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## UNIT 1 NYAYA PHILOSOPHY

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### Structure

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- 1.2 Epistemology
- 1.3 Theory of Causation (*Asatkâryavâda*)
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### 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, you will learn the Nyâyika's doctrine of valid sources of knowledge and their arguments on self and liberation. Further, you will also learn the Nyâyika's views on God.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain different kinds of perception;
- discuss nature and characteristics of inference;
- elucidate Nyâya concept of self;
- illustrate Nyâyika's views on liberation; and
- examine Nyâyika's arguments on testimony as a valid source of knowledge.

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Nyâya School is founded by the sage Gotama, who is not confused as Gautama Buddha. He is familiarized as 'Aksapâda'. Nyâya means correct thinking with proper arguments and valid reasoning. Thus, Nyâya philosophy is known as tarkashâstra (the science of reasoning); pramânashâstra (the science of logic and epistemology); hetuvidyâ (the science of causes); vâdavidyâ (the science of debate); and anviksiki (the science of critical study). The Nyâya philosophy as a practitioner and believer of realism seeks for acquiring knowledge of reality.

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### 1.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

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The Nyâya school of thought is adhered to atomistic pluralism and logical realism. It is atomistic pluralism on the account that atom is the constituent of matter and there are not one but many entities, both material and spiritual, as ultimate constituents of the universe. By holding pluralism standpoint it refutes materialistic and spiritualistic monism. It is a system of logical realism by dint of its adaptation the doctrine that the world exists independently from our

perceptions and knowledge. Further, the independent existence of the world can be defended not by our faith or intuition but by the logical arguments and critical reflection on the nature of experience.

The Nyâya philosophy recognizes sixteen categories and the first category is known as ‘pramâna’ which focuses the logical and epistemological character of the Nyâya system. It professes that there are four independent pramânas (sources of valid knowledge). These are; perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony or sabda.

Interpreting the term ‘knowledge’ Nyâyikas says that it may be treated as cognition, apprehension, consciousness, or manifestation of objects. Knowledge is of subjective and objective. Subjective knowledge differs from objective knowledge. If different people give the different opinion on a particular object or a fact then the knowledge about that object will be treated as subjective knowledge. For example, on a road accident if we ask different people who were present there, we will find different opinions from them. Hence, the view on the accident is treated as subjective knowledge. On the other hand, if most of the people express their views on an object similar to others then the knowledge of that object would be treated as objective knowledge. For example, all people agreed that apple is a fruit and eatable. Thus, any sort of knowledge is a revelation or manifestation of objects. Just as a tube light manifests physical things of a room, likewise, knowledge reveals all objects surrounded it. The Nyâya Philosophy is being the upholder of realism expresses that knowledge is always dealt with object.

Knowledge may be valid or invalid. Valid knowledge is called *pramâ* and invalid knowledge is called *apramâ*. The Nyâya School advocates that valid knowledge is the true and right apprehension of an object. It is the manifestation of an object as it is. The characterization of valid knowledge is a consequence of the correspondence theory of truth which states that truth is the correspondence between a proposition and reality. Thus, valid knowledge is treated as presentative knowledge. Presentative knowledge arises when the object of knowledge is directly present to the knower. For example, Dr. Biplab perceives a pen in his shirt pocket is an instance of presentative knowledge. Valid knowledge is produced by the four valid sources of knowledge- perception, inference comparison, and sabda. Invalid knowledge is defined as the wrong apprehension of object. It includes memory (*smruti*), doubt (*samsaya*), error (*viparyâya*), and hypothetical reasoning (*tarka*). Memory is not presentative but representative knowledge. Memory can also consider as a source of valid knowledge provided what is recalled or remembered were experienced in the past as a presentative cognition. Doubt is lack of certainty on cognition. Error is misapprehension of what is cognized. For example, a snake is mistakenly cognized as rope. Tarka is considered as invalid knowledge because it does not produce any new knowledge. It only confirms what one already knows earlier. Thus, it is representative in nature.

We shall now consider the four valid sources of knowledge (*pramânas*) that is upheld by the Nyâyikas.

### Perception

According to Nyâyikas, perception is the direct and immediate cognition produced by the interaction between the object and sense-organs. For a perceptual cognition,

four elements are necessary. These are; the self, mind, sense organs and objects. The self is in contact with the mind (*manas*), the mind is in contact with the sense organs and lastly, the sense organs are in contact with the objects, as a result, we perceive objects.

