

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA & LITERATURE:

- Many media experts feel that media is like a bullet. It reaches home in a short while, with total impact.
- People, therefore, are ready to take in what media dishes out to them, almost without question and without argument. Others feel that people are discerning.
- They choose only that matter from media which is of importance to them, or which matters to them.
- It is undoubtedly true that media does set the agenda: what we read in newspapers and magazines, hear on the radio or watch on television, becomes the basis for what we think, feel and act upon. Conversely, media has the responsibility of reflecting what people think and feel.
- News is a major commodity aired out by media. News records events as they are taking place: It may be political events, social jamborees, something as serious as declaration of war, imminent scandals or something as frivolous as fashion pageants.
- Nothing is "great" or "little" for media to record. As long as the event or personality touches the life of the majority of persons, news agencies pick up the thread and record it.
- News has been variously defined as "something that is new" or that "which comes to us from north, east, west or south".
- It could be termed as "current history". News needs to be dispassionate and far reaching, yet, not all events or personalities make news. What then is the Criteria for news selection? Change is a basic criteria for news.
- The bigger the change, the greater the number of persons affected by it, the more important it is. Conflicts and disasters make news. Strikes, demonstrations, crime, political tension, suspense which is often associated with conflicts are important factors for news selection.
- New events, progress, achievements and break through all make it to the headlines. Whether it is something as earth shaking as Neil

Armstrong's first step on the moon which he termed as a "giant step for mankind" or the Bill Clinton Lewinsky event, news rarely leaves events alone.

- Media is preoccupied with eminent personalities. It is often said, in a lighter vein, that if the President so much as sneezes, it becomes news. A case in point is the life and death of Princess Diana - Nothing Princess Diana said or did was too trivial for the media to pick-up.
- Her marriage to the handsome, charming and eligible Prince Charles was a media event.
- It was a Cinderella story which the media loved and the people loved even more. What Diana wore, where she went, even her hairstyle nicknamed the "Diana cut" all became media forte.
- Her children, their birth and upbringing, Diana's middle class upbringing and her imperial status after marriage were all media spotlights. So much so, that when personally things began to go wrong with her, the media dissected her every move and discussed her marital status threadbare.
- As in life, so in death. The "Paparazzi" of press photographers relentlessly pursued Diana. Nothing could stop them from pursuing her on the eventful day in August 1997 when the end came finally. It was a disaster and the media was infamously involved.
- Right from times immemorial, media has been preoccupied with personalities. What they, say, do, think and feel is splashed across newspapers or comes alive on television screens across the world. In fact, political luminaries come alive to us only through media:
- Leading lights of the century like Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhiji, Rabindranath Tagore, Sunil Gawasker, Lata Mangeshkar, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, M.F. Hussain or film star Nargis have all come alive due to media.
- They were catapulted to fame by media due to their singular achievements in their individual fields. Whatever they did or said, fashioned an era. Political leaders like Gandhiji and Martin Luther King were. the beacons of this century.

- They were leaders in thought, deed and action. When they lived, media recorded their every moment. Their statements, their decisions, what they thought, emoted or felt.
- Their trials and travails, their predicaments and problems all become a focus for media. After their death, they were written about in books.
- Media here converted to Literature very easily. Biographies therefore base factual detail gathered through media. Some biographers put together their own experience as well as that recorded by media:
- A case in point is Pupul Jaykar's "Indira Gandhi", a biography of the remarkable lady who was India's Prime Minister for almost 16 years. This biography is a compelling record of Indira Gandhi, her life and times.
- Indira Gandhi's early years were tremulous and lonely. Born into a family swept up by political upheavals Indira Gandhi faced several problems during her teenage years. Slowly, her confidence grew in youth and as a young adult.
- Pupul Jaykar has written about her not only as a political leader, but as an individual.
- She is viewed with honesty and compassion. Pupul Jaykar writes with a rare insight, vision and feeling.
- Being rather close to the Nehru family, and Indira Gandhi in particular, Pupul Jaykar has a unique distinction and position. Indira Gandhi was a political leader for more than 16 vital years after Indian Independence.
- Her triumphs and travails span the better part of free India's history. Nowhere probably has a single person mattered in post independence India as did Indira Gandhi.
- Though close to the 'doyen of Indian Politics', Pupul Jaykar does not lose her perspective. She views Indira Gandhi's acts of omission with biographical candour.

