**MPYE – 003: Epistemology**

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**1.Define certitude. Explain various kinds of certitudes possible.**

Definition of certitude [plural certitudes]

1 : the state of being or feeling certain

2 : certainty of act or event

3 : something that is certain : certainty [From Merriam Webster Dictionary]

**Certitude** is defined as the firm assent of mind to the truth, based on evidence. In simple terms it is “the conviction that such and such is (is not) the case.” Certitude is complete assurance. The achievement of certitude involves the search for truth, with the aim of understanding (knowing) and recognizing the truth.

It is quite the same as ‘Certainty’. ‘Certainty’ means the state of being certain, but certitude, means the state of feeling absolutely convinced. Certitude is a feeling while certainty involves inherent factuality. In Latin, “certus” means pledge, or surety which is the root word of both certainty and Certitude.

If certitude is based on evidence, there are different kinds of knowledge and expected certitudes on the basis of different kinds of knowledge, and consequently the different kinds of evidences. Due to recognised valid reason, “certitude” is a state of mind, and gives firm assent to a judgement without fear of the possibility of error.

In Indian Philosophy, Samkhya recognizes true cognition, as certain, called asamdigdha.

The possible kinds of Certitudes

On the basis of kinds of evidences available in different cases, there are different kinds of certitudes possible, which are pointed out by various scholars.

1. **Logical Certitude** :

We all possess **analytical judgements**, which guides our acts of thinking. Our Evidence of truth is obtained by analysing of the terms and definitions used, as in Logic and mathematics. As per Aristotle, the logic is the science which guides our acts of thinking so that our reasoning may proceed in good order, without difficulty and without error.

Certitude based on such kind of evidence, admitting of no possible or conceivable exception, can be called absolute. Eg, it is absolutely certain, that if M follows N, and N follows P, then M is following P.

This is the formal field of knowledge.

1. **Ontological Certitude** :

The **Laws of mind**, are based on the laws of being itself, which is the ontological realm. The self-evidence is not merely logical but ontological. “I think, therefore I am”, and ‘the self”, is something we know that exists with certitude. The evidence of this truth is generally obtained through sensory experience. Ultimately, it could be made certain through insight discoveries.

In Indian philosophy, Ontology is mentioned as Tattva Mimamsa.

This is the Informal field of knowledge.

1. **Physical Certitude**:

The evidence of truth could be experienced by **sense-perception** or the verification or falsification by laboratory conducted experiments of hypothesis formed. This certitude characterizes assent to concrete applications of physical laws.

Kant was impressed by the success of the physical sciences and decided that only scientific truth and certitude were reliable. All physical explanations end in empirical facts.

1. **Moral Certitude**:

“Certitude” in the field of ethics is the **study of behaviour**. In includes the general norms and principles which help in the judgement of right and wrong. It is the Confident assent concerning human conduct based on people's normal and predictable responses to certain needs, abilities, and motivations.

Awareness about nuclear warfare, capital punishment, abortion, birth control, etc. are debated. The judgement based on ones Ethics on the immediate data, is self-evident. It could be extended to the psychological makeup, social relationships and history.

1. **Religious Certitude**:

The religious beliefs are inherited from parents, society, educators, etc. Religious beliefs are mostly based on **respective scriptures**(“written testimony”). These could be considered reasonable, but, at any rate, it could only be “moral certitude”. This often brings a sense of superiority over others.

A self-satisfied certainty arises only by grasping the ready-made answers handed down by others. Only upon critical reflection, the true answers are realised. To reach an evolved understanding, one has to have experienced some doubts about his religion, have faced them without fear and have grown as a direct result of that courage.

**2.Discuss how various schools of Indian thought approach the method of perception.**

In Indian philosophy, Perception is accepted as one of the primary means of knowledge, called **pramana**. It is one of the pramanas that enable to have correct cognitions of the world.

The standard interpretation of perception is that it is a cognition arising within the self from mental operations following a sense-object contact. The cognition is in the form of some form, Rupa, and some qualities, Guna. Here the knowledge is restricted to the object in vision and the qualities that are inhere in it. This is **Nirvikalpa Pratyaksha**, or conception-free perception. The perception is made without distinguishing features and without qualification. It is a simple apprehension.

