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## Part-II

### Q 2:

a)

#### Philosophy

"Philosophy" is derived from the greek words "philo" and "sophia"; meaning "love of wisdom".

That however, is just the literal meaning of the word. Philosophy is notoriously difficult to define as each definition would itself imply a certain philosophical attitude. Some like to say that philosophy is something larger than science, but falling short of religion. Others argue it is the search for truth. These contrasting conceptions of philosophy cannot be reconciled with ease. In reality, philosophy can be understood by looking at what is common between all the different conceptions of it. Philosophy is an exercise in critical thinking. In philosophy fundamental questions are posed along with immediate importance. Answers to such questions posed are evaluated in terms of

logical merit. So, philosophy is about fundamental questions about life.

## b) Scope of philosophy:

Another feature of philosophy is its vast scope. It is not so much so because of philosophy as a subject, but because of the ubiquity of people's indulgence in philosophy. In every area of life, there is a specific philosophy in operation. Even people claiming no relation with philosophy embody a philosophical attitude.

Philosophy is about fundamental questions and such encompasses a broad area or areas.

## 1) Metaphysics: Metaphysics cover ultimate questions

regarding the nature of being, existence and reality itself.

It is perhaps the most abstract of the areas that philosophy covers, but this abstract nature is not without its due reason.

Most specific observations or explanations, even scientific ones, ultimately lead back to more fundamental questions.

The study of reality prompts inquiry in two areas of metaphysics.

(i) Ontology: Ontological questions address the nature of being or existence. It addresses questions such as "What kind of a being human beings have?". It addresses and have its own answers to: why reality exists?

(ii) Theology: Another closely related area is theology which is about religious doctrines as explanations for the ultimate metaphysical questions, such as, why is there something rather than nothing? Is there a God? What are his attributes? Theology addresses these concepts by using various religious doctrines, which although lack philosophical rigour, but are equally hard to reject, as that too is a particular kind of philosophy.

2) Epistemology: Another important area of philosophy is the study of the very nature of knowledge itself. How do

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we know what we know? or more importantly, what can be known?

Philosophy is not just outward looking, it is also introspective. It questions the fundamental assumptions that we unknowingly hold while gaining knowledge.

What is the true source of knowledge? Is it experience or reason? Is there a limit to knowledge? These questions form the core of philosophy's epistemological concerns.

Epistemological inquiries have been abstract inquiries, but the consequences of these inquiries have been monumental for humanity. So philosophy's concern with knowledge has yielded important methods (tools) and perspectives (rationalism, empiricism).

(3) Ethics : Another important area which philosophy has addressed is the ethical one.

Questions about the rightness or wrongness of actions have puzzled humanity for centuries. Why are some actions right or wrong? This area of inquiry

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has enormous consequences for legal systems operating throughout the world. Two central perspectives in this regard have been the consequentialist and deontological ones. Most people practice a version of these without even aware of it. Philosophical discussions on the nature of ethical action has had enormous impact on our perceptions of right and wrong.

(4) **Logic:** Logic is the main tool of philosophy. It separates proper philosophers from pseudo-intellectuals. Philosophers don't just come up with explanations to deep questions. They employ a certain system of logic to ensure consistency in ideas. Different forms of logic exist - e.g. deductive, inductive, dialectical or abductive logic. All these various types of logical tools emphasize on a different set of assumptions. The scientific method was also the result of philosophy's obsession with finding ways to access knowledge.

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These broad areas serve to show the vast scope of philosophy. Its vastness is a testament to its relevance.

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### Q No. 3:

a) Introduction: The dialectical method is a process of reasoning that is used to explore and resolve contradictions within ideas or concepts. It is rooted in ancient philosophy but is attributed to George Wilhelm Hegel. It is a dynamic approach to understanding change and evolution in philosophy.

b) The Method: The method involves the following stages:

(1) Thesis: Thesis stage refers to the starting point. It is the initially proposed idea or state of things.

(2) Anti-thesis: Each idea or concept also contains within itself the notions of its opposite. It also refers to an idea that is opposed to the thesis. Conflict between thesis and anti-thesis is inevitable.

(3) Synthesis: The conflict between the thesis and anti-thesis leads to a tension which is often resolved through a synthesis of both, creating a new position or proposition.

The dialectical method is cyclical. Example of the method is as follows. Hegel said that the french revolution happened because there was tension between the deeply hierarchical and feudal french (society) and the rising bourgeoisie class (Anti-thesis). The revolution resolved the conflict by formation of a republic which became the new situation of or idea.

society  
↑  
(Thesis)

## (C) Features of the method:

From this discussion, the following features of the dialectical method are evident.

### (1) Progression through conflict/contradiction:

The dialectical method progresses through contradictions inherent in the ideas. It is a way of resolving those contradictions.

### (2) Process/Dynamic: Rather than looking at ideas or concepts

as static, it emphasizes the dynamic nature of truth or concepts. It does away with a static conception of truth.

### (3) Unity of opposites: Opposing ideas are seen as interconnected and interdependent.



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(d) Drawbacks of the

Dialectical Method: Despite its

significance it is not without its own set of drawbacks.

(1) Abstract and Complex:

The dialectical method of Hegel represented a high point for German idealism.

It was a consequence of the romantic age. It was an attempt to come up with a grand and complex metaphysical explanation. It is overly abstract and fails to find practical solutions to problems.

