarnagar**, Meerut, Muradabad, **Rampur** and Bareilly during day time. Early morning, on July 15, near Fatheganj in Bareilly district, the police arrested Tikait and some of his prominent BKU activists and lodged them in jails. The news of Tikait's arrest spread fast and had an electrifying impression on the farmers in Western, as well as, Eastern U.P. Farmers started moving to Lucknow in isolated groups, silently. In order to fulfill the deep resolve of the farmers of the state to conduct the panchayat at Lucknow on July 15. Ten dare-devil BKU youths of Budaun district of Eastern U.P. managed to reach the Hazrat **Beghum** Mahal Park and successfully conducted the panchayat under the banner of BKU flag. They were, immediately, whisked away to jail. Similarly, another group of farmers mostly from Eastern districts reached the Vidhan Sabha by escape routes to express their resentment against the administration. They were also arrested and put in jail. Although, the Lucknow Panchayat effort was nipped in the bud and the agitation was crushed even before it began on July 15 by the iron hand of the U.P. State machinery, but, it left a permanent scar on the minds of the farmers of Western Uttar Pradesh, who were totally antagonized and they were alienated from **Mulayam** Singh Yadav, one of the many leaders nurtured and patronized by late Chaudhary Charan Singh during his lifetime.

A glaring incident of July 17 clearly demonstrated the brutal attitude of the police. A police convoy was passing through Bhabisa village in **Muzaffarnagar** district on Budhana Khatauli road. The farmers were holding Panchayat in the village school compound to discuss irregularities in land consolidation cases in the village. On seeing the police convey,

some village boys, raised road blockade which became an excuse for the police to open fire on the Panchayat. Many farmers were injured and one young farmer, Subhash,, died on the spot. After two hours, a Police contingent of 300 constables, again, appeared in the village. They entered the houses of the farmers and mercilessly bashed up the young and old including women. A woman who had delivered a child few hours ago was severely beaten and the new-born thrown on the floor. Women were chased around and molested. This incident and many more in different parts of Western U.P. created permanent resentment against Mulayam Singh Yadav who was already in the bad books of the farmers in this region due to his opposition to Ajit Singh. To assuage the wounded pride of the farmers, Central leaders including Ajit Singh visited Bhabisa and other places of police excesses and assured the aggrieved of strict action against the erring police officials who ordered these police firings.

Tikait's arrest and the repressive measures, Mulayam Singh Yadav had unleashed against farmers flared up a political crisis in the state. The **BKU** farmers and their sympathizers made a violent protest against the excesses and arrests. A political crisis arose within the JD when 56 of the JD MLAs through a joint memorandum drew the attention of the party Chief, Shri S R **Bomma**i towards the Chief Minister's high-handedness in dealing with the farmers. They also made it clear that all this was done deliberately to let down Ajit Singh in front of his supporters. They pleaded that either the Chief Minister should resign or they would submit resignations from their respective Assembly seats. Mulayam Singh Yadav suffered a major crisis to his Government which was reduced to a minority by withdrawal of support from 56 MLAs mostly from Western U.P. However, at the last minute. Mr. V.P. Singh and Ajit Singh exercised their influence in bringing back home the break-away group of JD Legislators. Tikait was released from jail along with the other farmers on July 21.



## Content Analysis:

The analysis of total coverage of **BKU** news/photographs in **Amar Ujala** during the fifth phase of Lucknow Panchayat agitation as given in table (6.25) indicates that the newspaper had given the largest coverage to BKU on January 20. On the front page, there were three news items, one each from Lucknow, Meerut and New Delhi datelines, two of them by AU Correspondents and one by PTI & Varta. On page eight, there were two news items. On page nine, there was a total news coverage measuring 66 col cm. with two news items, one each from Muzaffarnagar and Budhana by AU Local Correspondents. On page 12, i.e. the back page, there were four photographs and three news items. The second best coverage was on July 19. On the front page, the total coverage was 185.5 col cm., out of which 169.5 col cm. was news and 16 col cm. a cartoon which shall be included in the photo section. The cartoon showing a jawan and a kisan, source not mentioned. There were six news items, four of them from Lucknow dateline, two by AU Correspondents and two from Varta, one news each from Meerut and Barielly by AU Local Correspondents. On page eight, there was 72 col cm. coverage which consisted of three carry forward items from page one. On **page-11**, there was a news item measuring 21 col cm. from Meerut, by AU Correspondent. On **page-12**, there was a total coverage of 253 col cm., out of which 165 col cm. was news and remaining 88 col cm. was photographs. There were **five** photographs, all by AU Staff Photographs and there were news items, all from dateline Meerut and by AU Correspondents.

After thorough discussion on various facets of media coverage of the four phases of BKU farmer's movement, I shall be, now, analysing the role of village panchayats (Jats Khaps) and its Chaudhary in acting as a catalyst in the process of spontaneous Communication with the community of the farmers in Western UP.

**Table: 6.25**

TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION)  
IN THE FIFTH PHASE (P-V) OF BKU AGITATION AT LUCKNOW PANCHAYAT FROM  
AUGUST 17-23/90.

Date	News	%	Photos	%	Total	%
July 17 (12 Pages)	206	4.21	27	0.55	233	4.76
July 18 (12 Pages)	140.5	2.86	46	0.94	186.5	3.80
July 19 (12 Pages)	427.5	8.73	105	2.12	531	10.85
July 20 (12 Pages)	420.5	8.59	119.5	2.44	54	<b>11.03</b>
July 21 (12 Pages)	466	9.52			466	9.52
July 22 (12 Pages)	371.5	7.59	57	<b>1.16</b>	428.5	8.75
July 23 (12 Pages)	380	7.76	<b>121</b>	2.47	501	10.23
Total	2412	7.04	4745	<b>1.38</b>	2886	8.42

Certain events are so obtrusive that they quickly become visible not only to newsmen but also to a large portion of the general population. Awareness of such happenings would spread without press coverage because they interrupt, immediately and unmistakably, a large

number of lives. Obvious examples of forceful intrusion upon public awareness are military assaults, natural disasters, public-service strikes, and large-scale accidents. Without a medium of mass communication, most other newsworthy occurrences would remain unknown, at least for a prolonged period, even though a good many people were eventually affected. For example, a disease may spread to epidemic proportions before it impinges upon the awareness of most of the uninfected, unless public-health officials warn the public, via the press or an equivalent means of spreading the news. The case in point is the BKU farmer's movement. Initially, the awareness picked up by word of mouth and through the local panchayats of the farmers, later on, however, the media took up their cause.

For most news to reach the public with relative immediacy requires institutional arrangements for enhancing its public visibility via the press. In most instances, newsmen's ability to "observe" (that is, become cognizant of) newsworthy events is a consequence of the way institutions are organized. Who and what attains visibility; how, when, and where it is achieved; why some institutions and individuals have it at will and others don't; the social consequences of having news making visibility or striving for it — all are vital aspects of the news making process. These tendencies were observed in case of the BKU movement in Western U.P, as the movement advanced in different stages and the participation of the farmers and other political and social organisations increased, the media took up the issue, effectively.

**Table: 6.26**

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA (MEERUT EDITION) DURING  
THE FIFTH PHASE OF BKU AGITATION (P-V) AT LUCKNOW PANCHAYAT FROM  
AUGUST 17-23/90.

Page	News (in col. cm)	%	Photos (in col. Cm)	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
Front Page	642	22.47	46	1.61	688	24.80
Inside Page	1222	42.78	192	4.74	1414	47.52
Back Page	528	19.18	236	8.26	784	27.45
Total	2412	7.04	474.5	1.38	2886	8.42

"Observability" and "visibility," when employed as sociological concepts, refer to social arrangements that facilitate or impede communication within a group. We are concerned here not with the exception, in terms of unexpected obtrusiveness, but with the rule, in terms of channels of communication. Sociologically, **observeability** and visibility represent a commonplace social condition: different members of a group have varying capacities for knowing what others in the group are thinking or doing and for letting others know what they are thinking and doing. Such communication of attitudes and behaviour is routinely transmitted in variety of ways, from holding a committee meeting to taking a public-opinion poll. One reason the concepts of social visibility and observability are valuable for purposes of sociological analysis is that the facility with which such communications are sent and received depends upon where the senders and receivers are located in the group's structure. Differences in social visibility and observability, growing out of differences in social position, link the sociology of news to a concern with social stratification, the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or categories of individuals. In his discussion of "reference groups," Merton has pointed out that stratification affects visibility

and observability within groups, which in turn affect the flow of communication within them, which in turn affects the exercise of authority by group of "differentials in communication" among group members hold for groups of all sizes and any activity, from a street gang to a national citizenry. He, therefore, deals with an issue significant for the sociology of news when he poses the following question: "Which mechanisms — which arrangements of the parts and processes of group structure — serve to meet these functional requirements of effective authority?" That part of his answer most relevant to this discussion is as follows:

Differentials in communication: One such mechanism, and not necessarily a mechanism planned for the purpose, is provided by the distinctive networks of communication in which the "authorities" in a group are typically engaged. This has been compactly described by Homans in two connected statements: "The higher a man's social rank, the larger will be the number of persons that originate interaction for him, either directly or through intermediaries." And "the higher a man's social rank, the larger the number of persons for whom he originates interaction, either directly or through intermediaries." The structure is generally so arranged that those in authority are at a nexus of two-way communication.

Merton drew on Homans to provide a theoretical basis for explaining why those holding higher rank in a social structure are likely to be more effective intragroup communicators, both as senders and receivers, than those of lower social rank. In turn, one can draw on Merton to explain why the press usually favours those occupying position of authority rather than those lower in the same hierarchy, as its routine sources and subjects of news stories. Adding another link to the argument, one can postulate as follows;

**Table: 6.27**

**TOTAL COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) IN THE FIFTH PHASE (P-V) OF BKU AGITATION AT LUCKNOW PANCHAYAT FROM AUGUST 17-23/90.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Photos</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>July 17</b> (12 Pages)	292	5.63	66	1.27	358	6.90
<b>July 18</b> (12 Pages)	257	5.95	32	0.74	289	6.69
<b>July 19</b> (12 Pages)	249	5.76	97	2.24	346	8.0
<b>July 20</b> (12 Pages)	231	5.35	101.5	2.35	332.5	7.70
<b>July 21</b> (12 Pages)	264	5.09			264	5.09
<b>July 22</b> (12 Pages)	236	4.55			236	4.55
<b>July 23</b> (12 Pages)	198	3.82			198	3.82
<b>Total</b>	1727	5.12	296.5	0.88	2023.5	6.0

"The higher an individual's rank in a social hierarchy, whether of an organization, institution, or community, (1) the more influential his own attitudes are likely to be on other members of the group; and (2) the more consequential his acts are likely to be for others. Therefore, the more likely it is that others, both outside and within the group, will want to know about his attitudes and actions rather than about those of other group members of lower

rank. In sum, Merton's discussion of how social structure affects communicability provides a theoretical basis for explaining why the press gravitate toward routine dependence upon certain news sources rather than others".

This discussion is relevant to the body of our present research in respect of the community of farmer's and their social organisation in terms of 'khaps' and their relationship with the leader i.e. Chaudhary Mahender Singh Tikait. So, in order to derive the point home, it is important to discuss the background of these social institutions.

