

CHAPTER 40

PHILOSOPHY

Doctoral Theses

01. BURNWAL (Shiwani)
Status of Smṛti in Indian Epistemology: A Critical Evaluation.
Supervisor: Dr. Aditya K. Gupta
Th 26820

Abstract

In ordinary discourse, when one hears the word 'smṛti,' one is immediately reminded of Hindu sacred literature such as Manusmṛti, Naradsmṛti and so on. However, in the present thesis, smṛti has been used in its literal sense; Smṛti means something that is remembered. Another meaning of the term smṛti deals with the cognitive process whereby experience is remembered. From time immemorial, we have encountered questions regarding the validating nature of smṛti and its applicability in our lives. It is very enlightening to explore smṛti, as it leads to exploring human understanding with the various dimensions of highly developed epistemology and thinking toward reality. The present work explored the status of smṛti in Indian epistemology. The status of smṛti consists in the answer of knowing what are the possible means/sources of acquiring a piece of knowledge. Human knowledge is an important aspect of human existence. Indeed. There is no limit to how much we can know and how we can know it. The facts of knowledge are often taken for granted. There are a number of factors involved in the process of knowledge. Our rational faculty continues to be impressed with stimuli. We seem to receive submissively what is presented to us by our sense organs, as these sensations are worked into images, conceptions, ideas, and all these into our smaraṇa. We engage our minds in perception, images, conceptions, and the rest. Although it is a universal tendency to be interested and to strive to understand the universe, it is the privilege of human beings to make an effort to understand knowledge itself. When struggling to understand knowledge, we ask a variety of questions, such as: what is the nature of knowledge; who is the knower; what can be known, and What is the object of knowledge; what validates our piece of knowledge; what are the processes involved in obtaining pramā (valid knowledge) and the rest. Thus, this work has elaborated upon the concept and nature of smṛti as pramā or pramāṇa from the perspective of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Dvaita Vedānta and Jaina majorly. I have delved into various aspects of the concept of smṛti as pramā or pramāṇa in the realm of jñāna-mīmāṃsā. This quest of understanding the status of smṛti in Indian epistemology passed through five chapters. The first chapter is just a basic analysis of the various concepts of jñāna-mīmāṃsā (epistemology). The second and third chapters discuss the nature of smṛti as pramā and pramāṇa from the perspective of four major schools of Indian philosophy, namely, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Dvaita Vedānta and Jaina and also from the perspective of western thinkers. The fourth 172 chapter brings an intriguing discussion of smṛti with other allied cognitive concepts. The last chapter demonstrated and examined smṛti as pramā and pramāṇa in Indian Epistemology.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. Epistemology in Indian Philosophy 3. Nature of smṛti in āstika schools of Indian Philosophy with special reference to nyāya-vaiśeṣika and mīmāṃsā 4. Nature of smṛti in Jainism and Dvaita Vedānta 5. Smṛti and other allied cognitive concept 6. Status of smṛti in Indian epistemology. Conclusion. Glossary. Bibliography.

02. चौरसिया (अंकित)

