Perspectives of the Library



Dr. Biswajit Adhikary



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This book is dedicated to

My mama

Shri Dipak Kumar Paladhi

The greatest human being I have ever seen.

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Preface

I saw little magazine for the first time in the year 1992 when I was in class XI. The title of the magazine was *Aatpoure* (which means informal, unpretentious, or unceremonious), published from Kharagpur. Deb-babu, Debkumar Suin, an English-teacher of our school was the editor. I wrote something for the first time in the second issue of that magazine. It was a tiny text, looked something like a poem. *Aatpoure* was the magazine that provoked me to try to write something. Since then I wrote heaps of poems, stories, essays, reviews, translations, etc. in the pages of several little magazines. Even, I was assigned to design the cover pages for some magazines.

So, initially, I knew little magazine as the space to publish the works by new authors, poets, painters, etc. After a few years, I got engaged with some magazines as a member of the editorial team. And finally, after almost a decade of introduction, I discovered the treasure of literary jewels in the pages of those magazines, and become a serious reader of little magazines. Some magazines used to publish all forms of literary works alongside, while some magazines are specialized in poetry, fiction, drama, painting, rhyme, etc. Gradually, I realized that little magazines are the true manifesto for the modernism (or post-modernism) of literature. If *The Little Review* had not been published, we would not have got the novel, *Ulysses*. Where would Amiyabhushan Majumdar write his outstanding short stories if there were no magazines like *Purbasha* (edited by Sanjay Bhattacharya) or *Chaturanga* (edited by Ataur Rahaman)?

Moreover, I discovered that little magazines are not only literary little magazines, there are other varieties too. Some of them are invaluable repositories of scholarly discourses on different branches of knowledge. Even, some little magazines are

exclusively dedicated to different contemporary social issues. There are a few little magazines that publish articles on the natural sciences too. Now, it is a proven fact that if anyone wants to study social sciences in *Bangla* he or she cannot avoid or overlook the works scattered in the pages of little magazines. Because those are the prime media for intellectual communications on some subjects and they are the only forum for certain thinkers.

The academic study had always been a burden or liability for me. The time came when I needed a Ph.D. degree for my job. When I was applying for registration of doctoral research, I was scared at the thought that I would have to do a tedious job for at least the next 4/5 years. However, Prof. Durga Sankar Rath made the task interesting for me connecting my professional study to my passion. I submitted my proposal to the University stating that I would like to do some intensive study on Little Magazines. I had never thought that my proposal would be accepted. It was Prof. Rath who made it possible and he agreed to supervise my work.

Since the registration in 2010, I did not write even a sentence in the next two years. Then I started to think about the task. Initially, I didn't have any clear idea about the course of my research. The comrades of the little magazine movement, who knew about my assignment, were voluntarily providing me their special opinions and suggestions. Biswajit-da (Dr. Biswajit Panda) had done his Ph.D. on the little magazines from the literary perspectives. He lent me his thesis for study. And that helped me a lot to have some clear perceptions.

To have in-depth theoretical knowledge about the little magazines, I talked to several senior authors, poets, and editors. I collected all the available heavy special issues of the leading little magazines. Poet Manaskumar Chini, author Kinnar Ray, poet editor Haraprasad Sahoo, Surya Nandi, Prafulla Pal, etc. provided me the necessary guidelines to build up the right strategy for the research work. There has been a handy yearbook edited by Zahirul

Hasan, which helped me to estimate the population and to design the sample for my study.

In the years 2013 to 2015, every weekend I used to roam around the College Street of Kolkata in the quest for some missing magazines, some missing issues, or some missing articles. In this context, I must say something for my successor. For the person who is religiously doing a little magazine, College Street would be the optimum pilgrimage. The *Patiram* at College Street junction is the inevitable inn for him. And the address at 18/M, Tamer Lane, would be his final destination where a lonely old monk is sitting in a monastery. Everybody knows the name of the monastery, it is "Kolkata Little Magazine Library O Gabesana Kendra"; and the famous monk is none other than our beloved and respected Sandip-da Shri Sandip Dutta.

