METHODOLOGY AND PERSPECTIVES
OF HUMANITIES AND PHILOSOPHY

CORE COURSE

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CORE COURSE
METHODOLOGY AND PERSPECTIVES OF HUMANITIES AND PHILOSOPHY

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Methodology and Perspectives of Humanities and Philosophy
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UNIT I

INTRODUCTION

Difference between the natural, social and the human sciences; facts and interpretation-history and fiction-study of the natural world compared to the study of the subjective world-study of tastes, values, and belief systems-the question of ideology.

Objective: *To introduce the methodological issues specific to the humanities.
   *To introduce humanities as a discipline that is distinct from natural and social sciences.
   *The characteristics of humanities are to be brought out.
   *The methods of natural and social sciences in contrast to the method of humanities is to be explicated.
   *The importance of humanities as a distinctive discipline is to be explained.
   *The objectivity in science and the subjectivity in humanities needs to be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The classical Greek notion of humanities was to provide a basis of a broad education to the Greek citizens. The concept of liberal arts is connected with such a tradition. The term ‘humanities’ probably appeared first during the Italian Renaissance in connection with the education of Christians for their moral and spiritual development. The term humanities actually refers to those disciplines of knowledge which are broadly concerned with human thoughts, creative expressions and culture.

Humanities are non-science academic disciplines.

Humanities include the various branches of knowledge which explore the process of creative intervention that humans make in imaginatively interpreting and expressing the meanings of their lived in experiences. Various forms of literature such as novels, short stories, poetry, drama etc represent various ways of articulating the meanings of peoples’ life experiences. The classics, literature and languages, philosophy, visual and performing arts are recognized as part of humanities. The humanities explore the process of how human beings construct a world of meanings and interpretations around their lives. To create an intellectual – spiritual sense of the lived world is the aim of humanities. To introduce humanities, it is necessary to distinguish it from natural and social sciences.
Difference between the natural, social and the human sciences.

Science

Science is a systematic study of all things, natural and social. Scientific knowledge is a set of verified and verifiable statements about all phenomena. Science as a continuous and cumulative activity is engaged in; Collecting data in a methodical way, Analysis of the data, Determination of the relationship between facts, Formulation of causal explanation.

Explanations are then verified.

The scientific method involves formulating hypothesis and verifying it for the purpose of explaining the fact. The scientific method involves generating testable hypotheses in order to make predictions and verifying them. That is; Observation and analysis of facts, Formulation of hypothesis, Deduction and verification, Proof. Science has been committed to empirically provable ideas. Empirical proof, objective truth which is verifiable through sense perception, is the hallmark of scientific method. The aim of science is to arrive at accurate and absolute truth, objective truth. Scientific method focuses on accuracy and objectivity. Thus the study of the world of natural phenomena is the most appropriate object of study.

Natural Science

The scientific study of the external, natural world is called natural science. The scientific method is best exemplified in the study of natural science. In natural science, the empirical reality is open to observation by sense perception. The subject matter of natural science is studied and examined from outside. The scientific method provides a high degree of predictability with respect to the workings of the natural world. In natural science the data can be quantified, selected and classified in the most objective manner.

The natural sciences acquire knowledge through the direct observation of phenomenon. They try to support or refute their hypotheses about causal relations between phenomena by undertaking controlled observations (experiments) where ever possible. The disciplines that are categorized as natural sciences are astronomy, earth sciences, physics, chemistry, biology etc. The growth of modern science since the late seventeenth century and it’s contribution to the modern life have given it an incomparable power as the most reliable form of knowledge, and it’s methods as the best way to arrive at truth of phenomena.

Social sciences

Everything that can be studied can be divided into two kinds of phenomena, natural and social. Natural phenomena exist without the intervention of people, whereas social phenomena are something that exists only as a result of human interaction. When social behavior of human beings is explained and predicted with the help of scientific methods, the body of knowledge thus created is called social science. Sociology, anthropology, political science and economics are social sciences.

Social sciences are close to the humanities in their analysis of human interaction and the subjective world, but they apply the scientific method to their subject matter. As science claims
the status of the most reliable method to arrive at truth, all the social sciences claimed the status of a science. Scientific inquiry made great gains in in the field of physics, chemistry, biology and other fields pertaining to the natural environment. Social science disciplines adopted the same scientific method. But since the social sciences were dealing with the social environment, whether the same scientific method be applied to explain and predict human behavior, remains a question.

The natural and social sciences differ in their subject matter and aims. In the natural sciences, we get an insight into what things are, were or would be. Social sciences are involved with the problem of what is and what should be. Social sciences are involved with the question of the betterment of the humankind in general. While the world of natural phenomena is quantifiable, the social world is more complicated, and involves subjectivity, values, beliefs.

Humanities

Disciplines that study human conditions in it’s entirety are called humanities. Various performing arts, philosophy, language and literature are humanities disciplines. The natural and social sciences use empirical methods, while humanities use methods that are creative and speculative in nature. Humanities provide us with the stories, the ideas that help us to make sense of our life and our world. By elaborating how others have lived and thought about life, the humanities help us to decide what is important in our own lives and what we can do to make them better. Humanities help us to answer questions such as what is right or wrong ?, what is truth ? Humanities emphasize the role of meaning, purpose, and goals of human condition. There is no search for objective truths in humanities. As interpretative disciplines, humanities employ narrative imagination as an important tool in the production and reproduction of meanings of culture, literature and history. Philosophy offers a critical systematic approach. It relies on reasoned argument.

Facts and Interpretation

The word fact is derived from the Latin word Factum. A fact means something that can be shown to be true, to exist, or to have happened. Facts are reality of something, the truth or actual existence of something, as opposed to the supposition or a belief about something. Facts have an objective and finite existence. Facts are perceptible directly to human senses. The objective existence of facts permits them to be tested by means of the existing methods of science.

Fact is sometimes used as synonymous with truth or reality. The question of objectivity and truth are intrinsically related to the idea of facts. As science bases it’s knowledge on a systematic collection, observation, interpretation and analysis of facts, various scientific disciplines have engaged themselves in theorizing their subject matter as facts.

E.H.Carr in his book What is History, argues that facts cannot be conceived without an inherent framework of interpretation and value judgment. The very process of the gathering of facts, which involves selection and choice, categorization, and analysis and interpretation of data, makes the idea of objective truth problematic, especially when we are talking of the human realm. It is important to understand that facts are always selected, collected, analysed and interpreted, within a theoretical framework, which are always based on certain value
judgments. Therefore, the idea of a completely value-neutral science, independent of subjective interpretation, based on facts, is questionable. This is more so for the social sciences and humanities where subjective interpretation of facts by human beings plays a greater role than the natural sciences.

History and Fiction

History studies the past. The past includes anything and everything that has happened before, but such a study involves a certain approach. That is, a historian needs to study not everything that happened in the past, but what could be said about the past. There is a basic dilemma between whether history is a study of human affairs in the past or that of the natural events. By discovering manuscripts or by recovering the details of any significant happening, a historian may choose to develop a narrative – an account of what happened in terms of the sequence of events. But how far the story is governed by the collected facts or being shaped by the imaginative faculty of the historian is a serious methodological question.

In modern times, history is regarded as an independent discipline that deals in facts, not fancies. Prior to the French Revolution, historiography was conventionally regarded as a literary art. Until late in the nineteenth century, most historians regarded themselves as literary men. The stories they were telling were true, but they were telling stories as though they were novelists. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century, as the discipline of history was professionalized, a majority had come to hold the view that historian is a seeker after truth using scientific methods. It is difficult to ignore the many similarities between the historian’s task and that of the novelist. It has been a perennial question in history, as far as it’s method is concerned, whether it is concerned with only objective facts or involved in subjective interpretation. The question is whether history is just an accumulation of facts or it does involve an interpretation of such facts also?

E.H. Carr, the British Marxist historian, in his book What is History? addressed this question by asserting that the happenings in the society in which the historian is placed have an enormous role to play in the writing of history. Historical facts are ‘facts’ as long as they are being collected, interpreted and presented to us by a historian. The facts are refracted through the mind of the historian. So, the role of the historian according to the social positioning is also important when we encounter the work of any historian. A historian writes history with an understanding of the people about whom writes. A historian is also a product of the age, the engagement with reality. This is connected with the question of subjectivity in works of history. According to Carr, history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and facts. History is the work of historians, who also have views and assumptions about the world they live in.

Study of the natural world as compared to the subjective

Humanities are not in search of the causality of events. Humanities look for meanings, and value oriented interpretations of the human world and it’s institutions. So, the fundamental difference between humanities and natural or social sciences is in the subject matter and the approaches to the subject matter. Whereas natural or social sciences are in search of universal rules and explanations, humanities focus on particulars and develop
meanings produced with creative imaginations by human beings. Humanities are self-reflective in character. Self-reflection helps to develop interpersonal consciousness. Humanities answer the fundamental question: what it means to be human.

H.G. Gadamer and William Dilthey re-examined the difference between humanities and social sciences. They have enriched the methods of humanities. Introducing the concept of narrative imagination, contemporary scholars of humanities have explored the possibility of placing their disciplines closer to the social sciences. Plato illustrated from the classical Greek texts to establish that literary texts basically substantiated an entire value system, a particular view of the world. Plato distinguished between ‘reality’ and ‘appearance’. Plato considered artistic representation of the real world not a depiction of the reality or the reality of objects, but as they appear to the authors. There should not be any logical gap between facts and values. Plato’s model of knowledge was then broadly designed in scientific terms. By separating literary texts from their logical and sociopolitical correctness Aristotle stressed on the aesthetic value of literary texts. David Hume, the British philosopher also opined that there must be a logical gap between description of facts and value-judgments we might make on the basis of knowledge of these facts. The quest for objectivity in the subjective world of the humanities and the social sciences has been a long drawn process.

