



Ch. – 5 – Lecture Notes

Class – X – History

“Print Culture and the Modern World”

Introduction

- The earliest kind of print technology was developed in China, Japan and Korea. In China, books were printed by rubbing paper against the inked surface of woodblocks.

First Printed Books:

- **Print in China**

- In the 17th Century, the use of print diversified in China because of booming urban culture.
- China possessed a huge bureaucratic system which recruited its personnel through civil service examinations.
- Textbooks for this examination were printed in vast numbers under the sponsorship of the imperial state.
- **From the sixteenth century, the number of examination candidates went up and that increased the volume of print.**
- **By the seventeenth century, as urban culture bloomed in China, the uses of print diversified.**
- Print was no longer used just by scholar-officials. Merchants used print in their everyday life, as they collected trade information.
- Rich women began to read, and many women began publishing their poetry and plays.
- Wives of scholar-officials published their works and courtesans wrote about their lives.
- **Shanghai became the hub of the new print culture**, catering to the Western-style schools. From hand printing there was now a gradual shift to mechanical printing.

- **Print In Japan**

- Buddhist missionaries from China introduced hand printing technology into Japan.
- **The oldest Japanese book printed is the Buddhist 'Diamond Sutra'.**
- Poets and prose writers were regularly published, and books were cheap and abundant.
- Printing of visual material led to interesting publishing practices.
- **In the late 18th century in Edo (Tokyo)** in urban region, illustrated collection of paintings depicted on elegant Urban culture, libraries and bookstores were packed with hand printed material of various type - books on women, musical instruments, calculation, flower arrangement, cooking, proper etiquette and famous places.



Print comes to Europe

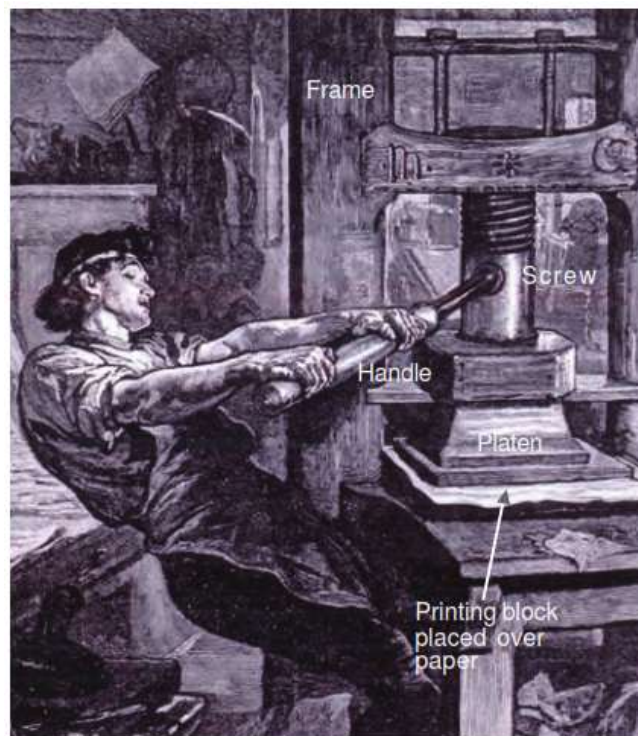


Fig. 4b – Jikji

- In the eleventh century, Chinese paper reached Europe via the same route.
- Paper made possible the production of manuscripts, carefully written by scribes. China already had the technology of woodblock printing.
- **Marco Polo brought this knowledge back with him.**
- Now Italians began producing books with woodblocks, and soon the technology spread to other parts of Europe.
- As the demand for books increased, booksellers all over Europe began exporting books to many different countries.
- **Book fairs were held at different places.**
- Scribes or skilled hand writers were no longer solely employed by wealthy or influential patrons but increasingly by booksellers as well.
- **More than 50 scribes often worked for one bookseller.**
- **Disadvantages of manuscripts**
 - The production of manuscripts could not satisfy the increasing demands of books.
 - Copying was expensive, time consuming and laborious.
 - **Manuscripts were fragile, awkward to handle or carry thus wood block printing became more popular.**
 - There was clearly a great need for even quicker and cheaper reproduction of texts.
 - **The breakthrough occurred at Strasbourg, Germany, where Johann Gutenberg developed the first-known printing press in the 1430s.**
- **Increase in Demand for Book**
 - Book fairs were held at different places.
 - Production of handwritten manuscripts was also organized in new ways to meet the expanded demand.
 - Scribes or Skilled hand writers were no longer solely employed by wealthy or influential patrons but increasingly by booksellers.



