

Chapter 5

A Study of Early Christian Print Culture and the Culture of Translation in Colonial Gujarat

Conclusion

My research topic in my dissertation was to study the early Christian print culture and the culture of translation in colonial Gujarat. For this I chose the two translations of *The Psalms of David* (18) a collection of Christian prayer songs in Gujarati language which were done by Vahlji Becher published by Gujarat Tract and Book Society, Ahmedabad, and Rev. James Glasgow published by Surat missionary press, *Khristi Geeto* written by Rev. V. M. Malaviya. *Gujarati Bhasha nu vyakran* written by J. V. S. Taylor, *Pathmala* by Rev. T. L. Wells, *Subodh Garbavali* by Late Rev. Kahanji Madhavji Ratnrahi published by Irish Mission Press, Surat In my dissertation I focused on the effects of printing technology in colonial India especially in colonial Gujarat through the Christian translations and early publications. The other important aspect was the emergence of new public in colonial Gujarat and the possibilities of understanding it through the texts of two translations of *Daud na geeto*, *The Psalms of David*, *Khristi Geeto*, *Gujarati Bhasha nu vyakran*, *Pathmala*, *Subodh Garbavali*. For this purpose, translation studies and archival studies were the models of this study. Not only this but public sphere and print culture were very important in this study.

The introduction discussed the period around the colonial times. The introduction has started with the discussion of modernity, the very important concept for my study. Here the views

of P. Sanal Mohan and the concept of modernity according to Mohan started the discussion. Modernity refers to “the socioeconomic and intellectual transformation that western world has undergone” (Mohan, 8). So the changes in Gujarat which was occur because of the introduction of the print culture and culture of translation according to Mohan is a modernity. So the modernity which you get under the colonial rule called colonial modernity. So for my thesis the concept of colonial modernity was very important to understand and to understand it P. Sanal Mohan was a great source. According to Mohan the use of modern language was one of the sign of colonial modernity. The central argument of introduction is the Christian missionaries lead to the emergence of print culture and the culture of translation so are these two cultures still used to cultivate the identity of the lower caste people. Further it discussed the understanding of what is colonialism and what is Christianity. So in short the introduction has somewhat historical account of Christianity, colonialism in India. How they emergence and hoe they make difference in the Indian society. Again the introduction also has an account of the experience of missionaries at the time when they were coming to India for the very first time. Here specially the introduction discussed about What were the social background of Gujarati society, what are the things they came through. Specially here it discussed the experience of Fr. Nobili, when he came to Gujarat for the very first time. Due to some discriminations many bad things happened which he has to go through. Camil Parkhe in his book *Contribution of Christian Missionaries in India* discusses about the different missionaries’ struggle and experience while introduces the new religion to the people who has already follow their religion. This Europeans were called *firangis* (Parkhe 8). Not only this but the people who keep contact with this Europeans has the risk of excommunication from their respective communities. So at the very early time no one were ready to have any kind of relationship. How the Indian culture was there that was discussed by Parkhe. Fr. Nobili thinks that

the reason behind not to be more successful in India by European was their attitude and not to leave the previous culture. So, Fr. Nobili adapt the Indian culture and try to mingle with the Indian people. Further it discusses the emergence of missionaries in India. The emergence of Christianity in India with this background the introduction has discussed the Christianity in Colonial Gujarat. Then the discussion has some kind of describing some methods which were used in writing of chapters. it in 1712 (Gupta and Chakravorty 8). The Christian Missionaries and their connection to the beginning of printing technology in India was one of the objectives of this study. Against this background the Introduction discussed the translations of early missionaries like William Carey, J. V. S. Taylor and other missionary translators who translated the Bible and other Christian tracts and books.