Mahendra Singh Tikait, the BKU Chaudhry ('headman') was born in 1935 at village Sisauli in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh. "According to Sakha, a branch of the Kashyap clan ('gotra') of the Jats migrated to the present area from the ancestral village of Mehla in Gurgaon district in the Punjab (now Haryana), some time in the second half of the twelfth century. After crossing the river Yamuna they first settled near the present villages of Bhanera-Jat and Sisauli. These two villages were the first to be founded by this branch of the clan. Sisauli was founded in the last decade of the twelfth century and became the hereditary seat of the clan Chaudhry. From here the Jats of the Kashyap clan spread to neighbouring areas, and founded or conquered the villages which now comprise the khap ('clan area') Baliyan." The Chaudharyship of a khap panchayat is a hereditary position. The Chaudhry enjoys administrative, adjudicative and executive powers over the khap villages. The Chaudhary is held in high esteem and his decisions are binding on his people. At a panchayat meeting of the khap Baliyan held at Sisauli on May 12, 1941, a resolution was passed which said: "We will work with our body, heart and soul under the leadership of our Chaudhry for the good of our khap. Towards this end the Chaudhry has the right even to demand our lives". Thus the Chaudhry of a khap panchayat enjoys supreme powers. His **fiat** runs through all villages of the khap. "The khap Chaudhry does not possess any kind of

personal property — landed or otherwise — by virtue of his post as the hereditary headman of the clan".

Ch Mahendra Singh Tikait inherited the Chaudhryship of the khap Baliyan at the age of eight when his father Ch Chauhal Singh died in 1943. The Chaudhryship of the Baliyan khap had been vesting in his family for the last thirteen centuries. Ch Harpal Singh, Tikait's alter ego elaborates" that Tikait's has been the 'Chaudhry' family for 1350 years. That of course includes a few centuries in Haryana before they migrated to Sisauli".

Table: 6.28

PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) DURING THE FIFTH PHASE (P-V) OF THE BKU AGITATION AT LUCKNOW PANCHAYAT FROM JULY 17-23/90.

Page	News	%	Photos	%	Total	%
Front Page	575.5	19.03	123.5	4.08	699	23.11
Inside Page	1151.5	38.07	173	5.72	1324.5	43.79
Back Page	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1727	5.12	296.5	0.88	2023.5	6.0

The sobriquet “Tikait” added to the name of the Chaudhry of Baliyan khap is shrouded in mystery. Mr M.C. Pradhan, a noted authority on the politico-social system of the Jats of northern India has made no mention of it in his research work. Nor is there any reference to it in the Jat archives maintained at the village assembly hall of Shoron. During the gherao of the Divisional Commissioner's office in Meerut in Jab-Feb. 1988, a newsman enquired about if from the octogenarian Mukhtiari Devi, mother of Chaudhry Mahendra



Singh. She narrated an historical incident which appears to be quite authentic and which also throws light on the genealogy of the Baliyan Chaudhry. She said, 'A remote ancestor of Mahender Singh was very brave and chivalrous. Once Emperor Harshavardhana (AD 606-647) sought his khap militia help to conquer a neighbouring kingdom. Tikait's forebear inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy. Harshavardhana was very much impressed by the valour and bravery of the Baliyan Chaudhry. As a matter of royal favour and honour, Emperor Harshavardhana incised his right hand thumb and applied blood tika ('sacred mark') on the forehead of the Baliyan Chaudhry. Since then the sobriquet "Tikait" is used by the Chaudhry of the Baliyan khap. This fact lends support to the theory that the Jat khaps of northern India were very influential centres of political power. They enjoyed certain prerogatives in their internal administration and had the right to raise their own militia. The Jat khap archives at Shoron are replete with recorded evidence where the khap militia help was sought by emperors of northern India. As for example: "The sarv-khap panchayat assembled in 1584 S.B. [A.D. 1527] in Sisauli [khap Baliyan] to discuss the appeal for military help to Rana **Sangram** Singh — who was supported by Maharana **Kirti Mal** of Dholpur — against Babur's invasion. It decided to send 25000 soldiers for different khaps to fight under the military command of the Maharans of Dholpur'.

Mahender Singh Tikait, an illiterate and rustic farmer who was little known outside his Baliyan Khap before the BKU farmer's movement which picked up in March '87 became a celebrity overnight. During various phases of the movement, the newspapers highlighted the personality of Tikait and his photographs were there in all major newspapers **and** magazines. This made him an important figure and this image of importance was further sustained by the media. The journalists of all publications were always eager to meet and interview him and whosoever he met, whatever he said became news. This supports the logic of various commentators given above.

**Table: 6.29**

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COVERAGE OF BKU NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION)  
DURING FIFTH PHASE (P-V) OF BKU AGITATION AT LUCKNOW PANCHAYAT, JULY 17-23, '90.

Date	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
July 17	206	4.21	27	0.55	233	4.76	295	5.63	66	1.27	358	6.90
July 18	140.5	2.86	46	0.94	186.5	3.80	257	5.95	32	0.74	289	6.69
July 19	427.5	8.73	104	2.12	531	10.85	249	5.76	97	2.24	346	8.0
July 20	420.5	8.59	119.5	2.44	540	11.03	231	5.35	101.5	2.35	332.5	7.70
July 21	466	9.52	—	—	466	9.52	264	5.09	—	-	264	5.09
July 22	371.5	7.59	57	1.16	428.5	8.75	236	4.55	—	—	236	4.55
July 23	380	7.76	121	2.47	501	10.23	198	3.82	—	—	198	3.82
Total	2412	7.04	474.5	1.38	2886	8.42	1727	5.12	296.5	0.88	2023.5	6.0

The comparative analysis of the coverage of **BKU News/Photographs in Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran (Meerut Edition)** during the fifth phase of BKU agitation at Lucknow Panchayat clearly indicates that **Amar Ujala** gave a better coverage in all respects. The total coverage given by **Amar Ujala** was 2,886 col cm. (8.42%), out of which 2,412 col cm. (7.04%) was news and 474.5 col cm. (1.38%) was photographs whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran**, the total coverage was 2,023.5 col cm. (6%), out of which 1,727 col cm. (5.12%) was news and 296.5 col. cm. (0.88%) was photographs. **Amar Ujala** was much ahead both in news and photograph coverage. **Amar Ujala**, during all the seven days of coverage during the fifth phase published 12 pages in every issue instead of ten whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran** the paper gave six day's issues of 12 pages instead of normal ten. Accordingly, the calculations have been done. The highest coverage in **Amar Ujala** was 11.03% on July 20 whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran** it was 8% on July 19. The second highest for **Amar Ujala** was 10.85% on July 19 whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran** it was 7.70% on July 20. The highest in terms of news coverage was 9.52% in **Amar Ujala**, whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran** it was mere 5.95% on July 18. Likewise, in case of **Amar Ujala**, highest in terms of photographs was on 2.47% on July 23 whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran** it was 2.35 on July 20. The lowest coverage in **Amar Ujala** was 3.80% on July 18 and 4.76% on July 17, on the first two days of the fifth phase whereas in case of **Dainik Jagran**, it was 3.82% on July 23 and 4.55% on July 22, on the last two days of the fifth phase. However, during the fifth phase of BKU agitation both the papers gave one editorial each, **Amar Ujala** gave it on July 17 supporting the cause of the farmers and criticizing the Government, **Dainik Jagran** gave it the next day, i.e. on July 18 criticizing the farmers for creating chaos and supporting the state Government and UP Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav for handling the Lucknow Panchayat agitation of the farmers strictly. Some good stories of Mr. Omkar Chaudhary were again dubbed in inside pages by **Dainik Jagran**.

**Table: 6.30**

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PLACEMENT OF NEWS/PHOTOGRAPHS IN **AMAR UJALA** & DAINIK JAGRAN (MEERUT EDITION) DURING THE FIFTH PHASE (P-V) OF BKU AGITATION AT LUCKNOW PANCHAYAT, JULY 17-23, '90.

Page	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%	News	%	Photo	%	Total	%
Front Page	642	22.47	46	<b>161</b>	688	24.08	575.5	19.03	123.5	4.08	699	23.11
Inside Page	1222	42.78	192	4.74	1414	47.52	1151.5	38.07	173	5.72	1324.5	43.79
Back Page	548	19.18	236	8.26	784	27.45	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	2412	7.04	474.5	1.38	2886	8.42	1727	5.12	296.5	0.88	2023.5	6.0

The comparative analysis of the placement of News/Photographs of the fifth phase of BKU agitation of the two papers, **Amar Ujala** and Dainik Jagran clearly indicates that on each page and in both news and photographs coverage **Amar Ujala** had done better than Dainik Jagran. The front page coverage given by Amar Ujala was 688 col cm. (24.08%) out of which 642 col cm. (22.47%) was news and 46 col cm. (1.61%) was photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran, the total coverage was 699 col cm. (23.11%), out of which 575.5 col. cm. (19.03%) was news and 123.5 col. cm. (4.08%) was photographs. So, it was clear that overall and individually also (news and photographs) Amar Ujala did much better than Dainik Jagran. Comparing the coverage on inside pages, we find that Amar Ujala had devoted the total space of 1,414 col cm. (47.52%), out of which 1,222 col cm. (42.78%) was news and 192 col cm. (4.74%) was photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran, the total coverage was 1,324.5 col cm. (43.79%), out of which 1,151.5 col cm. (38.07%) was news and 173 col cm. (5.72%) was photographs. Here, in terms of, photographs, Dainik Jagran had done better than Amar Ujala. However, in the back page coverage, Amar Ujala gave a total coverage of 784 col cm. (27.45%), out of which 548 col cm. (19.18%) was news and 236 col cm. (8.26%) was photographs whereas Dainik Jagran had not given any coverage on the back pages.

#### 6.10 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FIFTH PHASE OF THE AGITATION:

The fifth phase of BKU farmers agitation was mainly concerned with the tussle between the, then, Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav and the leader of the farmers movement Mohender Singh Tikait. Mulayam Singh Yadav impressed upon Tikait, to call off the BKU Panchayat at Lucknow, but, Tikait declined to do so. The State government became repressive. Entire coverage in the two papers focused upon the theme of repression. In this phase also Amar Ujala was much ahead in BKU coverage, both in terms of news and photographs. Both the newspapers added two additional pages, making it 12 pages, in case of

Amar Ujala for all the seven days whereas Dainik Jagran published 12-pages issue for six days.

Amar Ujala , again, gave better exposure to BKU news in terms of presentation and placement. Both the papers gave one editorial each during this phase. Amar Ujala gave it on July 17, supporting the cause of the farmers and criticizing the Government, Dainik Jagran gave it on the next day, i.e. on July 18, criticizing the farmers for creating chaos and supporting the State government and the UP Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav for handling the Lucknow Panchayat agitation of the farmers strictly. This clearly indicated the stance of both the newspapers.

