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Documentation of Ancient Typography in Marathi

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~~Documentation of state of typography in Marathi~~

Documentation of state of typography in Marathi
Special project

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VC 98625003

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Industrial Design Center,
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Approval Sheet

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Introduction:

Marathi... The local language of Maharashtra. Commonly used and is all around, still most people working with English typography! Very few people actually looking at Marathi to make the type, the script, the design or the typography better. Though there are experiments happening in Marathi type fonts, very few people actually working in typography and graphic design. Marathi is still a neglected language to work on with typography. Even I worked with English typography for the elective in third semester, when there was a choice. Reasons... unknown.

When Prof. Kirti Trivedi gave this project as a topic, I was desperate to know the work done in Marathi... my mother tongue.

As the project was started, it was seen not many changes happened in Marathi typography as compared to the western work. Whatever changes happened, they were because of the change in printing methods, and some times it is an influence of some good designers, like Sri. Dinanath Dalal, Subhash Awchat and Prof. R.K. Joshi. From the early period some people and groups such as Javji Dadaji, Ranuji Aru, Nirnaysagar press, Various type foundries after that, publications like Keshaw Bhikaji Dhawle, Mauj and Popular, ITR, have tried to improve the state and have worked extensively in the field. But those are very less in number. With arrival of new media and trends many are diverting.

In spite of development and good work in the field it hasn't reached the level of wide acceptance due to less propagation, some times even because of keeping secrecy about the work in fear of getting copied, and mostly due to poor documentation.

This is a small research project, an effort just to look back at the footsteps Marathi has left behind. Marathi Typography is taken in a broad sense here. It includes graphic design as well, which reflects the tradition, liking of people, the environment, and the changes in technologies.

Originally the project being a lecture on "state of Marathi typography", with help of 80 slides which shows the major landmarks and changes, this report is the extension of the same with a little information on the subject.

The art of printing plays a very crucial role in human development, interaction and communication.

Printing made a breakthrough in various languages and regions but it was **William Carrey** who made the first effort successfully in Devnagari. It was then done with the help of Pandit Vaidyanath in **1805** at Srirampur, near Calcutta, the year which is considered to be the most important in printing of Devnagari.

In 1813 American Missionaries entered Mumbai with the aim of spreading their religion. For this purpose they set up a printing press in Mumbai. This establishment proved to be a turning point in the history of Marathi printing. **Ganpat Krishnaji, Javji Dadaji and Ranuji Aru** were well-trained under **Thomas Graham's** direction (**1834**), who later on shouldered and pioneered the development and progress of Marathi typography and printing.

Ganpat Krishnaji was the first one, who started printing and publishing in Maharashtra in 1825/30. He collected pieces of litho from around, experimented and made ink and then set up an iron press specially for Litho and started printing small religious books. After that for almost 30 years Marathi Printing remained and progressed under the sincere and dedicated efforts of Ganapat Krishnaji. So that was a successful breakthrough of **Litho Offset** in Marathi when some of the printing was done in letterpress. Simultaneous experiments were carried in letterpress to increase convenience and quality of printing.

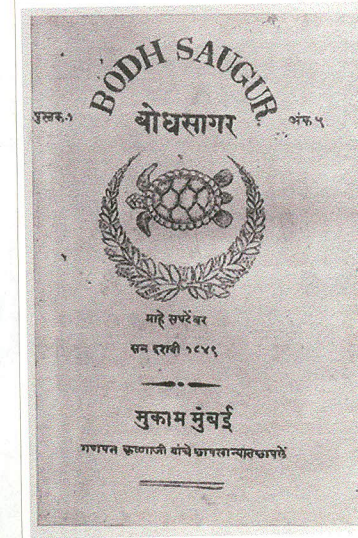
“Handwork” was the prime necessity of Litho Offset. Krishnaji himself had good handwriting skills. With a good designing and drawing sense he was well ahead of time. He thought that for good communication mere written matter was not sufficient, **writing should be treated as an art and should be accompanied by good graphics and design.** Thus Krishnaji’s thoughts proved to be revolutionary.

