

The Influence of Sankhya Philosophy on Present Education System in India

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Abstract:

Sankhya philosophy is one of the most prominent Vedic (Orthodox) philosophy and one of the oldest of Indian philosophies. An eminent, great sage Kapila was the founder of the Sankhya school of Hindu philosophy which is mentioned in the Mahabharata and the Upanishads. There are several disagreements on the etymological meaning of Sankhya philosophy. Such as according to some critics, Sankhya means complete knowledge and someone said Sankhya means the calculation of twenty fifth principles. In a nutshell, the Sankhya dynasty flourished in succession. At first great sage Kapila gave this knowledge disciple Asuri, then Asuri gave this knowledge to his disciple Pancasikha, which beautifully described in the book 'Samkhyakarika'. The earliest surviving text of the sankhya school of hindu philosophy. All though from Sankhyakarika, We can learn about Sankhya knowledge. At present, we can see that social deterioration, lack of values dependent on capitalist education. Therefore the only goal of education should be to develop and express the spirit of people. In fulfilling this goal of education, 'Sankhya Philosophy' plays a vital role in the development of conscience knowledge as well as practical knowledge. On the whole, it can be said that through the development of the soul and the development of values. Sankhya Philosophy' helps people and society to live a beautiful and orderly life. So my Research paper highlights the above discussion which is currently remarkable at present era.

Keywords: Sankhya Philosophy, Education, Kapil Muni, Vedic

Introduction:

Sankhya is one of the most prominent and one of the oldest of Indian schools of philosophies. An eminent, great sage Kapila was the founder of the Sankhya School. The Sankhya philosophy combines the basic doctrines of Sankhya and Yoga. However it should be remembered that the Samkhya represents the theory and Yoga represents the application or the practical aspects. Sankhya is dualistic realism. It is dualistic because it advocates two ultimate realities: Prakriti, matter and Purusha, self. Samkhya is realism as it considers that both matter and spirit are equally real. Samkhya is pluralistic also because of its teaching that Purusha is not one but many. Prakriti is the non-self, it is devoid of consciousness Prakriti is unintelligible and gets greatly influenced by the Purusha, the self. It can only manifest itself as the various objects of experience of the Purusha. Prakriti is constituted of three gunas, namely sattva, rajas and tamas.

The term guna, in ordinary sense means quality or nature. But here, it is to be understood in the sense of constituent (component) in Samkhya. Sattva is concerned with happiness. While rajas is concerned with action, tamas is associated with ignorance and inaction.

In accordance with the Satkaryavada, the Samkhya maintains that the three gunas of Prakriti are also associated with all the world-objects. Prakriti is the primordial and ultimate cause of all physical existence. Naturally the three gunas which constitute Prakriti also constitute every object of the physical world. Prakriti is never static. Even before evolution, the gunas are relentlessly changing and balancing each other. As a result, Prakriti and all the physical objects that are affected or produced by Prakriti, are also in a state of constant change and transformation.

Samkhya accepts three sources of valid knowledge: Perception, inference and testimony. According to sankhya philosophy ultimate aims of education is Liberation (mokhsolav) through vivekgyan.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

Sankhya philosophy is the ancient and most important theoretical philosophy of the East. This philosophy was disseminated by Maharishi Kapil Muni. The relevance of this philosophy may be observed in the modern society and in the education system. The aim of the present education is development of the innate possibilities of the learner and child-centric education, though such concepts have come from Purusa, Prakrit, Satkarmabad of Sankhya philosophy. Beside these the aims of education are development of self, values and to reduce the social and cultural degradation. All these are the important aspect of the axiology of Sankhya Philosophy. Therefore, this philosophical discourse has been chosen by the researcher is very relevant and significant in the present perspective.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following questions came in the mind of the present researcher before he began the present research work. Actually these questions inspired the present researcher to engage in this particular research work:

- i. What is the current educational relevance of the Sankhya Philosophy?
- ii. How does the Axiological view point of Sankhya philosophy helps in the development of social values?
- iii. Does Sankhya philosophy have any effect on creating ideal human beings beyond mystical knowledge?
- iv. How the philosophy of Sankhya helps in the development of the soul (Atmanambridhi)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study attempts to describe the various aspects of Sankhya Philosophy and its impact on present society for creating better civilization. Therefore the researcher considered the title of the problem as: **‘The Influence of Sankhya Philosophy on present education system in India’**

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The major objectives of the present research are:

- To Describes the various aspects or features (Metaphysics, Epistemology, & Axiology) of Sankhya Philosophy
- To find out the influence of Sankhya Philosophy on present education system.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

‘Literature Review’ is an inseparable part of any research article. It is a phase where the researcher positions himself/herself and his/her research work among other researches in the similar field.