## OVERALL PHASE-WISE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE PHASES COVERAGE:

**Table: 6.31**

ANALYSIS OF PHASE-WISE TOTAL COVERAGE OF NEWS & PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN

Phase	Amar Ujala						Dainik Jagran					
	News (in col. Cm)	%	Photo	%	Total (in col. cm)	%	News (in col. cm)	%	Photo	%	Total (in col. cm)	%
P-I	756.5	2.65	200.5	0.70	957	3.35	279.5	0.92	98	0.32	377.5	1.24
P-II	3523	12	978	3.33	4501	15.33	3275.5	10.83	1431.5	4.73	4707	15.56
P-III	2573.5	8.76	1305.5	4.44	3879	13.20	2813	7.25	<b>1154.5</b>	2.97	3967.5	10.22
P-IV	1494.5	4.95	832.5	2.76	2327	7.71	1060.5	2.73	364	0.94	1424.5	3.67
P-V	2412	7.04	474.5	1.38	2886	8.42	1727	5.12	296.5	0.88	2023.5	6.0

The phase-wise coverage analysis of the two papers Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran reveals that during the Second Phase (P-II), i.e. Meerut dharna, both the papers contributed their best in totality. Dainik Jagran gave more coverage, in fact, this was the only phase in which Dainik Jagran was ahead of Amar Ujala in the total coverage. Dainik Jagran gave its best exposure to the BKU agitation both in news as well as photographs. The total coverage given by Dainik Jagran was 4,707 col cm. (15.56%), out of which 3,275.5 col cm. (10.83%) was news and 1,431.5 col cm. (4.73%) was photographs whereas in Amar Ujala the total space devoted to BKU was 4,501 col cm (15.33%), out of which 3,275.5 col cm (12%) was in news category and 978 col cm. (3.33%) was in photographs category. So it is clear that in total Dainik Jagran was ahead, but, in news coverage it was lagging behind. The second best coverage for Amar Ujala was the third phase (P-III), the Delhi Boat Club sit-in when the paper provided the total coverage of 3,879 col cm. (13.20%) space, out of which 2,573.5 col cm. (8.76%) was news and 1,305.5 col cm. (4.44%) was photographs whereas in case of Dainik Jagran also the second best coverage phase was the third phase when it gave a total coverage of 3,967.5 (10.22%), out of which 2,813 col cm. (7.25%) was news and 1,154.5 col cm. (2.97%) was photographs. So, in this phase Amar Ujala was much ahead both in news and photographs coverage and the overall coverage, but, it gave its best of all the phases in terms of photographs (4.44%). The third best phase for both the papers was the fifth (P-V) and the last phase. Here, again, Amar Ujala was much ahead of Dainik Jagran in news, photographs and overall coverage. Amar Ujala gave 8.42% coverage in total and 7.04% in news and 1.38% in photographs whereas Dainik Jagran gave 6% in total and 5.12% in news and 0.88% in photographs. The fourth phase (P-IV) was also common for both the papers. But, Amar Ujala was much ahead, in fact it gave double coverage than Dainik Jagran. Amar Ujala 7.71% total news, 4.95% news, 2.76% news and 0.94% photographs. The lowest coverage given by the two newspapers also was lowest for both. Amar Ujala, 3.35% total, 2.65% news and 0.70% photograph whereas Dainik Jagran, 1.24% total, 0.92% news and 0.32% photographs.



**Table: 6.32**

PHASE - WISE ANALYSIS OF PLACEMENT OF NEWS / PHOTOGRAPHS IN AMAR UJALA & DAINIK JAGRAN

Phase	Amar Ujala					Dainik Jagran				
	Front Page	Inside Page	Back Page	Total	%	Front Page	Inside Page	Back Page	Total	%
P - I	229	588	140	957	3.35	140.5	211	26	377.5	1.24
P - II	1211	1908.5	1381.5	4501	15.33	1301.5	2237.5	1168	4707	15.56
P - III	1546.5	2227	105.5	3878	13.20	4576	2400	—	3967.5	10.22
P - IV	731.5	4584	11.5	2327	7.71	654	770	—	1424.5	3.67
P - V	688	1414	784	2886	8.42	699	1324.5	—	2023.5	6.0

Analysis of the phase-wise coverage of placement of news/photographs shows that although both the newspapers gave less coverage in the back page, but, Dainik Jagran gave the least coverage, in fact, during the last three phases it didn't give any coverage in its last pages and even in the first phase it was very poor coverage only 26 col cm. whereas **Amar Ujala** gave considerable coverage in the last page, in fact, it took its lead on this page and back page being a prominent page was read very seriously by the readers. Both the papers gave the highest coverage in the inside pages, Amar Ujala gave a total coverage of 7,721.5 col cm. whereas Dainik Jagran gave 6,943 col cm. in all the **five** phases. On the back pages, Amar Ujala gave 2,442.5 col cm. whereas Dainik Jagran devoted 1,194 col com. which was a very big difference and affected the overall coverage and the readership too. On the front pages of the entire **five** phases, Amar Ujala devoted 4,406 col com. whereas Dainik Jagran gave 4,371 col cm. space. So, there was not much of difference although Amar Ujala was ahead by devoting total 14,549 col cm. in all the **five** phases whereas the total coverage of Dainik Jagran was 12,500 col cm.

Apart from content analysis, which gives an indication and nature of coverage, it was also found necessary to understand the perspectives and policy, if any, behind the coverage. There are crucial aspects of newspaper production that allows us to examine coverage from the management perspective. Management in turn can be differentiated in to ownership and professional parameters. It is very difficult to assess the owner's perspective with respect to any particular issue. It is perhaps easier to understand whether it is a pro-establishment or ant-establishment paper. However, the journalists working in the field and on the desk can shed better perspective on why and how they covered a particular issue. It was, therefore, necessary to interview the Journalists who were behind the coverage. This allows us to understand the coverage parameters beyond the space dimension.

# Field Survey

## 6.11 INTERVIEWS OF FOUR JOURNALISTS - TWO FROM EACH PAPER - ONE FIELD REPORTER & ONE FROM THE DESK:

*Dr. Radhey Shyam Shukla, News Editor, Amar Ujala, Meerut, during the entire phases of BKU agitation and was the overall in-charge of the co-ordination of news gathering, selection and display. At present, he is the Founder Editor of 'Swatantra Varta', a Hindi newspaper, started three years ago, from Hyderabad:*

When the Amar Ujala started its Meerut Edition in December, '87, I had an opportunity of being associated with it right from the inception level. We were a small, but, dedicated group of field Reporters, Sub-editors and few Co-ordinators at the senior level. Mr. Atul Maheshwari, a young person of our age-group, was one of the second generation proprietors of the group who was leading us in this new launch. Our main competitor was Dainik Jagan, an established paper which had a lead of two years and had an impressive readership in the urban areas. Breaking of its monopoly in this segment was an uphill task with the limited resources we had. But, all of us were committed to break new grounds. After thorough discussions, it was decided to target the rural readers of the region and introduce Amar Ujala in the interior rural pockets of the district. Initially, we roped in the milkmen coming from the adjoining villages of Meerut and started sending four or five copies of the paper through them in their respective villages. Taking hints from them, we started covering small news of those villages and gradually limited copies of Amar Ujala were subscribed by some villagers in some pockets. We identified the pardhans, panchayats and some enlightened individuals and started sending them copies of Amar Ujala. It was realised that

there is a vacuum of readership in rural areas and a new rural readership could be built up provided we highlight their problems and win them over.

In this backdrop, the BKU Farmers' movement in Western Uttar Pradesh was a God-sent opportunity for us. Almost all members of our group in **Amar Ujala** were from the rural areas and had a deep commitment towards the rural masses and their problems. In the initial BKU agitation at **Shamli**, we organised ourselves and tried to give the best coverage possible, but, due to certain organisational problems, being a new newspapers, there were some handicaps. We gave thought provoking editorials and received the goodwill and readership of the farmers. The first phase of BKU farmers agitation was sudden and nobody was sure of its sustenance. So, the management had not preplanned the coverage. But, subsequently, as the **Amar Ujala's** coverage was appreciated by the farmers and rural people, we started giving wide coverage to BKU activities and by the time second phase of BKU agitation was started in Meerut, **Amar Ujala** was well known amongst the farmers. But, we got the real grip of our readers during the coverage of BKU agitation in Meerut. The management gave us a free hand in coverage and our coverage was balanced, though sympathetic towards the farmers. **Our** rival newspaper, **Dainik Jagran**, also realised the importance of rural readers during the two phases of agitation and there was a healthy competition between both the newspapers i.e. **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran (Meerut Editions)** in terms of coverage of BKU activities. But, the management policy of **Dainik Jagran** was urban-oriented and the mindset of the staff there except one or two exceptions were also urbanite. So, they failed to appreciate the problems of the farmers and project them effectively. In fact, the coverage given by **Dainik Jagran** antagonized the rural readers and some anti-farmer editorials written by the newspaper helped the **Amar Ujala** to further consolidate its position amongst the readers of rural areas. In other words, **Amar Ujala** created new readers in the rural pockets of the western UP districts.

Despite limited resources, **Amar Ujala** recruited and deputed their Correspondents in all the important locations of the region and a very good network of professionals were developed in the rural pockets which was a wise investment and paid off very well during the other phases of the **BKU** movement. The paper picked up circulation at a rapid pace. Starting with an initial circulation of about 18,000 to 20,000, in '86, the newspaper reached the level of 1,00,000 within one year and further 30-35,000 were added during the first few months of the next year **in'88**. The newspaper realised that the coverage of **BKU** agitations had given a boost to its readership. So, one Correspondent was deputed exclusively to cover, Sisuoli, Tikait's village and the activities going on there. The **BKU** activists openly claimed that **Amar Ujala**, was highlighting their problems. The newspaper further expanded its network when new Correspondents were recruited and given free hand to cover the areas under their jurisdiction and were instructed to focus on ignorant rural pockets. On the other hand, **Dainik Jagran**, seemed to be satisfied with their present set-up and neither tried to influence the farmers movement nor expanded their network in the rural areas. Another important landmark in the history of **Amar Ujala** was the coverage of riots which broke out in a small town, Maliana, near Meerut between the two communities, immediately after the first phase of **BKU** agitation. **Amar Ujala** gave a balanced coverage of this unfortunate happening. So, the readership of **Amar Ujala** picked up amongst the Muslims who are residing in large numbers in Western U.P. However, **in'89** - All India Level rally of farmers at New Delhi on October 2,'89 in which farmers from Southern states turned up in large numbers including thousands of activities of **Shetkari sanghatana** - failed due to **rowdism** of the followers of Tikait. In the scuffle which followed on the stage between the activists of **BKU** and **Shetkari sanghatana**, Sharad Joshi, fell down from the stage and suffered a leg fracture. I wrote an article criticizing the behaviour of the **BKU** activists and the piece was published along with a

cartoon of Tikait. This antagonized the BKU supporters and they staged a demonstration in front of the **Amar Ujala** office in Meerut and burned the copies of **Amar Ujala** in protest.

***Omkar Chaudhary, Journalist (now working with AU) was working with Dainik Jagran during the course of BKU agitation, i.e. '87 to '90. Based at Meerut:***

I was working as a Crime Reporter for Dainik Jagran till '87 when the BKU agitation started. Perhaps, considering my rural background, I was asked to cover the agitation. Initially, the seniors in office and the management thought that the farmer's agitation wouldn't go very far and was not taken seriously till the farmers burnt down the Power Station at **Karmukhera** near **Shamli** on March 2/87 and subsequently four farmers were killed at village **Simalaka** near **Shamli** in police firing. In fact, there was no mention in any newspaper of the country of the BKU or its leader Mahender Singh Tikait although the farmers were holding meetings and organising themselves in the '*Desh khaap*' in Meerut district (now Bagpat district) and '*Balyankhaap*' of Muzaffarnagar district. But, since I was moving around amongst rural masses and was witnessing the political vacuum after the demise of Chaudhary Charan Singh. I was having a clear idea in my mind that the mobilisation of farmers would culminate into a major crisis in the times to come.

My first meeting with Mahender Singh Tikait was held at his residence at Sisuoli town, immediately after the police firing at **Simalka**. When I sent in a word, introducing myself as a journalist from Dainik Jagarn and requested him for a meeting to discuss the recent developments of BKU, there was no response. Perhaps, the messenger, a simple farmer couldn't understand the importance and implications of the person from the media or maybe Tikait himself was not sure of the role of the media at that time. There was no response from his side and I kept waiting till by chance I met an educated local activist, Dr. Satender Singh from a nearby village - **Bhorakalan**. He immediately went inside and

arranged my meeting with Tikait. I found Tikait as a simplest of the farmer. His innocence or lack of awareness was clearly apparent when he dismissed Dainik Jagran and other papers as 'nothing but a piece of papers with some things printed on them everyday'. He was not aware of the impact of the media and Dr. Satender tried to explain him the purpose of my visit. He answered my questions in his own rural style. I recorded his impressions and that of other farmers which was published with photographs on the front page of Dainik Jagran, the next day. My interaction with the ordinary farmers of the region also indicated that they were not really aware of the role of the media in their agitation at the initial stage.

