Chapter 4th: The Age of Industrialisation

The First Printed Books

Fig. 2a – A page from the Diamond Sutra.

1. Early Print Technology in East Asia:

- Originated in China, Japan, and Korea.
- The hand printing method was developed initially.

2. Chinese Woodblock Printing:

- Introduced around AD 594 in China.
- Involved rubbing paper against inked woodblock.
- Traditionally used for printing books.

3. Chinese 'Accordion Book':

- Utilized due to the inability to print both sides of thin
- paper. Pages folded and stitched at the side.

4. Imperial State's Role in Printing:

- China's imperial state was a major producer of printed
- materials. Sponsored printing of textbooks for civil service examinations.

5. Diversification of Print Usage:

- By the 17th century, print usage expanded beyond scholar-
- officials. Merchants utilized print for trade information.
- Reading became a leisure activity for a broader audience.

6. Emergence of New Reading Culture:

- Preferred literary genres included fiction, poetry, autobiographies, and plays.
- Women began reading and publishing their works.

7. Introduction of Western Printing Techniques:

- Imported in the late 19th century.
- Mechanical presses replaced traditional hand
- printing. Shanghai became a center for the new print culture.

8. Transition to Mechanical Printing:

- Shift from hand printing to mechanical printing occurred gradually.
- Western-style schools in China contributed to the adoption of mechanical presses.

Print in Japan

Fig. 4a – A morning scene, ukiyo print by Shunman Kubo, late eighteenth century.
A man looks out of the window at the snowfall while women prepare tea and perform other domestic duties.

1. Introduction of Hand-Printing in Japan:

- Buddhist missionaries from China introduced hand-printing technology around AD 768-770.
- The oldest Japanese book, the Buddhist Diamond Sutra, was printed in AD 868.

2. Usage of Printed Material:

- Pictures were printed on textiles, playing cards, and paper money.
- Books in medieval Japan were cheap and abundant, with poets and prose writers regularly published.

3. Visual Material in Publishing Practices:

- Visual material led to diverse publishing practices.
- Late 18th-century Edo depicted an elegant urban culture through illustrated collections of paintings.

4. Content of Hand-Printed Material:

- Libraries and bookstores offered various types of hand-printed material:
- Books on women, musical instruments, calculations, tea ceremony, etc.
- Topics included flower arrangements, proper etiquette, cooking, and famous places.

5. Urban Circles in Edo (Tokyo):

- Flourishing urban circles in Edo showcased an elegant culture.
- Illustrations depicted artists, courtesans, and teahouse gatherings.

Print Comes to Europe

Fig. 4b – Jikji

The *Jikji* of Korea is among the world's oldest existing books printed with movable metal type. It contains the essential features of Zen Buddhism. About 150 monks of India, China and Korea are mentioned in the book. It was printed in late 14th century. While the first volume of the book is unavailable, the second one is available in the National Library of France. This work marked an important technical change in the print culture. That is why it was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2001.

1. Introduction of Chinese Paper in Europe:

- Chinese paper reached Europe via the Silk Route in the 11th century.
- Enabled manuscript production by scribes, enhancing written communication.

2. Impact of Marco Polo's Return:

- Marco Polo brought woodblock printing knowledge from China to Italy in 1295.
- Italians began producing books with woodblocks, leading to the spread of printing technology in Europe.

3. Shift Towards Printing Technology:

- Initially, luxury editions were handwritten, while cheaper printed copies gained popularity among merchants and students.
- Demand for books increased, leading to the organization of book production and the rise of booksellers.

4. Expansion of Book Trade:

- Booksellers across Europe began exporting books to various countries.
- Book fairs became common, facilitating the exchange of books and ideas.

5. Challenges of Manuscript Production:

- Handwritten manuscripts were expensive, labour-intensive, and fragile, limiting their circulation.
- Copying manuscripts was time-consuming, leading to the search for quicker reproduction methods.

