

## 1.4 BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

While studying the philosophical thoughts of a philosopher, we study his thinking in different branches of philosophy. These branches of philosophy are as follows:

- (1) **Epistemology.** Philosophy is the search for knowledge. This search is critical. Hence, the first problem which arises before a philosopher is about the nature of knowledge and its limitations. Therefore, epistemology is the most fundamental branch of philosophy. It discusses philosophically truth, falsehood, validity of knowledge, limits of knowledge and nature of knowledge, knower and known etc.
- (2) **Metaphysics.** This is the study of existence, reality or essence. Its main branches are as follows:
  - (i) **Cosmogony.** This is a study of creation. Is the world created, or is it eternal? How was world created? Why was it created? Who created the world? What is the purpose in creation? All these are the problems of cosmogony.
  - (ii) **Cosmology.** The main problems of cosmology are: Is the world one or is many, or is it both one and many?
  - (iii) **Ontology.** Ontology is the study of ultimate reality. Is the reality one or is it many or is it both one and many? If reality is many, what is the relation between these many elements? All these are ontological questions.
  - (iv) **Philosophy of self.** This is mainly concerned with the philosophical analysis of self. What is self? What is its relation with the body? Is it free of does it depend on the body? Is it one or many? All these are problems of philosophy of self.
  - (v) **Eschatology.** The discussion of the condition of soul after death, the nature of the other world, etc., form the subject matter of this branch of philosophy.
- (3) **Axiology.** This branch of philosophy philosophically studies value. It has been divided into the following three branches:
  - (i) **Ethics.** Ethics discusses the criteria of right and good.
  - (ii) **Aesthetics.** Aesthetics discusses the nature and criteria of beauty.
  - (iii) **Logic studies truth.** The subject matter of logic includes the methods of judgment, types of proposition, hypothesis, definition, comparison, division, classification and fundamental laws of thoughts, etc.
- (4) **Philosophy of Sciences.** This branch of philosophy is concerned with the philosophical examination of the postulates and conclusions of different sciences.
- (5) **Philosophies of Social Science.** The philosophical problems in different social sciences give birth to different branches of philosophy of which the main are as follows:
  - (i) **Philosophies of Education.** This is concerned with the aim of education and the basic philosophical problems arising in the field of education.
  - (ii) **Social Philosophy.** This branch of philosophy discusses the philosophical basis of social processes and social institutions.
  - (iii) **Political Philosophy.** This branch of philosophy is concerned with the forms of government, forms of state and other basic problems arising in the political field.

- (iv) **Philosophy of History.** The subject matter of this branch of philosophy is the nature of historical process, its purpose and its relations with the cosmic process.
- (v) **Philosophy of Economics.** This branch of philosophy studies the aim of man's economic activities and the fundamental problems arising in the economic field.

Besides the above mentioned branches of philosophy based on sciences, there may be certain comparatively lesser branches of philosophy such as philosophy of physics, philosophy of commerce, philosophy of physical education, philosophy of marriage, philosophy of family etc. These, however, are not sufficient to form independent branches of philosophy.

- (6) **Semantics.** The most important branch of philosophy, according to the contemporary school of Logical Positivism, is semantics which is concerned with the determination of the meanings of different words used in different languages (Shivendra, 2006).

### **1.5 RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY**

Educational thinking, like every other branch of knowledge, started in the philosophical deliberation of the ancient Greek philosophers. Thus the meaning of education in west is initially available in the works of Plato. It is interesting to note that thousands of years ago Plato gave a meaning to education which is even now followed in the West with slight changes here and there.

Plato defined education as a life-long process starting, "from the first years of childhood and lasting to the very end of the life." He used the term education in a very wide sense, "which makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship and teaches him how rightly to rule and how to obey."

Education not only provides knowledge and skills but also inculcates values, training of instincts, fostering right attitude and habits. In (Republic), Plato points out, that "true education, whatever that may be, will have the greatest tendency to civilize and humanize them in their relation to one another and to those who are under their protection." This humanist definition of education propounded by Plato is still the most widely accepted meaning of education in the West. Education everywhere has been taken as a process of inculcating values. As Plato said, "Now I mean by education that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children."

These views of Plato have been universally accepted in West as well as in the East. Education has been defined differently by the idealists, the pragmatists, the naturalists and the realist philosophers. However, its meaning has been generally idealistic. Without some sort of idealism there can be no education worth the name.