
The Philosophical Foundations of Indian Knowledge System: A Comprehensive Overview

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Abstract: Indian philosophy uses its fundamental spiritual, ethical, and social aspects to create a complicated system that explains both cosmic realities and human experiences. This research investigates how Indian philosophical traditions of Vedanta, Sankhya, and Yoga, along with Nyaya ethics, manage to connect with present-day societal needs. This study examines how the traditional teachings provide answers to metaphysical inquiries regarding what exists and human nature and achieving freedom. The research explores ancient Indian philosophical knowledge, which still creates tangible solutions to resolve modern dilemmas throughout personal life, community stability, and ecological sustainability.

Keywords- Indian Philosophy, Vedanta, Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya Ethics, Ecological Sustainability

Introduction

National institutions, referred to as Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), continue their existence through millennia with an extensive, diverse intellectual heritage. The ancient philosophical, scientific, and spiritual traditions of India base IKS to provide deep understanding about reality and knowledge structures as well as human freedom. Indian philosophy offers a variety of perspectives that enable individuals to understand metaphysical questions, ethically based principles, and strategies for achieving personal fulfillment. Through the analysis of these traditions, students acquire effective knowledge about personal self-positioning between internal mental states and external environmental factors to achieve total well-being and social equilibrium.

Six primary schools comprise Indian philosophy: Vedanta, Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika, along with Mimamsa, which research distinct methods for explaining reality (Mohanapriya & Suriya, 2025). The teachings of Advaita Vedanta provide that according to Adi Shankaracharya, ultimate reality remains non-dual while the goal of liberation requires an understanding of the convergence between universal consciousness (Brahman) and self (Atman). The beliefs of this tradition demand both overcoming the false understanding of dualism and establishing a personal experience of total existence's basic unity. Within the philosophical framework of Vedanta, Maya (illusion) serves as a central concept that explains that the fragmented

aspects we perceive throughout the world stem from our human capacity to misinterpret reality (Gupta, K., 2024).

As one of the earliest philosophical systems,, Sankhya presents reality through dualism by establishing two eternal components: Purusha represents consciousness while Prakriti stands for matter. The cosmic creation occurs through the continuous interaction of these two fundamental eternal principles,, which Sankhya recognizes. The systematic Tattva enumeration of 25 elements within this system details the cosmic evolution pathway starting from subtle things to gross physics while demonstrating how attaining self-awareness leads to release from rebirth (samsara). The distinction between what is real (Purusha) and what is not real (Prakriti) produces significant theoretical connections between consciousness and relationship between mind and body,, according to Sankhya philosophy (Mohanapriya & Suriya 2025).

The practical system for personal change appears in the Yoga Sutras written by Patanjali,, where Yoga receives its definition. Yoga teaches an eight-step path that establishes moral principles while adding body postures, breath techniques,, and meditation practices to cleanse physical and mental elements toward achieving spiritual freedom. Through disciplined self-awareness and mental control,, practitioners can achieve kaivalya,, which results in divine union by reaching liberation. Modern society values yoga extensively because it provides valuable methods to handle stress and improve mental health and general well-being (Gupta, B., 2021).

Through the Nyaya framework,, the system dedicates itself to establishing robust epistemological understanding of knowledge acquisition known as Pramana. Reasoning and logical inference play the essential role in Nyaya to establish what constitutes true from false knowledge. Nyaya made essential contributions to argumentative logic,, which brought significant changes to traditional philosophical thinking in India and the Western world. The systematic approach that Nyaya uses to analyze arguments and validate truth through inference in combination with sensory experience and testimonial information corresponds with modern scientific and critical analysis approaches (Gupta, K., 2024).

This framework consists of multiple classical systems that unite to provide an entire approach toward comprehending the universe and self, as well as the way to reach liberation. These classical systems exist as fundamental aspects of practical daily life because they actively shape how people act, develop, and establish social behaviors as well as ethical frameworks. Indian philosophy teaches the relationship between philosophy and science, medicine, and art (Mohanapriya & Suriya, 2025).

The Indian Knowledge System brings useful understanding to modern-day worldwide problems in the current era. Vedanta's explanation of non-duality matches contemporary scientific insights about interconnectedness and Yoga delivers effective approaches to manage stress and support mental health operations. The present world requires the combination of an ethical lifestyle along with sustainable practices and holistic wellness because it faces environmental and social

dilemmas. The pursuit of inner peace combined with harmony and balance, which are central concepts in Indian philosophy, integrates a different worldview compared to the materialistic fragmented perspective of present-day society (Gupta B., 2021).