At that time most of the printing was done by the missionaries which was mostly about Christianity. So it was accepted that any printed book is printed by the missionaries and would contain the same. But Krishnaji’s press broke all this, his books cleared all the doubts and people started reading marathi religious books.

At the same time there were people who had an objection for using animal fats in inks and for that reason, didn’t even touched the books. Ganpat Krishnaji experimented and came up with an ink made from ‘ghee’, which increased the reach of books.

It was Marathi Printing that was building its existence. Ganpat Krishnaji with his iron press really played an important role in this.

Most of the books then printed were mostly religious, talking about Hindus and Hinduism. It was an effort to fight against the British and American Missionaries who were then into spreading their religion in India. Protecting Hinduism was then the prime aim of printing.



The next person who proved to be important was Javji Dadaji Choudhary. He started a type foundry for Letter press printing in 1864, "Nirnay Sagar". Making fonts in different languages, Marathi, Gujarathi, Kannada, Hebrew etc. was then the job of the foundry. Work in Marathi type was already done in India then, but the work of Nirnay Sagar was really a gift for Devnagari. In spite of advanced technology and resources available today no type has ever reached or crossed the simplicity, beauty, convenience of the type designed by Nirnay Sagar.

Nirnay Sagar Designed Degree type, Continuous type, Matra mould, Ukar moulds etc.

In those days and even immediately after 'Nirnay Sagar Era', Nirnay Sagar types were copied and brought to the market with a very less difference made.



Books from Nirnay Sagar Press

324

Great Primer Black No. 2

ग्रेट प्रायमर ब्लॅक नं. २

प्रत्येक मनुष्यास, लोकांनी आपणांस चांगले म्हणावे, आपली वाहवा व्हावी, अशी साहजिकच इच्छा असते. परंतु नुसती

323

Great Primer Black No. 1

ग्रेट प्रायमर ब्लॅक नं. १

भाषेला विष्णु जसा, कवितेला मोगरा खुलवि नीट ॥
रविवर्मा चित्रकले, वर्णशलाकांस जावजी शेड ॥ १ ॥

469

Great Primer Black No. 3

ग्रेट प्रायमर ब्लॅक नं. ३

श्रीमंती इष्ट आहे किंवा नाही, याची वज्याच लोकांस शंका येते; आणि खरोखर पहातां, जे गर्भश्रीमंत आहेत ते निश्चयाने

In 1881, newspaper, **Kesari** established. Since the formatting for the newspapers was done by hand composing the metal type, a limitation the newspapers followed a straight column system, with just a bold headline followed by news. This rigid format hardly changed for long period, till 1900 AD a Mumbai based **Gujarathi type foundry** introduced the "point System", which gave newspapers a new look.

Until then news papers contained only 'news', but in 1910 and after that, the first page was full of small advertisements. Thus was a change in design, layouts and outlook.

In 1904, **Lokamanya Tilak**, freedom fighter and the founder of the news paper, Kesari was the one who noticed the problems in Marathi script development. Tilak opened his own foundry for Kesari. He made some changes in the type and got it done from Ranuji Aru, Nirnay Sagar, in 1914.

Simultaneously efforts and work was going on for improving the script.

The lesser the characters, the better it and easier. This was the approach because of Type writer, Mono type and Lino type machines. Javji Dadaji's son, **Tukaramshet** worked on marathi type in this direction in 1914.

Hari Govil also worked to improve the script for lino type, in 1930.

Lokamanya Tilak, Tukaramji Javji, and Hari Govil were the major one to work in this direction.

In 1930 **Monotype** came in India, which before existed in west since 1887.