6. Emergence of Woodblock Printing:

- Woodblocks were widely used in Europe by the early 15th century for printing textiles, playing cards, and religious pictures with simple texts.

7. Invention of Printing Press:

- Johann Gutenberg developed the first-known printing press in the 1430s in Strasbourg, Germany.
- Signalled a significant breakthrough in print technology, paving the way for mass production of texts.

Gutenberg and the Printing Press

Fig. 5 – A Portrait of Johann Gutenberg, 1584.

Fig. 6 – Gutenberg Printing Press.
Notice the long handle attached to the screw.
This handle was used to turn the screw and
press down the platen over the printing block
that was placed on top of a sheet of damp
paper. Gutenberg developed metal types for
each of the 26 characters of the Roman
alphabet and 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, and it remained the basic
print technology over the next 300 years.
Books could now be produced much faster than
was possible when each print block was
prepared by carving a piece of wood by hand.
The Gutenberg press could print 250 sheets
on one side per hour.

1. Gutenberg's Background and Innovation:

- Gutenberg, the son of a merchant, grew up on an agricultural estate and learned about presses.
- He acquired expertise in polishing stones, goldsmithing, and creating lead moulds, which he adapted for his printing press.

2. Development of Printing Press:

- Gutenberg perfected the printing press model by 1448, using olive press as a basis and lead moulds for metal types.
- First printed book was the Bible, with approximately 180 copies produced over three years, showcasing relatively fast production for the time.

Fig. 7 – Pages of Gutenberg's Bible, the first printed book in Europe.
Gutenberg printed about 180 copies, of which no more than 50 have survived.
Look at these pages of Gutenberg's Bible carefully. They were not just products of new technology. The text was printed in the new Gutenberg press with metal type, but the borders were carefully designed, painted and illuminated by hand by artists. No two copies were the same. Every page of each copy was different. Even when two copies look similar, a careful comparison will reveal differences. Elites everywhere preferred this lack of uniformity: what they possessed then could be claimed as unique, for no one else owned a copy that was exactly the same.
In the text you will notice the use of colour within the letters in various places. This had two functions: it added colour to the page, and highlighted all the holy words to emphasise their significance. But the colour on every page of the text was added by hand. Gutenberg printed the text in black, leaving spaces where the colour could be filled in later.

3. Coexistence with Hand Production:

- Printed books initially resembled handwritten manuscripts, with metal letters mimicking ornamental styles.
- Hand illumination and painting of illustrations continued, offering buyers customization options.

4. Spread of Printing Presses:

- Printing presses proliferated across Europe between 1450 and 1550, with German printers travelling to other countries to establish presses.

- This led to a surge in book production, with 20 million copies printed in the late 15th century and approximately 200 million in the 16th century.

5. Impact of Mechanical Printing:

- The transition from hand printing to mechanical printing sparked the print revolution, significantly increasing book availability and accessibility.

The Print Revolution and Its Impact

A New Reading Public

1. Impact of the Printing Press on the Reading Public:

- Printing press reduced book costs, decreased production time, and facilitated mass production, leading to a flood of books in the market.
- The emergence of a new reading public due to increased accessibility to books.

2. Transition in Reading Culture:

- Previously, reading was limited to elites, while common people engaged in oral culture, listening to sacred texts, ballads, and folk tales.
- The shift from oral to reading culture due to the availability of printed books, allows wider dissemination of knowledge.

3. Challenges of Literacy:

- Low literacy rates in most European countries until the twentieth century posed a challenge for publishers to reach common people with printed books.

4. Strategies to Reach Common People:

- Publishers adapted by producing illustrated books featuring popular ballads and folk tales, appealing to both readers and non-readers.
- Oral transmission of printed material occurred through recitations and singing at village gatherings and town taverns.

5. Blurring of Oral and Reading Cultures:

- Printed material incorporated elements of oral culture, blurring the line between oral and reading cultures.
- Hearing and reading publics intertwined as printed works were orally transmitted and enjoyed by both literate and illiterate individuals.