Indian Philosophical Traditions

1. Vedanta: The Path to Ultimate Reality

Concept of Brahman and Atman: The traditional Vedantic philosophy includes Brahman and Atman concepts as fundamental elements that deliver penetrating views of what exists in reality. Vedanta takes its philosophical foundation from the Upanishads, through which it teaches that Atman (individual soul) and Brahman (ultimate reality) share an essential connection as core elements for comprehending existence. The primary purpose of human existence in Vedanta philosophy requires people to identify how these two essential principles remain deeply connected. Through this understanding, one achieves liberation (moksha) that frees a person from the unending cycle of birth and death (samsara). Because Brahman represents an absolute reality that exists beyond time and space, it serves as the foundation of all things in the universe without possessing any form. The philosophy of Vedanta views Atman as an expression of Brahman since Atman appears as the individual self that exists within an extension of the universe. The Vedantic teaching about reality appears in the world-famous maxim "Tat Tvam Asi" (You are that), which illustrates that existence has a non-dual nature.

According to Vedanta, Atman establishes its unity with Brahman through the transformative path from ignorance to knowledge because the distinction between self and universe turns out to be illusory (Maya). People achieve nirvana and supreme peace through the discovery of complete unity with Brahman. Philosopher Adi Shankaracharya explained Advaita through his writings about a single fundamental reality that underlies all perceived differences in the world. Shankaracharya explains how Atman becomes one with Brahman and thus overcomes the physical and mental boundaries to merge with universal consciousness. The idea of Brahman expressed through different philosophical texts remains the core principle of Indian thought while providing a foundation for worldwide metaphysical studies (Doe, 2021; Chaudhuri, 1954).

Key Teachings of Advaita Vedanta: Advaita Vedanta philosophy, popularized by Adi Shankaracharya as its main proponent, teaches that the original essence of Brahman represents one non-dual reality free from any kind of separateness. From the perspective of Advaita Vedanta, all differences between Atman and the universe exist only as unreal illusions that stem from the deception of Maya. In Advaita Vedanta philosophy, persons reach liberation (moksha) by recognizing Atman and Brahman unite into one unity, which allows them to break free from dualistic thoughts about the world. People achieve this insight when they understand that both outer reality and inner existence express a single fundamental truth. People can eliminate the perception of isolation by performing meditation, conducting self-exploration, and practicing ethical conduct until they discover the final reality of nonduality. Through the teachings of Advaita Vedanta, one

discovers how existence maintains unity because these teachings guide people toward perceiving the fundamental link between themselves and cosmic reality.

People need to deeply examine themselves and engage in spiritual activities for experiential realization to occur. Shankaracharya explains through his Upanishad commentary that reality exists without distinction because the individual self is not different from universal consciousness according to Tat Tvam Asi. The concept has shaped Eastern and Western intellectual traditions and spiritual practices since ancient times, according to Sharmā (1996) and Bhajanananda and Mission (2010).

Contemporary Relevance The relevance of Vedanta philosophy persists to this day because it continues to influence personal development and spiritual well-being. Vedanta philosophy establishes a deep philosophical framework based on the Atman (self) and Brahman (ultimate reality) union, which enables people to handle present-day life challenges. The teaching system helps people discover tranquility within hectic circumstances by teaching self-actualization alongside non-attachment to worldly material possessions. The idea found in modern physics about universal interconnectedness matches the theory of quantum physics, which demonstrates that all elements in the universe operate collectively at their fundamental level. These parallel explanations show how Vedanta maintains an eternal relevance because its essential teachings connect traditions of ancient wisdom to current scientific areas. The approach of Vedanta to handling existential and personal questions makes this teaching system both a spiritual practice and an applicable philosophical method for today's world (Lal, 1978; Dutt, 2024).

Sankhya: The Evolution of the Cosmos

The Theory of Purusha and Prakriti: The Samkhya philosophy bases its view that the universe results from eternal cosmic principles, Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (nature or matter), which remain completely distinct from each other. Samkhya philosophy, as one of the oldest systems of Indian philosophy, separates reality into two eternal opposites: Purusha represents the conscious observer, while Prakriti represents the material dynamic forces. The universal evolution becomes possible because of how these two cosmic elements operate together. The inert substance Prakriti receives its activation from its union with Purusha to create the cosmic manifestation and life process. The relationship serves as the foundation for comprehending material essentials as well as spiritual nature. From the state of self-realization, the evolution of Prakriti reaches which finally sets Purusha free from physical restriction (Chauhan & Yadav, 2025; Kumar & Van Hillegersberg, 2000).