Objectivity in the subjective world

Auguste Comte, considered the founding father of sociology, advocated positivism. He called for a shift from social philosophy to social sciences. Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist, contributed to the emergence of sociology as a scientific discipline. The starting point of Durkheim was realization that sociology should seek causal relations of social phenomena. There by the laws of the causal relations of social phenomena could be achieved. The Comtean notion that social phenomena are natural facts, subject to natural laws, slowly lost its grip in social science thinking, as more and more subjective schools of thought started influencing sociologists. The orthodox view of treating social science simply as an extension of natural sciences was under doubts. The methods of natural sciences when applied to the study of human beings raised certain fundamental questions. It would be a crude way to treat human behavior as similar to that of phenomena of the natural and physical world. Human beings are endowed with values and motivations. It is as a result of value-loaded orientations and interactions that the human society emerges. The problem arises as to how to study subjective dimensions of social life objectively? Whether it is desirable to be objective in social sciences. To resolve the issue, the most powerful contribution was made by Max Weber, a German sociologist. The delicate task of separating value-judgment from value-interpretation was undertaken by him. Social sciences ought to study and explain values without being judgmental about them. Society is a result of a web of human interaction. As diametrically different from the object of study of natural sciences, the social sciences deal with the social subject, which has consciousness. Social sciences are cultural sciences, where one should not aspire for laws like natural laws. The very character of social laws would be that of what is probable, rather than what is the phenomenon. Value-freedom is the cornerstone of Max Weber’s contribution to the social sciences. Causal hypotheses and explanations are the testing ground of social sciences too. Science is to be set aside from values because, facts and values belong to two different realms.
As far as social sciences are concerned, the problem of objectivity is intrinsically linked to the question of arriving at an appropriate method of studying society. Objectivity in social sciences means a relative freedom from subjective biases. It means an observation uninfluenced by one’s personal biases, prejudices, beliefs or values. The problem of objectivity is in fact one of knowing reality.

**Study of Tastes, Values, and Belief Systems**

Taste indicates cultural choices and preferences. Taste means distinguishing between life styles, manners, consumables and art. Taste as a social phenomenon means the learned behavior of human beings to consider something aesthetically desirable, good or proper.

Behaviors determined by taste are linked to class and social relations. Some tastes may be more acceptable and legitimate than others which could be called dominant tastes. Different socio-economic groups are likely to have different tastes. Social class is one of the prominent factors in structuring taste. Values are aggregate set of beliefs about things, objects, ideas or actions that are considered preferable to others. Values are not taught directly to the members of society; they are internalized by young members of society as they grow up and participate in it’s activities. A notion of social acceptance may be attached to the values. The intensity of the social evaluation may vary with the importance attached to the values. In modern western societies, gender equality is a cherished value. In contrast, in Asian countries patriarchy is more ingrained.

Belief system provides a generalized guidance for moral action and a sense of good and bad. The belief systems followed in a society are derived from various sources, but largely, the religious systems prevalent in the society play a great role in providing a people with their belief system. Belief systems decide the way we organize our lives and how we deal with the various events in our private and social lives.

**The Question of Ideology**

Ideology is a set of ideas, which provide a theoretical and operational framework for thought or action by it’s adherents. The French Rationalist philosopher Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century coined the term ‘ideology’. It meant the science of ideas. The term was used in a negative way in Karl Marx and F.Engel's *The German Ideology* (1840). The Marxist theory used the term to imply something that mystifies and hides reality of the actual material conditions of society, a sort of false consciousness. It was theorized that all ruling ideas are nothing but a super -structural expression of the dominant material relations in society. The ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class.

Louis Althusser, in his essay ‘Ideology and Ideological state apparatus’ (1969), advanced the Marxist theory on ideology by pointing out that ideology is relatively autonomous. In other words, ideology is not simply a distorted representation of reality by which a ruling class exploits a subjected class, but plays an active constitutive role in social formation by affecting the material conditions themselves.

Later thinkers added to Althusser’s formulation that all ideologies are not monolithic, and people are differentially positioned as per their particular ideologies. Marxist literary critic Terry Eagleton in his *Ideology:An Introduction* quotes media theorist John B.Thompson, ‘To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of
domination’. Such a wide definition confers ideology the function to legitimate the power of a dominant social group. Eagleton critiques such a simplified understanding of ideology. Referring to the ideologies of the socialists, feminists and other radicals, Eagleton questions the inevitability of the connection between ideology and dominant power. Eagleton proposes a more inclusive definition of ideology. Such an understanding could take into account the kind of connection between belief system and political power. Ideology is more than just a ruling belief system.

Questions

A-Short Answer Questions (1 weightage)

1. Define science
   Science is a systematic study of all things, natural and social. Scientific knowledge is a set of verified and verifiable statements about all phenomena.

2. Define Humanities
   Disciplines that study human conditions, in its entirety are called humanities. Various performing arts, philosophy, language and literature are humanities disciplines.

3. What are facts?
   The word fact is derived from the Latin word Factum. A fact means something that can be shown to be true, to exist, or to have happened. Facts are reality of something, the truth or actual existence of something, as opposed to the supposition or a belief about something.

4. What is meant by ideology?
   Ideology is a set of ideas, which provide a theoretical and operational framework for thought or action by its adherents. The French Rationalist philosopher Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century coined the term ‘ideology’. It meant the science of ideas.

B-Short Answer Questions (2 weightages)

1. Explain natural science
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given it an incomparable power as the most reliable form of knowledge, and it’s methods as the best way to arrive at truth of phenomena.

2. Explain science and scientific method

Science is a systematic study of all things, natural and social. Scientific knowledge is a set of verified and verifiable statements about all phenomena. Science as a continuous and cumulative activity is engaged in; Collecting data in a methodical way, Analysis of the data, Determination of the relationship between facts, Formulation of causal explanation.

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3. Distinguish between natural science and social science

As science claims the status of the most reliable method to arrive at truth, all the social sciences claimed the status of a science. Scientific inquiry made great gains in in the field of physics, chemistry, biology and other fields pertaining to the natural environment. Social science disciplines adopted the same scientific method. But since the social sciences were dealing with the social environment, whether the same scientific method be applied to explain and predict human behavior, remains a question.

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4. Distinguish between humanities and social sciences

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meanings produced with creative imaginations by human beings. Humanities are self-reflective in character. Self-reflection helps to develop interpersonal consciousness. Humanities answer the fundamental question: what it means to be human.

5. Give an account of the concept of ideology.

Ideology is a set of ideas, which provide a theoretical and operational framework for thought or action by its adherents. The French Rationalist philosopher Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century coined the term ‘ideology’. It meant the science of ideas. The term was used in a negative way in Karl Marx and F. Engel’s *The German Ideology* (1840). The Marxist theory used the term to imply something that mystifies and hides reality of the actual material conditions of society, a sort of false consciousness. It was theorized that all ruling ideas are nothing but a super structural expression of the dominant material relations in society. The ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class.

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**C-Essay Question**

1. Explain humanities as a discipline distinct from natural and social sciences and having a methodology of its own.

**References**

UNIT-II
PHILOSOPHY

What is Philosophy?; Functions of Philosophy; The branches of Philosophy
Metaphysics: Materialism, Idealism, Realism.
Epistemology: Rationalism, Empiricism.
Ethics: Right, Wrong, virtue duty, freedom of will.
Logic: Terms, Propositions, syllogisms.

Aim: To introduce philosophy, functions, and the main branches of philosophy.

The term Philosophy is originated from the Greek words “philo” and “Sophia”. The word “philo” means love and “Sophia” means wisdom. Thus the etymological meaning of the term philosophy is Love of wisdom. The ancient Greek thinker Pythagoras was the first to use the term “philosophy. Pythagoras declared himself as a philosopher, implying his love for wisdom. In early days the term philosophy was loosely used by Greek thinkers and later on it was used to denote love of thinking, thinking attitude, reflective attitude towards life.

When the reflective thinking becomes serious, sustained and logical, and directed towards questions of life and values, it becomes philosophy.

The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates remains the best example of someone who was a “lover of wisdom”. Although we may think that acquiring wisdom is a matter of having all the answers, Socrates thought that it was more a matter of asking right questions. By knowing the proper questions when faced with a problem, debate, or issue, one can find good answers more easily than someone who starts off without such a foundation. According to the great Greek philosopher Plato a philosopher is one whose attention is fixed on reality rather than appearance.

Thus we may say that philosophy is a persistent attempt to understand the world in which we live in and of which we are a part. It signifies a natural and necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they live and they have their being. All searches for knowledge originate in our instinct of curiosity. It becomes so insistent in some persons that they make it their life’s mission. Hence philosophy may be explained as the interpretation of Man and Nature and their relation towards each other. Whereas Science is knowledge of facts, philosophy is insight into the nature of facts. While, the science gives a partial explanation of our experience, philosophy undertakes a full and final explanation of all the facts that constitute experience. A philosopher is always seeking to find answers to ultimate questions regarding the world. He is perplexed with questions like- What is the real nature of man? What is the end of this life? What is the nature of this world? Is there any creator of this world? How should man live in the light of his knowledge of himself, the world and God? These are some of the many problems, taken at random, which we find agitating the human mind in every land, from the very dawn of civilization.
As philosophy aims at knowledge of truth, it is termed in Indian literature, “the vision of truth” (Darshana). Every Indian school holds, in its own way, that there can be a direct realization of truth.

FUNCTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

We acquire our major beliefs by many ways such as from authority or suggestion from parents, teachers and others. Social environment and groups of men, whose views are simply accepted as the current ways of looking at things, may also contribute in the formation of beliefs. These beliefs may become prejudices as they are uncritical. Philosophy undertakes a critical examination of the grounds on which beliefs are held. This is one function of philosophy. That is a major function of philosophy is to enquire into the possibilities and limitations of reason, by way of supporting a particular belief. Any thinking that concerns the truth of a philosophical belief is philosophical thinking. It may take the form of accepting a belief as true and investigating its logical connections with other beliefs. Or it may take the form of questioning the belief and attempting to determine whether it is based on good reasons.

The other function of philosophy is to frame a picture of the whole universe, to establish a complete world view. This function distinguishes philosophy from the science. While the science is a systematic body of knowledge about a particular branch of the universe philosophy aims at a comprehensive knowledge. Philosophy is defined as the effort to comprehend the universe as a whole, not a particular department of it.

The function of philosophy is to understand the world. Philosophy helps us to realize that there are very important questions which science cannot answer, and that scientific knowledge is not sufficient. Philosophy keeps people intellectually modest and aware that there are no shortcuts to knowledge, what we believe to be indisputably true may turn out to be untrue.

