



PRSS-7

IMPLICATIONS OF SANKHYA CATEGORIES
FOR DEVELOPING NEW PEDAGOGY

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Introduction

Sankhya philosophy which is one of the most ancient systems of Indian thought, is basically a continuation of the old vedic and upnishadic way of looking at life and reality. It propounded a dualism of Prakrti and Puruṣa which has been the object of attention by the Indian thinkers for about 2000 years. The original **Sankhya karika** of Iswar Krishna is one of the oft quoted sources for the formulation, enunciation, interpretation and explanation of its tenets. The basic categories of Sankhya have, therefore, remained the corner stone of this system. All the metaphysical, epistemological and axiological principles which may be constructed for understanding the modern educational system in its formal and non-formal structures may be derived from and attributed to these basic categories which are twenty five in all. In the present paper an attempt has been made to view these Sankhya categories in a broader perspective of meanings in respect of life, life-processes, goals of life and relevance they have for the pursuit of education. The paper examines and works out the implication of Sankhya categories in a broader perspective and as such it does not go into the very narrow and specific aspects of propositional truths endorsed by Sankhya thinkers over the years.

Sankhya Metaphysics and Education

Sankhya maintains a clear-cut dualism between Puruṣa and Prakrti. It is a **pluralistic spiritualism** and an **atheistic realism** and an uncompromising dualism. Prakrti is the root cause of world of objects. According to Sankhya all worldly effects are latent in Prakrti which is the uncaused cause. It is the first principle of this universe. It is also called Avyakta and is extremely subtle and imperceptible. As an ever active unlimited power, it is also called Shakti. The existence of Prakrti is inferred through its product. Motion is inherent in it in the form of **Rajas**. The entire world of objects is implicit in the bosom of Prakrti. Sankhya believes that consciousness cannot be regarded as the sources of inanimate world as Vedanta and Mahayana believes it is so because an intelligent principle cannot transform itself into unintelligent one. Thus unintelligent, manifest, uncaused, ever – active, imperceptible, eternal and one prakrti alone is the final sources of this world of objects.

It may be pointed out that the nature of Prakrti is deduced from the nature of the common things of experience by the help of reason alone. By a process of analysis, the essential characteristics of the physical universe are reduced to three elements Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and Prakrti is thought to be constituted of them. These three factors are also called Gunas. They are said so as they by intertwining make a rope (Guna) or forge a chain for binding, the self. The nature of the Gunas explains the diversity of the worlds in its



material as well as its mechanical aspect. It is postulated that each of the three Gunas is manifold and that the infinity of Prakrti is due to their indefinite number. These Gunas form the substratum of change which as in Buddhism is taken to be perpetual. But change is not total here and the Gunas persist while only their modes appear and disappear. This explains that there is a two fold condition for all things – one latent or potential and the other, potent or actual. When all the modes of Prakrti are latent, we have the state of dissolution (Pralaya) and at other times, evolution (Sarga)

It may be noted that the three Gunas represent different qualities and attributes which have a tremendous implication for reviewing the current pedagogy in the formal and non-formal system of education. The Sattva represents whatever is fine or light; Tamas whatever is coarse or heavy; and Rajas whatever is active. This description is a pointer to the conception of a hypothesis explaining the diversity in the world. Thus, it may be seen that the three Gunas although being subtle and imperceptible may be inferred from their effects – pleasure, pain and indifference respectively. They are not the ordinary qualities as attributes like that of the Nyaya-Vaishesika Gunas. They are the factors or the constituents of the elements of Prakrti,

Sattva literally means real or existent and is called goodness and produces pleasure. Thus, luminosity of light, power of reflection, upward movement, pleasure, happiness, contentment and bliss are all attributed to it. Its colour is white. **Rajas** is literally foulness and is the principle of motion. It produces pain. It is mobile and stimulating and results in restless activity, feverish effort and wild behaviour. Its colour is red. **Tamas** which literally means darkness is the principle of inertia. It gives rise to indifference and apathy. Its resulting effect are ignorance, confusion, passivity, negativity, sloth and bewilderment. It is heavy (guru) and enveloping (varanaka) and as such it is opposed to Sattva. Its colour is dark.

These three Gunas which are integral part of Prakrti are never separate. They conflict and yet cooperate with one another and are always found intermingled. They are compared to the oil, the wick and the flame of the lamp, which though opposed yet co-operate to produce the light of the lamp.