Gutenberg and the printing press



- **Johann Gutenberg was a German to invent the printing press in 1430.**
- He was the son of merchant and grew up on a large agricultural estate.
- Since childhood he had seen wine and olive presser.
- He also learnt the art of polishing stones, to create lead moulds used for making trinkets.
- With the help of this technology he made moulds for print and metal types of letters.
- By 1448 he perfected this system and printed **his 1st book : 'The Bible' 180 copies** were printed in three years, some on paper and some on vellum.
- **In the hundred years between 1450 and 1550**, printing presses were set up in most countries of Europe.
- Printers from Germany travelled to other countries, seeking work and helping start new presses.
- As the number of printing presses grew, book production boomed.
- **The second half of the fifteenth century saw 20 million copies of printed books** flooding the markets in Europe.
- The number went up in the sixteenth century to about 200 million copies.
- Printed books at first closely resembled the written manuscripts in appearance and layout.
- **The metal letters imitated the ornamental handwritten styles.**
- Borders were illuminated by hand with foliage and other patterns, and illustrations were painted.
- In the books printed for the rich, space for decoration was kept blank on the printed page.
- Each purchaser could choose the design and decide on the painting school that would do the illustrations.



The Print Revolution and its Impact

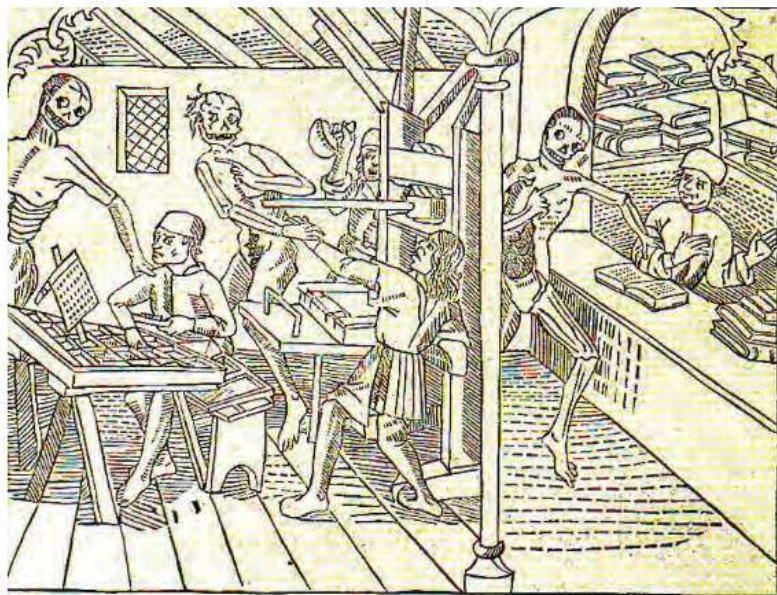
- The time and labour required to produce each book came down.
 - The printing press, a new reading public emerged. **Reduced the cost of books**, now a reading public came into being.
 - Knowledge was transferred orally. Before the age of print books were not only expensive but they could not be produced in sufficient numbers.
 - But the transition was not so simple.
 - **Books could be read only by the literate and the rates of literacy in most European countries were very low.**
 - Oral culture thus entered print and printed material was orally transmitted. And the public hearing and reading became intermingled.
- **A New Reading Public**
 - With the printing press, a new reading public emerged.
 - Printing reduced the cost of books.
 - **The time and labour required to produce each book came down, and multiple copies could be produced with greater ease.**
 - Books flooded the market, reaching out to an ever-growing readership. Earlier, reading was restricted to the elites.
 - Common people lived in a world of oral culture. They heard sacred texts read out, ballads recited, and folk tales narrated.
 - Knowledge was transferred orally. People collectively heard a story, or saw a performance.
- **Religious Debates and the fear of Print**
 - Print created the possibility of the wide circulation of ideas.
 - **Through the printed message, they could persuade people to think differently and introduced a new world of debate and discussion.** This has significance in the different sphere of life.
 - Many were apprehensive of the effects that the easier access to the printed world and the wider circulation of books, could have on people's minds.
 - If that happened the authority of 'valuable' literature would be destroyed, expressed by religious authorities and monarchs, as well as many writers and artists, achievement of religion areas of Martin Luther.
 - **A new intellectual atmosphere and helped spread the new ideas that led to the reformation.**



