

Little Magazines in West Bengal

Little Magazines in West Bengal:

*The Alternative Space to Study
Social Sciences*

By

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This book is dedicated to my wife

Smt. Sukla Adhikary

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>		viii
Chapter 1	Little Magazines, Social Sciences, and the Library: an Introduction	1
Chapter 2	Review of Some Relevant Literatures	16
Chapter 3	Methodology of the Study	31
Chapter 4	Little Magazines: A Theoretical Retrospection	44
Chapter 5	Social Science Information Published in Little Magazines	78
Chapter 6	Scholar Community, Common Readers and Little Magazines	130
Chapter 7	Little Magazines: Acquisition, Preservation and Dissemination	147
Chapter 8	Findings and Conclusions	162
<i>Bibliography</i>		179
<i>Index</i>		186

PREFACE

This book is an edited version of my Ph.D. thesis. Academic study is not one of my favourite tasks, so it was beyond my imagination to do doctoral research on any subject and to publish a book based on that research. I am a person of literature, I love to read and write short stories, poems, essays, etc. I never thought of writing about anything other than literature. Today I have no hesitation in admitting that I embarked on the research purely for the promotion of my career. We all know that if people don't do any work with love, the result cannot be very good. However, I must admit that although researching is not my favourite job, the topic of my thesis was closely related to my passion, i.e., little magazines. In this column I would like to mention those people without whose assistance, guidance and inspiration, this thesis could not have been completed. They actually pushed me into the deep sea and also rescued me alive.

Swapankumar Majee was one of the teachers of mathematics in our higher secondary school. However, I learned more about *Bangla* literature from him than calculus or algebra. He was the first to explain to me what a little magazine is. In 1992, when I was a student of class eleven, I became an author for a little magazine. My first literary work which looked like a poem appeared in a page of one such magazine called *Aatpoure* (meaning informal, unpretentious or unceremonious). An English teacher of our school, Mr. Debkumar Suin, was the editor. That was a quarterly magazine publishing all forms of works, e.g., poems, short stories, essays, etc. These two men were my first gurus in literature as well as in little magazines.

Some senior poets and authors helped me to develop some in-depth perceptions of little magazines. They explained in detail to me why the little magazine is the mainstream in Bangla literature. Poet Manaskumar Chini, Sumitesh Sarkar, author Anil Ghorai, Kinnar Ray, Manab Chakraborty, poet editor Samiran Majumdar, Haraprasad Sahoo, Surya Nandi, Prafulla Pal, Lakshman Karmakar, etc., provided me with the necessary guidelines to build up the right strategy for the research. My namesake Dr. Biswajit

Panda, who did the first ever full-length research on little magazines in Bengali, lent me his thesis for study. There has been a handy yearbook of Bengali literature edited by Zahirul Hasan, which helped me to estimate the population and to design the sample for my study. I must remember the assistance and cooperation provided by the editors of the sample magazines, who are actually *littérateurs* too.

In the years 2013 to 2015, every weekend I used to roam around the College Street of Kolkata in quest for some missing magazines, some missing issues, or some missing articles. In this context, I would like to give some suggestions for my successors. For the person who is religiously doing a little magazine, College Street would be his or her optimum pilgrimage. The kiosk *Patiram* at Bidhan Sarani is the inevitable inn. And the address at 18/M, Tamer Lane, would be his final destination where a lonely old monk used to sit in a monastery. Everybody knows the name of the monastery, it is “Kolkata Little Magazine Library O Gabesana Kendra”; and the famous monk was none other than Sandip Dutta.

No one can learn much about *Bangla* little magazines without knowing Shri Dutta. I met *Sandip-da* at his library on a hot Saturday afternoon of April 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 was so knowledgeable about little magazines that his general words seemed like theories. Working in his library under his supervision was a wonderful experience. Memories of those weekends are very special to me. However, it would not be possible for me to hand over this book to Sandip Dutta because he passed away on 15th March 2023.

I was able to complete the research work due to the continuous cooperation of some of my teachers and colleagues. One of them whom I must mention is my friend, Assistant Professor of English literature, Dr. Bibhas Chand. He was always with me during the whole process. He was the first reader and critic of each of my writings on this topic. Dr. Arjuna

Mukhopadhyay, Associate Professor of physics, always wants me to do something special and become successful.