Larson (1979) in his book 'Classical Samkhya' brought into the notice that the fundamental notion of Samkhya philosophy such as prakriti, purusa, ahamkara, manas and the three gunas provide the conceptual frame work which influenced the classical formulation of other systems of philosophy. Similarly the influence of Samkhya as propounded over many ages to the areas namely as law, logic, science, economics and psychology. This work refers a new interpretation of philosophical significance to the Samkhya.

K.Das in his doctoral Thesis submitted to Guawhati University conducted a detailed study on the concept of personality according to Sankhya, Yoga and Gita. This study also refers to the contribution of Sri Sankaracharya and his literature as a secondary part.

In many other research quite similar tones is echoed. Till date no research has been conducted on the Influence of Sankhya Philosophy on Present Education System in India.

Methodology:

It is a documentary study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on Primary and Secondary sources. The Primary sources are Government Report and Books. The Secondary sources data are related to the journal, article, newspaper etc. Some related information's were extracted from various websites. It is a Descriptive Research.

Objectives 1:- Features of Sankhya Philosophy:**Metaphysical Aspects of Sankhya Philosophy:**

- Metaphysically Samkhya Philosophy is regarded as dualistic realism. It believes two ultimate realities Prakṛti and Purusa. But that reality is plural. They differ from each other, as like, subject and object. Purusa is having subjective reality and prakriti can be characterized by objective reality.

- The Sankhya replies that Prakriti is the ultimate cause of all objects, including our mind, body and sense organs. The worldly creation is being expressed through cause effect relationship. Cause and effect are two inseparable components stand for all sorts of creation in the cosmos. Hence, all objects of the world are bounded in the chain of cause-effect relation. This relation Sankhya named as 'satkaryavada' and populated as 'theory of causation'.

Prakṛti:

Prakriti is the ultimate cause which is eternal into which the whole world is dissolved.

Gunas of Prakṛti:

The gunas are the ultimate elements of constructing prakriti. Prakriti is the combination of sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva has the function of manifestation. Rajas have the function of activity and Tamas has the function of retardation.

- **Sattva:** Sattva has the function of manifestation. The tendency towards conscious manifestation in the senses, the mind and the intellect; the luminosity of light and the power of reflection in a mirror or crystal are all due to the operation of the element of Sattva in the constitution of things. Sattva manifests an object to consciousness.
- **Rajas:** Rajas has the function of activity. It is active because of its mobility and stimulation. It is also the nature of pain. Rajas makes an object move and act. It is the principle of activity.
- **Tamas:** Tamas has the function of restraint. It is opposed to the Sattvagunas because it is heavy, laziness, drowsiness, sleep and alike. It produces ignorance and darkness and obstructs activity. Tamas is the inertia, resistance or restraint.

Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas contradict as well as cooperate among each other to produce an object. These three gunas are present in all the objects of the world. None of them exist alone.

Purusa:

Purusa or self is an eternal reality. Purusa is neither the body, nor the mind (manas), neither ego (ahamkaara) nor intellect (buddhi). It is free from distortions. Its objects changes but it itself never changes. It is above self-arrogance, aversion and attachment.

Evolution:

A sage named Kapila has described the order of creation which is accepted by the Sankhya Philosophy. The order of creation is as follows.

i) Mahat:

Mahat is the first component produced as a result of evolution. It is cosmic in its nature. It is important to mention that buddhi should not be understood as the same as consciousness. Buddhi helps to identify the soul or the atman which differs from all physical objects and their qualities.

ii) Ahamkara:

The cosmic Buddhi becomes individuated and evolves into the cosmic egoism or Ahamkara. It is the second product of evolution. Ego is identified as “I” or “mine” feelings of an individual. Every individual has buddhi, and since ahamkara is a practical element of buddhi, it is found in all individuals.

iii) Manas:

According to the Sankhya Philosophy, manas or mind is neither eternal nor atomic. It is constituted with parts and thus can come into contact with the different sense organs simultaneously. Mind helps to analyze and synthesize the sense-data into determinate perceptions. Being an internal sense organ, it is aware of objects belonging to the past, present, and the future.

iv) Jnanendriyas:

Jñanendriyas are known as five sense organs; nose, ears, eyes, skin, and tongue. On Sankhya views, sense is an imperceptible energy or force which exists in the perceived organs and apprehends the object.

v) Karmendriyas:

Karmendriyas is understood as the five organs of action which reside in mouth, ears, feet, anus, and the sex organ. They perform the functions respectively as speech, hearing, movement, excretion, and reproduction.

