The Contemporary Hermeneutical Analysis of the Pramanas in Classical Indian Philosophy: A Critical Appraisal

Dinesha V

Introduction

Pramanas, or the means of obtaining knowledge, have historically been the focus of investigations into epistemology, rationality, and public speech in Hindu philosophy and ancient Indian thinking. The term pramana denotes the procedures or sources of accurate intellectual functioning, often used by Buddhist interlocutors to describe cognition. Hindu philosophers sought to discover and comprehend these processes because their welfare depended on skilled navigation of the environment and a thorough understanding of it. Achieving life goals relies on cognitive achievements, and understanding the mechanisms leading to knowledge is crucial for long-term success and a fulfilling life. In ancient Indian intellectual discourse, schools of thought and practice were required to justify their perspectives and ways of living.

In philosophical, religious, and ethical debates, pramanas, or 'true' beliefs, play a crucial role in establishing one's stance and proving that the other side's viewpoint is flawed. To preserve the Vedic text's moral and religious authority, *Mimamsa* develops a sophisticated epistemology for cognition grounded on Vedic evidence. An established pramana is a formed deduction, and the writers of Nyaya deem it obligatory to provide evidence for the self's existence. Specific notions of inference are essential to Nyaya's approach to logic and inferential cognition. By deciphering the *Upanishad*, adherents of Vedic philosophy hope to gain insight into Brahman and the role of the subconscious in observing waking experiences. By encouraging epistemic normativity and investigating unchangeable ways of knowledge acquisition, Hindu thinkers investigate and debate basic ways of knowing.

This essay will explain how current critical thinking has shed light on important sections of *pramana-shastra*, how these areas have been understood, and how their implications have been investigated or expanded. This includes general pramanas such as *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana*, *Upamana*, *Shabda*, *Arthapatti*, and *Anupalabdhi*, with a particular focus on concepts such as *Prama* (knowledge), *Pramanya* (validity or truth), and *Jnana* (consciousness). Understanding these concepts is crucial for exploring the nature of knowledge and its implications in various philosophical contexts. Moreover, they serve as foundational tools for discerning the reliability of different sources of information and for establishing a coherent framework for epistemological inquiry.

1. Methodology

The pramanas language, which is essential to traditional Indian philosophy, is examined and understood in this study using the theoretical framework of Hans George Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy, which incorporates epistemology as a kind of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics concerns itself mainly with the philosophy of cognition.[1] Hans George Gadamer's research in philosophical hermeneutics had a profound impact on ancient philosophy, historiography, and other academic fields.[2] Hermeneutics, an essential element of epistemology, is concerned with the theory of interpretation, as well as epistemic theories of knowledge, justification, and meaning. According to Gadamer, phenomenology, in its hermeneutical essence, addresses the problem of epistemology by acknowledging hermeneutics as a human experience rather than a methodological notion.[3] Gadamer's work effectively blends constructivism and

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[1] Ann E. MacManus Holroyd, "Interpreting Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Clarifying, Understanding," *IPJP*, Vol.7 (September 2007): 2.

[2] Chris Dawson, "Gadamer's Ontology: An Examination of Hans George Gadamer's Concept of Being in *Relation to Heidegger, Plato, and Hegel*," PhD Thesis, 1996, https://www.researchgate.net, accessed on 15.7.2024.

[3] Vabri Roy, "Epistemology and Hermeneutics," *Multidisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* Vol.3, Issue 3-Article no.1, pp, 5, *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, iep.utp.edu/Gadamer, accessed on 7.7.2024.

historicism, demonstrating the harmony of history and tradition without hindering creativity and success in construction, communication, and interpretation. "Every renewed encounter with an older tradition now is no longer a simple matter of appropriation that unconsciously adds what is proper to itself even as it assimilates what is old; it has to cross the abyss of historical consciousness."[4] Tradition, according to Gadamer, is the finite unfolding of an infinite truth, characterized by its inexhaustible facticity and the impossibility of full realization.[5] According to J. N. Mohanty, a living tradition puts the intellectual to the ultimate test. Many commentators within the tradition have raised doubts about the fundamental concepts. Mohanty says, Nagarjuna and Buddha contested the metaphysical-epistemological and *atman* traditions.[6] Effective communication is essential for comprehending history, tradition, literature, and geography. Gadamer underscores language as a kind of play, linking us to both the inner self and the exterior universe. It helps us understand, interpret, and construct the past and present, strengthening our connection to the external environment.[7] According to Habermas, the interconnectedness of language and the real-world social environment of existence is what separates a hermeneutic circle from a vicious one.[8] According to Gadamer, "Hermeneutic experience is the corrective means by which the thinking reason escapes the prison of language, and it is itself constituted linguistically."[9] According to Gadamer, paragraph interpretation and language understanding are crucial because life events change our preconceived beliefs, making them difficult to return to. The term he uses for this shift in perspective is "a reversal in consciousness," and it is the result of coming to terms with the fact that our prior knowledge of something is relative at best.[10] According to Gadamer, the historical analysis and meaning of a work intrinsically intertwine, making quick readings impossible. The text's historical significance forces interpreters to provide their interpretations.[11] Most Western Indologists, according to Gadamer, aim to study texts without understanding their interpretation history, or *Wirkungsgeschichte*.[12] Gadamer posits that the implicit relationship between the whole and its components, including sentences and words, is crucial for comprehension. He argues that interpretation underlies all understanding, with an application component allowing for fresh interpretations.[13] Understanding, in Gadamer's view, is a universally applicable process of conceptual articulation and linguisticality. To give a third dimension to language and make each reading of a paragraph more significant, he suggests studying hermeneutics, which looks at the relationship between language and interpretation. However, when the context shifts, a fresh interpretation becomes necessary.[14]

2. Etymology of Pramana

Pramana, an Indian philosophical idea and area, signifies "proof." The idea derives from the Sanskrit preposition *pra*, meaning "outward" or "forth," and the word "measurement," *ma*. Pramana is a further nominalization of the term *prama*, which means "correct notion, true knowledge, a basis for understanding." It follows that the idea of pramana is a "means of acquiring *prama*, or certain, correct, true knowledge."[15] Several different Hindu religious systems make frequent use of the word "Pramana." The term *pramanavada* refers to pramana throughout Buddhist literature.[16] Pramana texts, mainly from Hinduism's Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Advaita Vedanta schools, contain "theories of errors," which explain human mistakes and erroneous knowledge. These theories aim to determine the accuracy of these errors and rectify them to provide accurate knowledge.[17]

3. The Study of Pramanas

Epistemology, the theory of knowledge, examines the sources of true knowledge (pramanas), highlighting the intrinsic connection between philosophy and religion.[18] This relationship is particularly evident in the ways different cultures interpret divine revelation and moral truths. By exploring these connections, epistemology not only enriches our understanding of knowledge but also encourages a deeper inquiry into the foundations of belief systems.

[4] Hans George Gadamer, *Reason in the Age of Science* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983), 98.

[5] Hans George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (tr.), William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), 363.

[6] J.N. Mohanty, "Pramanya and Workability: Response to Potter," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*,12 (1984):117.

[7] Chris Dawson, "Gadamer's Ontology: An Examination of Hans George Gadamer's Concept of Being," in *Relation to Heidegger, Plato, and Hegel*, accessed on 15.7.2024.

[8] J. Habermas, *Knowledge, and Human Interests*, (tr.), Jeremy J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann, 1972), 173.

[9] Hans George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (tr.), William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), 363.

[10] G. Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press,1987), 26.

[11] J.N. Mohanty, "On Motilal's Understanding of Indian Philosophy," *Philosophy of East and West*, Vol.42, No. 3 (July 1992): 400.

[12] J.N. Mohanty, "On Motilal's Understanding of Indian Philosophy," (July 1992): 400.

[13] Jurgen Habermas, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, (tr.), Sherry Weber Nicholsen and Jerry A. Stark, (UK: Polity Press, 1988), 149.

[14] Jurgen Habermas, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, 149.

[15] John A. Grimes, *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy: Sanskrit Terms Defined in English* (New York: The State University of New York Press, 1996), 237-238.