No one can learn much about *Bangla* little magazine without knowing Shri Dutta. I met Sandip-da at his library on a Saturday afternoon of summer and talked to him about the resources I needed for my study. He congratulated me with a bright smile and assured me of all sorts of help. I immediately applied for membership in his library and started my study. I must mention one special fact in this regard. He always provided me with what I asked for, along with something extra. And that extra information or documents were invaluable inputs for my work. He is so knowledgeable about the little magazine that his general words seem like theories. Working in his library under his supervision was a wonderful experience. Memories of those weekends are very special to me.

While doing the work, I met many of the famous personalities of the little magazines. I will never forget their guidance and assistance. During those four-five years, many wonderful stories about the little magazine movement and the revolutionaries have been stored in my mind. If I write all those stories, it will become a book. Maybe someday, I will have to write it.

I was able to complete the research work due to the continuous cooperation of some of my teachers and colleagues. One of them

I must mention is my friend, Assistant Professor of English literature, Shri Bibhas Chand. He was always with me in the whole process. He is the first reader and critic of each of my writings on this subject.

It is to be noted that this book is not the complete volume of my Ph.D. thesis. However, all of the essays compiled here are the by products of that research work. The first article was published in 2011, while the rest were published in 2015.

Here I must admit that since the articles were once written as independent works, there have been some repetitions in them. I apologize to the readers for that. Moreover, it should also be mentioned that English is not the language of my thoughts, so I have to do constant translation of my vernacular to write English. And I can write much better Bengali than that. So in my mind, I suffer from an inferiority complex about my writing. I hope the reader will forgive me for this weakness.

2nd August 2021

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Biswajit Adhikary

Collection and Preservation of the Local Publications: Role of the Libraries

Introduction: The mainstream media of any country or province cannot concentrate on all the important issues of any distant localities. It is not possible or feasible for a newspaper or magazine of big cities to give enough space or importance to any village or any small town. However, every small village or town has its own history, heritage, custom, and culture. In many distant localities there are old temples, remains of old feudal structures, rare manuscripts, etc. Some villages have some special kind of foodstuffs, customs, and rituals. In a word, every town, or village has its own identity.

Huge numbers of local publication like local newspapers and little magazines are published regularly from distant corners of our state. These publications reflect different problems, needs, and important issues of day to day life of local people. Articles on local history and biography, folk culture; folk songs, etc. of different rural areas of our state are exclusively published in such publication. The reports and articles published on those media are generally overlooked by the concerned authorities and scholars. That's why the publications should be collected and archived properly. This paper concentrates on the importance of such publication in rural Bengal and tries to specify the roles to be played by the libraries in this respect.

The history of Bengali Newspapers is almost two centuries old. It starts with the publication of *Sambad Darpan* or *Digdarshan* in 1818. It is needless to specify that the centre of the publication of Bengali newspapers and news magazines in those days was in Kolkata. The Indian renaissance initiated and flourished in this city in the 19th century. And, Acharya Brajendranath Seal opined that the publication of newspapers and news magazines was one of the results of the renaissance.

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Besides Kolkata, there were some other centers too where such papers started publishing. In the British period, as per the requirement of the colonial Govt. the importance of some suburban areas were increased. Some commercial centers were set up in some of those areas. As a result of which people arrived in such towns in search of their occupation, and in this way, the process of urbanization started. Newspapers and magazines started publishing from those newly developed township areas e.g. *Murshidabad Sambadpatri* (1840), *Tamoluk*, etc. Those were not the newspapers but those publications prepared the field for the first generation of newspapers.

Which publications can be called local publication? Simply, we can say that local publications are those which are published locally. Dr. Swapan Basu in his article "Unish shataker anchalik patra-patrika", tried to give a general definition of the local newspaper. "We can call those papers as local papers which aim to publish articles and reports on the topics like – history of a certain area, the local living habits, the needs of the local people, etc." Generally, the local papers can be identified by their names but there are exceptions as well. *Tamoluk* published from Tamluk was not a local newspaper but *Sanjay* from Faridpur was really an effective local newspaper.

