



Mapping of Media (Print) Industry in North East

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Introduction

Relatively free from rigid social hierarchy such as likes caste system with strong communitarian spirit marked the India's North East. With its population of about 39 million constituting 2.69 per cent of India's total population of 1.02 billion (2001 census), and covering an area of 2,55,088 sq. km or 7.75 per cent of India's landmass of 32,87,263 sq. km, the region's average literacy rate of 64.5 per cent is more than the national average of 61.3 per cent (2001 census).

The North Eastern region of India consisting of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim,¹ is in any way no homogeneous. If India is known for her 'unity in diversity', the world of India's North East is defined by its diversity. It hardly needs to mention that 'North East' is just a geographical connotation and there is little common attachment among the people of this region barring some communities cutting across few states' territorial boundary. It was estimated that there are more than 200² communities in this part of the country. Out of which, some 160 communities were recognized as 'tribe'³ under the Indian Constitution of Article 342 and there are many more sub-tribes and divisions within it. Similarly, there are over 200 speaking dialect⁴ besides Assamese and Manipuri, which are included in the eight scheduled of the constitution. Thus, diversity is vast, though other than the Khasis,

¹ With the inclusion of Sikkim in the North East Council (NEC), the states in the North East have increased from seven to eight. Unlike other states, the geographical location of the Sikkim is not contiguous, however it is done with the hope to improve governance and administration since like many states in the North East, Sikkim is also predominantly dominated by the tribal.

² Within the states of North East, the largest number of communities is in Arunachal Pradesh, erstwhile known as NEFA (North Eastern Frontier Agency)

³ Even though the word 'tribe' remain a contentious issue within the academia since it was considered superimposed and a term borrowed from western conception, here it refers to those communities claimed as local and indigenous and who does not belong to any major religious groups until the process of westernization and christianisation.

⁴ It is remained to be seen as some scholars have pointed out that if a particular commodity have a dialect, it may also have language.

Jantias and Garos, most of the community trace their origin to Mongolian race.

Besides, ninety-nine percent of the India's North East geographical boundary share borders with the neighbouring countries and with just one percent are attached with the mainland India. This connecting track is popularly known as Siliguri corridor or 'Chicken's Neck'. North East is surrounded by Myanmar (Burma) in the east, China in the North, Bangladesh in Southwest and Bhutan in Northwest.

In the North Eastern region of India, the Christian missionaries were the ones who initially started the print media, with a publication called *Orunodoi* in Assam.⁵ It was followed by other publications in neighbouring Khasi, Jaintia & Garo Hills (Meghalaya), Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and other places. They all seemed to have had a common goal – to reform the society.

Table 1: Map of North Eastern Region



Print Media in North East

⁵ Other than princely states of Manipur, Tripura and NEFA, those days the present whole India's North East was known as Assam.

On account of certain compelling reasons,⁶ the approach of the study was focus more on state-wise instead of taking the North Eastern region as a whole. It is hopeful that following this approach will not only provide the respective state's status of print media, but will also give the general view of the region as a whole. This approach also may throw some light on diverse nature of the North East, which was often ignored while generalizing the region as compact whole or even as homogenous. The most dangerous to study on any issue in the North East is to simplifying the region to law of universality.

No doubt, there are some periodicals, which are bi-weekly, fortnightly, quarterly, half-yearly and annually, the focus of this study is on daily, weekly and monthly. The main tempting reason is primarily because periodicity of these categories is more in comparison to other periodicals. The following table provides the detail.

Table 2: State - Wise Classification of Newspapers and Periodicals

<i>Periodicity</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Assam</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>Mizoram</i>	<i>Nagaland</i>	<i>Sikkim</i>	<i>Tripura</i>
Daily	4	75	47	9	36	8	9	19
Weekly	2	216	25	9	43	8	48	57
Monthly	2	165	53	10	29	1	1	10
Total	8	456	125	28	108	17	58	86

Source: Registrar of Newspapers for India, <https://rni.nic.in/> accessed on 11 January 2008

Government of India, (2004), *Mass Media in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publication Division, Patiala House: New Delhi

As per the available record,⁷ it seems the first print media in the North East called *Ramdhenu* in Assamese was begun in 1951, as a monthly, which was published from Guwahati. *Juger Aloe* in Bengali followed suit in 1952 publishing weekly and again from Guwahati. For the English publication, it was started in 1954 called *Assam Information*, which was again a monthly and was published in Guwahati. In the subsequent years, some of the vernacular publications were also started. For instance, *Achikni Repepy* (1957) in Garo was published monthly from Tura, *Tunlai*

⁶ Some of the reasons include the absent of pan North East daily newspapers, region's socio-cultural diversity, contested space, prolong conflict situation and so forth.