The great discoveries and inventions in science have made a tremendous advancement in man’s life. The progress of science also affected their conduct, beliefs and attitudes. As life become more mechanical materialistic values pursued in neglect of spiritual ones. The scientific progress has unfortunately led to the loss of spiritual significance. We are uncertain about our ultimate purposes, values and goals. There is only one way of escaping from this confusion. It is to direct out mind to the contemplation of the life situation as a whole. What we have lost is the total perspective. Our whole life is divided into fragments and there seems to be no overall purpose. Philosophy is significant in this context. It rises above this confused state of mind and grasps the total perspective. It is not a game played by leisurely intellectuals with abstract concepts. Rather, it deals with questions which vitally affect the worth and significance of human life. It helps in developing an objective, balanced and unbiased attitude to life.

THE BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

One way to approach philosophy is to describe the several branches that have emerged as the traditional fields of study in the discipline. Elaboration of specific problems of philosophy and its development led to its various aspects being singled out as independent sections. These are Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics, and Logic etc.
METAPHYSICS

The term “metaphysics” literally means beyond physics. The term was first used by Andronicus of Rhodes for the “first philosophy” of Aristotle. Subsequently the scholastics used the term transphysica for studies which come after the ordinary physical studies of natural phenomena. The “first philosophy” of Aristotle which was called metaphysics discussed such philosophical problems like God, soul, and other supernatural phenomena. Thus, later on, metaphysics came to mean the study of those phenomena which lie beyond nature.

Metaphysics is the systematic study of the fundamental problems relating to the nature of ultimate reality. It referred to a definite attitude of human mind distinct from moral, religious, and aesthetical attitude. Metaphysics implies a belief that there is more in the world than what appears in our sense perceptions. Metaphysical speculations spring from two basic impulses, i.e. to know the real and the desire to construct a comprehensive view of the nature, origin and future of the world including man. Starting with Aristotle metaphysics was considered as “a science which studies Being qua Being and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature”. Being is considered here as the essence and ultimate reality is conceived in terms of essence.

There are three major issues with which metaphysics is concerned. It makes a distinction between reality and appearances and tries to distinguish the real from the unreal. Secondly, metaphysics provides a more comprehensive understanding of the world than that which is provided by the common sense and the science. Finally, metaphysics refers to man’s earliest attempt to understand the mystery of Nature, its origin and future possibilities.

Metaphysics is concerned with knowledge of the reality which implies the essence of the objective world of things. It is an attempt to find out the first cause of this world. The subject matter of metaphysics is supersensible. As metaphysics transcends the scientific knowledge it may be considered as supra-scientific knowledge.

The aim of metaphysics is to apprehend the ultimate reality. In the writings of Aristotle we find the use of the term first cause or primary cause of things. The first cause is conceived as the basis of everything else and is beyond all contradictions. Besides this, the ultimate reality is characterized by infinity, independence, transcendence and immutability.

In the investigation of the nature of ultimate reality metaphysics applies analytical and critical procedures. Metaphysics is not totally speculative. Even human experience is analyzed to determine its reality. The main concern of metaphysics is self-consistency of the data furnished by the experience. Hence metaphysical method can be considered as a priori, non-empirical or independent of experience. The method of metaphysics is also constructive since the ultimate aim is the formation of an overall world picture.

Philosophy in the form of metaphysics aims to know the real. It attempts to evolve a comprehensive view of the universe. For this purpose, metaphysics offers a variety of views and approaches. The history of philosophy is the record of different points of views about the real expressed by the philosophers from time to time. Broadly these views are categorized as materialism, idealism, and realism, etc.
Materialism

Materialism is a name given to a family of doctrines concerning the nature of the world. It attributes to matter a primary position and regard mind or spirit as secondary or dependent reality. According to materialism matter is the ultimate constituent of the universe. Materialism considers mind or consciousness as a property of matter. It believes that the psychical processes are reducible to physical processes. Materialism as philosophical doctrine considers matter as an objectively existing reality. It believes that the universe can be explained in terms of matter and motion. Materialism is opposed to both natural realism and idealism.

Materialism considers the world of objects as fundamentally physical. The priority of matter implies that it is the unique world substance and there is nothing but matter which exhausts all that exists. Materialism may appear as an attractive doctrine and appeals to common sense for the following reasons. Our knowledge of matter, its properties and the changes that it undergoes, is much greater than our knowledge of mind. Again, we are immediately confronted with matter and it is much easier to know its dimensions. Enduring appeal of materialism arises from its alliance with physical sciences. The facts furnished by physiology and its allied branches, which substantiate the materialist view of reality. Thus a strong and convincing case for the priority of matter to mind, dependence of mental on the material, is presented by the science. It seems logical and so difficult to refute the arguments of materialism from the standpoint of physical sciences.

Materialists uphold that knowledge is a special form of reflection of reality. Knowledge does not exist by itself. It is the result of a cognitive activity of human being. Materialists reject all ideologies, such as transcendental intuitionism, pure rationalism and idealism. According materialism sense perception is the basis of knowledge, though it is the primary stage in the cognitive process. At the same time materialists do claim that they accord reason its legitimate place. They are aware of the importance of reason as the source of general propositions.

The idealist picture of the world often centers on the idea of God, who is regarded as the creator and governor of the world. Materialists reject this idea and explain the world without postulating anything supernatural. They advocate evolutionary naturalism as the explanation of the world phenomena. Believing in the material unity of the world, they also conceive certain laws behind this. They admit the dictum “nothing arises out of nothing”. To materialists nature is a system of interrelated phenomena, which exists and endures by itself.

Materialists do not recognize any such thing as purpose in the universe. All events are due to the interaction of matter and motion. For materialists values and purposes exists only in the human desires and aspirations. They are against the absolutist ethics and hold that moral questions are relative but they do not subscribe to mere pleasure seeking philosophy. Materialists aim at happiness which results from harmonious concord of various elements of human nature. They reject the absolute ethics of the idealists in which God prevails as the moral governor.
Idealism

Idealism considers reality as ultimately spiritual. According to idealism the universe as a whole including physical nature is ultimately mental or spiritual. Thus materialism and idealism can be seen as two rival trends in philosophy. The chief difference between them consists in the primacy they are attributing either to matter or to idea (spirit). Idealism is a metaphysical doctrine which undertakes to show that in order to think matter or the spatio-temporal order of events in its ultimate nature we are logically compelled to think mind or spirit as in some sense foundational to it. As a necessary corollary to this we find the view that the ordinary perception of the external world does not reveal the true nature of things with a change in emphasis, one may say that our ordinary perception of this world is in some sense illusory. Even idealists who regard the external world as an independent reality are forced to this position. Consequently idealism, always implicitly or explicitly, turns around, a concept of reality in terms of an Absolute.

According to idealism the ideas are independent of the limitations and imperfections of empirical reality. Idealism grants primacy to spiritual representations. Apart from the self or mind there can be no world of objects. An object which is not object of some consciousness is not comprehensible. There is a general agreement among idealists that the world is not a vast machine. They assert that there is a unity and harmony in nature and the same cannot be adequately explained by the mechanical principles. Idealism forwards a teleological explanation of the universe. Teleology means the doctrine of final causes, the view that developments are due to the purpose or design that is served by them. The universe has meaning and purpose. This is supported by the inner harmony both in the universe and soul of man. Idealism emphasizes the position of man as the central figure in the scheme of things. Idealists generally agree that objects of nature are objects either of thought or of sensation or of both. Emphasis on mental or spiritual aspect of the world is also an important trait of idealism.

There are various forms of idealistic philosophy and three important forms are generally recognized: 1) Subjective idealism 2) Transcendental idealism 3) Objective or Absolute idealism.

Realism

Realism is a philosophical position which considers that the external world is real and exists independently. It is a common sense view and refers to the instinctive belief of man. The external world is directly revealed to us by means of our senses. In epistemology, realism holds that in the process of knowledge, objects known remain independent of the existence and influence of the knower. The qualities of the objects exist in the objects themselves and not the creation of the knower. Our knowledge of objects is direct and perceptual. Realists believe that the same object cannot appear differently to different persons. Objects are universal and exist independently of human subjectivity.

According to realism concepts are real things. Realism is the view which maintains that corresponding to every concept, there is a real substance.
EPISTEMOLOGY

The term epistemology is derived from the two Greek words ‘episteme’ and ‘logos’. Episteme means ‘knowledge’ and logos mean ‘study of’. Thus epistemology literally means the study of knowledge. As epistemology is concerned with the problem of knowledge it can also be termed as the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature, source, limitations, and validity of knowledge. The term epistemology identifies the philosophical activity directed toward questions about how and what a knower knows. Epistemology is intimately involved in the development and analysis of criteria. Criteria are the standards by which something is measures or judged. To establish a basis for comparing and evaluating judgments about the accuracy or extent of human knowledge, the philosopher must analyze the various criteria used in the process of knowing. The nature of what can know and the process of knowing can be fruitfully discussed only if we can establish precise criteria. Although we use words such as “belief” and “knowledge” synonymously, there is a quite difference in their proper use. When we say we know something, we are claiming a greater degree of certainty for that claim than we would for a mere belief about it. Yet how do we get a sense of this certainty in order to be sure when we should use the word “know”, as opposed to the word “belief”. Another issue that epistemology deal with is the nature of truth. What exactly makes a claim true? Are there degrees of truthfulness? Is truthfulness somehow associated with certainty? If so how?

Although these questions appear to be quite esoteric and of little use in our day-today lives, nothing could be further from the case. Knowledge is not a problem since we all feel that we know reality in the form of external objects. An ordinary man may feel that his knowledge is true and objective. Knowledge becomes a problem when verification in the actual practice arises. Perceptions are the starting point of knowledge. Whatever we perceive is called percepts. These percepts develop into concepts and concepts into ideas. What we call knowledge is not only cognition but involves other modes of consciousness. Knowledge involves relation of percepts with thought. There is a subjective as well as objective aspect in knowledge. Epistemology attempts to discuss all aspects of knowledge including the limits of knowing mind.

Knowledge is a relation between the knower and the known, the subject and the object. Knowledge is a relational phenomenon. Epistemology tries to answer two basic problems. The first one is about the origin or source of knowledge. The second problem is concerned with the truth and validity of knowledge. Rationalism and empiricism are the two different philosophical schools which engaged in the discussion of these issues.

