

IKS : Importance and Framework

The vedic corpuse – introduction, four vedas, vendangas, vedic life, and vedic school of philosophy

Wisdom through the ages, non vedic philosophical system,, puran itihās, ramayan
Mahabharata niti shastra aur subhasita,

PURANAS:

History is there for all of us to study and examine so that same mistakes shall not incur again in future. Also, it provides us as a guide of how to live, administer, follow social customs, also showcasing cultural practices, history, science and technology of the prevailing times. Therefore, the accumulated body of literature serves as the repository of wisdom through the ages. With a long civilizational history, India has a rich body of knowledge and experience that has developed within the society from time to time, captures through a variety of literary works.

Puranas and Itihasas mainly belong to this category. In the recorded history, several literary works have been authored in Sanskrit and other regional languages.

Puranas have significantly contributed to maintaining cultural pluralism in India. They played a role in influencing classical art forms such as dance and music and promoted social practices such as celebration of various festivals. The spread of cultural heritage among masses has to a large extent possible only because of puranas. They have played a pioneering role in motivating and practice of ethical and moral values in life of people of Indian society using stories as a powerful medium to communicate the ideals. Puranas have provided means by which socio-cultural values can blend with religious values and dharmic living.

Puranas closely align with epics in form and substance as literary beauty and story based narration of ideas through ‘Hari Katha’ has attracted masses towards it. They enable us to know the true import of ethos, philosophy, and religion of Vedas and are companion text to help and understand Vedas.

Skanda-purana:- Sruti (Vedas), Smṛti (Ramayana, Mahabharata etc), and Puranas are the 3 eyes of a scholar. One who sees the world with his 3 eyes is indeed a part of supreme God.

Viṣṇu-purana:- One who is a scholar of all 4 vedas, with its limbs and upaniṣads in it and has no knowledge of puranas can never be considered a complete scholar

RAMAYANA:

Ramayana consists of 7 books which are called as Kandas, organized into 645 sargas(chapters) and 23,672 verses. It is a vast history of Rama but also consists of many other related instances. There are around 300 versions of Ramayana around the world. In India there are more than 40 versions of Ramayana in different languages like:

- Ramacaritmanas: Avadhi
- Kamba Ramayana: Tamil
- Madhava Kandali: Assamese
- Jagmohan Ramayana: Oriya
- Gona Budha's Ranganatha Ramayana: Kannada

Ramayana played a significant role in cultural transmission between Indian and other

Asian countries. It travelled from India to other parts such as China, Turkestan, Burma, Thailand, Java, Cambodia and Vietnam. Almost all the Southeast Asia have Rama story albeit in varied forms and content. From 13th century onward several Thai kings assumed the title Rama. Rama is not only a human being but an embodiment and living entity of concept of Dharma.

BALA KANDA: - It deals with the birth and childhood of Rama and his brothers. Visvamitra takes along with him Rama and Laksmana through the forest and eventually to Mithila leading to marriage of Sita to Rama. The message was to know the reality of life in the country by king to be. This reminds us of an imp principle stated in modern management parlance. In organisations, great leadership requires a good knowledge of the issues and realities facing the organization. This can be done if leader can connect to people and situations in organisations physically and mentally.

AYODHYA KANDA: - The part of story where Dashratha who wanted Rama to be king of Ayodhya was left disappointed and died with grief as Kaikeyi went futile in want of making her son Bharat king of Ayodhya. This part of epic provides an important message that life is a roller coaster and those who can develop a mental equanimity to handle such events are the ones that are gonna be successful. The conversation of Bharat and Rama in the final part contains a wealth of information on public policy and administration.

ARANYA KANDA: - It is the part of large scale elimination of demons by Rama on request of sages and seers. It is also the portion of kidnapping of Sita by Ravana. The epic reminds that good needs to be protected from evils lest it becomes unsustainable. It reminds us that an evil action taken by an individual eventually triggers a bigger reaction from system and in process of elimination of evil, some good aspects might get destroyed too

Kishkindha KANDA: - It describes the efforts from Rama and Lakshmana when Sita was abducted. The grief that underwent was unparalleled as they weren't even aware of what happened and who abducted Sita. The meeting of Sugriva through good offices of Hanuman instilled a ray of hope in their search. The epic brings forward the importance of friendship, especially during periods of great distress. It also reminds us of wise counselling to wade through challenges that we face in our life.