[16] John A. Grimes, *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy: Sanskrit Terms Defined in English*, 237-238.

[17] R Narasimha, *Asia, Europe, and the Emergence of Modern Science: Knowledge Crossing Boundaries* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 95-105.

[18] K.P. Aleaz, *Dimensions of Indian Religion: Study Experience and Interaction* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1995), 25.

The pramanas' writings provide information that, from extreme realists to conservative nominalists, classical Indian philosophy is characterized by a lack of consensus on the meaning of key concepts. While certain Buddhist traditions, the Nyaya-Vaisheika and Mimamsa schools, hold to the conceptualist view, others, like the Vedantins and Jains, hold to the nominalist view. These two extremes are not the only possible points of view. Pramana, a key aspect of Indian philosophy, is a distinctive method of knowledge collection that focuses on the external world. This approach is crucial for comprehending reality and its application in various methods, making it essential for formulating philosophical concepts.[19]

Pramanas is a deliberate focus on the essence and role of knowledge, as well as inquiries about the nature of our understanding. In India, people often view logic as a proof and discovery discipline that aids in both acquiring new knowledge and validating existing knowledge. Indian scholars have widely differing opinions on the extent to which they should address various systems, such as visual organs, in their research. Touch or real observation can verify the existence and nature of previously unknown entities. There are a variety of perspectives on the number of pramanas.[20] Philosophy schools, however, frequently combine many pramanas into a single group. The most widely used, albeit rather mechanical, method of classifying the schools is based on how many pramanas they accept, which can range from one to six or more. However, Indian logicians generally accept three: perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*), and verbal testimony (*shabda*).[21]

When discussing the pramanas, or ways of knowing, traditional Indian philosophers emphasize epistemology. When trying to decipher the Upanishad-described Self, *Atman*, and *Brahman*, it is essential to have a firm grasp of these pramanas so as not to confuse one thing with another. This knowledge aids in guiding efforts and achieving goals, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of information gathering. The Indian *Darshana* schools acknowledge six pramanas: perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*), comparison (*upamana*), testimony (*shabda*), postulation (*arthapatti*), and non-existence (*anupalabdhi*).[22] Vaisheshika, Samkhya, and Nyaya are Indian philosophical systems that recognize different pramanas. Samkhya and Yoga recognize perception, inference, and testimony, while Nyaya and Vaisheshika recognize perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. Buddhism recognizes two pramanas, perception, and inference, while Mimamsa and Vedanta accept six: perception, inference, comparison, testimony, postulation, and non-existence. The number of these legitimate sources of knowledge varies among Indian philosophical traditions.[23] The Innermost *atman* always illuminates the five *pramanas*—perception, inference, comparison, postulation, and non-cognition—that make up the realm of human rationality; on the other hand, the sixth *pramana*, verbal testimony, transcends all dogmatism.[24]

Indian epistemology, a philosophical framework that elucidates knowledge acquisition, has been a prominent subject of study in Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism throughout recorded history. It includes a variety of methods for accurate and genuine information acquisition, as well as a variety of philosophical frameworks.[25] Philosophy has been a crucial element of Indian society since antiquity, with philosophers noting *pandits* participating in philosophical discourse. Indian philosophy prioritizes self-realization as the paramount objective, with each school formulating its epistemology. The evolution of their philosophical framework intricately links this knowledge, as epistemology, metaphysics, and the theoretical foundations of reality deeply intertwine. The only way to discover one's identity and purpose is through comprehending concepts, highlighting the importance of philosophical inquiry in human existence.[26]

4. The Origins and Development of Pramana Theory

In both philosophical and religious contexts, the ancients regarded logic and epistemology as far more important than they do now. We raise relevant inquiries about the feasibility of any epistemic theory using the theoretical framework of *pramana-shastra*, which has its closest Western counterpart in "epistemology." Unlike the Vaisheshika system, which began with ontological categories (*prameya*) and metaphysics before improving its epistemology treatment, the Nyaya school began with epistemology and research methods. The Nyaya-sutra starts with pramana, "means of cognition," and ends with *hetvabhasa*, "fallacious reasoning," and *pramanabhasha*, "*pseudo-brahmana*."[27] The Nyaya technique recognizes sixteen distinct categories, known as *padarthas*. The pramanas relate to fifteen of these categories. The last category, *prameya*, refers to the

[19] James Lochtefeld, "Pramana," in *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Hinduism*, Vol.2, N-Z (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2002), 520-21.

[20] M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1949), 42.

[21] M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, 43.

[22] Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Delhi: Motilalbanarsidass, 2002), 25-26.

[23] Purshottama Bilimoria, "Pramana Epistemology: Some Recent Developments in Asian Philosophy," Vol. 7, *Springer* (1993): 137-154.

[24] K.P. Aleaz, *The Role of Pramanas in Hindu-Christian Epistemology* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak,1991),

[25] James G. Lochtefeld, "Pramana," in *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Hinduism*, Vol 2: N-Z, Rosen Publishing, 2002, page 520-521, Google eBook.

[26] Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philo*sophies, 25-26.

[27] Anantalal Thakur, (ed.) *Nyaya Darshana*, "Nyaya-sutra with Bhasha of Vatsyayana, Vartikka of Uddyotkara," (Mithila: *Mithila Institute Series*, no. 20, NS.1 (1967):18.

components that require detailed comprehension to achieve *Nihishreya*, the ultimate benefit, through the appropriate use of pramanas.[28]

The pramana idea may have originated in medical literature, specifically the *Charaka-Samhita,* and *Susrata-Samhita*. The *Charaka-Samhita*, dating to the first or second century CE, teaches the philosophy of pramana, the tools or methods used to obtain knowledge. In the *Susrata*, the term "pramana" refers to "measurement" or size. Charaka provides a method of inquiry for doctors to investigate pain origins, treatments, and recovery chances. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, part of *anvikshiki*, uses Nyaya as a calculative logic, detailing the components of "debate" (*vada*), including pramanas, formal inference, and the rules of argumentation.[29] *Charaka-Samhita* defines inference as cognition based on prior knowledge or perception, whereas perception (*pratyaksha*) is a connection between the self and the present. Inferences regarding the past, present, and future fall into one of three categories. We can infer a future fruit from seed because we have previously witnessed or experienced that process. We infer fire from smoke and copulation from pregnancy (past and present, respectively).[30]

4.1. Pramana as Yukti

Pramana parallels the Indian concept of *yukti*, which involves the proactive application of existing information, novel ideas, cunning associations or tactics, component integration, and the use of a device, technique, means, or innovation to improve efficiency.[31] Charaka presents a pramana that is both unusual and exciting. This pramana is known as synthetic inductive reasoning, which is also known as *yukta-pramana* or simply *yukta*.[32] Certain Indian literature simultaneously addresses *yukti* and pramana; *yukti* is an active method of information acquisition, while pramana is a passive process of knowledge acquisition through observation or perception.[33] Dan Lusthaus defines Charaka's *yukta* theory as the synchronization of numerous factors that lead to transformation. This multifaceted process may affect agriculture and medicine. Several factors mediate the seed-fruit interaction. *Yukta*, derived from the verb *yukti*, is logic that integrates factors to achieve a result. Inference, or *anumana*, is the conclusion of a circumstance or cause leading to a specific result, like fruit growth from a seed. Charaka emphasizes the importance of prior perception in inference, which allows for future fruit yield prediction.[34]

4.2. Development of Pramana Theory

An important step forward in Indian philosophy, the pramana theory seeks to explain the nature and scope of knowledge, as well as the difference between complete ignorance and faulty understanding. Genuine knowledge (*prama*) requires a reliable and legitimate instrument (*karana*). The instrumental efficacy of a valid method of knowing leads to precise knowledge acquisition. Different forms of pramana exist for objective and trans-objective information, starting with perception.[35] Mysore Hiriyanna, a pioneering Indian philosopher of his day, aimed to elucidate pramana's discourse for a non-Indian readership. The writer looked at three main uses of pramana: knowledge; a method for checking, evaluating, and closely looking into knowledge claims or interpretations from the source by using ratiocination; and "measurement" based on criteria for "truth" or "falsity," which is also known as the validity issue. Collectively, all of these provide the fundamental basis for knowledge's existence.[36]

4.3. The Concept of Jnana-Knowledge

In Indian philosophical thought, *jnana*, also known as cognition, is considered to be the predicate of truth. *Samkhya-Yoga* and *Vedanta* describe *jnana* as a tangible occurrence, a *guna* or *kriya* of the self in most systems, a modification or *vritti* of the inner sense, and a reflection in consciousness.[37] *Jnana*, a fundamental concept in pramana doctrines, is often associated with "cognition" in Western culture, but only after significant qualifications. Despite varying views among schools, the application of truth-valuing cognition and impartial experience is characterized by uncertainty, regardless of truth or falsehood. *Jnana* can be classified as true, false, or potentially false or inaccurate. Contemporary authors have explored this subject, with some rejecting

[28] Anantalal Thakur, (ed.) *Nyaya Darshana*, "Nyaya-sutra with Bhasha of Vatsyayana, 183.