Religious Debates and the Fear of Print

Fig. 9 – J.V. Schley, L'Imprimerie, 1739.
This is one of the many images produced in early modern Europe, celebrating the coming of print. You can see the printing press descending from heaven, carried by a goddess. On two sides of the goddess, blessing the machine, are Minerva (the goddess of wisdom) and Mercury (the messenger god, also symbolising reason). The women in the foreground are holding plaques with the portraits of six pioneer printers of different countries. In the middle ground on the left (figure encircled) is the portrait of Gutenberg.

1. Impact of Printing on the Circulation of Ideas:

- Print enabled wide dissemination of ideas, fostering debate and discussion.
- Individuals could print and circulate their ideas, influencing others' thoughts and actions.

2. Mixed Reception of Printed Books:

- Not everyone welcomed printed books; fears existed regarding their effects on people's minds.
- Apprehensions included concerns about rebellious and irreligious thoughts spreading due to uncontrolled printing and reading.

3. Implications in Religion:

- Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, criticizing Roman Catholic Church practices, was printed and widely circulated in 1517.
- Luther's writings led to the Protestant Reformation by sparking division within the Church.
- Luther's New Testament translation sold thousands of copies rapidly, highlighting the power of print in disseminating religious reform ideas.

4. Role of Printing in the Reformation:

- Printing played a crucial role in facilitating the spread of new religious ideas, contributing to the intellectual atmosphere that fueled the Reformation.
- Luther acknowledged printing as a divine gift, emphasizing its significance in advancing religious reform.
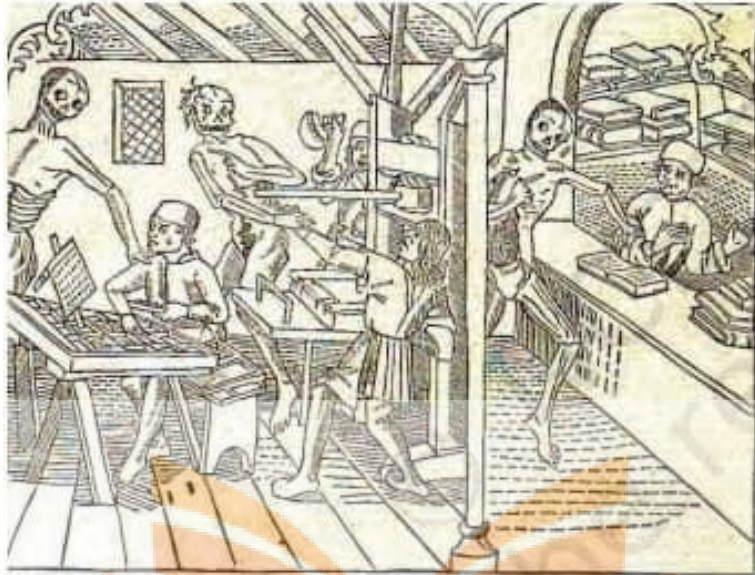
Print and Dissent

Fig. 10 – The macabre dance.
This sixteenth-century print shows how the fear of printing was dramatised in visual representations of the time. In this highly interesting woodcut the coming of print is associated with the end of the world. The interior of the printer's workshop here is the site of a dance of death. Skeletal figures control the printer and his workers, define and dictate what is to be done and what is to be produced.

1. Impact of Print on Religious Interpretations:

- Print and popular religious literature sparked diverse individual interpretations of faith, even among the less educated.
- Example: Manocchio, a miller in Italy, reinterpreted biblical messages based on books he read, leading to conflict with the Roman Catholic Church.

2. Case of Manocchio:

- Manocchio's reinterpretation of the Bible enraged the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century.
- Despite his limited education, Manocchio formulated controversial views on God and Creation, challenging established religious doctrines.

