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REPORT

Schools of Indian Philosophy and Sages associated with these Schools

A Study Report on:

SCHOOLS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND SAGES ASSOCIATED

For Project Titled:

Reviving India's Rich Cultural Heritage: Exploring Indian Philosophy and Economy in the Context of NEP 2020

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1.Introduction

Philosophy is defined as the "love of knowledge," and knowledge is the key to mystical experiences that lead to a clearer and deeper understanding of what it means to live. The word "darshana" refers to a "view" or "philosophical system," and every school of Indian philosophy offers a different way of looking at reality and the nature of existence.

In Hindu tradition, it is believed that there are six schools i.e., Nyāya, Vaisesika, Sānkhya, Yoga, Mimāmsā and Vedānta, which were started by the rsis or sages of hoary antiquity. They are also known as the “Shad-Darśanas”, and offer diverse perspectives on the nature of reality, existence and path of liberation. These schools emerged between 800 BCE and 200 CE and they are the foundational to Hindu thought. Each school presents unique philosophical viewpoints, leading to rich ideas that have influenced Indian culture and spirituality.

2. Schools of Indian Philosophy

The Indian Philosophy is divided into Orthodox and Unorthodox Schools. The Indian philosophies and the sages associated with them are discussed as follows:

2.1 NYĀYA DARŚANAS

The Nyāya Darśanas of Gotama or Gautama (550 BC) was the first school. It emphasizes logic and reasoning as tools for understanding truth. Its main aim is to discern the truth through logical analysis. The Nyāyasutras of Gautama are considered as the basic text of this system. It comprises five chapters, which is divided in two sections. The total number of sutras is 528. The five chapters have a bhāsya or commentary by Vātsyāyana. The Nyāyabhāsya has a Nyāya-vārttika by Udyotakara. Vācaspati has further elucidated this work in his Tātparyatikā. The last in this series of commentaries is the Tātparyatīkā-pari-śuddhi by Udayana, his other work is Kusumāñjali. Mention may also be made of the Nyāyamañjari of Jayanta and the Tattvacintāmani of Gaṅgeśa. This last work laid the foundation for a new or modern and highly advanced school of Nyāya philosophy, now well-known as ‘Navya-nyāya’

The Nyāya system enumerates sixteen padarthas (topics), they are:-

- Pramāṇas (methods of knowing truly)
- Prameyas (object of true knowledge)
- Saṁśaya (doubt)
- Prayojana (utility, end in view)
- Dṛṣṭānta (example)
- Siddhānta (doctrine)
- Avayava (member of syllogism)
- Tarka (logic)

- Nirṇaya (final decision)
- Vāda (argument to discover the truth)
- Jalpa (argument to win)
- Vitaṇḍā (destructive criticism)
- Hetvābhāsa (apparent, but not valid reason)
- Chala (unfair reply)
- Jāti (false analogy)
- Nigrahasthāna (a ground of defeat in debate)

THE NYĀYA THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

The theory of knowledge as propagated by the Nyāya Darśanas accepts four pramāṇas, they are:-

1. Pratyaksa (Direct Perception) :- When a sense organ comes in contact with a sense object producing true, clear and unerring knowledge of that object, it is known as pratyaksa.
2. Anumāna (Inference):- It gives us the knowledge of a thing indirectly, when we see some sign invariably connected with the original.
3. Upamāna (Comparison) :- It is defined as the process of naming objects through a given description.
4. Śabda (Verbal Testimony) :- It is defined as the assertion of a trustworthy person. Sabda may concern drstārtha (relating to perceptible objects) and adarstartha (relating to imperceptible things). This also includes supersensible realities like scriptural statements about God and soul. The sruti, considered sabda in the highest sense.

THE NYĀYA THEORY ABOUT PHYSICAL WORLD, GOD AND JIVAS

The Nyāya system considers God as the ultimate cause of sṛṣṭi (creation), sthiti (maintenance), and pralaya (destruction) of the world. The physical world is the product of four kinds of paramanus i.e., prithvi (earth), ap (water), tejas (fire) and vayu (air). The physical substance akasa (ether) and the non-physical kala (time) and dik (space) also contribute to the process of creation.

The jīvas (individual souls) are infinite in number.they are eternal and vibhu (all-pervading). A jiva gets all its experiences when its mind is related to the outside world through the sense organ.

