



# Topics

## *to be covered*



- 1 First Printed Book
- 2 Print Comes To Europe 
- 3 Print Comes To India
- 4 Print and Censorship



# PRINT CULTURE & THE MODERN WORLD



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- Print has become a very integral part of our modern lives.
- Before the invention of Printing Press → writing of books was purely manual affair.
- Calligraphy ( the art of beautiful and stylish writing) → developed as an art during that era
- Hand printing was the initial form of painting → practised in China, Japan and Korea.



## 2. THE FIRST PRINTED BOOKS

### a. Print in China

- The earliest print technology was developed in China, Japan and Korea.
- By the 17th century, as urban culture bloomed in China, the uses of print diversified.
- In the late 19th century, western printing techniques and mechanical presses were imported as Western powers established their outposts in China.
- Shanghai became the hub of the new print culture.

### b. Print in Japan

Around AD 768-770, Buddhist missionaries from China introduced hand-printing technology into Japan.

- The Buddhist Diamond Sutra was the oldest Japanese book which was printed in AD 868.



### 3. PRINT COMES TO EUROPE

- In the 11th century, Chinese paper reached Europe via the silk route.
- In 1295 Marco Polo, a great explorer, returned to Italy from China and brought printing knowledge back with him. Italians began producing books with woodblocks, and soon the technology spread to other parts of Europe.
- As the demand for books increased booksellers all over Europe began exporting books to many different countries.
- But the production of handwritten manuscripts could not satisfy the ever-increasing demand for books because:
  - Copying was an expensive, laborious and time-consuming business.
  - Manuscripts were fragile, awkward to handle.
- In the 1430s Johann Gutenberg invented new printing technology by developing first-known printing press at Strasbourg, Germany.



## Gutenberg and the Printing Press

- Gutenberg learned the art of polishing stones, became a master goldsmith, and also acquired the expertise to create lead moulds used for making trinkets.
- Based on this knowledge, Gutenberg adapted existing technology to design his innovation.
- By 1448, Gutenberg perfected the system.
- The first book he printed was the Bible.-
- With his invention was able to produce 180 copies of the Bible in three years. This was a fast production method during those times
- Between 1450 and 1550, printing presses were set up in most countries of Europe.



## 4. THE PRINT REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT

### a. A New Reading Public

- Access to books created a new culture of reading.
- However, the rates of literacy in most European countries were very low till the twentieth century which was a major hurdle in spreading of this culture.
- So printers began publishing popular ballads and folk tales, and such books would be profusely illustrated with pictures.

### c. Print and Dissent

- The printing of popular religious literature sometimes led to the distinctive interpretation of religion by the various individuals.
- Menocchio → a miller in Italy interpreted the Bible in his own way and formulated a view of God and Creation of Roman Catholic Church, which was different from the point of view of the Church.
- Menocchio was dragged up publicly twice and then executed. This was done to set an example to those who questioned and criticized the Roman Catholic Church's ways.
- From 1558 → the Church began to maintain Prohibited Books' Index to gain control over publishers and booksellers.



## b. Religious Debates and the Fear of Print

- It was feared that if there was no control over what was printed and read then rebellious and irreligious thoughts might spread.
- In 1517 → the religious reformer Martin Luther wrote 'Ninety Five Theses' criticising many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.
- This led to a division within the Church and to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
- Martin Luther's work spread like a forest fire, leading to the sale of 5000 copies in the first few weeks.
- Luther was thankful to the technique of printing and stated Print as "the ultimate gift of God and the greatest one".

## 5. THE READING MANIA

- by the end of the 18th century → in some parts of Europe literacy rates were as high as 60 to 80 %.
- In England — Penny chapbooks were carried by petty pedlars known as chapmen and sold for a penny.
- In France → the 'Biliotheque Bleue' - low priced small books printed on poor quality paper and bound in cheap blue covers.
- The ideas of famous scientists such as Issac Newton or the thinkers like Thomas Paine, Jean Jacques Rousseau were now widely printed and read.
- Newspapers and journals carried information about wars and trade, as well as news of developments in other places.



### a. Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world!

- By the mid-18th century, there was a common conviction that books were a means of spreading progress and enlightenment.
- People start believing that books can bring a positive change to the world.
- Louise Sebastian Mercier, a novelist in France declared that print is the most powerful engine of progress.
- Mercier proclaimed: 'Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world! Tremble before the virtual writer!'

### b. Print Culture and the French Revolution

- Print culture created the conditions within which French Revolution occurred.
- Print popularized the ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers.
- Print created a new culture of dialogue and debate.
- By the 1780s, literature mocked the royalty and criticized their morality were large in number.