न्याय, मीमांसा और भर्तृहरि के भाषायी का तुलनात्मक और समीक्षात्मक विवेचन।

निर्देशक: डॉ. आदित्य कुमार गुप्ता

Th 27177

Abstract

प्रस्तुत थीसिस में नयाँ दर्शन मीमांसा दर्शन और भर्तृहरि के दर्शन में विकसित भाषा चिंतन के माध्यम से बोध की समस्या और सम्प्रेषण की संभाव्यता को समझने का प्रयास किया गया है। मैं यहाँ संदर्भों का उल्लेख न करके इस तुलनात्मक और समीक्षात्मक विवेचन के कान्सैट को आपके समक्ष रखने का प्रयास करूँगा। यद्यपि हम लोक में भाषा से ही अपना व्यवहार करते हैं और इस व्यवहार में भाषा से बोध और सम्प्रेषण का बड़ा महत्व होता है। मैं यहाँ जो भाषा कह रहा हूँ वह वर्ण, पद और वाक्य में सुनते हैं और देखते हैं। पदवादियों में न्याय दर्शन और मीमांसा में विकसित भाषा चिंतन को रखा गया है और वाक्यवादियों में भर्तृहरि के दर्शन विकसित भाषा चिंतन को रखा गया है। यद्यपि पदवादी और वाक्यावड़ी दोनों ही लोक में व्यवहार वाक्य से मानते हैं लेकिन दोनों में अंतर यह है कि पदवादी वाक्य को संघात रूप में पद से निर्मित इकाई मानते हैं और वाक्यावड़ी वाक्य को एक अखंड इकाई के रूप में स्वीकार करते हैं। इसके साथ ही साथ पदवादियों में न्यायायिक और मीमांसक दोनों ही पद को वास्तविक मानते हुए वाक्यार्थ तक कि यात्रा में ससर्ग बोध और संसृष्ट बोध को स्वीकार करते हुए स्मृति को स्थान देते हैं। पदवादियों में प्राचीन न्यायायिक शब्द और अर्थ का संबंध ईश्वरकृत मानते हैं और नव्या न्यायायिक मानवीय इच्छा मानते हैं लेकिन वही मीमांसक शब्द अर्थ का संबंध अपोरुषेय मानते हैं। वाक्यवादियों में भर्तृहरि भी शब्द अर्थ का संबंध अपोरुषेय ही स्वीकार करते हैं। पदवादी में अभिधा और लक्षणा नमक शक्ति को स्वीकार करते हैं और वाक्यवादियों में भर्तृहरि केवल अभिधा शक्ति को ही मानते हैं जिससे पद का प्राथमिक अर्थ प्रपट हो सके।

Contents

1. पारिचय। 2. न्याय दर्शन में भाषा, शब्दार्थ और इनके बीच संबंध। 3. मीमांसा दर्शन में भाषा, शब्दार्थ और इनके बीच संबंध। 4. भर्तृहरि के दर्शन में भाषा, शब्दार्थ और इनके बीच संबंध। 5. न्याय, मीमांसा और भर्तृहरि के भाषायी दर्शन का तुलनात्मक और समीक्षात्मक विवेचन। उपसंहार एवं संदर्भ सूची।

03. CHAKRABARTI (Suprotik)

Examining Luminosity.

Supervisor: Dr. Nilanjan Bhowmick

Th 26821

Abstract

In the preceding chapters, I have inquired into timothy Williamsons (2000) anti-luminosity argument. the thesis exmined whether the argument can withstand criticism in terms of its soundness as well as the consequences of the success of anti-luminosity. In this chapter shall briefly review these inquiries and arrive at a conclusion. We began by looking at the context within which Williamson gives the anti- luminosity argument. Traditionally, knoeledge was understood to be justified true belief. But edmund gettier showed that justified true belief is not sufficient for

knowledge. This left the concept of knowledge wide open to epistemologists. Timothy Williamson's view is that knowledge is not to be analysed as a combination of belief and other conditions, but rather that knowledge is itself a primitive mental state. He calls this view knowledge first Epistemology. The problem with this view is that while primitive mental states such as believing are accepted to be luminous, knowledge is not known to have this feature. One can know that X without being in a position to know that I know X. But if I believe that X then I must be in a position to know that I believe that X in that case how can knowledge be a primitive mental state. In this context Williamson says that not just knowledge but no non-trivial mental states are luminous. This also means that the cognitive home of cartesian epistemology will be lost. Anti-luminosity implies that our mind is no longer a realm to which one has unmediated and direct epistemic access. The fallout of cognitive homelessness is discussed in later chapters.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. Reliability 3. Anti-Cartesianism and normativity 4. Intention and practical knowledge 5. Conclusion. Bibliography.

04. CHETAN KUMAR

Mind, Body and the Experient: Reflections on Descartes and the Samkhya System.