From the very beginning, my seniors in office to whom I reported and who were the deciding authorities and the management of the newspaper was not very enthusiastic about the BKU agitation. In fact, they had their own reservations. They considered this agitation as a casual outbreak of frustration amongst the directionless and leaderless group of farmers which would achieve nothing. They were, in fact, allergic about the agitation from the very beginning and continued to remain so till the end. This was clearly apparent from the Editorials which appeared in the newspaper from time to time. I had to confront this bias of the senior editorial staff and the management from day one and till I covered the agitation. I was not given any direct instructions from the management about the manner in which the agitation should be covered, but, off and on my bosses who reported to the management used to comment that the BKU agitation is getting too much of importance and in informal discussions they used to accuse farmers of creating chaos in Meerut and Delhi. However, I could hardly remember an incident when my story was tempered with or altered or killed. Yet, at times, my stories concerning BKU agitation was carried on the inside pages of the Meerut edition whereas the in-charge of the other editions displayed them prominently on the front page. This disclosed the bias in display of news and the attitude of the in-charges of

various editions. At times, I did criticise the role of the BKU leaders and the farmers agitation where it warranted criticism as per my independent judgement.

Did you ever face any problem in covering BKU agitation as representative of Dainik Jagran? Not really. In fact, I also got the required help and cooperation from the farmer leaders. After initial ignorance, as the BKU agitations became more broadbased and organised, the farmer leaders including Tikait, the ordinary farmers and other activists also started realising the importance of the Press in highlighting the BKU movements. Tikait started addressing Press Conferences at an appointed time and he became more cautious and sometimes tactful in answering questions from the media. After and even during the Meerut **Commissionary** ghearo, the national and international Press highlighted the agitation in a big way. This gave lot of exposure to the farmer leaders and the farmers themselves. Now, those who never read newspapers also started reading it. This further created consciousness amongst them. Initially, newspapers like 'Hindustan' and the 'Nav **Bharat**' criticised the farmers agitation on the line of Dainik Jagran, and even the English papers were reluctant to give it due coverage. But, when farmers staged a sit-in at Boat Club, Delhi, the press came around and started giving coverage. The big coverage given by the international media also changed the minds of the national media. Normally, the national media try to imitate the international media.

*Harishankar Joshi, a Senior Correspondent with Amar Ujala, Meerut, covered all the phases of BKU agitation in Western U.P. He also took photographs. At present, he is working with Amar Ujala in Meerut.*

I covered all the phases of the BKU agitations in Western U.P. right from the inception of Amar Ujala (Meerut Edition). I was a witness to the emergence of the power of farmers in the region. Initially, nobody expected that the movement would go this far. In our paper



which was new to the region at the time of the **BKU** agitation, there was a very liberal and professional atmosphere towards work. We were a group of young and energetic Reporters. There was an excitement in the air because of the challenge of establishing the newspaper. Immediately, after the first **BKU** agitation at **Shamli**, I went to attend a Panchayat of **BKU** farmers at Sisuoli. I was fascinated to experience the high spirits of the farmers. I was surprised to see an illiterate farmer, Mahender Singh Tikait, leading the farmers and the respect he received from them. I interviewed him and his direct approach of answering questions appealed me very much. Henceforth, attending and covering the Panchayats of the farmers at Sisuoli was a pleasant experience. I would get lot of professional satisfaction. I come from a village in the hills. I was aware of the problems of the rural areas and had deep sympathy towards the cause of the farmers. Even our desk (sub-editors) were eager to give the best possible display to the **BKU** news. We were not really ready when the first **BKU** agitation took place in Shamli. It happened, suddenly, but, after the two young farmers were killed in police firing, we went to their villages, collected as much information as possible and gave their profiles along with photographs in the next day's newspaper.

By the time of the next phase of agitation at Meerut we were ready for the event and a very detailed strategy for day-to-day coverage was worked out and carried out by a team of Reporters. **Amar Ujala** was the most sought after newspaper during the Meerut Siege of Divisional **Commisionary** by the farmers. All copies of our newspapers were sold off after few hours of reaching the hawkers and book-shop outlets. During the day, many farmers would be seen demanding a copy of the **Amar Ujala**. As the agitation **advanced**, the circulation of **Amar Ujala** increased and with it the respect of being a Correspondent from **Amar Ujala**. Initially, when we used to go to the villages, farmers would enquire 'What do you do with the information which you take from us? What is a journalist? How do they print newspapers?

*Abhay Gupta, Senior Sub-Editor, Dainik Jagran, Meerut Edition. He was on the desk of the Dainik Jagran during the phase of BKU agitations. He lives in Meerut.*

I dealt with the news of BKU agitation during the late eighties and early nineties in Western Uttar Pradesh. I could understand that the farmers were facing some problems and was sympathetic towards them. But, their mass movements in Meerut and Delhi was something which I could not understand and appreciate. What have the farmers gained out of the agitations? They were out on the roads for 24 days in Meerut and for one week at Delhi. Nobody knew what was their basic agenda. They created law and order problem. Schools and colleges of Meerut were closed for almost two weeks and there was disturbance in the government offices. All the work came to a standstill. The entire government machinery was paralyzed for almost a month. Many farmers died during of the agitation due to severe cold. What was the logic of putting themselves and other people in the cities to hardships? The atmosphere of the dharna site in Meerut was that of a big 'mela' where people came to enjoy. There was no seriousness of a movement.

Dainik Jagran criticised the farmers agitation when there was widespread violence in many towns of Western U.P. The farmers are respected because they produce for millions. but, if they indulge in violence, create law and order problems, they don't deserve respect. Yes, the paper was justified in giving an editorial that farmers had behaved in an irresponsible manner. What is wrong in calling spade a spade? We gave positive coverage to the farmers agitation and highlighted their activities, prominently. At the same time, we also didn't hesitate to criticise their wrong actions. We came to learn about the activities of the BKU when the police opened fire in Shamli at the gathering of farmers and four farmers were killed. It was for the first time, since independence, that such a farmers agitation took place in

Western U.P. Farmers agitation in Meerut was widely covered by Dainik Jagran and so were the other phases of **BKU** agitation at New Delhi, Lucknow and at local levels.

It is wrong to say that Dainik Jagran is an urban paper and cater to the interests of urban people only. Dainik Jagran edition was coming out from Meerut much before that of **Amar Ujala** and our readership was there in rural as well urban areas. Dainik Jagran highlighted the issues as they occurred. We had no preconceived notions about anything, say, we wouldn't think on those terms that if we give coverage to the **BKU** agitation our readership or circulation would increase. Why should we think that way, our readership is there because people like to read our paper and they like to read our paper because they found that the content of our paper was worth reading. Our objective was to inform and educate our readers and we performed that responsibility, honestly.

The space devoted to the movement is one crucial parameter. The qualitative interpretation of how and why the coverage was organized is another parameter. At the level of impact, the slow and steady improvement in circulation of the two newspapers in region can be interpreted as a criteria for understanding the impact. However, in this case, the impact is not nearly related to circulation. Impact can be measured by what the farmers of region think of the coverage and thereby we can understand the contribution, if any, of the newspaper. Surveys of large scale to assess the impact can not be undertaken as the response is difficult to measure due to the differences in the abilities of the farmers to follow the coverage. However, through a careful assessment of the field situation, it may be possible for us to **identify** and contact farmers who apart from being participants are also in a position to respond. This assumption allowed us to have in-depth interviews with farmers belonging to different categories.

## **6.12 INTERVIEWS OF THE FARMERS - THREE CATEGORIES - SMALL, MEDIUM AND BIG:**

- **Village Kakkor, block Chaprauli, district Bagpat (UP). The village is about 8-10 km. from the main road, situated on the Haryana-U.P. border.**

### **Small Category Farmers:**

Ravinder Saroha (31)                      High school pass, actively involved in social and political activities.

Rampal Kaushik (48)                      M.A. - running a flour mill in the village.

Shadev Singh      (50)                      Eight pass - running a general merchant shop in the village and supplying the newspapers to the entire village.

The three Respondents in the category of small farmers felt that the newspapers were the main source of news for the farmers regarding the BKU agitations. Amar Ujala was the only newspaper which was read by the farmers in their village and it created mass consciousness. During the agitation, one copy of the newspaper used to be read by at least eight to ten households. In the evenings, when the farmers used to come back from work, they used to ask one of the educated youngsters to read out the contents of the BKU agitation activities aloud. Thereafter, they used to discuss the developments, making speculation about the future. Many farmers who had visited the agitation site, lately, would give some more facts in addition to the press reports in the newspapers. According to all the Respondents, Dainik Jagran was considered to be a pro-establishment newspaper and Amar Ujala was read and admired by the farmers because it used to give news which was pro-farmer and went well

with the psychology of the farmers. Amar Ujala took a lead in highlighting the agitation at an initial stage when **Karmukhera** Power station was set on **fire** by the farmers. Since the Meerut edition of the newspaper started along with the BKU agitation, there was a close bond between the newspaper and the farmers. They considered the newspaper as their own because it gave positive and comprehensive coverage of the BKU activities. The farmers were not aware about the journalists and the power of the press before this agitation. They came to learn about the journalists and their role during the agitation. The BKU agitation and the role of newspapers also fascinated the farmers because earlier they were of the view that their problems could be solved only through political means and through the politicians. For the first time, they realised that an apolitical agitation could also succeed. Shudev Singh, who is a shopkeeper disclosed that earlier, i.e. before the BKU agitation, only two to three newspapers used to come to the village which was brought by noon time by the postman along with the daily mail. But, during the BKU agitation papers started coming regularly and I started bringing it on demand of the readers in the village. There was a time when more than 12 Amar Ujala copies were subscribed by the villagers. It all started with the coverage of BKU agitation by Amar Ujala. This paper gave rural-oriented news.

#### Medium Category Farmers:

**Ramvir Singh** (45)    M.A. Sugar crusher owner in the village.

**Jaidev**                (50)    High school dropout.

**Subhash**            (35)    Education upto primary level.

The group recollected that before the BKU agitation started, i.e. before '87, there was no craze for the newspapers. Normally, not many people were interested in reading

newspapers, although, one or two newspapers, Punjab **Kesari** & Dainik Jagran came to two houses. The first announcement regarding the BKU agitation came in the form of a mike announcement in the village saying that four farmers have been shot dead by the police while BKU was agitating for the just demands of the farmers. Farmers were asked to go to **Shamli** in big numbers to show solidarity with the agitating farmers. Thereafter, some retired government servants started getting newspapers, mostly Amar Ujala, for daily reading. Few papers were brought by the casual visitors from Baraut and Chaprauli and these newspapers were read by a large number of people. Those farmers, who were illiterate used to ask educated youth to read the papers for them. Earlier, few copies of both Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran, the two most popular newspapers of the region used to be read by the farmers. Later, comparing the coverage of BKU agitation in both the newspapers, we concluded that Amar Ujala was giving detailed and factual coverage of the agitation and even criticised the government. But, the coverage of Dainik Jagran was not in favour of the farmers. This paper had a lukewarm attitude and it was apparent that it doesn't want to annoy the government and was also taking side of the government.

One of the respondent gave a statement and others agreed that Amar Ujala is the paper of the farmers and the Dainik Jagran is the paper of the 'banias'. Noting this bias, the farmers started purchasing Amar Ujala and latest 12 copies of Amar Ujala started coming to the village. The respondents felt that the "Press is the mirror of the society, whatever happens in the society has its reflection in the newspapers". Amar Ujala reflected the rural point-of-view of the farmers. So, it attracted the attention of the farmers and became a number one newspaper during a short span of three to four years. But, Dainik Jagran which was being published from '84 was reflecting the urban-oriented point-of-view and was very diplomatic in its coverage, mostly keeping in line with the government's stand. So, the farmers shun Dainik Jagran and read Amar Ujala. They felt that the readership of Amar Ujala increased

rapidly during and after the Meerut **Commissionary** 'ghaero' in '88. The group felt that the BKU agitation and its coverage in Amar Ujala was instrumental in creating awareness amongst the farmers regarding the Press and the journalists. It was the first opportunity for them to see the journalists highlighting their activities which created affinity and sense of belonging amongst them.