2.1.1 Sage Gotama or Gautama

'Akṣapāda Gautama' (or 'Gotama') stands for the legendary founder of the Nyāya ('Logic') school of Indian philosophy, who is reputed also to be the author of its basic text, the Nyāyasūtra. This compilation of roughly 500 mnemonic sentences. It is the oldest core that preserves a manual of philosophical debate supplemented by elements of an early philosophy of nature and a basic soteriology. The later parts of the text deal with the number and nature of the means of valid cognition; they further treat the objects of valid cognition and discuss basic questions of metaphysical content.

The philosophy of Gautama places a high value on accurate definitions, term classification, and meticulous logical examination. The Nyaya approach offers a framework for assessing claims, spotting errors, and drawing reliable conclusions.

The writings of Gautama set the stage for the evolution of an orderly and methodical approach to philosophical inquiry in prehistoric India.

2.2 VAIŚEṢIKA DARŚANA

The Vaiśesika Darśana, attributed to sage Kāṇāda, also known as Ulūka around the 2nd century BC, delves into the nature of reality and existence. It is also called Kāṇāda or Aulūkya Darśana. It explores the concept of atoms (anu) as the building blocks of the universe. The Vaiśesika Sutras outline its principle, it is divided into ten adhyāyas (books) and each adhyāyas contains two āhnikas (section). It has a total of 374 sūtras. The Vaiśesika used the term Padārthas as its categories.

THE SEVEN PADĀRTHAS

The meaning of Padārtha is 'an object of knowledge'. All such objects are divided into two parts,viz., being (bhāva), it stands for positive aspects and non-being (abhāva) it stands for negative aspects. The saptapadārthas are :-

1. Dravya (substance) :- It is a substance in which guna and karma can exist. There are nine kinds of dravya i.e., prthvī (earth), jala (water), tejas (light), vayu (air), ākāśa (ether), kala (time), dik (space), ātma (soul) and manas (mind).
2. Guna (quality) :- It is always dependent on dravya for its existence. There are 24 guna, some of them are :- parimāna (magnitude), samyoga (conjection), buddhi (cognition), sukha and duḥkha (pleasure and pain), icchā and dvesa (desire and aversion), samskāra (tendency), dharma and adharma (merit and demerit).
3. Karma (action) :- It belongs to a substance. There are five kinds of action, some of them are utksepana (throwing upward) and ākuncana (contraction).
4. Sāmānya (generality) :- It is called as an universal.These universals are eternal and inherent in the individuals.
5. Viśesa (particularity) :- It is the direct opposite to sāmānya. It is the unique individuality of the ethereal substance.
6. Samavāya (relation of inherence) :- The samvāya relationship is inherent in the substances and it is permanent. Inherence is an inseparable and intimate relation between two entities, one of which is incapable of existing separately or independently apart from the other. Inherence relation is eternal. It cannot be separated from its substrate.
7. Abhāva (non-existence) :- It is the only category of negative type. Abhāva is of two types, samsargābhāva and anyonyābhāva.

GOD AND THE WORLD

The Vaiśesika Darśana accepts the existence of Īśvara as a supreme body under whose will and guidance this world is created, sustained and destroyed. The creator of the world is God. The first product is the soul, Brahmā and he is blessed by six qualities like knowledge, detachment and splendor. He is the chief architect of the creation of the world. In terms of vaiśesika atomism is spiritual because God as creator imparted motion to the atoms which originally lacked motions.

In vaiśesika darśana human beings are obliged to bondage and liberation. The bondage is due to ignorance and liberation is due to knowledge. Our actions cause them both and the soul performs actions. Due to ignorance, actions that are performed by the soul are judged as good or bad and it results in our karmic influx. The principal law of karma is governed by God.
The Vaiśesika Darśana is a realistic philosophy which combines pluralism with theism. Creations are executed by God in a planned manner, as per the karma of individual souls. God is the creator and moral governor of the world.