Rationalism

Epistemological issues received attention of the philosophers from very early period in the history of Western philosophy. The early Greek thinkers were considered as rationalists. Rationalism is a very broad doctrine. In theory of knowledge, however, the word is usually used to designate the type of epistemological position of the so-called “rationalists” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Wolff are probably the best representatives of this standpoint.
Advocates of rationalism are intent on attaining knowledge that is absolute and certain. In their pursuit of knowledge they start with propositions that are self-evident. The basic axioms on which they build their system are derived from ideas that are claimed to be clear, distinct, and certain to the human mind. The human mind has the capacity to “know” these ideas, but human beings do not create them or learn them through experience. The ideas are somehow “there” as part of basic reality, and the human mind, because it partakes of this reality, thereby contains the ideas. It is in this sense that mind reasons. The rationalists argue that since the mind comprehends principles, the principles must therefore “exist” that is, they must be true and real. If principles do not exist, it is impossible for human beings to conceive them. Principles are a priori.

Rationalism maintains an epistemological theory according to which universality and necessity- the universal attributes of true knowledge- cannot be deduced from experience and its generalizations. They may be deduced only from the mind itself, either from concepts innate in the mind or from concepts existing only in the form of the predispositions of the mind. Experience exerts a certain stimulating influence upon their appearance, but the character of the absolute necessity is given to them by a priori judgments of the mind or a priori forms absolutely independent of experience. In this sense rationalism is opposed to empiricism.

Rationalism is widely manifested in various spheres of knowledge, where it means belief in reason, in the reality of the rational judgment, in the force of the argument. In this sense rationalism is opposed to irrationalism. In theology, rationalism is a trend, according to which only those dogmas of faith are acceptable which are considered to be in conformity with logic and sensible arguments.

It is maintained that the most perfect of knowing is the sort which is found in mathematical demonstration. Such demonstration consists in starting with premises which are self-evident, intuitively certain, are said to be clear and distinct, and deducing the consequences of these axioms or truths. By this method we can assure ourselves certainty in knowledge. The source of our first premises is the “natural light” of reason and our developed knowledge would have the validity characteristic of strict logical deduction. Just as this is true of mathematical knowledge, so can it be true of our knowledge of the world.

It was held that there are certain basic principles of the world which are recognized as true by the reason of men and from these we can acquire a rigorous deductive knowledge of the world. These first principles have their source somehow in the reason of man and are not derived from empirical experience. In fact, our empirical experience depends upon these principles.

**Empiricism**

In general, empiricism affirms that the source and validity of knowledge are to be found in the empirical aspects of experience. Empiricism holds that sense experience is the only source of knowledge and affirms that all knowledge is founded on experience and is obtained through experience. Since at least the time of Aristotle, there has been a strong epistemological tradition based solely on experience. Empiricists argue that it is unreasonable to set a goal of absolute and all-inclusive knowledge – especially when there is a close at hand the power to increase practical knowledge by
slower but dependable methods. Empiricists are content to build a system of knowledge that has a high probability of being true even though its absolute certainty cannot be guaranteed. Empiricists find that high probability is a stable and realistic foundation for the knowledge accessible to human beings.

John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume are some of the leading figures of modern empiricism. Empiricism deduces the general and necessary character of knowledge not from reason, but from experience. There is an exaggeration of the role of sense cognition in empiricism. Empiricists also underestimate the role of scientific abstractions and theories of knowledge. They also deny the active role and relative independence of thought. The reason of man is not provided with innate or a priori knowledge. In fact the mind of man is a tabula rasa (clean slate) upon which experience writes. Sensation is the beginning of all knowledge and all our ideas are ultimately reducible to sensory experience. Thus, the empiricist would hold that knowledge rather than being deductive is essentially inductive in its procedure. Sound knowledge is to be obtained only by generalizations from experience.

Experience consist of two types or manifolds of sensation- the inner and the outer. The former are “sensations” of a subjective character, such as desire, feeling, and thinking. The latter are our sensations of the external world, such as those of sight, smell, and taste. Those who insist that all knowledge can be reduced to sensory experience and who further insist that what cannot be traced to specific sense experiences is not true knowledge are called “sensationalists”, or “radical empiricists”.

ETHICS

The term ethics is derived from the Latin word ‘ethos’, which means ‘character’. In this way ethics is the science of character. We may define ethics as the normative science of the conduct of the human beings living in societies- a science which judges this conduct to be right or wrong, to be good or bad, or in similar way. This definition says, first of all, that ethics is a science. Science is a systematic and more or less complete body of knowledge about a particular set of related events or objects. The scientific knowledge differs from the ordinary, haphazard knowledge of the uneducated people in being arranged in a definite coherent system. A science also aims at providing as complete a knowledge of its subject-matter as it can. The sphere of science is limited to one set of facts or objects; no science deals with all the facts known about the universe.

Ethics is a normative science and that it is not a positive science. Positive sciences describe empirical facts or phenomena. Normative sciences do not deal directly with observed facts but which deal with the standards or rules or norms or criteria by which we judge certain objects. The normative sciences differ from the positive sciences in one more way; they do not merely describe the standards by which we judge; they are also concerned with the validity or truth of these standards. Ethics enquires why the rules or standards are valid or on what grounds we ought to observe them.

Ethics has been defined as the normative science of conduct, and conduct is a collective name for voluntary actions include all willed or volitional actions in which there is a conscious process of willing. Voluntary actions also include certain actions, where there may be no conscious process of willing at all, provided that the doer could
have prevented or changed the action by choosing to do so. The question for ethics is not whether an action was deliberately willed, but whether the doer could have prevented it by taking thought about it. If the doer could have prevented it, the action can certainly be judged to be a right or wrong action. Conduct may include inward activities like motives and desires as well as outward activities like speech and movements of the doer’s limbs, and so these also will fall within the sphere of ethics.

Our definition of ethics thus has limited the conduct with which we deal in ethics in two ways. We deal with human actions only. Again, the study of ethics is confined to the conduct of the human beings living in societies. Ethics is also called Moral Philosophy. The word moral is derived from the Latin root *mores* meaning conventions or practices. In this way ethics is the study of conventions or practices.

A systematic study of Ethics presupposes the understanding of the fundamental concepts of the subject. Good, Bad, Right, Wrong, Virtue, and Freedom of will, are some of the main concepts of ethics.

**Good and Bad**

Of the words used in moral judgment “good” and “bad” are probably the most common, but they are also the most troublesome. These words are used ambiguously in common speech. In fact the word “good” as commonly used merely indicates an attitude of the mind in favor of the object or event to which the term good is applied. A morally good conduct not merely as that towards which men feel a favorable attitude; it is in some sense conduct worthy of arousing such a favorable attitude or conduct that ought to arouse such an attitude. It is convenient in ethics to use the words good or bad of an action, when we are thinking of the action as leading to consequences which are good or bad. The whole range of the meanings of the “good” will have to be considered when we come to those ethical theories which regard the “goodness” or “rightness” of an action depending upon its power of producing good results. Moral good is that which satisfies moral will. In this way moral good is different from economic, social, biological, psychological, or other kinds of good. It is possible to conceive a hierarchy of goods.

The highest in the hierarchy is the ultimate good. It is an end in itself while the other ends are motivated means to it. It is the ultimate objective. It is the final aim.

**Right and Wrong**

The English word “Right” is derived from the Latin word “rectus” Meaning according to law. Thus one’s obeying ethical laws is normally right and wrong includes all those actions which violate ethical laws. A right action is in some way fitting to the circumstance. The word right sometimes suggests that the action referred to is in some way obligatory. The judgment of duty may sometimes very different from the judgment of goodness. It may be suggested that what distinguishes an action which ought to do from one that is merely right, is that, when we ought to do an action, the action is not merely right but there are motives and inclinations in the mind of the doer which would hinder his doing it.

Judgments of right and wrong will correspond to the nature of good. Thus good and bad as defined by the hedonist will not be the same when defined by the rationalist. Here it may be questioned that in practical life the judgment of duty or non-duty will become a problem of a difficult nature. But the propriety or rightness of good as well as goodness itself is determined by the ultimate good. Thus, ethics examines what the ultimate good can be.
Man is a social being. The interests of the society and the individual are interdependent. Thus, in the ultimate good, the interests of society are mixed with the interests of the individual. In this ultimate good lies the benefit, both of the society and of the individual. Society is an organization of social relations. Social relations are founded in the mutual duties and corresponding rights of the individuals. Thus, finally the organization or the structure of society depends upon the organization of the duties of the various members of society.

Virtue

The word virtue is used for excellence of any kind. The excellence referred to is an excellence belonging to a man. So the virtues may be described as forms of human excellence. In ethics, ‘virtue’ is used with two somewhat different meanings. Firstly, virtue is considered as a quality of character. That is virtue as disposition to do what is right in a particular direction. Secondly, virtue is considered as a habit of action corresponding to the quality of character or disposition. We may refer to the honesty of a man, or to the honesty of his dealings equally as virtues.

Laird in his book “A Study in Moral Theory” has divided virtues into three classes. Firstly, there are virtues of the righteous quality. A virtue of this kind consists in the habit of performing a duty of a particular kind and in the quality of character which leads to this kind of action. The only distinction that can be made between virtuous conduct of this kind and right conduct is that the term ‘virtuous conduct’ emphasizes the habitual performance of what is right. There are virtues, secondly, of the requisite quality. These are necessary to a virtuous character, but are also found in bad characters, and indeed may tend to increase the wickedness of the bad. Such virtues include prudence and perseverance. There are virtues, thirdly, of the generous quality. These are chiefly of an emotional kind, and they add something not strictly definable, but of the nature of beauty or of moral intrinsic value, to actions that are in other respects right. They sometimes even give a strange quality of nobility to conduct that is morally wrong. Of the three classes, virtues of the righteous quality are the most important in the moral life.

Is it possible to do more than one’s duty? Are there good actions which cannot be called obligatory, but which add to the moral goodness of the agent? Common opinion makes such a distinction and holds that a man’s duty consists of obvious obligations like the performance of his daily work, the care of his family, and common kindness to those around him. If, however, a man does some unexpected or outstanding act of self-sacrifice then this is described as more than his duty; it is often called “virtue”, a special use of a term which has been used in as great a variety of meanings as “duty” itself. A man who pays his taxes regularly to the government is merely doing his duty; a man who makes a gift of his property to the government is doing more than his duty, and so giving evidence of his “virtue”.