Little magazines are generally considered as the media of literary works written by the younger generation. Alongside the Magazines also publish articles on various branches of Social Sciences and contemporary social events. A huge amount of articles are published in thousands of such magazines from different corners of Bengal as well as in India. Those articles are generally neglected or overlooked by social science researchers. The locally published little magazines act as the windows to display the socio-economic status of that locality. The exclusive features of local livelihoods, needs, and problems of local people, the local dialect, and folk culture are reliably reflected in these magazines.

Features and objectives of the publications: In the editorial of the *Tamoluk* the objective of the paper was indicated. "This small magazine is being published from a rural village. So how can we expect the support or attention of the local people towards the magazine if the socio-economic condition of the area cannot be revealed?

In 12th Ashardh of Bangabda 1300 (1893) *Chunchura Bartabaha* in its editorial page wrote—"The main objectives of (this) newspaper is to publish reports on the needs of the peoples of the district of Hoogly, to publish important news, and to print different articles on Hinduism, Hindu society, and Politics"

Srihatta Darpan wrote—"This small paper is being published to carefully reflect all the important affairs of Shrihatta".

In the above quotations, the main features and objectives of the local newspapers and news magazines of those days are reflected. From then as time goes by, the socio-economic needs of the people changed with the change in political conditions and technological advancements. With those changes, the objectives of such publications are revised and some new features are also added.

Based on the published reports and articles the features of the local newspaper and locally published Little Magazine are as follows:

Local Newspapers generally publish:

- local news for local people
- reports on local affairs
- articles on local biography and history
- articles on the archaeology of local areas
- articles on local folk-cultures
- articles on some old manuscripts
- survey of the opinion of the local people

Little Magazines publish:

- publish literary works of local writers
- articles on local dialects

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- articles on local folk culture and folklore
- articles on local history and biography
- articles on different branches of social sciences
- articles on archaeology and social anthropology

History and coverage of the publications: The oldest local newspaper, so far known, is *Murshidabad Sambadpatri*. It was launched on 10th May 1840 from Kasimbazar with the kindness of Raja Krishnanath Ray. On 10th January 1849, the *Sambad Bhaskar* wrote "There has been enough publicity of newspapers in the city of Calcutta but not in the rural areas. Raja Krishnanath Ray Bahadur first published a newspaper from his capital town Murshibad...."

Some other old papers are weekly Sambad Muktabali (1848) from Shibpur Howrah, weekly Sambad Bardhaman Jnanapradayini (1849), weekly Bardhaman Chandroday (1849), monthly Midnapore and Hijli Guardian (1851), weekly Sabmad Shashadhar (1851) from Shreerampur, weekly Dhaka Prakash (1861), weekly Grambarta Prakashika (1863) from Kumarkhali of Kustia, weekly Bharat Paridarshan (1863) from Shantipur, monthly Pabna Darpan (1864), weekly Bharatranjan (1864) from Baharampur, monthly Grambasi (1873) from Ranaghat, etc.

In the district of Midnapore, the history of local publications is very rich. The first publication from Midnapore was a newspaper, patronized by the district collector H.G. Belly. It was "Midnapore and Hijli Guardian" or *Medinipur o Hijli anchaler adhyaksha*, published in 1851. It was a bilingual newspaper. A complete Bengali news magazine *Tamoluk patrika* edited by Trailokyanath Rakshit was launched from Tamluk in 1874. It is to be noted that the *Bangadarshan* of Bankimchandra had started only two years back. After that, the fortnightly news magazine *Medinipur Samachar* (1877) edited by Hridaynath Das; weekly *Medini* (1879) edited by Akhilchandra Dutta and weekly *Medinibandhab* (1898) edited by Debdas Karan started publishing.