As elsewhere in India, in Gujarat too certain conditions in the Hindu system proved useful to the establishment of Christianity. In this context, the caste hierarchy and restrictions on the 'lower' castes in Hindu society were significant. The missionaries offered a relief from the restrictions and make the 'lower' caste people to accept the foreign religion. They were allowed to enter the churches, worship Christ, and touch to the statue of God etc. As I understand it, the acceptance of liberation theology in India generally and especially in Gujarat becomes a significant element that attracted people who already followed a different religion. The social deprivation of Dalits resulted in their need for true social liberation. Dalits who were socially deprived and oppressed by the other higher caste people in the light of religious faith were naturally drawn to such a philosophy and they became the particular focus of the early missionaries in Gujarat.

If we talk about the history of the early conversion in Hinduism to Christianity in Gujarat Robin Boyd, an Irish Presbyterian Historian opens his book *History of the Church in Gujarat* with Jourdain, who was a French missionary. He and his four friends arrived in Thana in 1321. In Thana Jourdain baptized more than ninety people (Boyd, 1). Then they were invited to Bharuch to preach. With the arrival of Jourdain and his friends Christianity was introduced in Gujarat where many religions were prevalent at that time (Boyd, 1).

As I am trying to locate the 19th century Gujarat, I have studied the changes in the textual culture of Gujarat in the light of the emergence of the print culture and the culture of translation in the nineteenth century. Focusing on colonial modernity, public sphere and the question of inequality in castes in Gujarat, I studied the role played by Christian print and translation cultures in the constitution of the Gujarati imagination. So in this context in my first chapter I gave an account of the historical and political of colonial India and colonial Gujarat. Here I discuss the theory of hybridity by Homi Bhabha. I have given some information of social and political formation of colonial Gujarat. Where I discussed about the very old casteism in the colonial Gujarat. Then from that I gave an account of Christianity in colonial Gujarat. At the very last as every culture has this question of caste similarly Christianity in colonial Gujarat also has it. So I gave the idea of the question of caste in colonial Gujarat. I have studied the social formation of India as well as Gujarat in nineteenth century. Where I took help of the autobiographies of early missionaries where they shared their experience in this very difficult journey according to them. The casteism which was heart of Indian culture gives the missionaries chance of making the target people to accept the new religion.

In the second chapter I have discussed the print culture and colonialism. the which affected the textual culture of India as well as Gujarat in the nineteenth century. The other aspect in the advantages of the innovation of printing press was the shift from scribal to the typographical culture. After the invention of printing presses every oral art had a shape which everybody can read wherever they want. Elizabeth Eisenstein in her work *Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Other Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* says because of the print culture the transformation of all forms of knowledge changed (Eisenstein, 65). The medium by which the knowledge was spread transferred from oral practices to the written forms. The new public emerged who can read the written material and take different advantages of it. Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty in *Book History in India: Print Areas* says before the invention of print culture scribal books was the medium of knowledge giving. But printing presses introduces new form of knowledge to the public (Gupta and Chakravorthy, 9). And that public creates a different point of view. It means which creates a public sphere in India. So the Introduction further studied print culture in the context of the public sphere. For this some ideas from Jürgen Habermas and his work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* became very important for the study. According to Habermas public sphere is a place where different people meet together and discuss some issues of their interest (Habermas, 27). However, the public sphere is not an inclusive place.

Daud na geeto [The Psalms of David], *Khristi Geeto* as text those created a new knowledge of religion and the language of faith, and because it is a prayer books it is also important to look at it as a text which contains the history of performance. The early print culture and translation

helped to locate the big question of liberation in the early history of Dalit Christians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In my research I have studied the printed materials of Christianity which were the first hand, most important source of diffusion of Christianity in colonial India and colonial Gujarat.

The inequality of castes led to the Dalits in Gujarat adopting Christianity from the nineteenth century onwards. The role of printed material and translations in this process was very important. The Christian gospels introduced them to the concept of liberation which allowed them to think about their own position in society. The Christian gospels and the preaching of the early priests as well as the translation and the printed version of the Bible gospel played an important role in this process. This attracts me to study the print culture in the context of Christianity in colonial Gujarat. The importance of this study, according to me is to show how the early print culture and translation helped to locate the big question of liberation in the early history of Dalit Christians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In my research I have study the printed materials of Christianity which were the first hand, most important source of diffusion of Christianity in colonial India.