[29] Dan Lusthaus, "Philosophy, Medicine, Science, and Boundaries," in *After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion*, ed. Morny Joy (Calgary: Calgary University Press, 2013),151-157.

[30] "Charaka Samhita," 209, chapter 11, pp, 21-22.

[31] Tom J. F. Tillemans (2011), *Buddhist Epistemology (Pramanavada), The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy,* Editors: William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195328998.003.0022, accessed on 16.7.2024.

[32] Dan Lusthaus, "Philosophy, Medicine, Science, and Boundaries," in *After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion*, 160.

[33] Monier-Williams, "Yukti: Sanskrit-English Dictionary," *Cologne Digital Sanskrit Lexicon, Germany*, in R Narasimha, *Asia, Europe, and the Emergence of Modern Science: Knowledge Crossing Boundaries* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 95-97.

[34] Dan Lusthaus, "Philosophy, Medicine, Science, and Boundaries," in *After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion*, 160.

[35] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic* (Calcutta: Chukervertty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., 1956),162.

[36] M. Hiriyanna, *Outline of Indian Philosophy* (Bombay: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), 178.

[37] J.N. Mohanty, "Indian Theories of Truth: Thoughts on Their Common Framework," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (October-1980): 440.

its translation as "knowledge" and preferring the term "prama." *Jnana* is an experienced reality that involves cognitive or psychological activities such as "ideation," "recalling," "doubting," "wandering," "guessing," "dreaming," "inferring," and "understanding."[38] Nyaya asserts that knowledge discloses the subject and the object, which are two quite different things. This explains why people refer to Nyaya as a realist system. Apprehension, or consciousness, is the definition of knowledge or cognition. Knowledge can be true or false. Prama, or valid knowledge, refers to the correct understanding of something.[39] However, *jnana* possesses the subtlety of "cognition," or maybe more accurately, "awareness," at a deeper level. Karl H. Potter asserted that we should understand *jnana* as "an act of awareness" in the sense of a cognitive or mental episode or occurrence rather than interpreting it as a disposition like "belief."[40] Attaining *jnana*, which stands for awareness, is necessary for the attainment of *prama*, the finding of truth. Since the goal of epistemology is to provide a subjective or phenomenological basis for "objective" knowledge, *jnana*, as awareness, serves as the basis of pramana theory.[41] To begin with, *Jnana* is hyper-present and instantaneous (*vyavasaya, aparokshanubuti*) in sensory awareness; secondly, it is deliberate and focused (*vishayata*), meaning that it is about or directed towards an "object" (either inwardly or outwardly).[42] Matilal connects this discovery to Peter Strawson's idea of a pre-theoretic framework or worldview.[43]

Jnana's relational qualificative structure has two stages: (1) item X manifests in consciousness as "this" or "it," transforming into *visheshana*, and (2) the mode (*prakara*) that presents the item serves as the qualificand's attribute or qualifier. Every cognitive event or F-ness object has this qualifier-qualified structure. Q (cup-ness) may characterize an oblique object's features (*tadvisheshakam*). The object's essence contributes to a more complete qualitative experience (*vishista*). Some epistemologies of realism incorporate this idea, which is not necessary for representational cognition.[44] To put it another way, Nyaya believes that the object of cognition, sensory contact with the object, and interaction with the qualified object of the form are the three most crucial components of true perceptual cognition.[45] Qualificative awareness episodes can be verbally articulated, but this is not always necessary. According to Indian philosophers such as Bhartrihari (400–500 CE), language permeates all knowledge, and the phenomenological datum is linguistic or conceptual. Older Nyaya interpreters contend that we cannot present instantaneous experiences as well-formed judgments of consciousness until we delve into conceptual and language aspects. People often perceive language and cognition as distinct processes.[46]

4.4. The Concept of Pramanya

Pramanya, a pivotal term in classical Indian thought, makes it easier to understand pramanas as a philosophical framework. A theory of truth and standards for determining the validity of *jnana* are matters that pramanya must attend to. In Mohanty's new definition, pramanya means "truth." Indian epistemology complicates the theory by distinguishing between two main ideas: the concept of "truth" and the process of finding truth.[47] Truth theories contain a concept known as the *Svatah* thesis. This thesis proposes that cognition's actuality may involve different or the same conditions as perception. The *Svatah* thesis, on the other hand, contends that the actuality of cognition is independent of the conditions of its development, whereas the *paratah* hypothesis acknowledges that mistakes may occur in any awareness episode.[48] Mohanty, along with a few other contemporary philosophers, attempted to bridge the gap between the two points of view and concluded that it is possible that they were addressing distinct issues to further their theories and conceptions of truth.[49]

Karl H. Potter resolves the conflict by proposing a very different understanding of *jnana* and its essence. The intentional pursuit of fulfillment or pleasure is what Potter means when he talks about this connection. Awareness experiences demonstrate whether two people are compatible in terms of subject matter. Potter says that *Yathartha*, which means "fit" in Sanskrit, represents J's (*jnana*) drive.[50] The play explores the ambiguous term "*artha*" in pramanya speech, which can encompass various meanings such as "object," "purpose," "goal," and "system of ends." Potter compares the extracted "purposive" structure to pramanya, which refers to a situation where the initial qualifier of a *jnana* (J) is the qualificandum of a *jnana* (1) with a specific

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[38] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Perception (Pratyaksha) in Advaita Vedanta," *Philosophy East and West,* 30, 1 (1985): 30.

[39] B.A. Sanskriti, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 2011), 24.

[40] Karl H. Potter, "Does Indian Epistemology Concern Justified True Belief?" *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 12 (4) (1984): 307-382.

[41] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1986), 23, 105-107.

[42] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 11.

[43] Peter F. Strawson, "Knowledge and Truth," *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.3, No.3 (1976): 273-283.

[44] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 374.

[45] J. L. Shaw, "Knowledge, Belief and Doubt: Some Contemporary Problems and Their Solutions in the Nyaya Perspective," *Asian Studies Institute*, (Victoria University of Wellington, 2007):14.

[46] Sibajiban Bhattacharyya, Purushottama Bilimoria, "Bimal Matilal's Navya- Realism, Buddhist 'Lingo- Phobia' and Mental Things," in *Language and Mind, vol. 2: The Classical Indian Perspective*, ed. K. S. Prasad (New Delhi: Decent Books, 2008), 31.

[47] J. N. Mohanty, *Gangesha's Theory of Truth, Visvabharati, Santiniketan: Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,1966), 77.

[48] J. N. Mohanty, *Gangesha's Theory of Truth, Visvabharati, Santiniketan: Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy*, 77.

[49] J. N. Mohanty, *Gangesha's Theory of Truth, Visvabharati, Santiniketan: Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy*, 70-80.