If knowledge is experienced in the form as “this is thus”, where ‘this’ is referred to as the cognized object, and ‘thus’ to the qualities and the forms, which are inseparably connected to the object, it is **Savikalpa pratyaksha**. This is a conception loaded perception, or discriminate perception, where distinguished features are observed. Here, the object is cognised along with its specific form and qualities.

**Nyaya** recognises perceptions as **laukika**, which are ordinary, and **aloukika**, which are extra ordinary. Pratyaksha, or perception is defined as the knowledge which does not presuppose other knowledge. Laukika perception described the contacts by usual senses to the object. This is the direct apprehension where the feeling of directness or immediacy is present. It is due to the external senses of sight, hearing, taste and smell. In addition to the given five senses, the Samkhya system includes five other senses, which are the senses of action.

The **Aloukika** is due to unusual medium, or transcendental. This is brought by the minds contact with psychical states and processes. It could be through external cognition, which is Bahya, or through internal cognition which is manasa. Extraordinary perceptions are of three types

1. **Samanya Lakshana**: When the perceived properties are related to universal.
2. **Jnana Lakshana**: When the perceived properties are through a sense organ, while normally, it should be perceived by another sense organ,
3. **Yogaja**: Which is intuitive knowledge gained by yogis.

3. Answer any two of the following questions in about 250 words each:

**a) What do you know about Ideal Language Philosophy and Ordinary Language Philosophy? Explain.**

Language in philosophy is seen as “**medium of conceptualisation**”. The analysis of language has the potential to answer the new problems in philosophy. It is believed that language reflects reality, and hence it is an efficient tool to know and understand the reality through the analysis of its logical syntax and description. The language schools analyses the certainty, analytical, and synthetic truths. Linguistic philosophy may be characterized as the view that a focus on language is key to both the content and method proper to the discipline of philosophy as a whole.

The linguistic turn has been divided into two ways, that of Ideal language, and the Ordinary language, which agree to certain points and take inspiration from each other.

**Ordinary Language Philosophy**

The major influence on Ordinary Language philosophy is by George Edward Moore, a British philosopher. It is based on ordinary language and common sense.

The experience of objects are integrated into a phenomenon, and provide us with the sense data. All means of knowledge are based on sense data. Moorean concept of certainty, knowledge and language emerge from the interpretation of this sense data. It is the sensory experiences, and perceptions which form the ideas in our minds. In this philosophy, at issue is the use of the expressions of language, not expressions in and of themselves. Moore says that the colour, shape and size are distinct sense-data; but he soon revised his terminology so that these are regarded as properties of the visual sense-datum he ‘actually saw’, or ‘directly apprehended’ as he normally says.

Moore divided the classification of material entities. A preposition is the sort of thing which is commonly expressed as a whole sentence. The prepositions derive the knowledge of material entities.

**Ideal Language Philosophy**

Ideal language believes that the properties of language help in understanding the structure of the world. Ideal language is precise, free of ambiguity, and clear in structure, on the model of symbolic logic, as contrasted with ordinary language, which is vague, misleading, and sometimes contradictory. This is built up of first language.

Ideal language philosophy assumes that the properties of language may help in understanding the structure of the world.

**b) What is the relation existing between epistemic justification and truth? Discuss various theories of justification.**

Information given by parents, friends, relatives, and other sources like the social media, news media and the internet. Analysis of information results in the evolution of knowledge. This is a subjective requirement, which is belief. Belief has been traditionally identified with having the aim of gaining the knowledge, and truth. Knowledge is not simply a true belief.

The person acquiring the knowledge must use reliable method for acquiring the belief, which is justification. Epistemic justification is the right standing of a person’s beliefs with respect to knowledge. The epistemic acceptance (belief) which happens to be true does not suffice for knowledge. There are groundless conjectures, eg superstitious beliefs which might turn out to be true, could still not be credited for the justified knowledge. Hence, it necessitates that the true belief qualifying as knowledge must be based on good evidence.

False beliefs can be justified.