There are two types of perception; ordinary perception (*laukika*) and extraordinary perception (*alukika*). Ordinary perception is further divided in two sorts; external (*bâhya*) and internal (*mânas*). External Perception has five distinctions because it is connected with five sense organs - auditory, visual, tactual, gustatory, and olfactory. In case of internal perception, the contacts occur between mind and the object. As a result, knowledge produces. Examples of internal perceptions are; feeling, desiring, wishing, etc.

Again, perceptions are divided in three sorts. These are, indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpa*), determinate perception (*savikalpa*), and recognition (*prativijnâna*). These distinctions are made only in thought but not in experience. Now let us discuss indeterminate perception.

### **Indeterminate Perception**

A perception is considered as indeterminate when we can't determine its features like colour, shape, size, etc. In this case, the sense organs contact with the object and a particular knowledge immediately emerges. Nyâyikas named this knowledge is 'avyakta' which means it can't explain through our vocabulary. In other words, we can't express about the object accurately and clearly. This sort of knowledge arises when self has merely an awareness of the object without having any concrete knowledge of its name, form, qualities, etc. It is basically an underdeveloped form of perception. It's existence is only proved through inference, not by perception.

### **Determinate Perception**

Determinate perception unlike indeterminate perception arises when the knowledge of an object consists of characters, such as; name, colour, shape etc. It gives knowledge of the object, as a result, we cognize 'It is a tree', 'He is a man' etc. In this case, an individual can identify and cognize the object as it is.

### **Recognition**

The senses contact with the object and recalled that whether the same object had been encountered earlier or not. If it had encountered in the past and positively recapitulating the situation and the features of the object then it would be considered as recognition. For example, Mr. Ranjeet saw Dr. Biplab after a long time and recognized him. Here, Mr. Ranjeet would be able to do so because he encountered Dr. Biplab in an academic conference five years back. In that time they had spent a very lighter and beautiful moment together. All these events are remembered by Mr. Ranjeet. So once he saw Dr. Biplab he said hey! Are you Dr. Biplab? I am Ranjeet my self. Do you remember we met five years back in a conference? By listening from Ranjeet Dr. Biplab said oh! Yes. I remember you, even I remember the moment that we had spent together. This sense of knowledge is called recognition. In this knowledge there is always an element of immediate experience, e.g., Mr. Ranjeet met Dr. Biplab after a long time in a particular place.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a brief about ordinary perception.

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**Extra Ordinary Perception**

Now we will focus our discussion on extraordinary perception (alukika). To explain, it is a perception that provides knowledge even without the senses-object contact. In other words, this sort of perception arises whenever the contacts between sense organs and objects occur in an unusual manner.

Nyâya recognizes three kinds of extraordinary perception. These are;

- a) Sâmnanyalaksana
- b) Jñânalaksana
- c) Yogaja

**Sâmnanyalaksana**

Sâmnanya laksana is the perception of universals. In other words, it is the perception of classes. According to Nyâya, the universals are a distinct class. They inhere in all the particular belonging to the same class. For example, a hen becomes a hen because it has the universal ‘henness’ inhering in it. Another example, we identify a person as ‘man’ because that person possesses the common quality of ‘manhood’ which we find among other men.

In our day-to-day life we perceive only particulars like a table, a cow, a pen etc. but not universals like tableness, cowness, penness, etc. Thus, it is admitted that whenever we perceive the particulars we first perceive the universal which inheres in it. These sorts of perception Nyâyikas treats as an extraordinary perception.