Supervisor: Prof. Enakshi Ray Mitra

Th 26822

Abstract

Body, Mind, and the Experient: Reflections on Descartes and the System The body is considered to be of crucial importance both in the Cartesian and the *Sāṃkhya* version of dualism between matter and consciousness. In both these philosophies, the living body with all its complexities becomes a compelling point of discussion, turning out to be somehow associated with the mind. *Sāṃkhya* philosophy presents a teleological interaction between *Puru a* and *Prakṛti*, whereas Descartes' philosophy advocates a causal interaction between mind and body (matter). This thesis will also delve into the related question as to why the mind-body relation with respect to non-human organisms remained unclear in Descartes' system. As we know, both the systems have also undertaken a thorough investigation of the notion of mind. This study will take on the experiential aspect of the mind rather than giving a repetitive account of the theoretical or rational faculties. The details of the sensory or experiential faculty of the mind will be investigated for the sake of exploring the psychological aspect of the mind in both traditions his work gives due importance to the *Sāṃkhya* pre-occupation with human experience, emphasizing how in this system the *tattvas* are not experienced, but inferentially known through an analysis of our experience. The comparative analysis undertaken in this thesis is marked with proper reservation and qualification. The subject/object dichotomy that makes Descartes' philosophy "dualistic" is seen to pertain to epistemology whereas the *uru* and *Pr kṛti* in their pure form turn out to be beyond such epistemological practices. In other words, the major upshot of this work is to realise that what prevents us from ascribing a Cartesian dualism to *Sāṃkhya* is the protectively metaphysical character of the *Puru - Pr kṛti* relation.

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1. Introduction 2. Descartes's dualism 3. The body 4. The mind 5. The experient. Conclusion. Endnotes. Bibliography.

05. KAUR (Anmolpreet)

Conflict of Values in the Mahābhārata: A Philosophical Analysis.

Supervisor: Prof. Balaganapathi Devarakonda

Th 26823

Abstract

The central theme of the thesis is to study the conflict of values within the *Mahābhārata*. For comprehending the conflicts, the notion of *dharma* must be analyzed as *dharma* is an overarching term and offers flexibility to choose the actions. *Dharma* helps us in analyzing the choices made by the moral agents in the *Mahābhārata* owing to its contextual nature. The thesis shows that *dharma* and values are synonymous which helps us in comprehending conflict of values and addresses intriguing questions like how *dharma* is flexible, how can one decide upon one's *dharma*. The study shows that conflict of values, moral conflicts and moral dilemmas are synonymous. The research focusses on the intrapersonal conflicts which are responsible for the emergence of conflict of values. The thesis argues for the plurality of values and that conflict of values are genuine as opposed to Kant who believed that conflict of values are not real. Their reality is accepted by showing the presence of moral residue in the form of emotions of guilt and remorse. The thesis then discusses some of the values found in the *Mahābhārata*, for instance: friendship of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, and so on. It discusses some of the values which were preached by a particular character but also violated by the same, for instance: Yudhiṣṭhira preached patience, righteousness, but violated all these values. It also discusses cases of pseudo moral conflicts (Dhṛtarāṣṭra) and conflict of interest (Droṇa). Before analyzing the instances of moral conflicts, the study discusses that the moral conflicts can be resolved under two heads: de-contextual study and contextual study. The de-contextual study discusses the solutions available in the *Dharmaśāstra* for resolving the conflicts. The contextual study analyses the cases of conflict of values in the *Mahābhārata* under four heads, which constitutes the four-fold model of analyzing the justifications of choices. Since *dharma* is contextual, the four heads are based upon the contextual nature of *dharma*, i.e., there is the flexibility to choose the context. The four heads are: Pure context, Upholding the context of the character, Upholding the context of the consequence, Upholding the context of duty. The study of conflict of values shows that there was an equal treatment meted to all the moral agents on account of violation of *dharma*; the righteous Yudhiṣṭhira experienced hell for causing deception to Droṇa. Thus, *Mahābhārata* is realistic and not idealistic as it highlights the flaws of righteous (Yudhiṣṭhira) and good qualities of even the mean and wicked (Śakuni, Duryodhana). Also, since there is flexibility to choose the context, morality cannot be fixed.