- Undoubtedly, Indira ruled as the "Goddess Durga" as she was made out to be, in her first two terms as prime-minister, while 1997 marked a dismal fall as a political supremo.
- However, she came back to power and once more tried to prove her mettle only to be struck down by an assassin's bullet. In the forward; Pupul Jaykar has recorded how she managed to write this biography:
- "This is not a political biography but Indira Gandhi's life was part of the unfolding of the history of India, intricately woven with India's past and future.
- It becomes inevitable, therefore, that politics forms a backdrop to her public and often private actions... "She goes on further to emphasis..." It was in 1986 that I decided to write the biography of Indira Gandhi.
- She was a controversial person and the controversies had not ended with her death... "Though Pupul Jaykar had sought help from Rajiv Gandhi before she began writing, she was not able to get any matter from him, so finally she says:
- "I had therefore to rely on my own observations, interviews with her political colleagues and opponents to tell her story." She adds further a little later, "I am deeply grateful to Dr. Gisela Boun for permission to use her photograph of Indira Gandhi, which forms the cover page, to Raghu Rai and T.S. Nagarajan for permission to use some of their photographs of Indira Gandhi and to Dileep Padgaonkar of 'The Times of India' for his support.
- My special thanks to Arun Purie of "India Today" for permission to use the library which helped me greatly in locating various sources".

Thus a biographer so close to her biographer as Pupul Jaykar was to Indira Gandhi certainly had to garner information from newspapers, magazines and other media sources since authentic material can be found quite often only in media related libraries. Dr. Rafiq Zakaria has been known as a scholar in varied fields like law, education, journalism, politics and Islamic studies. He has written several books including "A study of Nehru"; "Razia Queen of India"; "The Insight into the Status of Woman in Islam"; "The Struggle within Islam". "Muhammed and the Quran" by Dr. Rafiq Zakaria published by Penguin Books in 1991 was inspired by Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses". The latter became very popular after the "fatwa" by the late Ayatollah Khomeini. It convinced Dr. Zakaria that a fair picture of Islam needed to be presented once again in order to remove much of the distortion that has crept into its perception. He has lamented the fact that though much has been written about Islam, the old prejudices and misunderstandings persist.

Many oil-rich Muslim rulers have spent billions of dollars propagating the cause of Islam in Europe and America. But this has not helped. On the contrary, most Europeans and Americans and a large chunk of the rest of the world have continued to be prejudiced against Islam and they are quite certain that Islam has in fact no answer to its critics. He therefore elaborates that his aim in penning, "Muhammed and the Quran" was "mine is a modest effort to meet prejudice by reason, distortion by fact, and calumny by a sober analysis of events as adduced from unimpeachable historical records. The book is not the life story of Muhammed, nor does it give a translation of the whole text of the Quran. It is an attempt to bring out the essentials of what Allah has pronounced and what his Messenger preached and practised". Zakaria goes on to emphasise that Muhammed has often been lambasted as an imposter, his mission declared a fraud. He has been lambasted as warmonger who spread his religion by the sword. These are the charges which have been hurled against him over the centuries.

Zakaria makes an attempt to answer these rationally. He has studied facts and allows them to speak for themselves. He says: "I shall feel amply rewarded if my book will help dispel at least some misgivings about Islam and bring a little light into the dark corners that exist in the thinking world, so that the faith which has moved millions of people for more than fifteen centuries is somewhat better understood". Amongst others, Zakaria relied upon Mr. Girilal Jain, whom he terms a "Scholar-editor" and "Doyen of Indian Journalism", for painstakingly going through the manuscript and making some critical suggestions. Zakaria has also taken the help of his wife Fatma Zakaria whose editorial competence was of great help.

