



CHAPTER - 4

Print Culture and the Modern World

Introduction

- * Can we imagine a world without a Printed Matter?
 - Print and we.
- * Imagine a time before the coming up of print.
 - Print Itself has history
 - Evolution of Print → East Asia - Europe - India.
 - Impact of technology on Print.

The first Printed Books

The earliest kind of Printed technology → system of hand Printing
→ From AD 594 onwards, books in China were printed by rubbing paper against the inked

Bureaucratic system increased the volume of Print



Recruitment through exams → Printing of Books

- * With the emergence of urban culture use of Print diversified
 - used by merchant, upcoming of new leadership
 - Shift from hand Printing to mechanical printing
 - Emergence of western-style schools etc.
 - Surface of woodblocks → Both the sides of paper could not be printed. This is thin and porous sheet e.g. Traditional Chinese book Accordian book



Print in Japan

- * Buddhist Missionaries → Introduced Hand Printing technology into Japan
- * Oldest Japanese book printed in AD 868 → 'Diamond Sutra'
- * Containing six sheets of text and woodcut illustrations.

Diversified use of Print

- Print on textile, playing cards and paper money.
- Publishing of visual material led to interesting publishing practices.
- Painting depicting an elegant urban culture, involving artists, courtesans and teahouse gatherings.
- Books on various topics [women, Musical instrument, calculations etc]

Kitagawa Utamaro's Ukiyo

- * An artist → Born in Edo [Tokyo] in 1753 → Known for his contribution to an art form called Ukiyo.
- * This art form travelled to contemporary US and Europe and influenced artist like Monet and Van Gogh.
 - In this form of painting ordinary human experiences, live scene of day to day life are being depicted through the painting.

Print Comes to Europe - I

- * Silk Route → Silk, Spices and paper reached Europe
- * In 1295, Marco Polo → Italian explorer.
 - ↓
 - Returned to Italy from China.
 - ↓
 - He took the knowledge of wood block printing along with him.



Now books were produced in Italy by woodblock

Printing technology.

- * Aristocratic and Rich → Book written on expensive vellum by hand.
 - * Merchants and students → bought cheaper printed copies.
 - * Demand for book increased
- ↓
- . [Bookseller started exporting books]
 - * Scribes were no longer solely employed by wealthy people only.
 - * But then also demand ie Demand ≠ Supply.
 - * Manuscripts were not in a position to satisfy the ever-increasing demand for books.
- It was an expensive, laborious and time-consuming business. Manuscript were fragile awkward to handle, can not be carried around easily, read easily, limited circulation.
- Woodblock printing was a viable alternative.
- Still there was a great need for even quicker and cheaper reproduction of text.
- Relief was brought by Johann Gutenberg.

Gutenberg and the Printing Press - I

Johann Gutenberg

He was from Germany, a son of Merchant grew up on a large agricultural Estate

- * He learnt the art of polishing stones, became a master goldsmith.



* Learning from this knowledge, he adopted existing technology to design his innovation.

What did he do? And How?

→ Olive press provided a model of Printing press → Alphabet were made using the moulds of Metal = Mechanical printing press.

* Platen view

N O R S D
I P R T
J A P U

→ The first book he printed was 'Bible'

→ 180 copies in 3 years

→ The new technology did not entirely displaced the existing art of Producing books by Hands.

→ Printed books resembled the written manuscript in appearance and layout.

→ Metal letter looks like the hand written styles.

→ Borders were illuminated by hand.

→ Illustration for decoration was kept blank.

* Production → 20 Million - 200 Million books = Print Revolution

The Print Revolution and its Impact

why it is known as Revolution → Because it changed lives of the people, Relationship to information and knowledge, Institutions and authorities. It gave a new way of looking at things.

A New Reading Public

Printing Press → Reduced the cost of printing books → Multiple copies could be produced with greater ease → Created a new culture of Reading.



Reading → Restricted to Elites & Common people - oral culture.

→ Knowledge was transferred orally. ↓
Text were read out, ballads recited, folk tales narrated

* Print revolution → Hearing public and public intermingled.

→ Only literate could read the book.

So, Publishers started publishing popular ballads and folk tales.

These were then sung at gatherings and Taverns.

→ By this even those who could not read certainly enjoy listening to books being read out.

Religious Debates and fear of Print

Print → Possibility of circulation of idea

↓
Even those who disagreed with established authority could now print and circulate their ideas.