06. KHARI (Kanika)

Abortion, Feminism and Care Ethics.

Supervisor: Dr. Sonia Mehta

Th 26824

Abstract

After considering various aspects of the abortion issue from medical, legal moral, feminist and care ethics perspective, it is concluded that abortion is widely portrayed worldwide as a controversial and boldly stigmatized issue to this day. Although a significant body of literature has worked or continues to work on this stigma of

abortion this issue nonetheless has its merits and demerits largely due to the challenges the abortion issue poses to a strong norm of women's sexuality supported by overlapping health inequalities. This makes the stigma of abortion an important issue for access to sexual and reproductive health care and the well-being of women undergoing abortion. Women's exercise of their physical autonomy is facing a global crisis. The overturning of the judgment in *Roe v. Wade* ruling by the United States Supreme Court sent a clear message that women's bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom are under threat till date not only in the developing countries but all around the world. Women around the world face a crisis as their reproductive rights are regulated by law and denied in court. Even in India while there are some policies and law the safe access to abortion, Indian women still face insuperable socio-economical barriers in accessing abortion. Therefore, India consequently also lacks laws and policies that are founded on good research and prioritise women because these laws are more based on social stigma other than medical care. In other words the economic circumstances and lack of accessible services, particularly for late abortion, presents millions of women with discouraging obstacles, forcing some women to resort to unsafe and legal abortion and self-abortion.

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1. Introduction to abortion 2. Historical development of abortion 3. Abortion and feminism 4. Abortion and care ethics. Conclusion. Bibliography.

07.

NELSON KHO K P

The Communitarian Idea of the Self with Special Reference to Charles Taylor.

Supervisor: Prof. P Kesava Kumar

Th 27176

Abstract

As a moral realist, Taylor claims that cosmic or transcendental morality defines the human self. As an existential phenomenologist, he claims that human beings are embodied in the world. As a communitarian, he claims that human agency is not independent but dependent on the social structures with language as the means to understand the standard of one another among the individuals while actualizing one's identity and life meaning. Hence, for Taylor, the framework to understand the human self is to first accept human as the moral and transcendental self, an embodied self and the social self. Human as a moral agent inherently possessed of moral intuition, good cannot be abstracted from human but presupposes human selfhood. However, the transcendental nature of the self and the good is manifested by the agent himself situated in the world as an immanent self and the social self. Hence, to actualize a flourishing self, the agent has to pursue the goods within the lived experiences and community where the goods are embedded in the social structures: social institutions and stories, values, culture, language and praxis. Taylor's ontology, therefore, incorporates both the abstract and the concrete conception of the self without camping himself neither in the intellectualist tent nor in the atomist tent while defining the self. Taylor is, therefore, critical of the categorically given or imperative conception of the self of the liberal theory which is metaphysically abstract, disengaged, neutral, individualistic, autonomous, universal and transcendental from the world. Liberalism, as an offshoot of foundationalism, claims that every person is morally equal, free and rational, and inherently having a sense of the good from within without needing any motivation and help from the external sources such as God, surrounding nature and society. Taylor agrees with the liberals that humans are morally equal and free, and inherently rational, but disagrees with their completely disengaged self. For Taylor, human, in the complete term, is neither neutral but judgmental about morality, nor unsituated but situated

in the world, nor uninformed but aware of the social structures, nor individualistic but social, nor transcendental but immanent. Similarly, unlike the liberal categorically given rights and obligated morality, it is, for Taylor, a situated right and situated morality. Taylor claims that modernity has embraced liberal values. However, without rejecting individual rights and freedom dearly valued in modernity, Taylor insists that, with other things, human existence is cosmologically ordered but with a space for change and moral evaluation so that the existential crisis of self-identity and life meaning in modernity itself has a transcendental explanation.

