

### Block 3 Introduction

Hermeneutics can be understood as a theory of interpretation. Hermeneutics through its methods and principles sees the text or the object of interpretation in the present context. Hermeneutics is concerned with generalities such as context, language, history, and culture, and specially concerned with specifics such as figures of speech, symbols, poetry, prophecy, typology, doctrinal teachings and various literary forms. As the author and the text have a specific historical context and the horizon, every reader brings a horizon of expectation to the text. There are six different levels where the reader influences the text and its meaning. They are: Inter-textual, situational, horizontal, semiotic, hermeneutical, and theoretical frameworks. In the history of Hermeneutics in the West there was a gradual development from the initial stages of interpretation of myths to the interpretation of the texts. Further hermeneutics grew towards the methodological developments, hermeneutics of experience or the ontology. In Indian philosophical and religious tradition too we find the interpretative theories have played a vital role. Contemporary trends in Hermeneutics range from Hermeneutics of meta-criticism, Hermeneutics of suspicion and retrieval, Socio-critical hermeneutics to Liberation hermeneutics

Unit 1 on Introduction to Hermeneutics speaks of the emergence and development of Hermeneutics in the Western tradition from Greek to Contemporary period. From mere theory of interpretation of religious texts Hermeneutics has a wide range of issues in the philosophical arena of interpretation. The unit also elaborates on the contribution of important thinkers with their specific theories.