⁷ The Registrar of Newspapers for India, more popularly known as RNI, which came into being 1956 on the recommendation of the First Press Commission of 1953. The Office is located at West Block VIII, Wing 2, R.K.Puram New Delhi – 110066. <https://rni.nic.in/> accessed on 11 January, 2008

(1959) in Mizo was a weekly published from Aizwal, *The Simatha Patrika* (1962) in Manipuri published daily from Imphal, *Abhiyan* (1968) in Nepali published weekly from Shillong, *U Nongpyrta Shuwa ka Jingwan U Khrist* (1968) in Khasi published bi-monthly from Shillong among other.

However, history has it that print media was started in mid 1920' s though publication in those days was characterized by the credo: ' come and go' . This was due to a strong stand taken by the then British Government of India against the press, and publication of newspapers/magazines was virtually impossible in those days.⁸ Perhaps, some few newspapers that survived till date are the ones like the *Assam Tribune*, which begun its journey since 1939, evolving from being a sedate weekly courier of news to a robust daily newspaper.⁹

Today, there are about 207 dailies, 508 weeklies and 271 monthly publications in the states of North East.¹⁰ Among the North Eastern states, the maximum number of publications both in daily newspapers and periodicals is from Assam followed by Manipur. Whereas, the least number of publications is from Arunachal Pradesh and the next is Nagaland.

Major Daily in Language -Wise

In the following table, it provides the details of dailies in vernacular and in major Indian languages ¹¹ in the states of North East.

Table 3: Language - Wise Classification of Major Daily

<i>Daily</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Assam</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>Mizoram</i>	<i>Nagaland</i>	<i>Sikkim</i>	<i>Tripura</i>	<i>Total</i>
English	4	18	5	5	5	6	3	3	49
Hindi		4					1		5
Assamese		34							34
Bengali		8	5					16	29
Manipuri			20						20

⁸ *Gangte, Gin, Press in Manipur: An Overview*, http://www.e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=features.press_in_manipur_an_overview.html accessed on 17 February, 2008

⁹ *Press Information Bureau, Government of India: 'PM lauds Assam Tribune's role on Development of North-Eastern Region'* <http://pib.myiris.com/speech/article.php3?fl=D14494>, Accessed on 17 February 2008

¹⁰ The figures are based on the account provided by the Registrar Newspaper for India. Accessed on 11 January, 2008

¹¹ Major Indian Languages in this study will means those languages, which are included in the 8th Scheduled of the Indian Constitution. From the states of North East though only Assamese and Manipuri are recognized in this scheduled, Hindi, Bengali, Nepali and English are also common, besides various vernacular.

Nepali							6		6
Vernacular		3	9	3	35	2			52

Source: Registrar of Newspapers for India, Government of India, (2004) *Mass Media in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publication Division, Patiala House: New Delhi

From the point of media (print) industry in the North East, till date there is not a single pan North Eastern daily newspaper although there are some few periodicals such as the *Eastern Panorama* (monthly), *North East Sun* (fortnightly) and so forth. The daily newspaper is, by and large, state specific with a North East page in the middle in some dailies apart from national and international page.

Hence, the above table shows that the highest number of dailies in the North Eastern India is vernacular (52), followed by English (49), and with Assamese coming in the third place (34).¹² Thus, when it comes to daily newspaper, whether it is English, other major Indian languages or vernacular, it focuses mainly to respective state.

Within the category of English daily, the maximum is published from Assam (18), followed by Manipur, and Meghalaya and Mizoram with (5 each). The table also shows that the minimum is from the state of Sikkim and Tripura with (3 each).

