

Chapter 5

Print Culture and the Modern World

Write in brief

Q.1A Give reasons for the following:

Woodblock print only came to Europe after 1295.

Ans.:

Woodblock print: Woodblock print was invented around the sixth century in China. It came to Europe, along with Marco Polo. He was a great explorer, in 1295 he returned to Italy after many years of exploration in China. Marco Polo brought this knowledge of Woodblock print back with him. Now Italians were able to produce books with woodblocks and soon the technology spread to other parts of Europe.

Q.1B Give reasons for the following:

Martin Luther was in favour of print and spoke out in praise of it.

Ans.:

Martin Luther in favour of print: Print made Martin Luther able to publish his ideas as a religious reformer. Through the publications of his protestant ideas, he challenged the orthodox practices and rituals. In 1517, he wrote ninety five Theses in which he criticized many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. He challenged the Church to debate his ideas. Luther's writings were immediately reproduced in vast numbers and were widely read. This led to a division within the church and led to the beginning of the protestant reformation. He also translated the New Testament of which 5000 copies were sold within a few days. These were impossible without the printing technology. Luther expressed his gratitude to print, by saying. 'Printing is the ultimate gift of god and the greatest one. 'Several scholars, In fact, think that print brought about

a new intellectual atmosphere and helped spread the new ideas that led to the reformation. This is the reason why Luther was in favour of print and spoke out in praise of it.

Q.1C Give reasons for the following:

The Roman Catholic Church began keeping an index of prohibited Books from the mid-sixteenth century.

Ans.: In the sixteenth century, The Roman Catholic Church had to face many dissents. People had written many books that interpreted the God and the creation in their own ways or as they liked. Menocchio, a miller In Italy, read a few books and interpreted the message of the bible and created a view of god and its creation. It infuriated the Roman Catholic Church. Menocchio was hauled up twice and ultimately executed.

Then Erasmus, a Latin scholar and a Catholic reformer also criticized the extremes of Catholicism. The Roman church, in order to control these developments, imposed severe controls over publishers and booksellers. The church banned such books and started maintaining an index of prohibited books from 1558.

Q.1D Give reasons for the following:

Gandhi said the fight for Swaraj is a fight for liberty of speech, liberty of the press, and freedom of association.

Ans.: The power of the printed word is most often seen in the way, so governments seek to regulate and suppress print. The colonial government kept continuous track of all books and newspapers published in India and passed numerous laws to control the press. Gandhi considered that the liberty of speech, liberty of press and freedom of association were three most powerful vehicles of expressing and cultivating public opinion. But the government of India tried to crush his idea. At that moment he

encouraged Indians to fight for Swaraj for khilafat which meant a fight for liberty of speech, liberty of the press and freedom of association.

Q.2A Write short notes to show what you know about:

The Gutenberg press

Ans.: 1) Johann Gutenberg developed the first known printing press in the 1430s. Gutenberg was the son of a merchant and grew up on a large agricultural estate. He had seen the wine and olive presses right from his childhood. As he had

2) He had seen the wine and olive presses right from his childhood. As he had learnt the art of polishing stones he became a master goldsmith acquiring the expertise in creating leads moulds used for making trinkets. He innovated his own design drawn on from his knowledge. The olive press provided the model for the printing press in

3) He innovated his own design drawn on from his knowledge. The olive press provided the model for the printing press in moulds were used for casting the metal types for the letters of the alphabet. In 1448, Gutenberg perfected the system and printed the first book of the bible. About 180 copies were printed and it took three years to produce them. As Gutenberg devised a way of the moving the

4) In 1448, Gutenberg perfected the system and printed the first book of the bible. About 180 copies were printed and it took three years to produce them. As Gutenberg devised a way of the moving the

5) As Gutenberg devised a way of moving the twenty-six characters of the Roman alphabet around, so as to compose different words of the text.

6) It was known as the movable type printing machine. It remained the basic print technology over the next 300 years. It made the production of books faster. It could print 250 sheets on the side per hour. By the standards of the time this was fast production. It was in fact a revolution in the print technology.

Q.2B Write short notes to show what you know about:

Erasmus's idea of the printed book

Ans.: Erasmus was a Latin secular and a Catholic reformer. Like Martin Luther he criticized the excesses of Catholicism but unlike him, he was not grateful to print.

He expressed a deep anxiety about printing. For him books were stupid, ignorant, slanderous, scandalous, irreligious and seditious.

He thought that books were not good for the sanctity of scholastic knowledge. He was of the opinion that printed books would glut the market with contents which will do more harm than good to society. Because of this the value of good content would be lost in the din.