हल्लींच्या अबकारी कमिटीपुढें विचारार्थ आलेल्या सूचनांची वासलत कशी लागते याचा मासला म्हणून आम्हीं पुणे शहरच्या कमिटीच्या कामाची त्रोटक हकीकत ता. ३० जानेवारीच्या अंकांत दिली होती त्या हकीकतीवरून कमिटीपुढें आलेल्या सूचना सरकारी अधिकाऱ्यांकडून कशा फेटाळून दिल्या जातात हे उघड हेंतें अर्थात वस्तुस्थिति अशीच आहे.

पुस्तक च्याकडून वगळल्यावरून एखाद्यास अपराधक मानून शिक्षा करणें फार वाढत आहे, या प्रकारच्या न्याय करणारांच्या उताळपणांमुळे खरे गडबडगार अजूनही स्टॅण्डर्ड वगळून वगळून न्हाण्यांस व पुस्तक वगळून हस्तकरत्यांस वगळून वगळून वगळून म्हाळाल्या शिक्षा झाल्या आहेत.

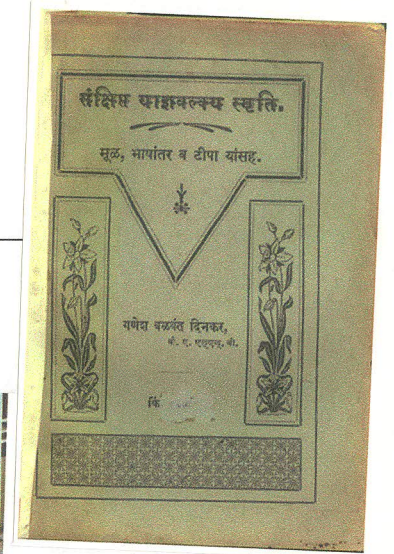
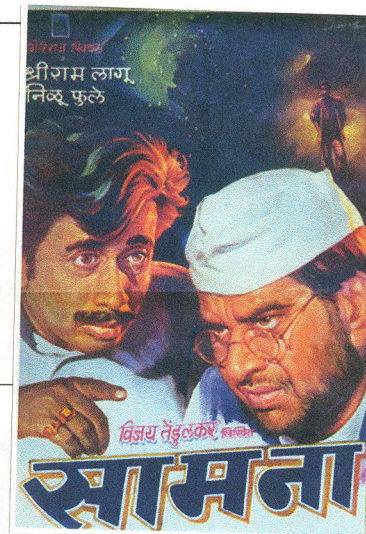
तीन रुपय दरमहा घेऊन दगडावर टाइप घांशीत बसणारं त्या वळ्यां तें पोर पुढें अशा यांग्यतंस यंईल असं काणांच्या स्वप्नातही नव्हतं आणि त्या वळ्यांच्या त्यांच्या बराबरच्या पारांत दुसरं कोणी असं पुढें आलंही नाही.

In 1931, Shankarrao Date introduced the kerning system and fitted Devnagari on Monotype, which solved many problems and is considered to be a major landmarks in Marathi, as well as other type designs.

In this period, the purpose of book covers was just to tell the title, author and price of the book. The covers were mainly text oriented. The inside text was centrally aligned.

Litho printing was used for printing film posters. The black and white photographs available then were many times printed in coloured inks just to add some colour. To make an impact, photo-realistic drawing and rendering was preferred and was in commonly in use.

Now it was possible to print acid etched blocks to print in four colour.



After Independence (1947), the subject matter for books was broadening. With religious books, now even freedom movement books, literature was available. It was then needed to make the books more interesting and attractive. It was here where **Master Dinanath Dalal** started his career. He ruled the people for many years by his master strokes and drawings.

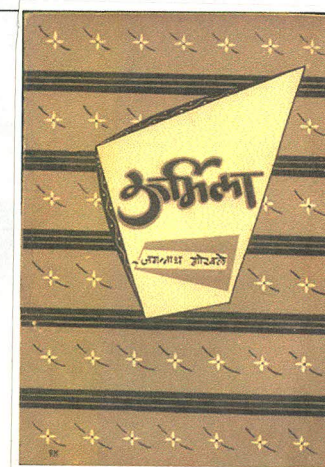
The 50's showed Dalal's realistic work in and on many of books, calendars and magazines.