There are two states - Assam and Sikkim that publishes Hindi daily. Assamese and Manipuri dailies are published in its respective state (Assam & Manipur), where it is the official language, and Nepali daily is published only in Sikkim. Excepting the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura, daily in vernacular are published in other states. Among these states, maximum number of vernacular daily is published from Mizoram (35) followed by Manipur (9).

Table 4: Principal English Daily in the States of North East

<i>Assam</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>Mizoram</i>	<i>Nagaland</i>	<i>Sikkim</i>	<i>Tripura</i>
The Assam Tribune,	Arunachal Times, Arunachal	The Free Press, Sangai	The Shillong Times,	Aizol Times, Zoram	The Nagaland Post, The	Sikkim Express, Sikkim	Tripura Times,

¹² It may be noted that the figures in the bracket in all illustrations indicate the quantity of publication, unless it is mentioned, otherwise.

The Sentinel, The North East Times, News Front, The North East Observer	1 Express, North East Times	Express, Manipur Mail, Imphal Times	The Guardian, Apphira Daily News	Tribune, Morning Post	Eastern Mirror, The Morung Express, The Nagaland Page	Reporter	Tripura Observer
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Table 5: Major Daily in other Major Indian Languages

<i>Assamese</i>	<i>Bengali</i>	<i>Manipuri</i>	<i>Hindi</i>
Ammar Asom, Asomiya Pratidin, Dainik Janambhumi, Dainik Agradoot, Dainik Asom	Gati, Dainik Sonar Cachar, Dainik Jugasankha, Samaya Anchalik Kagal, Daily Desher Katha, Dainik Arohan, Jagaran, Shibha Samkalpa, Syandan Parika, Tripura Mukh Daily, Prabha	Poknapham, Naharolgi Thoudang, Sanaleibak Matamgi Yakairol	Uttarkaal, Dainik Purvoday

Besides, the above mentioned there are various dailies published in vernacular in some states of North East, which are popular and command good readership. For instance, in Mizoram, Mizo dailies are more common than the other dailies.

It may noted that northeast edition of *The Telegraph* based in Guwahati (Assam) along with some mainland newspapers (some call national newspapers) is also accessible on the day of publication in Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur. Otherwise, rest of the states- Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura faces a delay of 24 hours. In Sikkim, the *Statesman* of Siliguri edition is accessible on the day of publication. Some English dailies of Guwahati publication (Assam) like the *Assam Tribune* and *The Sentinel* have large readers in Meghalaya as well. In the same way, English dailies of Nagaland like *The Morung Express* and *The Nagaland Post* are common in hill districts of Manipur.

Another information that may be gathered from the table is that though Hindi is considered to be popular among the Arunachalis, there is neither daily nor weekly that is published in Hindi. This perhaps indicates that the readership is low as there is no paper for those who

can read Hindi. Of course, it is altogether a different matter that needs to investigate as to whether who can speak Hindi can also read, which is beyond scope of this study.

Otherwise, in Assam, Assamese daily (34) is more in number than English daily (18). So are the cases in Manipur, Manipuri daily (20) and English daily (5), in Sikkim, Nepali Daily (6) and English daily (3) and in Tripura, Bengali daily (16) and English (3) respectively.

Principal Weekly in Language-Wise

The following table highlights the weekly in all the major Indian languages spoken and used in the North East region along with the vernacular.

Table 6: Language –Wise Classification of Major Weekly

<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Assam</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>Mizoram</i>	<i>Nagaland</i>	<i>Sikkim</i>	<i>Tripura</i>	<i>Total</i>
English	1	3	3	4	2	8	3	3	27
Hindi		6	1				1		8
Assamese		95			1				96
Bengali		71	7	6			1	46	131
Manipuri			8						8
Nepali							45		45
Vernacular		7	1	14	41			3	66

Source: Registrar of Newspapers for India, Government of India, (2004), *Mass Media in India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publication Division, Patiala House: New Delhi*

Unlike the dailies, the weeklies show that major Indian languages have more publications compared to that of the vernacular. For instance, in Bengali there are 131 weeklies, followed by Assamese (96), and Nepali (45) respectively. The share of the vernacular in the periodicity of weekly comes to 66. Whereas, when it comes to weeklies, the share of English publication is relatively less (as shown in the table there are only 27). What makes English different from other major Indian languages in this category is that it is the only weekly published in all the states.

