

Concept of Pratyaksha Pramana: A Brief Review Of Indian Philosophy

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Abstract: Accepted by all school of thoughts in Indian Philosophy, Pratyaksha Pramana is acknowledged universally as independent proof. The area of Pratyaksha Pramana is comprehensive and whole world believes in this only. The knowledge as outcome of conjunction of senses and objects is taken as Pratyaksha Pramana. It is doubtless and definite. It may be Laukika (ordinary) or Alaukika (extraordinary). Ordinary is further divided in to Savikalpaka (determinate) and Nirvikalpaka (indeterminate). Both determinate and indeterminate are said to be of two folds, being Arvachina (recent) and Anarvachina (memorial). Ordinary determinate is well recognized by everyone. Important of mana (mind) is given specific space in processing of association between five senses and objects based on cognition and conscious. Six types of associations are suggested which differs from each other based on qualities.

Keywords: Pratyaksha, Pramana, Savikalpaka, Nirvikalpaka, Determinate, Indeterminate, Valid, Knowledge.....

Knowledge means 'the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association'¹. It is related with apprehension of subjects both theoretically and practically. It is result of ordered arrangement of mind, sense organs and objects. Any defect or disability in either of three causes wrong knowledge or cognition. Indian epistemology has classified knowledge (*gyan*) in *Aprama* and *Prama*³. *Aprama* is invalid or incorrect cognition or knowledge⁴. As the wrong knowledge is root cause of all pains⁵, correct knowledge based on proofs should be apprehended. It is called as *Prama* and process of ascertaining is called as *Pramana* (Etymology: *Maa Dhatu* with *Pra* prefix and *Lyut* suffix). Different schools of thoughts in Indian philosophy have given distinguished numbers of steps for ascertaining of correct knowledge, but *Pratyaksh Pramana* (perception) is common by all of them. It is considered as best or supreme in all other *Pramana*⁶. The word *Pratyaksha* is derived from *Prati* means expression or resemblance¹¹ and *Aksha* means sense organs¹¹, so *Pratyaksha* is expression of characters using sense organs¹². Mimamsa mentions perception as knowledge based on contact of senses and soul. It's knowledge of existing objects⁶. Perception means knowledge based on presence of five objects of senses⁸. It is knowledge where organs work as instruments¹⁰. It is discernment being in conjunction with things perceived⁷. It is basis of other *Pramanas*. Perception leads to satisfy the avidity⁷. So, perception is knowledge and is devoid of doubt and error⁹. It is infallible¹⁰.

Actually perception is based on responses of sensory receptors. Received stimuli are converted in to electrochemical signals of sensory neurons. This causes change in action potential that is relayed in central nervous system (CNS). The processing in CNS occurs in integration with other information and conscious perception comes in origin¹⁴. So, it is more related with sensory cognition, remembrance, recognition, induction and deduction of sensory knowledge¹⁵.

Epithet (Characteristics) of Pratyaksha

All philosophical texts officially recognize *Pratyaksha Pramana* as an important tool of knowledge where sensory stimulations are translated in to organized experiences. It has following distinguishing qualities^{16,17,18,26}:

- 1. Avyapdeshya or Unamenable:** It means free from pretence or false representation using words¹⁹. It is also called as *Ashabda* as *Vyapdeshya* is *Shabdagyan*²¹. Percipience of *Pramata* is based on association of sense organs and cognized responses as nature of sweetness depends upon the amount and types of sugars and their relation with other inherited compounds as sweetness of *Yastimadhu* differs from that of *Sugarcane*. The differences cannot be explained in words, but can be perceived after experiencing the taste only.
- 2. Avyabhichari or Non-erratic:** It is not subject of objection as it is steady or consistent²⁰. It is true in all cases. It is free from misunderstanding or illusion or error. Mirage is observed due to refraction of light from the sky by heated air which gives illusion of water. But *Pratyaksha Pramana* considers such observation as illusionary or

unsteady as coming closer to the place of mirage formation results in disappearance of mirage. Only consistent perceiving is considered as *Prtyaksha*²¹.

