

Chapter 5: Print Culture and The Modern World

Activity: 1

Question: Imagine that you are Marco Polo. Write a letter from China to describe the world of print which you have seen there.

Answer:

Dear Sir,

Hello sir hope your fine, I am fine. I am mainly writing this letter to tell you that now presently I am in china and I want to tell you about the world of print I have seen its really good, some of the important things I want to tell you is people living here have started printing it is a wonderful technique with which we can take copies of different hand written things which would also help in knowing about all things happening in our place, and get educated about them.

I hope the people of our kingdom would also try these.

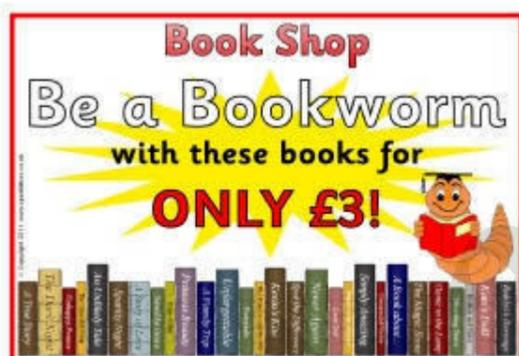
Yours obediently,

Marco polo.

Activity: 2

Question: You are a bookseller advertising the availability of new cheap printed books. Design a poster for your shop window

Answer:



OR



Discuss: 1

Question: Write briefly why some people feared that the development of print could lead to the growth of dissenting ideas

Answer: People feared that the development of print could lead to the growth of dissenting ideas because print and popular literature encouraged many distinctive interpretations of religious faith and ideas.

Menocchio, a miller in Italy, gave a new interpretation of the Bible and formulated a view of God and Creation which made the Roman Catholic Church angry. As a result, he was executed when the Roman Church began its inquisition to repress heretical ideas.

Troubled by such incident, the Roman Catholic Church imposed severe controls over publishers and book-sellers, and began to maintain an Index of Prohibited Books from 1558.

Activity: 3

Question: Imagine that you are a cartoonist in France before the revolution. Design a cartoon as it would have appeared in a pamphlet.

Answer:



Discuss: 2

Question: Why do some historians think that print culture created the basis for the French Revolution?

Answer: The following arguments are given in favor of the facts that the print culture created conditions for the French Revolution:

- Printing popularized the ideas of enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau.
- Collectively their writings provided a critical commentary on tradition, superstition and despotism. They propagated "reasons". This influenced peoples mind to rebel against monarchy.
- Printing created new culture of dialogue and debate between old religious and political ideas and the new politico religious ideas. This led to the spread of new ideas of social revolution.
- Cartoon and caricatures that came into being through print technology, mocked monarchy and expressed the sufferings of common people. This also inflamed the fire of revolution.

Activity: 4

Question: Look at Fig. 13. What impact do such advertisements have on the public mind? Do you think everyone reacts to printed material in the same way?



Fig. 13 – Advertisements at a railway station in England, a lithograph by Alfred Concanen, 1874. Printed advertisements and notices were plastered on street walls, railway platforms and public buildings.

Answer: Such advertisements influence people's minds immensely. They divert their thoughts and provoke them to buy the advertised products.

No. everyone does not react to printed material in the same way.

Activity: 5

Question: Look at Figs. 19, 20 and 21 carefully.

- What comment are the artists making on the social changes taking place in society?
- What changes in society were taking place to provoke this reaction?
- Do you agree with the artist's view?



Fig. 19 – Ghor Kali (The End of the World), coloured woodcut, late nineteenth century.

The artist's vision of the destruction of proper family relations. Here the husband is totally dominated by his wife who is perched on his shoulder. He is cruel towards his mother, dragging her like an animal, by the noose.



Fig. 20 – An Indian couple, black and white woodcut.