#### Big Category Farmers:

Udaivir Singh	(36)	Intermediate pass.
Harender Singh	(35)	B.A..
Satender Kumar	(38)	M.A..

The group felt that Amar Ujala rose to prominence due to the BKU agitation. Earlier, nobody had heard about this paper. As the BKU agitation started at Karmukhera near Shamli, the papers started giving reports about it and the coverage of Amar Ujala was considered to be the best. The word spread around that Amar Ujala is giving the best coverage. So, everybody started buying Amar Ujala. The paper gained more and more readers in the region as the BKU agitation spread. There was more local news in Amar Ujala and its language was the one which farmers used while conversing with each other. According to the Respondents, the main reason for the popularity of Amar Ujala amongst farmers was that the paper highlighted original statements of Tikait which were liked by the farmers. The paper was so prominent during the 21-day BKU agitation in Meerut in 1988 that the copies of Amar Ujala was in great demand everyday. The farmers used to hunt around for Amar Ujala and it sold in black, i.e. farmers sometimes were willing to pay twice the amount to buy a copy of Amar Ujala. Initially, some farmers read other papers including Dainik Jagran, but, they didn't find

the coverage of these papers as positive as that of Amar Ujala. It seems that Amar Ujala had understood the psychology of the farmers. BKU agitations created consciousness amongst the farmers and newspaper reading became a part of their daily routine. It started with Amar Ujala. Now, besides, Amar Ujala, at least three papers are being read by the farmers in our village.

6.13 INTERVIEWS OF FARMERS FROM CHAPRAULI TOWN IN BAGPAT DISTRICT:

Small Category Farmers:

Nawal Singh, Ex-serviceman (54)	Manage a shop in Chaprauli
Jaidev (50)	High school pass
Mahipal Singh (44)	An Intermediate

The Respondent number one, Mr. Nawal Singh was in the army. He got a release from the army in '87 when the farmers movement of BKU had already started. Initially, he started taking Amar Ujala. But, later on switched over to Dainik Jagran because many people were taking Amar Ujala and they could exchange the newspapers. So, they used to change the newspapers and read. Nawal Singh felt that Amar Ujala gave a better coverage of the BKU movement, but, Dainik Jagaran provided better coverage of the local issues in our area. He felt that Dainik Jagran gave almost the same news of BKU agitation as Amar Ujala. The Correspondents of Amar Ujala would take pains to take more interviews, give names of many farmers and cover almost all important events. Jaidev, Respondent number two felt Amar Ujala would give the news of the movement going on at Meerut as well as at the same time there would be reports from the villages what the people there felt about the agitation. So, the



approach of **Amar Ujala** was much wide and it was apparent that there was a team work in coverage. This was lacking in Dainik Jagran.

The photographs given by Amar Ujala were more relevant and of good quality. Mahipal Singh, Respondents number 3 had attended almost all the agitation starting from Meerut onwards. He felt that the activists there had all the time in the world to do number of things, read newspaper, play games, go around because they had to pass time. Every morning, our first job was to get Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran. We used to read both the newspapers and discuss which paper had given what. We could make out that the coverage of Amar Ujala was much better than Dainik Jagran. On most of the days, Amar Ujala used to give the BKU news and photographs on the front page and as a main headline. Many-a times, almost the entire front page and last page was full of news and photographs of the BKU agitation. Dainik Jagran also gave lot of coverage, but, there was no depth in the news. Amar Ujala used to give more interviews of Tiakit and other leaders of the BKU.

#### Medium Category Farmers:

- |                        |      |  |
|------------------------|------|--|
| Rajpal Singh           | (60) | Retired Teacher, resident of Chaprauli town. |
| Dharambir Sing Shastri | (60) | Farmer from Chaprauli, active in BKU         |
| Jagat Singh            | (58) | Farmer from Chaprauli, active in BKU         |

The respondents were of the view that at the time of the starting of BKU movement, they were subscribers of Dainik Jagran which used to give local news and everybody used to read it. One or two copies of Amar Ujala also used to come. At the time of the Meerut agitation also we were getting Dainik Jagran, but, many who were not taking any newspaper started reading Amar Ujala because they felt that this new newspaper was giving better

coverage of **BKU**. We used to exchange the newspapers and read it. The Respondents felt that the quality of news of Amar Ujala was better than Dainik Jagran. There were names of farmers from the region. Photographs of some of the farmers were also published. So most of the farmers started reading Amar Ujala. This newspaper was daring, its editorials used to challenge the government and was always in the favour of farmers. Before the BKU agitation most of the respondents were not keen readers of editorials. We had no patience to go through the entire editorial. It was a heavy stuff for us, but, during the time of the BKU agitation, it was different. We used to read the editorials about the BKU agitation first. Gradually, we got into the habit of reading the editorial page, thoroughly.

#### Big Farmers Category:

- |                |      |  |
|----------------|------|--|
| Satyadev Singh | (60) | Retired lecturer in History. Looking after his farm in Chaprauli.            |
| Bhopal Singh   | (58) | Principal of an Intermediate College at Ghinjjana in Muzaffarnagar district. |
| Shoodan Singh  | (50) | Teacher in a local Intermediate College.                                     |

The group consisted of educated farmers. So, there was some disagreements in their views. Respondent number one felt that as a regular reader of Dainik Jagran, he found that the paper gave lot of local news and was balanced in approach. The local Correspondent of the paper was an enthusiastic young man. Amar Ujala launched its edition at a time when the BKU activities started in 1987. The paper saw in it an opportunity to increase its circulation. With this in mind, the paper aroused the feelings of the farmers and enmeshed upon it. Amar Ujala established its hold in the area only on the basis of the agitation and giving one-sided view of the farmers which they liked. However, the other two respondents disagreed with him saying that earlier there was not much of competition. So, Dainik Jagran was popular

amongst the locals because it was the only daily paper coming out from Meerut. But, the launching of **Amar Ujala** from Meerut broke the monopoly of Dainik Jagran. It was a coincidence that the BKU agitation came up in a big way and effective coverage given by Amar Ujala made it popular amongst the farmers. They felt that the paper did demonstrate its commitment towards the cause of the farmers which was apparent from its editorials and the good quality of coverage.

#### **6.14 INTERVIEWS OF FARMERS FROM KANIYAN VILLAGE (5-6 Km. FROM THE ROADSIDE) IN KANDHLA BLOCK OF MUZAFFAR NAGAR DISTRICT:**

##### **Small Category Farmer:**

Goverdhan (55) Middle Level Education

Jagbir Singh (60) Intermediate and Basic Training Certificate (BTC)- retired  
Headmaster of a primary school.

Bhawar Singh (59) Primary level education.

The respondents confided that before the BKU agitation, they had no interest in reading of newspapers. They were regular listeners of radio and were particularly fond of listening to the folk songs and religious discourses apart from the regional and national news bulletins. They were also interested in the rural agricultural programmes which would give them information on farming techniques. The respondents disclosed that they came to learn about the death of four farmers in a police firing at BKU Panchayat at Karmukhera power House near **Shamli** through some local people who had gone to participate in the Panchayat. They also carried with them a copy of a newspaper - Amar Ujala - in which photographs of

the farmers killed were given along with the description of the incident. This was the first time that the respondents saw **Amar Ujala**. Later, the newspaper started giving more and more coverage to the BKU farmers agitation and one or two copies of the newspaper started coming to the village. Every evening, an educated boy would be asked to read out the details of the newspaper reportage on BKU agitation for the benefit of the illiterate farmers. They were very enthusiastic and many loaded tractor - trollies of the village went to participate in various agitations of the BKU at Meerut, Delhi, Lucknow etc. After six months, at least eight to ten copies of **Amar Ujala** started coming to the village, two copies of Dainik Jagran were also subscribed, but, it didn't match the coverage of Amar Ujala. The respondents pointed out that during the Meerut BKU agitation, Dainik Jagran gave lot of photographs of the farmers with no descriptive material, but, the coverage done by Amar Ujala was balanced and most of the farmers appreciated it.

#### Medium Category Farmers:

Jaipal Singh (45) Primary Level Education.

Jaideev Singh (35) Middle Pass.

**Ram Kishan** (55) High School.

The respondents repeated the view that the habit of newspaper reading started in the village during the BKU farmers movement. Earlier, no newspaper used to come to the village which is situated at a distance of about 6Km. from the nearby town and the main road. Amar Ujala attracted the farmers because it raised rural issues and highlighted the problems of the farmers. Everyday in the evening, all of us would sit together and discuss the developments of the day. The information of the newspaper and the account of eyewitnesses who had been to Meerut, Delhi and other places of BKU agitations would explain the happenings there. All

of us went to participate in the agitations in batches. The womenfolk in the village were equally curious to know what was happening at the dharna sites. So, they would tell one of the school going girl or boy to get the newspaper and read out to them the main developments. Even two to three days' stale news in a newspaper about the BKU agitation was informative for them because there was no other source of information available.

#### Big Category Farmers:

Shishpal (58) Graduate - school teacher in an intermediate school at Kandhla town.

Satpal Singh (58) Graduate - retired subedar from the armed forces.

Rajbir Singh (48) Intermediate.

The respondents are social persons who regularly moved out of the village and visited the nearby towns and cities almost daily. They felt that the BKU agitation was, in a way, blessing to the farmers of the entire region. They got the much required exposure and self-confidence while participating in the meetings of Panchayats. All the respondents felt that, earlier, they used to read Dainik Jagran everyday in the town because that was the only newspaper available. They were satisfied with its local coverage. But, after the launching of **Amar Ujala**, there was a choice and the way this newspaper covered the BKU agitation helped in picking up its circulation. They gave hard-hitting editorials blaming the government for the BKU agitation and effectively putting the farmers' point of view. This gave an image of "people oriented" newspaper to **Amar Ujala** and the farmers felt that the newspaper fostered a sense of unity among them because farmers of different regions got the authentic news of the BKU activities in this newspaper. Citing an incident of police atrocities and highhandedness of police force against the farmers and their women folk in a nearby

village, the respondents said that during the Chief Ministership of **Mulayam** Singh Yadav in '90,there was firing by the police on the **BKU** activists killing one boy and injuring hundreds, the police entered the houses and didn't even spare the women who were beaten up and molested. This news was carried out prominently and boldly by Amar Ujala. It made the newspaper more popular among its readers. Although **Dainik Jagran** gave the news , but, the real punch of Amar Ujala was missing.

**6.15 INTERVIEW OF THE FARMERS FROM AILUM TOWN IN MUZAFFARNAGAR DISTRICT:**

**Small Category Farmers:**

Rajender Singh	(39)	Middle pass.
Soampal	(47)	High School Pass.
Sukhpal	(58)	Illeterate

The respondents felt that since their town was on the main road and was well connected by road and rail transport, newspapers were available and being read since years. Most of them never bothered to read the newspapers because they hardly carried anything of their interest. Instead, they would hear news, folk songs or some agricultural related programmes on the radio. Sometimes, other educated and well informed farmers would to tell them about the latest developments in the field of politics. But, the **BKU** movement in 1987 brought a change and most of them started reading newspapers. They did not subscribe it, but, used to get from neighbours. Everyday, they used to wait for the newspapers anxiously to know about the latest developments of agitations. Earlier, **Dainik Jagran**, was more popular. Later, we heard that a new paper by the name of **Amar Ujala** is giving a better coverage of

BKU news. So, everybody changed over to Amar Ujala and we also started reading it. The most interesting part in that newspaper was that it gave lot of good photographs of Tikait and other farmers. The respondent number three, who is an illiterate farmer commented that although he is unable to read and write, but, he used to send one of his school going son / daughter to get a newspaper from the neighbours house and he / she would read it aloud for the entire family.