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1. Introduction. 2. General idea of the self. 3. Liberal idea of the self. 4. Communitarian idea of the self. 5. Taylor's idea of the self. 6. Taylor's critique of modernity. Conclusion. Bibliography.

08. RAWAT (Saurabh)

Philosophical Interpretations of Śaivāgamas.

Supervisor: Dr. Jayanti P. Sahoo

Th 26825

Abstract

The research titled 'The philosophical interpretations of Śaivāgamas' deals with perennial problems concerning the applicative philosophical principles and focuses on experiential learning. It provides a holistic view of the Śaiva tradition by explaining the philosophical significance of esoteric doctrines, understanding the ceremonial aspects, reflecting upon intellectual lineage, and reviving the ancient methods for self-realization. A comparative analysis of the Śaiva philosophical systems reflects the salient features of the Śaiva epistemology and ethics. This process facilitated the interpretation of Śaivāgamic scripture like Kāmikāgama, Mātangāgama, and Rauravāgama, which resulted in the exploration of unveiled Śaivāgamic theories and concepts. The interpretation revealed esoteric doctrines, philosophical arguments, methodologies, meditative techniques, scientific ideas, stages of realization, experiential observations, and cosmological explanations. The metaphysical foundation of Śaivāgamas revolves around Śiva and Śakti, which are concomitant realities. Śiva is transcendental, and Śakti is an immanent aspect of reality. The whole universe is manifest by the union of Śiva and Śakti. This union inspires the creative imagination of sects like Ardhanārīśvara, where the deity represents the coexistence of male and female aspects of reality. Śaivāgamic philosophy flows through various sects and sub-sects that serve the society in different ways; Nātha, Hari-Hara, and Kālāmukhas. Due to several misconceptions about Āgamas and Tantras, the researchers have left the Śaivavāgams untouched. Through this research, a genuine and authentic interpretation will help reinitiate a contemporary philosophical discourse. We aim to seek the attention of academicians and scholars in re-establishing the Śaiva philosophical system among the mainstream classical Indian philosophical system.

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1. Introduction 2. Traditional overview of śaivāgamas 3. Analysis of śaivāgamic Philosophical systems 4. An overview of śaivāgamic sects 5. Śaivāgamic methodology 6. Approaches of esoteric doctrines of śaivāgamas. Conclusion. Appendix. Bibliography.

09. SHARMA (Shivani)

Commodification of Food: A Critical Perspective in Food Ethics.

