## Unit 1: Indian Theories of Knowledge (Epistemology)

Indian philosophical systems

Indian philosophical systems are classified into two main categories:

Orthodox (Astika): These systems accept the authority of the Vedas, the oldest Hindu scriptures. The six orthodox systems are:

- *Samkhya- Samkhya is a dualist system that postulates two fundamental realities: purusha (consciousness) and prakriti (matter). Purusha is unchanging and eternal, while prakriti is dynamic and ever-changing. The goal of Samkhya is to achieve moksha (liberation) from the cycle of birth and death, which is possible by realizing the distinction between purusha and prakriti.*
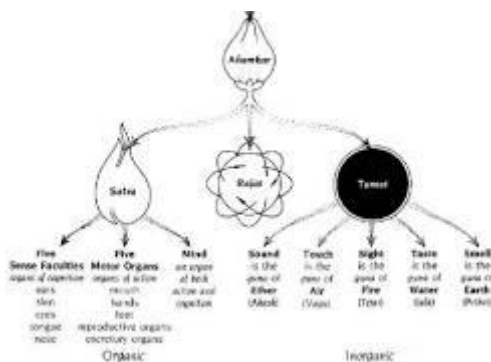
- Yoga -Yoga is a system that focuses on the practice of meditation and physical postures to achieve moksha. It is based on the premise that the mind and body are interconnected, and that by controlling the mind, one can control the body and achieve spiritual liberation.


Nyaya- Nyaya is a system of logic and epistemology. It is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how we can acquire it. Nyaya philosophers developed a sophisticated system of logic to help us identify and avoid fallacies in our reasoning
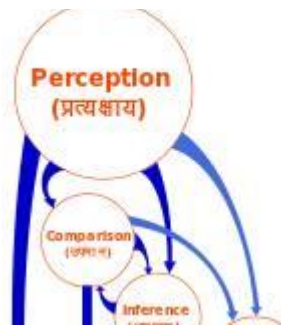
- Vaisheshika -Vaisheshika is a system of metaphysics and natural philosophy. It is concerned with the nature of reality and the properties of physical objects. Vaisheshika philosophers developed a detailed theory of atomism, which held that all physical objects are made up of indivisible atoms.

VAISESIKA SUTRA

Book	
I	Five categories of substance, quality, action, generality and particularity
II	Deals with the different substances, excepting soul and mind, which, along with the objects of the senses and the nature of inference, are treated in
III	The atomic structure of the universe is the central topic
IV +V	devoted to a discussion of the nature and kinds of action, while ethical problems are considered
VI+VII	discusses the questions of quality, self and inherence
VIII+IX+X	mainly logical, and treat the problems of perception, inference and causality

- Mimamsa -Mimamsa is a system of ritualism and hermeneutics. It is concerned with the interpretation of the Vedas and the proper performance of Vedic rituals. Mimamsa philosophers developed a sophisticated system of hermeneutics to help us understand the meaning of the Vedas and to apply their teachings to our lives.


Predicables in Mimamsa philosophy
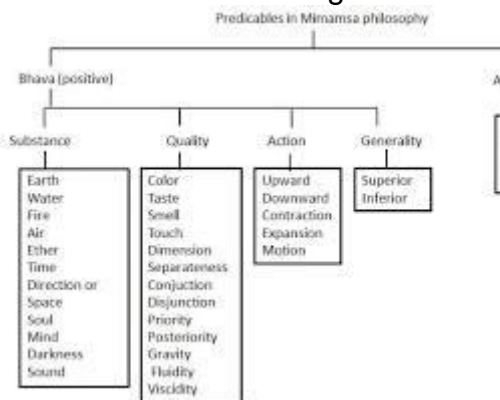
- Vedanta- Vedanta is a system of metaphysics and theology. It is based on the Upanishads, which are the philosophical texts of the Vedas. Vedanta philosophers developed a variety of theories about the nature of reality, the relationship between Brahman (ultimate reality) and the individual soul, and the path to moksha.
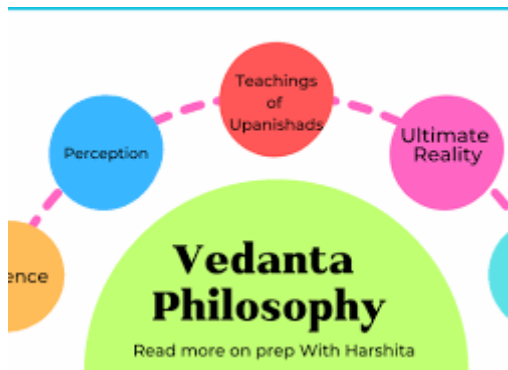
Heterodox (Nastika): These systems do not accept the authority of the Vedas. The four major heterodox systems are:

