

## **Print Culture and the Modern World**

### **How was the imperial state of China the major producer of printed materials?**

1. China possessed a huge bureaucratic system which recruited its personnel through civil service examinations. Textbooks for this examination were printed in vast numbers under the sponsorship of the imperial state.
2. From the sixteenth century, the number of examination candidates went up and that increased the volume of print.
3. As urban culture bloomed in China, the uses of print diversified. Reading increasingly became a leisure activity in cities. The new readership liked fictional narratives, poetry, autobiographies and romantic plays.
4. Print was no longer used just by scholar officials but also by Merchants who used print in their everyday life, as they collected trade information.
5. Rich women began to read, and many women began publishing their poetry and plays. Wives of scholar-officials published their works and courtesans wrote about their lives.

### **Why did Shanghai become the hub of the new print culture?**

1. As Western powers established their outposts in China Western style schools were established.
2. Western printing techniques and mechanical presses were imported in the late nineteenth century.
3. Shanghai became the hub of the new print culture, catering to the Western-style schools.

### **Development of Print in Japan**

1. Buddhist missionaries from China introduced hand-printing technology into Japan around AD 768-770.
2. The oldest Japanese book, printed in AD 868, is the Buddhist *Diamond Sutra*, containing six sheets of text and woodcut illustrations.
3. Pictures were printed on textiles, playing cards and paper money with the help of woodblock printing technology.
4. In medieval Japan, poets and prose writers regularly published books and those books were cheap and abundant.
5. Printing of visual material led to interesting publishing practices at Edo (Tokyo). Libraries and bookstores were packed with hand-printed material of various types – books on women, musical instruments, calculations, tea ceremony, flower arrangements, proper etiquette, cooking and famous places.

### **The production of handwritten manuscripts could not satisfy the ever-increasing demand for books.**

1. Copying was an expensive, laborious and time-consuming business.
2. Manuscripts were fragile, awkward to handle, and could not be carried around or read easily.
3. Their circulation therefore remained limited. There was a great need for even quicker and cheaper reproduction of texts.

### **How did Gutenberg develop the Printing Press?**

1. Gutenberg (from his childhood) had seen wine and olive presses.
2. He learnt the art of polishing stones.
3. He learnt the art of making jewel and became a master goldsmith.
4. He also acquired the expertise to create lead moulds used for making trinkets.
5. Drawing on this knowledge, Gutenberg adapted existing technology to design his printing machine. The first book he printed was the Bible. About 180 copies were printed and it took three years to produce them.

### **The new technology did not entirely displace the existing art of producing books by hand.**

1. Printed books at first closely resembled the written manuscripts in appearance and layout. The metal letters imitated the ornamental handwritten styles.
2. Borders were illuminated by hand with foliage and other patterns, and illustrations were painted.
3. In the books printed for the rich, space for decoration was kept blank on the printed page. Each purchaser could choose the design and decide on the painting school that would do the illustrations.

### **The Print Revolution and Its Impact**

Print revolution was a new way of producing books which transformed the lives of people, changed their relationship to information and knowledge, and within institutions and authorities. It opened up new ways of looking at things.

1. Earlier, reading was restricted to the elites. Common people lived in a world of oral culture. People collectively heard a story, or saw a performance. Now books could reach out to wider sections of people. If earlier there was a hearing public, now a reading public came into being.
2. Books could be read only by the literate, and the rates of literacy in most European countries were very low. So printers began publishing popular ballads and folk tales, and such books would be profusely illustrated with pictures to make everyone to read books.
3. 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.
4. Not everyone welcomed the printed book, and those who did also had fears about it. They 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.
5. Menocchio, a miller in Italy, began to read books that were available in his locality. He reinterpreted the message of the Bible and formulated a view of God and Creation that enraged the Roman Catholic Church. He was persecuted and the Church imposed severe controls over publishers and booksellers and began to maintain an **Index of Prohibited Books** from 1558.

### **Protestant Reformation.**

1. The religious reformer Martin Luther wrote Ninety Five Theses criticising many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. A printed copy of this was posted on a church door and he challenged the Church to debate with his ideas.
2. 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**.
3. Deeply grateful to print, Luther said, '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.