↓
This could persuade people to think differently

* Not everyone welcomed the print on people's mind.

Martin Luther [Protestant Reformation]

criticising many of the practices and rituals of the Roman catholic Church.



challenged the church to debate his idea.



Beginning of Protestant Reformation

His statement → Printing is ultimate gift of god and the greatest one.



Print and Dissent

Print → Individual interpretations of faith { even among little-educated section. }

e.g. Menocchio [Miller in Italy]

- Began to read books available in his locality
- Reinterpreted the message of Bible.
- Enlarged the Roman catholic church.

* Inquisition by Roman church to suppress heretical ideas.

* The Roman church began to maintain an Index of Prohibited books from 1558.

→ To control publishers and Booksellers.

The Reading Mania

Literacy Rates ↑

→ Churches of different denominations set up schools.

→ 60 to 80% increases and created a virtual reading mania.

New forms of popular literatures appeared.

→ Almanacs, ballads and folktales, chapbooks

→ Bibliotheque Bleue in France

→ Histories and Romances.

→ This type of material was sold by pedlars employed by booksellers.

Ideas of scientists and philosophers became more accessible

→ Maps and scientists' diagrams were widely printed.

→ Discovery of Isaac Newton.

→ Writings of thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau were also widely printed.



Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world

Books

- Means of spreading progress and Enlightenment
- Could change the world.
- Liberate society from despotism and tyranny.

* Louise - Sébastien Mercier

'The Printing Press is the most powerful engine of progress and public opinion is that will sweep despotism away'

- He was a novelist.
- Heroes → Enlightenment → Act of Reading
- He only proclaimed: Tremble, therefore tyrants of the world!
Tremble before the virtual writer!

Print Culture and the French Revolution

* Print culture created the conditions within which French Revolution occurred.

Print popularised the ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers.

* Print culture created the conditions within which French Revolution occurred.

* Ideas → Critical view on traditions, superstition and despotism.



Argued for the rule of Reason rather than Custom →

Print created a new culture of dialogue and debate

Reason and Rationality

- Re-evaluation and discussion of values, norms and institutions.
- People recognised the need to question existing ideas and beliefs.



Outpouring of literature questioning royalty and existing social order

Cartoons and Caricatures → showing pleasure of monarchy and common people's suffering It led to growth of hostile sentiments against monarchy.

The Nineteenth Century

Children

- Production of school textbook, children's press, 1857 [France]
- Publish new and old fairy tales, Grimm, Brother's Germany
- Things unsuitable to children or would appear vulgar to elites was not published.

Women

- Reader as well as writer, Magazine teaching proper behaviour and housekeeping.
- Women novelists like Jane Austen, The Bronze Sister George Eliot.
- Defining a new type of women, person with will, strength and determination.

Workers

- Lending libraries, Instrument for educating white collar workers
- They wrote for themselves and they wrote political tract and autobiographies.



Pre-colonial Bengal

↓
Network of village primary schools

↓
Students = Read less ↓
write More ↑

- Teachers dictated portions of text from memory and student wrote them down.

Print comes to India

- first printing press came to Goa - Portuguese Missionaries
- Jesuits Priests learnt Konkani and Printed several books
 - By 1674, About 50 books had been Printed [Konkani, Kanara]
- * Catholic Priests Printed the first Tamil book in 1579 at cochin
 - * first malayalam book in 1713.
- * Dutch Protestant Missionaries → Printed 32 Tamil text [Translation]
- * English language press grew very late.
- * From 1780, James Augustus Hickey → Bengal Gazette
 - ↓
A commercial paper open to all, but influenced by none.
- * Private English enterprise → started English Printing
- * Criticised Company's senior officials → Enraged Governor General warren Hastings
 - ↓
* Hickey was persecuted.



Further Innovation

- * Richard M. Hoe of New York → Perfected power driven cylindrical Press
- * Development of offset Press → Prints up to six colours at a time
- * Electrically operated press [fast production]
- * Development → way of feeding paper, Quality of Plates, automatic paper reels, photoelectric.
- * Periodicals serialised Important Novels
 - ↓
Gave birth to a particular way of writing
- * Cheap Shilling series
- * The dust cover

Great Depression in 1930



They brought out cheap paperback editions and to sustain buying

India and the world of Print

Manuscripts before the Age of Print

India and Manuscripts



- written in various vernacular languages
- copied on palm leaves or on handmade paper.
- either pressed between wooden covers or sewn together to ensure preservation
- Limitations

→ Highly expensive and fragile, they had to be handled carefully
Couldn't be read easily



- * Indians - Publish Indian newspapers
→ Bengal Gazette by Gangadhar Bhattacharya.

