

Print Culture and the Modern World

Print Technology

- Print technology refers to the method of reproducing text or images on paper in multiple copies using different techniques.
 - The earliest form of print technology developed in **China, Japan, and Korea**, where **woodblock printing** was used. In this method, text or images were carved on wooden blocks and then inked to print on paper.
 - In China, from 594 AD, printing was mainly controlled by the imperial government, which produced books for civil services and administration.

Example:

- Chinese officials used printed books to prepare for civil service examinations.

Print in Japan

- Printing technology was introduced to Japan by Buddhist missionaries from China around 768–770 AD.
- The oldest printed Japanese book is the **Buddhist Sutra (868 AD)**.
- Printing helped spread religious ideas and later developed into artistic forms like **ukiyo-e** (pictures of the floating world).

Example:

- Kitagawa Utamaro created beautiful prints showing daily life, women, and nature in Japan.

Coming of Print in Europe

- Print technology came to Europe after **Marco Polo** returned from China in 1295.
- He brought knowledge of woodblock printing to Italy.
- Soon, printing spread across Europe, though books were still produced slowly.

Example:

- Italian printers started printing religious books using woodblocks.

Invention of the Printing Press

- The modern printing press was invented by **Johann Gutenberg** around 1440.
- His press used movable metal type, making printing faster and cheaper.
- The first book he printed was the Bible.

Example:

- Thousands of copies of the Bible were printed, making it accessible to common people.

The Print Revolution

- The Print Revolution refers to the transformation in society due to the spread of printing.
 - Books became cheaper and widely available.
 - A new reading public emerged, including ordinary people.
 - Oral culture (stories told by mouth) began to appear in printed form.

Example:

- Folk tales and songs were printed and sold in markets for common people.

Religious Debates

- Printing allowed ideas to spread quickly, leading to debates and reforms.
 - In 1517, **Martin Luther** wrote the **Ninety-Five Theses** criticizing the Church.
 - Printing helped spread his ideas rapidly across Europe.

Example:

- People began interpreting religion on their own instead of depending only on priests.

The Reading Mania

- In the 17th and 18th centuries, literacy rates increased in Europe.
 - People became eager to read books, newspapers, and pamphlets.
 - Cheap books like chapbooks and almanacs became popular.

Example:

- In England, small books were sold by traveling sellers (chapmen) for just a penny.

Print Culture and the French Revolution

- Many historians believe print played a key role in the **French Revolution**.
 - Books and pamphlets criticized the monarchy and spread revolutionary ideas.

Example:

- Political writings encouraged people to fight for equality and rights.

New Readers: Children, Women, Workers

- In the 19th century, education spread widely.
 - Women, children, and workers became new readers.
 - Special books and magazines were written for them.

Example:

- Women started reading novels and educational books at home.

New Innovations in Printing

- Printing technology improved greatly in the 19th century.
 - Power-driven presses and offset printing made printing faster and colorful.

Example:

- Newspapers could print thousands of copies daily with images and colors.

Manuscripts in India Before Printing

- Before printing, India had a rich tradition of handwritten manuscripts.
 - Written in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and regional languages.
 - Made on palm leaves or handmade paper.

Example:

- Religious texts like the Vedas were carefully handwritten and preserved.

Coming of Print in India

- The printing press came to India with Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century
 - First printing press was set up in Goa.
 - Books were printed in local languages.

Example:

- The first Tamil book was printed in 1579 in Cochin.

Religious Reform and Public Debates in India

- Printing encouraged debates on religion and social reforms.
 - Reformers like **Raja Rammohan Roy** used newspapers to spread ideas.
 - Orthodox groups also published papers to oppose reforms.

Example:

- Newspapers discussed issues like widow burning (sati), caste system, and monotheism.

New Forms of Print

- By the late 19th century, print culture expanded into visual forms.
 - Images, cartoons, and caricatures became popular.
 - Women's writings and novels increased.

Example:

- Raja Ravi Varma printed paintings that reached common people.

Print and Censorship

- Governments tried to control the press.
 - In India, the British introduced laws to censor newspapers.
 - Some publications were encouraged if they supported British rule.

Example:

- In 1835, press laws were revised to control printing activities.

Conclusion

Print culture played a major role in shaping the modern world. It spread knowledge, encouraged education, promoted debates, and brought social and political changes across societies.



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