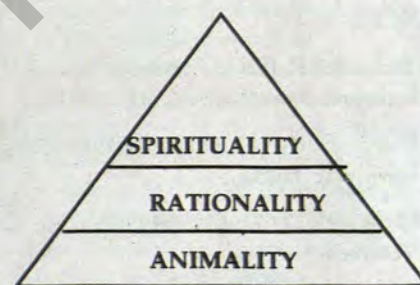
In terms of this description it will be easy to comprehend that all things in this world are composed of these three Gunas and their differences are due to the different combinations of these Gunas. Thus, the nature of a thing is determined by preponderance of a particular Guna. Things are called Good, Bad or indifferent; intelligent, active or slothful; pure, impure or neutral, on account of the predominance of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas respectively. In education and in its processes due emphasis should be given to identify the situations of this predominance in the teacher, the taught and their interactions. The predominance of Sattva in them will lead to laying down the good foundations for mutual trust, regards and appreciation which will be a powerful factor for a sound educational programme. It may also be indicated that the nature and form of curricular and co-curricular programs and activities should be regulated, controlled and conditioned in terms of the predominance of sattva over rajas or tamas.

Another important metaphysical construct in the theory of Sankhya is the Purusa – the principle of pure Con-

sciousness. It is the soul, the self, the spirit, the subject and the knower. It is neither body nor senses nor brain nor mind (manas) nor ego (ahankara) nor intellect (Buddhi). Consciousness is said to be its essence. It is postulated as the ultimate knower which is the foundation of all knowledge. In Sankhya Philosophy Purusa is the pure subject and as such can never become the object of knowledge. It is the silent witness, the emancipated alone, the neutral Seer, the peaceful eternal. It is self-luminous and self-proved. The Sankhya philosophy further believes that the Purusas are available in plurality.

Like the Jivas of Jainas, the souls of Ramanuja and Monads of Leibnitz, the Sankhya Purusa are subjects to qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism. Thus, the selves are all essentially alike; only numerically they are different. They represent the principle of Consciousness in man. In education the principle of consciousness has to be recognized as a basic factor for making it a qualitatively viable enterprise. Thus, true education will be concerned with raising the levels of consciousness so as to carry out, condition and ensure the transformation of man from the lower levels of animality to higher levels of nationality and divinity. It can be further illustrated and depicted through the following diagram:

Highest Level of consciousness



Lowest Level of consciousness

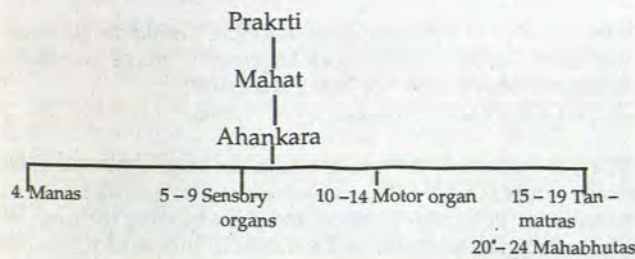
Theory of Evolution:

Another important metaphysical formulation which is of great relevance for understanding the process of transformation involved in any educational activity is the theory of evolution. According to Sankhya Philosophy evolution in Prakrti occurs when heterogeneous motion arises and Rajas disturbs the equilibrium of the Gunas. It is when Rajas, the principle of activity vibrates and makes the other two Sattva and Tamas vibrate, that the process of creation begins. This creation is not the new creation of the worldly objects but only their manifestation. It implies making explicit of that which was formally implicit. Evolution is, therefore, regarded as cyclic and not linear. There is no continuous progress in one direction but alternating periods of evolution (Sarga) and dissolution (Pralaya) in a cyclic order. It is basically teleological and not mechanical or blind. Sankhya believes that evolution takes place for serving the purpose of the Purusa – the highest principle of Consciousness. Thus, Prakrti, the Gunas, the senses, the mind, the ego, the intellect and the subtle body according to Sankhya Philosophy are all constantly serving the purpose of the Purusa – the Consciousness principle.



In this beautiful metaphysical analysis, the Sankhya depicts the twenty five principles out of which twenty four are the evolutes showing how everything works to serve the purpose of Puruṣa though unconsciously. Just as non-intelligent tree grow fruits, or water flows on account of the delivity of the soul or iron filings are attracted towards the magnet or milk flow through the udders of the cow in order to nourish the calf, similarly everything unconsciously tends to serve the purpose of Puruṣa - the principle of Consciousness whether it is enjoyment or liberation.

The following chart brings out the process of evolution along with the role of Puruṣa who is untouched by this evolution.



It is evident from the forgoing enunciation that the Sankhya system because of its logic embraces idealistic monism or absolutism but it clings to spiritualistic pluralism and dualism. It may be emphasized that when Puruṣa is reflected in its own power Prakrti, it becomes the empirical ego, the Jiva-the phenomenal. Thus, plurality belongs to this Jiva, and not to the transcendental Puruṣa. In this line of thinking every Jiva is the potential Puruṣa and the liberation consists in the actualization of this potentiality. The purpose and process of education, therefore, should be concerned to making the potential powers actual by practicing various levels of transformation as indicated earlier from animality to rationality and from rationality to divinity.