- Jainism -Jainism is a system of non-violence and asceticism. It teaches that all living beings have souls and that we should strive to avoid causing harm to others. Jains also believe in karma, the law of cause and effect, and that we can achieve moksha by liberating our souls from the cycle of birth and death.
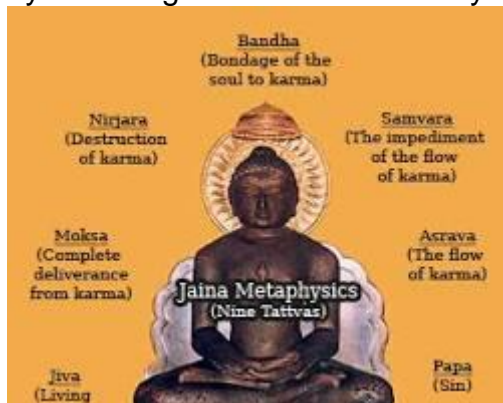
- Buddhism- Buddhism is a system of ethics and meditation. It teaches that suffering is caused by attachment and that we can achieve liberation from suffering by following the Eightfold Path. Buddhism also teaches that there is no permanent self and that all phenomena are impermanent.

- Ajivika- Ajivika is a system of fatalism. It teaches that our lives are predetermined and that there is nothing we can do to change them. Ajivikas also believe that there is no free will and that our actions are determined by our karma.

- Charvaka- Charvaka is a system of materialism. It teaches that the only reality is the physical world and that there is no such thing as a soul or an afterlife. Charvakas also believe that we should enjoy life to the fullest while we can, as there is nothing beyond this life.

It is important to note that these classifications are not always clear-cut and there is some overlap between the different systems.

For example, some Vedanta philosophers may also accept the teachings of Yoga, and some Jain philosophers may also accept the teachings of Buddhism.

Six ways of knowing in Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophy encompasses a rich tapestry of thought, and epistemology, the theory of knowledge, holds a central place in this intellectual tradition. In Indian philosophy, there are six classical ways of knowing, known as pramanas. These pramanas serve as the means to acquire valid knowledge and form the foundation of various schools of Indian philosophy. Here's a brief overview of these six ways of knowing in Indian philosophy:

1. **Perception (Pratyaksha):** Perception is direct sensory experience. It is the most basic way of knowing and involves information gained through the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell). Perceptual knowledge is considered valid as long as the senses are functioning correctly and are not impaired.

2. **Inference (Anumana):** Inference is a logical process of arriving at new knowledge based on existing knowledge and observations. It involves drawing conclusions by reasoning from cause to effect or from effect to cause. Inference is a vital tool in scientific and philosophical reasoning.

3. **Comparison (Upamana):** Upamana is knowledge gained through comparison or analogy. It involves recognizing similarities between objects or concepts. By comparing something unfamiliar to something familiar, one can gain knowledge about the unfamiliar object or concept.

4. **Verbal Testimony (Sabda):** Verbal testimony refers to knowledge acquired through trustworthy verbal sources. This includes information obtained from scriptures, teachers, experts, or reliable texts. In the Indian context, scriptures (like Vedas) are considered authoritative sources of knowledge.

5. Postulation (Arthapatti): Arthapatti is a way of knowing through postulation or presumption. It involves accepting the existence of something based on the absence of alternative explanations. For example, if a person is observed to be healthy despite not eating, it is postulated that they must be eating when nobody is watching.