As the rate of literacy had been increased in the twentieth century the number of local newspapers was also increased comprehensively. The chronological list lf such publiscations is as follows:

- Nihar (1901, weekly) from Kanthi edited by Madhusudan Jana,
- *Tamalika* (1903, weekly) from Tamluk edited by Shreedhar Adhikary,
- *Medinipur Hitayisi* (1907) from Midnapore town edited by Manmathanath Nag
- Satyabadi (1922, weekly) edited by Satkaripati Ray
- *Pradip* (1942)
- Swaraj o Sangathan (1947)
- Medinipur Patrika (1952)
- Medinipurer Katha (1953, weekly)...

In recent times, some daily newspapers are published from the different corners of the district. Only from the township of Midnapore and its surrounding areas at least 8/10 daily newspapers are published regularly. Some examples of such publications are *Upatyaka*, *Biplabi Sabyasachi*, *Medinipur Times*, *Chhapa Khabar*, *Medinipur Barta*, etc. They play a great role as the local media of information for the people of Midnapore.

Besides the newspaper, a huge number of little magazines are published from distant corners of our state. Except Kolkata, the maximum number of such magazines has been published from the district of undivided Medinipur over two to three decades. Nearly 50 little magazines are published from the township of Midnapore and its nearby localities, 10 of which are very regular.

Some of the leading little magazines of the district of Medinipur are *Amritalok* edited by Samiran Majumdar, *Shabder Michhil* published by the Midnapore branch of the Ganatantrik Lekhak Shilpi Sangha, *Ebang Sayak* edited by Surya Nandi, *Srijan* edited by Prof. Lakshman Karmakar, *Purba* edited by Ranajit Adhikary, *Jwaladorchi* edited by Rittwik Tripathi, *Prakrita Angikar* edited by Ramranjan Ray and *Turya* edited by the famous author Anil Gharai.

Subjects of the published articles of the local publications: The local newspapers generally concentrate on the news and events of the

surrounding locality. The area may span from a small town to a whole district. The topics published in these publications have a great subject variety. Besides the day-to-day news, they publish articles on various subjects. Different subject experts of local areas express their thought on different contemporary political and social events. Articles on local history and biography, local problems, local culture, folklore, folk arts, folk songs are exclusively published in these papers.

One daily newspaper *Biplabi Sabyasachi* and one little magazine *Shabder Michhil*, both published from Midnapore town are selected for the study. All issues of the last one year of *Biplabi Sabyasachi*, and all the issues published in between the period of ten years between 2001 and 2010 of *Shabder Michhil* are taken into consideration. The subject-wise breakup of the published articles in the two above-mentioned publications is displayed below.

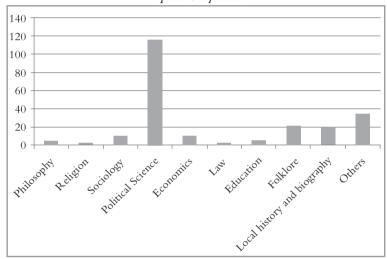
Table 1: Subject wise breakup of the published articles in Biplabi Sabyasachi

Subjects	Articles	Percentage
Philosophy	5	2.17
Religion	2	0.87
Sociology	11	4.78
Political Science	116	50.43
Economics	11	4.78
Law	3	1.30
Education	6	2.61
Folklore	21	9.13
Local history and biography	20	8.70
Others	35	15.22
Total	230	100

Biplabi Sabyasachi is one of the most popular daily newspapers published in the town of Midnapore. The main published matter of this publication is the day-to-day news of the nearby locality. Besides these local news items, the paper publishes articles on different subjects as shown in the diagram. Renowned social

scientists, educationists, historians enrich the newspaper with their valuable scholarly articles regularly. Persons like Haripada Mandal, Anuttam Bhattacharya, Ajharuddin Khan, Biplab Maji, Kanailal Dey are the regular author of the post-editorial articles. The subject-wise breakup of the published articles in *Biplabi Sabyasachi* other than the news items is shown in the diagram below.