I was very much privileged to get the opportunity to do my doctoral research on a topic which I was passionate about. I am very much grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Durgasankar Rath, for giving me the liberty to choose such an unconventional subject. Every time I went to discuss the content and construction of the thesis, Dr. Rath used to tell me that I knew more about little magazines than him. Now I can understand that it was nothing but one of his strategies to make me do my best. Dr. Rath is a great teacher and a great philosopher to me.

And finally, I must say something about the contribution of my family. All the senior members of my family along with my parents always wanted me to have a doctorate degree. Especially *mama*, i.e., my maternal uncle Shri Dipakkumar Paladhi, always inspired me to try to achieve the highest degree of at university. My wife Sukla helped me a lot during those days by removing the burden of domestic duties from me. At that time the age of my twin daughters Bindu and Indu was only three or four and they were very weak and sick because of their premature births. It was my wife who allowed me to concentrate on my thesis despite all her problems and sufferings.

English is not the language in which I think, so I have to constantly translate my thoughts to write in English. And I can write much better Bengali than that. So, I have plenty of inferiority complexes about my English writings. I hope the reader will forgive me for this weakness.

—*Biswajit Adhikary*
Midnapore, West Bengal, India
January 2024

CHAPTER 1

LITTLE MAGAZINES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE LIBRARY: AN INTRODUCTION

Is there any mutual relationship among Little Magazines, Social Sciences and the Library? Is there any potentiality 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. 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 avant-garde periodicals, (ii) study and research of the subjects which directly relate with 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 Information, i.e., Library Professionals.

In the present work, the phenomena of so-called convergence will be observed and analysed from the viewpoint of the Library. The two main aspects are ‘whether the convergence has actually occurred or not’ and ‘the consequences of the incident’. Hence, a natural question may arise; why does a Library pay attention to those slender and short-lived periodicals which are neither familiar and not 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 it, the nearby police station cannot overlook it. They will obviously collect necessary

information in anticipation, keep close vigilance over the crowd, and post adequate forces if needed. Similarly, if in any new species of media, a significant amount of information is collected and published over the years, libraries cannot ignore them. Professional inquisitiveness will make the library-personnel concerned about that media.

Walt Crawford and Michael Gorman formulated five new laws of Library Science (Crawford & Gorman, 1995), which was a reinterpretation of the original laws devised by Dr. Ranganathan. The new laws are:

- **Libraries serve humanity**
- **Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated**
- Use technology intelligently to enhance service
- Protect free access to knowledge.
- Honour the past and create the future.

Though the new laws have been formulated for the modern digital era of the libraries, the first two laws, along with the second law of Ranganathan (**Every user his or her book**) may be regarded as the philosophical foundation as well as a preamble for the present study.

Moreover, document evaluation before acquisition is a routine work for a library or information centre. The library professionals must conduct that evaluation programme themselves. They have to be always in quest of new media, new format and a new *avatar* of information. The ultimate goal is to prepare the library adequately with the necessary supply of information in anticipation of the demand from the users that may arise for that.

Little Magazine

Originally, the word ‘magazine’ means the storehouse of a weapon, a cartridge, or a cartridge holder. In Merriam Webster’s Encyclopaedia of Literature, the word magazine is defined as “A printed collection of texts (essays, articles, stories, poems), often illustrated, that is produced at regular intervals. The original sense of the English word was “storehouse”; from its use in periodical titles in the figurative sense to mean “storehouse of information” (as the Gentleman’s Magazine, first published in 1731) it

became the general word for such publications”. (Merriam Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature, 1995).

When the adjective little is added to the word magazine to form a new terminology, both the words lose their original meaning. Little magazines are neither little (the littleness of their size and circulation is not the necessary characteristic of such publications) nor magazine in the true sense. Little has a figurative meaning here; it is the symbol of an intellectual movement, which tries to build up a resistance against the cheap and popular arts and literature.

As per the professional practice, we will start to explore new terminology from the dictionary and encyclopaedia. The information provided against the entry (Little Magazine) in an online edition of Oxford English Dictionary is given below-

“Definition of *little magazine* in English:

Noun

A periodical directed at a readership with serious literary, artistic, or other intellectual interests, usually having a small circulation and considered to appeal to a minority; compare earlier *little review*.

Origin

Late 19th century; earliest use found in Henry James (1843–1916), writer.”