In the third chapter I have tried to study the culture of translation in colonial Christianity in Gujarat. The cultures translation those established out of the proselytizing efforts of Christian missionaries in Gujarat. Here I have studied about the new forms of writing influenced by English and in what way did they affect the development of modern Gujarati literature. And I have focused more on the different translations of Christian concepts, and particularly on the issues such as

problems while translating the hymns and prayers including the deployment of specific vocabularies while translating hymns. It discusses the different translations in different languages. Some protest against the translations of the Bible was also discussed in this chapter. Here I have studied *Daud na Geeto* [The Psalms of David] translated by Vahlji Bechar in comparison with *The Psalms of David* by Rev. James Glasgow. The time period between these two translation is ten years. So, from the use of words for the same themes and the arrangement of the words gives the idea about the society and the social culture around which those translations were done by the translators. Though I couldn't study the original text so I think my study of linguistic translations in those two translations has many limitations. Even I am not the part of the public who uses these translations in the oral or written form limit my study. In the same chapter I have studied *Subodh Garbavali* a collection of songs sung at the time of *Garba (A Folk dance of Gujarat)*. In the very preface of the collection writer himself accept the reason why he created the garba songs which are already there in colonial Gujarat. He said I am creating these songs because at the time when these songs were created this Folk dance uses the songs of other religion. So as by creating these songs for the first time religion and the common social cultural mixture takes place attracted me to study this collection.

In fourth chapter again, I have studied the role of print culture, culture of translation and Christian public sphere in colonial Gujarat. For this some ideas from Jürgen Habermas and his work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* became very important for the study. According to Habermas public sphere is a place where different people meet together and discuss some issues of their interest (27). However, the public sphere is not an inclusive place. In the public sphere in colonial india I had discuss Veena Naregal and Habermas.

Veena Naregal in *Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere* discusses the colonial power and elitism in print. According to her print was obviously essential in the making of colonial ideology and power (145). The print culture in colonial India gave birth to a different public in which the elites shaped the public opinion. On the other hand, Charu Gupta in her study of the print culture in U P showed that even though the elites have an upper hand in forming public opinion, there was also a great increase in the production of popular literature because of printing technology. This literature gave rise to debates on good and obscene literature and censorship. However, the popular literature continued to be printed because it was in great demand. In this context Gupta shows how many of the traditional entertainment genres like nautanki, quissas and legends were also printed (Gupta, 55).

Fraser discusses about Habermas concept of public sphere and adds her own views on it. Habermas in his work discusses about the bourgeois public sphere here Fraser argues that there never was and never should be, just one public sphere but rather a number of public spheres. Habermas define the meaning of public sphere is 'a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk (Habermas, 6)'. He means to say that it is a space in which citizens discusses about their common affairs. This space is conceptually different from state (Fraser, 519). This is arena where citizens criticize the state. The public sphere according to Habermas is also conceptually distinct from the official economy. It is a theatre for debating not for buying and selling. Christian church in modern time can be considered as different public sphere where Christians come together and discuss about their common interest. In the public sphere in Habermas sense printed material were used for conducting the critical debates. Newspapers, magazines, etc were used as the medium of the discourse in public sphere. And here

I have studied how print culture and culture of translation fits into the public sphere. At last I have given the characterization of the Christian public sphere in colonial Gujarat. Here I have studied my primary texts with the idea of public sphere. The different translations of songs of David, grammar book, collection of garba songs and their impact in the creation of new public in colonial Gujarat. The translation of faith and the reactions of public in colonial Gujarat. Next in the same chapter it was discussed the construction of Christian public sphere. What kind of language discrimination was there in Gujarat by analyzing the songs collected in *Daud na Geeto*, *The Psalms*, *Khrsti Geeto*.