Diagram 1: Subject wise breakup of the articles published in Biplabi Sabyasachi



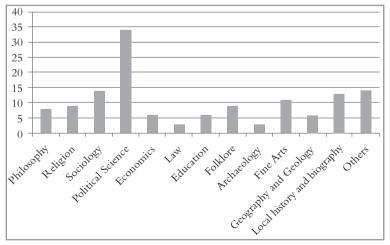
Shabder Michhil is a famous little magazine published from the district of Paschim Medinipur, edited by Ajharuddin Khan, who is the author of some great books including the biography of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Little Magazines are mainly the platform for the rising poets and authors to publish themselves in front of a group of genuine readers of modern literature. These publications are generally non-commercial in nature and support experimentation on different art forms and literary styles. Few of these Magazines regularly publish scholarly and thoughtful essays on different subjects other than the literature. The quantity and the quality of those non-fiction thought-provoking essays are very attractive for the researchers of different subjects. From

the table and the diagram below, the variety of subjects of the essays are displayed.

Table 2: Subject wise breakup of the published articles in Shabder Michhil

Subjects	Articles	Percentage
Philosophy	8	5.93
Religion	9	6.67
Sociology	14	10.37
Political Science	34	25.19
Economics	6	4.44
Law	3	2.22
Education	6	4.44
Folklore	9	6.67
Archaeology	2	1.48
Fine Arts	11	8.15
Geography and Geology	6	4.44
Local history and biography	13	9.63
Others	14	10.37
Total	135	100.00

Diagram 2: Subject wise breakup of the articles published in Shabder Michhil



Importance of preserving such publications: Prof. Jayantanuj Bandyopadhyay in his book "Dharma o pragati" wrote that the Indians don't have history consciousness. Indians love to read and write epics rather than history. Therefore, we have great epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana but we don't have any reliable written document of the history of those periods. Historians have to depend mainly on the travelogues written by the foreign travelers of those periods to write theses on ancient Indian history because of the scarcity of documentary evidence inside the country.

Local history or regional history is relatively a newer branch of history. Many scholars are specialized in this field nowadays; several books are getting published in different distant rural areas of our state. Local publications like local newspaper and local little magazines can be the most important source of information for these works.

These publications can also be a great source of information for local biographies. From the time of "Buno Ramnath" some extraordinary people did their works silently hiding in distant corners of rural areas of our country. Later their works get published and become famous but the story of their great concentration, dedication, and constant endeavor remain unknown to the common people. Local publications can be the most useful documents to discover such great biographies. For example, we can say about Shree Bhabatos Satpathi the renowned *lokokabi* (balladist) of the district of Paschim Medinipur. Almost all of his literary works have been published in little magazines. Moreover, essays on local poets and authors like Satpathi are published only in local publications.

The archaeological information of local areas is generally published in local publications first, and then the big papers take up the story. Reports on old temples, churches, or mosques; descriptions of archaeological excavations of surrounding local areas are exclusively published in these small media. For example, we can mention the village *Pathra*, famous for its temples set up

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by some feudal *Rajas* who ruled here a few centuries ago. The reports on these invaluable archaeological architectures were published for the first time in a local newspaper of very small circulation.

Such publications are the mirror of the political opinion of the local people; on the other hand, these media can play a great role to design the public opinion on different issues. The problems and needs, the infrastructural shortcomings, the pattern of local livelihoods are reflected in these media. The local publications act as the complementary to the big media. So we can say that there is great importance to preserve such publications for scholars as well as for common people.

Role to be played by the libraries: For preserving such local publications the main role must be played by the local public libraries and college libraries. No personal endeavor can make a complete collection of these publications. Therefore, the Govt. aided public and college libraries have their duty to archive such special documents, highly useful for the scholars of different branches of Social Sciences. The public libraries (rural and urban) have their infrastructural limitations, so the college libraries must take the leading role in this respect. They should support and encourage those local media to open up a new horizon of the information sources and to provide value-added information services to their users.