In a trivial sense, justified in believing a given preposition is similar to saying that justification in believing the preposition is true. It is conceived that there is an internal connection between a belief being justified and true. In a non-trivial sense, one wants to believe what is true and disbelieve which is false.

It is believed that justification and truth are related logically and conceptually. If conditions justify the belief of a person, it is logically considered to be true.

It is observed that the satisfaction of justification condition, however complete it may appear, does not entail satisfaction of the truth condition. Hence, truth and justification are two conceptually independent concepts. If standards of epistemic justification are chosen appropriately, the beliefs are epistemologically justified, and tend to bring about the truth.

**Theories of justification**

**Foundationalism**: According to Epistemological Foundationalism, inferential justification chain terminates with belief that are immediately justified, beliefs that do not depend on any other beliefs for their justification.

This is a view about the proper structure of one’s knowledge or justified beliefs. It distinguish two kinds of justified beliefs: some beliefs that are justified independently of their relationships to other beliefs, and some other beliefs that are justified because of their relationship to other beliefs. Some beliefs are known or justifiably believed only because some other beliefs are known or justifiably believed.

It maintain that some beliefs are properly basic and that the rest of one’s beliefs inherit their epistemic status (knowledge or justification) in virtue of receiving proper support from the basic beliefs. The first type of beliefs are foundational, and the second types are non-foundational.

**Contextualism**: Contextualist says that in the context of an inquiry or discussion, the truth or acceptability of some proposition will be taken for granted by the discussion. It says that whether one knows is somehow relative to context. This allows for the possibility that different contexts set different epistemic standards, and it invariably maintain that the standards do in fact vary from one context to another.

In certain beliefs the foundation of justification are they are taken for granted and accepted without any reason. Here, the social consensus does not provide the required reason to believe.

4. Answer any four of the following in about 150 words each:

**a) What is a paradigm?**

Science has grown in a systematic way. It works within established frameworks, supported by theories and supported data. In normal science the key theories, instruments, values and metaphysical assumptions that comprise the disciplinary matrix are kept fixed. Sometimes, the answers are not found in the given frameworks, and hence, a certain amount of arbitrariness is present. **Paradigm** is the established framework within which many unanswered questions are answered.

Paradigm emerges as research advances, thinking advances, and understanding becomes more refine. In scientific revolution, the disciplinary matrix goes for continuous revision. Hence, it gives meaning to the larger body of facts and establishes the relation within its boundaries. It also helps in prediction of the given data. It also resolves the ambiguities and problems within its boundaries.

Paradigm, **by Kuhn**, is the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, etc, shared by the members of the groups and/or communities. As the understanding of science is shared by groups and communities, paradigm is a collection of community commitments.

**b) What are the main streams that helped in the development of the linguistic turn in Philosophy?**

As per philosophy, Language is method. Language is seen as “method of conceptualisation’. The linguistic turn aims at arriving to the truth through the analysis of language.

The growth in the fields of **phenomenology, existentialism, logic**, etc gave rise to linguistic turn. Cognitive Linguistics has considerably diversified and many have formulated alternative positions on crucial issues such as the nature of meaning, representation, grammar – and, especially relevant for this chapter – consciousness, embodiment and intersubjectivity. Empirical methods try to ground linguistic analysis on the firm basis of objective observation, then we can certainly witness a growing appeal to such empirical methods within Linguistics.

The growth of **Science** and the view of the scientific world has given rise to the linguistic turn. Linguistics overlaps each of the human sciences including psychology, neurology, anthropology, and sociology. It conduct formal studies of sound structure, grammar and meaning, but they also investigate the history of language families, and research language acquisition. Linguistics formulate hypotheses, catalog observations, and work to support explanatory theories.

**d) Briefly explain Sphota Theory.**

In Indian philosophy, the inner nature of the word essence, in language is articulated as begin less and endless. This is known as Sabda-Brahman, and is conscious in all living beings. In Vyakaran Darsana, which Is Indian System of Grammar, **Sphut** is the eternal world symbol, which is different from letters, symbols and indicative of meaning. Sphut, in literal words means “To Burst Forth or when Applied to Language a Bursting Forth of Illumination or Light”. Sphota theory holds detailed analysis of letter, word and sentence.