In English weekly, the maximum number of publications is from Nagaland (8) followed by Meghalaya (4) and the minimum is from Arunachal Pradesh (1). The share of the other states in English weeklies is Assam, Sikkim, Tripura & Manipur with 3 each, and Meghalaya (4).

The respective states' official language other than English also publishes good number of weeklies such as Assamese (95) in Assam, Bengali (46) in Tripura, Nepali (45) in Sikkim and Manipuri (8) in Manipur. Besides, the state of Tripura, weeklies in Bengali is also published in Assam (71), Manipur (7), Meghalaya (6) and Sikkim (1) respectively. Hindi weeklies are published in the states of Assam (6), and Manipur and Sikkim with 1 each.

Again the maximum number of vernacular is from Mizoram (41) followed by Meghalaya (17). The share of some other states in vernacular weeklies is in Assam (7), Manipur (1) and Tripura (3). Apart from English, there is neither other major Indian languages nor vernacular weekly in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

The tables below provide the name of some of the major weekly in English and other major Indian languages.

Table 7: Some Major in English Weekly

<i>Assam</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>Mizoram</i>	<i>Nagaland</i>	<i>Sikkim</i>	<i>Tripura</i>
Action News Magazine Cachar Tribune, Event Times, The Bodoland Times	Arunachal Front Arunachal News	Frontier Weekend, Manipur Times	The Meghalaya Today, North East Business Chronicle, Shillong Herald	Newslinks, Mizoram Gazette	Hill Express, Nagaland News Review, The Naga Herald	Gangtok Times, Gangtok, North-Eastern Weekend Review	The Tripura Chronicles, The Technological Era

Table 8: Major Weekly in other Major Indian Languages

<i>Assamese</i>	Aamar Khabar, Abhimot, Adin, Agnigarh, Amar Agniban
<i>Bengali</i>	Aathuti, Abhimat, Abichar, Abosan, Aman Barta, Anchalik Khabar, Barari, Dhurba Sambad, Samadarshan, Tripura Prabaha

This suggests that unlike other states in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, English publication is the most preferred weekly simply because either there is no publication in vernacular or other languages. Whereas, in the states of Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim, state's official language is more common. For the state of Mizoram, vernacular continues to dominate like the dailies.

Some Major Monthly in Language Wise

Table 8 below provides the detailed monthly publications in both major Indian languages and vernacular based on state use in the North Eastern states.

Table 9: Language - Wise Classification of Major Monthly

<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Assam</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>Mizoram</i>	<i>Nagaland</i>	<i>Sikkim</i>	<i>Tripura</i>	<i>Total</i>
English	2	14	5	3			1	1	24
Hindi		2		1					3
Assamese		78							78
Bengali		27	5	2				8	42
Manipuri			18						18
Nepali				1					1
Vernacular		11	19	3	29	1		1	64

Source: Registrar of Newspapers for India,

Government of India, (2004), Mass Media in India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publication Division, Patiala House: New Delhi

As per the figure showed in the above table, the largest number of monthly publication is Assamese (78) followed by vernacular (64). The least number of publications in monthly category is Nepali (1) then comes Hindi (3). In monthly category, there are 24 in English, Manipuri (18) and Bengali (42) respectively.

According to the state-wise figure, the maximum numbers of monthly is from Assam (132), followed by Manipur (47). The share of the other states is in Mizoram (29), Meghalaya and Tripura (10 each), Arunachal Pradesh (2), and Nagaland and Sikkim (1 each).

The succeeding tables indicate some principal monthly in English and other major Indian languages.