The image shows the artist's fear that the cultural impact of the West has turned the family upside down. Notice that the man is playing the veena while the woman is smoking a hookah. The move towards women's education in the late nineteenth century created anxiety about the breakdown of traditional family roles.



Fig. 21 – A European couple sitting on chairs, nineteenth-century woodcut.

The picture suggests traditional family roles. The Sahib holds a liquor bottle in his hand while the Memsahib plays the violin.

Answer:

1. What comments are the artists making on the social changes taking place in society?

- In fig 19 a man is dominated by his wife, and he is dominating his mother. Artist comments that tradition of mother- in – law dominating the daughter – in – law through her son has reversed, due to the new social changes taking place.
- In figure 20, the role between men and women is reversed. As women enjoys Hooka and a man plays Veena in order to entertain his wife.
- In figure 21, artist sends a message that social changes do not affect the English families.

2. What changes in society were taking place to provoke this reaction?

The changes such as empowerment and upliftment of women through western education were occurring in the society. These changes provoked artists to depict such images of families in India.

3. Do you agree with the artist's view?

According to me, artist's view in the illustrations 19,20,21 are more extreme than the actual situation. They are partially out of focus or over assumed. The artist could have been moderate in their comments on the social changes taking place in Indian society.

Write in brief

Question 1. Give reasons for the following:

- Woodblock print only came to Europe after 1295.**
- Martin Luther was in favor of print and spoke out in praise of it.**
- The Roman Catholic Church began keeping an Index of Prohibited books from the mid-sixteenth century.**
- Gandhi said the fight for Swaraj is a fight for liberty of speech, liberty of the press, and freedom of association.**

Answer:

a. Woodblock print only came to Europe after 1295 due to the following reasons:

- The earliest kind of print technology – system of hand printing – was developed in China, Japan and Korea.
- From AD 594 onwards, books in China were printed by rubbing paper – also invented there – against the inked surface of woodblocks.
- Marco Polo, a great explorer, had gone to China for exploration.
- In 1295 he returned to Italy and brought this knowledge with him.
- From Italy this technology spread to other parts of Europe.
- Religious preachers too were help in spreading print culture.
- However, it may be mentioned here luxury editions were still handwritten on vellum meant for aristocratic people and rich monastic libraries which scoffed at printed books as cheap vulgarities. Merchants and students in the university towns bought the cheaper printed copies.
- With the growing demand for books, woodblock printing gradually became more and more popular.
- By the early fifteenth century, woodblocks were being widely used in Europe to print textiles, playing cards and religious pictures with simple brief texts.

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

Because it was the printing press which gave him a chance to criticize many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.

c. The Roman Catholic Church began keeping an Index of Prohibited books from the mid-sixteenth century.

Print and popular literature encouraged many distinctive interpretations of religious faiths and ideas. In the 16th century, Manocchio, a miller in Italy began to read books available readily in his locality. He gave a new interpretation of the Bible and formulated a view of God, and creation that enraged the Roman Catholic Church.

As a result, Manocchio was hauled up twice, and ultimately executed when the Roman Church began its inquisition, and to repress the therapeutical ideas. After this several control measures were imposed on publishers and booksellers. In 1558, the Roman Church decided to maintain an Index of prohibited books.

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

Mahatma Gandhi uttered these words in 1922 during the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922). Because according to him without the liberty of speech, the liberty of the press, and freedom of association, no nation can even survive. If the country was to get free from foreign domination, then these liberties were quite important.

If there is no liberty of speech, liberty of the press, and freedom of association, then there is no nationalism. Nationalism requires these three prerequisites for its survival. Mahatma Gandhi fully knew the fact. That is why, he said so, particularly about these three freedoms. How could one ever think of nationalism in the absence of these three essential conditions?

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

- The Gutenberg Press
- Erasmus's idea of the printed book

c. The Vernacular Press Act.

