

The Azadi

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By
Abdul Malek

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Please allow me to thank the organisers for giving me a chance to speak about the small newspaper of my country - Bangladesh.

There are 39 dailies and about 400 weeklies in Bangladesh and most of these are published from Dhaka, There is a tendency to categorise dailies into National-those published from Dhaka and Regional-those published from outside Dhaka. Ofcourse, there are regional newspapers those have large circulation than many of the so called national papers.

Chittagong, the Sea-port and second biggest City of the country with a population of about 1.5 million, has four vernacular and one English dailies. Of these 3 vernacular dailies, are of eight pages and the remaining two are six pages. The size of the papers are of Double Demy (18" X 23"). Ours, the Daily Azadi, is one of the oldest newspaper of the country. It was established in 1960. In terms of year ours is the 5th oldest, the other 4 (four) papers are of Dhaka.

In Chittagong Hill tracts there are two vernacular dailies and of these one is of tabloid size.

Newspapers published from Dhaka are printed in Web offset presses while those from outside Dhaka, except Chittagong are using age old conventional method of printing. Almost 80% of these are using handfed Flatbed letterpress machines. Exceptions are in the case of one English Daily from Khulna and government owned vernacular daily from Rajshahi. The former uses the sheet fed offset machine and the latter uses letterpress Rotary.

In Chittagong two Dailies including ours one, are using Rotary Web offset for printing and one is using sheet fed offset. For your information, allow me to mention that we were the first to install Rotary Web offset machine outside Dhaka. Again we were the first to have monotype machine (1964) and subsequently we are the lone organisation to install Linotype machine (1979). Presently we have imported photo Type setters from Linotype England. These are being installed and we hope to switch over from next-month.

The development in printing & composing so fast that it become difficult for industries of the developing nations, particularly in any country where the liquid resources of the entrepreneurs are comparatively limited, to keep pace. Last two decades have surpassed the development of last two hundred years.

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To go back to the printing process, it was Pakistan observer (Now Bangladesh Observer) who imported first letter press Flat bed Rotary machine in 1957. And it was observer to import first one Rotary Web offset machine in 1966. Of course, thereafter Rotary offset machine were imported by other Dhaka Newspapers and these are almost goss and Newsking from U.S.A. Some of these have Subrban folder. After independence some Indian made Orient and Bandhu Machines have been installed. Recently one goss super machine with Auto splicer has been imported by Messrs Ittefaq Group of publications, Dhaka. This machine has a speed of 35000 copies per hour. Inclub another daily from Dhaka has installed Harris Machine and it has 25000 printing speed/

Now about the composing. Till today 95% depend on hand set, only few have hot metal composing with Lino and Mono type. Presently tendency is there to switch over to photo composing. In Dhaka, two vernacular and English dailies - Inqlab, Khabar & Observer respectively are using Lino photo type setter. And of course we will be the Fourth in the country to use the Lino PTS.

In photo composing Linotype model Linotron 202 machines are in use. For composing eight pages in Bengali five terminals are used in two shifts, preference is to get positive from the PTS to save time. It also enables to use positive plates.

Some newspapers have introduced computers, Known as Desk Top publication, for type setting the text. In my country APPLE & IBM are taking lead, These computers are quite cheap and the English Type Faces are good. But Bengali Faces require to be improved, Market will depend on this improvement, Dhaka English daily - the Daily News was the first to adopt. Another Bengali Daily - the Azad and English daily, Daily life (Chittagong) have introduced, say, an experimental basis.

In the process section old newspapers have horizontal Camera and new comers are using vertical type. This shift is because of the fact that horizontal cameras are cumbersome, occupy more space and what is more are lamp carbon are not always available in the market.

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Plate making is still in mediaeval age. These plates are exposed commonly by printing down frame using metal Holide lamp. Only one or two papers are using newly developed printing down frames, which have motor driven diffusion foil attachment. With the use of diffusion foil use of gum is not necessary. After exposing the plates, which saves time. The exposing time is only 10 seconds.

These developments have revolutionised the printing industry and have created a great urge among the readers for better look. But at the same time these have created some problems-social & economic.

The automation are putting the human hands out of employment. As such there are hue & cry over this throughout the country. At times these became human problem. In countries like ours, a worker when dismissed hardly find another employment because of limited scope. According to the law of the land, a dismissed staff is entitled to a great chunk of money. Thus the establishment is to spend a big cash amount and at times it tells upon the organisation. Again, modern technology puts the costs at a higher mark. But the readers are not willing to pay more. Readership in these countries, where percentage of literacy is not more than 15% and majority of people live in dire poverty, Circulation is not expected to jump over to a economic point. Believe it or not, highest circulation of a daily in my country is about two lakhs. Economic survivality of the newspapers depend on the social, political and economic condition of a country. Even the advertisers in our country are shy and Choosy. So, it is more for prestige than for commercial consideration that we are daugling in the newspaper industry.

Thank you gentlemen, for giving me a patient hearing and bearing with me an unimpressive paper.

Thank You.

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