Not like the master hand but many artists followed suit.

Sargerao Ghorpade, a publisher, printer and designer is working in the field since 1954, who is a versatile person with a good hand in drawing, sketching, and sensible layouts with innovative works.

In late 50's **R. K. Joshi** started working but still it was just a start, without any specific interest or style.

After 59, most of the news papers again concentrated on the news for the first page and advertisements were then distributed over inside pages.

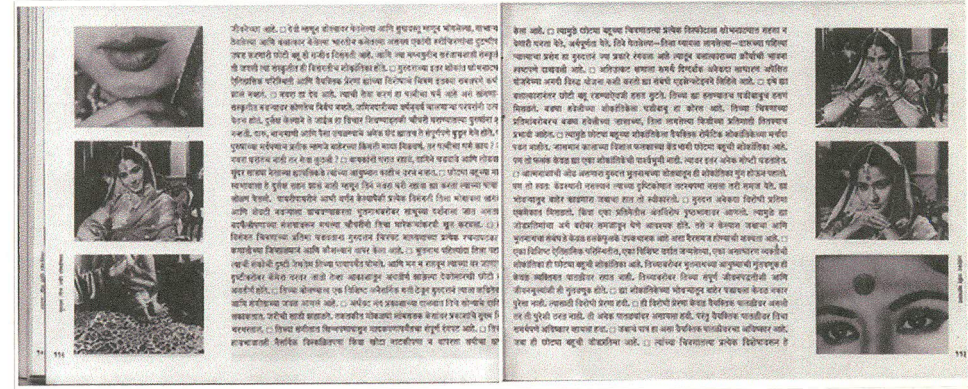
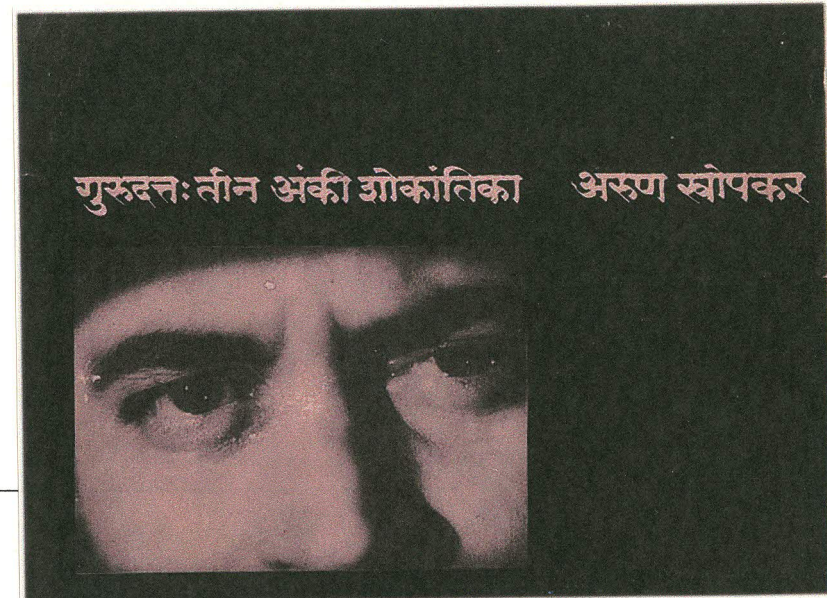


Achyut Palav, who learnt his lessons of calligraphy and typography from Prof. R. K. Joshi, is in graphic design scene late 80's.

In late 60's and 70's, R. K. Joshi's experimental typographic work in 'Satyakatha' Magazine from Mauj Prakashan was a subject of discussions and got a lot of attention. Well read, experienced and intelligent R. K.'s work has a very strong base of Indian philosophy.