Fatma Zakaria was Senior Assistant Editor at "The Times of India" for several years and is now Executive Editor of "The Daily" in Bombay. Zakaria affirms that "her long experience in journalism has always been a great asset to me. I was often impatient and irritated with her unceasing and tireless editing, but the end result has been gratifying and more than rewarding." This brings to a crux: Where (media) journalism and literature unite? The point at which journalism become literature. In the nineteenth century Charles Dickens was a successful reporter covering Parliament for London's "Morning Chronicle". In the twentieth century, Ernest Hemingway started his career on the "Kansas City Star" before becoming a European correspondent for the "Toronto Star". Charles Dickens, as is well known, became a great novelist with memorable works like "A Tale of Two Cities", "David Copperfield", "The Pickwick Papers" etc. Hemmingway's great works, include "A Farewell to Arms" which could be termed as "A modern classic"; "The Old man & The Sea" and "For whom The Bells Toll". Nearer home, journalists who have turned to writing books, are many.

Names which readily come to mind are Arun Shourie, Khushwant Singh and Janardhan Thakur. Arun Shourie is known for his many political commentaries. "Hinduism, essence and Consequence", "Symptoms of Fascism", "Institutions in the Janata Phase", "Mrs. Gandhi's second reign", "Religion in Politics", "The State as Charade" and "Indian Controversies", his thorough study of politics, religion and the state, make him a knowledgeable writer. His incisive language, clear arguments and razor sharp rationality, leaves the reader convinced and even chagrined at times. Khushwant Singh has been a national figure since he began writing. His career developed rapidly when they become Editor of the "Illustrated Weekly of India". His journalistic output has been tremendous.

His flamboyant nature and outspoken stance has won him many admirers. Books like "A History of the Sikhs", "Last Train to Pakistan" and his famed short stories catapulted him to fame as a writer as well. In Kushwant Singh we find a blend of journalism and literature. Recently, he has become a television anchor person with his weekly show entitled "Not a Nice man to Know" on Star Plus Channel. Like Arun Shourie and Khushwant Singh, Janardhan Thakur is a veteran journalist. Born at Singhwara in Darbhanga district of Bihar, he was educated at the University of Allahabad. He joined journalism in 1959, and has had extensive experience working in various newspapers "The Searchlight" and "The Indian Nation" in Patna, the "Hindustan Standard" and the "Anand Bazar Patrika" in Calcutta. For a time he worked with Khushwant Singh as the contributing Editor of "New Delhi" magazine.

In 1971, Thakur was a Jefferson Fellow at the East-West Centre, Hawaii. As a correspondent in the Delhi Bureau of the Anand Bazar Patrika he covered the Russian occupation of Afghanistan and the hostage drama in Khomeini's Iran in 1984, he covered the presidential elections in America for the 'Richa Features which he has been editing since 1981. He is a syndicated Columnist and lives on the outskirts of Delhi. Janardhan Thakur is best known for his books entitled "All the Prime Minister's Men" written in 1977. "Indira Gandhi and her power game" written in 1979 and "V.P. Singh: The quest for power". Taking a clean look at the biography written on V.P. Singh, we find Janardhan Thakur a sceptic. It was written before V.P. Singh became the prime minister. The climb of VP. Singh to power, to becoming a Defence Minister in Rajiv Gandhi's political brigade was a "power game" according to Janardhan Thakur.

Finally, it must be said that media is like coffee which is brewed instantly. It cannot wait for time and tide to change. Instant coffee is hot, rejuvenating and refreshing. But ground and filtered coffee is long lasting, strong and has a residual quality as well. Reflections are possible in literary writing to a greater extent than journalistic writing. As emphasized by William Rivers and Wilbur Schramm & Clifford G. Christians, in their book, "Responsibility in Mass Communication": Mass communication media can and do effect change in many cases when they are all in agreement. If one can imagine all those with pivotal roles, if the media agreeing to present the information and develop the psychological dynamics that would persuade the American people to adopt one point of view toward nuclear weapons, toward sexism in the United States then there would be possibility of dramatic change.

"In the absence of such an unlikely agreement, we must consider the power of the mass media not as a tidal wave as a great rivers. It feeds the ground it touches, following the lines of existing contours but preparing the way for change over a long period. Sometimes it finds a spot where the ground is soft and ready and there it cuts a new channel. Sometimes it carries material which helps to alter its banks. And occasionally, in time of flood, it washes away a piece of ground and gives the channel a new look." "Undoubtedly the most important role of the media is to feed the ground to deposit layers of information day by day hour by hour, so that a base is laid for knowledge on which we walk. Compared with the occasional great and dramatic changes we can attribute to the media this slow, continuing never ending effect is immensely more powerful and significant."