

PROBLEM REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF KNOWLEDGE

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The three senses of word 'know'

- Knowing who (knowledge by acquaintance)
- Knowing how (knowledge by ability)
- Knowing that (propositional knowledge)

Knowing who

- Sometimes , we use the word 'know' to mean Knowledge by Acquaintance. For example, I know Rabindranath Tagore. Here, 'know' means I am acquainted with RabindranathTagore. Here acquaintance represents the word knows. For instance, RabindranathTagore is a great poet and he wrote Gitanjali etc. In this Sense, the 'knowledge' means knowing something that is knowledge by acquaintance.

Knowing how

- Again, sometimes we use the word 'know' in doing something or in performing an action. For example, I know how to cook, I know how to sing, I know how to ride cycle etc. If one does not perform an action, we cannot say that he has some knowledge about that action. In this sense, the 'knowledge' means the ability to perform an action.

Knowing that

- The word 'know' is mostly used in propositional sense. In this sense, the 'know' means that the proposition is always true. In this sense, using the word 'know', it is always used – 'I know that', 'He knows that' etc. Here, the word 'that' is always followed by a sentence or a proposition. For example, 'I know that, Narendra Modi is a Prime minister', 'He knows that, Dr. Dhruva Acharya is a joint coordinator of this Refresher Course. Here, the subject 'I' declares that the proposition 'Narendra Modi is a Prime Minister' is true.

Conditions or requirements

- Truth
- Belief
- Justification

Truth

- To know something truth is the first condition of knowing that. When 'S' claims that he knows that 'P', here 'S' knows that 'P' is true.

Belief

- Belief is an important condition of knowledge claim. Without believing something we cannot say that we know something. When 'S' claims that he knows that 'P', that means 'S' believes that 'P' is true, otherwise 'S' is not in the position to claim that he knows that 'P'.

Justification

- As truth and believe justification is also a prime condition of knowledge. 'S' knows that 'P' means 'S' knows that 'P' is true, 'S' believes that 'P' is true and also 'S' is justified in believing 'P' is true.

New aspects

- When we say we know Rabindranath Tagore – what is the meaning of the term ‘know’ which is used to describe Rabindranath Tagore. Description and knowledge are not the same but we always use the term ‘know’ to describe something. Description is one type of definition which we are doing by the help of knowledge but knowledge is itself an undefined term. The question is how an undefined term defines something.
- Though the great western philosopher B. Russell has dealt a lot regarding this matter. But we can not see any concrete answer of the said problem.
- 2. When we try to realise the sense of knowledge we always try to put some condition or requirement to realise the same. As we have mentioned earlier that truth, belief and justification are the condition or requirement of knowledge. But can we say that these conditions can make sure to know something. This problem is not so easy. As Gettier has raised a great contribution regarding this problem and which is known to us as the Gettier problem. How can we put an end to this problem? Can we? No, never, because if we put an end that means our thinking process stopped, but philosophy is known to us as a process of thinking which is always active.