The conventional information sources may not be sufficient for researchers of a certain specialized area of this new era. The news and reports of rural or suburban areas are not always emphasized in the big papers; only the local papers can act as the substitute. The local media have also their role as complementary to the big media. So, to prepare a complete collection of information on subjects like local history and biography, folk culture, etc. a Library must collect and archive at least 2 to 3 little magazines and at least one local newspaper regularly. The articles published in little magazines should be properly indexed and

proper clippings should be prepared and preserved from the newspapers.

The articles published in those local media may be archived in digital format too so that the potential users of the document can browse and search through the online interface provided for them. Any open-source digital library software can be used for this purpose.

The librarians should have up-to-date knowledge about the local publications and their impact on the locality so that they can choose the right newspaper and little magazine for their libraries. And with the collection of those media, the libraries should extend their services for the users who come from outside the institution.

Conclusions: In the era of this information explosion, the information is bing emitted from varieties of sources. As the socioeconomic conditions of the country have been improved the average educational qualification of the common people has been moved up. The varieties of sources of information have been increased. So it is a great challenge for the information professionals to identify and locate the newborn media of the new generation.

Librarians should have patience and prudence like the fishermen waiting for fish. They have to identify quickly the newer form of the information media and collect them for their information repositories. As described by the fifth law of library science, in a growing library the varieties of information sources and documents to be archived by the library will also increase over years. Librarians should be prepared to meet the demand of the time.

The local publications like local newspaper and little magazines are the two newer forms of the sources of information. The paper tries to find out the importance of those media as the primary documents from a library perspective. Extensive researches are needed to find out the actual potency of those media as the information resources.

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Little Magazines, Social Sciences, and the Library: an Introduction

Is there any mutual relationship among Little Magazine, Social Sciences and the Library? Is there any potential of the relationship to be explored scholarly? We will try to examine if there is an opportunity for in-depth study or not.

We find three live facets—'Little Magazine', 'Social Science' and 'Information' in the title of this article. In the title, there is a hint of tripartite confrontation or in other words, a convergence of three heterogeneous streams of intellect with different sets of objectives. The three streams are—(i) movement of the avantgarde periodicals, (ii) study and research of the subjects which directly related with the human society and civilization, and (iii) identification, preservation, and management of the knowledge-particles i.e. information. Three parties, in this context, are—(i) the stakeholders of Little Magazine e.g. Editors and Publishers, (ii) Authors and Readers of the literature on Social Sciences e.g. Researchers and Scholars, and (iii) the managers of the Information i.e. Library Professionals.

In the present work, the phenomena of so-called convergence will be observed and analyzed from the viewpoint of the Library. The two main aspects are 'whether the convergence actually occurred or not', and 'the consequences of the incident'. Hence, a natural question may arise that why does a fretfully busy department like Library would think about those slender and short-lived periodicals which are neither familiar and nor so consistent? To answer the question, the example of the activities of the constabulary system can be cited. If there is a gathering of people, whatever may be the reason behind that, the nearby police station cannot overlook. They will obviously collect necessary information in anticipation, keep close vigilance over the crowd,

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It is our pride that the Bengali avant-garde magazines are almost contemporaneous to those of Europe and the United States. *Poetry:* A Magazine of Verse was launched in 1912 in Chicago; and, Sabuj Patra was published in 1914, the year in which Blast (London), The Egoist (London), and The Little Review (NY City & Paris) were published. This book is one of the very few titles on Bengali avant-garde magazines in English. However, the texts are not as dry as the research articles used to be. Therefore, anyone who is interested in little magazines can go through the slender volume. The author has been associated with little magazines for nearly thirty years as a reader, author, editor, and organizer. The works compiled here are enriched by his long experience of inward relationship with the magazines.

Biswajit Adhikary, M.Sc., MLISc., Ph.D., started his career as a Trainee at the Library of the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum (BITM), Kolkata in 2007. Since 2010, he has been working as the Librarian of Raja N.L. Khan Women's College (Autonomous), Midnapore Town, West Bengal.





15A/1, G. J. Khan Road, Kolkata, West Bengal India, PIN - 700039 bookswaypub@gmail.com