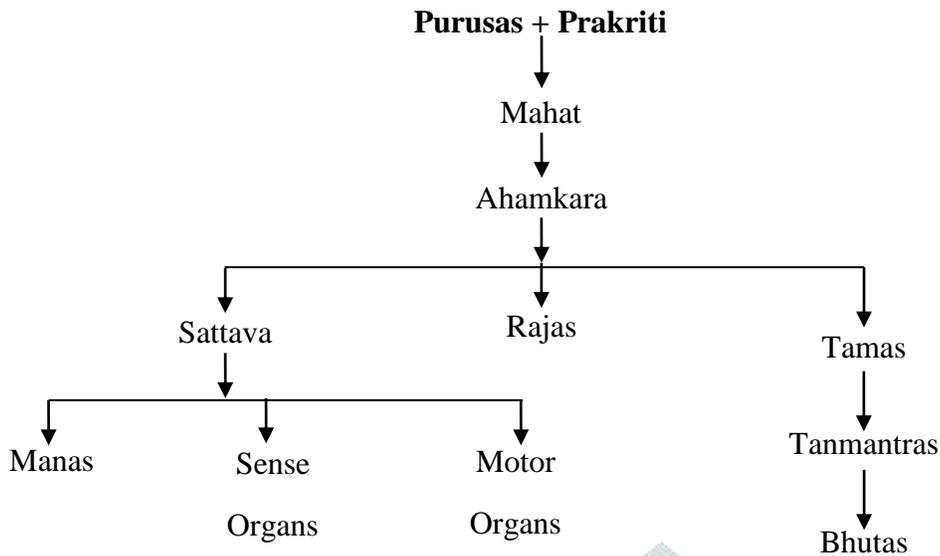
vi) Tanmatras

There are five tanmatras; sabda or sound, sparsa or touch, rupa or form, rasa or taste, and gandha or smell.

vii) Mahabhutas

There are five mahabhutas found in the cosmos namely; Air or Vayu, Fire or Agni, Akasa or Ether, Water or Jala, Prithivi or Earth.

The Samkhya theory of evolution is illustrated in the following diagram for your clarity and better understanding.

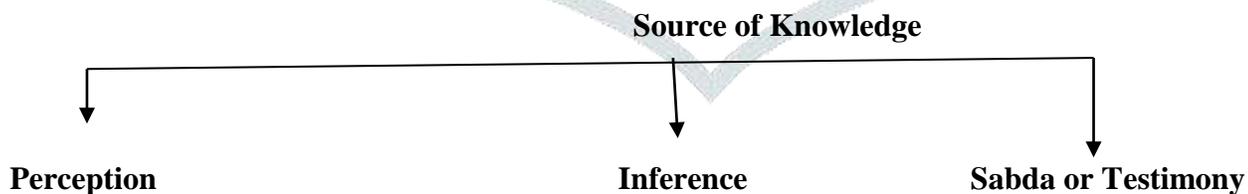


Epistemological Aspects of Samkhya Philosophy:

The sankhya accepts only three independent sources of valid knowledge. These are perception, inference and scriptural testimony (sabda). The other sources of knowledge, like comparison, postulation and non-cognition, are included under these three, and not recognized as separate sources of knowledge.

In all valid knowledge there are three factors, namely, the subject (Pramata) the object (Prameya) and the ground or source of knowledge (Pramana). The modification (vrotti) of the intellect, through which the self knows an object, is called Pramana. The object presented to the self through this~ modification is the Prameya. Prama or valid 'knowledge is the reflection of the self in the intellect as modified into the form of the object.

Sankhya Epistemology



Perception: Perception is the direct cognition of an object through its contact with some senses. When an object like the table comes within the range of your vision, there is contact between the table and your eyes. The table produces impressions or modifications in the sense organ, which are analyzed and synthesized by manas or the mind just as a mirror reflects the light of a lamp and thereby manifests other things, so the material principle of buddhi, being transparent and bright, reflects the consciousness of the self and illuminates or cognizes the objects of knowledge.