Mimamsa theory says that words or sentences have no independent entity apart from letters. Nyayikas hold the word as the unit. The Vaiyakaranas hold that the sentences are the real unit of language.

Sabda is understood as audible sound(Dhvani), and have spatial and temporal relations. Distinguished from the sphota are the abstract sound pattern (prakrta-dhvani) and the utterances (vaikrtadhvani). A word is rather an abstraction from a sentence, hence, the sentence sphota is the primary unit of meaning. A word is also grasped as a unity by an instantaneous flash of insight (pratibha).

**f) Differentiate between internalism and externalism.**

Internalism and Externalism are the main methods by which we understand the world and acquire knowledge. Internalist theories justify through appeal to internal features of the subjects, and the externalist theories justify the same through appeal to the external features.

**Internalism**: This theory restricts itself to the justification through what lies inside the object. However, depending on how the notion of internal is understood, internalism appears in different forms. There are two senses in which it is used: perspective internalism and access internalism.

Access internalism, holds that the justification-conferring factors must be reflectively accessible to the subject, such that he is able to find, with regard to the beliefs he holds, whether they are justified.

**Externalism:** Externalism says thatsome relationship to the external world accounting for the truth of our belief suffices to convert true belief into knowledge without our having any idea of that relationship. Epistemic justification of a basic belief derives from obtaining of an appropriate relation, causal or nomological between the believer and the world.

5. Write short notes on any five of the following in about 100 words each:

**a) Postulation (Arthapati)**

The mimamsika school expressed **arthapati** as a valid **method of cognition**. It is the fifth of the five means of knowledge (pramana) by which one obtains accurate knowledge of the world. The term artha means fact and apatti means ‘kalpana’ which is understood as ‘supposition’. Together, they are joined to form Arthapati.

Arthapatti refers to the way in which knowledge is derived from a set of circumstances. It is the assumption of an unperceived fact in order to reconcile two apparently inconsistent perceived facts. It recognizes not all information is immediately accessible; thus, to use postulation and presumption is considered one method of gaining proper insight and knowledge.

**b) Syadvada**

The Jain philosophers have the theory of seven forms of judgements, **syadvada**. They have accepted two types of cognition, viz., **pratyaksha**, direct and **paroksha**, indirect, which are not being contradicted. It is the philosophy of seeing an individual or an object from various points of view; trying to understand them thus; and acquiring the right knowledge of those things.

From the everyday and empirical point of view, we have always to qualify our judgments as somehow’ (‘syat’) true or ‘somehow’ false. The truth is always multidimensional and it can never be realized by means of a single-point of view. The truth is always relative; but not an absolute realized from any one point of view.

**c) Fallibilism**

Fallibilism is the principle that propositions concerning empirical knowledge can be accepted even though they cannot be proved with certainty.

Thus, "**fallibilism**" has been used to describe the claim that:

1. No beliefs can be conclusively justified.
2. Knowledge does not require certainty.
3. Almost no basic (that is, non-inferred) beliefs are certain or conclusively justified.

**d) Nescience**

Moral certitude is the confident assent concerning human conduct based on people's normal and predictable responses to certain needs, abilities, and motivations. **Nescience** is the absence of that knowledge and moral certitude not expected from one.

Nescience is a not knowing something that differs from ignorance because it is an absence of it in your available surroundings or experience. The knowledge has not yet been uncovered for it to be available for others to assimilate and propagate.

**h) Naturalized Epistemology**

Naturalized epistemology, coined by W. V. O. Quine, is a collection of philosophic views concerned with the theory of knowledge that emphasize the role of natural scientific methods. Some advocates of naturalized epistemology emphasize methodological issues, arguing that epistemologists must make use of results from the sciences that study human reasoning in pursuing epistemological questions.

Quine suggested that epistemology be seen as an examination of how we come to have our understanding of the world from the sensory stimulations we receive. This is a factual question to be investigated by psychology and not a matter for armchair speculation. Hence, he makes the bold claim that “Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science.”