#### Medium Category Farmers:

Krishan Pal (45) M.A.

Karan Singh (65) B.A., Retd. from Para-Military.

Davender (42) High School.

The respondents felt that Amar Ujala created and promoted a habit of newspaper reading among the farmers of the region. Earlier, although, some farmers households were subscribing newspapers, mostly Dainik Jagran or Navbharat Times, but, there were few keen readers. The BKU agitations became a focal point for all the farmers and comprehensive style of coverage of Amar Ujala which started coming to the town with the agitation was very attractive. The paper used to give lot of information and good photographs. Many farmers from the town used to go to the agitation sites like Meerut, Delhi, Lucknow. So, their family members, relatives etc. kept themselves well informed about the latest happenings only through newspapers. Earlier, there was no choice. So, the farmers used to read Dainik Jagran, but, once Amar Ujala, started publication from Meerut, it spread like wild fire and everybody was reading it.

**Big Category Farmers:**

Raj Pal Singh (55) Ph.D.- Lecturer in History

Karambir Singh (60) Intermediate

Jagdish (64) B.A.

The Respondents felt that both the newspapers, Dainik Jagran and Amar Ujala highlighted the BKU movement and its agitation satisfactorily. Initially, none of the newspapers and even the farmers themselves were sure of the success of the BKU movement in such a big way. The agitations spread rapidly. The hard hitting editorials written by Amar Ujala during the initial days of the agitation, criticizing the government and favouring the farmers was the starting point of the popularity and spread of Amar Ujala in the region. These editorials were read, discussed and appreciated by the farmers. Few farmers started subscribing Amar Ujala which was incidentally a new paper and it attracted others also. Now, they started comparing the coverage of both the papers and found that Amar Ujala was giving news which appealed to the cause of the farmers. The paper with its catchy masthead and neat layout attracted the farmers and many of them who were not subscribing any newspaper, earlier, started reading Amar Ujala. The readership of the newspaper kept on increasing as the BKU agitations spread. Dainik Jagran lost out at the beginning itself because its editorial policy towards the BKU movement lacked clarity and consistency. Although, later on it tried to make amends by increasing the coverage of BKU agitations, but, it was too late by that time.

Another important category for this study is the leadership. While they lead the movement, they are also conscious of their followers and how the issue is represented in the media. It can also be stated that the leadership is sensitive to the coverage. Their reading of coverage is, thus, an important variable for this study. The variable of a qualitative nature and



perhaps can not be reduced to quantitative parameters which offers a different perspective to the role these newspapers in the movement. So, we decided to take the interviews of the main leaders of the **BKU** movement so that their point of view may also be included and fruitful conclusions may be derived out of the discussions held with them on the crucial issue of the farmers movement and the role of media in covering it.

## **6.16 INTERVIEWS OF THE PROMINENT FARMER LEADERS:**

### **Mahender Singh Tikait -Moving Spirit of the BKU Movement:**

Mahender Singh Tikait, the BKU Chaudhary (headman) was born in 1935 at village Sisuali in **Muzaffarnagar** district of Uttar Pradesh. According to sakha, a branch of the *Kashyap* clan (Gotra) of the Jats migrated to the present area from the ancestral village of Mehlaana in Gurgaon district in the Punjab (now Haryana) some time in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. After crossing the river Yamuna, they first settled near the present villages of Bhanera Jat and Sisuali. These two villages were the first to be founded by this branch of the clan. Sisuali was founded in the last decade of the 12th Century and became the hereditary seat of the clan Chaudhary. From here the jats of the *Kashyap* clan spread to neighbouring areas, and found or conquered the villages which now comprise the '*khaap*' (clan area) '*Baliyan*'. Chaudhary Mahender Singh Tikait inherited the Chaudharyship of the '*Balayan khaap*' at the age of eight when his father, Chaudhary Chauhal Singh, died in 1993. Tikait, an illiterate farmer, is whimsical, unpredictable, inarticulate, grouchy, was even called foolish and naive by some.

When asked about his impressions about the newspapers and how did they cover the BKU movements headed by him, Tikait said that newspapers are published everyday and they cannot be printed if there was no news. So, news was a prerequisite for their survival. We needed them as much as they needed us. BKU and its activities was no news when we were going from village to village, organising the farmers. For years, we struggled day and night to motivate the people and convince them to join together to fight for their rights. No newspaperwalla ever came to us to ask 'what are we doing?'. Then, after some time, thousands of people started coming to our Panchayats which were held from time to time. But, no news reporter highlighted us. The BKU agitations which you saw in the later years was not an outcome of a day or two. It took us years to organise the farmers, but, the newspapers noticed us and reported the union activities only after four farmers were killed by police bullets during **Kharmukhera** agitation. They noticed us only when we showed our strength, our might. But, why were we forced to show this might? Had the government agreed to **our** just demands, we wouldn't have got so many of our brother farmers killed. We would have not spent days and nights together shivering in cold in the open. But, then, these newspaperwallas wouldn't have got such good pictures and juicy stories to sell their newspapers and earn hefty profits out of it.

Initially, as simpletons or idiots, whatever you may call, we thought, yes, this paper is giving us good coverage. It has our interest at heart and it is giving our side of the story. We had all praises for the newspaper and the other papers were not giving good BKU stories, so, they were anti-farmers. Yes, it was true to an extent, but, the newspaper which was taking our side was not doing so because it had a genuine love for farmers. The '**malik**' (owner) of the newspaper was doing it because he had noticed that the sale of his newspaper was going up, more and more farmers are buying the newspaper, it was getting popular in the region. Once

they had a comfortable readership and the paper was established, they also went their way. But, we are not thankless people. Yes, **Amar Ujala** gave us good coverage and highlighted our point of view. They wrote long editorials to support our cause and the proprietor of the newspaper who was very nice person came to meet us when we were agitating in Meerut, although, he was not keeping well. We appreciate him, he is no more, now. But, later on the same newspaper after getting the support of the farmers forgot us and started writing against us. We have no complaints against other newspapers. They also covered our agitation, may not be that prominently, but, they gave lot of news about us and made our cause popular.

To the question - Whether the print media helped in sustaining the **BKU** movement, he replied, "Yes, there is no doubt that if the newspaper wallas wouldn't have beaten our drum nobody would have known about our cause. But, I never asked any 'newspaper walla' to highlight us. In fact, initially, I told them not to publish my photographs. Sometimes, I even scolded them for giving wrong news and information about us and putting something they wanted to publish in our mouth and than publish it. I scolded so many journalists, young and old, as I scolded my own people. Many young girls and ladies used to come to cover our agitations, their clothes were not decent, not keeping to our traditions. I told them bluntly that if you want to come to our meetings come well dressed. But, still they gave me coverage. They highlighted the issues of the farmers. Nobody can dispute the fact that they gave us a great helping hand".

What about the newspapers and magazines from abroad? How did the cover the movement? "My well read activists used to read the reports from papers and magazines published form abroad and used to tell me about the news of BBC. I was very happy to notice that these people gave factual stories and understood our problems better than many of our

own journalists. They send a copy of their newspaper to us. They were genuinely interested in our problems".

**BKU FARMER LEADER, DEPUTY TO TIKAIT:**

CAPTAIN BHOPAL SINGH (65): Farmer leader from Chaprauli who was the most important leader after Tikait in the Meerut region (now Bagpat district). He an ex-serviceman. At initial stage when the agitation started, Amar Ujala, was not very prominent amongst the farmers. Dainik Jagran was better known and read by the farmers. Perhaps, Dainik Jagran was being published from Meerut and Amar Ujala came out almost at the time of initiation of the BKU agitation and this might have been the reason of the lead by Dainik Jagran during the phase of the agitation at Karmukhera near Shamli. But, Amar Ujala gave a comprehensive coverage to the activities of BKU as it advanced in the region and the paper kept on gaining regard and readership amongst the farmers. Amar Ujala gave very inspiring editorials during the agitation. It gained special place in the hearts of the farmers during the Meerut Commissioner Gherao where its coverage was very organised and objective and even during later agitations. There was no distortion of news. In fact, it gained more favour amongst the farmers and leaders of this agitation because late Dori Lal, proprietor of Amar Ujala who was alive at that time took pains to come and meet us in person at the CDA grounds in Meerut. He assured us that his paper would go to any extent in propagating the just demands of the farmers. Amar Ujala proved true to its promise and continued to highlight the problems of the farmers very forcefully. It had a rural-oriented and pro-farmer approach. Dainik Jagran, although gave coverage to the BKU activities, its approach had been very reserved and diplomatic. Consequently, farmers stopped reading this paper and called it the paper of 'banias' or 'sarkari paper'. Amar Ujala had a strong network of newsgathering and maximum Correspondents of the paper were from the rural areas. So, they developed natural

affinity towards the **BKU** agitation and the management also gave them complete freedom in this respect. On the other hand, the newsgathering network of Dainik Jagran was not very strong and the newspaper was not keen to highlight the problems of the farmers. This is also apparent from the editorials published in the newspapers from time to time.

"I remember, one journalist, **Omkar Chaudhary**, from Dainik Jagran, who was constantly in touch with us and gave some positive coverage because he hailed from a rural area and knew the problems of the farmers. Editorial policy of Amar Ujala was apparently in favour of the farmers movement and they gave a comprehensive and organised coverage with perfect ratio of news and photographs. But, in case, of Dainik Jagran, some news were not in good taste, sometimes. Dainik Jagran was prominently read by the urban people. So, it catered to that point of view and was mostly driven by the market forces. Although, I remember, after the demise of the first generation owner of Amar Ujala, **Shri Dori Lal Agarwal**, the next generation proprietors started giving distorted news and there was a change of stance, sometimes in 1991, when V.P. Singh's government fell. Dainik Jagran people came and met us and asked why we are not reading their newspaper. We gave our piece of mind to them, but, there was not much of change in their stand except that the coverage of **BKU** agitations increased in Dainik Jagran. I, personally feel, that none of these two newspapers felt much about the farmers, they were more concerned about their readership and in this process we got more attention and coverage because there was scope for coverage and an opportunity of increasing the readership through **BKU** agitations", he concluded.

#### **OTHER FARMER LEADERS:**

**SUMMER SINGH ARYA** (58): *A school teacher from Kakripur village near A Hum town. He is a prominent leader of the BKU and in-charge of 36 villages which*

*included two villages of our research study, i.e. Ailum and Kaniyan in Muzaffarnagar district.*

I had been actively involved with all the **five** of **BKU** agitation phases taken by you for your study. The role of Press had been very crucial for the **BKU** agitation through. During the first phase of the agitation.i.e. **Karmukhera** Power Station dharna in March '87, it was the coverage in the newspapers which informed the farmers of the entire region about the firing on the farmers. The role of the newspapers, **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** was prominent. We continued the agitation for 24-days in Meerut and everyday in the morning we impatiently waited for the newspapers. So, were the family members in the villages who wanted to know what their uncles or brother were doing in Meerut. We, at the dharna site, were curious to know what had been reported in the newspaper because it is through the means of newspapers that our grievances were being communicated to the bureaucracy and the government. During the third phase of agitation, i.e. a sit-in at the Boat Club, New Delhi, we got a great help from newspapers because whenever there was some special occasion and the additional strength was required it was after reading the statements of Tikait that the farmers used to rush to the dharna site. During the last two days of the sit-in, there was an effort of getting the farmers evicted from the Boat Club by force, when Tikait made a statement in the newspapers and appealed to the farmers, they responded to his call and within few hours reached the Boat Club.