6. Non-apprehension (Anupalabdhi): Non-apprehension refers to knowledge gained through the absence or non-perception of something. When something expected is not perceived, it leads to the knowledge of its absence. For example, the absence of smoke indicates the non-existence of fire in a certain place.

These six ways of knowing provide a comprehensive framework for acquiring knowledge in Indian philosophy. Different schools of thought within Indian philosophy emphasize different pramanas, and the understanding and interpretation of these ways of knowing have contributed significantly to the diverse and profound philosophical traditions of India.

Nyaya, one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy, provides a detailed analysis of perception. According to Nyaya philosophy, perception, or 'pratyaksha,' is a valid source of knowledge. Nyaya defines perception as the direct and immediate cognition of an object without the intervention of any other means or instrument. In other words, it is the awareness or knowledge that arises when the senses come into contact with the external world.

Nyaya distinguishes between determinate and indeterminate perception based on the clarity and specificity of the perceived object:

1. **Determinate Perception (Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksha): Determinate perception occurs when the cognition of an object is clear, distinct, and specific. In this type of perception, the perceiver recognizes the object as it is, without any confusion or ambiguity. For example, seeing a red apple and recognizing it as a red apple is an instance of determinate perception. The cognition is precise and unmistakable.**

2. **Indeterminate Perception (Aviklapaka Pratyaksha): Indeterminate perception, on the other hand, is characterized by vagueness and lack of clarity. In this type of perception, the object is perceived, but the perceiver is unable to identify or distinguish it clearly. The cognition is hazy and ambiguous. For example, seeing a distant figure and not being able to discern whether it's a person or a tree represents indeterminate perception. The object is perceived, but its specific attributes are unclear.**

Nyaya philosophers emphasize that determinate perception is more reliable and valuable because it provides accurate and certain knowledge about the object. Indeterminate perception, while still a valid form of perception, lacks

the precision of determinate perception and may lead to misunderstandings or errors in judgment.

In summary, Nyaya's definition of perception encompasses direct and immediate awareness of the external world through the senses. The school distinguishes between determinate perception, where the object is perceived clearly and distinctly, and indeterminate perception, wherethe object is perceived vaguely and ambiguously. Determinate perception is considered more reliable due to its specificity and accuracy.

Indeterminate perception (avyākṛta-saṃjñā) is a Buddhist concept that refers to a type of perception that is not clearly defined or understood. It is often used to describe the perception of phenomena that are beyond the ordinary range of human experience, such as the nature of reality or the true self.

The Buddhist view on indeterminate perception is that it is a necessary step in the path to enlightenment. According to the Buddha, we must first recognize the limitations of our ordinary perception before we can begin to see the world as it really is.

The Buddha taught that there are three types of perception:

- *Determinate perception: This is the type of perception that we use in everyday life. It is based on our senses and our conceptual understanding of the world.*

- *Indeterminate perception: This is the type of perception that we experience when we come into contact with phenomena that are beyond the ordinary range of human experience. It is a state of open-mindedness and receptivity.*

- *Non-perception: This is the state of enlightenment, in which we see the world as it really is, without any distortion or conceptual overlay.*

Indeterminate perception is a bridge between determinate perception and non-perception. It allows us to let go of our preconceived notions and to open ourselves up to new possibilities.

The Buddha taught that there are a number of ways to cultivate indeterminate perception. One way is to practice meditation. Meditation

helps us to become more aware of ourthoughts and feelings, and to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Another way to cultivate indeterminate perception is to study Buddhist philosophy. Buddhist philosophy teaches us about the nature of reality and the true self. This knowledge can help us to break free from the limitations of our ordinary perception.

Finally, indeterminate perception can also be cultivated through experience. When we encounter new and unfamiliar phenomena, we can challenge ourselves to see them with an open mind. We can also try to experience the world through all of our senses, rather than just through our eyes and ears.