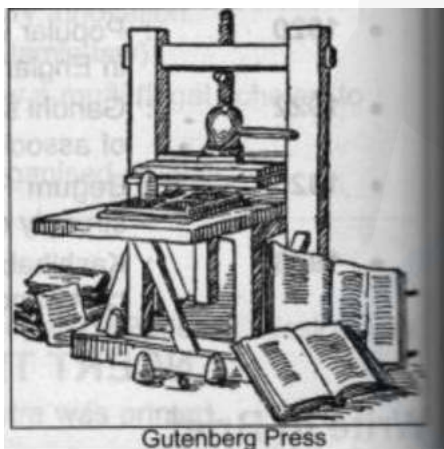
Q.2C Write short notes to show what you know about:

The vernacular press act

Ans.: The vernacular press act was passed in 1878, modeled on the Irish Press Laws, to curtail the freedom of the Indian-language press. Proposed by Lord Lytton, then viceroy of India, the act was intended to prevent the vernacular press from expressing criticism of British policies—notably,

the opposition that had grown with the outset of the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878–80). The act excluded English-language publications. It elicited strong and sustained protests from a wide spectrum of the Indian populace.

The act provided the colonial government with extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press. From now on the government kept regular track of the vernacular newspaper published in different provinces. When a report was judged as seditious, the newspaper was warned. If the newspaper ignored the warning, the government had right to seize the press and confiscate the printing machinery.



Q.3A What did the spread of print culture in nineteenth Century India mean to:

Women

Ans.: Women: As a result of the spread of print culture in the 19th century India, books became cheaper. Many hawkers started selling books from door to door. This created easy availability of books for majority of women. Women's reading increased enormously in middle class homes. Liberal husbands and fathers began educating their women folk at home, and sent them to schools when women's schools were getting up in the cities and towns after mid 19th century. But conservatives Hindus

and Muslims were not in favour of educating women. Sometimes rebel women defied them. The story of a Muslim girl is worth-mentioning here. Her family wanted her to read only the Arabic Quran which she did not understand. So she insisted on learning to read and write in Urdu, a language that was her own.

These are some examples of women writers from 19th century:

Rashsundari Devi: A young married girl in a very orthodox household learnt to read in the secrecy of her kitchen. She wrote her autobiography Amar Jiban which was published in 1876, became the first full –length autobiography published in the Bengali language.

Kailashbhashini Devi: In 1860s, she wrote books high lighting the experiences of women about how women were imprisoned at home, kept in ignorance and forced to do hard domestic labour.

Tarabaisinde and Pandita Ramabai: wrote about the miserable lives of upper – caste Hindu women, especially widows.

Begum Rokeya Sakhawatossain: In 1926, an educationist and literacy figure Begum Rokeya Sakhawatossain, strongly condemned men for withholdings education from women.

Women, who were earlier cocooned inside their homes, could now know about the outside world thanks to the print technology. This created a spurt of many women writers in India. It can be said that print culture not only created readers among women but also writers among them.

Q.3B What did the spread of print culture in nineteenth Century India mean to:

The poor

Ans.: The poor: With the spread of print – culture very cheap small books, were brought to markets in the nineteenth century and sold at crossroads, allowing poor people traveling to markets to buy them. Public libraries were set up to expand the access of books. From the late 19th century, issues of caste discrimination began to be written about in many printed tracts and essays. Jyotibaphule wrote about the injustices of the caste system in his famous book Gulamgiri in 1871. This helped in bringing these issues to the forefront of public consciousness.

Workers in factories lacked education to write much about their experiences. But some workers took initiative to write stories about their conditions. Like:

Kashibaba, a Kanpur mill worker wrote and published Chhote aur bade ka sawal in 1938 to show the links between class and caste exploitation.

The poems of another Kanpur millworker under the name of sudarshanchakr between 1935 and 1955, were brought together and published in a collection called Sacchi kavitayan. So worker's problems also came to the fore.

Q.3C What did the spread of print culture in nineteenth Century India mean to:

Reformers

Ans.: The Reformers: From the early nineteenth century there were intense debates around religious issues. Different groups confronted the

changes happening within colonial society in different ways, and offered a variety of new interpretations of the beliefs of different religions. Some criticized existing practices and campaigned for reform, while others countered the arguments of reformers. These debates were carried out in public and in print. Wider public can participate in public discussion and express their views. New ideas emerged through clashes of opinions. Debates over religious reform took place, which were opposed by the Hindu and Muslim orthodoxy. They always discouraged people from reading printed materials.

Ram Mohan Roy started publishing a weekly news paper Sambad Kaumudi in 1821, Hindu orthodoxy commissioned and the Samachar chandrika opposed his opinions.

The deoband Seminary, founded in 1867, published thousands of fatwas telling muslims readers how to conduct themselves in their everyday lives, and explaining the meaning of Islamic doctrines

Discuss

Q.1 Why did some people in eighteenth century Europe think that print culture would bring enlightenment and end despotism?

Ans.: There was a general conviction among the people in the 18th century that books were a means of spreading progress and enlightenment. And because of print books became affordable for masses. This helped in spreading revolutionary ideas to a vast section of society in a more efficient way. Many believed that books could change the world, liberate society from despotism and tyranny and herald a time when reason and intellect would rule.