Table 10: Some principal monthly in English

<i>Assam</i>	<i>Arunachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Meghalaya</i>
Assam Information, Guwahati Market, Heritage Explorer, News from North East, The North East Twilight	The Eastern Eastern Horizon	Backbone, Hill View, Imphal Reporter	Eastern Panorama, North East Skyline, Ropeco

Table 11: Some Major monthly in other Major Indian Languages

<i>Assamese</i>	Abhiruchi, Abikal, Ajanta, Asomiya Sare Gama, Binodan, Gyan Sambhar, Hiya
<i>Bengali</i>	Aho Raho, Amader Gram Barta, Gyan Lahar, Prantar, Rajdhani Agratala, Saswati Bhabana, Tripura Samabesh, Tripura Sundari
<i>Hindi</i>	Asom Prabhakar

From the above description, it is possible to draw certain broad conclusion. It is not surprising to find the media (print) industry, in general, is still at a nascent stage in most parts of the region, barring Assam where its premier English daily, *The Assam Tribune*, is nearing a century. As far as Arunachal Pradesh is concerned, in all the categories of daily, weekly and monthly, the figure is less compared to other states and there is no newspapers or periodicals other than English. Otherwise, it is considered that Hindi is popular in the state and said that there are large number of communities running to over hundred.

In Assam, apart from English, three other major Indian languages viz, Assamese, Hindi and Bengali are equally popular. In the same way, besides, English and Manipuri, there are few vernacular and Bengali that are published in Manipur. Other than English there are few daily, weekly and monthly publications that are published both in Khasi and Garo in Meghalaya.

Unlike the rest of the states, in Mizoram, whether it is daily, weekly or monthly, Mizo is much popular than English. For instance, there are 41 weeklies published in Mizo but only 2 in English. And in the monthly category, there are no English publications at all, but 29 publications are published in Mizo.

In Nagaland, there are 6 dailies in English and 2 in vernacular. Likewise, there are 8 weeklies in English but no weekly in vernacular, and in monthly category there is 1 vernacular but not in English. This perhaps shows that in Nagaland, English publications continue to be the most preferred newspapers and periodicals. May be this is also due to the fact that English is the official language in the state.

Where as, in Sikkim, unlike some of the states such as Meghalaya and Nagaland, English is not popular. Indeed, both in daily and weekly, Nepali publications are more preferred than English publications.

More or less is the case in Tripura, as the preferred language is Bengali. For instance, in daily newspapers there are three publications in English but more than fifteen are published in Bengali. The same is the condition in both weekly and monthly. In fact, there is only 1 monthly publication in English.

Geographical Dimensions of Publication of Major Daily

With regard to the place of publication, other than in the state of Assam most of the newspapers and periodicals are published in respective state's capital. Though in term of geographical area, Arunachal Pradesh is the largest in the region but the most populous state is Assam. Moreover, some of the states in the North East such as Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram were carved out from erstwhile Assam. This may be the reason why Assam has the highest registered numbers both in newspapers and periodicals than any other states in the region. At the same time, in Assam various newspapers and periodicals are published in different parts of the state, unlike the other states where most of the newspapers and periodicals are published in the respective state's capital,

Take the case of Arunachal Pradesh, excepting the *Arunachal Front*, which is published in Naharlagun, the rest, whether it is daily, weekly and monthly are all published in Itanagar.

Likewise, in Manipur most of the newspapers and periodicals are published in Imphal with some few vernaculars also being published in some district headquarters.

Although, in Meghalaya most of the newspapers and periodicals are published in Shillong, some are also published in Tura.

In Mizoram, Aizwal and Lunglei are the two places where most of the newspapers and periodicals are published.

Most of the newspapers and periodicals in Nagaland are published from Kohima and Dimapur – the commercial hub of the state.

In the same way, in Sikkim whether it is Nepali or English most of the newspapers and periodicals are published in Gangtok, though few of are also published in South Sikkim (Namchi).

So is the case with Tripura, as most of the newspapers and periodicals are published in Agartala, with some few being published in North Tripura and West Tripura.

State - Wise Details of Major Daily

1. Manipur: Imphal Free Press ¹³ is a widely circulated English daily published in Imphal. Started in the year 1996, it has relocated its office from Sega Road, Imphal to Palace Gate, Imphal. Mr. Pradip Phanjoubam is the current Editor of this Daily. The newspaper is owned under a partnership deal between individuals. The newspaper attributes its sources of news collection to various international, national and local agencies. Some of the agencies that the paper relies on for its news are:

<i>International News</i>	<i>National News</i>	<i>Local News</i>
Reuter & Associated Press	PTI, UNI	NNN(Newmei News Network) Local Reporters & Correspondents

Currently, the paper and its owner are fighting a court case against the Government of Manipur. The paper has also been proscribed by two militant organisations in 2001 by UNLF (United National Liberation Front) and in 2006 by KCP (Kanglaipak Communist Party). The paper seems to be under the spotlight due to the neutrality of its reportage of the facts by the paper. It has a daily circulation of 36,000 and is more popular in the Imphal valley with a predominant audience from the Meitei (Manipuri) community.