Answer:

a. The Gutenberg Press:

- It was invented by Gutenberg by adopting existing technology to design his innovation.
- He used olive press as a model for the printing press and moulds were used for casting the metal types for the letters of the alphabet.
- By 1448, he perfected his system. Gutenberg developed metal types for each of the 26 characters of the Roman alphabet.
- He devised a way of moving them around so as to compose different words of the text. This came to be known as the moveable type printing machine.
- It remained the basic print technology over the next 300 years.
- The Gutenberg press could print 250 sheets on one side per hour.
- Bible was the first book that was printed by him. It took three years to print 180 copies but this was fast production at that time.

b. Erasmus's idea of the printed book:

Erasmus was a Latin scholar and a Catholic reformer. He criticized the excesses of Catholicism. He, however, kept his distance from Luther and did not join his movement against the Church. He was worried about printing on a large scale because he thought that some of the books might be good in contributing some useful knowledge but most of the books are slanderous, scandalous, raving, irreligious and seditious. Such books are harmful and their number is so large that even valuable books lose their value. So, he was against printing of books.

c. The Vernacular Press Act:

Causes:

- Before 1857, the East India Company encouraged publication of newspapers.
- During the period of William Bentick, Thomas Macaulay formulated new rules that restored the earlier freedoms of the press.
- After 1857 the Indian press began publishing a lot of information which helped in the awakening of the masses.
- The vernacular press became nationalist. The attitude of the press enraged the Englishmen and they demanded to put restrictions on the vernacular press.

It was under above conditions that the Vernacular Press Act was passed in 1878. It was modeled, on the Irish Press Laws. It provided the government with extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press. This Act was against the freedom of press and the vernacular press was kept under stringent control.

For example when a newspaper report was judged as seditious, the newspaper was warned, and if the warning was ignored, the press was liable to be seized and the printing machinery confiscated. But in spite of this repressive measure, the nationalist newspapers grew in numbers in all parts of the country. They went on reporting misrule of the British government in India and encouraged nationalist activities.

Question 3. What did the spread of print culture in nineteenth-century India mean to:

- Women
- The poor
- Reformers?

Answer:

a. Women: The spread of print culture in nineteenth-century India was very important in the following ways for the women:

- The lives and feelings of women began to be written in clear and intense ways.
- Women's reading increased enormously in middle-class homes.
- Liberal husbands and fathers started educating women at home. When women's schools were opened after the mid-nineteenth century, they sent them to schools for education.
- Articles were written in journals about the need for education for women. Sometimes syllabus and suitable reading material was published which could be used for home-based schooling. Thus print culture helped in the improvement of the condition of women in society. Some of them wrote books and autobiographies. For example, Rashsundari Debi wrote her autobiography Amar Jiban

which was published in 1876. Kailashbashini Debi (Bengal), Tarabai Shinde, and Pandita Ramabai (Maharashtra) were famous women writers. However, the conservative Hindus believed that a literate girl would be widowed. Muslims too feared that educated women would be corrupted by reading Urdu romances.

- Women started writing about their own lives. From the 1860s, a few Bengali women like Kailashbashini Debi wrote books highlighting the experiences of women at home doing hard domestic labor and treated unjustly by the very people they served.
- In 1880, in present-day Maharashtra, Tarabai Shinde, and Pandita Ramabai wrote with passionate anger about the miserable lives of the upper caste Hindu women.
- In Hindi too, a large segment of printing was devoted to the education of women.

b. The Poor: Print culture helped the poor people significantly in the following ways:

- Very cheap small books were brought to the markets in nineteenth-century Madras towns and sold at cross-roads, allowing poor people travelling to markets to buy them.
- Public libraries were set up from the early twentieth century, expanding the access to books. These libraries were located mostly in cities and towns, and at times in prosperous villages. For rich local patrons, setting up a library was a way of acquiring prestige.
- From the late nineteenth-century, cases of caste discrimination were published. For example: Jyotiba Phule, the Maratha pioneer of 'low caste' protest movements, wrote about the injustices of the caste system in his *Gulamgiri*(1871).
- Social reformers tried to restrict excessive drinking among them to bring literacy and sometimes, to propagate the message of nationalism.