The fifth chapter concludes the dissertation and pulls together the arguments made in the previous chapters in a comparative perspective. It loops back to question of caste and the role of print culture and culture of translation. And how the new public emerged in colonial Gujarat. The new public sphere and the impacts of print culture and culture of translation in this new public sphere. The emergence of Christian public sphere and the role of print culture and culture of translation in it was the central idea around which the chapter has the discussion.

Key Findings

The missionaries entered in Gujarat in very first fourteenth century. Robin Boyd in his work *Beyond Captivity: Explorations in Indian Christian History and theology* in the very first article name “The Contribution to Scholarship of Missionaries in Gujarat” explains how the missionaries with help of print culture and culture of translation contribute in the development of Gujarat (Boyd, 4). Which works of missionaries contribute in the establishment of the growth of Gujarat and its people. If we see the education in the early years of 19th century we noticed that it was limited to a very few. There were no printed books, and no school text-books of any kind. Boyd said according to the first report of the Gujarat Tract society¹ till 1853 the students of the ordinary schools of Gujarat don’t have printed character from which they can copy.

This study comes to the following conclusion. The study of early Christian print culture and culture of translation has made following contribution to the world.

1. The role of Christian missionaries in the emergence of print culture was very important. Christian missionaries paved the way for the rise of print culture and the culture of translation.
2. The studies of the printing technology and the public sphere in India question the openness of the public sphere and the equal status of all the genres in the development of the individual in the public sphere as discussed by Habermas.

¹ Quoted in George Wilson *The story of the Gujarati Bible*, Bombay 1954, p. 2

3. The folk dance which is for secular public, it should be open for everyone but here also the writer himself accepted that the religious institution doesn't want Christian public to dance on the songs which were specially composed to worship Hindu God. And that is the reason writer composed the *garba* songs for Christian public. Which is again differentiated among the secular and religious public. The dance which can join every caste people again the discrimination arose. The emergence of print culture changes the assumptions of language, literary and literacy.
4. As mention in chapter because of the print the language increased the importance because it was visually there. So the impact of it increased. The importance of education increased. As mention in chapter in early 19th century the discrimination was there. There was a boundaries and some discrimination that some people cannot have right to take education but after Christianity came everything changed. Even after the introduction of print the right to education changed and everyone were able to take education. And so the level of literacy went high and high. The introduction of print as well as the culture of translation changes the literature also. No boundaries of understating. Even though you are not following the particular religion you can understand it because it was there in the language you know and as you have literacy you can take advantage of it.
5. The oral performances like *garba*, prayer songs, prayers, etc which were purely performances based but because of introduction of print culture the impact of them changes.
6. The casteism which was the reason for converting religion for most of the people but then also they were not make themselves free from that. Even in contemporary time that casteism is there in Gujarat. though education changes the thinking of people but not

wholly. Still the higher and lower concepts were there in the society. The untouchability is also there in Gujarat².

7. The casteism was also there in the writing of literature. The selection of language, vocabulary everything was depended on the caste in which you were belonging. As the history suggest the words used by the Bible translator and other tracts and books selected with the concern of the reader's background.
8. There are two translations I have studied to understand the way of translation.
9. The study done by me in this dissertation helps scholars to understand the social and political changes occur because of the introduction of print culture and the culture of translation, what is public sphere and how these cultures fits into public sphere
10. So my research area on which I have worked for this dissertation was untouched so that is the reason this study is very helpful for the others. The history of Christianity in Gujarat was also very vast.

² This statement I used from my personal experience of it.

