

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

Give reasons for the following

1. Woodblock print only came to Europe after 1295.

Ans. Marco Polo the Italian explorer returned to Italy from China in 1295 and brought with him the knowledge of woodblock printing.

2. Martin Luther was in favour of print and spoke out in praise of it.

Ans. Martin Luther's criticism of Roman Catholic church reached a large section of masses because of print. Hence, he was in favour of print and spoke out in praise of it.

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

Ans. Because of print new interpretation of Bible reached to people and they started questioning the authority of church. Due to this the Roman Catholic Church began keeping and index of Prohibited books from the mid – sixteenth century.

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

Ans. The power of the printed word is most often seen in the way governments seek to regulate and suppress print. The colonial government kept continuous track of all books and newspapers published in India and passed numerous laws to control the press. Because of this Gandhi said the fight for Swaraj is a fight for liberty of speech, liberty of the press, and freedom of association.

Write short notes on following

1. The Gutenberg Press

Ans. Gutenberg was the son of a merchant and grew up on a large agricultural estate. From his childhood he had seen wine and olive presses. Subsequently, he learnt the art of polishing stones, became a master goldsmith, and also acquired the expertise to create lead moulds used for making trinkets. Drawing on this knowledge, Gutenberg adapted existing technology to design his innovation. The olive press provided the model for the printing press, and moulds were used for casting the metal types for the letters of the alphabet.

By 1448, Gutenberg perfected the system. The first book he printed was the Bible. About 180 copies were printed and it took three years to produce them. By the standards of the time this was fast production.

2. Erasmus's idea of the printed book

Ans. Erasmus thought that books were not good for sanctity of scholastic knowledge. He was of the opinion that printed books would glut the market with contents which will do more harm than good to society. Because of this the value of good content would be lost in the din.

3. The Vernacular Press Act

Ans. In 1878, the Vernacular Press Act was passed, modelled on the Irish Press Laws. It provided the government with extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press. 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.

4. What did the spread of print culture in nineteenth century India mean to:
- Women
 - The poor
 - Reformers

Ans. Women: Because of printing technique books became cheaper. Many hawkers started selling books from door to door. This created easy availability of books for majority of women. Apart from this many liberal males encouraged women from their families to read. Novels contained interesting descriptions of women's lives. This created interest among women readers. Women, who were earlier cocooned inside their homes could now know about the outside world thanks to the print technology. This created a spurt of many women writers in India. It can be said that print culture not only created readers among women but also writers among them.

The poor: Very cheap small books were brought to markets in nineteenth-century Madras towns and sold at crossroads, allowing poor people traveling to markets to buy them. Public libraries were set up from the early twentieth century, expanding the access to books.

From the late nineteenth century, issues of caste discrimination began to be written about in many printed tracts and essays. This helped in bringing these issues to the forefront of public consciousness. Workers in factories were too overworked and lacked the education to write much about their experiences. But some workers took initiative to write stories about their conditions. These narratives contained issues related to class oppression. So, worker's problems also came to the fore.

Reformers: From the early nineteenth century there were intense debates around religious issues. 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 criticised 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. A wider public could now participate in these public discussions and express their views. New ideas emerged through these clashes of opinions.

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. To reach a wider audience, the ideas were printed in the everyday, spoken language of ordinary people.

Answer the following questions

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

Ans. Despotism is a governance system in which absolute power is wielded by an individual, without any legal regulation or checks by Constitution.

- There was a common conviction that books were a means of spreading enlightenment and progress, by the mid-eighteenth century.
- Many believed that books would herald a time when intellect and reason could change the world.
- People believed that books would help in liberating society from tyranny and despotism.
- In eighteenth-century France, a famous novelist named Louise-Sebastien Mercier, declared that despotism will be swept away by the force of public opinion and progress and the printing press is the powerful engine behind it.
- Through acts of reading, the heroes are transformed in many of Mercier's novels.
- The ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers were popularised by Print.
- Their writings provided a critical commentary on despotism, superstition, and tradition, collectively.
- It was demanded that everything be judged through the application of rationality and reason, they argued for giving predominance to reason instead of custom.

- The legitimacy of a social order based on tradition was eroded when there was an attack on despotic power wielded by the state.
- The sacred authority of the Church was attacked through Print.
- Those who read the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire saw the world through new eyes, eyes that were rational, critical and questioning. Their works were read widely by people.
- A new culture of debate and dialogue was created by the Print.
- Due to more awareness of the power of reason by the public, all institutions, norms and values were discussed and re-evaluated.
- New ideas of social revolution came into being with public culture which understood the requirement for questioning existing beliefs and ideas.
- Against the monarchy, there was a growth of hostile sentiments with the circulation of underground literature.
- Caricatures and Cartoons usually suggested that while the common people suffered immense hardships, the monarchy remained absorbed only in sensual pleasures.
- There came into existence immense amounts of literature that criticised and mocked the morality of the royalty, by the 1780s. The existing social order was questioned through these processes.

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

Ans. Not everyone welcomed the printed book, and those who did also had fears about it. Many were apprehensive of the effects that the easier access to the printed word and the wider circulation of books, could have on people's minds. It was 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. Expressed by religious authorities and monarchs, as well as many writers and artists, this anxiety was the basis of widespread criticism of the new printed literature that had begun to circulate.

Example from Europe: Erasmus thought that books were not good for sanctity of scholastic knowledge. He was of the opinion that printed books would glut the market with contents which will do more harm than good to society. Because of this the value of good content would be lost in the din.

Example from India: Conservative Hindus believed that a literate girl would be widowed, and Muslims feared that educated women would be corrupted by reading Urdu romances.

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

Ans. In India, the poor people benefitted from the print culture, due to the availability of low-price books and public libraries.

- Enlightening essays were written against caste discrimination and injustices. These were read by the common people across the country.
- Because of the support and encouragement of the social reformer, over-worked factory workers set up libraries for self-education, and some also published their own works like, Kashibaba Kanpur mill worker wrote Chhote aur Bade ka Sawal.

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

Ans.

- It assisted by providing easy access to nationalist ideals and ideas of quality and freedom.
- It became easier for the social reformers to spread their opinions through newspapers, which sparked off public debates.
- The common people began questioning the authority due to the power of reasoning.
- The nationalist newspaper reported on colonial misrule and encouraged people to participate in nationalist activities.