



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Arts

### PRINTMAKING AS A FORM OF ART: IT'S EVOLUTION AND GROWTH SINCE INCEPTION AN IN-DEPTH STUDY.

KEY WORDS:

Vedika Chauhan

#### ABSTRACT

The paper researches the advent of 'print', its growth and its popularity. In the course of the study, the manner of communication has changed drastically according to the period under consideration. Urbanization a result of industrialization brought in its wake a large demand for knowledge which was fed by 'print'. In recent years the form of communication has changed drastically with the spread of digitalization, globalization and liberalization. The accessibility to online modes has led to the popularity of social media but print is the cheapest most accessible and wide-ranging form of reach amongst the larger sections of society. **Research Question:** An attempt would be made to understand the history of printmaking, with special reference to it being an 'Art'. The reasons for its growth path and why should it be considered a form of 'Art'. Are there different types of printmaking? Are there different routes that different forms of printmaking followed? Are all of them considered 'Art'? These are some of the questions that the research paper will attempt to answer.

#### INTRODUCTION

Print-based media essentially means any written or pictorial form of communication that is produced mechanically or electronically using printing, photocopying or any other digital method. Under this, multiple copies are made automatically. Print media includes a whole range like:

- Books
- Business cards
- Brochures
- Coupons
- Advertisements in magazines, newspapers and billboards
- Postcards
- Product packaging



Figure 1: Image Of Print Media

Source: Google image

#### Background

The earliest known form of printing as applied to paper was woodblock printing. That appeared in China before 220 AD and was used primarily for cloth printing. It was not applied to paper till the seventh century.

As far as books were concerned, it was first inscribed on stone tablets and that was the start of the history of written communication between humans. The use of paper developed from papyrus scrolls in Egypt. They were made from the papyrus plant and rolled into cylinders so that they could be stored. This eventually led to the invention of paper made from tree pulp by the Chinese. The Romans used "codex" which meant that 2 pieces of wood with wax on each side and words inscribed were bound together by leather. This is the beginning of the construction of the book as we know it today.

The block printing technique was the next major invention because till then all books and scrolls were written and copied by hand. This was invented by Guttenberg. It was his invention that led to a revolution in printing. During the industrial revolution of Britain in the 1860s, when education

and literacy were on the rise, the Dime novel was invented. It was like the comic books and short episode novels we read today.

Traditional printmaking techniques include woodcut, etching, engraving and lithography. The main method used is a 'matrix', which is a template and could be made of wood, metal or glass. A design is created on this with either tools or chemicals. It is then inked or transferred to the desired surface. The print from the matrix is used with the application of pressure and this is achieved by a printmaking press. Normally, the print is a mirror image of the original design which was on the matrix. Indicated below are various impressions of print being used as an 'Art' through various mediums.

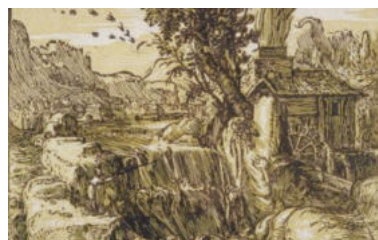


Figure 2: An Image Of A Woodcut Impression

Source: Art in context, <https://artincontext.org/woodcut-art/>



Figure 3: An Image Of An Etching Impression

Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2019/renaissance-of-etching>



**Figure 4: An Image Of An Engraving**

Source: Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engraving>



**Figure 5: An Image Of A Lithography**

Source: History of Science museum, <https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/lithography>



**Figure 6: An Image Of Screen Printing**

Source: Underway Studio, <https://www.underwaystudio.com/blog/2020/4/16/design-your-own-screenprint-pack>

#### Definition

Print media is a very wide term and refers to paper publications circulated in the form of physical editions of books, magazines, journals or newsletters. It is also concerned with behind the scene planning and artistic ability that shape journalistic routines and norms behind printed products. The basic aim is to provide information, words and/or photographs. Newspapers and magazines are a part of this definition. In simple terms, the materials of publication which are printed on paper and distributed are known as print media.