2.2.1 SAGE KĀNĀDA :-

Sage Kanada, commonly referred to as Kashyapa, was a well-known Indian philosopher and an important contributor to the growth of the Vaisheshika school of thought. He was born in 600 BC in Prabhas Kshetra (near Dwaraka) in Gujarat, in Eastern India He was an important contributor to Indian philosophy's understanding of atomism, epistemology, and metaphysics.
Kanada's worldview centered on dissecting reality's structure into its tiniest elements, which he referred to as "anu" or atoms. He asserted that these indivisible particles, each of which possesses unique properties, make up the entirety of the universe. His teachings provided the theoretical underpinnings for the concept of "padartha" or categories, which categorized the various facets of reality into six major groups: substance, quality, activity, generality, particularity, and inherence.
Later Indian philosophical thought was greatly influenced by Kanada's views on causation, the nature of the soul, and the interconnectedness of all things. His work also influenced the Nyaya-Vaisheshika movement, which combined metaphysical ideas with the study of logic and epistemology.

2.3 SĀṄKHYA DARŚANA

The Sāṅkhya Darśana was propagated by sage Kapila, the word Sāṅkhya means jñāna or knowledge and it also means ‘number’. Sage Kapila says jñāna as the sole means of attaining mokṣa, called ‘kaivalya’. It examines the dualistic nature of reality i.e., the distinction between the eternal and the temporary. It explores the interplay of the twenty-five tattvas (principles) that composes existence. “Samkhya Karika” is a fundamental text of this school. It has Sāṅkhyasūtras. It contains six chapters which includes 526 sūtras in all. Vijñānabhikṣu has written a commentary on the same, known as Sāṅkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya. Other important works of this school are:- Sāṅkhyakārikā-bhāṣya of Gauḍapāda,700 A.D., the Sāṅkhyatattva-kaumudī of Vācaspati, the Sāṅkhyapravacanasūtravṛtti of Aniruddha and Saṅkhyasāra of Vijñānabhikṣu, 15 A.D.

THE PRAMĀṆAS (METHODS OF KNOWLEDGE)

The Sāṅkhya accepts three pramāṇas or valid sources of knowledge and they are categorized as,

1. Pratyakṣa (direct perception)
2. Anumāna (inference)
3. Śabda (testimony)

EVOLUTION OF WORLD

The evolution of the world has its starting point in the samyoga, it is an effective contact between the purusa (unattached) and prakrti (jada).

Bondage and Liberation:- According to Sankhya, both slavery and freedom are magnificent. Purusa's servitude is a myth. Only the ego, which is a byproduct of Prakrti, is bound. Therefore, the only thing that is freed is the ego. Bondage and emancipation have no effect on Purusa because of its total seclusion. Since true bondage cannot be broken, Purusa could not have been set free even after a hundred births if it had been truly bound. The one who is restrained and the one who is set free is Prakrti. Because of this, Purusa is actually neither bound nor free nor does it transmigrate, according to Ishvarakrsna. Instead, bondage, freedom, and transmigration all belong to Prakrti in all of its varied forms. With its seven forms, Prakrti ties itself. Nothing is finer or more delicate.

2.3.1 SAGE KAPILA

The Indian philosopher Sage Kapila is one of the leading philosophers in Indian philosophy, Kapila is frequently credited with helping to establish the Sankhya school of thought. Though there aren't many records of his life, it's thought that he lived around the sixth century BCE. He is claimed to have been born in a hermitage, and Vasudeva, a famous sage. According to Bhagavata Purana, he is the son of the sage Kardama and Devahuti. He was estimated to have lived in the 6th-century BCE or the 7th-century BCE. According to the Brahmanda Purana, Kapila is described to be an incarnation of Vishnu.

While historical details about Kapila's life remain somewhat speculative, his contributions to Indian philosophy are undeniable. His emphasis on self-realization, the analysis of reality, and the pursuit of liberation continue to be subjects of study and contemplation in the realm of philosophy and spirituality.

In conclusion, Sage Kapila stands as a revered figure in Indian philosophical history, known for his foundational contributions to the Sankhya school of thought. His exploration of the dualities of existence, the nature of consciousness, and the path to liberation continues to inspire seekers of knowledge and truth.

2.4 YOGA

The Yoga Darśana is one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy, also known as the "Shad-Darśana." Developed by the sage Patanjali, the Yoga Darśana is primarily concerned with the practice and philosophy of yoga.

The Yoga Darśana is presented in Patanjali's "Yoga Sutras," a collection of concise aphorisms that outline the principles of yoga. This text is divided into four chapters, discussing various aspects of yoga and its practical applications. The main focus of the Yoga Sutras is on the concept of "ashtanga yoga," or the eightfold path, which outlines steps for achieving self-realization and liberation (moksha).

