



# Print Culture and the Modern World

Chapter 5 | India and the Contemporary World - II



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# 1 The First Printed Books - China, Japan & Korea

The earliest kind of print technology was developed in **China, Japan and Korea**.

## What is Print Culture?

**Print Culture** refers to the societal and cultural shifts that occur with mass-produced printed materials like books, newspapers, and images. It changed how knowledge was produced, shared, and consumed.

## Print in China

- From **AD 594** onwards, books printed by **rubbing paper against inked woodblocks**
- Earliest Chinese books made in '**accordion**' style - folded and stitched
- **China's imperial state** was major producer of printed material
- **Textbooks** for civil service examinations were main printed materials
- By 17th century, uses diversified: **fiction, poetry, plays**

## Print in Japan

- **Buddhist missionaries** introduced printing around **AD 768-770**
- Oldest Japanese book: **Buddhist Diamond Sutra** (AD 868)
- Books were **cheap and abundant**

## ★ IMP FACTS

- ★ Woodblock printing was the earliest form of print technology
- ★ China was the pioneer - printing began from AD 594
- ★ Diamond Sutra (AD 868) is the oldest surviving printed book

# 2 Print Comes to Europe

**Marco Polo** brought woodblock printing knowledge from China to Italy in **1295**.

July  
17

## Spread of Print in Europe

1295

**Marco Polo** returned to Italy with woodblock printing knowledge

1430s

**Johann Gutenberg** developed the printing press

1455

**Gutenberg Bible** - First major book printed



### Manuscripts Before Print

- Books were **handwritten by scribes**
- Written on **vellum** (parchment from animal skin)
- Were **expensive, fragile** and difficult to handle
- Could not meet growing demand for books

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## Gutenberg and the Printing Press



### Johann Gutenberg

Born in Strasbourg, Germany  
Inventor of Printing Press (1430s)  
First printed book: Bible (1455)

## How Gutenberg Developed the Printing Press

- Grew up on an **agricultural estate**
- Saw **olive presses and wine presses** in operation
- **Olive press** provided model for printing press
- As goldsmith, created **lead moulds** for casting metal type letters
- By **1448**, perfected the system
- **Gutenberg Bible** - 180 copies in 3 years

## Movable Type

Individual letters cast in metal that could be rearranged to print different pages. This made mass production of books possible and reduced cost and time.

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## The Print Revolution and Its Impact

### Spread of Printing Presses

- Between **1450-1550**, presses set up in most European countries
- **20 million copies** of printed books by end of 15th century
- **200 million** copies by 16th century
- Books became **cheaper and accessible**

### A New Reading Public

- Time and labour for producing books **decreased dramatically**
- Printing reduced **cost of books**
- Created new culture of **reading**
- **Oral culture** replaced by **reading public**
- Common people now lived in world of **printed material**

## ★ IMP FACTS

- ★ Print Revolution democratized knowledge
- ★ Books reached wider sections of people
- ★ Created a new reading public with access to knowledge

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## The Reading Mania & Popular Literature



### New Forms of Popular Literature

- **Penny chapbooks** - cheap, small books sold by travelling **chapmen**
- In France: "**Bibliothèque Bleue**" - printed on cheap blue paper
- Contained **romances, histories, devotional literature**
- **Almanacs and calendars** became popular



### New Spaces for Reading

- **Taverns (Pubs)** - people gathered to exchange news
- **Coffee houses** - popular from 17th century
- **Lending libraries** - made books available to all



## Martin Luther

German Religious Reformer  
Wrote "Ninety-Five Theses" (1517)  
Began Protestant Reformation



### Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation

- In **1517**, wrote **Ninety-Five Theses**
- Criticized **corrupt practices** of Catholic Church
- **5,000 copies** sold within weeks
- Said: "**Printing is the ultimate gift of God**"
- Print helped spread **Protestant ideas**



### Index of Prohibited Books

- Catholic Church began **Index of Prohibited Books** (mid-16th century)
- List of books Catholics were **forbidden to read**
- Publishers had to submit books for approval

### Problems with Manuscripts in India

- Written in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, vernacular languages
- Copied on **palm leaves** or **handmade paper**
- Were **expensive and fragile**
- Script was **difficult to read**

### 17 July **Print Arrives in India**

**Mid-16th C**

First press came to **Goa** with Portuguese missionaries

**1579**

First **Tamil book** printed at Cochin

**1780**

**James Augustus Hickey** started **Bengal Gazette**

**1810**

First printed edition of **Ramcharitmanas**

**1821**

**Raja Ram Mohan Roy** published **Sambad Kaumudi**

**1822**

**Bombay Samachar** (Gujarati) started



### Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Father of Indian Renaissance  
Published Sambad Kaumudi (1821)  
Campaigned against Sati