**Jñânalaksana**

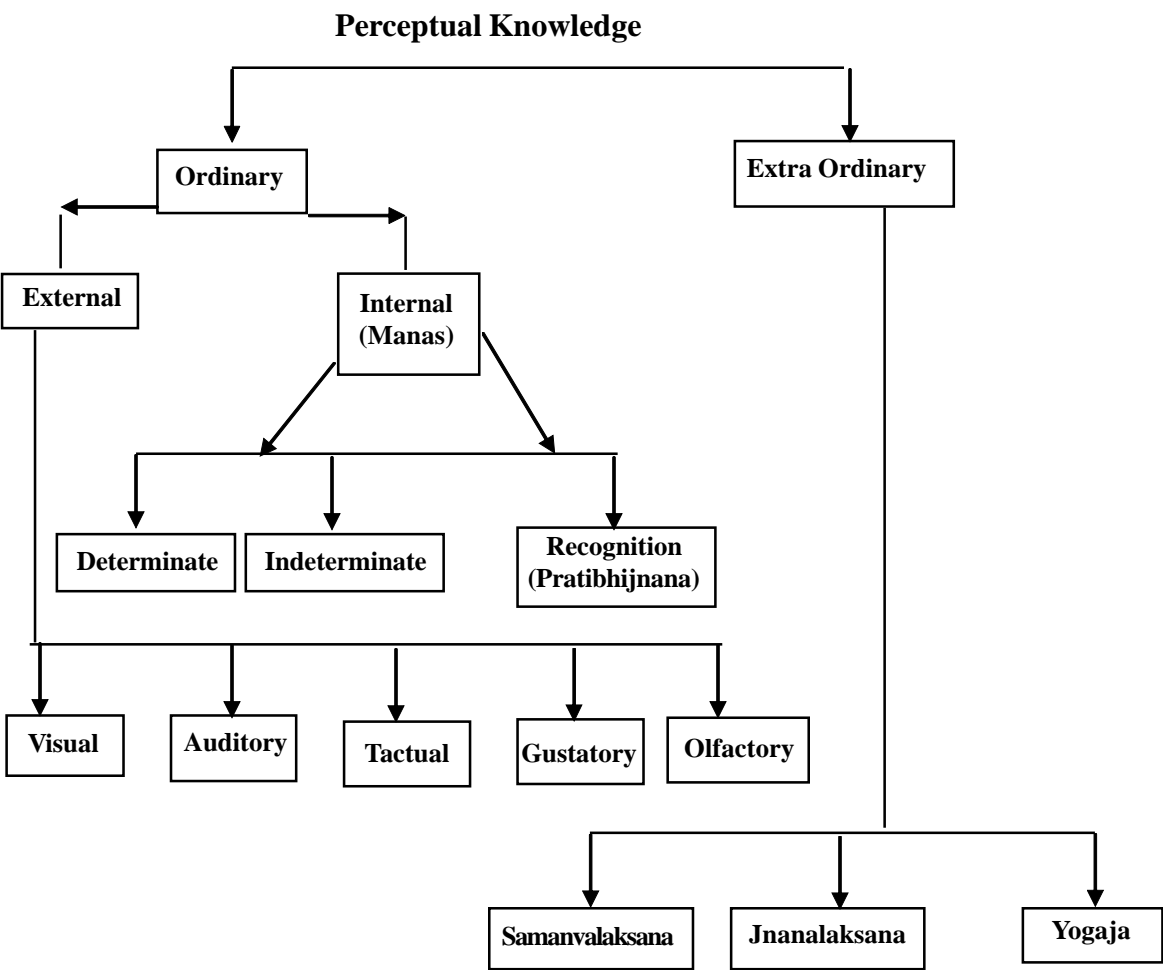
Jñânalaksana perception is a perception through complex association. In this case, an object is not directly presented to the sense organs, but it is retrieved in memory through the past cognition of it and is perceived thorough representation. For example, the ice looks cold, the fire looks hot, etc. Suppose that a person has in the past experienced a piece of ice, its colour and its coldness. Owing to such

invariable association of touch and colour, the person presents in his visual perceptions of ice and its coldness. This results him to say, ice looks cold.

Yogaja

Yogaja perception as an extraordinary perception is found in yogis who possess supernatural power. Yogis through their power of meditation can have intuitive and immediate perception of all objects, past, present, and future.

The following chart represents the Nyâya distinctions on perception.



Inference

According to Nyâya Philosophy, the second source of valid knowledge is ‘inference’. It is also known as ‘anumāna’. The expression ‘anumāna’ is the conjoined of two terms; ‘anu’ and ‘māna’. The word ‘anu’ stands for ‘after’ and ‘māna’ means ‘cognition’. So etymologically speaking, ‘anumāna’ (inference) means ‘after cognition’. Literally speaking, anumāna is such knowledge which follows from other knowledge.