c. Reformers:

- Reformers used newspapers, journals and books to highlight the social evils prevailing in the society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy published the *Sambad Kaumudi* to highlight the plight of widows.
- From the 1860s, many Bengali women writers like Kailashbashini Debi wrote books highlighting the experiences of women about how women were imprisoned at home, kept in ignorance, forced to do hard domestic labour and treated unjustly by the men-folk, they served.
- In the 1880s, in present-day Maharashtra, Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai wrote with passionate anger about the miserable lives of the upper-caste Hindu women, especially the widows. The poor status of women was also expressed by the Tamil writers.
- Jyotiba Phule was a social reformer. He wrote about the poor condition of the 'low caste'. In his book *Gulamgiri* (1871), he wrote about the injustices of the caste system.
- In the 20th century, B.R. Ambedkar also wrote powerfully against the caste system. He also wrote against untouchability.
- E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, also known as Periyar, too wrote about the caste system prevailing in Madras (Chennai).

Discuss

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

Answer: After the coming of the print culture, the ideas of scientists and philosophers became more accessible to the common people. Scientific discoveries published by scientists like Isaac Newton influenced a much wider circle of scientifically minded readers.

In their writings, thinkers argued for the rule of reason rather than custom, and demanded that everything be judged through the application of reason and rationality. They attacked the sacred authority of the Church and the despotic power of the state, thus eroding the legitimacy of a social order based on tradition. When people read these books, they saw the world through new eyes, eyes that were questioning, critical and rational.

So some people thought that print culture could change the world, liberate society from despotism and tyranny and herald a time when reason and intellect would rule.

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

Answer: In Europe, some people feared the effect of easily available printed books because 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.

Example from Europe: In 1517, the religious reformer Martin Luther wrote Ninety-Five Theses criticizing many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. A printed copy of this was pasted on a church door in Wittenberg. It challenged the Church to debate his ideas. Luther's writings were immediately reproduced in vast numbers and read widely. This led to a division within the Church and to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

In India fear about printed books was related to women's education. Some Native Hindus believed that a literate girl would be widowed and Muslims thought that educated women would be corrupted by reading Urdu romances.

Example from India: In East Bengal, in the early nineteenth century, Rashsundari Debi, a young married girl in a very orthodox household, learnt to read in the secrecy of her kitchen. Later, she wrote her autobiography Amar Jiban which was published in 1876. It was the first full length autobiography published in the Bengali language.

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

Answer: **The Poor:** Print culture helped the poor people significantly in the following ways:

- Very cheap small books were brought to the markets in nineteenth-century Madras towns and sold at cross-roads, allowing poor people travelling to markets to buy them.
- Public libraries were set up from the early twentieth century, expanding the access to books. These libraries were located mostly in cities and towns, and at times in prosperous villages. For rich local patrons, setting up a library was a way of acquiring prestige.
- From the late nineteenth-century, cases of caste discrimination were published. For example: Jyotiba Phule, the Maratha pioneer of 'low caste' protest movements, wrote about the injustices of the caste system in his Gulamgiri(1871).
- Social reformers tried to restrict excessive drinking among them to bring literacy and sometimes, to propagate the message of nationalism.

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

Answer:

- Print introduced a new world of debate and discussion. These intense debates were on social, economic and religious issues. In the 19th century, 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.
- Printed tracts and newspapers not only spread the new ideas, but they shaped the nature of the debate. All this led to a wider participation of public in these public discussions, assisting the growth of nationalism in India.
- Print did not only stimulate the publication of conflicting opinions amongst communities, but it also connected communities and people in various parts of India. Newspapers conveyed news from one place to another, creating pan-Indian identities.
- Nationalist cartoons were published, criticizing imperial rule.
- Libraries sponsored by social reformers were set up to bring literacy and propagate the message of nationalism.
- Though the colonial government took various steps to control press freedom, nationalist newspapers grew in numbers in all parts of India, reporting on colonial misrule and encouraging nationalist activities.