[50] Karl H. Potter, "Does Indian Epistemology Concern Justified True Belief?", (1984):312.

characteristic (*visheshana*). Potter argues that subsequent Navya-Nyaya definitions and other Buddhist accounts consistently link the notion of "right" awareness to a "previously established purpose or purposeful object."[51] Pramanya, according to Potter, is all about purpose, fulfillment, or desired consequence; he equates it with *Samarthya*, which is too wide. He challenges the typical understanding of pramanya as "truth" and suggests an alternative, more pragmatic, or "workability" criterion for the capacity of *jnana* to impact real-world enjoyment. This hypothesis, according to Potter, suggests either "correspondence to reality" or the disappointment of *jnana*-derived happiness. Potter's non-cognitivist approach to value theory aims to bridge the gap between "fact" and "value" by revising the pramanya idea, focussing on a "workability" theory of truth, which encompasses normative, ethical, and artistic descriptions.[52] Pramanya, an Indian notion of reality, contains two unique meanings. According to *Svataha* theorists, *pramanya* and *jnanatva* share identical generative conditions, thereby mitigating mistakes and fostering *jnana*. The Prabhakaras and Advaita Vedanta schools possess divergent perspectives on *jnana*, with some asserting that all *jnana* constitutes *prama*, while others contend that *aprama* or mistakes do not qualify as forms of *jnana*. Nyaya contends that even errors, or *aprama*, are forms of *jnana*. One can make decisions with certainty and simultaneously engage in cognition. If a question arises, it may be necessary to examine the unique quality, or "mark of excellence" (*guna*), that gave the verdict its unique truth value. In such cases, a deficiency or vitiating condition may have caused the judgment's inaccuracy, leading to rejection or *aprama*.[53]

Criticisms of the pramanya-based Advaita school of thought center on two points: first, that "P works because P is true because P works." Second, the school defines *artha* as the deliberate fulfillment of object values. Conversely, the *Svatah* thesis disregards empirical evidence in favor of the assumption that truth is intrinsic. Since "knowledge" encompasses an epistemological requirement and *jnana* is the polar opposite of knowledge in *Advaita*, the latter is an appropriate translation.[54]

5. The General Pramanas

Pramanas are important philosophical concepts and teachings that have greatly shaped and influenced various aspects of Indian thought.

5.1. Pratyaksha-Perception

Indian and Western philosophical traditions center on the nature of perception, with realist-phenomenalist and idealist schools of thought vying for dominance. Several fourth-century Buddhists, like Dignaga, rejected realism and exhibited a plurality of phenomenalism. Nyaya-Vaisheshika, with B.K. Matilal's notable contributions represent explicit realism in Indian vision.

Perception is the English translation of the Sanskrit word *pratyaksha*. Etymologically, the word *pratyaksha* consists of two elements: *prati* (to, before, near) and *aksha* (sense-organ), or *prati* and *akshi* (eye). Thus, the word translates to 'present to or before the eyes or any other sense organ,' implying 'direct' or 'immediate.' Pratyaksha serves as both a noun and an adjective in Indian philosophy, signifying immediacy. It is a noun that stands for immediate knowledge. We use it as an adjective to describe (i) knowledge (*jnana*), (ii) the object of knowledge (*vishaya*), and (iii) the way of knowing (*pramana*).[55] Nyaya posits that illusion is a material object present in perception, not a non-existent one, influenced by memory, recollection, or sensory stimulation. In contrast, the Buddhist perspective views illusion as a revelation of the non-existent.

Armstrong argues that perceptual illusion is a belief rather than a physical sight or perception. However, the Nyaya perspective, explained by Matilal, suggests that individuals have strong visual or tactical experiences in such illusions, making them perceptual and requiring explanation. People often claim an event is perceptual.[56]

Bilimoria quotes a sense-data theorist who argues that the instantaneous provision of raw sense data, including unsensed sense data, influences our perception of things. The mind is responsible for this sensory information, and representationalist perspectives believe that human perception relies on inferring causality from sensory data. Given that representationalists and phenomenalists define immediate awareness as a sensible quality, sense impression, or sense data, the phenomenalist's claim that our experience derives from sensory material raises doubts about its validity.[57]

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[51] Karl H. Potter, "Does Indian Epistemology Concern Justified True Belief?", (1984): 313.

[52] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Bimal K Matilal's Navya- Realism, Buddhist 'Lingo- Phobia' and Mental Things," in *Language and Mind, vol. 2: The Classical Indian Perspective*, ed. K. S. Prasad (New Delhi: Decent Books, 2008), 31.

[53] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Pramana Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," (January 1993): 35.

[54] J.N. Mohanty, "Pramanya and Workability: Response to Potter," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 12, No. 4 (1984): 332.

[55] D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing: A Critical Study of The Advaita Theory of Knowledge* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta,1972), 30.

[56] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 218.

[57] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Praman Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," (January 1993):34.

5.1.1. Kinds of Perception

The Nayayikas classify perception into two major categories: ordinary (*laukiaka*) and extraordinary (*alaukika*). Ordinary perception occurs when the normal sense-object interaction continues. We recognize the conventional pathways of sensory experiences, including the sense organs of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, as sources of sensation. However, we regard common perceptions from two perspectives. The *Nirvikalpa* is indeterminate, while the *Savikalpa* is determinate.[58] *Nirvikalpa*, according to Matilal, is conception-free, while *Savikalpa* is conception-loaded.[59]

5.1.1.1. Nirvikalpaka

In conception-free perception, the object is the central focus, occurring before any connection is made between the item and its name (*nama*), its fundamental quality as a whole (*jati*), and so on.[60] It is precisely the situation where we hold an object as though it were a snapshot or picture. It may be addressed using a pronoun like "this" or "that." In other words, the perceiver does not attach any qualities to the object while being aware of it and having intentionality[61] towards it in his/her mind. In this particular case, it has been argued that, despite his/her consciousness, a clear and specific thought, such as "This is so and so," does not arise. Kesavamisra illustrates "This is Ditta" and "This is a Brahmana" as judgments that instantaneously provide conception-free perceptions, indicating that Nyaya likewise addresses our commonplace perceptual experiences.[62] Matilal's concept of a complete chair as a set of interconnected components raises questions about our understanding of the world. He argues that these components exist nominally, composed of elements like color, shape, and tactical feel, beyond our senses. This raises questions about our comprehensive view of the object and its constituent parts, as well as our perception of features as independent of their substance.[63]

5.1.1.2. Savikalpaka

Manameyodaya contends that linguistic expression and awareness swiftly attain accomplishment. It presupposes the paradigm of "This is red," "This is a pot," and so on, where its essence encompasses all elements distinguished by a basic attribute (*jati*), among other variables. People often describe this phenomenon as "concept-loaded."[64]

Matilal argues that perception theories should not solely focus on sensory experience; our normal perceptual judgement goes beyond it. The Nyaya argument emphasizes that most indirect theories of perception, such as realist or idealist, are biased toward the part-whole dichotomy, supporting Matilal's more extreme theory of "naive" or "direct realism.' This highlights the importance of considering the gap between sensory experience and perception theories. Bilimoria argues that Nyaya's approach to understanding perception differs from the commonsense presumption that the relationship between parts and the whole is contingent. Instead, Nyaya proposes an inherence relationship, where the tree is equally contained in the branch. This approach emphasizes the importance of examining the whole-part distinction at the ontological level, as we first perceive the whole because it consists of parts. This approach challenges the notion that parts and the whole are contingent, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of perception.[65] Matilal argues that the traditional distinction between mediate and immediate objects of experience is not genuine and extends beyond the Nyaya theory's purview.[66] Matilal challenges the validity of the representationalist theory of perception by asserting that it relies on sensory information and interprets the causal relationship between sensory data and objects. The theory is underpinned by the Lockean distinction between subsidiary and basic qualities, which requires deduction from one to the other. Nyaya's methodology, which attributes causal responsibility to the fraction affecting the body's perception, lacks causal validity.[67]

The following remark from Matilal elucidates the prior explanation:

Nyaya's direct realism eliminates the third entity, sense-datum, from the discussion of perception. By giving a different causal explanation of perceptual illusion and hallucination, Nyaya aims to characterize the causal factors in a naive or non-specialist conception of perception. Then, the consideration for the so-called causal relation between sense data and the material object (which has been the cornerstone of modern representationalist and causal theorists) is conspicuous by its absence in Nyaya. Here, we do not argue that a person claims to perceive a familiar body under the occurrence of some sense of impression.[68]

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[58] Sarsvati Chennakesavan, *Concept of Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1976),140.