### **Why did people want to read books in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?**

1. Churches of different sizes set up schools in villages, carrying literacy to peasants and artisans. By the end of the eighteenth century, in some parts of Europe literacy rates were as high as 60 to 80 per cent. As literacy and schools spread in European countries, there was a virtual reading mania.
2. Booksellers employed pedlars who roamed around villages, carrying little books for sale. There were ritual calendars, along with ballads and folktales. In England, penny chapbooks were carried by petty pedlars known as chapmen, and sold for a penny, so that even the poor could buy them.
3. The periodical press developed from the early eighteenth century, combining information about current affairs with entertainment. Newspapers and journals carried information about wars and trade.
4. Similarly, the ideas of scientists and philosophers now became more accessible to the common people. Ancient and medieval scientific and philosophical texts were compiled and published, and maps and scientific diagrams were widely printed.
5. By the mid-eighteenth century, many believed that books would spread progress and enlightenment, change the world and liberate society from despotism and tyranny. Louise-Sebastien Mercier, a novelist in eighteenth-century France, declared: 'The printing press is the most powerful engine of progress and public opinion is the force that will sweep despotism away.' In many of Mercier's novels, the heroes are transformed by acts of reading.

### **How did print culture create the conditions within which French Revolution occurred?**

OR

### **Why do some historians think that print culture created the basis for the French Revolution?**

1. Print popularised the ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers. Collectively, their writings provided a critical commentary on tradition, superstition and despotism. Those who read these books saw the world through new eyes, eyes that were questioning, critical and rational.
2. Print created a new culture of dialogue and debate. All values, norms and institutions were re-evaluated and discussed by a public that had become aware of the power of reason, and recognised the need to question existing ideas and beliefs.
3. By the 1780s there was an outpouring of literature that mocked the royalty and criticised their morality. In the process, it raised questions about the existing social order. Cartoons and caricatures typically suggested that the monarchy remained absorbed only in sensual pleasures while the common people suffered immense hardships.

### **How did mass literacy in Europe bring in large numbers of new readers among children, women and workers?**

1. As primary education became compulsory from the late nineteenth century, children became an important category of readers. Children's press published new works as well as old fairy tales and folk tales. The Grimm Brothers in Germany spent years compiling traditional folk tales gathered from peasants.
2. Women became important as readers as well as writers. Penny magazines were especially meant for women, as were manuals teaching proper behaviour and housekeeping. Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot became important women writers in defining a new type of woman: a person with will, strength of personality, determination and the power to think.
3. Lending libraries had been in existence from the seventeenth century onwards. In the nineteenth century, lending libraries in England became instruments for educating white-collar workers, artisans and lower-middle-class people. Sometimes, self-educated working class people wrote for themselves.

### **What were a series of new innovations in printing technology in the nineteenth century?**

1. Richard M. Hoe of New York had perfected the power-driven cylindrical press. This was capable of printing 8,000 sheets per hour. This press was particularly useful for printing newspapers.
2. In the late nineteenth century, the offset press was developed which could print up to six colours at a time.
3. From the turn of the twentieth century, electrically operated presses accelerated printing operations.
4. A series of other developments followed. Methods of feeding paper improved, the quality of plates became better.
5. Automatic paper reels and photoelectric controls of the colour register were also introduced in the same period.

### **What were the new strategies followed by the Printers and publishers to sell their products?**

1. Nineteenth-century periodicals serialized important novels, which gave birth to a particular way of writing novels.
2. In England, popular works were sold in cheap series, called the Shilling Series.
3. The dust cover or the book jacket is also a twentieth-century innovation.

### **What were the disadvantages in making and using manuscripts in India?**

1. Manuscripts, however, were highly expensive and fragile.
2. They had to be handled carefully, and they could not be read easily.
3. The script was written in different styles. So manuscripts were not widely used in everyday life.

### **Role of press in Religious Reform and Public Debates in India**

1. From the early nineteenth century different groups confronted the changes happening within colonial society in different ways some criticised existing practices and campaigned for reform, while others countered the arguments of reformers. These debates were carried out in public and in print.
2. This was a time of intense controversies between social and religious reformers and the Hindu orthodoxy over matters like widow immolation, monotheism, Brahmanical priesthood and idolatry. In Bengal, as the debate developed, tracts and newspapers proliferated, circulating a variety of arguments.
3. In north India, the ulamas were deeply anxious about the collapse of Muslim dynasties. To counter this, they used cheap lithographic presses, published Persian and Urdu translations of holy scriptures, and printed religious newspapers and tracts and published thousands upon thousands of fatwas telling Muslim readers how to conduct themselves in their everyday lives.
4. Hindus published Holy Scriptures like the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas in vernacular languages. Naval Kishore Press at Lucknow and the Shri Venkateshwar Press in Bombay published numerous religious texts in vernaculars.
5. Print not only stimulated the publication of conflicting opinions amongst communities, but also connected communities and people in different parts of India. Newspapers conveyed news from one place to another, creating pan-Indian identities.