The Freedom of the Will

The problem of free will, that is whether the human will is free to act and not to act, or whether it is determined, is among the oldest of moral questions. It would be absurd to tell anyone that he ought to do a certain action at a particular moment when previous events have already made it inevitable that he is to do another action at this moment. While moralists and guardians of law pleaded in favor of free will, the
behavioral scientists held that free will is impossible due to compelling scientific reasons. The interest in the problem is motivated by the fact that belief in free will is inconsistent with scientific principles and denial of free will jeopardizes morality and jurisprudence. Thus there are two schools of thought one holding that all our actions are determined and the other that the human will is free in making choices between alternative actions. On the basis of our ordinary experience we know that freedom means the freedom of doing and not doing an act. But the problem arises when it is uncritically accepted that man has the power of free choice. The determinists do not accept the concept of free choice. There have been two broad contexts within which the denial of free will has been viewed. These are the theological and scientific contexts.

The concept of free will is indispensable in ethics. Morality is impossible unless voluntary actions are presumed to be an exception to the principle that everything is cost. The repentance for an act would be meaningful only if freedom is a reality. The feeling of repentance is a proof that the deed could be avoided. The concepts of reward and punishment also presuppose the freedom of will. The problem of moral freedom is inseparably associated with the ideas of duty, obligation, law, guilt and remorse, praise and blame etc.

LOGIC

The word “Logic” is derived from the Greek adjective “Logike” corresponding to the Greek noun “Logos”, which means either “thought” or “word” as expression of thought. Hence etymologically Logic is the science of thought as expressed in language. Thinking is the act of the mind by means of which knowledge is obtained. For the purposes of simpler a general description, however, the simpler word ‘reasoning may be substituted for ‘thought’, and it may be said that Logic is concerned with Reasoning as expressed in language and with certain subsidiary processes. The study of logic is a study of the rules of reasoning by which people arrive at conclusions. Logic is defined popularly as the science of reasoning, but that is not entirely accurate. The term “reasoning” merely identifies the practice of drawing conclusions from premises. There are two distinctive process of reasoning – psychological and logical. The psychological process of drawing conclusions from premises is called inference. The psychological process is difficult to describe, but we know that human beings do it all the time; it is somehow related to the activities of the human brain and nervous system. Logical reasoning, in contrast, takes place only when evidence is stated in the form of propositions and those propositions are formally related as premises and conclusion. Logicians are interested in the relationships among propositions and in the logical order of the argument. They are concerned with the formal correctness of the completed structure of the argument. Logic is the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish good (correct) from bad (incorrect) arguments. It is their intention to be formal and objective.

Terms and Propositions

There are three process of thinking: conception, judgment, and reasoning. The process of forming a mental image of an object is called a concept. When we see an elephant we form an idea of elephant in our mind. The judgment is the process of comparing concepts or ideas. By judgment a relation between things is established. Here the mind affirms or denies something of something else. If we have an idea of ‘man’ and idea of ‘mortality’ our mind tries to connect them together and thus we have
the judgment, “Man is mortal”. Reasoning or inference is a process of passing from certain known judgments to a new judgment. Here the mind draws a new truth from certain given truths. From the two known judgments “All men are mortal”, and “Socrates is a man”, we draw a conclusion that “Socrates is mortal”. These three operations of human mind when expressed in language are known as Term, Proposition, and Argument respectively. That is the term is the verbal expression of a concept. The proposition is the statement of relation between terms. There are two types of propositions- categorical and conditional. A categorical proposition states something categorically. A conditional proposition states something conditionally. An argument is a group of propositions in which one proposition is inferred on the basis of other propositions. The inferred proposition is called the conclusion of the argument and those propositions which form the basis of conclusion are the premises.

**Induction and Deduction**

Logical reasoning is one of the most important areas of contemporary philosophical studies. The traditional way of classifying logical arguments is to designate them either inductive or deductive. Different criteria are employed in evaluating each type.

Induction refers to the process of drawing conclusions from specific evidence. It is a process of reasoning in which conclusions are typically drawn from the observation of particular cases.

The claim of induction is that we can experience directly only what is concrete and particular. Particulars are the individual units of perception or experience rather than the general or universal aspects. When we generalize about these particulars, we go beyond the immediate experience of those particulars. Consequently, a conclusion reached through the inductive process is never absolutely certain. In induction, reasoning proceeds to a conclusion that is not confined to the scope of the premises but is somehow additional to, or beyond, them. Inductive logical procedure is tightly linked to the concept of probability. The conclusion is only probable. There is the possibility of discovering new evidence. The conclusion is true as long as the premises are factual. Inductive arguments are characterized as strong or weak. The claim is that their premises provide some evidence for their conclusion. Though this method of reasoning has been identified with scientific activity, the scientific method involves much more than the strict application of inductive logic. One important advantage of inductive thinking is that it helps human beings to frame their expectations of the future on the basis of what they know about the past and present.

The basic principles of deductive logic are well established. The defining characteristic of a valid deduction is its certainty. If the conclusion is necessary- that is, if it is forced by the premises- the argument is certain. A deductive argument involves the claim that its premises provide all the evidence required for a conclusion. Additional evidence does not affect the credibility of a valid deductive conclusion. A deductive system of argumentation is a closed system; it cannot advance beyond the scope of its premises. Deductive arguments are typically analytic; that is they analyze, or separate out, something that has already been included in the premises, and then they state in the conclusion. The deductive arguments are characterized as valid and invalid. A valid argument is one that has the property of being legitimately derived from premises by prescribed logical deduction. To be valid, the argument must-
without exception—follow the established rules. The task of deductive logic is to clarify the nature of the relationship that holds between premises and conclusion in valid arguments and to propose techniques for discriminating valid from invalid arguments.

**Syllogism**

One pattern of deductive argument is found in the “syllogism”. A syllogism is a precise and standardized form of argument. Every syllogism consists of three terms which arranged in pairs, from three propositions of the subject-predicate structure: two premises and a conclusion. The main purpose of syllogism is to ascertain the conditions under which a definite conclusion follows or does not follow from given premises. Two types of syllogisms may be introduced – categorical and conditional.

A categorical syllogism consists of categorical propositions. A categorical proposition is a statement that consists of only two terms and relates a class of things (called the subject) to another class of things (called predicate). In a categorical syllogism, the three propositions together supply exactly three terms, each of which appears twice and is used in the same sense throughout in the argument. An example is as follows:

All fire fighters are brave.
Max is a fire fighter.
Therefore Max is brave.

Another type of syllogism is hypothetical syllogism, which exhibits a somewhat different form. The hypothetical syllogism is expressed conditionally using if-then propositions in the premises:

If a person is a fire fighter, then he or she is brave.
Max is a fire fighter.
Therefore, Max is brave.

**Reference Books:**

5. S. P. Guptha – **Logic and Scientific Method**

**Questions**

A-(1 weightage.)

1. Define ethics.

   **Answer:** The term ethics is derived from the Latin word ethos, which means character. In this way ethics is the science of character. We may define ethics as the normative science of the conduct of the human beings living in societies—a science which judges this conduct to be right or wrong, to be good or bad, or in similar way.
2. Define logic.
Answer: Logic is the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish good (correct) from bad (incorrect) arguments. It is their intention to be formal and objective.

B- (2 weightages.)

1. Write an account of the functions of philosophy.
Answer: Philosophy undertakes a critical examination of the grounds on which beliefs are held. This is one function of philosophy. Any thinking that concerns the truth of a philosophical belief is philosophical thinking. It may take the form of accepting a belief as true and investigating its logical connections with other beliefs. Or it may take the form of questioning the belief and attempting to determine whether it is based on good reasons.

The other function of philosophy is to frame a picture of the whole universe, to establish a complete world view. This function distinguishes philosophy from the science. While the science is a systematic body of knowledge about a particular branch of the universe philosophy aims at a comprehensive knowledge. Philosophy is defined as the effort to comprehend the universe as a whole, not a particular department of it.

The function of philosophy is to understand the world. Philosophy helps us to realize that there are very important questions which science cannot answer, and that scientific knowledge is not sufficient.

2. Give a note on idealism.
Answer: Idealism considers reality as ultimately spiritual. According to idealism the universe as a whole including physical nature is ultimately mental or spiritual. Thus materialism and idealism can be seen as two rival trends in philosophy. The chief difference between them consists in the primacy they are attributing either to matter or to idea (spirit).

According to idealism the ideas are independent of the limitations and imperfections of empirical reality. Apart from the self or mind there can be no world of objects. An object which is not object of some consciousness is not comprehensible. They assert that there is a unity and harmony in nature. Idealism forwards a teleological explanation of the universe. The universe has meaning and purpose. This is supported by the inner harmony both in the universe and soul of man. Idealism emphasizes the position of man as the central figure in the scheme of things. Emphasis on mental or spiritual aspect of the world is also an important trait of idealism.

There are various forms of idealistic philosophy and three important forms are generally recognized: 1) Subjective idealism 2) Transcendental idealism 3) Objective or Absolute idealism.
UNIT - III

INDIAN THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

Methodologies of Indian knowledge systems; what is knowledge; concepts of knowledge in the Indian tradition: origin and development of Indian philosophical systems.

Epistemology or Indian theories of knowledge (Pramāṇa Sāstra)

The Indian epistemologies (Theory of Knowledge) are causal theories. The distinction, common in Western thought, between causal question and the question of justification, was not made by the Indian theories. True knowledge is said to be not only what corresponds to its object, but also is produced in the right way.

The methods that the theorist generally applies are

1. Appeal to ordinary linguistic usage (Lokavyavahara)
2. Consider the evidence of experience-ordinary as well as not-so-ordinary
3. Consider the evidence of one’s own introspection into one’s cognitive life.

The problem of knowledge has long been engaged the attention of thinkers all over the world. What is the nature of knowledge? What are the means of acquiring it? What is the criterion of the truth of knowledge? What is theory of error? These are some of the issues which comprise the subject matter of the epistemological queries that lead to the formation of a theory of knowledge.

What is knowledge?

Various words like ‘cit’, ‘jnana’ etc are rendered in English as knowledge. But such a loose translation would defeat all intent and purpose. ‘Cit’ may be translated as consciousness and ‘jnana’ as cognition. Cognition could be either true ‘prama’ or false ‘aprama’. Only a true cognition, in the strict sense, could be termed as knowledge. Hence prama or pramajnana should be the terms, proper as knowledge instead of the world ‘jnana’. If prama is knowledge that is true, then aprama is knowledge that is false. According to the Western thinkers, knowledge, if it is knowledge in always true. One needs not prefix ‘true’ to knowledge just as one needs not prefix ‘sweet’ to sugar for sugar is always sweet. Wrong knowledge according to Western thinkers, is not knowledge that is wrong, but it is a case of no-knowledge.