- **Effect of printing on religion**

- **In 1517, the religious reformer Martin Luther wrote Ninety Five Theses criticising many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.**
- A printed copy of this was posted on a church door in Wittenberg. It challenged the Church to debate his ideas.
- This led to a division within the Church and to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
- **Luther's translation of the New Testament sold 5,000 copies within a few weeks and a second edition appeared within three months.**
- Several scholars, in fact, think that print brought about a new intellectual atmosphere and helped spread the new ideas that led to the Reformation.

- **Print and Dissent**



- **In the 16th century, Menocchio, a Miller in Italy,** began to read books that were available in his locality.
- He interpreted the message of the Bible and formulated a view of God and creation that enraged the Roman Catholic Church.
- When Roman church began its inquisition to repress heretical ideas, **Menocchio was hauled up twice and ultimately executed.**
- The Roman church, troubled by popular reading and questioning of faith.
- So, church imposed control over publishers and book sellers and **began to maintain an index of prohibited books from 1558.**



The Reading Mania and The Rise of New Reading Public

- The printing press led to the rise of new reading public because the books not only began to be printed in large number but also cheap.
 - **All sorts of book like novels, drama, poems, short stories, essays, lyrics etc.** now flooded the market not only the scholarly people were interested in reading but now children and women all were attracted towards books.
 - The reading habit took the shape of a reading mania.
 - New forms of popular literature appeared in print.
 - Booksellers employed peddlers who roamed around villages, carrying little books for sale. There were almanacs or ritual calendars, along with ballads and folktales.
 - **In England, penny chapbooks were carried by petty peddlers known as chapmen,** and sold for a penny, so that even the poor could buy them.
 - **In France, were the “Biliotheque Bleue”,** which were low-priced small books printed on poor quality paper, and bound in cheap blue covers.
 - Then there were the romances, printed on four to six pages, and the more substantial ‘histories’ which were stories about the past.
 - **The periodical press developed from the early eighteenth century,** combining information about current affairs with entertainment.
 - Newspapers and journals carried information about wars and trade, as well as news of developments in other places.
 - The ideas of scientists and philosophers now became more accessible to the common people.
 - Ancient and medieval scientific texts were compiled and published, and maps and scientific diagrams were widely printed.
 - **When scientists like Isaac Newton began to publish their discoveries,** they could influence a much wider circle of scientifically minded readers.
 - **The writings of thinkers such as Thomas Paine, Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau were also widely printed and read.**
 - Thus, their ideas about science, reason and rationality found their way into popular literature.
- **‘Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world!’**
 - Books were a means of spreading progress and enlightenment.
 - Many believed that books could change the world, liberate society from despotism and tyranny, and herald a time when reason and intellect would rule.
 - **Louise-Sebastien Mercier, a novelist in eighteenth-century France, declared:** ‘The printing press is the most powerful engine of progress and public opinion is the force that will sweep despotism away.’
 - In many of Mercier’s novels, the heroes are transformed by acts of reading.
 - They devour books, are lost in the world books create, and become enlightened in the process.
 - Convinced of the power of print in bringing enlightenment and destroying the basis of despotism, Mercier proclaimed: ‘Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world! Tremble before the virtual writer!’



- **Print culture and the French Revolution**

First: Print the popularised ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers.

- Collectively, their writings provided a critical commentary on tradition, superstition and despotism.
- They argued for the rule of reason rather than custom, and demanded that everything be judged through the application of reason and rationality.
- They attacked the sacred authority of the Church and the despotic power of the state, thus eroding the legitimacy of a social order based on tradition.

Second: Print created a new culture of dialogue and debate.

- All values, norms and institutions were re-evaluated and discussed by a public that had become aware of the power of reason, and recognised the need to question existing ideas and beliefs.
- Within this public culture, new ideas of social revolution came into being.

Third: By the 1780s there was an outpouring of literature that mocked the royalty and criticised their morality.

- In the process, it raised questions about the existing social order.
- Cartoons and caricatures typically suggested that the monarchy remained absorbed only in sensual pleasures while the common people suffered immense hardships.
- Print helps the spread of ideas. But we must remember that people did not read just one kind of literature.
- **If they read the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau, they were also exposed to monarchical and Church propaganda.**
- They were not influenced directly by everything they read or saw. They accepted some ideas and rejected others. They interpreted things their own way.