3. Response of the Roman Catholic Church:

- Troubled by dissenting interpretations of faith, the Roman Catholic Church initiated an inquisition to suppress heretical ideas.
- The Church imposed strict controls over publishers and booksellers to regulate the dissemination of potentially controversial religious literature.

4. Establishment of Index of Prohibited Books:

- From 1558, the Roman Catholic Church maintained an Index of Prohibited Books to control the spread of dissenting ideas.
- The Index aimed to restrict access to texts deemed heretical or dangerous to religious orthodoxy.

The Reading Mania

1. Increase in Literacy Rates:

- During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, literacy rates rose across Europe due to the establishment of church-run schools in villages.
- In some parts of Europe by the late eighteenth century, literacy rates reached as high as 60 to 80 percent, indicating widespread literacy.

2. Emergence of Popular Literature:

- Print led to the creation of new forms of popular literature, targeting diverse audiences.
- Booksellers utilized peddlers to distribute various reading materials, including almanacs, ballads, folktales, and chapbooks, catering to the entertainment needs of ordinary readers.

3. Development of Periodical Press:

- The periodical press evolved in the early eighteenth century, offering a blend of current affairs and entertainment.
- Newspapers and journals disseminated information about wars, trade, and global developments, enhancing people's access to knowledge.

4. Accessibility of Scientific Ideas:

- Scientific and philosophical ideas became more accessible to the common people through printed texts.
- Ancient and medieval scientific texts were compiled and published, alongside maps and scientific diagrams, expanding the dissemination of knowledge.

5. Influence of Thinkers and Writers:

- Influential thinkers like Isaac Newton, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and Jean Jacques Rousseau published their ideas, reaching a broader audience.
- Their writings on science, reason, and rationality became prominent in popular literature, shaping public discourse and intellectual thought.

'Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world!'

1. Perception of Books as Agents of Change:

- By the mid-eighteenth century, there was a widespread belief that books were instrumental in spreading progress and enlightenment.

- Many individuals held the conviction that books had the potential to transform society, leading to the liberation from despotism and tyranny.

2. Role of Printing Press in Promoting Enlightenment:

- Louise-Sebastien Mercier, an eighteenth-century French novelist, emphasized the profound impact of the printing press on societal progress.
- Mercier asserted that the printing press was the most powerful tool for advancing public opinion, which could ultimately overthrow despotic rule.

3. Empowerment through Reading:

- In Mercier's novels, protagonists undergo significant transformations through reading.
- Characters immerse themselves in books, experiencing enlightenment and intellectual growth, thus highlighting the transformative power of reading.

4. Challenge to Tyranny:

- Mercier's proclamation, "Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world! Tremble before the virtual writer!" underscores the perceived threat that printed works posed to oppressive regimes.
- The declaration symbolizes the belief in the ability of printed materials to challenge and undermine authoritarian rule.

Print Culture and the French Revolution

Fig. 11 – The nobility and the common people before the French Revolution, a cartoon of the late eighteenth century.
The cartoon shows how the ordinary people – peasants, artisans and workers – had a hard time while the nobility enjoyed life and oppressed them. Circulation of cartoons like this one had an impact on the thinking of people before the revolution.

1. Role of Print in Popularizing Enlightenment Ideas:

- Print culture disseminated the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who advocated reason over tradition and superstition.
- Enlightenment writings critiqued established institutions like the Church and the monarchy, challenging the legitimacy of traditional social orders.

2. Emergence of a Culture of Dialogue and Debate:

- Print facilitated open discussions and debates on societal norms and values, fostering a culture of critical thinking and inquiry.
- The public became more aware of the power of reason, leading to the questioning of existing ideas and beliefs, paving the way for new social revolutions.

3. Literature Criticizing Monarchy and Social Order:

- By the 1780s, there was a surge in literature mocking royalty and critiquing their morality, leading to widespread questioning of the existing social hierarchy.
- Cartoons and caricatures depicted the monarchy as indulging in sensual pleasures while the common people suffered, fostering discontent and opposition against the monarchy.