It is also called *alocana* or *amere* sensing of the object. The second kind of perception is the result or the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of sense-data by means of the mind. So it is called *vivecana* or a judgement of the object. It is the determinate cognition of an object as a particular kind of the thing having certain analysis and standing in certain relation to other things. The determinate perception of an object is expressed in the form of a Subject-Predicate Proposition, e.g. this is a cow, 'that rose is red'.

Inference: Inference is the knowledge of one term of a relation, which is not perceived through the other which is perceived and known to be invariable by related to the first.

Inference is first divided into two kinds, namely, *vita* and *avita*. It is called *vita* or affirmative when it is based on a universal negative proposition. The *vita* is subdivided into the *purvavat* and the *samanyato-drsta*. A *purvavat* inference is that which is based on the observed uniformity of concomitance between two things. *Samanyatodrsta* inference on the other hand is not based on any observation of the concomitance between the middle with such facts as are uniformly related to the major. The other kinds of inference, namely *avita* is what some *Naiyayikas* call *sesavat*.

Sabda or testimony: The third *pramana* is *Sabda* or testimony. It is constituted by authoritative statements and gives the knowledge of objects which cannot be known by perception and inference. *Sabda* is generally said to be of two kinds, namely, *laukika* and *vaidika*. It is the testimony of *sruti* or the Vedas that is to be admitted as the third independent *Parmana*. The Vedas give us true knowledge about super sensus relatives which cannot be known by perception and inference.

Axiology Aspects of Sankhya Philosophy:

1. The self, who is eternal, pure conscious, and all pervading, due to its ignorance identifies itself with the *manas*, *ahmkara*, and *mahat* which are the products of *Prakrti*. Thus, it experiences the worldly pain and suffering. The universe is constituted of manifold objects, and since objects are embedded with *gunas* and selves and even interrelated among them, suffering is unavoidable. This is so because the *Sankhya* claims that wherever there is *guna* there is suffering. Further, they said that the life in heaven is also controlled by the *gunas*.

2. *Sankhya* philosophy starts with acceptance of universalness of three sorrows–

- ✓ Spiritual (related to soul, mind and body),
- ✓ Physical (related to outer world) and
- ✓ Divine (related to horoscope and divinity).

According to *Sankhya*, emancipation or salvation is the name of riddance from sorrows.

3. Sankhya believes that our Body, Mind and Soul, generated from the combination of Purusa and Prakruti and ultimate liberation is possible after attainment of right knowledge about Purusa and Prakriti so that one can differentiate the existence of Purusa and Prakriti.

4. According to Sankhya its main cause of ignorance when Purusha accept Buddhi's work as his own work, i.e. he experiences Sata, Raja and Tama properties of Prakriti, then it is called Ignorance, so that he become the consumer of happiness– sorrows otherwise he is without properties (Nirguna), he should not experience happiness–sorrows. To know original form of any material and to not accept Buddhi's work as his own work is the knowledge. Human can be dissociated from happiness–sorrows only in the status of this knowledge. Sankhya considers Yoga Sadhana way (Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranayama, Pratyahaara, Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi) necessary to acquire it. Sankhya Philosophy believes that one can follow all these who are keen for salvation. Human can control his senses only through compliance of these moral great vows and rules, can serene his mind and can follow the other 6 steps-Aasana, Pranayama, Pratyahaara, Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi of Yoga Sadhana for liberation.

5. According to Sankhya, pain and suffering are due to non-discrimination between purusa and prakriti. The supreme good is the realization of the perfection of purusa and all ethical activity leads to this end. Virtuous behaviour and the practice of Yoga are recommended as the means to salvation. According to Sankhya, independence of God (the Supreme soul) and individual souls is difficult to maintain. Both cannot co-exist. Also, when the function of productivity is assigned to prakriti, God became superfluous. Thus Sankhya philosophy does not subscribe to the existence of a supreme being. Sankhya believes in the universality of suffering which is of three kinds: **Adhyatmika:** Adhyatmika or arising from the psychophysical nature of man. **Adhibhautika:** Adhibhautika or arising from the external world. **Adhidaivika:** Adhidaivika or arising from supernatural agencies

6. Bondage is caused by non-discrimination between purusa and prakriti. Knowledge and ignorance are the sole determinants of release and bondage. The supreme good is realization of the perfection of the purusa – all ethical activity leads to this end. Freedom is brought about by virtue, the practice of yoga, etc. Wrong knowledge causing bondage includes egoism, desire, hatred and fear. Unselfish activity is an indirect way to salvation. Thus, Sankhya recommends a virtuous life.