Religious Reform and Public Debates

Religion - A debatable issue → various interpretations

- ↓
 - Some criticised existing Practices and demand reforms.
 - while others countered the arguments of reformers.

* Point [Printed tracts, Newspaper, Books etc]

→ It spread new Ideas and shaped opinion and Nature of debate which lead to clashes of opinions
eg Social and Religious reformers v/s Hindu orthodoxy

Muslim Ulema v/s Their Fear

* Controversies over matters like widow immolation, monotheism, Brahmanical Priesthood and Idolatory.

→ Newspaper and other printed material helped in spreading various Ideas on these issues.

Raja Rammohan Roy



Sambad Kaumudi in 1822

v/s

Hindu orthodoxy



Samachar Chanderika

* From 1822 → Two Persian newspaper → Jam-i-Jahan Nama and Shamsul Akhbar

* Fear of Muslim Ulama

- Fall of Muslim dynasties ↓ and rise of Christianity ie fear of conversion and changes in Muslim personal law
- Use of Hindu order and Persian press to counter the influence of



Opponents.

- * use of Publishing translations of holy scriptures, printing religious newspapers and tracts etc.
- Deoband Seminary → founded in 1867 → Published many fatwas
- Guiding muslim conduct in everyday lives, Explaining the meaning of Islamic doctrine.
- Among Hindus also print encouraged reading of religious text from 1880's
- * Naval Kishore Press at Lucknow and Shri Venkatas Press at Bombay.
- * First Printed edition of Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas.
 - ↓
came out from Calcutta in 1810
- * Print also connected communities and people
 - ↓
Pan Indian Identities.

New forms of Publication

Print created an appetite for new kinds of writing → lives, experiences, emotions and relationships reflected in what they read.

- * New literary forms → lyrics, short stories, essays
- Coming up of visual print material
- Painting for mass circulation
- Raja Ravi Verma.
- * Shaping up of the ideas about modernity and tradition, religion and politics and society and culture
- * Cartoons and Caricatures → Commenting on social and political issues.



Women and Print

* Print increases reading among women

Liberals

vs

Conservatives

- * Began educating their womenfolk at home, sent to schools.
- Journals covering writing by women and content for women.
- * Rebel attitude of women toward such prohibition
- * work done by Kailashbashi Debi highlights the experiences of women Imprisoned at home, kept in ignorance Hard domestic labour etc.
- * Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai wrote about the miserable lives of upper-caste Hindu women, especially widows.
- Printing in Hindi → 1870, → Large segment of it was devoted to the education of women
- Journal written and edited by women.
- Debate and discussion on issues like women's education, widowhood, widow, remarriage.
- offered household and fashion lesson to women.
- Istri Dharm Vichar by Ramchaddha → Teaching women how to be obedient wives.
- * The Khalsa Tract Society
- * In Bengal → The Battala
 - cheap edition of various types of books
 - Peddlers took the Battala publication to homes.



Print and the Poor People

- * Cheap small books → allowing poor people to buy them
- * Public libraries - To expand access to books
- * Issues of caste discrimination

Jyotiba Phule

↓
Gulamgiri (1871)

- wrote about injustice of the caste system
- * B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker wrote powerfully on caste.
- Kashi Baba → A Kanpur mill worker wrote Chhote Awi Bade ka Sawal
→ Poems of another Kanpur mill worker under the name Sudarshan Chakra
- Sacchi Kavita Yan
- * Setting up of libraries [Bangalore, Bombay]

Print and Censorship

Before 1798 → censorship was directed against Englishmen in India, criticism might be used by its critics in England to attack its trade monopoly.

By 1820 - Calcutta Supreme Court passed regulation to control press freedom and encouraging publication of newspaper that would celebrate British rule.

- * Petition by editors of English and vernacular newspaper
- * After the revolt 1857 → changes in Press law → to clamp down native



- * In 1878 Vernacular Press Act was passed
 - Extensive right to censor report and editorials
 - Seditious report → warning → Press was seized sieged and confiscation
- * To revise Press Laws [Governor General Bentick]
 - Thomas Macaulay -
- * Nationalism and Print
 - Kesari → Bal Gangadhar Tilak.