4. Complexity of Influence of Printed Material:

- While print aided the spread of ideas, individuals were exposed to a variety of literature, including monarchial and Church propaganda, alongside Enlightenment writings.
- People interpreted and synthesized diverse perspectives, accepting some ideas while rejecting others, indicating that print did not directly shape their minds but offered the possibility of independent thought.

The Nineteenth Century

- The nineteenth century saw vast leaps in mass literacy in Europe, bringing in large numbers of new readers among children, women and workers.

Children, Women and Workers

1. Impact of Compulsory Primary Education:

- With the introduction of compulsory primary education in the late nineteenth century, children emerged as a significant group of readers.
- The production of school textbooks became crucial for the publishing industry to cater to the educational needs of children.

2. Development of Children's Literature:

- A children's press, specializing in literature for children, was established in France in 1857, emphasizing the importance of creating content specifically for young readers.
- Traditional folk tales, like those compiled by the Grimm Brothers in Germany, underwent editing to make them suitable for children and to align with societal standards.

3. Role of Women in Reading and Writing:

- Women played a pivotal role as both readers and writers during the nineteenth century.
- Penny magazines and manuals on etiquette and housekeeping were targeted towards women, while female novelists like Jane Austen

  and the Bronte sisters gained prominence, shaping perceptions of womanhood.

4. Emergence of Lending Libraries:

- Lending libraries, established in the seventeenth century, expanded their role in educating white-collar workers, artisans, and the lower-middle class in nineteenth-century England.
- These libraries served as avenues for self-improvement and self-expression for working-class individuals, who also engaged in writing political tracts and autobiographies to express their ideas and experiences.

Further Innovations

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.

1. Evolution of Printing Technology:

- In the late eighteenth century, printing presses transitioned from wood to metal construction.
- Richard M. Hoe's power-driven cylindrical press, perfected in the mid-nineteenth century, significantly increased printing capacity to 8,000 sheets per hour, primarily benefiting newspaper production.
- The late nineteenth century saw the development of the offset press, capable of printing multiple colours simultaneously, revolutionizing printing capabilities.

2. Innovations in the Twentieth Century:

- Electrically operated presses, introduced at the turn of the twentieth century, accelerated printing processes.
- Continuous advancements such as improved paper feeding methods, better plate quality, and the introduction of automatic paper reels and photoelectric colour control further enhanced printing efficiency and quality.

3. Marketing Strategies:

- Nineteenth-century periodicals serialized novels, shaping a unique approach to writing novels.
- In England during the 1920s, popular works were sold in affordable series like the Shilling Series, making literature more accessible to the masses.
- The introduction of dust covers or book jackets in the twentieth century added visual appeal to books.
- During the Great Depression in the 1930s, publishers released cheap paperback editions to sustain book purchases amidst economic downturns.
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India and the World of Print

Manuscripts Before the Age of Print

Fig. 15 – Pages from the Diwan of Hafiz, 1824.
Hafiz was a fourteenth-century poet whose collected works are known as Diwan. Notice the beautiful calligraphy and the elaborate illustration and design. Manuscripts like this continued to be produced for the rich even after the coming of the letterpress.

Fig. 16 – Pages from the Rigveda.
Handwritten manuscripts continued to be produced in India till much after the coming of print. This manuscript was produced in the eighteenth century in the Malayalam script.

1. Tradition of Handwritten Manuscripts in India:

- India had a rich tradition of handwritten manuscripts in languages like Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and various vernacular languages.
- Manuscripts were copied on palm leaves or handmade paper, sometimes featuring intricate illustrations.

- Preservation techniques included pressing between wooden covers or sewing pages together.

2. Challenges with Manuscripts:

- Manuscripts were expensive and fragile, requiring careful handling.
- Different script styles made reading difficult, limiting their widespread use in everyday life.

3. Education System and Manuscript Usage:

- Pre-colonial Bengal had village primary schools, but students often learned to write without reading texts.
- Teachers relied on memory to dictate portions of texts, and students transcribed them, resulting in literacy without actual reading experience for many.