SUNDARA KANDA: - It describes the heroic efforts of hanuman to cross the ocean to locate sita and repose confidence in her. It also describes the horrifying state of affairs for sita and grit and determination with which she faced the situation. The epic beautifully demonstrates the strength of character of sita, with which she discovered unlimited courage within and face adversity with grace and purpose. Other message include statecraft, dealing with ambassadors, using presence of mind to assess the strength of opponent

YUDDHA KANDA: - It describes the royal battle that erupted between Sugriva's army and Ravana's army, eventually culminating large scale elimination of rakhshasas and their king King Ravana as prophesied by Marica. The epic forcefully brings out the benefits of wise counselling and the danger of hasty decisions arising out of an inebriated mind polluted with attachment to unreasonable and unethical desires. As showcased various of ravana's ministers including his brothers kumbhakaran and Vibhishana, his wife mandodari tried to convince him but he didn't agree and eventually this led to his death,

UTTARA KANDA: - It has collection of related stories not necessarily in chronological order depicting birth of Luv and Kush, departure of Rama and Sita from this world etc.

Ramayana is not just about rama but also about ravana. The war between them was so huge and so great that it could not be described in mere words let alone simile. Both were great but it was just good in rama that made him prevail over ravana. Ramayana through the lives of rama, sita, Lakshmana, bharaat, ravana teach us the moral, difficulties, and principles of ideal living. How to deal with adverse situations while following dharma and prevailing goodness over all the bad things that could affect us mentally and physically.

MAHABHARATA:

Mahabharata is one of the greatest poems in the world composed by Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipayana (Veda Vyasa). The first and original version of Mahabharata which was named JAYA consisted of only about 8000 verses and then second version had 24000 verses ending up to 100000 verses and named Mahabharata.. The critical version in the end had about 89000 verses under 18 parvas.

Multiple editions and redaction of original text of Mahabharata may appear to be a cause of concern but the leading incidents and characters of epic have not been effected and modified by these changes. Mahabharata depicted the trials and tribulations that various kings of lunar dynasty went through. To a large extent it focuses on two families, kauravas and Pandavas. It covers various topics like law, philosophy, religion, custom and to some extent geography and cosmography combined with several episodes and legends adding to richness of message. The issues can be classified as:

Birth Childhood and Rivalry: - Adi parv and Sabha Parv the first two books of mahabharata describe in detail the ancestral details of both families including birth and growth of rivalry between the two. The ever growing respect and popularity for pandavas was seeding jealousy in kauravas and it reached a flashpoint of winning a game of dice and ill treating Draupadi. Ironically several elders, well-wishers and wise people were party to this treacherous act direct or otherwise

Banishing of Pandavas: - Aranyaka-parva and virata parva describe a variety of events that unfolded when the pandavas were asked to go to the forest as compromise to restore their

kingdom if they successfully complete the tenure. The possibility of ill treatment and unfair judgement on their return was in their cautious as they prepared for a potential war gaining strength and blessing from Gods.

Failed Peace parleys leading to war: - Starting from Udyogya parva the next 7 books described failed efforts from both families to avert war. It provides description of great war that led to death of whole of Kauravas brothers and many prominent people from both sides leading to lamentation of several widows and ladies.

Post war Yudhishtira and Bhishma: - Santi-parva and Anusasana parva cover the discussion between to be coronated Yudhishtira and Bhishma who was ready to give up his mortal body. The sections have a wealth of information on several aspects of life, public policy and administration, spiritual and materialistic aspects of life, dharma and other purusharthas.

EXIT: - the last 5 books from Ashvamedhika parva, discuss role of Yudhishtira as king, This is followed by exit of all characters.

Mahabharat doesn't show ideal life nor does it only teach good values. It shows how actually life is and what all it does present in front of us. From Pandavas to Bhishma all of them made mistakes and paid for it. Even the ones like Duryodhana who may be portrayed evil to some got heaven because of good qualities they had which were hidden due to their bad decisions. Bhishma pointed out that dharma varies in accordance with demands of situation like for moments of strength and distress.

NITI SHASTRA:

Nitis are guidance to take a person to the path of Dharma by providing the right perspectives about life and life goals. The role of niti shastras lies in providing us helpful direction to resolve such conflicts by providing snippets of wisdom culled out or distilled from past experiences. It utilizes verses set in poetic metres to concisely communicate the message.