Project

Question: Find out more about the changes in print technology in the last 100 years. Write about the changes, explaining why they have taken place, what their consequences have been.

Answer:

- Eighteenth century innovations:**

At the end of the eighteenth century, there were several remarkable innovations in the graphic techniques and those that were utilized to make their materials. Bewick developed the method of using engraving tools on the end of the wood. Senefelder discovered lithography. Blake made relief etchings.

ii. **Nineteenth century innovations:**

- Early in the nineteenth century Stan hope, George E. Clymer, Koenig and others introduced new kinds of type presses, which for strength surpassed anything that had previously been known.
- Bryan Donkin developed a comerial application of Fourdrinier machine and invented the composition roller.

iii. **Twentieth century innovation:**

Books and newspaper are printed using the technique of offset lithography. Other common techniques include

- **Flexography** used for packaging, labels, newspaper
- **Relief print**,(mainly used for catalogues),
- **Screen printing** From T – shirt to floor tiles
- **Rotogravure** mainly used for magazines and packaging.
- **Inkjet** used typically to print a small number of books or packaging, and also to print a variety of material from high quality papers stimulate offset printing floor tiles; Inkjet is also used to apply mailing addresses to direct mail pieces.
- **Hot wax** dry transfer
- **Laser printing** mainly used in office transactional printing (bills, bank documents printing is commonly used by direct mail compound to create variable data letters or coupons, etc.
- **Gravure:** For gravure printing, the image to be printed is made up of small holes sunk into the surface of the printing plate. The cells are filled with ink and the excess is scraped off the surface. Then a rubber – covered roller presses paper into the surface of the plate and into contact with the ink in the cells. The printing plates are usually made from copper and may be produced by engraving etching. Gravure printing is used for long, high – quality print runs such as magazines, mail – order catalogues, packaging, and printing onto fabric and wallpaper. it is also used for printing postage stamps and decorative plastic laminates such as kitchen worktops.
- **Digital Printing:**Printing at home or in an office or engineering environment is subdivided into:
 - Small format (up to ledger size paper sheets), as used in business offices and libraries
 - Wide format (up to 3' or 914 m wide rolls of paper), as used in drafting and design establishments.

Some of the more common technologies are:

- **Line printing** – Where pre – formed characters are applied to the paper by lines
- **Daisy wheel** – where pre-formed characters are applied individually
- **Dot- matrix** – which produces arbitrary patterns of dots with an array of printing studs
- **Heat transfer** – like early fax machines or modern receipt printers that apply heat to special paper, which turns black to form the printed image
- **Laser** – where toner consisting primarily of polymer with pigment of the desired colors is melted and applied directly to the paper to create the desired image
- **Reasons and consequences behind these changes:**

Vendors typically stress the total cost to operate the equipment, involving complex calculations that include all cost factors involved in the operation as well as the capital equipment costs, amortization , etc. for the most part, toner systems beat inkjet in the long run, whereas inkjets are less expensive in the initial purchase price.

Professional digital printing (using toner) primarily uses an electrical charge to transfer toner or liquid ink to the substrate it is printed on. Digital print quality has steadily improved from early color digital presses like the Xerox iGen3, the Kodak express and the HP Indigo Digital press series. The iGen3 and Express use tenor particles and the Indigo uses liquid ink. All three are made for small runs and variable data, and rival offset in quality.

Digital offset presses are called direct imaging presses; although these receive computer files and automatically turn them into – print – ready plates, they cannot insert variable data.

Small Press and fanzines generally use digital printing or more rarely xerography. Prior to the introduction of cheap photocopying, the use of machines such as the spirit duplicator, hectograph, and mimeograph was common.