Wikipedia defines – “The Little Magazines, often called ‘Small Magazines’ are literary magazines, which publish experimental and non-conformist writings of relatively unknown writers. They are usually noncommercial in their outlook. They are often very irregular in their publication. The earliest significant examples are the transcendentalist publication *The Dial* (1840–44), edited by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller in Boston, and *The Savoy* (1896), edited by Arthur Symons in London, which had a revolt against the Victorian Materialism as its agenda”.

Foremost examples of such magazines are the *Poetry* (1912-) and *Little Review* (1914-29) from the USA; *Egoist* (1914-19) and *Blast* (1914-15) from the UK; and the *Transition* (1927-38) from France.

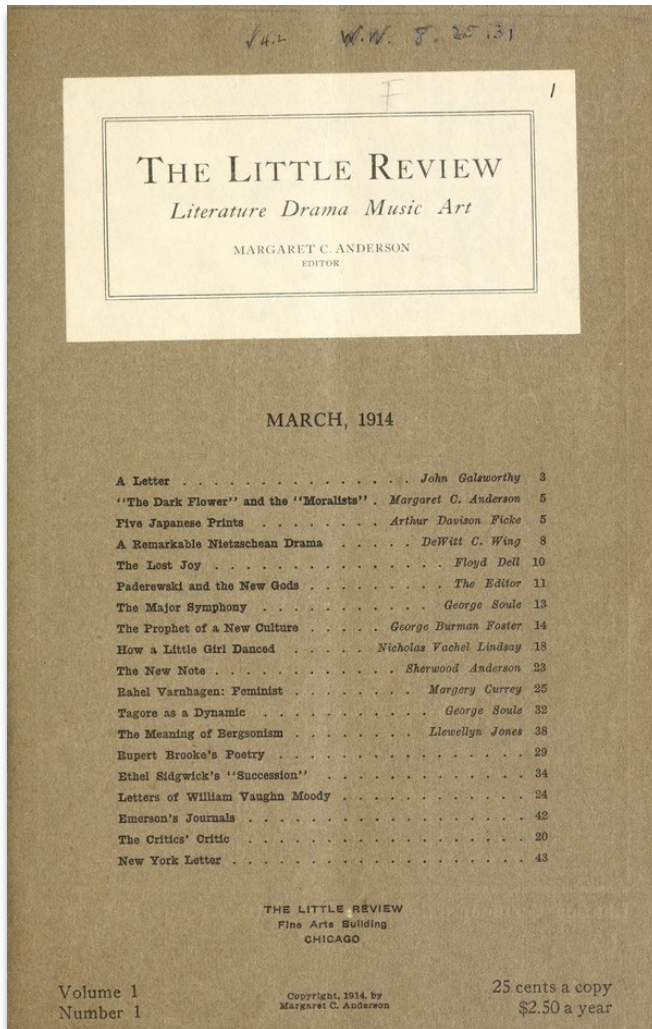
Encyclopaedia Britannica provides a true portrait — “A little magazine usually begins with the objective of publishing literary work of some artistic merit that is unacceptable to commercial magazines for any one or all of three reasons—the writer is unknown and therefore not a good risk; the work itself is unconventional or experimental in form; or it violates one or several popular notions of moral, social, or aesthetic behavior.”

Therefore, from the initial lexical study, we can form an outline of the characteristics of little magazines.

1. They have a small circulation.
2. They publish experimental and non-conformist writings from relatively unknown writers.
3. Writings are unconventional and may violate one or several popular notions.
4. They are non-commercial in outlook.
5. They are generally irregular.

In a further study, the known articles of the leading personalities of literature like Buddhadeb Basu, Anandagopal Sengupta, Shibnarayan Ray, Nirmalya Acharya would sharpen the thoughts. According to Buddhadev Basu, (Basu, Sahityapatra, 1953) one of the leading poets in the post-Tagore era of Bengali poetry, - the premier characteristic of little magazines is protesting against the traditions. Their lifetimes are generally very short and they publish a large number of substandard articles along with enough excellent writings. Basu describes this characteristic with an example of a bunch of leaves around the flower.

From the same article, we came to know that according to Basu, ‘*Sabuj Patra*’ was the first-ever little magazine in the Bengali language.

*The Little Review, Vol. - 1, Issue - 1, 1914*



Blast, July 1915

Social Sciences

Before the 20th century, Social Science was almost synonymous with Sociology. Then, gradually the meaning associated with the notion widened. Since the mid-20th century, the term “Social Science” has become more general. It refers not just to sociology, but also to all those disciplines which analyse human society and culture. The positivist philosophy of science of the early 19th century played a very significant role to shape the structure of the agglomerated body of Social Sciences.