There are 4 major goals of life: Dharma, Artha, kama and Moksha.

Dharma is enabling framework for leading a life that is self fulfilling, sustainable and allows us to peacefully coexist with each other and other entities in universe. It is basically a set of do and don'ts of life

Artha provides the material wherewithal to fulfill our life goals, needs and wants.

Kama is set of desires across biological, physiological and intellectual dimensions

Moksha is liberation of an individual from clutches and limitation of life and a means to realize one's true potential and nature.

Niti takes into consideration the very basic rule that all purusharthas are generally guaranteed to individuals by universe. It is when he realizes all these goals that his life is comprehensively successful. It is the first 3 goals that niti focuses on while 4th is meant to happen seamlessly and naturally. The conflict between these

goals is what causes the real dilemma. Niti is broadly classified into 2 repositories:

Samanya Niti: analysis of individual. these text provide difference between a wise person and others, good and evil, success and failure of life pursuits. It also emphasizes the need of living harmonious life in society.

Raja Niti: analysis on political and administrative tasks and provide ideas on do's and don'ts for a king. Arthashastra of Kautilya is an imp text in this category. Others works such as Panchatantra and Niti Sara are inspired by it.

VEDAS The term Veda has been derived from Sanskrit word Vid meaning to know. These mean to exist, to discriminate, to obtain, and to make known. The Hindu religious tradition has accorded the Vedas the highest place in its canonical literature and are revered as basic scriptures. It is believed in Indian tradition Veda is poetry of Gods and it neither fades nor becomes stale by passing of time. Vedas are a unique repository of knowledge that distinguishes itself from other forms of knowledge. Normally, we attribute knowledge to a person, however the Vedic corpus is generally understood as a non human source as Apuruseya. The Vedic repository has been preserved and transmitted through an oral tradition on account of well developed phonetics system known as Shiksha.

RIGVEDA Earliest Sacred Book in India

- Studied by one who wants to understand Indian Literature and spiritual culture
- Rigveda priest is Hotr
- Rigvedic hymns are various and not only prayers to God whom sacrifice is offered
- Inherent curiosity and quest for new knowledge is evident
- Origin of universe is a question captured

YAJURVEDA

- Issue of conducting sacrifice
- Mantras mainly in prose form with some in metrical form
- Mantras referred as Yajus
- Guidebook for priest to perform a variety of tasks
- Divided into Krsna and Sukla

SAMAVEDA

- To please, pacify or satisfy
- Mantras referred as Sama
- 3 branches :- Kauthuma, Ranayaniya, Jaiminiya
- Please devtas by singing the mantras after making offering

- 2 Parts :- Purvacikam and Uttararcikam
- 1875 Mantras :- Except 75, all from Rigveda
- 150+ seers associated with Samaveda

ATHARVEDA

- Multi faceted nature and characteristics
- Later addition to 3 vedas
- Priest is known as Brahman
- Brahman's permission to be sought before ritual
- Originally more than 9 sakhas present but presently 2 :- Paippalada and Saunakiya
- Atharveda Samhita is divided into 4 books. There are 20 kandas or books in all. Except for books 15 and 16, the text is in poem form deploying a diversity of vedic measures. Each kanda is divided into suktas or hymns and suktas into mantras
- 6077 mantras in 736 sutras

VEDANGAS

During earlier times, the Vedic language was easy to recite and understand. With passing time natural changes occurred in spoken language and it slowly drifted away from vedic language. Therefore, these people needed support to read and comprehend the Vedic text.

One can identify six complementary requirements for the preservation of Vedic Corpus and the practices prescribed therein and proper use of them.

- Vedic texts being oral in nature have to be preserved in their original form. This requires listening to the sounds properly and reproducing them the same way they were heard
- Words and sentences of the text had to be understood, without any ambiguity
- The metres to which the mantras are set had to be systematically understood and their rules followed properly.
- There is a need for a complete guide to lead a life as prescribed in vedas. This requires unambiguously spelt out practices and norms for various activities to be performed
- A properly structured set of instructions to perform the rituals prescribed in Vedas, right form building the yajna sala to carrying the elaborate rituals such as soma-yagas need to be established

There are 6 Vedangas:

- Oral Preservation – Phonetics, pronunciation etc. – Siksa
- Present Knowledge Properly – Grammarly – Vyakarana
- Prevent Corruption – Rules for Presenting Knowledge – Chandas

- Ensure Correct Meaning – Book of Synonyms and Etymology – Nirukta
- Establish Norms, Rules and Practices – Manual – Kalpa
- When to do – Methodology for Timing Events – Jyotisa

VEDIC SCHOOLS

All the schools have a common goal, i.e. to answer questions such as, “Who am I?” and “What is the process for final liberation?” To know oneself and escape from the cycle of birth-death and get liberated, correct knowledge needs to be obtained. The schools differ in presenting how to obtain the right knowledge and use it as the means for ultimate liberation of the ‘self’. The context for the philosophical discussion is the 3 inter related concepts of God-Universe-Individual. All schools have employed several constructs involving these 3 entities in discussing the path for self-evaluation and liberation. The 6 schools differ in the approach taken to reach the goal.

SAMKHYA DARSANA

- Sage Kapila is supposed to be the author of Samkhya System, there is no available evidence or material to substantiate this.
- The earliest authoritative material available on Samkhya Karika by Isvarakrsna. This is a work in 70 verses and has a lucid exposition of Samkhya system.
- Samkhya argues that the root cause of all pains and sufferings is the lack of correct knowledge. By proper understanding of ontology of Samkhya darsana, the causes of pain and the way to end it can be explained.
- **SAMKHYA SYSTEM: PURUSA AND PRAKRITI**
 - According to Samkhya system, 2 basic elements constitute everything in this world, namely matter(Prakriti) and spirit(Purusa)
 - Purusa is pure consciousness, sentient, changeless, eternal, and passive.
 - Prakriti is root cause of all activities including the entire creation.
 - Prakrti + Purusa assumes diverse shapes and forms, gross and subtle
 - Prakrti is made of 3 basic constituents: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These are called Gunas.
 - Evolution of Prakrti results in:
 - Mahat
 - Ahankara
 - Manas
 - 5 Sense organs
 - 5 Organs of Action
 - 5 generic classes attributable to objects perceived through sense organs
 - 5 gross elements

YOGA DARSANA

- It is said to be founded by Patanjali through his yoga-sutras.

- The unique thing that establishes yoga as distinct among other darsanas is that its emphasis on understanding the mind, its various states, its cognitive activities, and methods to control it.
- If a person wants to understand his true nature, and experience bliss eventually, he must focus on the physical, psychological, and moral states of his being and make simultaneous progress on all the three.
- Yoga system provides an 8 step process to gradually attain complete cessation of the activities of mind.
 - Yama : Forebearance
 - Niyama : Observances
 - Asana : Physical Fitness
 - Pranayama : Breath Control
 - Pratyahara : Withdrawing the cognitive senses from their subjects
 - Dharana : Absorption
 - Samadhi : State of Oneness

NYAYA DARSANA

- Original theory of Nyaya School is found in Nyaya-Sutra, a set of aphorisms developed by Gautama.
- The aphorisms are organized into 5 chapters, each having two sections
- Gangesopadhyaya took different positions on some of the theories of School and established a new school called Navya-Nyaya.
- The Nyaya philosophy starts with proposition that one attains liberation only when he acquires the knowledge of Truth. The knowledge of Truth drives away miseries and an individual escapes the cycle of birth-death to final liberation.
- The unique contribution of Nyaya school is its detailed inquiry of knowledge (Prama) and valid cognition and it means (Pramana)

VAISESIKA DARSANA

- Propounded by Kanada and his work was organized into aphorisms in ten chapters, each consisting of 2 sections.
- Vaisesika means difference or unique attributes in a thing.
- According to this school, diversity, not unity is fundamental to the Universe.
- Although the multitude of forms and shapes exist they can be reduced into 3 classes of dravya, guna, and karna, but also into sub-classes such as cows, redness, or moving.
- Samanya is a very important aspect in scheme of classification. When we classify many things into one category, consider the similarities.
- The final liberation or salvation comes as a result of real knowledge produced by proper understanding of the six categories in sutra.