The Nineteenth Century:

- **Children:**

- As primary education became compulsory from the late nineteenth century, children became an important category of readers.
- Production of school textbooks became critical for the publishing industry.
- **A children's press, devoted to literature for children alone, was set up in France in 1857.**
- **The Grimm Brothers in Germany** spent years compiling traditional folk tales gathered from peasants.
- What they collected was edited before the stories were published in a collection in 1812.

- **Women:**

- **As primary education became compulsory from the late nineteenth century.** A large number of new readers were especially women.
- Women became important as readers as well as writers.
- **Penny magazines were especially meant for women,** as were manuals teaching proper behaviour and housekeeping.



- **In the nineteenth century, lending libraries in England, lower middle-class people.**
- Sometimes self-educated working class people wrote for themselves.
- Women were seen as important readers.
- **Some of the best-known novelists were women:** Jane Austin, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot, their writings became important in defining a new type of woman.
- **Workers:**
 - Lending libraries had been in existence from the seventeenth century onwards.
 - **In the nineteenth century, lending libraries in England** became instruments for educating white-collar workers, artisans and lower-middle-class people.
 - Sometimes, self-educated working class people wrote for themselves.
 - **After the working day was gradually shortened from the mid-nineteenth century**, workers had some time for self-improvement and self-expression. They wrote political tracts and autobiographies in large numbers.
 - **Thomas Wood, a Yorkshire mechanic**, narrated how he would rent old newspapers and read them by firelight in the evenings as he could not afford candles.
 - **The twentieth-century Russian revolutionary author Maxim Gorky's** "My Childhood and My University" provide glimpses of such struggles.
- **Further Innovations:**
 - By the mid-nineteenth century, Richard M. Hoe of New York had perfected the power-driven cylindrical press.
 - **This was capable of printing 8,000 sheets per hour.** This press was particularly useful for printing newspapers.
 - **In the late nineteenth century**, the offset press was developed which could print up to six colours at a time.
 - **From the turn of the twentieth century**, electrically operated presses accelerated printing operations.
 - **Methods of feeding paper improved**, the quality of plates became better, automatic paper reels and photoelectric controls of the colour register were introduced.
 - Printers and publishers continuously developed new strategies to sell their product.
 - Nineteenth-century periodicals serialised important novels, which gave birth to a particular way of writing novels.

India and the World of Print

- **Manuscripts Before the Age of Print**
 - India had a very rich and old tradition of handwritten manuscripts – in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, as well as in various vernacular languages.
 - **Manuscripts were copied on palm leaves or on handmade paper.**
 - Manuscripts, however, were highly expensive and fragile.
 - Pre-colonial Bengal had developed an extensive network of village primary schools, students very often did not read texts.



- **Printing In India**
 - ❖ The printing press came to India with Portuguese Missionaries in mid 16th century.
 - ❖ **The first Tamil Book printed in Cochin in 1579 BC.**
 - ❖ **Weekly Magazine 'Bengal Gazette' started publication in 1780 BC.**
 - ❖ **First printed edition of Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas came out in Calcutta in 1810 BC.**
 - ❖ Many newspapers in various languages started publication in 1821-22 BC.
 - ❖ **Hindi Printing began seriously in 1870 BC.**
- **Print Comes to India:**
 - **The printing press first came to Goa** with Portuguese missionaries in the mid-sixteenth century.
 - Jesuit priests learnt Konkani and printed several tracts.
 - **By 1674, about 50 books had been printed in the Konkani and in Kanara languages.**
 - Catholic priests printed the first Tamil book in 1579 at Cochin, and in 1713 the first Malayalam book was printed by them.
 - **By 1710, Dutch Protestant missionaries had printed 32 Tamil texts**, many of them translations of older works.
 - The English language press did not grow in India till quite late even though the English East India Company began to import presses from the late seventeenth century.
 - **From 1780, James Augustus Hickey began to edit the Bengal Gazette**, a weekly magazine that described itself as 'a commercial paper open to all, but influenced by none'.
 - So it was private English enterprise, proud of its independence from colonial influence, that began English printing in India.
 - Hickey published a lot of advertisements, including those that related to the import and sale of slaves.
 - But he also published a lot of gossip about the Company's senior officials in India.
 - Enraged by this, Governor-General Warren Hastings persecuted Hickey, and encouraged the publication of officially sanctioned newspapers that could counter the flow of information that damaged the image of the colonial government.
 - **By the close of the eighteenth century**, a number of newspapers and journals appeared in print.
 - There were Indians, too, who began to publish Indian newspapers.
 - **The first to appear was the weekly Bengal Gazette, brought out by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, who was close to Rammohun Roy.**