Jnana or cognition is of two types anubhava (prestational knowledge) and smriti (memory). Both anubhava and smriti can have valid or invalid forms.

Anubhava or presentational knowledge.

Anubhava is always new knowledge and not the simple repetition of the past one. Anubhava includes not only pratyaksanubhava (mediate) but also paroksanubhava (immediate). All jnanas different from smriti belongs to anubhava.

Smriti (memory)

The knowledge through the past memory is called smriti which is recollected knowledge based on previous experience. It originates only through samskara.
Anubhava (presentational knowledge) is classified into two prama and aparma i.e. those that are true and those that are not true. Smriti (memory) is also classified into two yatharthta (real) and ayatharthta (unreal). The understanding of the specialty of a thing as the quality which is immanent in that particular object is called yatharthta (real). The understanding of the specialty of a thing which is not actually immanent in that object leads into ayatharthta (unreal).

Prama or valid knowledge is defined as presentational knowledge or yatharthanubhava. Four factors are involved in this. The knower or the subject, the known or the object, the method by which the knower knows the known, and the resultant knowledge. In western epistemology it is usual to distinguish between the subject, the object and the resultant knowledge. In Indian thought there is, in addition, what is usually known as the method of knowledge. These four, subject-pramata, object-prameya, method pramana and the resulting knowledge prama, mutually constitute the whole truth. Valid knowledge is not possible in the absence of any one of these. Such a four-fold division becomes easy to understand when we examine different ways of acquiring knowledge.

What are the means of acquiring knowledge?

Every system of Indian philosophy defended a list of types of true cognition. The Sanskrit word for true cognition is prama. Pramana means “that by which true cognition is arrived at (Pramiyateaena). It may be taken then to be a cause of, or a means for, achieving true cognition. A classification of true cognition is also a classification of the causes of true cognition (pramana) – perception, inference, sabda, comparison, postulation and negation.

Following is the list of Pramanas, accepted by different systems of philosophy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>Pramanas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carvaka</td>
<td>Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>Perception, Inference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisesika</td>
<td>Perception, Inference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samkhya</td>
<td>Perception, Inference, Sabda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyāya</td>
<td>Perception, Inference, comparison, Sabda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vedanta</td>
<td>Perception, Inference, Comparisons Sabda, Postuation, Negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhātt Mimamsa</td>
<td>Perception, Inference, Sabda, Companion, Postuation, Negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabhakara Mimamsa</td>
<td>Perception, Inference, Sabda, companion, Postuation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perception is the means of valid knowledge accepted by one and all. Excepting Carvaka, Inference is accepted by all Sabda (Verbal testimony) is accepted) as a separate means of knowledge by all except Carvaka, Buddhism and Vaisesika. Adding to these three, Samkhya do not accept Upamana as an independent means of knowledge. Vedanta and Mimamsa accept postulation. Negation is accepted by Vedanta and Bhatta school.

There is no agreement among the different school of Indian philosophy about the number of pramanas.
Perception (Pratyaksa)

There are two types of definition of perception in Indian philosophy. 1) The definition given in terms of how perceptual cognition is caused and 2) the definitions that are in terms of the nature of cognition.

In terms of how cognition is caused, the most common definition is that of the Nyaya. Perceptual cognition is that cognition that is caused by the contact of the sense organs with their respective objects Indriyartha Sannikarsa. The Nyaya adds that for the cognition to arise, two more contacts are needed. Namely contact of the mind (manas) with the sense and contact of the self with the mind. Definitions that appeal to the nature of cognitions are of three kinds.

1. Kalpana podham
2. Visadam Pratyaksam
3. Aparoksa

Kalpana Podham

According to Dignaga (the Buddhist logician) “Perception is a cognition which is free from any concept”. Dignaga had given a list of conceptual constructions (Kalpana), which should be excluded from perception. These are proper names, class names, qualities, motions (verbal names) substances-names. These are all “mere names”. Perception is reduced to the pure sensation, whose object is the unique, ineffable nature of an instantaneous event.

Visadam Pratyaksam

The second way of defining perception in terms of its cognitive features is to be found in the Jain epistemology. The Jainas defines perception in terms of its vividness (visadam pratyaksam) perception manifests its object with clarity and distinction and manifests its object with clarity and distinction and manifests it as a substance and also in its modes. It is also conceptual in as much as it manifests universal features of objects.

Aparoksa

The third way of defining perception without bringing in how it is caused is in terms of immediacy. Perceptuality is immediacy (aparoksa). What is immediately apprehended is consciousness. Consciousness as such is perceptual. This is the view of the Advaita Vedanta.

Perception is divided by the Naiyayika into two broad fields- ordinary laukika and the extra ordinary alaukika.

Ordinary perception

Ordinary perception is that where the normal sense-object contract persists. The usual channels of sense-perception, such as the sense-organs of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, are all acknowledged as means of sensations. However, ordinary perceptions are viewed from two different angles. These are the indeterminate, Nirvikalpa and the determinate, savikalpa. This division is based on the type of the resultant knowledge of the sense-object contact. Almost all schools of Indian thought accept this division between indeterminate and determinate perceptions.
Extra ordinary perception

Perception that are caused by modes of contract, that are not one of the types enumerated under sensory perceptions, Nyaya system recognizes three kinds of extra ordinary perception Samanya laksana, Jnana Laksana, and yogaja perception.

Inference or Anumana

The Sanskrit term for it is, ‘anumana’. Etymologically meaning a cognition that follows upon some other cognition or cognitions(anu-after, mana-cognition). This is the case when upon seeing smoke on the Yonderhill, I infer that the hill must have fire. Leaving aside the materialist Lokayatas, all Indian philosophers recognize inference as a valid means of knowing. Inference is generally regarded as of two kinds-Svartha and parartha according as it is meant for oneself or for others. Nyaya recognizes three kinds of inference-purvavat, shesaavat and Samanyatodrsta. The first two are based on causation and last one on mere co-existences.

Purvavat:- When we infer the unperceived effect from a perceived cause we have purvavat inference, eg. when we infer future rain from dark clouds in the sky.

Sesavat:- When we infer the unperceived cause from a perceived effect we have sesavat inferences eg. When we infer past rain from the swift muddy flooded water of a river.

Samanyato drsta:- Where inference is based not on causation but on uniformity of co-existence, it is called samanyato drsta eg when we infer cloven hoofs of an animal by its horns.

Sabda or Verbal Testimony

Sabda is defined as the statement of a trust worthy person and consist in understanding its meaning. There are two ways of classifying sabda, which give us drstarth and adrstarth. That relating to perceptible objects and that relating to imperceptible objects.

Four conditions of an intelligible sentence are

1. Akanksa or mutual need of the words of a sentence for expressing a complete sense.
2. Yogyata or the mutual fitness of the words.
3. Sannidhi or the proximity between the words of a sentence.
4. Tatparya or the meaning intended to be conveyed by a sentence.

Leaving aside the Lokayatas, the Buddhists, and the Vaisesikas, all other schools of Indian philosophy recognize that utterances of sentences by competent speakers are a major source of our knowledge, and a pramana. Thus a large part of what we know about the world is derived from such utterances. Our knowledge of what we ought or ought not to do, and also of supersensible realities, is derived from the scriptural texts.

Upamana or Comparison

A fourth kind of true cognition is upamana or comparison(samjna samjnī sambandha jnana. It has been defined as the knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation. It is produced by the knowledge of resemblance or similarity. Let
us suppose a person wants to know what is meant by the word ‘gavaya’. She learns, from another, that a gavaya resembles a cow. Now an another occasion she sees an animal resembling a cow and recalls the instruction ‘gavaya’. She thus is able to determine a meaning relation between a word and a thing. It is the knowledge of similarity—at first verbal, then perceptual and finally memory—which is the cognition and so is the upamana as a a pramana.

**Nonperception (anupalabdhi)**

Anupalabdhi or non perception is regarded by the Vedantins to be the way we apprehend an absence. The Nyaya view is that the same sense organ, which perceives the presence of a colour in a thing also perceives the absence of another colour in that thing. Kumarila admits non-perception as an independent source of knowledge. Non-perception is a means of knowledge with reference to the object negated. We perceive the vacant space and think of the absence of the jar.

**Postulation (Arthapatti)**

It is presumption or postulation it is the assumption of an unperceived fact in order to reconcile two apparently in consist and perceived fact. If a meaning ‘X’ is not otherwise possible, or cannot be possible save under the assumption of ‘Y’, then given X, Y may be truly asserted(i.e.cognized). The standard example given by the Vedantins run like this. Suppose that Devadatta is day by day growing fat, but never eats during the day. These two conditions can both be true only if we postulate that Devadatta eats at night.

The Naiyayika reduces presumption to inference. The Mimamsaka and Vedantins accept it as an independent pramana.

In perception, inference upamana testimony, postulation and Non-perception the subject, the object and the resultant knowledge are the invariable factors while the method employed is the variable. Thus the operative cause of knowledge is pramana, the method.

**What is the criterion of the truth of knowledge? (Pramanya)**

What is meant by pramanya? Or the property of being a true cognition. Pramanya means truth of knowledge. The question is Is truth(Pramajana) intrinsic(svatah) to a cognition or is it extrinsic(paratah)to it. Svatah literally means “from within” and Paratah “from without”. If the originating conditions of truth is precisely the same as the originating conditions of knowledge and if the apprehending conditions of truth and knowledge are same, then we can say that the truth is intrinsic. It is intrinsic with regard to the origin and intrinsic with regard to the apprehension. If the generating conditions of the truth of knowledge is more than the generating conditions of knowledge and the apprehension of knowledge does not always amount to the apprehension of truth, then we can say that the truth is extrinsic to the knowledge.

Consider a cognition K. Assuming K to be true, we can ask 1) Do the very same causal conditions that give rise to K also give rise to K’s truth (which is a property of K)? If they do, then truth is intrinsic(Svatah) with regard to origin, to K. If besides the causal conditions that prude K, some additional causal factor is needed to make K true, then truth is, with regard to origin, extrinsic(paratah) to K.
What is pramanya? Or the property of being a true cognition? There are three types of views on this question in Indian Philosophy.