The eight limbs of yoga that Patanjali lists are:

- YAMA (Ethical Principles):- Yama are moral observances that include non-violence, honesty, not stealing, celibacy, and possessiveness.

- NIYAMA (Disciplines):- Cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and devotion are examples of Niyama, which are personal activities for self-purification and growth.
- ASANA (Postures):- These are physical postures that help stabilize the body and mind for meditation.
- PRANAYAMA (Breath Control):- This involves breath regulation to control prana (life force energy) and achieve mental clarity.
- PRATYAHARA (Withdrawal of the senses):- This step focuses on turning the senses inward to detach from external stimuli.
- DHARANA (Concentration):- This involves cultivating one-pointed concentration, focusing the mind on a single object.
- DHYANA (Meditation):- This is sustained and continuous concentration, where the mind is absorbed in the chosen object of meditation.
- SAMADHI (Union):- The final step, where the practitioner achieves a state of profound meditation, merging with the object of meditation and experiencing unity and transcendence.

The Yoga Darshana's ultimate goal is the liberation of the practitioner's consciousness from the cycle of birth and death (samsara) and realization of the true nature of self (atman) and its unity with the ultimate reality (Brahman). The teachings emphasize self-discipline, self-awareness, and the cultivation of a calm and focused mind.

2.4.1 **SAGE PATANJALI**

Sage Patanjali, a revered figure in Indian philosophy, is widely known for his significant contributions to the field of Yoga and the Yoga Sutras. His background and life remain shrouded in mystery, yet his profound impact on philosophy, spirituality, and psychology has left an indelible mark on the world.

The exact birth date of Patanjali remains uncertain, with estimates placing him anywhere between the 2nd century BCE to the 4th century CE. He is believed to have been born in the region that is present-day India.

Sage Patanjali's most renowned work, the Yoga Sutras, is a compilation of aphorisms that serves as a foundational text for the practice and philosophy of Yoga. The Yoga Sutras outline a systematic approach to attaining self-realization and spiritual enlightenment. Divided into four chapters, the Sutras provide guidance on ethical principles, physical postures, breath control, and meditation techniques.

Patanjali's interpretation of Yoga went beyond the physical aspects of postures, emphasizing the control of the mind and emotions. His teachings explore the nature of consciousness, the relationship between the mind and the body, and the path to transcending suffering through self-awareness and discipline.

Beyond Yoga, Patanjali's work has also been instrumental in the development of Indian philosophical thought. His emphasis on understanding the workings of the mind and achieving mental clarity has influenced fields as diverse as psychology, meditation, and mindfulness.

Through his teachings and writings, Patanjali remains a guiding light for those seeking to explore the depths of the mind and the soul.

2.5 MIMAMSA

The Mimāmsā Darśana, also called Pūrvamīmāmsā Darśana is associated with sage Jaimini and was founded in 400 BC. It is concerned with the interpretation of sacred texts and rituals. The main focus of this school is on understanding and performing Vedic rituals to achieve desired outcomes. The term Mimāmsā is derived from the Sanskrit root, 'to think, investigate or examine'. In short it means 'desire to think', which signifies the investigation of vedic texts. The commentator works on Mimāmsā Sutra are primarily of Kumalia Bhatta and Prabhakara Mishra.

The Mīmāmsāsūtras of Jaimini is the basic text of this system. It contains 12 chapters and 60 sub-sections, which comprises more than 2500 aphorisms.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE:

Types of knowledge according to Mīmāmsā are:-

- PRATYAKSA (immediate or direct perception):- It has two stages of development, first as soon as a sense organ comes into contact with a sense object, there is awareness that something is existing, this is known as nirvikalpaka-pratyaksa. In the second stage, all the details are noted in the light of past experience, which is called savikalpa-pratyaksa.
- ANUMĀNA (inference):- It gives us the knowledge of a thing indirectly, when we see some sign invariably connected with the original.
- UPAMANA (comparison)
- ŚABDA (verbal testimony):- It is defined as the assertion of a trustworthy person. Sabda may concern drstārtha (relating to perceptible objects) and adarstartha (relating to imperceptible things). This also includes supersensible realities like scriptural statements about God and soul. The sruti, considered śabda in the highest sense.
- ARTHĀPATTI (postulation):- It is defined as the obligatory assumption of an unknown fact that is the only one able to explain a scenario that calls for an explanation.
- ANUPALABDHI (non-perception):- It gives the immediate cognition of the non-existence of an object.