Indeterminate perception is an important part of the Buddhist path to enlightenment. By cultivating indeterminate perception, we can let go of our preconceived notions and open ourselves up to new possibilities. This can lead to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Nyaya View on Inference: Vyapti, Tarka, and Kinds of Anuman

Nyaya, one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy, has a rich tradition of epistemology and logic. In the Nyaya view on inference, three key concepts are central: Vyapti, Tarka, and Anuman.

1. Vyapti: Vyapti refers to the relation of invariable concomitance between the hetu (reason) and the sadhya (the inferred). According to Nyaya, for a hetu to be valid, it must be invariably connected with the sadhya in all cases and in all places. This invariable connection is the basis of inference in Nyaya philosophy. Vyapti establishes a universal relationship between the hetu and the sadhya, forming the foundation of valid inference.

2. Tarka: Tarka, in the context of Nyaya, refers to logical reasoning. It involves the systematic application of rules and principles of inference to establish the validity of an argument. Tarka is the process of critical thinking and logical analysis usedto evaluate the premises and conclusions of an inference. Nyaya philosophers emphasized the importance of rigorous tarka to ensure the validity of logical conclusions and arguments.

3. Kinds of Anuman (Inference): Nyaya recognizes five kinds of inference, each with its specific characteristics and applications:

- **Purvavat Anuman:** This type of inference is based on prior experience. It occurs when something is inferred based on a previous similar experience. For example, if someone has seen smoke (hetu) preceding fire (sadhya) in the past, they can infer the presence of fire when they see smoke again.

- **Sheshavat Anuman:** Sheshavat Anuman, or deductive inference, involves the inference of a universal proposition from a particular observation. If an individual observes smoke and fire together in a specific instance, they can infer the general principle that wherever there is smoke, there is fire.

- **Samanantara Anuman:** This type of inference occurs when an effect is inferred from the simultaneous presence of two or more invariable concomitants. For instance, if there is lightning and thunder at the same time, one can infer the presence of rain.

- Kevalanvayi Anuman: Kevalanvayi Anuman, or positive concomitant inference, involves the inference of an invariable concomitant from the presence of the hetu. If smoke is present, fire is always present. This type of inference establishes a positive relationship between hetu and sadhya.

- Kevalavyatireki Anuman: Kevalavyatireki Anuman, or negative concomitant inference, occurs when the absence of hetu implies the absence of sadhya. If there is no smoke, there is no fire. This inference establishes a negative relationship between hetu and sadhya.

In summary, Nyaya philosophy places great emphasis on the systematic analysis of inference, ensuring that reasoning is grounded in universal principles (Vyapti), supported by rigorous logical analysis (Tarka), and classified into specific types of inference (Anuman) based on the nature of the reasoning process and the observed phenomena.

Carvaka's critique of inference

Carvaka, also known as Lokayata, was an ancient school of Indian philosophy that emerged around the 6th century BCE. It was a materialistic and atheistic school of thought that rejected the existence of gods, the afterlife, and the authority of the Vedas, which were the sacred texts of Hinduism. Carvaka philosophy emphasized empirical perception (pratyaksha) as the only valid means of knowledge and rejected inference (anumana) as a reliable source of knowledge.

Carvaka's critique of inference was rooted in their skepticism towards unseen or unobservable entities. They argued that inference relied on hypothetical reasoning and often led to speculative conclusions. According to Carvaka thinkers, inference could not provide valid knowledge about the world because it involved making inferences about the unseen based on the seen, which they considered unreliable.

Furthermore, Carvaka philosophers believed that relying on inference could lead to erroneous conclusions, as it often involved drawing conclusions about the unknown based on limited and fallible sensory experiences. They emphasized the importance of direct sensory perception and considered only those things that could be perceived through the senses as real and worthy of acceptance.

In summary, Carvaka's critique of inference was grounded in their rejection of speculative reasoning about the unseen world. They argued for a strict reliance on direct empirical perception, dismissing inference as a flawed method of acquiring knowledge. This skepticism towards inference was a fundamental aspect of Carvaka philosophy, distinguishing it from other schools of Indian philosophy that accepted inference as a valid means of knowledge.