3. **Vyavasayatmaka or Determinate:** *Pratyaksha Pramana* is with repeated behavior or perseverance or persistent determination²². It is free from inactiveness. It is more related to grasping of knowledge after completion of work with involvement of senses. Three different meanings are referred in *Nyaya Darshana* as:
 - i. *Nishachaya*: It means ascertainment of fixed opinion²³. Ascertainment is result of completion of work or practical done to obtain knowledge. As it is outcome of repeated experiences, so it is doubtless.
 - ii. *Avadharana*: Knowledge received through repeated work affirms the accurate determination²⁴. A perception is stored in mind. It can be related to cognitive theories of perception.
 - iii. *Nirdharana*: Specifying out of many to determine with certainty is *Nirdharana*²⁵. It is based on apprehension after interpretation of sensory information on completion of practical.

Types of *Prtyaksha Pramana*^{44,45,46,47}

According to qualities of *Pratyaksha* or nature of apprehension, it is classified mainly in two types as *laukika* and *alaukika*. They are further classified in different sub-classes as:

1. ***Laukika Pratyaksha (Ordinary Perception)***: Belonging to this world which is expressed in relevant words is called as *Laukika*^{44,45}. This type of perception is usually expressed for knowledge obtained simple association of sensory organs. It is of three types as:
 - i. ***Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksha (Non-determinate or Non-conceptual Perception)***: Obscure knowledge of a matter is called as *Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksha*. This is more related with inability to cognize with reference material in mind. *Avachhedaka* (determinant) of quality or subject-predicate relation is not present in this case or quality is not cognized in this case by conscious mind. As this knowledge may vary from individual to individual, it cannot be generalized. So, it called as non-conceptual knowledge. It reveals the objects with characteristics without disclosure of identity (name). It is divided in to two types as *Arvachina* (recent) and *Anarvachina* (memorial)⁵⁰.
 - ii. ***Savikalpaka Pratyaksha (Determinate or Conceptual Perception)***: When determinate knowledge is obtained by association of sense organs, it is called as *Savikalpaka Pratyaksha*. This stage of *Pratyaksha* follows the stage of *Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksha*. It details the objects with characteristics along with name. Proper cognition enables the appropriate perception in this case. As the perceived information can be generalized, this is called as conceptual perception. It is also divided in to two types as *Arvachina* (recent) and *Anarvachina* (memorial)⁵⁰.

Recognition based on experience is called as ***Pratyabhigya Pratyaksha***. This is medium of possible knowledge where perception is based on conceptualized cognition, so this is part of *Savikalpaka Pratyaksha*.

2. ***Alaukika Pratyaksha (Extraordinary Perception)***: This is knowledge based on concentration as by coming in contact of specific object, all related information (common characteristics) are apprehended. This is based on transcendental contact. It is associated with integrated perception. Three types are suggested as:
 - i. ***Samanyalakshana Pratyaksha (Universal or General Character Perception)***: This is a type of extraordinary perception that predicate all corresponding knowledge about an object by virtue of contact. The knowledge based general symptoms can be taken under this category.
 - ii. ***Gyanalakshana Pratyaksha (Complicated Perception)***: Object is known by its specific characteristics. Individual characteristic is understood by contact of particular sense organ. But when the perception of other senses is apprehended while coming in contact of any particular sense, it is called as complicated perception viz., by visualizing the ice, its coldness is felt.

iii. **Yogaja Pratyaksha (Intuitive Perception):** Nyaya strongly believes in perception through *Yoga* (meditation). Such type of perception is supra-sensual or intuitive or supra-relational perception. The details about present, past and future of any object can be apprehended by such perception. This is related with understanding and synchronization of mind with waves present in universe. Available scientific evidences do not rely upon this.