Now, let us talk about the stance of the coverage of **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** which were the two prominent newspapers in the region. I used to read **Dainik Jagran** earlier, but, **Amar Ujala** gave a better coverage of our agitation, especially the Editorials which appeared in **Amar Ujala** right from the first phase to the other phases of agitation showed that the newspaper not only had a soft corner for the farmers, but, it was fighting for the rights of

the farmers very effectively. Whatsoever may be the reason of this bias, but, **Amar Ujala** did gain lot of goodwill and readership during the BKU agitations. In fact, today, Amar Ujala is one of the prominent newspaper of the North only due to its coverage of BKU agitation. We compared the coverage of both Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran, on the day-to-day basis and would try to read **between** the lines of the news and editorial and even the photographs. Amar Ujala used to give a balanced and pro-farmer news, but, Dainik Jagran, though used to give coverage, but, in a diplomatic manner and even the Editorials of Dainik Jagran were confused and sometimes accused the farmers for the crisis. Dainik Jagran had a pro-government approach.

**Jaibir Singh (55) - Farmer leader and BKU activist who was in-charge of 36 villages in the Shamli region adjoining Yamuna, bordering Haryana State. He hails from village Tana near Shamli.**

Few copies of Dainik Jagran used to come to our village before the farmers agitation of BKU started from Shamli. We were not very keen to read it because there was nothing much of interest for us. But, as the farmers movement picked up and its news started appearing in newspapers, we started taking newspapers seriously. Initially, we read Dainik Jagran, but, its coverage of BKU news was superfluous. However, we found that the news in Amar Ujala was objective and accurate. After the first phase of the BKU agitation at Karmukhera Power Station, Amar Ujala, deputed a Correspondent in our villages near Shamli. He was a hard working boy and used to keep in touch with us, regularly. He used to come to attend all our BKU Panchayats and news of these meetings used to come in next day's newspaper along with the name of the speakers and the prominent farmers and leaders present from every village. We had never imagined that our names would come in

newspapers and it was really a stimulating experience for all of us. We used to keep a cutting of the news item and show it to our family members and relatives. The paper also gave photographs of the farmers addressing the gathering.

Asked to pinpoint specific instances where **Amar Ujala** excelled in coverage and it helped the farmers in some way, the farmer leader said that in general the day-to-day news by Amar Ujala kept the farmers well informed of **BKU** activities and **future** course of action. In many cases, the news published in Amar Ujala acted as a reference to show to the administration as a proof. Once, during the **Rajakpur** agitation of BKU, the state government was taking an extreme step of imposing heavy penalties on the farmers on flimsy and cooked up charges, the clippings of Amar Ujala came handy as proof in favour of the farmers when the case was put up for investigation. The network of Amar Ujala covered the BKU activities from each and every region and we could open up our mind in front of the Amar Ujala journalists. Sometimes, we gave them some information in confidence with a request not to publish it and they acted as per our wishes. Both the BKU movement and Amar Ujala benefited from each other. Amar Ujala was a new paper in the region. It needed a foothold, a readership which it got in the rural areas with the help of the BKU agitations and the BKU had no means of disseminating information and messages amongst its members, they got the genuine means of communication in the form of Amar Ujala newspaper. Both of them supplemented each other. But, later, there was a time, sometimes, in '91 when Amar Ujala Management changed its attitude towards the BKU. Perhaps, the proprietors of Amar Ujala thought that the BKU was a spent force, now, and the paper had already taken the advantage of the movement and they started ignoring BKU and giving anti - BKU news.



## 6.17 ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS:

I would, now, give a synoptic view of each category of interviews described above. We shall start with the first category of the Journalists who covered the BKU agitation. The views expressed by two Journalists from AU, Dr. Radhey Shyam Shukla and Harishankar Joshi clearly indicates that the agitations of BKU was covered by a committed team of Journalists with the rural background duly supported and encouraged by the management. There was a perfect coordination between the field reporters and the news desk. The management had ensured exhaustive coverage by deputing correspondents in the rural pockets of our areas of study with the strategy of increasing its readership in mind. The interviews of the two Journalists from Dainik Jagran, Omkar Chaudhary and Abhay Gupta working with the paper indicated that the newspaper had no clear-cut strategy towards the coverage of BKU agitations. Since Chaudhary was from the rural background and was willing to cover the agitation, he was deputed on that beat. But, many good stories which he generated for the paper was not given the right kind of exposure. He also complained that many senior journalists who were responsible for the display of news were not favourably inclined towards the coverage of BKU agitations. An interview with the senior sub-editor, Abhay Gupta, indicated that he was not very sure about why the farmers were agitating. He vigorously defended the role of his paper played in criticizing the BKU agitations. The interviews indicated that there was no coordination between the field reporters and the desk of Dainik Jagran in the coverage of BKU agitation.

The discussions with the groups of farmers in both the districts were very interesting and educative. Most of the farmers easily recollected the happenings of BKU agitations, about 15 years ago and had clear cut views which they presented in a spontaneous manner. It

was clear from the interviews of the farmers that **Amar Ujala provided better coverage to the BKU agitations** and became popular amongst the farmers in a short time. The response of most of the farmers disclosed their news paper started gaining readership from the first phase itself, got a firm foothold during the agitation at Meerut and was comfortably established, thereafter. It was also clear from the interviews that Amar Ujala created a habit of reading newspapers amongst the rural masses in the two districts of our study. The coverage, especially the editorials published by the newspapers was highly appreciated by the farmers. The interviews with the farmers further disclosed that they completely identified themselves with the newspaper and stopped the subscription of Dainik Jagran because they thought that it was not giving balanced coverage to the BKU agitations. Some farmers even called it a pro-establishment newspaper and indicated that the coverage provided by the paper was not in favour of the farmers. They were particularly critical of the paper because it published anti-farmer editorials.

The interviews with the farmer leaders reflected that they appreciated the coverage of both the newspapers. But, at the same time, they accepted that the quality of the contents and placement of news of Amar Ujala was better. They also acknowledged that the proprietor of the paper, late Dorilal **Aggarwal**, personally came to meet them when they were agitating at Meerut. He assured them of highlighting the just and genuine issues of the farmers. The farmer leaders felt that Amar Ujala gave pro-farmers news which not only increased its circulation in the Western UP, but, also help the farmers because the paper active as a medium of communication between the farmers and the government administration. It helped in highlighting the basic issues of the farmers favourably. Mahender Singh Tikait, leader of the farmers movement, in his usual style, criticized the newspaper for using the BKU farmers agitation to gain circulation and later discarding the basic issues of the farmers. He felt that

the first generation proprietors of **Amar Ujala** were in favour of the farmers cause and the present management has no inclination towards the farmers because they are already established in the region. The leaders felt that the Journalists from rural background and the wide rural network were the main reasons for better coverage in **Amar Ujala**.

The interviews of the Journalists, selected farmers and the farmer leaders read together with the results of the content analysis clearly indicates that Amar Ujala gave a comprehensive and objective coverage to the BKU agitation. Dainik Jagran lagged behind almost on all fronts both in qualitative and quantitative parameters of the coverage. The complete analysis of the BKU movement in terms of coverage provided by the two newspapers shows that although both the newspapers were not expecting the BKU agitation to clear up into a full fledged movement. But, Amar Ujala, who was desperate to establish itself in the region saw a good opportunity of increasing its readership by providing coverage to the BKU movement. There was a perfect combination of a good human resource in the form of a group of committed Journalists with the rural background, ideal work culture, good management strategy and planning which led to the success of Amar Ujala in not only establishing itself, but also creating new consciousness amongst the farmers. It is clear from the content analysis, interviews with different categories of respondents and the overall view of the facts provided in the study that Amar Ujala attain success step by step from one agitation to another. It kept on constantly highlighting the issues concerning the farmers and adding to its readership. The biggest asset of Amar Ujala, as per the overall response of the study was a strong network of rural reporters, strategy of identifying the right kind of rural issues to highlight and projecting them in a presentable manner. Overall there seemed to be a clear-cut policy of the Management with regard to the coverage of the farmers' movement in

the region. It is therefore evident that the media play a crucial role in the rural areas especially in giving coverage to issues that matter to them the most.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.1 SUMMARY:

The present study is an attempt to methodologically analyse the role played by the print media in highlighting a social movement. **The** coverage of **the** two prominent Hindi dailies, Amar Ujala & Dainik Jagran (Meerut Editions), was critically assessed in propagating Bhartiya Kisan Union's (BKU) movement in Western Uttar Pradesh. The Researcher, himself, was a mainstream journalist during the BKU movement, and got an opportunity to cover the movement, comprehensively, from its inception in 1987 to 1990 which is also a time frame of our study. As required of a proper methodological study, an elaborate Content Analysis of the newspapers was done. Other data collection techniques were also used. The method of observation through in-depth interviews of journalists who covered the movement, farmer leaders, farmers who participated and the self observation of the researcher as a journalist were also made use of.

The study tried to establish a strong linkage between Media and the Farmers\* movement by going deep into one of the most important farmer's movement (BKU) in the country. An attempt was made towards ascertaining the impact of the media in **educating**, enlightening and creating consciousness amongst the farmers in organizing themselves as a potent force to fight for their rights. Since electronic media was still emerging as a powerful media during the period of our study, i.e., 1987-90, the focus was on the print media. The two districts of Western Uttar Pradesh which played an active role in the initiation and spread of the movement - Meerut (now Bagpat) and Muzaffarnagar were selected for an in-depth interviews of the farmer leaders and the farmers. The Meerut Editions of the two most

**popular newspapers - Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran, which provided coverage to the BKU**

movement on a daily basis were chosen for content analysis and interviews of the journalists.

Social movements have been an area of interest to sociologists, communicators and political scientists since the third decade of independence. The study traced the nature and characteristics of social movements, their emergence and outcomes and their relationship to social structures. The discourse on New Social Movements (NSMs) emerged in the year 1980s, attempting to make conceptual sense of the diverse, at times chaotic and complex movements, struggles and organisations that came up in the post 1960s scenario, in both the First and Third Worlds. The study defined the New social Movements (NSM) and emphasized upon the relevance of these NSMs to the New Farmer's Movement which emerged in different parts of India, recently, in the form of BKU and other farmer's movements.

The study examined the growth and dynamics of the farmer's movements in Uttar Pradesh with special focus on the BKU movement of the 80s and 90s. It explored the political and economic conditions that contributed to the rise of the movement and the ideological and social resources that sustained it. The decades of the 1980s witnessed the emergence of two inter-related changes in Uttar Pradesh. The first represented an unfolding and crystallization of agricultural transformation initiated in the 1980s, and the second was the growing momentum of surplus producing farmers as a major political force in Uttar Pradesh. Both of these developments heightened the growth of the BKU movement in western Uttar Pradesh.

In the study, the farmer's movement in Uttar Pradesh was divided in two broad areas.

The first part dealt with the background of the movements launched in Uttar Pradesh and how it has been influenced by the ideology of and work done by Chaudhary Charan Singh during his long political career of 57 years amongst the farmers of the country, in general, and Uttar Pradesh in particular. He was one of the leaders who had original ideas about the farming community and all the issues raised by the farmer's in terms of demands were dealt by Charan Singh at one point of time or the other. In fact, the BKU agitation in Uttar Pradesh during the 1980s, and 1990s was the outcome of the consciousness created by him amongst the farmers over the years. The BKU came to prominence only in 1987, when a concerted effort was made to resurrect the organisation in order to fill the political vacuum left by the death of Charan Singh, the leading protagonist of rural interests. His bitter opposition by a section of intelligentsia and the capitalist owned press was evident in either projecting him in a bad light or ignoring him altogether. The second part gave a comprehensive history of farmer's Movements in Uttar Pradesh starting from the British time to the 1970s and later focusing upon the BKU agitations in the 1980s and 1990s.