Constituents of Inference

An inference is constituted with at least three sentences and these three sentences are again constituted of three different terms. These three sentences are named as; major premise, minor premise, and conclusion respectively. The major term

is found in the major premise. Similarly minor term is found in the minor premise. And, the term which is found in both major premise and minor premise is called as middle term. In the conclusion only major term and minor term are found. The middle term makes a link between minor term and major term. Major, minor, and middle terms are used interchangeably as ‘sadhya’, ‘paksa’ and ‘hetu’ in Nyâya Philosophy.

An example will clarify the above analysis.

Major Premise : All things which have smoke have fire.  
Minor Premise : This hill has smoke  
Conclusion : Therefore, this hill has fire

Here ‘smoke’ is the middle term, ‘fire’ is the major term and ‘hill’ is the minor term. In any anumâna (inference) ‘vyâpti’ relation must subsist between hetu and sâdhya. Vyâpti is defined as an invariable, unconditional and universal relation between middle term and major term of an inferential argument.

In an inference, knowledge of an object is derived due to previous knowledge of some sign or mark. The previous knowledge is due to the universal relation between the major term and the middle term is being present in the minor term.

To explain the above example, it is stated that an individual saw the smoke on a hill from a distant place. By seeing the smoke he/she relates his/her previous knowledge that wherever there is smoke there is fire, e.g.; in kitchen, in a lamp, etc. which is a universal truth. Then, he/she claims that since the hill looks smoky, it implies there is fire.

Now let us discuss the major term, minor term, middle term and their brief analysis in an inferential argument.

**Major Term (Sâdhya)**

In Aristotelian logic ‘major term’ and in Nyâya philosophy ‘sâdhya’ are one and the same. The Sâdhya is the object of inference. It is to be established. The Sâdhya is not perceived but it is inferred by us. On the above example, ‘fire’ is considered as ‘sâdhya’

**Minor Term (Paksa)**

In Aristotelian logic, paksa is same as ‘minor term’. Paksa is to be perceived, but not inferred. The paksa is the subject where we establish something. This something is not considered directly but indirectly. The consideration is depending on inference. ‘Hill’ is considered as ‘paksa’ on the above example.

**Middle Term (Hetu)**

The term ‘hetu’ corresponds to middle term in Aristotelian logic. It is also known as ‘linga’, ‘mark’, and ‘sign’. It is found once in relation to sâdhya and then in relation to paksa. Lastly, in the conclusion, it helps in establishing sâdhya in paksa. ‘Smoke’ is considered as ‘hetu’ on the above inferential argument.

Types of Inference

Inference is of two types:

- i) Svârtha or for one’s self
- ii) Parârtha or for others

In case of the former, the inference is intended for own self whereas, in case of the later, the inference is conveyed knowledge for others. In the former, it is not required to present the judgment in an orderly manner, since it is personal to the member, whereas in case of the later, it is necessary to do so. This is so because the correct order of judgment helps an individual to make understand others.

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, inference for others consists of five constituents.

- 1) This hill has fire (Pratijnâ)
- 2) Because there is smoke (Hetu)
- 3) Wherever there is smoke, there is fire (Udâharana)
- 4) This hill has smoke (Upamâna)
- 5) Therefore, this hill has fire (Nigamâna)

In this inference, the middle term appears three times, Therefore, it is also known as ‘tritiyalinga parâmarsa’. In this inference, if we remove either first two premises or last two premises, the inference will not be an invalid and incorrect one. Hence, for an inference we need three and at least three premises possessing three different terms as its basic requirements.

**Check Your Progress II**

**Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain the role of hetu (middle term) in an inferential argument.

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Upamâna (Comparison)

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, comparison (upamâna) is the third source of valid knowledge. The expression ‘upamâna’, is derived from two words, ‘upa’ and ‘mâna’. The word ‘upa’ means similarity or ‘sâdrusya’ and the word ‘mâna’ means ‘cognition’. Thus, generally speaking, upamâna as a source of knowledge

is derived from the similarity between two things/objects. It is a source of knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation (what the word refers to).

*Example of Upamâna:*

A person does not know what a ‘squirrel’ is? S(he) is told by a forester that it is a small animal like rat, but it has a long furry tail and strips on its body. After some period of time, when s(he) sees such an animal in the forest, s(he) knows that it is a squirrel.

There are four steps involved in acquiring knowledge of an object in comparison (upamâna).

- First : We have an authoritative statement that a word denotes objects of a certain description.
- Second : When one observes any such objects she/he has the knowledge that it answers to the given description.
- Third : There is a recollection of the descriptive statement received from authority.
- Four/Finally : There is the resulting knowledge that, this kind of objects are denoted by the word is same.