2. Meghalaya: *Shillong Times* ¹⁴ is one of the most widely circulated English daily published in Shillong. *The Shillong Times* first appeared as a tabloid-sized weekly on 10th August 1945 under the editorship of Mr S.B. Chaudhuri on a treadle machine. In 1961, Parsva Nath Chaudhuri bought *The Shillong Times* newspaper from the founder editor - proprietor, Mr S.B. Chaudhuri and took over the editorial reins. With the

¹³ Palace Gate, New Checkon Gate, Imphal East – 795001, Phone: 91(0385) 2441704, Editor: Pradip Phajoubam, email:info@ifp.co.in, website: <http://ift.co.in>

¹⁴ Rilbong, Shillong-4, Meghalaya, Phone: 91(0364) 2223488, 2227488 (Shillong) & 91 (03651) 222526, 222825 (Tura), Fax: 91(0364) 2229488. Editor-in-Chief: Manas Chaudhuri, website: theshillongtimes.com

untimely death of its second editor, Mr. P.N. Chaudhuri on 1st April 1978, his youngest son, Mr Manas Chaudhuri, already actively working for *The Shillong Times*; took over the management of the paper. A symbolic day – Independence Day, 15th August 1991 – was chosen as the day to switch over to the modern computer typesetting and offset printing technique to keep abreast with the latest in printing technology. For the first time *The Shillong Times* appeared as a broadsheet daily.

Realising that the Garo Hills comprises virtually half of Meghalaya and that there was no enough vehicle of information to disseminate information of events taking place in those parts, *The Shillong Times* launched its Garo Hills edition giving the readers of Tura a morning newspaper for the first time on 9th November 1992.

The newspaper attributes its sources of news collection to various international, national and local agencies. The paper relies for its news on the following agencies:

<i>International News</i>	<i>National News</i>	<i>Local News</i>
Associated Press	PTI, UNI	Local Reporters & Correspondents

Shillong Times has a daily circulation of 17,100 copies, while its sister publication *Salantini Janera* sells 29,465 copies. The paper has no pending court case against it nor has the paper been proscribed by any militant organisation.

3. Nagaland: *Nagaland Post*¹⁵ is a widely circulated English daily published in Dimapur. *Nagaland Post* was launched as an eight-paged tabloid using letter press technology in 1990 and came to the field when about half a dozen tabloid news weeklies were already in existence. Mr. Goffery Yaden is the current Editor of this Daily. The newspaper is owned under a private ownership of Mr. Goffery Yaden. The newspaper attributes its sources of news collection to various international, national and local agencies. The agencies that the paper relies on for its news are:

<i>International News</i>	<i>National News</i>	<i>Local News</i>
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¹⁵ G.M. Printers, Circular Road, Dimapur 797112, Nagaland, Phone:- 91(03862) 230748, Editor: Geoffrey Yaden, email: Nagalandpost@rediffmail.com, website: www.Nagalandpost.com

Reuters & Associated Press	PTI, UNI, ANI & SL Sam Communication	Local Reporters & Correspondents
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The paper has no pending court case against it nor the government or any militant organisation has proscribed the paper. The paper has a daily circulation of 42,000. Apart from Nagaland, the paper is quite popular in the hill areas of Manipur such as Senapati and Ukhrul.

4. Mizoram: *Mizoram Post*¹⁶ is a widely circulated English daily published in Aizol. It was started in the year 2001. Mr. Nilotpol Chourdury is the current Editor of this Daily. The newspaper is registered under the Mizo Publication Pvt. Ltd. The newspaper attributes its sources of news collection to various international, national and local agencies. Some of the agencies on which the paper relies for its news are -

<i>International News</i>	<i>National News</i>	<i>Local News</i>
Reuters & Associated Press	PTI & IANS	Local Reporters & Correspondents

Neither the paper has any pending court case against it nor the paper been proscribed by the government or any militant organisation. The daily circulation of the paper comes to about 6,000.