Objectives 2:- Educational Implications of Sankhya Philosophy:

Sankhya has great relevance for contemporary education. If we consider the modern view of education as development, then Sankhya's postulate that development is only the unfolding of what already has potential existence needs no modification to suit today's world. Sankhya's psychological views also reflect modern learning theories. If knowledge leads to the modification of buddhi in the Sankhya system, then modern education aims at the modification of behaviour. If cognition is a function of buddhi or intellect in Sankhya, it is the formation of intellectual structure in modern education. Sankhya's theory that generalisation is the

result not only of observation of elements but also non-observation of non-elements reflects the modern view of concept formation. A deeper study will yield many more similarities. According to modern education system, the aims of education are divided into two category,

- ❖ Proximal aims of Education
- ❖ Ultimate aims of Education

Let us attempt to analyze in detail the implications of Sankhya for modern education:

Proximal Aims of Education:

Aims of education:

Sankhya states the ultimate aim as attaining the perfection of purusa through discrimination, leading to its salvation. Thus the aim of education should be to create discerning individuals capable of attaining the perfection that exists within them, as Swami Vivekananda also put it.

Methods:

The methods are clearly indicated thorough study of authorities but keeping an open mind and using reason to validate their theories. Experiential learning with maximum involvement of the senses. Activity based learning including projects, practical work, etc. enabling the development of observation and logical reasoning.

Curriculum:

The curriculum will involve the study of all disciplines, with stress on the natural sciences, since to understand prakriti is to discriminate between purusa and prakriti, and the arts, so as to develop an appreciation and understanding of the works of authorities. Physical sciences and the yoga will also form part of the curriculum since Sankhya believes only a healthy and focused individual can attain salvation.

Discipline:

Sankhya recommends a high degree of discipline. One can deduce that it should be self-imposed.

Role of teacher:

The teacher is to be a facilitator of the development of the innate potentiality of the child.

Place of student:

Since Sankhya believes in the multiplicity of purusas, it follows that education must be individualized and child-centred.

Religious and moral education:

It can be deduced that religious education will not have much importance but moral education involving the teaching of ethical values will definitely hold a central place in any system of education based on Sankhya.

Ultimate aims of Education:

According to Sankhya philosophy the ultimate aims of education are:

Liberation:

Liberation or Kaivalya is one of the most valued objectives of sage Kapila. He explains that liberation is attained when matter is dissociated from the spirit. As long as the individual associates the body with the soul, he will always stay in bondage. As a result, liberation in Samkhya makes the end of bondage and can be attained only with the knowledge of discrimination. He said liberation namely Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti .Jivan Mukti is a state of liberation which is attained while the individual is still living in this world. This is possible only when the right knowledge of discrimination is attained. On the other hand, Videha Mukti is attained after the death of the individual.

Development of Values:

The development of values is described by Swami Vivekananda in these words, “To be happy is the universal urge of all beings and at all times. One has to be at peace with oneself to be happy. These can be no peace for a turbulent mind. ‘*Vasanas*’ (undesirable, wants) take away the peace of mind. It is only when we follow a value system that we can have a serene, contemplative mind. When mind is calm, we can turn it within to ‘see’ the treasure of pure consciousness. No treasure, on earth is equal to a slice of that ‘*tattva*’(element)”.

Development of Self-Actualization:

A self-actualized individual has a strong sense of who they are. They have a deep understanding of their beliefs and values, and they live in congruence with those beliefs and values. Because they accept and understand themselves, they are authentic and true to themselves. They do not pretend to be anything they are not. Not only are self-actualized people authentic, but they seek authenticity as well, both in people and in the world. They are quick to spot dishonesty. Sankhya philosophy guides us to realize the truth for self-actualization.

Enlightenment of self:

Enlightenment of self is a state of awakened understanding. It can be described as the transcendence of suffering and desire in order to obtain spiritual liberation (*moksha*). To be enlightened is to be freed from the tyranny of the mind and to experience deep spiritual peace, presence and wholeness. The state of enlightenment is important in Hindu, Buddhist, Yogic and Sankhya philosophy also.

Conclusion:

Like any other Theist philosophy of India, the real knowledge of the truth is the base of the salvation theory of Sankhya Philosophy. This philosophy helps to escape from sorrow and misery of life by eradicating ignorance and acquiring real knowledge. Ultimate knowledge is the base of welfare of mankind and society. At the end it may be said that modern science, psychology, education can be enriched from this philosophy. Animate and inanimate- integration of these two aspect leads towards life, movement change and its development. If it is realized by knowledge and karma then education becomes successful.

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