PURVA MIMAMSA DARSANA

- Mimamsa conveys different meanings: reflection, consideration, profound thought, investigation, examination, and discussion.
- In purva mimamsa it means reflection and is primarily based on a tradition of deep contemplation on meanings of Vedic texts which it relies on as the authority for its principles
- Purva mimamsa places greater emphasis on the Brahmanas and draws from it substantially as it is the part of vedic corpus that has elaborate procedural details on the vedic rituals.
- School established by Jaimini (student of Ved Vyasa). He presented his aphorisms numbering over 2500 in 12 chapters, which are divided into 60 sections.
- The text provides philosophical justifications for observance of vedic rituals, by offering meaning and significance of Vedic rituals to attain Moksha.
- The main aim of school is to ascertain the meanings of the Samhita and Brahmana portions of Veda which lay importance on the karma, performing rituals, and thereby attaining dharma, a quality that is acquired by an atman which prompts him to the respective rituals such as svarga.
- Eventually with purified actions, such a person attains liberation.

VEDANTA DARSANA

- All Vedanta schools derive a considerable part of their material from the Upanisads.
- Relies on 3 major texts: Prasthan Traya :- Brahma-sutras, Bhagavadgita, Upanisads
- Some schools of Vedanta:
 - **Advaita-Vedanta:**
 - Conception of attribute less God as ultimate reality.
 - Upanisads describe Brahman as one without form, name, and attributes, known as Nirguna-Brahman.
 - Sankara built further on Gaudapada's foundational work through his karika for Mandukya-Upanisad and gave more strength and structure and formalized the Advaita-Vedanta
 - Other main aspects of philosophy include the doctrine of Maya, the identity of Jiva with the Brahman and conception of Moksha as the merger of Jiva in Brahman.
 - Advaita-vedanta postulates oneness of Jiva and Isvara and in its scheme of things, the Isvara and the Jiva deploy similar mechanisms to create the world.
 - Isvara represents macrocosm with maya as the mechanism to create physical universe. In same way jiva uses ignorance as the mechanism to create its own world constituting a parallel microcosm.

Visistadvaita-Vedanta:

- It combines bhakti to a personal god, who has name, form, and shape and who saves his devotees from all miseries of the world and the impersonal God as espoused in the Upanisads into a single school of thought

- Brahman or the ultimate reality is also referred to as Visnu, etymologically meaning that which pervades everything.
- The attribute-less Brahman held by Advaita School is rejected as metaphysical abstraction and Brahman is conceived, by Visistadvaitin as God with attributes like possessing a bodily form, with infinite good qualities and glories.
- Ultimate is one but not attribute less. Matter, Jiva and Isvara are 3 recognised entities in Visistavedita. The three are inseparable unity, the first two being subjected to the restraint of the third in all its forms. This is the core of conceptualization in Visistadvaita.
- One attains freedom by gaining knowledge of the nature of self and attaining the feet of the lord in his abode, Vaikuntha. However to gain this knowledge, each jiva has to put forth the effort to attain liberation.
- The nature of effort to be invested requires a continuous unwavering meditation with love on Supreme being. Referred to as Bhakti.
- The concept of total surrender is also considered as the direct means to liberation.
- **Dvaita-Vedanta:**
 - Udupi as centre of Dvaita-vedanta
 - Quintessential aspects of Dvaita are that Visnu is supreme god, the world is real and there is a difference between God and Jivas.
 - All jivas are dependent on Visnu and liberation consists on enjoyment of bliss that is inherent in oneself. Finally pure devotion is means of attaining it.
 - School admits 2 independent and mutually irreducible substances that make up the Universe: the Jiva and the Isvara
 - Isvara is independent but Jiva is dependent on Isvara.
 - Matter making up the physical Universe was considered real.
 - According to dvaita, it is the Isvara who causes the individual to be unaware of relationship of the atman with God.

NON-VEDIC PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

These system did not consider Vedas as an authoritative text. These schools also do not accept the entity Isvara

JAIN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY Jaina from ji meaning to conquer, indicating someone who has successfully subdued his passions and obtained mastery.