### Jyotiba Phule

Social reformer from Maharashtra  
Wrote "Gulamgiri" (1871)  
Highlighted caste injustices



#### Print and Social Reform

- **Sambad Kaumudi** (1821) - Ram Mohan Roy campaigned against Sati
- **Samachar Chandrika** - Hindu orthodox opposed Roy's views
- **Bombay Samachar** (1822) - Gujarati newspaper
- **Deoband Seminary** (1867) - published fatwas for Muslims



#### Women Writers

- **Rashsundari Debi** wrote "**Amar Jiban**" - first Bengali autobiography
- **Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai** wrote about women's conditions
- **Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain** - Muslim reformer for women's education

## **The Vernacular Press Act (1878)**

- Modelled on **Irish Press Laws**
- Gave government **extensive rights to censor** vernacular newspapers
- When report judged **seditions**, newspaper was warned
- If warning ignored, press **liable to be seized**
- Printing machinery could be **confiscated**



## **Nationalist Newspapers**

- Despite censorship, nationalist newspapers continued
- **Kesari** (Marathi) - by Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- **Gandhi**: "Fight for Swaraj is fight for liberty of press"

Year	Event
<b>AD 594</b>	Woodblock printing began in China
<b>AD 868</b>	Diamond Sutra - oldest printed book
<b>1295</b>	Marco Polo brought printing to Europe
<b>1430s</b>	Gutenberg developed printing press
<b>1455</b>	Gutenberg Bible printed
<b>1517</b>	Luther's Ninety-Five Theses
<b>Mid-16th C</b>	First press came to Goa
<b>1579</b>	First Tamil book printed
<b>1780</b>	Bengal Gazette started by Hickey
<b>1821</b>	Sambad Kaumudi by Ram Mohan Roy
<b>1871</b>	Gulamgiri by Jyotiba Phule

Year	Event
1878	Vernacular Press Act passed



## Key Terms / Definitions

### **Calligraphy**

Art of beautiful and stylized writing.

### **Vellum**

Parchment made from animal skin for writing.

### **Chapbooks**

Pocket-sized cheap books sold by chapmen.

### **Bibliothèque Bleue**

Low-priced books on blue paper (France).

### **Protestant Reformation**

16th century movement challenging Catholic Church.

### **Vernacular Press**

Publications in local Indian languages.

### **Seditious**

Content inciting rebellion against state.

### **Ulama**

Legal scholars of Islam and Sharia law.



## Chapter Summary

- ✓ **Print technology** first developed in **China, Japan and Korea** with woodblock printing.
- ✓ **Johann Gutenberg** invented the printing press in 1430s, revolutionizing book production.
- ✓ **Martin Luther** used print to spread Protestant Reformation ideas.
- ✓ In India, print came through **Portuguese missionaries** in mid-16th century.
- ✓ **James Augustus Hickey** started Bengal Gazette (1780), first Indian newspaper.
- ✓ Reformers like **Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Jyotiba Phule** used print for social reform.
- ✓ British passed **Vernacular Press Act (1878)** to control Indian newspapers.
- ✓ Despite censorship, print played **crucial role in Indian nationalism**.



## Important Questions for Board Exam

**Q. Who invented the printing press?**

**Ans:** Johann Gutenberg (1430s, Strasbourg, Germany).

**Q. What was the first book printed by Gutenberg?**

**Ans:** The Bible (180 copies in 3 years, 1455).

**Q. Who started the Bengal Gazette?**

**Ans:** James Augustus Hickey (1780).

**Q. Which newspaper was published by Raja Ram Mohan Roy?**

**Ans:** Sambad Kaumudi (1821).

**Q. When was the Vernacular Press Act passed?**

**Ans:** 1878.

**Q. Who wrote "Gulamgiri"?**

**Ans:** Jyotiba Phule (1871).

**Q. Why did Martin Luther say "Printing is the ultimate gift of God"?**

**Ans:** Print allowed his ideas to spread widely and rapidly. His Ninety-Five Theses (1517) criticizing the Catholic Church sold 5,000 copies in weeks, sparking the Protestant Reformation.

**Q. What was the Vernacular Press Act? Why was it passed?**

**Ans:** Passed in 1878, modelled on Irish Press Laws. It gave government power to: (i) Censor reports and editorials (ii) Warn seditious newspapers (iii) Seize printing presses if warnings ignored. It was passed to control nationalist ideas spreading through Indian language newspapers.

**Q. Describe the Print Revolution and its impact.**

**Ans:** (i) Shift from hand printing to mechanical printing (ii) Reduced time and cost of book production (iii) Made books accessible to common people (iv) Created new reading public (v) Enabled spread of new ideas - Reformation, Enlightenment (vi) Led to questioning of established authorities (vii) Changed education, politics, religion and social life.



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