5. Assam: *Sentinel*¹⁷ is a major daily in Assam, which is widely circulated not only in Assam but in Meghalaya as well. The paper was begun way back in 1983 as a private enterprise under the aegis of Omega Printers & Publishers Pvt. Ltd. The current editor of this daily is Mr. Shankar Rajkhewa and is printed and published at Guwahati.

<i>International News</i>	<i>National News</i>	<i>Local News</i>
Washington Times, New York Times, The Guardian, Associate Press, Reuter.	PTI, UNI, ANI, IANS.	Local Reporters & Correspondents.

As seen in the above account, this daily has a link with *Washington Times*, *New York Times* and *The Guardian* apart from *Associate Press* and

¹⁶ 119, Jail Road, Dawrpui, Aizwal 796001, Mizoram, Phone: 91(0389) 2317485, Editor: Nilotpol Choudhury,

¹⁷ G.S Road, Guwahati -781005, Assam, Phone: 91(0361) 2452048, Editor: Shankar Rajkhewa, Website: www. sentinelassam.com

Reuter for its international source of news. For national source, it uses all the major agents in India that includes *PTI, UNI, ANI & IANS*. Where as, on local news it mostly depends on local reporters and correspondents. The paper is neither proscribed nor any court case till date. The daily circulation is about 65,000.

6. Tripura: *Tripura Times*¹⁸ is most popular among the dailies in Tripura. It began as weekly in 1960 and became a daily from 1997 onwards. This is a private enterprise and owned by Mrs. Alaka Lodh and the current editor is Mr. D. Lodh.

<i>International News</i>	<i>National News</i>	<i>Local News</i>
Associate Press, Reuter.	PTI	NNN (Newmei News Network), Local Reporters & Correspondents.

As for international news, it uses both the *Associate Press* and *Reuter*. *PTI* is used as the major source of news when it comes to national. For regional source, it uses *NNN (Newmei News Network)* besides the local correspondents and reporters. It has a daily circulation of 25,778. There is neither court case against it nor the paper been proscribed by any militant organisations or by the government.

Out of these dailies, it is clear that both the *Shillong Times* (Meghalaya) and *Mizoram Times* (Mizoram) are not edited by the local. Some of the papers are also owned and edited by same person or extended family members.

Status of Readership in North East

The table below presents the figures of readership in the states of North East based on some major daily in English.

Table 12: State - Wise Percentage of Readership of Major Daily to Total Population and Literate Population

<i>State</i>	<i>Name of Newspaper</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Population in '000</i>	<i>% Of Readership to TP</i>	<i>Literate Population</i>	<i>% Of Literate Population</i>	<i>% Of Readership to LP</i>
Arunacha	Arunachal		1098			54.3	

¹⁸ Akhaura Road, Agartala, Tripura West, Phone: 91(0381) 2329560, Fax: 91(0381) 2329560, Editor: . D. Lodh email: tripuratimes@rediffmail.com.

1 Pradesh	Times						
Nagaland	Nagaland Post	42000	1990	2.1	1325340	66.6	3.17
Manipur	Imphal Free Press	36000	2294	1.6	1617270	70.5	2.3
Mizoram	Mizoram Post	16000	889	1.8	789432	88.8	2.03
Tripura	Tripura Times	25778	3199	0.8	2341668	73.2	1.1
Meghalaya	Shillong Times	17100	2319	0.78	1451694	62.6	1.2
Assam	The Sentinel	65000	26656	0.24	16873248	63.3	0.4

Source: Survey Carried out by CCMG/JMI & AMAN, New Delhi

From the above table it is clear that Nagaland has the highest percentage of readership to total population and total literate population as well. In terms of the readership percentage to the total population it comes to 2.1 % and percentage to literate population is 3.7 % respectively. Manipur follows it with 1.6 % and 2.23 % respectively. The table also shows that whether it is in percentage of readership to total population or literate population it is lowest in Assam, which stands at 0.24 % and 0.4 %.