According to the OED (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1933), the term “Social Science” was used for the first time in 1846. Peter R. Senn, in his paper (Senn, 1958) showed that it was John Stuart Mill, who first coined the term at least ten years earlier in an article in *The London and Westminster Review* (Mill, On the definition of Political Economy; and on the Method of Philosophical Investigation in that Science, 1836) in October 1836. In addition to the example above, Mill again used the term earlier than the OED reference of 1846. This occurred in the revision of his article for publication in his book *Essay on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy* published in 1844 (Mill, 1844).

However, Mill was not the first person to use the term. It was Thompson (Thompson, 1824). Another source reveals that the term "social science" first appeared in 1824 in a book, named *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness; applied to the Newly Proposed System of Voluntary Equality of Wealth* by William Thompson (1775–1833). That very book can be regarded as one of the earliest books on Social Science, with the term itself used several times throughout the text.

These are the earliest English usages of the term yet discovered. Until other usages are found, we must accord to Thomson the distinction of adding to the language a term which was destined to become widely used and of great importance. However, no matter when the term might have been introduced, the history of certain branches of Social Science started long ago. In the largest sense, the origins go back to the ancient Greeks and their rationalist inquests into the nature of humans, state, and morality. The heritage of both

Greece and Rome had powerful influences in the history of social thought as it is in other areas of Western society. Thinkers like Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Auguste Comte, Charles Fourier, Max Weber, etc., are regarded as the principal architects of modern social science.

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines social science as – “Any discipline or branch of science that deals with the socio-cultural aspects of human behaviour are called social science. The social sciences generally include cultural anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, criminology, and social psychology. Comparative law and comparative religion (the comparative study of the legal systems and religions of different nations and cultures) are also sometimes regarded as social sciences” (Nisbet).

It is very difficult to draw the boundary line of the notion of Social Science. This is an agglomerated body of subjects or in other words, this is an umbrella over a number of disciplines that deal with the same topic: human society. As a classical definition, we can quote from *The Social Science Encyclopaedia*, (Kupar & Kuper, 2003). “Social Science is the ambitious concept to define the set of disciplines of scholarship which deal with aspects of human society. The singular implies a community of method and approach which is now claimed by few; thus the plural, Social Sciences, seems more appropriate.” This Encyclopaedia includes only four subjects like Economics, Sociology, Anthropology (social), and Political Science within the domain of Social Sciences. However, we know that the area is much bigger; many disciplines other than those four have the necessary characteristics to be included in the agglomeration. Moreover, we cannot assert that the boundary has become stable; actually, it is expanding steadily.

“The term *social science* may refer either to the specific *sciences of society* established by thinkers such as Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber or more generally to all disciplines outside of *noble science* and arts”. As the branches of social sciences in the 21st century, Wikipedia includes the subjects - Environmental Studies, Anthropology, Area studies, Business studies, Communication studies, Criminology, Demography, Development studies, Economics, Education, Geography, History, Industrial relations, Information science, Law, Library science, Linguistics, Media studies,

Political science, Psychology, Public administration, Sociology, and Social work. The list does not differ very much from the one given by Britannica.

Besides these references, we will consult the “Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme” (21st Ed.) to finalize the scope of social science for this present study.

Social Science Research in India

The *Dharmashastra* of Manu was completed in second or third century BC and is one of the oldest texts in the domain of Social Science in India. *Arthashastra* by Kautilya, based on the statecraft, political and economic structure, and the functioning of Indian society was written between 324 – 296 BC. Many scholars from outside the country also contributed to Indian Social Science research from time to time. Greek ambassador Megasthenes to the court of Chandragupta Maurya (324 – 300 BC), wrote a book on Indian society and customs. Persian scholar Al Biruni, in 1030 AD, wrote a book based on his observations on Indian social and cultural life. Bernier, a French traveller, provides some interesting information about the Indian society of the seventeenth century during the reign of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. Therefore, it can be said that India has one of the longest traditions of study and research in different areas of social sciences.

However, all those monumental works were the solo contributions of some geniuses of those days. The appearance of such personalities can only occur now and then, maybe once or twice in a century, as phenomenal occurrences. The traditional Hindu ‘*Gurukuls*’ were there; Nalanda was there, but those isolated systems were not adequately equipped to explore the heterogeneous Indian society.