Causes of *Pratyaksha*^{16,17,18}

Pratyaksha is based on apprehension of knowledge obtained from contacts of objects and senses. Following causes are noted for *Pratyaksha Pramana*:

1. **Indriya:** It means faculty of senses²⁷. But *Shabdikalpadrum* has classified *Indriya* as *Gyanendriya*, *Karmendriya* and *Antarindriya*. Five sensory organs are taken as *Gyanendriya* viz., *Chakshu*, *Karna*, *Nasika*, *Twacha* and *Jihva*²⁸. Five *Karmendriya* are *Vaaka*, *Paani*, *Paada*, *Payu* and *Upastha*²⁸. Other than these, four *Antarindriya* are said as *Mana*, *Buddhi*, *Ahamkara* and *Chitta*²⁸. Among all *Indriya* mentioned, five of *Gyanendriya* (*Bahya Indriya*) and *Mana* (*Antarindriya*) are taken for knowledge of *Pratyaksha Pramana*²³. *Bahyaindriya* are said to be *Bhautika* (materialistic in nature) because of their origin from *Panchamahabhutas* (five elements) while *Antarindriya* are *Abhautika* (non-materialistic) and perpetual²³. *Mana* accepts stimulation of every of these *Bahyaindriya*. Exactly these *Bahyaindriya* works as instruments for *Mana*. It processes the obtained information and stores for cognizance²³.

The characters evaluated using *Bahyaindriya* are usually taken as *Organoleptic* or sensory properties²⁹. They are specifically used for recognition of *Dravya*, however *Shrotra* is excluded in *Vaisheshik Darshana*³¹. Attribute-ness and existence are perceptible to all the senses³³. Determinate and indeterminate perceptions are applied for these sensory organs. Subjects of these sensory organs are commended as³⁰:

- i. **Chakshu:** It is implied to objects which can be perceived through eyes. *Bhasha-Parichheda* specifies colour, separateness, number, disjunction, conjunction, distance, nearness, oiliness, liquidity, dimension, visible actions and generic attributes^{32,33}.
- ii. **Shrotra:** It is related to auditory organ used for sensing of hearing. Presence or absence of any sound specifies the characteristics of any substance³⁴. Two types of sound are said viz., inarticulate and articulate. That produced by living organism is called as articulate while other sound is inarticulate³⁷.
- iii. **Ghrana:** It is associated with olfactory organs applied for sensing of odour³⁴.
- iv. **Twaach:** Whatever is perceptible to eyes are also perceptible to skin except colour^{33,34}.
- v. **Rasana:** Gestatory organs leads to perception of taste. Tongue is used for the purpose³⁴.
- vi. **Mana:** It is ultimately information stored in mind which helps in cognition and perception. *Mana* plays an important role being an entity's thought and consciousness³⁵. It is related with understanding of stimuli and related brain activities. It is related with feeling, effort, presence or absence etc. Without conjunction of mind, no other *Gyanendriya* will work.

2. **Sannikarsha:** In *Nyaya* philosophy, relation of *Indriya* with objects/subjects is called as *Sannikarsha*³⁸. It is cause of knowledge^{38,39}. Perception is caused if anyone is asleep even.

- i. **Samyoga:** Eye/Eye-ball is suggested as *Dravyagrahaka Indriya* and materialistic in nature^{40,41}. Mutual relationship between two *Dravya* is called as *Samyoga*⁴¹. Rays connect the one material with other⁴⁰. Then only perception is possible. It is specifically related eye related to perception, however skin is also considered as materialistic by some authors⁴¹. It's rule that *Indriya* indicating the *Samyoga* also deals with *Abhava*⁴¹.
- ii. **Samavaya:** It means inseparable or concomitant relation. It's concomitant relationship between eyes and material (*Dravya*) that describes the appearance of material⁴¹. Action (*Karman*) and qualities present in *Dravya* is concomitantly related with each other⁴². It means action and quality are inseparable as without

quality, action will not happen and without action, quality is not counted.