Print Comes to India

1. Introduction of Printing Press in Goa:

- Portuguese missionaries brought the printing press to Goa in the mid-sixteenth century.
- Jesuit priests printed tracts in Konkani, with around 50 books printed in Konkani and Kanara languages by 1674.

2. Printing in Tamil and Malayalam:

- Catholic priests printed the first Tamil book in 1579 at Cochin and the first Malayalam book in 1713.
- Dutch Protestant missionaries printed 32 Tamil texts by 1710, translating older works.

3. Emergence of English Language Press:

- English language press in India developed relatively late, despite the presence of the English East India Company importing presses from the late seventeenth century.
- James Augustus Hickey initiated English printing with the Bengal Gazette in 1780, emphasizing its independence from colonial influence.

4. Significance of Bengal Gazette:

- Bengal Gazette, edited by Hickey, served as a weekly magazine and commercial paper open to all.
- It published advertisements, including those related to the import and sale of slaves, and gossip about the Company's officials, leading to conflicts with Governor-General Warren Hastings.

5. Response to Independent Press:

- Warren Hastings persecuted Hickey and supported officially sanctioned newspapers to counteract negative information about the colonial government.
- The late eighteenth century saw the emergence of several newspapers and journals, including Indian-owned publications like the weekly Bengal Gazette by Gangadhar Bhattacharya.

Religious Reform and Public Debates

1. Role of Print in Religious Debates:

- Intense religious debates in the early nineteenth century spurred the production of printed tracts and newspapers.

- These publications spread new ideas and shaped public discourse, allowing wider participation in discussions and the expression of diverse views.

2. Printing in Bengal:

- Rammohun Roy published the Sambad Kaumudi in 1821, advocating for reforms, while the Hindu orthodoxy countered with the Samachar Chandrika.
- Persian newspapers like Jam-i-Jahan Nama and Shamsul Akhbar emerged alongside the Gujarati newspaper, the Bombay Samachar, in 1822.

3. Printing in North India:

- Muslim ulama used cheap lithographic presses to publish religious scriptures and newspapers in Persian and Urdu to counter colonial influences and promote Islamic doctrines.
- The Deoband Seminary, established in 1867, issued numerous fatwas guiding Muslims in everyday life.

4. Impact on Hindu Communities:

- Print facilitated the reading of religious texts among Hindus, with the first printed edition of the Ramcharitmanas in 1810.
- Cheap lithographic editions of religious texts flooded the north Indian markets by the mid-nineteenth century, enhancing accessibility.

5. Wide Circulation and Connectivity:

- Printed religious texts reached a broad audience, fostering discussions, debates, and controversies across different regions and religious communities.

- Newspapers played a crucial role in connecting communities and disseminating news, contributing to the formation of pan-Indian identities.

New Forms of Publication

1. Impact of Printing on Literary Preferences:

- Printing led to a demand for literature that reflected the lives, experiences, emotions, and relationships of readers.
- The novel emerged as a popular literary form, catering to this need and offering diverse portrayals of human life.

2. Expansion of Literary Forms:

- Alongside novels, new literary forms such as lyrics, short stories, and essays on social and political issues gained popularity.
- These forms highlighted human experiences and social dynamics, reflecting the changing societal norms.

3. Emergence of Visual Culture:

- Increased accessibility to printing presses facilitated the reproduction of visual images in mass quantities.
- Artists like Raja Ravi Varma produced images for mass circulation, while wood engravers created prints for decoration, shaping popular perceptions of modernity, tradition, religion, and politics.

4. Role of Caricatures and Cartoons:

- Caricatures and cartoons became prevalent in journals and newspapers by the 1870s, serving as commentary on social and political matters.
- They depicted various aspects of Indian society, including the fascination with Western culture, the fear of social change, and critiques of imperial rule.