[59] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theory of Knowledge*, 313.

[60] Junzo Tanizawa, "Perception in Indian Philosophy: Is Nirvikalpa Pratyaksha Possible," *JJASA* Series, 7 (1995): 3.

[61] Keshava Mishra, "Tarkabhasa," Bombay Sanskriti and Prakriti Series, pp 33, in   Junzo Tanizawa, "Perception in Indian Philosophy," *JJASA* Series, 7 (1995): 3.

[62] Keshava Mishra, "Tarkabhasa:" *Bombay Sanskriti, and Prakriti Series*, 7, pp 33, in Junzo Tanizawa, "Perception in Indian Philosophy: Is Nirvikalpa Pratyaksha Possible," (1995):3.

[63] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 246.

[64] "Manameyodaya," Adyar Library Series, pp.18-19, in Junzo Tanizawa, "Perception in Indian Philosophy," *JJASA Serie*s, 7 (1995): 3.

[65] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Praman Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," 35.

[66] Bimal K. Matilal, "Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge," 267.

[67] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Pramana Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," 35.

[68] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 268.

Matilal argues that our understanding of visual perception should be based on the physical substance, such as the tomato, rather than the property itself. He suggests that the tomato represents a specific instance of the universal red property, and people interpret it based on its unique color, which is inherent in a composite material.[69] A third technique for improving the viewpoint entails transferring the "in virtue of" connection from the representationalist explanation of "sense data." We do this after eliminating the assumption of sense data. The following phrase embodies the core principle of Nyaya-Vaisheshika (direct) realism, often referred to as the school of thought's official credo: We cannot see a tomato based solely on its bright appearance. In contrast, we can identify the tomato based on its distinctive color and form.[70]

5.1.2. Views of Philosophical Schools on Perception

Buddhist and Hindu philosophical traditions differ in their understanding of perception. Buddhist schools of thought consider perception to be non-conceptualized awareness, but traditional Hindu schools acknowledge the possibility of both non-conceptualized and conceptualized experiences. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the intricacies of perception in the process of obtaining knowledge, which stands in contrast to the more expansive perspective of perception that is prevalent in Hindu philosophical traditions.

5.1.2.1. Nyaya: Its Further Explanation of Perception

The Nyaya contains contradictions, discordant with the tenets of both phenomenalism and representationalism. According to the phenomenalist view, often called "sensibilia," the sense data and perception are equivalent to reality. According to this view, there are two types of perception: direct and indirect. The former sees mental or physical things as building blocks that, when combined, create perceptual objects.[71] Gautama's Nyaya-Sutra 1.1.4 provides the most thorough and significant description of perception in classical Indian philosophy. Words do not influence perception, which is an exact and well-defined form of cognition that results from the interaction of the senses with an object.[72] The objects are non-erratic (unerring), formed by their links to our intelligence.[73]

According to Nyaya's philosophy, cognition or knowledge is defined as apprehension or awareness. Perception is to be considered a type of genuine cognition in logic.[74] The Nyaya School states that perception is based on four factors: (1) the sense organ's interaction with the object; (2) the perception is ineffable; (3) the perception is non-deviating; and (4) the perception is definitive in and of itself.[75]

In his *Nyayabhashya*, Vatsayana comments on the term ineffable as follows:

> The object's name does not express the cognition of an object if the relation between the object and the word that denotes it has not yet been comprehended. Even after comprehending the relationship between the object and its name, the object's cognition remains unchanged from its previous understanding.[76]

5.1.2.2. The Perspective of Mimamsa on Perception

Around 200 BCE, Jamini wrote the Purva Mimamsa-sutra (MS). According to the fourth MS 1.1.4, an individual's sense faculties connect to an existent (*sat*) object, resulting in cognition. This process is known as perception, and it is not the source of *Dharma* knowledge; it is the comprehension of the present.[77] Mimamsa observers, including Kumarila, have differing interpretations of the *Mimamsa sutra*. According to Kumarila, the first section of the *sutra* cannot define perception in its context. Instead, it focuses on investigating righteousness (*Dharma*). The *sutra* asserts that perception arises from a connection between the sense faculty and a tangible object. However, Kumarila suggests that *Vrittikara* may legitimately be interpreted as a definition. The Mimamsa sutra's extensive commentary proposes a different interpretation of the first part of the sutra by flipping the words "that" and "existing," stating that true perception is a cognition that results from the connection of a person's sense faculties with the same object.[78]

5.1.2.3. Perception in the View of Samkhya

A sense organ's function is the original definition of perception in the Samkhya school. Jayarashi Bhatta (c. 8th century), an ancient skeptic, is quick to point out that this is insufficient. This kind of perception cannot serve as a vehicle for pramana (knowledge) since it fails to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate sensing and, by extension, between sound and false impressions. In a later, more nuanced version, the term is defined as "an ascertainment (of buddhi or intellect) regarding a sense faculty."[79]

[69] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 283.

[70] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, 285.

[71] Bimal K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*,1986, 273.

[72] Nyaya-Sutra 1:1-4.

[73] S. Radhakrishnan and C. Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (New Jersy: Princeton University Press, 1957), 359.

[74] Satish Chandra Chatterjee and Dheerendra Mohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: Nishitchandra Sen, 1948), 199.

[75] Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *Concept of Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1976),139.

[76] Junzo Tanizawa, "Perception in Indian Philosophy,"2.

[77] John A. Taber, "A Road Not Taken in Indian Epistemology: Kumarila's Defense of the Perceptibility," in J. Tuske, *Indian epistemology and Metaphysics* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 44.

[78] John A. Taber, "A Road Not Taken in Indian Epistemology: Kumarila's Defense of the Perceptibility," 16.

[79] Wezler, A, *Yuktidipika: The Most Significant Commentary on the Sankhyakarika*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag,1998), n.a.

Perception is a modification of the intellect, involving selective ascertainment of an object through the functioning of a sense faculty. This concept highlights perception as the primary means of knowledge, as it is an "ascertainment" of the intellect. The intellect views ascertainment as an outcome of cognitive processes, but the ego regards it as mere perception. The *Samkhyakarika* posits that the senses have a restricted role in basic perception, but ascertainment, an intellectual activity, entails identifying things such as a cow.[80] This indicates a two-step process: first, the senses operate to "mere see" the object (non-conceptualized awareness), and then the mind acts upon this mere seeing to identify the object conceptually. Mimamsaka and Naiyayika, in their comprehensive depictions of conceptual (*savikalpaka*) perception, also outline this two-phase process.[81]

5.1.2.4. Advaita Vedanta

Advaita Vedanta holds that the directness of knowledge obtained through perception is what distinguishes perception.[82] Nyaya and Mimamsa advocates argue that the sense faculty's connection with its object is critical to perception, whereas *Advaitins* emphasize the directness of perception. Feelings of pleasure and pain, as described in the *Vedanta Paribhasha*, are instances of direct intuition that do not need physical contact.[83] According to *Advaitins*, perception is only consciousness' immediate presence; any device does not mediate knowledge.[84] It is important to note that this definition and the one used by Navya-Naiyayikas are quite similar. Like the latter, the *Advaitins* consider the sensory connection's role in perception to be incidental rather than crucial. While other Hindu schools consider non-conceptual perception to be merely a stage before conceptualized perception, the Neo-Advaitins acknowledge the distinction between conceptual or determinate perception (*visayagata pratyaksha*) and non-conceptual or indeterminate perception (*nirvikaplapka pratyaksha*).