Limitations of the study

Apart from the above points there are many limitations in this study. First of all, the study has pointed out the need to look for more archival materials regarding the community of early Christians so that more discussion of the strategies of translation can be explained fully. At this moment the dissertation assumes certain points about literacy levels in Gujarati people and conversion patterns, however with more archival research this discussion can become fully developed. On the other hand, the second limitation depends upon my own knowledge of Christian theology. This particular point refers to Rev Sanjay Malaviya's thesis which could not be used to its fullest because of my lack of the deep theological knowledge. In fourth chapter the foremost limitation of this study is related to the lack of Christian public sphere. The songs which used in these collections are very old and may have gone out of memory of even senior members of the Church. Even in contemporary time the use of these songs in church is also limited. As I said before in the contemporary time no one used the songs of either Bechar's nor Rev. Glasgow's collection in Roman Catholic church also they are not using these songs. However, an attempt needs to be made to look for possible source persons who might remember the songs or even the public sphere to understand the adaptation of these songs. On the other hand, assuming that there is lack of material in this area the study needs to develop a methodology of understanding the *Chhand*, [the Gujarati Prosody] through textual evidence. For this a study of *Pingalsastra* and some concepts needs to be undertaken more fully than has been included in the dissertation. In the same chapter the limited knowledge and information about the original text was another difficulty. For this, in future, an attempt to understand the history and the understanding of Gujarati grammar

will be necessary. The translations of the titles of the books as well as the examples from the collection were done by me so maybe it was having some limitations of understanding.

In short studying for this dissertation has allowed me to see the future directions of my research in terms of the limitations. It is possible to say that in the future years of this kind of study more work in the archive, textual, and audio visual, are needed along with a deeper understanding of methods like ethnography (for oral performance) and comparative language studies (for understanding the emergence of modern Gujarati) are needed. The convergence of religious discourse and linguistic discourse was a very vast topic to study. I hope to cover some of these areas in my future work.

Scope for future research:

My proposed area of study was the 19th century Gujarat. I have study the changes in the textual culture of Gujarat in the light of the emergence of the print culture and the culture of translation in the 19th century. Focusing on colonial modernity, public sphere and the question of inequality in castes in Gujarat, I have studied the role played by Christian print and translation cultures in the constitution of the Gujarati imagination.

I have studied the early print culture and the culture of translation that Christianity introduced in colonial Gujarat. As I have discussed before, Christianity emerged in Gujarat in the fourteenth century but print culture, introduced by Christian missionaries in Gujarat, emerged in the 19th century, so my study was focused on 19th century Gujarat and the shaping of Christian print culture and the culture of translation. My study which proposes to discuss the history of print in the context of Gujarati Christianity would help open up the question of liberation in 'lower caste' contexts.

There are scopes to study the print in electronic media and again how it leads to emergence of new culture. I can say that the Christianity was a very important part of Gujarat. Christianity is declared by “Indian Census 2011” Census Department Government of India by 0.5% of the population of the state of Gujarat in India. In every district of Gujarat there must be Christian population. One think which I noticed in contemporary times that at every village where the

missionaries stays they have started the schools, hospitals, etc which can help the society and make the people more self-efficient to be independ. And because of this reason the population of Christian increasing day by day.

My work also enlightens others with the concern of translation of the Bible and other tracts. The theory of translation as well as it can also help them to understand which version of the Bible can be used. My hypothesis is that early printed religious books set up a new language of faith that played an important role in the construction of a new public comprising of early converts it can be more informative for others. The printing of the Christian material and more importantly the translation of such materials resulted in the growth of the new religion, Christianity in the area where other religions pre-existed. Further, I would say that these texts also had an impact upon the development of modern Gujarati through the introduction of new genres and vocabularies drawn essentially from English. So the analysis of such text was very important for others to know. Rather than there are many other areas which was important to know for others which my dissertation can help them. They are as follows.

- What was the role played by Christian missionaries in the introduction of print culture in Gujarat?
- What was the nature of translation that developed out of the proselytizing efforts of Christian missionaries in Gujarat?
- What were the new forms of writing that emerged as a consequence of the emergence of print culture and the culture of translation?

- How were these new forms of writing influenced by English and in what way did they affect the development of modern Gujarati literature?
- How did these new forms of writing address the question of liberation and salvation and in what manner did it affect the articulation of 'lower caste' identity?