It may be noted that in Assam one of the reasons for low rate of readership of the given newspaper (*The Sentinel*) may be due to the presence of other dailies both in other major Indian languages and vernacular. At the same time, it is the most populous state in the North East but the literacy rate is not so good compare to other states in the region. Likewise, in Mizoram though the literate population is high, it seems people prefers the vernacular publications when it comes to choice of the newspapers. The same may be true for Tripura where Bengali is more popular.

Table 13: Statistics of Readership in North East (2006-2007)

<i>State</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Assam	8	3	1	2	5, 41, 557
Manipur	3				57, 038
Meghalaya	2		1	1	95, 011
Nagaland	1				27, 244
Tripura	4				1, 88, 189

Source: INS (2007) *The Indian Newspaper Society, Press Handbook-2006-2007, Vol. 1*,
Pawan Chopra for & on behalf of INS, New Delhi

In Assam, the statistics of readership¹⁹ in eight dailies (5 Assamese and 1 each of English, Bengali & Hindi), three weeklies (all in Assamese) and 1 monthly, which is also in Assamese, comes to 5,41,557. For the state of Manipur, the readership comes to 57,038 from three dailies (1 English & 2 Manipuri). When it comes to Meghalaya, with two dailies and one monthly (all in English), the readership stands at 95,011. In the case of Nagaland with one daily of English publication the readership comes to 27,244. And in Tripura, four dailies (all in Bengali), the readership shows 1,88,189. It is possible that there may be crosscutting of readership since there are number of dailies and weeklies in the same state. Those interested for details readership on paper-wise and language wise refer to annexure 1.

It may be noted that for the purpose of this study, the random method of selection is used while selecting newspapers from each state. Moreover, since the primary focus of this analysis is on English medium, the selection was concentrated on which is seemed to be most popular and widely circulated newspaper of English daily.

When it comes to status of readership and circulation the picture appears to be far from satisfactory. This may be because newspapers are common mostly in state capitals, district headquarters, in and around the location of sub-divisional offices and small towns. Otherwise, most rural places and villages seem to be cut off from the reach of newspapers and periodicals.

To verify this, it may be helpful to understand the pattern of the distribution of urban-rural population in the North East as per latest census (2001). Needles to note that the share of the latter is much more than the former. The population of North East has recorded to increase from 31.9 million in 1991 census to 38.85 million in 2001 census. Within its total population, 32.77 million lives in rural areas while just 6.08 million are from the urban areas.²⁰ This may partly reflects why the figure of readership is low in North East India. For instance, *National Readership Survey* (NRS 99) has provided that in Assam

¹⁹ The figure recorded by the *Indian Newspaper Society*, popularly known as INS. It was established in 1939 with membership spread all over South Asian Countries. The office is located at INS Building, Rafi Marg, New Delhi – 110011. Website: <http://www.ins.org.in/>

²⁰ Government of India, *Census of India, 2001, Social and Cultural Table*

and other northeastern States, higher than average literacy rates do not translate into high reach for the print media.²¹ In Assam, it is stated that circulation of newspapers has reached to 32 % of its total population.²² This suggests that newspapers continue to be the property of privilege few.

Conclusion

Not only that there is no pan daily newspapers in the North East but also most of the newspapers are of recent origin with the exception of *Assam Tribune* and *The Sentinel*, which are primarily based in Gauhati (Assam). The media as an industry in the North East India is yet to see its true picture since many of the newspapers are owned and edited by one person, if not remain as the family/clan fiefdom. There is relatively less scope to accommodate diverse opinions and views to provide larger perspective to the readers. Moreover, unable to come out a pan North East India daily newspaper till date is a sign that people are yet to act 'out of the box' that different states are entangled with. This also indicates that there is not a common voice on various issues that is confronting the people of this region. Taking this sort of position only make the central government to conveniently assume the many conflicts in the North East region as mere law and order problem. The average circulation is low compared to its high literacy rate in the region, which is more than the national average. Consequently, the readership is low.

²¹ See, *Frontline*, Volume 16 - Issue 20, Sep. 25 - Oct. 08, 1999

²² Government of India, (2004), *Mass Media in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publications Division: New Delhi, p. 129

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