In late 70's Mahendra Patel, under the guidance of Adrian Frutiger at National Institute of Design, Ahemadabad, arrived at a Devnagari type design suitable for new technology.

अन्तर्देशीय आगमन

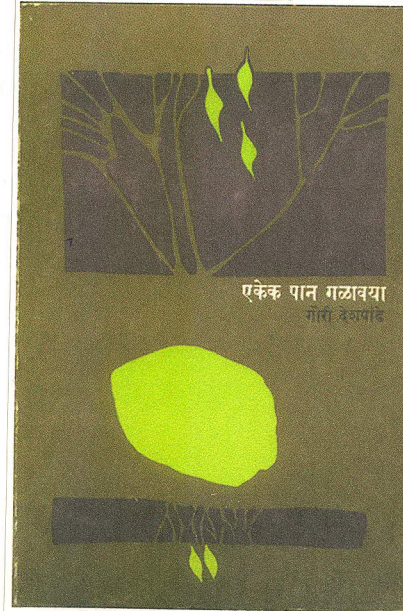
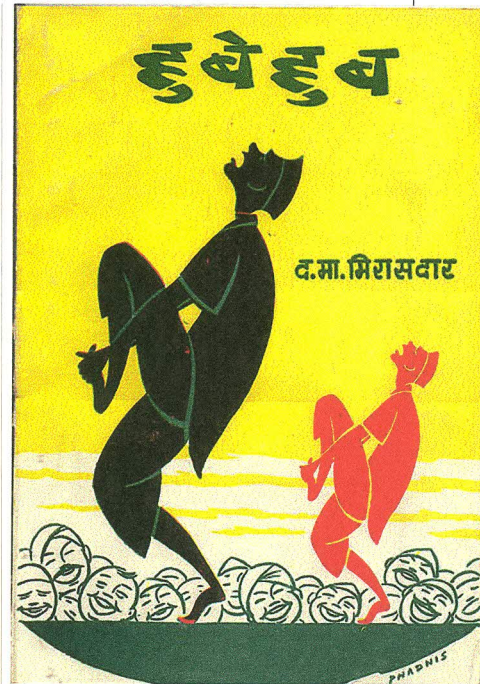


Devidas Bagul, known as sensitive typographer and for his brilliant layouts, started working in book design in late 60's.

Kamal Shedge experimented with lettering since late 60's, mostly for titles of Marathi plays, books etc. The base of his work is visual quality. The titles were never so impressive before that. For the titles he also tried to get the qualities of particular type like Korina etc. in Marathi lettering.

Subhash Awchat came in early 70's with his style oriented work.

S. D. Phadnis started his work in book design in late 70's with his mastered simplicity and humerus approach.



पुणकामेशी
फुंफुटंस्टिकु
हिटलर्स
कमल रेशी
कारेभुललाशी
रेशांग घना!

In a revolutionary happening of 1975, Photo Type setting was introduced in India, which was then used extensively for Marathi newspapers from 1980's. This was a major change for better which gave composing a little freedom.

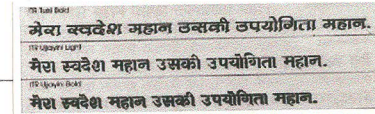
With this new technology market had an extensive need for new type fonts. In 1979 ITR and soon after that Modular-Systems came with new type fonts, suitable for headlines or running text etc. Though there is still a need of the right font for Marathi news paper.

In 80's offset printing and in 85/86 four-colour offset was introduced. Previously it was a tedious and time consuming job to have a photograph in newspaper, as it took around 3/4 hours to make a photographic itched block. Now it was easy to have photographs. In news papers and magazines, photographs was an attraction. Now text was used to use the photograph. I.e. News/ text for photographs, not the photographs for text.