5.1.2.5. Buddhist View

Vasubandhu first articulated the concept of perception in the fourth century CE. Vasubandhu defined perception as "a cognition that arises" from the represented object. Within the Buddhist tradition, this notion of perception is the oldest definition of perception that is still prevalent today.[85] Buddhist Yogachara philosopher Dinnaga (480–540 CE) believed that perception is a non-conceptual cognition, lacking conceptual formulation. Scholars widely debate this perspective, leading to two significant consequences. Firstly, we cannot perceive vision as gazing, as it is a non-conceptual phenomenon. Second, perception is the acquisition of fundamental information without any connection to language, as any connection can lead to misrepresentation of the object. In Buddhism, universal referents are not considered tangible elements of the cosmos.[86] Secondly, Dinnaga's definition emphasizes a phenomenological component of perception while neglecting its origin and the notion that it arises from a sense faculty interacting with an object. According to Buddhist idealists, the form that arises inside consciousness must be the object of perceptual knowledge rather than an external physical being. These principles incited fervent debates between Buddhists and Hindus in classical Indian philosophy. The first notion pertains to non-conceptual experience, but the subsequent notion emphasizes idealism. The realist Nyaya-Vaisheshika and Mimamsa schools strongly disagree with Dinnaga's idealist-nominalist philosophy and epistemology, which aligns with Buddhist ideas of emptiness, the fleeting nature of all things, and the lack of a self.[87]

5.1.2.6. Charvaka

Due to its practical approach to the world and life, people have viewed the Charvaka or *Lokayata* philosophy as either weak, vulnerable, or strong, presenting a variety of objections. The Charvaka philosophical school rejects all the pramanas of Indian philosophy except perception.

The Charvaka believe that perception is the sole reliable source of information. They argue that all non-perceptual or indirect sources of knowledge, such as inference and the testimony of others, are untrustworthy and frequently deceptive. As a result, we should only trust in what we can instantly perceive.[88]

5.2. Anumana-Inference

Inference serves as a secondary source of knowledge, enabling perception to reveal information that is not immediately apparent. According to its origins, "anumana" is knowledge that "follows from other knowledge." Mimamsa defines inference as the process of comprehending an unperceived term in a relationship via the assumed correlation of a secondary term. The steadfast connection between the perceived and the inferred allows us to acquire knowledge about the non-perceived through the seen. The Bhattas define invariable

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[80] Wezler, A, *Yuktidipika*: *The Most Significant Commentary on the Sankhyakarika*, Vol. 1, n.a.

[81] Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *Concept of Indian Philosophy*,139-140.

[82] Purshotham Bilimoria, "Perception (Pratyaksha) in Advaita Vedanta," (1980):35.

[83] Vedanta Paribhasha (1972): 30.

[84] Bina Gupta, Dharmarajadhvarindra, N. S. Anantakrishna Sastri, *Perceiving in Advaita Vedanta: Epistemological Analysis and Interpretation* (London: Associate University Press, 1991), 40.

[85] Erich Frauwallner, *The Philosophy of Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,1957),120.

[86] John A. Taber, *A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 8.

[87] John A. Taber, *A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology*, 8.

[88] Satish Chandra Chatterjee, Dhirendra Mohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1960), 25.

concomitance (*vyapti*) as a "natural relation," with "natural" indicating a lack of limiting adjuncts.[89] According to Nyaya, logic is a branch of *anumanavada* philosophy, which focuses on inference. The term *anu* translates to "after," while *mana* signifies knowledge. The term "anumana" refers to a cognition that is contingent upon another cognition, namely the act of measuring after something.[90] The process of making conclusions, also known as *anumana*, begins with recalling, recreating, and considering the facts. It includes both deductive and inductive inferences.[91] The inference is made up of three distinct components and five individual words. The three components consist of the rationale (*hetu*), the illustrations (*dristanta*), and the thesis (*pratijna*). In Sanskrit, the five terms are *paksha* (meaning mountain), *sadhya* (meaning fire), *hetu* or *linga* (meaning smoke), *sapaksa* (meaning kitchen), and *vipaksa* (meaning lake). The two individuals perceive the *paksa*, a single-member unit class in our given scenario, as the mountain. The *sadhya* (fire possession) class encompasses all flaming items, whereas the *hetu* class pertains to smoke possession.[92] Inferences possess universal correlations, like fire and smoke. The sight of smoke emanating from a mountain often indicates the existence of a fire. Since fire generates smoke, we may deduce that smoke originates from fire. This conclusion is based on the common association between smoke and fire. "*Vyapti*, the inherent connection between cause and effect, integrates the understanding of the material with the '*linga*' or '*hetu*' cause."[93] The cause is defined as the immutable, definitive prerequisite for consequence. According to the Nyaya perspective on *vyapti*, universals are eternal entities that form components of reality. The Nyaya worldview posits that universal relationships occur irrespective of individuals.[94] Because cause and effect are linked, a fire can start anywhere there is smoke. We establish *Sadhya*, literally meaning "cause," by observing symptoms and applying the concept of concurrent relations.[95] We conclude that there is a fire due to the observation of smoke emanating from the mountain, inferring its presence from all sources of emissions. Although the flames are not visible, we can plausibly infer the presence of fire on the mountain by applying our understanding of the underlying principle to the situation.[96] Chatterjee contends that, in this instance, we understand the process of inference-making through the medium rather than relying on passive observation. Inference is the process of determining an object's attribute by using a mark and its universal function concerning the inferred characteristic.[97] Given the persistent recognition of the correlation between smoke and fire in a hilly environment, Christopher Bartley asserts that it is possible to detect a fire by observing smoke. Smoke leaves a noticeable mark on the mountain, prompting us to assess the inverse correlation between fire and smoke. Using our understanding of fundamental concepts in event inquiry, we can reliably deduce the existence of fire on the mountain, even when direct eye observation is impractical. He argues that the process of inference acquires information by utilizing knowledge of pervasive forces.[98]

5.3. Upamana-Comparison

In classical Indian *Darshana*, the third source of information is *upamana*, which also means analogy. Mimamsa and Vedanta regard the analogy as the pramana for understanding similarity, but other schools, both Vedic and non-Vedic, reject it, except Nyaya, which proposes a radical reinterpretation. Nyaya is the first of the more exotic candidate sources proposed in the classical literature, primarily within Mimamsa (often elaborated by Vedantins). *Upa*, which means "similarity," and *mana*, which means "cognition," are the etymological roots of the word *upamana*. Therefore, the meaning of *upamana* is "knowledge through similarity." The definition of *upamana* as a pramana is "knowledge of the relationship that arises between a term and its denotation."[99] It compares or analogizes things to determine their similarity. Understanding the relationship between a name and the object it refers to constitutes an inference.[100] If Mimamsa exegetes want to give a practical interpretation of Vedic instructions, they need to be able to switch out one type of grain or animal for another, taking into account both availability and similarity. According to Kumar, analogy in *Vedanta* helps comprehend the *Upanishads*, which draw parallels between the lives of common people and those of spiritual or yogic experiences.[101]

Mimamsa, Yogacara, and Nyaya are logicians who argue that inferential knowledge is based on a significant similarity. This recognition of similarities and differences leads to the acquisition of information about

[89] Bina Gupta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012),114.

[90] Ruth Renya, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy: A Simplified Text* (New Delhi: TATA McGraw Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., 1971),127.

[91] S. Radhakrishnan and C. A. Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, 357.

[92] Roy W. Perrett, "The Problem of Induction in Indian Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (April 1984): 161-174, Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1398916.

[93] Swamy Satya Prasad Dasji, *Indian Philosophy* (Bhuj: Sadguru Mahant Swami Sri. Dharmananda Dasji, 2010), 94.

[94] Ruth Renya, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy: A Simplified Text*, 128.

[95] Swamy Satya Prasad Dasji, *Indian Philosophy*, 94.

[96] Christopher Bartley, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 111.

[97] Satish Chandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 207.

[98] Christopher Bartley, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 112.

[99] Bina Gupta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom*, 180.

[100] Ramchandra Bose, *Hindu Philosophy* (Lahore, India: The Punjab Religious Book Society, 1884), 206.