### **New Forms of Publication introduced in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

1. The novel, a literary form which had developed in Europe, ideally catered to this need. It soon acquired distinctively Indian forms and styles. For readers, it opened up new worlds of experience, and gave a vivid sense of the diversity of human lives.
2. Other new literary forms also entered the world of reading were lyrics, short stories, essays about social and political matters. In different ways, they reinforced the new emphasis on human lives and intimate feelings, about the political and social rules that shaped such things.
3. By the end of the nineteenth century, a new visual culture was taking shape. Visual images were reproduced in multiple copies. Painters like Raja Ravi Varma produced images for mass circulation.
4. By the 1870s, caricatures and cartoons were being published in journals and newspapers, commenting on social and political issues. Some caricatures ridiculed the educated Indians' fascination with Western tastes and clothes, while others expressed the fear of social change.

### **Women and Print in India**

1. Conservative Hindus believed that a literate girl would be widowed and Muslims feared that educated women would be corrupted by reading Urdu romances. Liberal husbands and fathers began educating their womenfolk at home, and sent them to schools when women's schools were set up in the cities and towns.
2. Rash Sundari 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. Kailashbhashini 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 very people they served.

3. In the 1880s, in present-day Maharashtra, Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai wrote with passionate anger about the miserable lives of upper-caste Hindu women, especially widows.
4. In the early twentieth century, journals, written for and sometimes edited by women, became extremely popular. They discussed issues like women's education, widowhood, widow remarriage and the national movement.
5. In Punjab folk literature was widely printed from the early twentieth century. Ram Chaddha published the fast-selling *Istri Dharm Vichar* to teach women how to be obedient wives.

### **Print and the Poor People in India**

1. Very cheap small books were brought to markets in nineteenth-century in Madras. 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.
2. From the late nineteenth century, issues of caste discrimination began to be written about in many printed tracts and essays. Jyotiba Phule, the Maratha pioneer of 'low caste' protest movements, wrote about the injustices of the caste system in his ***Gulamgiri*** (1871).
3. In the twentieth century, B.R. Ambedkar in Maharashtra and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in Madras, better known as Periyar, wrote powerfully on caste and their writings were read by people all over India.
4. Workers in factories were too overworked and lacked the education to write much about their experiences. But Kashibaba, a Kanpur millworker, wrote and published ***Chhote Aur Bade Ka Sawal*** in 1938 to show the links between caste and class exploitation.
5. The poems of another Kanpur millworker, who wrote under the name of Sudarshan Chakr between 1935 and 1955, were brought together and published in a collection called ***Sacchi Kavita***. By the 1930s, Bangalore cotton millworkers set up libraries to educate themselves, following the example of Bombay workers.

### **Print and Censorship in India**

1. East India Company's early measures to control printed matter were directed against English Editors like James Augustus Hickey who were critical of Company misrule and hated the actions of particular Company officers. The Company was worried for such criticisms.
2. By the 1820s, the Calcutta Supreme Court passed certain regulations to control press freedom and the Company began encouraging publication of newspapers that would celebrate British rule.
3. In 1835, faced with urgent petitions by editors of English and vernacular newspapers, Governor-General Bentinck agreed to revise press laws. Thomas Macaulay, a liberal colonial official, formulated new rules that restored the earlier freedoms for press.
4. After the revolt of 1857, the attitude to freedom of the press changed. Enraged Englishmen demanded a clamp down on the 'native' press. In 1878, the Vernacular Press Act was passed. It provided the government with extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press.
5. From now on the government kept regular track of the vernacular newspapers published in different provinces. When a 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.

### **Role of Press in Freedom Struggle in India**

1. Despite repressive measures, nationalist newspapers grew in numbers in all parts of India. They reported on colonial misrule and encouraged nationalist activities.
2. Attempts to throttle nationalist criticism provoked militant protest. This in turn led to a renewed cycle of persecution and protests.
3. When Punjab revolutionaries were deported in 1907, Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote with great sympathy about them in his *Kesari*. This led to his imprisonment and led to widespread protests all over India.