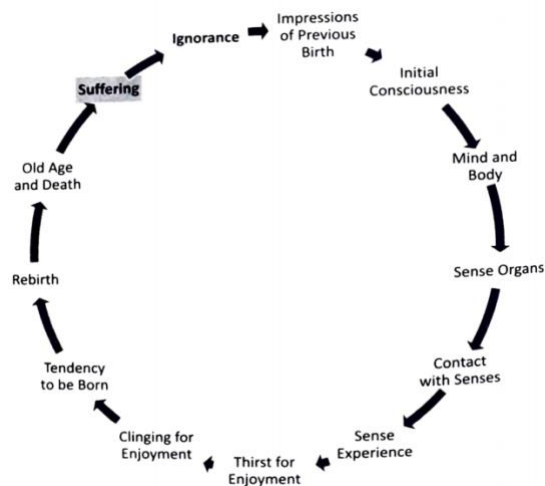
- The jain school considers 24 Tirthankaras starting from Vrsabhadra to Mahavira as prophets and masters of the philosophy.
- They appear periodically in the world to educate and lead people to cross over the ocean of rebirth.
- This is similar to notion of avatara-purusas, who by their conduct and teaching help the human beings cross ocean of Samsara.
- During the early common era, 2 sects of Jains, Svetambras and Digambras emerged.

- There are some differences between the 3 sects in certain aspects such as rituals, ascetic practices, and monastic organization. Despite this on matters of philosophical principles and concepts, they remain similar.
- According to Jain ontology, the fundamental categories of being are a soul (Jiva), a matter of which the substances in the world are formed (Pudgala), space (Akasa), time(KALA), the principle of motion (Dharma).
- These particles also possess innumerable qualities and jivas with their limited ability cannot describe them completely. Hence our knowledge of any substance is not absolute but relative. Jaina school proposes a methodology to address this issue and argues that capturing reality perfectly with language is not possible.
- Description of reality can be sufficiently enhanced through appropriate qualification of the claim made. This approach is known as 'syad-vada', meaning conditional predication. 'Syat' in Sanskrit means 'maybe'
- Using this concept, the Jaina school lists seven possibilities for truth values. In jaina school, the cycle of death and birth is attributed to tiny particles of matter that have embedded themselves in Jiva. This is called Karma and Jain philosophy, spiritual growth is to overcome this Karma.
- Jiva is stuck in bondage with matter because of his karma and passions. Hence freeing the self from the matter is way to liberation
- From a practical point of view the goal is to purify the Jiva of karmic matter, in a way by cleaning the karma so that the Jiva can radiate in its inherent blissful nature. To achieve this goal, Jain philosophy considers ascetic practices as essential. 3 Gems are prescribed: right faith, right knowledge, right conduct

BAUDDHA SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY

- Based on teachings of Gautama Buddha.
- Northern Buddhism: Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan
- Southern Buddhism: Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand
- Earliest Forms is northern and it includes several sub traditions like Zen, Nichiren, Shingon
- 4 Noble Truth:
 - There is Suffering: Human being is a compound of 5 aggregates and clinging to them leads to suffering
 - 4 elements, 5 sense organs, 5 attributes of matter, 2 distinctions of sex, 3 essential conditions and 2 means of communication
 - Consciousness
 - Feeling: Sensations of pleasure and pain
 - Formation
 - Perception and Potentialities which lead to good or bad results
 - There is cause of Suffering
 - The Cessation of Suffering

- There is a path to end Suffering
- Ultimate goal is to reach Nirvana
- It is the sinless calm state of mind attained due to freedom from desires and passions, a state of perfect peace, goodness, and wisdoms
- Cycle of Suffering



CARVAKA SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY Maps to trait of materialism, which emphasizes a life of enjoyment based on certain principles and assumptions about life.

- The word Carvaka means 'sweet tongued', in a way signifying that the ideas appear attractive at the outset. This is because the system only advocates 2 of 4 purusharthas, pleasure and wealth as objectives of living. This school is also called Lokayata.
- In case of Carvaka we do not have extensive literature available to us today which discusses its tenets in totality
- The absence of canonical texts and a lineage of followers who were able to establish the tenets of the system by constantly engaging in intellectual debates to establish their tenets were perhaps responsible for its decay.
- One of major difference of Carvaka school with that of Vedic Schools of philosophy pertains to what is the accepted means of valid knowledge. This has significant implications for metaphysics. On account of this, Carvaka school considers matter as the only reality using which the world is made of.
- In Carvaka only 4 elements are considered disregarding ether or space.
- Other entities like sky, atman, mind, isvara, dharma, reincarnation which other schools accepted are rejected in Carvaka
- In essence all transcendental entities are dismissed using the argument that only direct perception provides valid knowledge.
- There is nothing called atman other than body
- Concept of Rebirth is dismissed
- There is no other world
- No afterlife. Pain and pleasure only while living.