[101] Shiv Kumar, *Upamana in Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1980),110.

pervasiveness, which is a necessary condition for inferential knowledge. Nyaya, unlike Yogacara, restricts comparison to a subject's comprehension of a word's meaning, allowing for extended generalizations from specific instances. The philosophers of Vedanta and Mimamsa assert that resemblance is an exceptional phenomenon, determinable from a singular origin. They offer examples that differ from Gautama's typical scenario and Vatsyayana's assertion that analogy is strictly applicable to understanding word meanings. By focusing on the Nyaya concept, we can better understand the concept of inferential knowledge and its importance in understanding the world around us.[102] Person S overhears his/her classmates calling certain types of cows "gavayas" without knowing what that term means, so S decides to ask a forester some questions about the *gavaya*. "What makes a *gavaya* different from a cow?" S wanted to know. The forester provides an in-depth analysis of the parallels and dissimilarities between the two. In the chapter comparing *Tattva*, *Cinta*, and *Mani*, Gangesha and his followers explained the Nyaya school of thought. Reports indicate that our subject S gains a thorough understanding (*samanyatah*) of the meaning of the word from the forester's contrasting comment ("A gavaya is like a cow"). S is unaware that the reference is crucial and practical. Following S's later meeting with a *gavaya* buffalo, S comments, "This is the precise meaning of the term *gavaya*, which has a striking similarity to a cow," thereby showcasing S's newly acquired analogical comprehension.[103] Many people hold strong opinions regarding the ontology of similarity. A relational feature, defined as something that shares many characteristics with another item, is more important than other properties, according to Gangesha's basic concept. In his view, the idea falls short of being universal because it treats the cow as an independent entity rather than part of the oneness that is inherent in cowhood, which includes every single cow. Despite some similarities, there are notable differences between the idea and *samyoga*, or touch. Because there are significant similarities between substances and specific traits and behaviors, the idea cannot be distilled into just one of the traditional seven: substance, quality, motion, universal, individualizer, inherence, or absence. However, Prabhakara asserts that the officially acknowledged seven do not view similarity as an independent concept.[104] According to Gangesha, there is inconsistency in the degree of similarity between the examples. Because the cow is a counter-positive, its quality is contingent upon one's emotional state. Additionally, the cow monitors various dimensions.[105] Among the nine Indian philosophical traditions, the Buddhists reduce *upamana* to perception and witness, the Samkhya and Vaisheshika reduce it to inference, and the Jains recognize it. Although they give different descriptions, the Mimamsakas and Advaita Vedanta acknowledge it as a distinct source of knowing.[106]

5.4. *Shabda*-Testimony

Shabda Pramana, denoting knowledge obtained through verbal expression or witness, is a significant kind of pramana, or technique of knowing, that has attained substantial popularity in Indian epistemology.[107] The term *shabda* refers to verbal knowledge. Words or phrases provide information about objects. Not every verbal bit of information is reliable. We refer to it as *shabda*. Shabda signifies sound, while pramana refers to a method of gaining reliable information.[108] "Hence, *shabda*, as a pramana, is defined in the Nyaya as valid testimony."[109]

A vast nameless and authorless compendium of knowledge, closed-knit and regarded in cryptic lines as safe and suitable for oral transmission from generation to generation, preceded all the philosophers historically known to us. Therefore, the first task of early Indian thinkers was to interpret, explain, and coordinate this vast body of knowledge inherited and preserved by tradition rather than function in a vacuum.[110] Its origins can be traced back to traditional advocates who proposed the compelling notion that the *Vedas*, Brahman's authoritative texts, provide an unassailable source of knowledge on several subjects. A substantial and varied corpus of ancient literature pertains to this topic; it started by presenting arguments supporting *Shruti's* knowledge, referred to as "the heard word," or the authoritative scriptures. This will just be a summary of our thoughts. Buddhism rejected the concept of Shabda as an independent pramana, arguing that inference and observation may clarify its operation, and that human experience is the only foundation for accepting any statement, even those of the Buddha. The Nyaya, consistent with the Mimamsa, conducted comprehensive analyses and fervently defended the validity, reliability, and autonomy of witnesses as a form of knowledge.[111] The concept of pramana serves as a unique tool, fulfilling the specific function of presenting the "object" of cognition to the conscious individual. This object is not insignificant; rather, it is a direct physical contact through the senses. Beyond the typical

[102] D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing*,121.

[103] D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing*,121.

[104] Giri K, *Shabda Pramana and Indian Biblical Hermeneutics: An Inter-Cultural Dialogue* (New Delhi: Christian World Print, 2015),7.

[105] Ramchandra Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, 206.

[106] Bina Gupta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom*, 180.

[107] Purushottama Bilimoria, *Shabda Pramana: Word and Knowledge, Testimony in Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: DK Print World Ltd., 2008), 36.

[108] Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *Concept of Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman 1976), 189.

[109] Satish Chandra Chatterjee, *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge: A Critical Study of Some Problems of Logic and Metaphysics* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt., 2015), 350.

[110] S.K. Saksena, "Authority in Indian Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol 1, No. 3 (October-1951): 40.

[111] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Pramana Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," 37.

focus on words, objects, and their meanings, we highlight the connection between language and knowledge. Other sources, such as direct dialogue, oral communication, rumor, auditory media, and textual material, also contribute significantly to our knowledge and opinions. Words emerge as the primary causal precursor, ensuring the overall system's smooth operation, even in arbitration and judicial processes. The narrative does not suggest that words are the only method of conveying information, but rather that they include all potentialities and transmission delays.[112]

The Indian philosophy acknowledges testimony as a source of knowledge and sometimes elevates it to a higher status, as only authority can reveal certain facts. Modern Western philosophy, on the other hand, is based on a revolt against authority. Eras of reason and free thought mark the history of ancient and modern philosophy, with modern philosophy claiming to have banished the appeal to testimony from rational inquiry. Religion recognizes authority, but philosophical and logical investigation recognizes only two valid sources of knowledge: immediate sense perception and mediate inferential reasoning.[113]

Western philosophy often posits a fundamental dichotomy between authority and reason. People often view faith in authority as illogical, leading them to either adopt rationalism or have confidence in it. Indian philosophy does not see a dichotomy. According to Indian philosophy, the dedication to reason and the acknowledgment of authority are rational and valid, implying that there is no intrinsic conflict between reason and authority, nor between philosophy and religion. The cognitive processes of long-term knowledge, inferential knowledge, and information derived from expert assertions examine and interrogate its substance.[114] *Shabdabodha*, or linguistic comprehension, is considered to be the fundamental component of Shabda pramana. The distinguishing "instrument," or *karana* for *shabdabodha*, is not just any string of syllables but a *vakya*, or sentence utterance. *Shabdabodha*, like any other cognition, consists of "meanings," or *Arthas*, their connections (*samsarga*), and the intentionality relevant to the particular speech act or utterance.[115]

5.5. Arthapatti-Postulation

The word *arthapatti* is a compound of two words: *artha*, which means fact, and *patti*, which means *kalpana*, or supposition. Etymologically, *arthapatti* means assumption, presumption, inference, or postulation of a reality.[116] The *Shabdabhoda* school of Vedanta, which includes Bhaskaracharya, Mimamsakas, and Advaita Vedantists, recognizes *arthapatti*, also known as an assumption, as a fifth supplementary mode of knowing. Within the Vedantin tradition, Carvaka, Buddhists, Sankhya, Jaina, Nyaya, Visistadvaitavadins, and Dvaitavadins do not see it as an independent epistemic source.[117] The *arthapatti* method exemplifies inverted inference by developing an assumption that explains a disparity in experiences. Inference involves considering premises and drawing conclusions that support them. The *arthapatti* method begins with a conclusion and proceeds to the premises to support it, similar to proposing a rational theoretical framework. Western theistic proofs are examples of *arthapatti* or assumed truths; however, they do not qualify as logical inferences. The critique is that the conclusion includes more information than the premises, making them uninferential. Kant's transcendental perspective analysis of experience exemplifies the concept of *arthapatti* or assumption. Only empirical evidence can draw empirical conclusions, and empirical evidence cannot infer methodological assumptions.[118] To rectify apparent discrepancies in reality, the Bhattas use the *arthapatti* assumption. A snake first resembles a serpent but, upon closer inspection, seems like a nylon rope. This contradiction implies that the snake was an illusion, whereas the Prabhakaras contend that *vastu dvairupya*, a twofold nature in reality, does not exist. *Arthapatti* emphasizes ambiguity, or *samshaya*, stemming from contradictory facts rather than established reality disputes. The notion of *arthapatti* aids in resolving the contradiction and the reality conundrum.[119]

Arthapatti, a Vedic concept, refers to the act of appending words to enhance the meaning of a Vedic text or prescription. It can be *drsta arthapatti* or *sruta arthapatti*, depending on the apparent contradiction in reality or incoherent or inadequate Vedic prescription. The snake-rope illusion illustrates how the *mithya* postulation can resolve seemingly contradictory experiences. *Sruta arthapatti*, on the other hand, denotes the addition of words to enhance the meaning of a Vedic text or prescription. For instance, the *Vedas* state that seeking bliss in heaven requires a specific sacrifice known as "svarga kamayajeta." However, the significance of this directive remains ambiguous or insufficient unless one believes that "Apurva" creates a correlation between present pleasure and future happiness. Thus, it is necessary to assume that making this sacrifice will unleash a metaphysical force,

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[112] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Pramana Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," 37.