- (i) Many contemporary thinkers, like Martin Luther and Monochhio could fire people's imagination because of help from print technology.
- (ii) Print popularized the ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers. Collectively, their writings provided a critical commentary on tradition, superstition and despotism. They argued for the rule of reason rather than custom and demanded that everything be judged through the application of reason and rationality.
- (iii) Printed created a new culture of dialogue and debate. All values, norms and institutions were re-valuated and discussed by a public that had become aware of power of reason and recognized the need to question existing ideas and beliefs. Within this public culture, new ideas of social revolution came into being.
- (iv) By the 1780s there was an outpouring of literature that mocked the royalty and criticized their morality. Question began to be raised about the existing social order.
- (v) Even for scientists it became easier to share knowledge and spread knowledge.

Q.2 Why did some people fear the effect of easily available printed books? Choose one example from Europe and one from India.

Ans.: Print created the possibility of wide circulation of ideas and introduced a new world of debate and discussion. even those who disagreed with established authorities could now print and circulate their ideas. This developed fear among some people. Not everyone welcomed the printed book, and those who did also had fears about it. Many were apprehensive of the effects that the easier access to the printed word and the wider circulation of books, could have on people's minds.

It was feared that if there was no control over what was printed and read then rebellious and irreligious thoughts might spread. If that happened the authority of valuable literature would be destroyed.

In 1517, the religious reformer Martin Luther wrote Ninety five theses criticizing many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. It challenged the church to debate his ideas. Luther's writing were immediately reproduced in vast numbers and widely. This led to a division within the church and to the beginning of the protestant reformation.

Example from Europe: Erasmus thought that books were not good for sanctity of scholastic knowledge. He was of the opinion that printed books would glut the market with contents which will do more harm than good to society. Because of this the value of good content would be lost in the din.

Example from India: In India conservative Hindus believed that a literate girl would be widowed and Muslims feared that educated women would be corrupted by reading Urdu romances. Sometimes, rebel women defied such prohibitions.

Q.3 What were the effects of the spread of print culture for poor people in nineteenth century India?

Ans.: Very cheap small books were brought to markets in nineteenth-century Madras towns and sold at crossroads, allowing poor people travelling to markets to buy them. Public libraries were set up from the early twentieth century, expanding the access to books.

From the late nineteenth century, issues of caste discrimination began to be written about in many printed tracts and essays. Gulamgiri of Jyotibaphule exposed the ill-treatment to the low castes. Dr Ambedkar and E V Ramaswamy Naicker wrote powerfully against untouchability.

Chhote aur bade ka sawal of Kashibaba exposed the link between caste and class exploitation. Sudarshan chakr published a collection called Sacchikavitayan about Kanpur mill worker.

These books highlighted how people were exploited by the upper caste people. These books were read all over India. Efforts were made by the social reformers to improve the conditions of poor workers through print.

These narratives contained issues related to class oppression. So poor's problems also came to the fore.

Q.4 Explain how print culture assisted the growth of nationalism in India.

Ans.: Print culture helped in developing a culture of dialogue among people. Ideas of social reform could be spread in a better way. Gandhiji spread his ideas of swadeshi in a powerful way through newspapers.

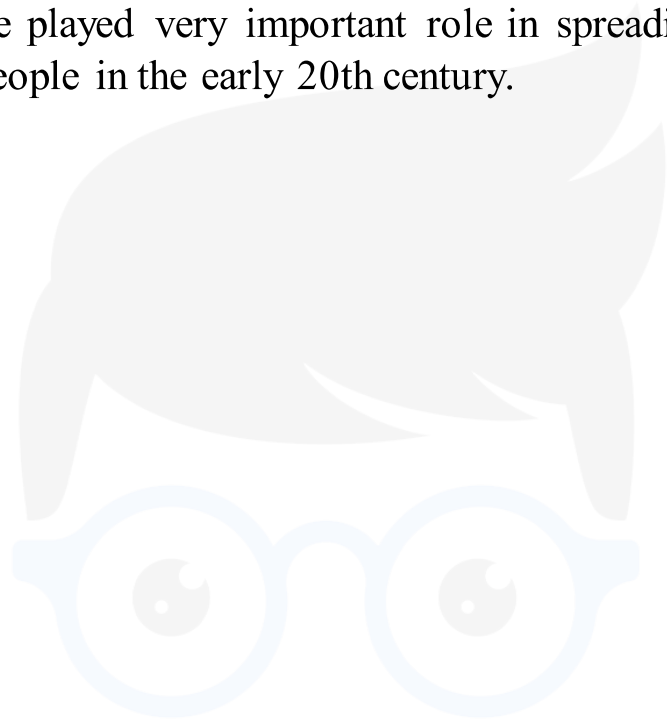
Print culture assisted the growth of nationalism in India in the following ways:

(i) Many vernacular newspapers began to be published in India, carried nationalist feelings. They reported on colonial misrule and encouraged nationalist activities. These helped in spreading the message of nationalism to the majority of the Indian masses. Even in spite of repressive measures print culture was a revolution which could not be stopped.

(ii) Attempts to throttle nationalist criticism provoked militant protest. This, in turn, led to a renewed cycle to persecution and protests.

(iii) When Punjabi revolutionaries were deported in 1907, Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote with great sympathy about them in his Kesari. This led to his imprisonment in 1908, provoking, in turn, widespread protests all over India.

Thus print culture played very important role in spreading nationalistic feelings among people in the early 20th century.



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