Supervisor: Dr. Sujata Roy Abhijat
 Th 26829

Abstract

My research work is an exploration of commodification of food. Commodification is a process that encompasses one main task which is, creating commodities and this is achieved by creating a social setting in which more objects from our material world can be made commodities in the market. Concerns about commodification are a result of non-objective aspects and experiences of our social spheres also getting reduced to a commodity in the market. Moral anxieties about commodification of food are spurring from the reduction of food as an essential need and an integral part of our identities to a commodity in the market. There is an assumption underlying commodification of food; that food is a material thing, which can be bought and sold via a monetary exchange. Underlying this assumption is a disregard for the metaphysical architecture of food. It can be experienced by many senses in the same way like a table can be but unlike other objects in the world, food is a not only an object. Food is ingested and both literally and metaphorically it becomes a part of us. To begin with, food is hard to explain. Not much deliberation is directed towards answering this question—what is food? There is an ambiguity about its nature and food can be differentiated from non-foods. There needs to be clarity about what food is and I have incorporated the views of a few thinkers that have tried to conceptualize food in order to answer this question. In light of this reductive nature of commodification, my work is based on furthering a moral critique of commodification. By arguing against the exploitative and corruptive nature of market activity, I am arguing against rampant commodification of all dimensions of food. This is not a move towards non-commodification of food; the idea is to argue for limits to commodification. If buying and selling of goods takes place without doing away with personal and intimate aspects of goods and services then food is not getting reduced to a commodity even though the exchange involves money. There are concerns about interdependence of people on each other, and the social contexts that one is a part of that are intimately tied with the different dimensions of food. Another area that I have touched upon in my work is the overdependence of food ethics on individualistic theories of ethics. This is not an area that has received much attention in food ethics. The conclusion that is drawn is that one of the main problems with the current way of food production is that it identifies individuals only in an isolated way. This is a problem with market morality and unfortunately this is the problem with leading theories in food ethics the same. Individual is the reference point. In short, the problem and the solution have the same reference point. In order to find a comprehensive solution for this problem, I have taken the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen as the standpoint for beginning the discussion of genuine individual well-being. The idea is that an approach needs to accommodate the ideology of capabilities for people, which can be identified as “freedoms” to achieve a respective state of affair in order to further the discussion on individual welfare. I have employed this concept of „individual capabilities“ to a more socially grounded view of community-based capabilities. My work is based on a communitarian approach to food that upholds that concepts like well-being, identity, capabilities, food justice and so on, have proper situation within a social context and that context is a community.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. Evolution of food: A history of contextualization of food; Part I: The history and context of food, Part II: Industrialization of food 3. Understanding commodities and the process of commodification; Part I: Contextualizing commodities, Part II: Commodification: A problem of value 4. A discussion of the ontology of food and problem of commodification; Part I: Developing a metaphysical account of food, Part II: A critical perspective of commodification 5. Food ethics and the idea of food justice; Part I: Linking food ethics with justice, Part II: Developing a dynamic understanding of food justice 6. Re-constructing food as a communitarian good; Part I: Limits to commodification and market morality, Part II: Developing a communitarian ethical approach. Conclusion. Bibliography.

10. SHIVANI

Analysis of Contemporary Liberal Theories of Justice from Feminist Perspective.

Supervisor: Dr. Sujata Roy Abhijat
Th 26826

Abstract

This research examines some of the most prominent contemporary liberal theories of justice from feminist perspective. The second half phase of the twentieth century has been crucial for the development of feminism and the revival of the concept of justice in mainstream socio-political philosophy, especially through the work of John Rawls. An alarming concern is why, despite a number of feminist works which were being published during that phase, which highlighted women and gender-related issues, they remain marginalised in the mainstream conceptions of justice. The research is focused on the liberal conception of social and distributive justice. The various feminist responses to the liberal theories of justice are often paradoxical to one another. On the one hand, feminists have used the liberal notions of personhood, autonomy, rights, dignity and self-respect as the best conceptual tools to criticise the gendered structure of society radically and to improve the status of women in society; on the other hand, liberalist assumptions are widely criticised and rejected by the feminist thinkers as inadequate and insensitive to the issue of gender justice. These thinkers have provided several reasons for opposing liberalism. The research examines this debate surrounding the liberal notion of justice and highlights the lacunas in these theories, and attempts to contribute to a gender-sensitive approach to justice. The work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with John Rawls's and Ronald Dworkin's models of justice. The following chapter analyses the stance of liberal feminist thinkers, with a focus on Susan Okin and Martha Nussbaum's perceptions of justice. The third chapter examines the position of Carole Pateman and Nancy Fraser to evaluate the arguments of critical feminist thinkers. The final chapter re-examines the notions of „justice“ and „care“ by adhering to the proposals of Virginia Held and Joan Tronto.

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1. Introduction 2. Understanding justice: Examining rawls' and dworkin's idea of justice 3. Considering feminist responses: Susan okin's and martha nussbaum's view on justice 4. Carole Pateman's and Nancy Fraser's perspectives on justice 5. Justice and care: A reinterpretation. Conclusion. Bibliography.

11. SINGHAL (Arushi)

Critical Approach to Buddhist Ethics.