Therefore, it is clear that there was no organized academic structure for the extensive cultivation of social science. The situation remained the same until the collapse of the Moghul Empire. The British scholars felt the necessity of studying Indian society and civilization scientifically for the first time. There might have been some kind of imperial interest, but those enthusiastic foreigners acted as the torchbearer of Indian social science

research. Consequently, the study and teaching of modern social sciences began in the 19th century under the leadership of the British rulers.

Shamita Sharma (Sharma, 1992) pointed out some reasons behind that attitude of the British. To run the colonial administration properly they needed some intensive knowledge about Indian society. “To resolve this problem, they began to collect extensive data and information on Indian society. The objective of this research was to obtain a better understanding of the Indian people, their culture, traditions, customs, and beliefs. ... To a large extent, it was this kind of research and data collection of the British administrators and scholars which formed the basis of modern social science research in India.”

Moreover, they required trained Indian civil servants to assist them in the Administration. English became the medium of instruction at the higher level of education and the European curricula was introduced. The establishment of some research institutes in the process gave an impetus to social science research in India. The institutes are the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784), the Academic Association (1828), the Bethune Society (1851), the Benares Institute (1861), and the Bengal Social Science Association (1867-1878).

Social Science Information

Social science occupied a vast continent of knowledge with some still unexplored grey areas. As the area and the horizon of social science cannot be strictly defined, the scope of information sources for the research on those subjects also remained unmapped. Still, there is no structured information system for some branches of the social sciences. Therefore, librarians have to confront various problems to meet the information needs of social scientists. They have to keep on searching newer sources and collecting and processing those sources to make the libraries prepared for probable challenges.

Shamita Sharma, in the same article mentioned above, pointed out some prominent problems of social science research in India in recent years. They are:

- Western dominance (basically due to colonial hangover)
- Elitism (due to the elitist character of the researchers)
- Imbalance (imbalance in the choice of area and topic of study)
- Public policy
- Gaps in social science research (unequal emphasis on different subjects)
- Lack of adequate interdisciplinary study
- Research funding
- Brain drain

Though not mentioned, yet another major problem is the lack of structured information systems in some areas of social sciences. For subjects like economics or political science, the conditions are better. Nevertheless, that is not true for subjects like sociology and anthropology. Moreover, some aspects of the rural livelihood, urban problems, or technological hazards of modern times remain unexplored.

The Library Perspectives

Prof. S.R Ranganathan divides the documentary sources of information into four groups, e.g. Conventional, Neo-conventional, Non-conventional, and Meta-document. While Denis Grogan groups them into three categories-Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. Both of them placed periodical publications in their first group. Therefore, the periodicals can be treated as conventional as well as the primary source of information. Again, periodicals have different forms and characteristics. They may be categorized as primary periodical, secondary periodical, research periodical, technical periodical, trade journal, popular periodical, house journal, magazines, etc. But, when we talk about “little magazines”, we cannot categorize them properly. The little magazines are eccentric, and that is why they cannot be managed in the existing system of classification designed for the documentary sources.

In the US and Europe, the little magazines or other small literary periodicals published from small presses were regarded as the alternative or parallel media of literature written by unknown young authors. The characteristics of their Indian counterparts were also the same. Alongside, the magazines

also publish articles on various branches of social sciences and contemporary social events. A huge amount of articles is 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 for various reasons. The reasons may be:

- (i) Unawareness of little magazines.
- (ii) Unfamiliarity and unavailability of such magazines.
- (iii) Irregular publications and small circulation.
- (iv) Lack of indexing and abstracting of articles published within.
- (v) Libraries of our country are still disinterested in archiving such magazines.

Little magazines are not familiar or traditional sources of social science. Though the word magazine is associated with their name, they are not magazines in the true sense. They are not research periodicals or popular journals. They belong outside the mainstream; they are offbeat.