1. Tatvatitatprakaraka
2. Saphalapravritjanakatva
3. Abadhittva

The first of these takes pramanya to mean yatharthya (the property of being like the object). The knowledge of that as that. It is knowledge that does not deviate from its object. According to the Naiyayikas truth is the cognition of the object after the manner of the object (tatvatitatprakaraka).

The second type of definition is advocated by the Buddhist. Truth is the property of causing successful practical response. A cognition on the Buddhist view is true if and only if the practical response it generates leads to success.

Third type of account of truth is given by the Advaita Vedantins. Advaita defines truth negatively as “Non-contradictedness”. Non-contradictedness (abadhitatva) is the criterion of truth. For the Vedantin, therefore, there is no generalized positive criterion of truth. The only workable definition is negative. A cognition is true if and only if it is not contradicted by subsequent experience. “That which, in principle cannot be contradicted by any experience”. On this theory, this strong requirement is satisfied only by knowledge of pure consciousness to contradict, or to negate it is to affirm it and so makes it incoherent.

Theories of false cognition (Khyativada)

Every school of Indian philosophy developed its own theory of error (known on khyativada) made to fit its epistemology and metaphysics. Aprama or theory of error was always an important part of a system’s theory of knowledge. The word ‘khyati’ literally mean ‘knowledge’ or apprehension. Though the word ‘khyati’ meant ‘knowledge’ later on it began to indicate those cases where knowledge become erroneous.

There are mainly three theories of false cognition or khyativada based on the nature of the content of error in Indian philosophy. They are Satkhyati, asatkhyati and anirvachaniyakhyati.

Satkhyati

Satkhyati theories are those which hold that the content of error in some how real. In the case of rope snake illusion, the snake which is the contact of error is not unreal.

Asatkhyati

Asatkhyati theories are of the opinion that the content of error is unreal. That which is being perceived, the illusory snake, is really non existent.

Anirvavaniyakhyati

For Anirvacaniyakhyati the content of error is indefinable. The snake is neither existent, since it is negated by knowledge of the rope, nor non existent since it is perceptually presented and so is indescribable as being either.
Satkhyati includes six theories they are:
1. Akhyati of Prabhakara Mimamsa and earlier Samkhya
2. Yatharthakhyati of Ramanuja
3. Viparitakhyati of Bhatta a Mimamsa
4. Anyathakhyati of Nyaya
5. Sadasatkhyati of later Samkha and Jainism
6. Atmakhyati of yogacara Buddhism.

Astkhyati includes two theories they are:
1. Asatkhyati of Madhyamika Buddhism
2. Abhinava anyatakhyati of Madhva

Anirvachaniyakhati is held only by one school and that is Advaita of Samkara.

Objectives
- To introduce the students to the nature and division of cognition or knowledge
- To acquaint the students to the concepts of Pramana.
- To acquaint the students to some of the theories of error in Indian philosophy.

Summary
The problem of knowledge (Jnana) has long been engaged the attention of thinkers all over the world. What is knowledge? What are the means of acquiring it? What is the criterion of the truth of knowledge? What is theory of error or khyativada? These are some of the issues which comprise the subject matter of epistemology. Cognitions are classified by Indian philosophies into prama and aprama. Pramana means the source of true cognition—Perception, inference sabda, comparison, postulation and negation. There is no agreement among the different school of Indian philosophy about the number of pramanas. Pramanya means truth of knowledge. Are truth and fabity intrinsic or extrinsic to knowledge? Every school of Indian philosophy developed its own theory of error known as khyativada made to fit its epistemology and metaphysics. There are mainly three theories of false cognition on the nature of the content of error. They are satkhyati, Asatkhyati and anirvachaniyalhati.

Glossary
1. Prama - Valid Knowledge
2. Aprama - Invalid knowledge
3. Pramanya - Validity
4. Pramana - Valid means
5. Pratyksa - perception
6. Khyativada - Theory of error
7. Svatah - from within
8. Paratah - from without
9. Smrity - memory
10. Epistemology - Theory of knowledge
A-Short Answer Questions (1weightage)

Define Perception

According to Nyaya system perceptual cognition is that cognition that is caused by the contact of the sense organs with their respective objects, which is unerring Indriyarthasannikarsa.

Define Upamana

It has been defined as the knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation which arises through similarity or resemblance(Samjna Samjni Sambandhajnana).

B-Short Answer Question (2weightage)

Explain Pramanya

Pramanya means truth of knowledge. The question is is truth intrinsic(svatah) to cognition or is it extrinsic(Paratah) svatah literally means from within and Paratah “from without”. If the originating conditions of truth is precisely the same as the originating conditions of knowledge and if the apprehending conditions of truth and knowledge are same then we can say that the truth in intrinsic. It is intrinsic with regard to the origin and intrinsic with regard to the apprehension. If the general conditions of the truth of knowledge is more than the generating conditions of knowledge and the apprehension of knowledge does not always amount to the apprehension of truth, then we can say that the truth is extrinsic to the knowledge. There are three types of views on this question in Indian Philosophy.

1. Tatvatitatprakaraka
2. Saphalapravrtijanakatva
3. Abadhittva

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UNIT IV

WESTERN THEORIES OF TRUTH

Correspondence theory, Coherence theory, and Pragmatic theory

About Truth in Philosophy

In philosophy truth is a concept. It treats both the meaning of the word true and the criteria by which we judge the truth or falsity in spoken and written statements. For thousands of years, Philosophers have attempted to answer the question what is truth. Philosophers proposed three main theories regarding the concept of truth. They are the correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic.

One of the earliest versions of the correspondence theory was put forward in the 4th century by the Greek philosopher Plato. He says that the meaning of knowledge and how it is acquired. Plato distinguished between true belief and false belief. He proposed a theory based on intuitive recognition that true statements correspond to the facts i.e., agree with reality—while false statements do not—recognized this theory as unsatisfactory because it did not allow for false belief. Both Plato and Russell reasoned that if a belief is false because there is no fact to which it corresponds, it would then be a belief about nothing and so not a belief at all reality? The 20th-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein says that the parts of a sentence relate to the objects they describe in much the same way that the parts of a picture relate to the objects pictured. Some pragmatists have gone so far as to question the usefulness of the idea of truth, arguing that in evaluating our beliefs we should rather pay attention to the consequences that our beliefs may have. However, critics of the pragmatic theory are not concerned that we would have no knowledge because we do not know which set of beliefs will ultimately be agreed upon; nor are there sets of beliefs that are useful in every context. In the coherence theory, they concern the meaning of knowledge. Coherence theorists have claimed that a set of beliefs is true if the beliefs are comprehensive i.e., they cover everything and do not contradict each other.

Correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic are perhaps the most popular notions of truth in modern day philosophy. All have deep historical roots as conceptions of truth. Theories of truth investigate truth as a property of one’s thoughts and speech. We attribute truth and falsity to a wide variety of so-called truth-bearers: linguistic items (sentences, utterances, statements, and assertions), abstract items (propositions), and mental items (judgments and beliefs). What is the property we are attributing when we call a truth-bearer true? The question is crucial because of truth’s involvement in central philosophical claims: For example, it is often said that truth is the aim of science that the meaning of a sentence is given by the conditions under which it is true, that logical validity’s the preservation of truth, or that ethical statements are neither true nor false. A proper understanding of truth promises to illuminate fundamental issues in metaphysics, the philosophy of language, logic, and ethics. The two traditional theories of truth are the correspondence theory and the coherence theory. Further theories of truth have emerged since the last part of the nineteenth century, most notably the pragmatic theory, the identity theory, and the semantic theory.

1. The correspondence theory of truth

The correspondence notion of truth is commonly viewed as the traditional and common sense understanding of truth. This characterization of reality as being both understandable and rational is generally held to be a key feature of correspondence. If our beliefs need to square with reality and also not be self-contradictory, then, because we experience one reality, this
implies that only one truth exists. Further, it implies that whether viewed from a religious or scientific perspective, truth needs to be one and the same. The other common sense aspect of the correspondence notion is that truth about nature is knowable.

According to the correspondence theory truth consists in correspondence to the facts. A truth-bearer (e.g. snow is white) is true if and only if it corresponds to a fact (that snow is white). Broadly speaking, truth is a relational property between truth-bearers on the one side and the world on the other.

Correspondence theory of truth can be traced in Plato and Aristotle in the third and fourth centuries B.C. Plato believed that reality comes from the mind of God and as such is both rational and understandable, assuming that we are clever enough. Aristotle emphasized the importance of observation to our comprehension of natural phenomena and provided a definition of correspondence that holds that a true statement or proposition reflects reality itself.

Echoes of the Platonic-Aristotelian account are present in the Stoics and medieval philosophers (e.g., St.Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, and Jean Buridan), and many modern philosophers from Rene Descartes onward endorse the correspondence theory of truth. René Descartes (1596–1650) says that the word truth in the strict sense denotes the conformity of thought with its object. He offered clear and distinct perception as a criterion of truth. Spinoza (1632–1677) expressly applied true to ideas in his work called Ethics. A true idea must agree with its object. The axiom is used to show that reason regards things as necessary.

Philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also accepted the correspondence definition of truth, but they differed from their ancient and medieval predecessors in emphasizing that the definition has no utility as a criterion of truth, that is, as a means to judge whether given propositions are. John Locke (1632–1704) endorsed the Platonic-Aristotelian view that true applies strictly to truth bearers of subject-predicate form to propositions, in particular. He did not formulate a correspondence definition of true proposition. Instead, he offered an account of the conditions in which truth is ascribed to ideas.

David Hume (1711–1776) follows Locke in his account of the kinds of truth in the Treatise: Truth is of two kinds, consisting either in the discovery of the proportions of ideas, considered as such, or in the conformity of our ideas of objects to their real existence. The second kind of truth, concerning matters of fact, echoes Locke's account of the ascription of truth to my own ideas and defines truth for matters of fact as conformity to the real existence of objects. Hume endorses a correspondence theory only for matters of fact, not for matters of reason. In the Critique of Pure Reason, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) defined truth as correspondence. The nominal definition of truth is the agreement of cognition with its object, is here granted and presupposed. However, Kant denied that there is a universal material criterion of truth and observed that a universal formal criterion of truth, being nothing but logic, is sufficient only for consistency. Hegel (1770–1831) also accepted a correspondence definition of truth in his Science of Logic: Objective truth is no doubt the Idea itself as the reality that corresponds to the notion.