Women and Print

Fig. 18 – The cover page of Indian Charivari. The Indian Charivari was one of the many journals of caricature and satire published in the late nineteenth century.
Notice that the imperial British figure is positioned right at the centre. He is authoritative and imperial; telling the natives what is to be done. The natives sit on either side of him, servile and submissive. The Indians are being shown a copy of Punch, the British journal of cartoons and satire. You can almost hear the British master say – 'This is the model, produce Indian versions of it.'

1. Increase in Women's Literacy:

- Women's literacy saw a significant rise in middle-class households, facilitated by the liberal attitudes of husbands and fathers who supported women's education at home and in schools.
- Journals played a crucial role by advocating for women's education and providing suitable reading material for home-based schooling.

2. Challenges to Women's Education:

- Conservative Hindu and Muslim families often opposed women's education, fearing widowhood or corruption from reading Urdu romances.

- Despite prohibitions, some women, like the girl in a conservative Muslim family in North India and Rashsundari Debi in East Bengal, clandestinely pursued education, showcasing individual defiance against societal norms.

3. Emergence of Women's Voices in Literature:

- Social reforms and novels generated interest in women's lives and emotions, leading to the emergence of female authors who highlighted women's experiences and challenges.
- Authors like Kailashbashini Debi, Tarabai Shinde, and Pandita Ramabai wrote passionately about the hardships faced by women, challenging societal injustices.

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.

4. Development of Women-centric Print Culture:

- Women's education became a significant focus of Hindi printing from the 1870s, with journals discussing issues like education, widowhood, and the national movement.

- Folk literature in Punjab and popular books from Bengal's Battala area addressed topics such as women's roles in households, often promoting traditional values through printed booklets and literature.

Print and the Poor People

1. Expansion of Book Access:

- In nineteenth-century Madras towns, very cheap small books were sold at crossroads, allowing even poor people travelling to markets to purchase them.
- Public libraries emerged in the early twentieth century, primarily in cities, towns, and prosperous villages, providing broader access to books.

2. Role of Libraries in Society:

- Setting up libraries became a status symbol for wealthy local patrons, enhancing their prestige within the community.

3. Caste Discourse in Print:

- From the late nineteenth century, caste discrimination issues were addressed in printed tracts and essays.
- Jyotiba Phule's "Gulamgiri" (1871) and writings by B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Periyar) in the twentieth century contributed significantly to caste discourse and were widely read across India.

4. Worker Representation in Print:

- Despite challenges, workers like Kashibaba and Sudarshan Chakra utilized print media to voice concerns about caste and class exploitation.
- The establishment of libraries by Bangalore cotton mill workers in the 1930s, inspired by Bombay workers, aimed at self-education, temperance, literacy promotion, and sometimes, nationalist propagation.

Print and Censorship

1. Early Colonial Press Control:

- Before 1798, the East India Company was not heavily concerned with censorship, primarily targeting English critics of Company actions in India to prevent attacks on its trade monopoly.

2. Changes in Press Regulations (1820s – 1835):

- In the 1820s, the Calcutta Supreme Court introduced regulations to control press freedom, aiming to promote newspapers supportive of British rule.
- Governor-General Bentinck revised press laws in 1835, restoring earlier freedoms under the influence of liberal colonial official Thomas Macaulay.

3. Post–1857 Revolt Shift in Press Attitude:

- After the 1857 revolt, English demands for press control intensified, especially targeting assertively nationalist vernacular newspapers.
- The Vernacular Press Act of 1878, modelled on Irish Press Laws, granted extensive censorship rights to the government over vernacular press content.

4. Impact on Nationalist Press and Responses:

- Despite repression, nationalist newspapers proliferated, reporting on colonial misrule and fostering nationalist activities.
- Attempts to suppress nationalist criticism triggered militant protests, leading to cycles of persecution and protests, exemplified by Balgangadhar Tilak's imprisonment in 1908 for supporting Punjab revolutionaries, sparking widespread protests across India.

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