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Contents

- Purusarthas and its Relevance: Dr. Deep Narayan Das
- ✓ Concept of Person: Dr. Namita Kalita
- Sixth Schedule and question of autonomy movement in Assam: Dr. Rahul Daimary
- Women Empowerment: It's impact on Socialization: Binoy Kherkatary
- Use of internet in teaching-learning with reference to Collegiate Education: Dipak Kr. Baro
- Indian *Nataka* and the role of *Preksaka*: A study based on Bharata's *Natyasastra*: Gutimali Goswami
- An Analysis of the Contribution of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Employment, GDP and Export of India: Nilakshi Gogoi
- Institutionalized ways of suppression & the relationship between men and women in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: Nitu Moni Das
- The traditional marriage system of the Bodos: Hathasuni khurnai- Sunita Baro
- *Abhijit Baruar Kabitat Aliotio Porokho Ullekh*: Dr. Nilotpal Sarma

Nilotpal Sarma

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List of Contributors

- Dr. Deep Narayan Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Vidya Bharati College, Singerpara, Assam
- ✓ • Dr. Namita Kalita, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Nowgong Girls' College, Nagaon, Assam
- Dr. Rahul Daimary, Head, Department of Political Science, Nalbari College, Nalbari, Assam
- Binoy Kherkatary, Assistant Professor (Temporary), Department of Bodo, North Kamrup College, Baghmara, Assam
- Dipak Kr. Baro, Assistant Professor, Patidarang College, Muktapur, Assam
- Gutimali Goswami, Head, Department of English, North Kamrup College, Baghmara, Assam
- Nilakshi Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, North Kamrup College, Baghmara, Assam
- Nitu Moni Das, Assistant Professor, Department of English, North Kamrup College, Baghmara, Assam
- Sunita Baro, Assistant Professor, Department of Bodo, North Kamrup College, Baghmara, Assam
- Dr. Nilotpal Sarma, Assistant Professor, Department of Assamese, North Kamrup College, Baghmara, Assam

CONCEPT OF PERSON

Dr. Namita Kalita

Person, an individual is capable of moral agency. Although the details of their theories of human nature differ widely, Descartes, Locke, Kant and Strawson, all accepted a functional description of the person that includes both mental and physical features: the attribution of responsibilities to a moral agent requires both the ability to choose and an ability to act on that choice.

One of the central problems of metaphysics is what it is to be a person. The answer ought to account for central phenomena of personhood; traditionally, command of language, self-consciousness, control or agency, and moral worth or title to request are amongst the salient characteristics that have been thought to distinguish persons from other forms of life. In Lock, "person" is a "forensic term, applying for moral reasons." A dualistic approach regards a person as an amalgam of an essentially separate mind and body, with the resulting problem of reinventing their unity in the living person, monistic theories, such as that of Strawson's Individuals (1959), work with a primitive concept of a person, as someone think logically capable of being described in bodily or mental terms. A popular modern analogy is with the compatible software and hardware descriptions of a computer.

Descartes, Rene (1596-1650): French philosophers. Descartes's efforts to achieve certainty in the face of scepticism mark the origins of modern epistemology.

Locke (1632-1704): English Philosopher. Lock was born in Wrington and educated at Oxford, where he seemed destined for a career in medicine.

Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804): German philosopher who revolutionised modern philosophy, in an effort to counter the sceptical arguments of Hume and provide a firm basis for human knowledge and morality. Kant used transcendental arguments to show that human beings apply synthetic a priori judgements as the preconditions for any possible experience.

Strawson, Peter F. (1919-): British philosopher who applies the methods of analytic philosophy to traditional philosophical problems. Strawson criticised Russell's theory of descriptions in "On Referring" (1950) and developed the notion of descriptive (as opposed to revisionary) metaphysics in reference to problem of reidentification of particulars in Individual: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics (1959). His The Bounds of Sense (1966) is an extended commentary on the critical philosophy of Kant.

Namita Kalita