Supervisor: Dr. Pragati Sahni
Th 26828

Abstract

Ethics in Buddhism as a developing area in the academic world has been especially garnering attention from scholars over the past few decades. Ethics was an area that somehow never become center stage compared to Buddhist metaphysics and soteriology. However this state of affairs has changed and the importance of ethics is coming to the fore more and more. Scholarly works have been devoted to understanding the nature of Buddhist ethics. There has been an effort to examine how Buddhism approached ethics, its place and what it means within the religion. The central question of Buddhism itself revolved around suffering or dukkha and how to get rid of suffering. The entire body of teachings ascribed to the Buddha is designed to cater to this cause. The issue I raised in this thesis was to ascertain in what way Buddhist ethics could be approached because within Buddhist literature there is no specific categorization of ethics mentioned. Several scholars have worked productively in this area and tried to provide a framework for understanding the structure of ethics, but a consensus has been missing. Thus, I aimed to explore the literature further and work towards identifying and furthering the understanding of ethics and its nuances in Buddhism. I hoped through this exercise to add positively to the scholarly views already existing in the area. I started the thesis by looking at the Pali canonical literature and surveyed certain ethical/moral concepts that are often mentioned throughout. I choose to call Buddhist ethics an ethics of perfectionism. The ethics of perfectionism has reflections of some specific moral theories undeniably, with its focus on obligatory precepts, virtues and a nibbanic end. Still it is also a representation of the uniqueness of the Buddhist ethical tradition just as consequentialism, it includes looking out for the end. Like deontology, Buddhism has morally obligatory precepts. Similar to virtue ethics the culmination of virtues is essential for the path of enlightenment. Thus, some sense of every moral theory can be pointed out Buddhist ethics but it cannot be purely understood in terms of any particular approach.

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1. Introduction 2. Outlines of an ethics in Buddhism 3. Ethical approaches to Buddhist ethics 4. Furthering the understanding of Buddhist ethics 5. Nibbana, ethics and responsibility 6. Understanding the precepts. Conclusion. Bibliography.

12. SINGH (Shivi)
Epistemic Injustice Against Women: An Analysis of the Objectivity of Knowledge and the Knower.
 Supervisor: Dr. Reetu Jaiswal
Th 26827

Abstract

The methods used to identify as well as define knowers are very problematic, it has been structured by the androcentric understanding of who is or can be a knower. In this thesis, by questioning the prevailing knowledge structure I have attempted to bring forth the existent deficiencies in the epistemic domain and its adverse effect on the marginalised groups and also how it functions as a tool in re-enforcing their marginalised position by preventing them from becoming a knower and be a part of that domain. Epistemology has been portrayed as a discipline that works in a

completely isolated manner, unaffected by social, political, ethical, or moral contingencies. Due to this exclusionary character of knowledge, only those subjects who possess the ability to disconnect themselves from these associations are considered capable of becoming a part of the epistemic domain. This means that only those characteristics that generalise the experience and existence of human beings are considered significant in understanding knowledge and knowers, and as men's experiences are taken as the generalised experience, all those who differ from this male-centric understanding are taken as anomalies or irrelevant to the discussion on knowledge and knowers. Hence emerged the dichotomous understanding of rational-emotional, man-woman, objective-subjective, and so on. These dichotomies work in a hierarchical manner making men the more powerful ones while marginalising women. Men are considered to be rational and objective whereas women are categorised as emotional and subjective thereby preventing them from being identified as knowers. The societal arrangements create a category of woman within which all women should fall, they must strive to become 'the woman'. This endeavour to become 'the woman' which is a patriarchally defined and determined understanding of women made to dominate them makes them irrelevant to the discussion on knowledge as their experiences are kept at a distance from being associated with rationality and objectivity. Their knowledge comes from their bodies and emotions which are not significant in the process of knowledge as per the androcentric definition of knowledge. Though as mentioned by Sally Haslanger, there is no one definition which can be used to define all women, and any attempt to do so will only constrain them from acting in their full capacity, their existence have been essentialized to restrict the discussion on knowledge to the maleworld

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