Twitter Thread by Bharadwaj



Bharadwaj
@BharadwajSpeaks



Today is the founding day of Gita Press.

This thread tells the story of Gita Press. Their mission, their founding members and their unrelenting resistance against left-liberal & Congress Govt censorship of their organization.

Gita Press was established in 1923 by JD Goyanka.

Hanuman Prasad Poddar was the founding editor of Gita Press.

Its first journal Kalyan was published in 1927. While most journals of this period are confined to libraries and archives, Gita Press and Kalyan still exist with millions of copies

Unlike other publications, Gita Press publishes its books at a very reasonable price.

For example, a Bhagavad Gita can be procured at Rs.30. A copy of Hanuman Chalisa costs just Rs. 2 (50 lakh copies printed every year). Yet, the printing, cover and content quality is FANTASTIC

But why? Why does Gita Press publish excellent books at such a minimum token price which inevitably equals or exceeds the creation cost?

The answer to this question is that Gita Press was not founded to be a profit making enterprise.

Its goals were something very different

Gita Press was founded at a time when Christian Missionaries were making rapid progress in converting Hindus.

They were making all out attacks on Hinduism.

Missionaries distributed copies of Bible to anyone who showed slightest inclination to accept it. Bibles were flowing in

By contrast, except for a few Pandits who were specialists in the field, an ordinary Hindu did not have any printed copy of any of his books.

Ordinary Hindu did not have any good knowledge of his own Dharma's books.

Gita Press was founded only to propagate and defend Dharma.

In addition, a majority of Hindus in this period was not literate. They simply could not read.

Hence, in addition to printing books, Gita Press also used to organise several Kathas(Oral narration). Their Kathavachaks would read & narrate the great Epics Ramayana and Mahabharata

The head Kathavachak of Gita Press was Kripashankar Ramayani.

He used to tour village to village. Gather people around in the evening after work and recite the Ramcaritmanas (there was no night shift in those days)

His salary: 0 (food and travel was organised by Gitapress)

And what was the success of Gita Press: It was ASTOUNDING.

As on 2014, they SOLD more than 72 million copies of Gita,70 million copies of Ramcaritmanas and 19 million copies of Puranas.

Gita press is easily the BIGGEST publisher of India. It DWARFS others by its sheer numbers

It was ONLY due to Gita Press that an ordinary Hindu could have a copy of Ramcaritmanas or Bhagavad Gita in his home.
It was due to Gita Press that an ordinary Hindu could read & know about his religion.
It was Gita Press which challenged the missionary proliferation of Bibles.

What do we except from a highly successful publishing house? A luxurious and posh building as its headquarters?

But NO!

The Gita Press House is a very small building. It looks like a very small temple.This is certainly not what one would expect from "India's biggest publisher"

Anybody who has visited Gita Press House at Gorakhpur would simply be awestruck at its simplicity.

There is no centralized air conditioning even.Why? Because Gita Press never accumulated profits. Any profit was spent on publishing and circulating books & recruiting Kathavachaks

The founding editor of Gita Press was Hanuman Prasad Poddar.

At the age of 22, Hanuman Prasad Poddar was arrested and held guilty of supplying arms to revolutionary Indian Freedom fighters of Anushilan Samihiti who wanted to liberate India by waging direct war against British

After Hanuman prasad was arrested & released, he was shunned by his own community.

NOBODY wanted to associate with a person who supplied arms to Indian revolutionary freedom fighters. Poddar's community engaged in business. They did not want to ruffle feathers with the British.

Boycotted and shunned, Poddar then left his native Kolkata and migrated to Mumbai.

He migrated in search of a Job! The great man who built India's greatest publishing house from scratch was once unemployed!

How many of you knew the founding editor of Gita Press was a great freedom fighter?

How many of you knew that he waged a direct war with British?

In contrast to million of copies of Ramcaritmanas, there are hardly any Gita Press publications on their own founding editor. Why?

Why? Why did Gita Press not publish anything about their editorial founder?

The answer lies in the Motto of Gita Press.

Hanuman prasad Poddar used to say- "I never sanction self praise" Gita Press shuns self praise and worship of Individuals"

As a result of this, while millions peruse the Gita Press publications, we hardly know anything about them
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All the information available ABOUT Gita Press, whether online or otherwise, is mostly its evaluation by parties and individuals extremely inimical to it

The modesty is striking.

Did you know that the founding editor of Gita Press, Hanuman Prasad Poddar was recommended for Bharat Ratna by then home minister Govind Ballabh Pant?

But to the surprise of Pant, Poddar flatly refused it. All his life, Poddar refused any felicitation

Yet, Nehru hated Gita Press and did everything in his power to shut down Gita Press.

He even arrested Hanuman Prasad Poddar alleging involvement in assassination of Gandhi.

Poddar was jailed. Birla refused to help Poddar and accused Gita press of propagating "Shaitan Dharma"

Poddar was ordered by the court to be released in the very next hearing, because, according to the court, "there was not a shred of evidence of his involvement in the assassination of Gandhi"

From 1949,Poddar played a very active part in the Ram Lalla movement to worship Ram Lalla idols inside Babri. He was also lathicharged by the administration.

He donated his entire life savings to establish/enable Ram Janmabhumi trust to fund Pujaris & court case until his death