#### Different Types Of Print Media

Different formats come under the term print media. Some of these are:

- **Magazines:** They are a collection of articles which may be concerned with sports, movies, politics, industrial economics, entertainment, household interests etc. These are specialized publications which may have glossy overtones and may be issued weekly, bi-monthly, monthly or yearly. A number of them have a lot of advertisements within the magazine which accounts for revenue generation and survival of the publication.



**Figure 7: Examples Of Different Genres Of Magazines**

Source: Space.com

- **Books:** They are the oldest form of print media and the most popular. It is from books that newspapers developed. After printing was invented, books were authored giving various aspects of knowledge to the world. Books are a collection of many printed pages which are bound together, which allow the author to impart their knowledge on a particular subject which may be ranging from literature, history, science, economics, autobiographies, and fiction stories. These are not only a medium for increasing the reader's knowledge but also provide entertainment.



**Figure 8: Image Of Different Types Of Books**

Source: London Library.

Books were the oldest form of print and in recent years have developed to a very large extent due to the growth in technology. The fact that paper involves the destruction of the environment, technology has developed an alternative in the form of 'Kindle'. It is a portable wireless electronic reading device, deduced by amazon.com and allows users to read e-books purchased on Amazon as well as library e-books. There are several available free e-books. This has developed as a viable alternative which saves on precious felling of trees.

Several readers feel however that the physical holding and reading of a book has its charm. To make several books accessible to readers, libraries have converted physical books to e-books. This has led to wider accessibility, and availability, reduces storage space as well as preserves old editions.

Archives which are a treasure hold of ancient manuscripts, letters, notes, etc. from all over the world, have resorted to widespread digitalization such that they can save important heritage from being destroyed by insects as well as human touch. These digitalized versions are now available for scholars and help in their research work. Such technological advancement has helped in saving a country's rich heritage.

- **Flyers:** Flyers are promotion strategies as they involve low cost and they are better read. They could be handed out at local events, public places or even by mailing them



directly to the target audience. In all of the above cases, this type of advertisement generates positive results and increases visibility. The advantage is that they are easy to read, small sized and contain few lines which are easy to grasp. It is an effective way of getting one's message across successfully.

They are attention-grabbing marketing tools with compact layouts, colours and big headlines. They are cost-effective, easy to design. Some of them come with redeemable discount coupons or codes which most people share with their family and friends, thus increasing brand awareness and reputation. This is an ideal format for event promotions and it could be distributed at press meets, product launches and new store openings. These are ideal for a targeted audience which may be the vicinity of the shop, the outlet or the product. It also acts as a pilot project and the response to it could be a basis for future campaigns. A large number of business flyers have trackable features which allow companies to keep tabs on every response and generate more leads.

The main purpose of a flyer is to give out a message to the audience which could be based on the product's top features or it could promote an upcoming sale. The headline is very important in this type of print, as it is the first thing that an audience is going to register. They should thus be compelling, exciting, precise, focusing on key points and short. An introduction flyer should be extremely creative, and eye-catching and should generally include a discount to attract more people. It is very important to find the target audience. These flyers could be distributed at gatherings and trade shows, inserted in local newspapers and magazines, handing them out at sporting events, concerts, fairs etc. putting them up on bulletin boards in parks, restaurants, and college campuses, and printing them and mailing them directly to the target prospect.



**Figure 9: Images Of Flyers**

Source:Wepik

- Newspapers: Newspapers conventionally are published on a daily or weekly basis and their main aim is to inform the public about recent events mostly public affairs. They give readers all the information that is required besides publishing stories on a variety of topics which normally includes social concerns, culture and the arts. Essentially it is the best link between the government and its people. The benefits of reading a newspaper:
- Strengthens reading and writing skills
- Provides entertainment and sports news
- The best source of general knowledge
- Intricate details on politics

Newspapers are generally known to be the best authentic source of information as journalists who write for the newspapers have more time to investigate and gather information and there is no such pressure for 'breaking news'.