Here, it is important to note that Buddhism (Buddhist philosophy) does not accept comparison as an independent source of valid knowledge. On their account, comparison can be reduced to perception and testimony. The Sâmkhya and the Vaisesika Philosophy believe that comparison can be reduced to inference.

**Check Your Progress III**

**Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Give an example of comparison (*upamâna*) on your own.

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### Verbal Testimony (Sabda)

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, sabda (verbal testimony) is the fourth and last valid source of knowledge. 'Sabda' literally means verbal knowledge. It is the knowledge of objects derived from words or sentence. But all verbal knowledge is not valid. Thus, Nyâyikas expressed that sabda is a pramâna of valid verbal testimony.

Sabda is the instructive assertion of a reliable person. Now a question probably comes to your mind, i.e. who is a reliable person? A reliable person may be a risi, mlechha, arya who is an expert in certain matter and is willing to communicate his/her experience of it.

#### *Example:*

Suppose that a lady came to the side of a river to cross the river and can't ascertain depth of water in the river. In this case, she asked a fisherman who is fishing there that 'can I cross the river?' Since the fisherman is a local person over there and has no enmity with her replied that you can cross the river easily. Here, the word of the fisherman man is to be accepted as a means of right knowledge called verbal testimony.

### Types of Sabda

These are two different kinds of Sabda.

- a) i) Drustârtha
- ii) Adrustârtha
- b) i) Laukika
- ii) Alaukika

The former classification is made on the basis of objects of meaning and the later classification is based on the origin of words. Sabda deals with perceptible object is called drstârta, e.g. table is brown, grows is green etc. A sabda deals with imperceptible object is called 'adrsta', e.g. Duty is god, Truth is noble, etc.

Laukika sabda is known as secular whereas alukika sabda is known as divine or vaidika. The Vedas are spoken by god. This vaidika testimony is divine and perfect. According to Nyâyikas, since human beings are not perfect only the words of trust worthy person can be considered as laukika sabda.

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## 1.3 THEORY OF CAUSATION (ASATKARYAVADA)

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The theory of causation is an important component of Nyâya Philosophy. Before going in to the discussion of Nyâya theory of causation, let us understand 'what is causation?'.

There are two important components found in the theory of causation. One is 'cause' and another is 'effect'. A cause is defined as an unconditional and invariable antecedent of an effect. An effect is defined as an unconditional and invariable consequent of a cause.

Nyâya theory of causation is known as 'astkâryavâda' or 'ârmbhavâda'. They viewed that effect is produced by a cause but the effect and the cause are not one

and the same. The effect is a new product comes to the existence which was not their earlier in the cause. Hence, every effect is a new product which was not found previously in the cause. For example, a pot is made by clay. Here ‘clay’ is the cause and ‘pot’ is its effect. According to Nyâyikas, pot is a fresh creation, a new beginning which did not exist before in the clay. In this way they uphold the theory ‘asatkâryavâda’.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is asatkâryavâda?

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1.4 SELF AND LIBERATION

The Nyâyikas expressed that there are infinite number of individual self exists in the universe. All those have perceivable qualities like pleasure, pain, etc. They are eternal and all pervading.

According to Nyâyaya, the self can neither be identified with mind (mânas) nor can be identified with pure consciousness, but understood as consciousness belonging to an individual/subject. This is so because mind is atomic and unperceivable and hence devoid from perceivable qualities. On the other hand, consciousness belongs to the individual self but not same as self. Thus, consciousness is not the self but only an attribute of the self. It is an accidental attribute of the self. The self in its original state has no consciousness and hence devoid of cognition and knowledge. But when it comes to contact with sense organs it acquires consciousness.

Self is regarded as ‘I’ the knower and it is known through internal perception. Since there is self, there is bondage and hence, aspires for liberation or salvation. Liberation is the state refrain from all kinds of sufferings and bondage those arises because of the self’s association with body and sense organs. Nyâyikas uphold association and attachment are the sources of pain and suffering. Hence, as long as self is attached with body and sense organs, it goes through the cycles of birth and death. This implies Nyâyikas believe in law of karma.

Liberation, according to Nyâya, can be achieved when there is cessation of karmic chain or karmic influx. It is a state where self is detached from body and sense organs.