MĪMĀMSĀ THEORY OF METAPHYSICS:-

According to mīmāmsa darśana the world comprises the living bodies including the various indriyas and the soul. The souls are in infinite numbers. The soul is eternal, omnipresent and has no consciousness of its own. Both slavery and freedom are options for the soul. There is no inherent consciousness in the souls. They only have the potential for consciousness, which materializes when the soul takes on physical form and sense objects are exposed.

2.5.1 SAGE JAIMINI

Jaimini was an ancient Indian sage who is best known for his contributions to the field of Mimamsa philosophy. He lived sometime around 3rd to 4th century BCE and is traditionally considered to be a disciple of Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharata.

Jaimini's primary work is the "Mimamsa Sutras," also known as the "Purva Mimamsa Sutras," which is a foundational text of the Mimamsa school of philosophy. This school is concerned with the interpretation of the Vedas, particularly the ritual and sacrificial portions.

Jaimini's work consists of aphorisms that discuss the principles of ritual, language, and epistemology, aiming to establish the importance of Vedic rituals as a means of achieving desired outcomes and spiritual goals. His philosophical approach is different from other schools of Indian thought, as it focuses extensively on the practical aspects of Vedic rituals and their proper execution. Jaimini's Mimamsa philosophy is characterized by its emphasis on the authority and efficacy of Vedic injunctions (mantras) and rituals (karmas). He is also known for his exploration of linguistic analysis and logic in the context of understanding Vedic texts.
In summary, Sage Jaimini was an important figure in ancient Indian philosophy, particularly in the Mimamsa school, focusing on the interpretation and practical application of Vedic texts and rituals.

2.6 VEDĀNTA

The Vedānta explores the philosophical aspects of the Vedas, it is India's ancient sacred texts. It seeks to understand the nature of reality, the self (atma), and the ultimate reality (Brahman). The founder of this school is Adi Shankaracharya. It emphasizes the non-dual nature of reality. The term "Vedanta" combines the terms "Veda," which means "knowledge," and "anta," which means "the end" or "the goal of." Here, "knowledge" refers to both our awareness of our own divine essence and of God. So, the pursuit of Self-knowledge and the pursuit of God are both aspects of Vedanta. The Vedānta system deals with three works, Upanishad (śrutiprasthāna), the Brahmasūtras and the Bhagavadgītā. The three together bring the term 'prasthānatraya'.
THE UPANISHAD:- The word upanishad is derived from the root word Sad (to sit), to which two prefixes, Upa and Ni, have been added. Upa and Ni both refer to proximity and totality, respectively. So this word denotes devotedly sitting close by. Upanishads are frequently referred to as Guhya (mysticism) or Rahasya (secret)
THE BRAHMASŪTRAS:- It deals with Brahman (God or the absolute) and Bādarāyana is the author of the Brahmasūtras. This is divided into four adhyāyas and each adhyāyas into four padas. The pādas comprise adhikaranas (topics), each composed of sūtras. The total number of adhikaranas and the sūtras, is 191 and 555 respectively.

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At the age of 8, he embarked on a journey to acquire knowledge, studying under eminent scholars. His unparalleled grasp of Vedantic concepts led him to compose profound commentaries on ancient scriptures, most notably the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Brahmasutras. He traveled extensively across India, engaging in philosophical debates and discussions to propagate his teachings.

Shankaracharya established four monastic centers (mathas) in different parts of India, symbolizing the cardinal directions, to ensure the propagation of Advaita Vedanta. He emphasized the significance of self-realization and the illusory nature of the material world. His teachings challenged conventional beliefs and rituals, advocating a direct path to enlightenment through knowledge and introspection.

Despite his relatively short life, Adi Shankaracharya's contributions had an enduring impact on Indian philosophy. His synthesis of various philosophical ideas into a coherent doctrine and his establishment of monastic orders helped preserve and propagate Advaita Vedanta. Today, his teachings continue to inspire seekers on the path of self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment.

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