Religious Reform and Public Debates

- **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.
- 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.
- **Rammohun Roy published the Sambad Kaumudi from 1821** and the Hindu orthodoxy commissioned the Samachar Chandrika to oppose his opinions.
- **From 1822, two Persian newspapers were published, Jam-i-Jahan Nama and Shamsul Akbar.**
- In the same year, a Gujarati newspaper, the Bombay Samachar, made its appearance.
- **In north India, the ulama were deeply anxious about the collapse of Muslim dynasties.**
- They feared that colonial rulers would encourage conversion, change the Muslim personal laws.
- To counter this, they used cheap lithographic presses, published Persian and Urdu translations of holy scriptures, and printed religious newspapers and tracts.
- **The Deoband Seminary, founded in 1867**, published thousands upon thousands of fatwas telling Muslim readers how to conduct themselves in their everyday lives, and explaining the meanings of Islamic doctrines.
- Urdu print helped them conduct these battles in public.
- Among Hindus, too, print encouraged the reading of religious texts, especially in the vernacular languages.
- **The first printed edition of the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas, a sixteenth-century text, came out from Calcutta in 1810.**
- By the mid-nineteenth century, cheap lithographic editions flooded north Indian markets.
- **From the 1880s, the Naval Kishore Press at Lucknow and the Shri Venkateshwar Press in Bombay** published numerous religious texts in vernaculars.
- Religious texts, therefore, reached a very wide circle of people, encouraging discussions, debates and controversies within and among different religions.
- Print did not only stimulate the publication of conflicting opinions amongst communities, but it also connected communities and people in different parts of India.
- Newspapers conveyed news from one place to another, creating pan-Indian identities.



New Forms of Publication

- Printing created an appetite for new kinds of writing.
- **The novel, a literary form which had developed in Europe, ideally catered to this need.**
- Other new literary forms also entered the world of reading – lyrics, short stories, essays about social and political matters.
- By the end of the nineteenth century, a new visual culture was taking shape.
- With the setting up of an increasing number of printing presses, visual images could be easily reproduced in multiple copies.
- **Painters like Raja Ravi Varma produced images for mass circulation.**
- Cheap prints and calendars, easily available in the bazaar, could be bought even by the poor to decorate the walls of their homes or places of work.
- **By the 1870s, caricatures and cartoons were being published in journals and newspapers, commenting on social and political issues.**
- **Woman and print :**
 - Lives and feelings of women began to be written in particularly vivid and intense ways.
 - **Women's reading, therefore, increased enormously in middle-class homes.**
 - Liberal husbands and fathers began educating their womenfolk at home, and sent them to schools when women's schools were set up in the cities and towns after the mid-nineteenth century.
 - Writers started writing about the lives of women and this increased the number of women readers.
 - **Women got interested in education and many women schools and colleges were set up** many journals started emphasizing the importance of women education.
 - **In East Bengal, in the early nineteenth century, Rashundari Debi, a young married girl in a very orthodox household, learnt to read in the secrecy of her kitchen.**
 - **Later she wrote her autobiography 'Amar Jiban' which was published in 1876,** it was the first full length autobiography published in the Bengali language.
 - **From the 1860s, many Bengali women writers like Kailash Bashini Debi** wrote books highlighting the experiences of women.
 - **In the 1880s, in present day Maharashtra, Tarabai Shinde and pandita Ramabai** wrote with passionate anger about the miserable lives of upper caste Hindu women especially widows.
 - **Hindu printing began seriously only from the 1870s.** Soon, a large section of it was devoted to the education of women.
 - **In the early 20th century,** the journals written by women became very popular in which women's education, widowhood, widow remarriage etc., were discussed.
 - Some of them offered household and fashion lesson to women and brought entertainment through short stories and serialised novels.
 - **In Punjab, Ram Chaddha published Istri Dharm Vichar** to teach women how to be obedient wives.
 - The Khalsa tract society published cheap booklets with a similar message.
 - **In Bengal, an entire area in central Calcutta,** the Battala was devoted to the printing of popular books.
 - Peddlers took the Battala publications to homes, enabling women to read them in their leisure time.



