

## **Semester II GE – PHIHGEC02T [Western Epistemology and Metaphysics]**

- **Origin of Knowledge:**

**There are two origins of acquiring knowledge. These are Empiricism and Rationalism.**

**THE EMPIRICISM:** Empiricism is the view that there is no such thing as innate knowledge, and instead of that knowledge is derived from experience which is through our five external senses and one internal sense. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume are empiricists. Though, there are lot of differences in the views of their regarding epistemology and metaphysics.

**THE RATIONALISM:** Rationalism is the view that there is innate knowledge; they differ in that they choose different objects of innate knowledge. Socrates and Plato are rationalist because they think that we have innate knowledge of the Forms. Descartes thinks that the idea of God, or perfection and infinity, and knowledge of my own existence is innate but he believes that there are other ideas too namely factitious ideas and adventitious; G.W. Leibniz thinks that only logical principles are innate.

**CRITICAL THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE:** Immanuel Kant did not reject empiricism and rationalism outright. He tried to retain all that appeared to be valuable in them his statement was that both rationalism and empiricism are right in what they affirm, but wrong in what they deny. Kant's aim was to move beyond the traditional dichotomy between rationalism and empiricism. The rationalist view is that we can understand the world by careful use of reason; this guarantees the truth of our knowledge but leaves serious questions about its practical content. The empiricist on the other hand, had argued on the view that all of our knowledge must be firmly grounded in experience; practical content is thus secured, but it turns out that we can be certain of very little. Both approaches have failed independently, Kant supposed, because both are premised on the same mistaken assumption. His view is "knowledge begins with experience, but does not necessarily originate from it."

According to Kant, the proper development of philosophy requires that we frame the epistemological problem in an entirely different way. The central problem of philosophy is not how we can bring ourselves to understand the world, but how the world comes to be understood by us. Instead of trying, by reason or experience independently, to make our concepts match the nature of objects, Kant held, we must allow the structure of our concepts shape our experience of objects. This is

the central theme of Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'. It is to show how reason determines the conditions under which experience and knowledge are possible.