- iii. **Samyukta Samvaya:** The concomitant relationship details about the action based on qualities. It is used in perception of *Guna* (quality), *Karma* (action) and *Jati* (type)⁴¹. Eye and skin are *Dravyagrahaka* and hint about the shape, size, number etc. of *Dravya* while ear, nose and tongue are *Gunagrahaka* which indicate about the qualities⁴¹. It means based on specific quality or specific action after particular quality only individual entity is known.
- iv. **Samveta Samvaya:** It is about inherited relationship. Like *Shrotra Indriya* (ear) is related to sound. *Nyaya* considers *Akasha* as *Shrotra Indriya* and sound uses the medium of *Akasha*. It means *Akasha* concomitantly related (*Samvaya*) with sound and perception of sound is inherited to ear.
- v. **Samyukta Samveta:** Many of drugs are odorous. Odour imparts the qualities of drugs. So such relationship is *Samyukta Samvaya* which cannot be separated. These odorous compounds inherit specific properties. Such type of perception is called as *Samyukta Samveta*⁴¹.
- vi. **Samvukta Visheshanata:** It means combined attributes of materials. Attributes are not independent cause of conjunction and disjunction, but are present in external and internal actions. As if drugs are odorous and odour attributes to specific action, then odour not only specifies the unique property of drugs, but also explore the absence of properties which are not related with that particular odour⁴¹. Similarly, other perception may be related to appearance or taste.

3. **Indriya-mana Samyoga:** Any *Pratyaksha gyan* is apprehended when *Atma* (soul) is related to *Mana* (mind), *Mana* is related to *Indriya* and *Sannikarsha* of *Indriya* occurs⁴¹. It is comprehensive in body⁴³. *Mana* brings the effects of cognition, pleasure, pain, desire etc. It helps to recall the stored memory. It doesn't have quality of appearance, odour, touch, taste and sound, but it characterizes these qualities in conjunction with *Indriya*. Contact of *Mana* is essential for any perception by using sense-organs³⁴. Its fast nature of working brings the thought that the perception is due to contact of *Indriya*, but conjunction of *Mana* and *Indriya* also occurs in succession. Numbers of times, if *Mana* is not involved, then even after contact of *Indriya* perception is not apprehended⁴³. It helps in *Dharana* (conception) and *Prerana* (induction).

Discussion: Sense organ is taken as instrument for *Pratyaksh Pramana*⁴⁹. *Shabara Bhasya* noted it as apprehension of objects existing at particular time⁴⁸. *Prabhakara* has also discussed perception for certain time only in his theory of *Triputi Pratyaksha Vada* (Doctrine of Tripartite Perception)⁴⁷. Bhatta's views clearly mention the one's own experience with healthy mind is able to get the valid perception⁴⁷. *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Sankhya*, *Yoga* and *Vedanta* have mentioned the perception based on existing and supra-normal conjunction. *Advaita* theory of perception relies on supra-sensual perception. It says without attaining the true *Brahmana*, valid knowledge of perception cannot be obtained.

Among all these, direct perception under the category of *Savikalpaka* is universally accepted by all schools of philosophy as source of real knowledge. *Nirvikalpaka* is in immature form of knowledge and lacks entity. However, it deals with approach of attentive mind. *Tarka-Bhasha* of *Keshava Mishra* says that if knowledge itself becomes the instrument then *Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksha* is accepted⁴⁹. *Yogaja Alaukika* is limited to individuals' quality of ascertaining which cannot be taken as generalized views of knowledge for everyone or greater mass. But *Samanyalakshana Pratyaksha* is widely used in medical science to predict the diseases based on symptoms. Expertise is the case of *Gyanalakshana Pratyaksha*, which is also factor of knowledge in science. So, a further minute critical screening with respect to conjunction and disjunction of senses and their impacts on perception is subject of detailed study.

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