Background Study

The concept of the present study entered into the idea plane not from any theory book but from those books containing selections of essays which were previously published in little magazines. Those books prove that, not only for the study of arts and literature but also for a larger domain of knowledge, little magazines acted as a significant medium. A larger portion of the articles published within are based on different branches of the social sciences. An illustrative list of such books is given below:

- Sera Sabuj Patra sangraha/ ed. by Bijitkumar Dutta
- Kallol prabandha sangraha/ ed. by Baridbaran Ghosh
- Samakalin nirbachita prabandha sankalan/ ed. by Anandagopal Sengupta
- Nirbachita Ekshan: prabandha sankalan/ ed. by Soumitra Chatterjee and Ashrukumar Shikdar
- Nirbachita Dhrubapad/ ed. by Sudhir Chakraborty
- Aneek 50 bachhar: nirbachita rachana sankalan/ ed. by Ratan Khasnobish

- Jijnasar digdiganta: Jijnasa prabandha sankalan (1981-2002)/ ed. by Shibnarayan Ray
- Anustup nirbachita prabandha sangraha/ ed. by Anil Acharya
- Ekak Matra sankalan 1: Samakal/ ed. by Anindya Bhattacharya

In each of the above books, essays on a variety of topics ranging from philosophy to folklore, and economics to anthropology have been compiled. Moreover, the books contain an amazing list of authors, who are the authorities of different domains of knowledge.

We can read the introduction of *Jijnasar Digdiganta* written by the editor Shibnarayan Ray (Ray, 2003), to get a general idea about the compilation. “In last twenty-two years, *Jijnasa* has published no less than six hundred essays on different subjects. After the completion of the first twelve years of the magazine, I edited a book containing the selection out of nearly three hundred published articles in 1992. Now, after twenty-two years [2002], it is not such an easy task to compile a book selecting articles from six hundred titles. All the essays, which were included in the earlier book, have been omitted; moreover, a large number of excellent writings have to be excluded from the new book too due to some natural limitations. However, we hope the readers will get enough issues for their cogitation from each of the essays of the book. ... Valuable thoughts of some great authors on different subjects, e.g., philosophy and science, history and literature, religion and sociology, politics and education, feminism and ecology, etc., are included in the form of essays in the present volume”. We can also remember the introductory articles of ‘Nirbachita Ekshan’ by Soumitra Chatterjee and Ashrulkumar Shikdar in this context.

Sristisandhan (<http://www.sristisandhan.com>), the website dedicated to little magazines and contemporary arts and literature, hosts a beautiful database (though not maintained and updated properly). This is a handy resource for browsing and searching information on a number of little magazines. This website also helps to build up the backdrop to start the in-depth study on such avant-garde periodicals.

The initial propositions (before extensive literature review) based on the background studies are listed below.

- a) Little magazines may have some definite roles in the study of social sciences.
- b) They can fill in the gaps in the existing systems of social science information
- c) They can identify some unexplored areas of social research.
- d) Libraries are still not interested in these offbeat publications.

Population and the Sample

We have to deal with an infinite population of little magazines. No one can calculate the exact number of such publications in West Bengal at a particular point in time. As the birth rate is very high and the average life span is very short, it is very difficult to estimate the population. And therefore, designing a proper sample out of the population is also a challenging task.

There are different kinds of heterogeneity among the little magazines. They may differ by their mission and vision (e.g. regional or non-regional, liberal or conservative, revolutionary or counterrevolutionary, etc.), subject interests (literary, socio-cultural, of special interest), place of publication (rural, urban, and suburban), etc. That is why the sample is to be designed carefully so that the representation from the desired categories is ensured. The selection of proper sampling techniques is also a very important factor.

Methodology

Citation analysis is an important tool to evaluate the periodicals as well as the published articles. However, that tool is not applicable in the present study, because the citation data is not available for the articles published in these magazines. There is no indexing or abstracting tools; statistics about the usage of the articles are not available. As the circulation of the magazines is very small, awareness among readers about any particular issue must be very limited. Therefore, we have to think in some other ways.

The procedure of database management or simply the indexing of articles can be helpful in this case. A bibliographic database can be prepared with the metadata of the articles and they can be indexed by their class no.,

subject headings, titles, authors, etc. And, through browsing and searching the database we can analyse various aspects of little magazines.

Limitations

The features which make them special, may be the main obstacles to conducting any study on little magazines. By nature, these publications differ from each other in various aspects. To cover all the heterogeneity, the sample size must be very large, which is not possible for any individual researcher.

To know the mutual responsiveness between the social events and the subject content of these magazines, time-series data of a high enough number of magazines (e.g., 100) for a considerable period (e.g. 30 to 50 years) should be collected. That is also an impossible task for an individual.

It is not sure that a complete file of all the good magazines will be available for research. This is because most of the publishers/distributors do not have any office, and preservation of the files and documents is very poor.