The study discussed, in brief, the history of the Press in India. Rural Press is a strong medium for community communication, with its potential for creating awareness of, and articulating, peoples' problems, which serves as a link between the policy-makers, development bureaucracy and farmers and as a second line of conversion of scientific knowledge into information for utilization in the field situation. If we take into consideration, the two newspapers which we have chosen for the present study –Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran, they were rural newspapers practicing real Community Journalism when they started some 53 years ago. Since then, the communities they were catering to changed drastically and so did the newspapers. The population, literacy, standard of living and the transition phase in the rural areas of the readership groups of these newspapers have witnessed a sea change.

Today, both these newspapers have 10 to 12 edition which caters to almost the entire Uttar Pradesh. Considering these facts and the topic of our research, the role of Rural Press in creating consciousness amongst the rural masses was discussed in detail. The study also discussed the history of the emergence and significance of the Indian Language Press in India and the role it played in creating consciousness amongst the masses in different parts of the country.

Hindi is a language which is read and spoken by large number of people in the country and the topic of research deals with the two Hindi papers. So, the history of Hindi press in the country in general and that of Uttar Pradesh in particular was discussed in detail. The origin and growth of the two newspapers, **Amar Ujala** and **Dainik Jagran** was traced and their role in creating consciousness amongst the farmers was discussed. Efforts were made through the demographic profile of the State and the media to establish the growth and increase in circulation of the two newspapers over the years and explain through charts and tables how the growth of infrastructure and literacy helped in increasing the readership of the newspapers. It demonstrated that in the 1980s and 1990s the regional papers of our study grew by leaps and bounds and left the so-called Hindi national newspaper groups like Navbharat Times, Hindustan and Janasatta, far behind in terms of circulation. In fact, of late, the two newspapers have started editions from outside the State i.e, outside Uttar Pradesh from Chandigarh and Jullunder.

After conducting the detailed content analysis of the two newspapers and interviews with farmers, farmer leaders and Journalists who covered the **BKU** movement, the study reached to some significant and interesting conclusions which we shall be discussing under the head of 'Conclusions' which follows.



## 7.2 CONCLUSIONS:

The outcome of the content analysis of all the **five** phases of our study clearly demonstrates that the coverage provided by **Amar Ujala** in terms of news and photographs was much better in all the phases except in the second phase when Dainik Jagran gave more coverage in terms of photographs.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content analysis of the first phase indicates that both the papers didn't take the **BKU** agitation seriously in the initial stage, but, the coverage given by **Amar Ujala** was much more impressive than that of Dainik Jagran. This is more so because **Amar Ujala** had started its Meerut Edition just three months ago whereas Dainik Jagran was there in the region for more than two years. This is apparent from the news items. Many news items used by the **Amar Ujala** came from the agencies and limited number of them came from its own Correspondents. Despite this, **Amar Ujala** showed inclination of highlighting the problems of the farmers, perhaps, sensing that it could **find** a permanent readership amongst the farmers of the region. The editorial written by the **Amar Ujala**, supporting the cause of the farmers and criticising the state government and local administration on March 5 clearly shows the stance of the newspaper and the two **letters-to-the-editor** written to the newspaper by the reader farmers shows that the readers appreciated the coverage of the paper. Except on the first day, i.e. March 3, Dainik Jagran, showed a casual attitude towards the coverage of the farmers agitation.

The second phase of **BKU** agitation makes an interesting reading because it was the longest agitation of the farmers which lasted for 24 days. By now, both the newspapers had realized the potential of the **BKU** movement and ensured the best

possible coverage of this phase. There was healthy competition and both the papers gave highest and their best coverage both in terms of news and photographs. This was the only phase amongst all the **five** phases in which Dainik Jagran gave more overall coverage than **Amar Ujala** to the **BKU** activities. But it was highest only in photographs and not in news. Amar Ujala was ahead in coverage of news. Dainik Jagran surged ahead of Amar Ujala by giving more space to photographs.

During all the seven days. Amar Ujala gave news of better quality and their presentation and placement was also appreciable. On all days, it gave main headline stories on the **BKU** farmers movement with rich reading material and catchy photographs. The layout of the paper was also impressive. The paper gave three editorials on January 29, February 4 and February 18. All these editorials were very stimulating and inspiring to the farmers and were critical of the government, accusing it to ignore the genuine demands of the farmers. However, in case of Dainik Jagran there was not much of planning and research in the presentation of news. The senior Correspondents of Dainik Jagran did give some good **stories**, but their projection and placement was not proper. The front page coverage of the paper was also weak in comparison to Amar Ujala. Dainik Jagran gave two editorials on January 29 and February 18. Both the editorials lacked depth and punch. First editorial was wavering as if the newspaper was unable to make up its mind whether to adopt the line of supporting the farmers movement or to oppose it. The second editorial was clearly against the farmers, criticizing their action and urging the government to deal with the farmers strictly. The feedback from the farmers in the form of Letters - to - the - Editor was missing. However, Amar Ujala published few **letters-to-the-Editor**.

**The comparative analysis of the third phase of the agitation indicates that the** overall coverage of Amar Ujala was much better than that of Dainik Jagran both in news and photographs category. The presentation and projection of the news and photographs of Amar Ujala was also better than that of Dainik Jagran. Amar Ujala increased its space on photographs which was much more than that of Dainik Jagran. However, in this phase of coverage, Dainik Jagran has improved in coverage of news in comparison to other two phases, but, lost to Amar Ujala in space given to photographs. In terms of placement of news also Amar Ujala was better placed than Dainik Jagran, especially in terms of photographs which were of better quality. The paper gave prominent space to news items pertaining to the BKU agitation. For example, the coverage given by Amar Ujala on October 31 highlighting the appeal of Tikait to the farmers to reach Boat Club in large strength was very appealing and the quality of coverage was also good. Overall reporting of the Amar Ujala, covering events related to farmers in the districts was also impressive.

**During** the fourth phase, Amar Ujala devoted just double the space than that of Dainik Jagran to the BKU agitation. The field reporters of Amar Ujala wrote special articles highlighting the unity amongst the Hindu and Muslim farmers. The paper gave impressive full page coverage of the BKU agitation in the Sunday supplement of the newspaper. Amar Ujala also gave wide coverage to the incidents of atrocities of the police upon the farmers by opening fire and forcing the farmers to dive in the canal which led to the death of few farmers by drowning. Amar Ujala's presentation of stories and their placement was better than Dainik Jagran. The paper used its broad network spread in the rural areas to project the abovementioned issues. However, Dainik Jagran gave more byline stories, but, its coverage was not focused.

During the fifth phase of BKU agitation in July '90, again, the coverage of **Amar Ujala** was much better than that of Dainik Jagran in terms of news and photographers. The newspaper gave comprehensive coverage to the agitation of the farmers which was to be held at Lucknow, but, could not be organized because of the highhanded attitude of the, then, Chief Minister of UP, **Mulayam Singh Yadav**. The paper highlighted the atrocities committed by the UP government against the farmers and also wrote two editorials against the government, criticizing its repressive attitude against the farmers. Whereas, Dainik Jagran did not give much coverage to the BKU activists on their way to Lucknow. In **fact**, the paper wrote an editorial criticizing the farmers for creating problems for the government and appreciating the role of the government in curbing the BKU movement. This further gave credence to the point of view of the farmers that Dainik Jagran was a pro-government newspaper

During the course of this research, interviews with 36 farmers respondents, except two farmers, all others clearly indicated that the coverage of BKU farmers movement provided by **Amar Ujala** was appreciated by one and all. The respondents felt that the paper made heavy inroads in the farming households of Western U.P. in general and the two districts of our study - Meerut (now Bagpat) and Muzaffarnagar in particular. The goodwill and growth of the newspaper in terms of readership and circulation was unprecedented. This was clear from the interviews we conducted with the group of farmers, four prominent farmer leaders and four journalists who covered the movement. The interviews disclosed that from the initial stage itself i.e. from the first BKU agitation at **Shamli** in March '87, **Amar Ujala** attracted the fascination of the rural masses and Dainik Jagran could not take the advantage. In fact, it was considered a '**Sarkari**' paper and was apparent that the rural masses in our area of research had no choice of reading any other local newspaper, earlier. Only Dainik Jagran had an

edition from Meerut and circulation in these areas. As the interviews with the journalists, farmer leaders and the farmer themselves disclosed, Amar Ujala also took interest in the movement, of course, with an eye on the rural readership. It went out of the way in building up a good team and spreading the network of its Reporters in the rural areas of the two districts.

Dainik Jagran also had an equal choice of building up its readership in the rural areas, but, it did not avail of the opportunity or may be, the management was satisfied with the comfortable readership it enjoyed. However, it was clear from the stance of the coverage and the editorials published in both the newspapers that Amar Ujala was sympathetic towards the farmers and highlighted their point of view. Dainik Jagran remained indecisive during the first phase and tried to make up the loss during the second phase by providing better coverage. But, by that time it was too late because Amar Ujala had already earned its goodwill amongst the farmers and established readership by breaking new grounds in creating new readers in the rural areas.

We noticed a remarkable awareness and intelligence amongst the interviewed farmers leaders who could notice the stance of coverage of news and views in both the newspapers. The interviews with the farmers and farmers leaders indicated that they had been comparing the coverage of both the papers and reading between the lines of their contents. The farmers not only read the editorials, but, also discussed and analyzed them in group discussions. The respondents confided that the credit of introducing the habit of reading newspapers and editorials goes to Amar Ujala because it gave comprehensive and interesting coverage of the **BKU** agitations. The respondents were intelligent enough to notice the stories of their taste and promote the newspaper, accordingly. Many of them discarded Dainik Jagran which they

**read, earlier. The respondents, few of them illiterate and less read, also pointed out that the** favourable editorials which appeared in Amar Ujala was the main reason why they liked the coverage of Amar Ujala. They said that they used to ask any educated person or a student to read out news and editorials to them.

It was clear from the content analysis and the interviews with the journalists and farmer leaders that there were some good journalists including Omkar Chaudhary who worked hard and contributed some hard-hitting and analytical stories to Dainik Jagran, but these stories did not **find** proper projection and placement in the newspaper. It was also clear from the interviews of the journalists that the real strength of Amar Ujala was its strong network of journalists who came from rural backgrounds and took pride in reporting the news concerning their rural brethren and their problems. In fact, the journalists of Amar Ujala and one journalist from Dainik Jagran clearly expressed their affinity towards the rural people and the issues associated with them. In their interviews, the farmer leaders and even some farmers emphasized this point of rural-oriented journalists working for Amar Ujala who gave better coverage to BKU movement.

It is clear from the above observations that Amar Ujala was instrumental in bringing a positive change in the lives of thousands of farmers living in the two districts of our research. The paper broke new grounds by trying new experiment of highlighting the BKU movement and the problems of farmers and motivating the farmers to read the newspaper. The vast readership of Amar Ujala during and after the BKU agitation indicates that there is an ample scope of establishing a new newspaper provided the management possesses the capability and patience to highlight the basic issues confronting a community.

### 7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

After the BKU agitation, the inhabitants of a rural area in the UP hills, spearheaded an

agitation for a separate State for the hill people. They felt that their interests were not being taken care of in the present set-up of UP. Over a period of time, in the early '90's, the agitations for a separate State of Uttrakhand, became more and more pronounced. Many agitations were held in the National Capital, New Delhi and Dehradun during this period. **Amar Ujala**, again, saw an opportunity in this new movement and not only gave comprehensive coverage to the ongoing agitations, but, also highlighted other problems being faced by the people of the hills. The paper adopted the same strategy of recruiting young and committed team of professional journalists. Within a short period, the newspaper got a stronghold in the hills and its circulation and readership increased rapidly. It would be a good exercise in communication research if this topic is taken up for further research and the movement of the hills which was instrumental in getting a separate State of Uttaranchal is studied in depth.

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