**Check Your Progress V**

**Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain Nyâyikas view on liberation.

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## 1.5 THE CONCEPT OF GOD

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He is the efficient, but not the material cause of the universe. The material cause of this universe is the eternal atoms of earth, water, fire, and air. He who desires the universe remains in the state of stability and tranquility. He has the real knowledge of all objects and occurrences. Thus, he is treated as an omnipresent and omniscient being.

## 1.6 LET US SUM UP

The sage Goutama is the founder of the Nyâya Philosophy. This school unlike other schools of Indian philosophy concerns on the valid reasoning to acquire knowledge of the reality. **Epistemology:** According to the Nyâya Philosophy, knowledge manifests with objects. There are two sorts of knowledge, valid and invalid. Valid knowledge is further divided into four; perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony whereas, invalid knowledge comprises memory, doubt, error, and tarka. **Perception:** It is the knowledge arises due to the association among self, mind, sense organs and objects. Perception is of two sorts: Ordinary and Extra-ordinary. **Inference:** There are there premises and three different terms required for an inferential argument. The premises are respectively named as; major premise, minor premise and conclusion. The three different terms are; major term, minor term, and the middle term. Vyâpti relation subsists in an inferential argument. **Comparison:** Knowledge arises out of the relation between a name and the object it denotes is regarded as comparison. **Sabda:** Sabda is a valid source of knowledge. The Nyâya explains sabda is a reliable statement of anyone. Sabda is divided into two kinds: a) Drustârtha and Adrustârtha b) Laukika and Alaukika. **Theory of Causation:** The Nyâya

Philosophy upholds astkâryavâda which states that effect is not same as the cause. Effect is a new creation or a new bringing of its existence. The effect did not exist in the material cause prior to its production. **Self and Liberation:** There are innumerable self exists in the universe. Since the self possesses consciousness, it is trapped by the law of karma. Hence, suffering and pain are the obvious phenomenon. To get rid from all sorts of sufferings the self seeks liberation. Liberation can be achieved when there will be cessation of law of karma. **God:** God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He regulates the earth, solar systems and the movements of planets and becomes identified as an omnipresent and omniscience being in the cosmos. According to Nyayikas, the world is created out of the four eternal atoms as its material cause. These are; space, time, mind and soul. God is being the efficient cause of universe is responsible for its maintenance, and destruction. Thus God, as the first efficient cause of the universal forces, is the creator of the world. God is one, infinite, eternal, and the universe of space and time, of mind and soul, does not limit him. God is said to possess six perfections: infinite glory, absolute sovereignty, unqualified virtue, supreme beauty, perfect knowledge, and complete detachment. The Nyaya philosophy offers an argument to establish the existence of God known as causal argument. On the line of this argument, it is stated that the entire universe is constituted of enumerable elements both subtle and gross. A human being by possessing limited knowledge cannot be the creator of the vast universe. This implies the creator is one who is beyond space and time, must be eternal and devoid of all limitations. And, all these features are therein Supreme Being or God. Hence, God is the creator or designer of the universe.

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**1.7 KEY WORDS**

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- Category** : A category is any of the broadest classes of things – ‘thing’ here meaning anything whatever that can be discussed and cannot be reduced to any other class.
- Knowledge** : Knowledge is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as (i) expertise, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject, (ii) what is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information or (iii) awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation. Philosophical debates in general start with Plato’s formulation of knowledge as “justified true belief.”

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**1.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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Barlingay, S.S. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Logic*. Delhi: National Publishing House, 1965.

Chatterjee, S.C. *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1950.

Vidyabhusana, S.C. *A History of Indian Logic*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1971.

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## 1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

Ordinary perception is of two sorts, external and internal. External is caused by our five sense organs and internal perception is treated as the mental perception.

### Check Your Progress II

Hetu is known as ‘middle term’ in Aristotelian syllogism. It finds in both the major premise and the minor premise and lastly helps major term to establish in the minor term in the conclusion.

### Check Your Progress III

Zebra is an animal looks like donkey but it has a long neck and it's body is covered with stripes.

### Check Your Progress IV

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, the doctrine that the effect is a new production and it is not same as its cause is known as asatkâryavâda.

### Check Your Progress V

Liberation is attained when there will be complete cessation of karmic influx. It is a state where the self is detached from all sorts of worldly sufferings and pains.