Conclusion

As the little magazines have an anti-establishment attitude and operate at the micro-level, they may bridge the gaps created due to the elitism of scholars (as pointed out by Sharma) or imbalance in the selection of topics.

These magazines provide a forum for civil society; in addition, we can also hear the mass voice of the common people in their pages. As the language of the periodicals is Bengali, a larger group of authors gets the opportunity to express their thoughts in their mother tongue. In such a way, little magazines act as the circulatory media (as blood in the human body) of social science knowledge, from top to bottom of the society.

Libraries must take these new species of publications seriously for their own sake. Little magazines may be supplementary resources of information for some areas of knowledge. That is why they should be preserved and maintained properly.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF SOME RELEVANT LITERATURES

Introduction

People concerned with arts and literature in our country love to talk about little magazines, but they are always shy and slothful to write something. We have crossed the centenary year (2014) of the initiation of the first Bengali little magazine, and we have got only a few books on the subject. Buddhadeb Basu wrote a theoretical text on little magazines for the first time in 1953. We do not have enough Bengali literature to study; so, we have to depend mainly on the literatures written by the Western thinkers and scholars.

The literatures studied for the present research work are divided into the following three categories.

Social Science Information

A large number of studies had been conducted into the requirements of scientists for information, but very little had been done in the field of social science information. There are a number of possible reasons for that. Social scientists, faced with a much smaller total volume of information, were much less information-conscious and less inclined to seek for solutions. There are very few specialist libraries in the field of social sciences, and few librarians were therefore confronted with social scientists' information needs in the same way as librarians in scientific libraries were confronted with users and their problems. Finally, INFROSS (The Investigation into Information Requirements of the Social Sciences) begun in the autumn of 1967 (Line, 1971).

The article named “Collection and organization of written information by social scientists and humanists: a review and exploratory study” by Case,

Donald Owen (Case, 1986) reviews literature on information storage in the humanities and social sciences and describes an exploratory study of the content and organization of personal files. In the study, thirty-six professors in a major private university were each interviewed twice during a five-month period. During the interview sessions, the scholars were asked to describe the way in which they organize their files. In addition, certain measurements were taken in their offices: the linear feet of books, journals and other printed material on shelves; the number of filing drawers maintained; and the number of stacks of printed material on surfaces within the office. The findings are described and discussed in the light of previous research. Finally, the article identifies ways in which such research could be used to develop superior information products and services and a better understanding of the process of scholarship.

Information is a vital national resource, as essential to a nation's overall socioeconomic development, security and welfare as any other natural resource like water and minerals. It can play a very significant role in issues like international relations, peace, prosperity and global development. The wealth of popular, intellectual, scholarly and research resources in libraries and information systems in a country is therefore one of its great strengths. Libraries must be adequately equipped, organized, financed and interconnected if their resources are to be made available to all the people of a country. In every country, this can be possible only with the active participation of the public and private agencies and institutions and with support from the government (Mangla, 1998).

It is generally said that the information needs of social science researchers can increasingly be met via the internet. SOSIG, The Social Science Information Gateway was established in 1994 as a pilot project to provide fast and easy access to relevant, high quality networked resources for social science researchers, academics and librarians. The paper (Hiom, 1998) discusses issues of quality, access, resource identification and description, which SOSIG has faced in the four years since its establishment. It also reviews the involvement of SOSIG in the European Union's DESIRE project.

There are at least three hypotheses relevant to understanding the contemporary growth of social scientific information sources in Asia. One postulates that growth depends on an increase in economic output and associated social life indicators. Another postulates a historical legacy of library development with holdings that reference social science issues. Yet a third suggests that the growth of social science information sources depends upon government sponsorship of education and research including a strong component in the social sciences (Wilson, 1999).

The paper by Meho, Lokman I. and Tibbo, Helen R. (Meho & Tibbo, 2003) revises David Ellis's information-seeking behaviour model of social scientists, which includes six generic features: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. The paper uses social science faculty researching stateless nations as the study population. The description and analysis of the information-seeking behaviour of this group of scholars is based on data collected through structured and semi-structured electronic mail interviews. Sixty faculty members from 14 different countries were interviewed by e-mail. For reality check purposes, face-to-face interviews with five faculty members were also conducted. Although the study confirmed Ellis's model, it found that a fuller description of the information-seeking process of social scientists studying stateless nations should include four additional features besides those identified by Ellis. These new features are accessing, networking, verifying, and information managing. In view of that, the study develops a new model, which, unlike Ellis's, groups all the features into four interrelated stages: searching, accessing, processing, and ending. This new model is fully described and its implications on research and practice are discussed.