Kesari was the first to bring DTP in Marathi news papers. Since the application didn't have any Marathi fonts loaded, they imported 'Fontographer', a package by which they designed their own font.

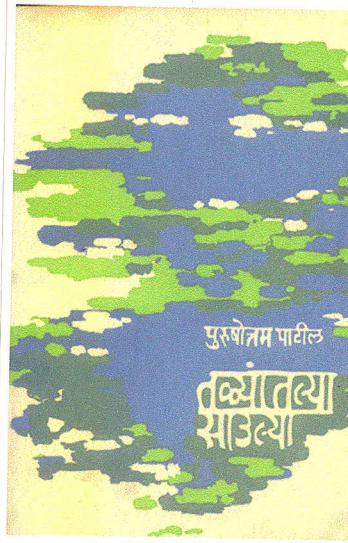
Till it was 1988 that DTP was introduced with Indian scripts by Abacus Computers, Mumbai. Since then it was commonly used by all the news papers.

Before this, text and graphics were printed separately with type and blocks, but DTP, a major revolution which made it possible to compose and print graphic, photograph and text together.

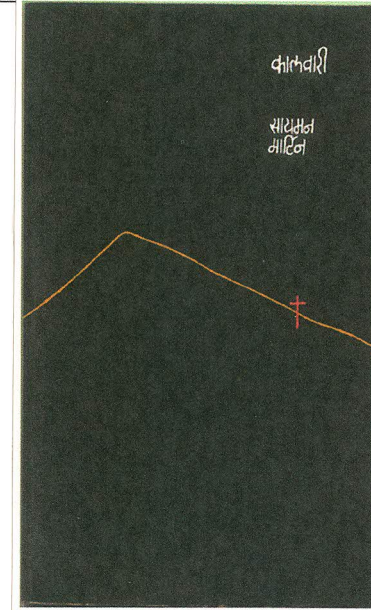


Up to late 80's, Marathi typography and graphic design experienced and saw many influential and original work by people like Master Dinanath Dalal, Prof. R.K. Joshi, Devidas Bagul, Sarjerao ghorpade, Subhash Awchat etc. The 90's designs experienced the impact and influence of the early works.

Though good and promising works were done by designers it was mostly onto the footsteps of the pioneer designers. Less of originality was seen. Designers like Ravi Mukul, Chandramohan Kulkarni, Kumar Gokhale who were influenced by the early work are now coming up with their own style.



Padma Sahastrabuddhe



With the increasing convenience and technology coming up printing has progressed very rapidly, but the ease has given a major drawback which can be seen in ugly design scene today. With DTP set up at every corner many of them are taking design as granted for just composition and using varied type fonts.

On the other hand we do have hopes from designers like Nikhil Pandit, who can bring a new era into graphic design in Marathi typography.

एक प्रकारचा
ओघ असणे
आवश्यक आहे.

दृश्य घटकांना
ओघ प्राप्त
करण देण्यासाठी
'उपलब्ध अवकाशात
त्यांची भौतिक मांडणी'
हा मुद्दा
महत्वाचा ठरतो.
असा ओघ प्राप्त
झालेले दृश्य घटक
डॉलद्वारे आणि
लयबद्ध दिसतात.
त्यांचे स्थिर अस्तित्व
लोप पावून ते काहिले
वर्तमान भासतात,
त्यांना दिशा मिळते
आणि क्रमाक्रमाने
होणारी वाढ ते
सूचित करतात.

दृश्य घटकांचे
परिणामकारक
प्रसारण साधण्यासाठी
दृश्य घटकांमध्ये

ओघ



लिखिताच्या अर्थाच्या
दृष्टीने विचार करतांना,
अर्थ आणि भावना

यामध्ये ओघ प्राप्त झालेले
वर्णमाला लिखिताची

दृश्य घटकांच्या आणि ओघाच्या

करण्यास मदत करतात

तसेच आशयाची आकलनशुणवत्ता