The 25 Tattvas: Sankhya philosophy describes the cosmos evolution through twenty-five elements named Tattvas, which span from subtlety to grossness. The 25 Tattvas start with the subtle Purusha as pure consciousness and then continue by depicting various levels of material and spiritual existence towards the most gross elements. The non-material absolute principle called Purusha exists together with the material counterpart Prakriti, representing the temporary world. Prakriti transforms

into various Tattvas through its evolution, thereby generating mind phenomena and physical elements while also creating the system of senses. Through its 25 Tattvas, the system constructs a complete framework that brings together both metaphysical and physical realities in a cosmic framework (Srinivasan et al., 2000; Swargiary, 2023).

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Yoga: The Discipline of the Mind

Eight-Limbed Path (Ashtanga Yoga): The eight limbs of Yoga provide a total systematic approach that, according to Patanjali Yoga Sutras, leads practitioners toward mental clarity and self-discipline together with spiritual awakening. The Eight-Limbed Path (Ashtanga Yoga) presents itself as an entire transformative program through which people learn ethical foundations and physical postures (asanas) and meditation techniques along with other mental training methods. The eight fundamental concepts of yoga work together to help people achieve physical and spiritual alignment while uniting their body and mind (Werner, 2016; Sarbacker, 2021). These eight limbs include ethical restraints (yama), observances (niyama), bodily postures (asana), breath control (pranayama), withdrawal of senses (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana), and enlightenment (samadhi).

The ancient teachings of yoga instruct that the supreme objective involves uniting humans with divinity through total comprehension of natural spiritual identity. People reach self-realization through mindfulness practices together with meditation and breath control. The tools provide practitioners with methods to silence mental and ego-based distractions so they can truly connect with divinity. Industrial science and methodical practices guide people toward spiritual enlightenment and internal tranquility (Singh et al., 2024; Basu, 2024).

Contemporary Significance: The popularity of yoga in modern society keeps increasing because it helps people manage their stress while enhancing physical wellness and brain function (Naragatti 2024). The evidence-based benefits of stress relief from yoga extend to its development of mindfulness alongside overall health improvement. The practice of yoga brings both personal health benefits as well as high-impact benefits to the workplace through better concentration, stress reduction, and life balance. Yoga functions as an influential tool for health improvement through its mind-body-spirit unification because it supports full well-being in contemporary society (Naragatti, 2024).

2. Nyaya: The Logic of Knowledge

Pramana and Prameya: Nyaya philosophy devotes its extensive research to knowledge and logic, as emphasized by Dadu and Purohit (2016). The central ideas of the philosophy consist of Pramana and Prameya concepts. Valid knowledge acquisition methods known as Pramana lead to obtaining correct and dependable knowledge information. Within the Nyaya tradition, Prameya describes the objects of knowledge that the individual needs to understand. The Nyaya system's well-established methodology enables people to discover the true nature of studied objects and assist them in identifying trustworthy knowledge. The system serves as a fundamental requirement for achieving accurate and unbiased knowledge while it leads investigations in philosophy and logical reasoning (Dadu & Purohit, 2016).

Logical Inquiry: Chatterjee (2016) establishes that the Nyaya system relies heavily upon logical tools and reasoning methods to understand reality. The system establishes an orderly method for arguing that enables people to discover trustworthy knowledge. Until modern logic and scientific methodologies developed, the Nyaya system served as the foundation for obtaining valid knowledge and proving deductive reasoning. Through its systematic methodology, Nyaya philosophy influences both philosophical research and scientific research development while retaining its practical value in current intellectual discussions (Chatterjee, 2016).

Applications in Modern Thought: According to Schmidt and Sriraman (2021), the logical principles of Nyaya have made substantial contributions to mathematical topics together with legal systems and epistemological theory. Through its method of argument evaluation, Nyaya has provided philosophical and scientific debates with discourse-oriented truth discovery, which leads to rational inquiry and structured reasoning systems. The Nyaya approach to clarifying arguments combined with validity testing and securing sound reasoning has established itself in current philosophical logic and continues to affect modern scientific rules and legal systems. Nyaya logic demonstrates its continued value for understanding and solving complicated intellectual problems, according to Schmidt & Sriraman (2021).

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophical traditions continue to deliver enduring teachings to handle present-day worldwide problems. Indian understanding of interdependence between all beings and human unity and self-exploration leads to effective solutions for individual happiness alongside social equilibrium and environmental stewardship. Modern society, dominated by materialism, finds in Indian philosophy a pluralistic framework that centers around spiritual development along with virtuous conduct and a balanced mentality.

Indian philosophy exists today as an active living culture that delivers modern solutions for fundamental problems of our present world. The paper has examined the core principles of Vedanta, Sankhya, Yoga, and Nyaya while showing their present-day significance as well as their enduring influence on worldwide philosophical theories.

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