Hunsucker, R Laval (Hunsucker, 2007) reviewed the work of Maurice B. Line. He critically evaluated the INFROSS project and tried to explain its importance. The study reported in the article was conceived in order to answer a question of very large scope: What are the information systems and services requirements of social scientists? Inherent in this question was the correlative question: How do social scientists tend to use such systems and services, and what resources and information access approaches do they by choice employ?

Little Magazines

The three general characteristics of little magazines are – (i) the Magazines are economically unsound; (ii) they seldom provide any gain for those associated with them, i.e., writer, editor, or publisher; (iii) and big cities like New York, etc., are not the centre of their activity (Swallow, *The Little Magazines*, 1942). Swallow lists three functions of the little magazine: “to provide a market for the great writing of our time; to sponsor experiment, controversy, and new movements; and to give a hearing to unpopular ideas.” He also insists that the little magazine does not attempt to be a “training ground for the writer,” although he suggests, “our best literary reputations are generally made” in the non-commercial periodicals. He concluded with the critical comment of Jack Woodford, that the Little Magazines are published for writers, not for readers. Unfortunately, this comment is largely true, for the upper limit for the circulation of such a magazine seems to be very infrequently above one thousand.

Why are little magazines created? James W. Healey (Healey, 1973/ 74) tries to find out the reasons in his essay. The particular reasons may vary, but the magazines exist because the editors possess a love to print and share their thoughts. Some magazines may have a regional as well as a non-regional agenda. Some little magazines grow out of a desire to patronize talented young authors. Few of them arise out of the sentiment of a single generation. The editing and publication of such magazines is a source of fun and excitement for the stakeholders. The energy and time spent to prepare a single issue is overwhelming. Healey concludes with the comment that much criticism has been aimed at such publications (“there are too many mediocre magazines publishing mediocre works by mediocre writers”), which is unfortunate. The larger magazines should support, encourage, praise, and draw attention to those ventures, which they feel, are noteworthy.

Little magazines survive only a very short time. This may in part be the result of each of them having attempted to reach the same audience (O'Connor, *The Direction of the Little Magazine*, 1948). Most of them have published fiction, poetry and criticism. Understandably, those magazines like *Kenyon*, *Partisan*, and *the Sewanee* of the past several years that have

on the whole published the most distinguished work have built up the largest lists of subscribers. Perhaps a new trend is to be inferred from the statements of policy made by the editors of three new magazines, *Epoch*, *Touchstone*, and *Stateside*. Each of these magazines is to specialize or to narrow the kinds of work it will publish. To survive for a longer period, the magazines must revise their policies in respect of the matters they are going to publish.

Charles Allen (Allen, *The Advance Guard*, 1943) categorized little magazines in a few groups depending upon their attitude and tendencies. There is a large number magazines devoted exclusively or largely to poetry. Allen opines that it can be safely estimated that at least ninety-five percent of post-1912 US poets were introduced by little magazines. In the second group, there are some sociological minded magazines. These magazines, which concentrate on experimentation, have been more numerous than other types. They introduced the different literary movements. Another group of magazines contains those which specialize in criticism and reviewing. Allen opines that the adjective *advance guard* is more suitable instead of *little* to refer to those magazines, which are eager to present artistic works by unknown authors and are non-commercial by intent. While, *rear guard* may be used to define the big commercial magazines.

Test, George A., in his paper tried to categorize the *New Republic*, primarily a journal of political and social comment, as a little magazine (Test, 1961). Maintained under Francis Hackett (literary editor, 1914-22) it had a flourishing literary department, which engaged actively in the controversy over imagism, gave extensive space to poetry, fiction and criticism, and through reviews and articles commented fully on the state of theatre. It demanded good writing on serious matters while trying to reach a wider audience than the esoteric little magazines could command. It was able to do this because, like the little magazines, it was free from commercial influence. It never turned a profit, nor did it need to. As a leading voice of progressivism edited by one of the ablest groups of writers and publicists ever gathered together at one time, the magazine played an important part in the intellectual life of the times. As an influential journal from its beginning, it succeeded in attracting many new writers. It was in fact more successful in introducing new writers into print than any little magazine of the twentieth century.