

A Mixed Thought Pattern and the Question of Justification: A Feminist Project

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Abstract : The feminist scholars point out the various problematic issues in the traditional mainstream western thought and theories. The thought practices behind the discriminatory and oppressive social practices are based on concepts that play a pivotal role in theorisation. Therefore, many feminist philosophers take up reformation or reconceptualisation projects. Such projects have bearings on various aspects of philosophical thought, namely, ontology, epistemology, logic, ethics, social, political thought, and so on. In tune with this spirit, the present paper suggests a well-established thought pattern which is not western but has got the potential to deal with the problems of mainstream western thought culture that are identified by the feminist critics. The Indian thought pattern is theorised in the domain of Indian logic, which is a study of inference patterns. As, in the Indian context, the inference is considered as a source of knowledge, certain epistemological questions are linked with the discussion of inference. One of the key epistemological issues is one regarding justification. The study about the nature of derivation of knowledge from available evidence, and the nature of the evidence itself, are integral parts of the discipline called Indian logic. But if we contrast the western tradition of thought with the Indian one, we can find that the Indian logic has got some peculiar features which may be shown to deal with the problems identified by the feminist scholars in western thought culture more plausibly. The tradition of western logic, starting from Aristotle, has been maintaining sharp differences between two forms of reasoning, namely, deductive and inductive. These two different forms of reasoning have been theorised and dealt with separately within the domain of the study called 'logic.' There are various philosophical problems that are raised around concepts and issues regarding both deductive and inductive reasoning. Indian logic does not distinguish between deduction and induction as thought patterns, but their distinction is very usual to make in the western tradition. Though there can be found various interpretations about this peculiarity of Indian thought pattern, these mixed patterns were actually very close to the cross-cultural pattern in which human beings would tend to argue or infer from the available data or evidence. The feminist theories can successfully operate in the domain of lived experience if they make use of such a mixed pattern of reasoning or inference. By offering sound inferential knowledge on contextual evidences, the Indian thought pattern is potent to serve the feminist purposes in a meaningful way.

Keywords : feminist thought, Indian logic, inference, justification, mixed thought pattern

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