[113] S.K. Saksena, "Authority in Indian philosophy," (October 1951): 38-39.

[114] S.K. Saksena, "Authority in Indian philosophy," (October 1951):38-39.

[115] Purushottama Bilimoria, "Pramana Epistemology: Some Recent Developments," 37.

[116] D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing: A Critical Study of the Advaita Theory of Knowledge* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1972), 182.

[117] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*,136.

[118] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 236-237.

[119] D.M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing: A Critical Study of the Advaita Theory of Knowledge*, 206.

ultimately resulting in bliss in paradise.[120] However, Nyaya and Sankhya reject *arthapatti* as an extra source of information. They claim that it is an example of negative inference or *vyatireki anumana*.[121]

5.6. Anupalabdhi-Non-cognition

Anupalabdhi refers to the use of non-appreciation as a source of knowledge. The main epistemological problem with negation is how we determine whether something is absent. As per the *Prashastapada Bhashya*, the *Vaisheshika Sutra* (IX.i.5) refutes the notion of negative means.[122] Prabhakaras, Buddhists, Jains, and Nyaya-Vaisheshikas do not consider *anupalabdi* as a sixth source of knowledge; however, Bhatta Mimamsakas, Advaitins, and Bhaskarites do. Dvaitins and Visista Dvaitins make up the Vedantin community.[123] The *Purva Mimamsa* system is the only authority on the concept of negative means. This philosophy recognizes six methods of knowledge: perception, inference, comparison, *shabda*, or oral testimony; a*rthapatti*; and *anupalabdi*, or negativity (*abhava*).[124] The Advaitins and Bhattas argue that absence results from a deficiency of knowledge, or *jnana bhava*, which correlates with the lack of understanding. Although the object remains discernible and meets the criteria for perception, the sensation of absence arises when the relevant perception is absent. The Advaitins see this as the sixth source of knowledge, termed *anupalabdhi*. Only when the thing is both physically present and well-lit does the feeling of absence become apparent. This understanding of absence stems from ignorance since the actual item surpasses our awareness.[125]

The Naiyayikas counter the Vedantins' assertion by contending that perception, rather than an inherent lack of perception, is the basis of human knowledge. The phrase 'withoutness' denotes a lack of a book, whereas the adjectival conjugation of *visesanata* creates a connection between the adjective and the table. The notion of *abhava*, or absence, serves as a defining characteristic of the table, referred to as its *viseshanya*, or distinctive quality. The principle of *samyukta viseshanata*, which signifies the engagement of the eye with the table and its connection to the *abhava*, enables the eye to discern the "absence" that characterizes the table. Through the practice of *samyoga* or the connection with representations of absence, *viseshana* denotes the relationship between the eye and the table.[126] The agreement between *Anvaya* and *Vyatireka* posits that *indriyartha sannikarsa*, or perception, serves as the foundation for comprehending the notion of absence. Perception causes the table to disappear, while absence leads to its nonexistence. Advaitins contest the idea that non-perception is the foundation of knowledge about absence. They argue that perception occurs when an *Antahkarana virtti*, or mental mode, assumes the form and shape of the object. In this instance, the visual perception of the eye directed the *virtti* towards the table, which logically inferred that the table likewise exhibited the feature of absence. As a result, Advaitins attribute the experience of absence to *pratyaksha*, or perception, rather than non-perception.[127] *Pratyaksha* (also called *anvaya*) and *vyatireka* (the lack of *pratyaksha*) are believed by Advaitins to be in accord. To achieve non-perception, one must first master *adhikarana-jnana*, also known as substrate cognition, which resides alongside perception. The term "*adhikarana-jnana*," which is synonymous with "*anyathasiddha*," describes the initial point of a problem. Substrateegor cognition, a state of non-perception, is a conditional antecedent of the knowledge of absence, unlike the unconditional and continuous antecedent of the sensation of absence.[128] The Naiyayikas contend that the perception of absence is experiential, contrary to the Advaitin doctrine. The Advaitin philosophy posits that quick realization transpires through *anupalabdhi*, the source of perception, which promptly discloses absence. Nonetheless, this experience does not inherently function as a source of cognition. In the phrase "Thou art the tenth," immediate comprehension occurs by verbal expression, or *shabda*, rather than sensory perception. This is in opposition to the Naiyayikas' critique of the Advaitin perspective.[129] The Advaitins contend that the Naiyayikas, as proponents of a rigid framework of ultimate entities, conflict with their doctrines. *Samyoga* and *vibhaga* are attributes of the Naiyayikas about their *padarthas*, or epistemological aims. The lack of a book that delineates a table does not constitute either *samyoga* or *vibhaga*, as the table is a tangible thing while *abhava* is not. The relationship between the table and its defining condition of absence, *abhava*, is neither inherent nor *samavaya*. The Naiyayika *padarthas* only include information about these three linkages. We regard the Naiyayikas as '*niyatapadartha vadins*,' meaning they cannot arbitrarily modify the value of their designated experiential entities. Their present predicament revolves around the connection between *abhava*, denoting the state of absence, and *adhikarana*, signifying the characteristic of being a substrate. This novel connection of *viseshanata*, or adjectivity, powerfully challenges

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[120] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 237-238.

[121] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 238.

[122] Vindhyaeshvariprasad Dvivedin, "Padarthadharma-samgraha," *Vizianagram Sanskrit Series*, (Banares:1985): 225.

[123] A. B. Keith, *Indian Logic & Atomism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1821), 53-57.

[124] Dhirendra Sharma, "Epistemological Negative Dialects of Indian Logic- Abhava Verses Anupalabdhi," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol.9, No. 4 (1966):292.

[125] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 238-239.

[126] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 239.

[127] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 239-240.

[128] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 240.

[129] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 240-41.

their '*niyata padartha vada.*'[130] The final Advaitin objection does not follow a precise enumeration. The Naiyayikas define *viseshanata* as a form of *svarupa sambandha*. The *svarupa sambandha* occurs when a connection or relationship serves as an additional word. In this context, *abhava* fulfills both the relation to the other word and the relatum, which indicates a link. In addition, *abhava* is one of the *padarthas* on the Nyaya list, and the Naiyayikas have not included *viseshanata* as a link to the overall count of *padarthas*.[131]

Conclusion

Pramana is an essential term in Indian philosophy. Exploring pramanas is a profound exploration of our fundamental perceptions and understandings of the cosmos, going beyond a mere mental exercise. Pramanas are of interest to more than just academics. It is a quest for the foundations of human reality perception and comprehension. The pramanas lay forth a systematic plan for developing a wiser and more knowledgeable outlook on life. As we navigate the complexity of information, the pramanas provide a structured approach for differentiating truth from deceit, allowing us to become more educated and perceptive. The six pramanas embody the diversity of thought within Indian philosophy. Although there may be variations in the number of pramanas acknowledged and the explanations provided for each, personal salvation remains the basic aim of learning throughout all schools. The connection between pramana (the way of knowing) and prameya (the item known) shows how metaphysics (*tattva-mimamsa*) relies heavily on epistemology (*jnana-mimamsa*). This demonstrates how critical it is to understand epistemology to understand Indian philosophy broadly.

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[130] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 241.
[131] Sunil Kumar Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics & Logic*, 242.

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