## 6. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### a. Children, Women and Workers

- In 1857, in France, a children's press, devoted to literature for children alone was set up.
- Women became important as readers as well as writers.
- Penny Magazines were especially meant for women, manuals teaching proper behaviors and housekeeping.
- In the nineteenth century, lending libraries in England became a medium for educating white-collar workers, artisans and lower-middle-class people.

### b. Further Innovations

- By mid 19th Century, Richard M. Hoe perfected the Power Driven cylindrical press.
- In the late 19th century, offset press was developed that can print up to six colours at a time.
- By the 20th century, electrically operated presses accelerated printing operations.

## 7. INDIA AND THE WORLD OF PRINT

### a. Manuscripts before the Age of Print

- Preserving information through manuscripts had been an ancient practice in India.
- They were written in various languages – Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, and local languages.
- In India, manuscripts were copied on palm leaves or on handmade paper.

### b. Print Comes to India

- In the mid-16th century → the printing press first came to Goa with Portuguese missionaries.
- By 1674 → About 50 books had been printed in Konkani and in Karana languages. Kannada
- Cochin, 1579 → Catholic priests printed the first Tamil book
- In 1713 → Catholic priests printed the first Malayalam book
- By 1710 → Dutch Protestant missionaries had printed 32 Tamil texts
- From 1780 → James Augustus Hickey began editing the Bengal Gazette, a weekly magazine.



## 8. RELIGIOUS REFORM AND PUBLIC DEBATES

- From the early 19th century → there were intense debates around religious issues.
- Different groups offered a variety of new interpretations of the beliefs of different religions.
- In 1821, Rammohun Roy published the Sambad Kaumudi → To counteract his ideas, Hindu orthodoxy published Samachar Chandrika.
- Two Persian newspapers- Jam-i-Jahan Nama and Samshul Akhbar- were published.
- A Gujrati newspaper was also published named Bombay Samachar.
- In 1810, the first printed edition of the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas → published in Calcutta.



## 9. NEW FORMS OF PUBLICATION

- The novel, a literary form which had developed in Europe soon acquired distinctively Indian forms and styles. 
- Other new literary forms such as lyrics, short stories, essays about social and political matters also entered the world of reading. 
- Painters like Raja Ravi Varma produced visual images for mass circulation. 



### a. Women and Print

- Liberal husbands and fathers began educating their womenfolk at home.
- Conservative Hindus believed that a literate girl would be widowed.
- Muslims feared that educated women would be corrupted by reading Urdu romances.
- Rashsundari Debi was a young married girl of Bengal who learnt to read in her house. Later she wrote her autobiography named Amar Jiban the first full-length autobiography, published in 1876.
- Kailashbashini Debi, a Bengali woman, wrote about women's experiences in her house: about the hard labour they were forced to do, treat as inferiority, kept in the confines in the house, and many more.
- Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Rambai wrote about the miserable lives of upper-caste Hindu women, especially the widows.



### a. Women and Print

- Hindi literature gained popularity from the 1870s.
- In Punjab, books were published for women as well. Ram Chaddha published a book named Istri Dharm Vichar to teach women to be obedient.
- In Bengal, Battala a central area in Calcutta was popular for printing popular books. They used to publish cheap editions of religious tracts and scriptures.



## b. Print and the Poor People

- In the 19th century, very cheap and small books were brought to markets.
- From the late 19th century, issues of caste discrimination began to be written about in many printed tracts and essays.
- Jyotiba Phule who is famous as Maratha pioneer of 'low caste' protest movement wrote about the bearings of low caste in his famous book 'Gulamgiri' (1871).
- B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker also wrote against the caste system, and such were read by a lot of people, bringing to light the plights of people which were ignored by people through the ages.
- Mill-workers and labourers also engaged themselves in reading and learning to express their feelings and experiences.



## b. Print and the Poor People

- Kashibaba, a Kanpur mill worker, published Chhote Aur Bade ka Sawaal where he defined the difference between upper and lower class people and about exploiting the people working in the industries and factories.

- A mill worker under the name Sudarshan wrote many poems.

T, Chakra

These poems were compiled as a collection and published as Sacchi Kavitayan.

- By the 1930s Bangalore cotton mill workers set up libraries to educate themselves following the footsteps of Bombay mill workers.



## 10. PRINT AND CENSORSHIP

- Before 1798, the colonial state under the East India Company was not much concerned about censorship.
- By 1820s, the Calcutta Supreme Court passed certain regulations to control press freedom.
- After the revolt of 1857, the attitude to freedom of the press changed.
- In 1878, the Vernacular Press Act was passed which provided the government with extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press.
- Despite repressive measures, nationalist newspapers grew in numbers in all parts of India.