Print and the Poor People

- **Public libraries were set up from the early twentieth century**, to provide books for poor. These libraries were set up by rich.
- From late 19th century many writers started writing books based on the issue of class distinction.
- **Jyotiba Phule wrote about injustice of the caste system in his book Gulamgiri (1871).**
- **In the 20th century B. R. Ambedkar in Maharashtra and E.V. Ramaswamy in Madras** wrote powerfully on caste and their writing.
- **Kashibaba, a Kanpur mill worker wrote and published Chhote Aur Bade Ka Sawal in 1938.**
- To show the link between caste and class exploitation.
- **The poems of another Kanpur millworker, who wrote under the name of Sudarshan Chakra between 1935 and 1955**, were brought together and published in a collection **called Sacchi Kavitayen.**
- By the 1930s, Bangalore cotton millworkers set up libraries to educate themselves.

Print and censorship

- **Before 1798**, the colonial state under the east India Company was not too concerned with Censorship.
- English East India company thought to censor press as it was against misrule of the Company and its officers. They were worried that this stuff would harm their trade monopoly.
- **In 1820 the Calcutta Supreme passed regulation to control press freedom** and company encouraged newspapers that would celebrate British rule in India.
- **In 1835, faced with urgent petitions by editors of English and Vernacular newspapers, Governor General Bentick agreed to revise Press laws.**
- Thomas Macaulay was a liberal colonial official who restored earlier freedom.
- But after the revolt of 1857 British introduced the Vernacular Press Act.
- **In 1878, the Vernacular Press Act was passed**, modelled on the Irish Press Law.
- It provided government with extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press.
- When a report was judged as seditious (against the British law) the newspaper was warned, and if warning was ignored, the press was liable to be seized and printing machinery confiscated.
- Despite repressive measures nationalist newspaper grew in numbers in all parts of India for e.g. **Kesari was started by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.** For this he was imprisoned in 1908.
- During the First World War, under the defence of India Rules, 22 newspapers had to furnish securities.
- **Of these, 18 shut down rather than comply with government orders.**
- The Sedition Committee Report under Rowlatt in 1919 further strengthened controls that led to imposition of penalties on various newspapers.
- The defence of India Act was passed after 2nd World War to censor war related topics. It also censored reports of the Quit India Movement.
- In August 1942, about 90 newspapers were suppressed.



❖ Glossary

- Calligraphy – The art of beautiful and stylised writing.
- Vellum – A parchment made from the skin of animals.
- Platen – In letterpress printing, platen is a board which is pressed onto the back of the paper to get the impression from the type. At one time it used to be a wooden board; later it was made of steel.
- Compositor – The person who composes the text for printing.
- Galley – Metal frame in which types are laid and the text composed.
- Ballad – A historical account or folk tale in verse, usually sung or recited.
- Taverns – Places where people gathered to drink alcohol, to be served food, and to meet friends and exchange news.
- Protestant Reformation – A sixteenth-century movement to reform the Catholic Church dominated by Rome. Martin Luther was one of the main Protestant reformers. Several traditions of anti-Catholic Christianity developed out of the movement.
- Inquisition – A former Roman Catholic court for identifying and punishing heretics.
- Heretical – Beliefs which do not follow the accepted teachings of the Church. In medieval times, heresy was seen as a threat to the right of the Church to decide on what should be believed and what should not. Heretical beliefs were severely punished.
- Satiety – The state of being fulfilled much beyond the point of satisfaction.
- Seditious – Action, speech or writing that is seen as opposing the government.
- Denominations – Sub groups within a religion.
- Almanac – An annual publication giving astronomical data, information about the movements of the sun and moon, timing of full tides and eclipses, and much else that was of importance in the everyday life of people.
- Chapbook – A term used to describe pocket-size books that are sold by travelling pedlars called chapmen. These became popular from the time of the sixteenth-century print revolution.
- Despotism – A system of governance in which absolute power is exercised by an individual, unregulated by legal and constitutional checks.
- Ulama – Legal scholars of Islam and the sharia (a body of Islamic law).
- Fatwa – A legal pronouncement on Islamic law usually given by a mufti (legal scholar) to clarify issues on which the law is uncertain.