**Figure 10: Newspapers**

Source: Google image

### Brochures

Brochures have an extremely important role as a marketing tool. It is a promotional document used to introduce a company, an organization, a product or a service which informs the benefits to prospective customers or members of the public. It normally can be folded and put into a pocket such that it can be carried for future reference. It is like a magazine with pictures of the product or services which the brand is promoting. These could be distributed as newspaper inserts, handed out personally, by mail or placed in brochure racks in high-traffic locations for example; tourist buses, tourist taxis, airports etc. These essentially contain only summary information.

The additional advantage of a brochure is that it allows brand establishment for the company. Despite the increased popularity of online marketing, brochures are an extremely successful marketing tool. They are the most cost-effective medium that could establish the brand. Important for networking for the firm as well as it can show some creativity which is often lost in digital marketing. Brochures can be mass printed which saves money and holds great value for potential customers. Personalization is another aspect which is achieved by the utilization of brochures as an important part of print media.



**Figure 11: Brochures**

Source: Google Image

### Direct Mail

This is a simple advertising technique for businesses to send tangible material to their target audience. These could increase website traffic and the conversion into using or buying the product is quite high. They tend to read the mindset of their potential customers and know exactly which sections of society to post the mail to. The response to direct mail as research has indicated is about 5-9%. It allows greater visibility and more creative opportunity. Direct mails reach individuals while other types of print reach groups.



**Figure 12: Direct Mail**

Source: Google Image

## Print Media As An 'Art'

Artists at times have used ideas that have manifested themselves in mass-produced images like fashion, beauty magazines and newspapers and at times have used it in their practice concerning painting and collage. Print media involves both traditional and new related technologies (performance, computer and video) and this is put forward by faculty and artists who are experts in their field. At times prints are produced by drawing or carving an image onto a hard surface which of course is then considered an original work of art. The whole printmaking process allows artists to create many iterations of the same image. It is considered an art form, usually on paper but occasionally on fabric, parchment or plastic but all under the supervision of an artist. Some fine prints are considered original works of art even though they exist in multiple. Thus definitely, print media does require the use of artists to make any concept to be vividly accepted.

## Growth Of This Field

As the versions of print media have grown manifold in the last few years, due to the growth in technology the importance of the above has also grown simultaneously. Though print media consists of different types of mediums, it is mainly used for increasing the popularity of the product or service and acts then as an advertiser of the product.

Some estimate print media spending might decline in the coming years. Though this may happen as a percentage the absolute numbers are on the rise.

The numbers rose phenomenally during the pandemic but subsequently as the economy has opened up the numbers have started declining.

Advertising spends a lot on showcasing products/state government and central governments' achievements in the print media. PMAR (Print Media Advertising Revenue) is likely to increase by 9% in the year 2023. This is the most important medium that the Indian government uses extensively to impart information. India is unique in the sense that the strength of print media was shaped by its historical experience and in particular with the freedom struggle as well as movements for social emancipation and reform. It is one of the most common ways for all to be informed about their special areas of interest. In the Indian context print media will continue to play an extremely important role and thus its spread is expected to grow for some time.



**Figure 13: Growth In Print Media Revenue In India**

Source: Google Image

## CONCLUSION

The history and importance of Print media are unparalleled compared to any other phenomenon. The role that it has played over the years concerning knowledge, awareness, information, direction, formation of thought processes, and unbiased political views are some of the aspects which this format has provided to the citizens of all countries.

In recent years, this medium of imparting information has changed tremendously. This does not necessarily mean that the value of print media has declined. What it indicates is that there are other avenues through which knowledge is being spread. The importance of print media is seen in the increasing amount of revenue spent that has occurred in India over the years.

Different formats are available whereby individuals and manufacturers have started using them. This could range from emails to brochures, etc. The rising trend of putting one's opinion on social media via Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, and other such formats has just led to reinforcing the same views across different channels of media representation. This does not mean that the value or importance of print media has declined because what is put across in this medium reaches a far wider spectrum of the population as it is cheap and easily accessible. At no point in time, one can undervalue the reach and importance of print media.

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