The correspondence theory was revived at the beginning of the twentieth century by the founders of analytic philosophy, G. E. Moore (1873–1958) and Russell, in reaction to James and Bradley. The new correspondence theories addressed the worries of idealists and pragmatists about just what the correspondence relation is. According to, G. E.Moore, to say of a given belief that it is true is to say that there is in the Universe a fact to which it corresponds. The correspondence theory is the most natural account of truth. It seems that no one need deny that a true belief corresponds to how things are. Bertrand Russell attempts to shed light on the correspondence relation by arguing for a structural isomorphism between beliefs and facts. Beliefs and facts are structured complexes, and when a belief-complex is suitably congruent with a fact-complex, the belief is true. According to Russell, a belief is true when there is a
corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact. The British ordinary language philosopher John Austin (1911–1960) proposed a correspondence theory in his article *Truth* (1950). His theory takes statements as truth bearers and states of affairs as truth makers. It defines correspondence as a correlation that relies on conventions of two kinds: demonstrative conventions relating token states of affairs to statements, and descriptive conventions relating types of states of affairs to sentence types expressing those statements. A statement is true when the state of affairs to which it is correlated by demonstrative conventions is of a type with which the sentence used in making the statement is correlated by descriptive conventions.

### 2 The Coherence Theory of Truth

According to the coherence theory of truth, a proposition is true if and only if it coheres with the set of beliefs that a person holds. This theory states that truth is based on what the individual believes. However, this is different for everybody, in that our beliefs are based on our past experience that others don’t experience.

According to this theory, there can be more than one belief as long as both of these beliefs do not contradict one another. This is referred to as logical consistency, in that these beliefs or propositions need to be consistent. The coherence theory of truth involves some kind of inferential or explanatory relationship between beliefs in the system. This is in reference to whether or not the proposition that is believed to be true is logically possible. In accordance to this theory, truth is what the person believes it to be, as long as it coheres with that person’s beliefs. Two different individuals can believe two different things as long as it holds up with what they personally believe. Therefore, this theory is flawed, in that the concept of allowing a proposition to hold true to the individual, allows it to not be consistent and contradicts another proposition.

The coherence theory of truth is probably second or third in popularity to the Correspondence Theory. Originally developed by Hegel and Spinoza, it often seems to be an accurate description of how our conception of truth actually works. It says: a belief is true when we are able to incorporate it in an orderly and logical manner into a larger and complex system of beliefs.

Sometimes this seems like an odd way to actually describe truth — after all, a belief can be an inaccurate description of reality and fit in with a larger, complex system of further inaccurate descriptions of reality. According to the Coherence Theory of Truth, an inaccurate belief would be called truth. To Spinoza, ultimate truth is the ultimate reality of a rationally ordered system that is God. To Hegel, truth is a rationally integrated system in which everything is contained.

Thus, for system-building philosophers like Spinoza and Hegel, truth isn’t actually divorced from reality, but they perceive reality as that which is described in a total, rationalized system. Thus, for a statement to be true it must be one which can be integrated into that system — not just any system, but the system that provides a comprehensive description of all of reality. Sometimes, it is argued that no statement can be known as true unless we also know if it coheres with every other statement in the system — and if that system is supposed to consist of all true statements, then the conclusion is that nothing at all can be known to be true or false.

The reason is that not everyone accepts that statements can be verified in isolation. Whenever you test an idea, you are also actually testing a whole set of ideas at the same time. For example, when you pick up a ball in your hand and drop it, it isn’t simply our belief about gravity which is tested but also our beliefs about a host of other things, not least of which would be the accuracy of our visual perception.

So, if statements are only tested as part of larger groups, then one might conclude that a statement can be classified as true not so much because it can be verified against reality but rather because it could be integrated into a group of complex ideas and they could then be
verified against reality. This version of the Coherence Theory can be found most often in scientific circles where ideas about verification and integrating new ideas into established systems occur regularly.

The Coherence Theory of Truth isn’t that far from the Correspondence Theory of Truth. The reason is that while individual statements may be judged as true or false based upon their ability to cohere with a larger system, it is assumed that that system is one which accurately corresponds to reality. Because of this, the Coherence Theory does manage to capture something important about the way we actually conceive of truth in our daily lives. It isn’t that unusual to dismiss something as false precisely because it fails to cohere with a system of ideas which we are confident are true.

The coherence theory of truth emerged in the work of Immanuel Kant at the end of the eighteenth century. Kantian philosophy became increasingly well known and popular during the late 1700’s and 1800’s. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant set limits on human knowledge of the world. He believed that the world was only knowable through the mind and that the perceived regularities that we note are due to aspects of the mind itself. This view implies that more than one truth is possible in our attempts to know the world. A consequence of Kant’s position is that knowledge is confined to the realm of the senses, the realm dealt with in science. Religion is directed to the realm beyond sensual knowledge and is apprehended by faith. Science and religion, then, are separate aspects of human experience that do not overlap. For coherence, a statement or proposition must be consistent with a suitably defined body of other propositions, and this body needs to be consistent within it. A less formal view of coherence requires that a statement or proposition be consistent with an existing body of beliefs.

The coherence theorist says that the truth of a belief consists in its coherence with other beliefs. Given some favored coherent set of beliefs, the truth of any of its members consists in its membership in that set—in this way the skeptic is disarmed, since truth no longer requires access to an independent realm of facts. Versions of the coherence theory have been attributed to Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Hegel and the theory was championed by idealists.

3. **The Pragmatic theory of Truth**

The term is derived from the same Greek word *pragma*, meaning action, from which our words practice and practical come. It was first introduced into philosophy by Charles Peirce in 1878. In an article entitled *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*, Peirce, points out that our beliefs are really rules for action, said that, to develop a thought’s meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance. And the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve – what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all. This is the principle of Peirce, the principle of pragmatism. To take in the importance of Peirce’s principle, one must get accustomed to applying it to concrete cases.

The pragmatic theory of truth is associated primarily with the American pragmatists Charles S. Peirce and William James. Their influence can be found in the work of Richard Rorty (1982). According to Peirce, we are to understand any idea or object through its practical effects. Peirce applies his rule to the idea of reality: the practical effect that real things have on us is to cause belief and so the question is how to distinguish true belief from false belief. Peirce’s answer is that the true beliefs are the ones to which we will all agree, and only the methods of science can realize the hope of reaching this consensus. Peirce writes, “This great hope is embodied in the conception of truth and reality. The opinion which is fated to be ultimately
agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. That is the way I would explain reality” This is not the independently existing reality associated with the correspondence theory.

For Peirce, what is special about science is its ability to settle opinion, and reality is whatever settled opinion says it is. James applies Peirce’s rule directly to truth. The practical effects of true beliefs are successful actions, beneficial dealings with the world; truths are invaluable instruments of action. In accordance with Peirce’s rule, truth is what is useful, what works. James places less emphasis than Peirce on consensus and scientific method.

Questions

A- Short answer questions (2 weightages)

1 Explain the correspondence theory of truth

Ans:

Correspondence theory of truth is a philosophical position which holds that any element of conception or discourse is rendered true by virtue of a corresponding fact that is a real state of affairs, typically having corresponding elements and a similar structure. In particular, such a position maintains that the truth or falsity of a statement is determined by how it relates to an objective world; by whether and how accurately it describes that world. Problems with the theory arise from consideration of precisely what is supposed to correspond with what. If a statement is just a sentence then it is merely a physical thing (for example, ink on a page, or sound waves in the air) with no intrinsic meaning. Therefore it is usually claimed that it is the proposition or meaning expressed by a statement that is supposed to correspond with the fact.

The most commonly cited problem for the correspondence theory is defining the relation of correspondence, and when a proposition corresponds with the facts. Bertrand Russell, and shortly after, Ludwig Wittgenstein, suggested that proposition and fact correspond when their structure is isomorphic.

2 Explain the coherence theory of truth

Ans:

According to the coherence theory of truth, a proposition is true if and only if it coheres with the set of beliefs that a person holds. This theory states that truth is based on what the individual believes. However, this is different for everybody, in that our beliefs are based on our past experience that others don’t experience.

According to this theory, there can be more than one belief as long as both of these beliefs do not contradict one another. This is referred to as logical consistency, in that these beliefs or propositions need to be consistent. The coherence theory of truth involves some kind of inferential or explanatory relationship between beliefs in the system. This is in reference to whether or not the proposition that is believed to be true is logically possible. In accordance to this theory, truth is what the person believes it be, as long as it coheres with that person’s beliefs. Two different individuals can believe two different things as long as it holds up with what they personally believe. Therefore, this theory is flawed, in that the concept of allowing a proposition to hold true to the individual, allows it to not be consistent and contradicts another proposition.

3 Explain the pragmatic theory of truth

Ans:

Pragmatic theories of truth seek to avoid the difficulties of traditional appeals to correspondence and coherence. A correspondence theory of truth claims that statements are true if and only if such statements correspond to actually existing and independent state of affairs in
the world. Such a theory raises epistemological problems of knowing these relations among statements and the world, as well as the question of our ability to know any state of affairs independent of our ability to capture that state in language and description. A coherence theory of truth claims that a statement is true if and only if it coheres with the set of our other beliefs. Such a theory raises the immediate difficulty of possessing a large and coherent web of false beliefs—adding one more coherent belief to this web does nothing to make such a set any more true. Pragmatic theories of truth appeal to the practical consequences of holding a belief. A belief is true if it brings about a satisfactory result in a particular inquiry or investigation. Truth cannot be separated from the specific context of an investigation, nor can it be divorced from the interests of the inquirer, the history of such investigations, or the habits of the culture and persons involved. The specifics of such a theory—what constitutes a satisfactory outcome, how settled a situation must be in order to count as resolved, and the nature and influence of previous such inquiries, for instance—are the subject of much debate and form much of the history of pragmatism's development.

For Peirce, pragmatism was primarily a theory of meaning. Although Peirce coined the term pragmatism in 1878, it was William James who later went on to popularize it. This led Peirce to introduce, in 1905, the term pragmaticism, thus distinguishing his theory from that of James. Peirce intended pragmatism to be a means to an objective and impersonal reality.

**Reference Books**