(2) Overemphasis

on contradictions:

The dialectal method places undue emphasis upon opposites or contradictions.

It simplifies change and neglects external influence, human agency, and other realities of change such as its gradual character.

(3) Deterministic in

nature :

The method is overly deterministic. It presumes that there is a highest truth (spirit) which is unfolding through a rational process. Such teleological view of progress is deterministic in nature as it implies that historical progression is following an inevitable path.

(4) Neglect of Empirical

evidence :

The dialectical method fails to incorporate empirical knowledge gained through accumulation of observations. It is purely theoretical and is limited in this regard.

(5) Tendency towards

dogmatism :

The dialectical method can be used to justify dogma. It can be dogmatic in the sense that there is emphasis on empirical facts and the rational system can be used

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to justify dogmatic positions.

6) Cyclical nature: The method is cyclical in nature and doesn't lead to practical resolutions of ideas.

Q No. 4:

a) Introduction: Jeremy Bentham and J. Stuart Mill are the British philosophers to whom the utilitarianism is attributed. Bentham gave the version of utilitarianism known as "Act utilitarianism". It emphasized solely on considerations of pleasure and didn't address the practicality of the system or the nuances of its operation. Mill addressed these weaknesses by giving a version known as "rule utilitarianism", aimed at remedying the shortcomings of Bentham's philosophy.

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## (b) Mill's Agreement with Bentham :

(1) Consequentialism: Mill agreed with Bentham's assertion that the rightness or wrongness of any action is determined by its consequences.

(2) Hedonism as the basis of morality: Mill accepted that the ultimate goal of human action is the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain.

(3) The Greatest Happiness Principle: Both agreed that the goal of morality is to maximize happiness of the greatest number.

However, Mill introduced significant changes to Bentham's perceived shortcomings.

## (c) Mill's Criticism of Act utilitarianism:

- 1) Quantitative and Qualitative pleasures: Bentham didn't differentiate or privilege one pleasure over the other. He only focused on the quantitative aspects of pleasure such as duration or intensity. Mill regarded Bentham's concept of human happiness as overly simplistic. He differentiated between higher pleasures such as ones derived from stimulating intellectual activity and lower pleasures like ones derived from the act of eating or drinking. Hence, mill focused on the qualitative aspects of pleasure.

- 2) Impracticality of the Hedonic Calculus: Mill found Bentham's hedonic calculus as impractical in every day life.

He regarded Bentham's system as too-demanding requiring people to calculate all outcomes of an action in terms of pleasure and pain.

### (3) Neglect of Individual

rights:

Mill

realized that

Bentham's system can lead to a neglect of individual rights and justice. He realized that individual liberties can be violated for serving the interests of the majority. Mill's philosophy in his work, "on liberty", emphasizes the importance of individual liberties.

### d) Rule Utilitarianism: So Mill presented Rule Utilitarianism

to account for the shortcomings of Bentham's philosophy. He modified the principle in the following way:

Happiness will be maximized by the rules when followed generally.

It advocated for rules that could be universally adopted.

Example: Lying might increase

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happiness in the short term, but if everyone started lying, happiness would drop for the maximum number. Hence, as a rule, lying cannot be adopted.

Mill also introduces the "harm principle" aimed at protecting individual rights. The morally right action is the one which leads to maximization of happiness without harming anyone in the process.

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## Q. No 5:

a) Introduction: Deconstruction is one of the most significant and controversial philosophical concepts. It was introduced by Jacques Derrida, a French post-structuralist. Deconstruction challenges traditional ways of thinking about knowledge, language and the self.

## (b) Defining Deconstruction:

Derrida avoided defining deconstruction as it would contradict deconstruction's core claims such as:

- (i) There are no fixed meanings
- (ii) Meaning is always deferred.
- (iii) Fixed conception of self and knowledge are contradictory

Hence, deconstruction is more "done" than "understood" as a theoretical concept.

## (c) Key elements of Deconstruction

(1) Logocentrism: Derrida critiqued western philosophy for overly relying on language as a way to communicate. Particularly, the emphasis on speech as an authentic form of communication. He would subsequently demonstrate the instability of language.



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(2)

## Binary Oppositions:

Derrida also argued that

Western philosophy relied on binary oppositions such as:

- i) day / night
- ii) good / bad
- iii) Beautiful / ugly

He argued that the former in the opposites was privileged while the latter was the marginalized term.

Example: The concept of day derives its meaning from its opposite; the night and vice versa. Hence, neither term is a self-sufficient entity.

(3)

## Différance:

Derrida combined the concepts of difference and deferral in one term. Différance referred to the meaning is derived from fact that opposites or difference with other terms. Deferral means that meaning is always postponed. For example, a text is never fully self-sufficient and hence its meaning is deferred in other terms or concepts not present in the text. The concept of différance, challenges the notion of fixed meanings.

## (d) Applications of Deconstruction:

Derrida applied his method of deconstruction to challenge western philosophy's unified and fixed conception of self. In epistemology, he introduced the concept of difference, which undermined the idea of fixed meaning or authoritative interpretation of text. It challenged fixed and rigid concepts in literature, culture and even politics.

Feminists used Derrida's methods to dismantle fixed conceptions of gender and identity.

So, Derrida's method and philosophy of deconstruction has been very influential. It is critiqued for being obscure and leading to relativism. It is also unproductive as it doesn't construct but only deconstructs meaning.