The theory of Causation of its Educational implications

Sankhya philosophy has advanced a theory of causation which is popularly known as 'Satkaryavad'. According to this theory the effect pre-exists in its material cause. Sankhya postulates that the effect is not a new creation, but only an explicit manifestation of that which is implicitly contained in its material cause. The philosophy believes in **parinamvad**, more appropriately called as **Prakrti Parinamvada**. This implies that all material effects are the modification (Parinama) of Prakrti. They are pre-existent in the eternal bosom of Prakrti and come out of it at the time of creation and return to it at the time of dissolution. Thus, production means development or manifestation (Avirbhava) and destruction means envelopment or dissolution (Tirobhava).

It becomes a very powerful theory when applied to the processes of education. In this connection it will be pertinent to indicate that Swami Vivekanand rightly suggested that true education is the manifestation of perfection within us. It is obvious, therefore, that the process of education, strategies used therein and the guidance and counseling processes all should be directed at promoting the process of self-realization by the educand. The new pedagogy has to adequately provide for such a practice in both the formal and non-for-

mal system of education. Thus, education should be viewed as an enabling process which will optimally ensure the perfection of the latent powers for the good of the individual as well as the society. The spectrum of teaching methods will, therefore, focus on augmenting the activities of shravan (effective reading and listening and viewing), manan (intellection or reasoned thoughts becoming the basis for argument, action and inference) and nidhidhyan (the application of ideas and thoughts at the level of conduct and character).

Sankhya Epistemology and Education

It may be noted that according to Sankhya philosophy the true education is that which practices the cessation of modification of 'Chitta'. This is achieved through meditations and concentration and is also called Yoga. The Sankhya philosophy endorses and lays down the procedure of Yogic practice in this regard. According to this cognate system the modification of chitta which actually is yoga is of five kinds: (1) right cognition (Pramana), (2) wrong cognition (viparyaya) (3) verbal cognition or imagination (vikalpa), (4) absence of cognition or sleep (nidra), and (5) memory (smrti). Right cognition is of three kinds: (a) perception (pratyaksa), when the chitta, through the sense-organs, comes into contact with the external object and assumes its form, or comes into contact with internal mental state, (b) inference (anumana), when the chitta cognizes the generic nature of things, and (c) verbal testimony (Shabda). Viparyaya is positively wrong knowledge like that of a rope snake. Vikalpa is mere verbal cognition like that of a hare's horn. Nidra is called absence of cognition, yet it is a mental modification because after sleep a person says 'I slept sound and knew nothing, and therefore, there must be some mental modification to support this absence of knowledge'. Smitri is the recollection of past experience through the impressions left behind.

The advocacy of Sankhya philosophy is for adopting the Astanga yoga of Patanajli. This yoga pleads for control over the body, the senses and the mind assuming that a sound mind needs a sound body. Thus, the process of knowledge should be stimulated through the practice of concentration and promoting the powers of internal mental state.

The new pedagogy has to add a chapter on yoga in order to promote self-realization and a sense of balance and control in the educands of 21st century. Needles to mention that this will form the basis of sound pedagogy promoting right action, right resolve and right conduct on the part of the learners. In order to ensure an effective and efficient educational process, it will be necessary to promote activities and programs which will promise optimal level of self-realization in the educand. This has to take place at every level and form of education. The practice of conditioning the mindset should commence from early child stage and continue throughout the life. Thus, Sankhya will endorse the concept of Life Long Education (LLE) and continuous evaluation of progress through bench marking as is the practice in yoga.

Sankhya Axiology and Education:

Entire Sankhya philosophy is inspired by the intrinsic faith in triggering of the processes of evolution through direction and control of the principle of consciousness. It is, therefore, quite emphatic in prescribing the highest norms of conduct which will be the binding principles of the forces in the present day world. This will create the basis for strengthen-



ing the humanistic stream in education which has been rightly visualized in the document 'Learning- the Treasure Within'. The focus is rightly laid through this document in contemplating one of the pillars of modern society as **Learning to Live co-operatively**. The other three pillars of a learning society as enunciated in this document are- Learning to know, learning to do and learning to be. In this frame of reference education is a process of **Becoming** which proceeds from the realization of **Being**.

The Sankhya axiology lends support to such outlook on education. It truly envisions a kind of integration and mutual appreciation among citizens of the country, nay- the citizens of the world to practice national integration and international understanding through the instrumentalities of education in the global world which is fast emerging with its new challenges and tensions.

In summing up, from the basis of analysis carried out in this paper, it is apparent that Sankhya philosophy, its tenets and formulations have a great implication for constructing the true ingredients of a new pedagogy. In this new pedagogy education should be viewed as a process of transformation from one level of consciousness to the other till the latent perfection in the individual educand is realized and made potent and powerful. The pedagogic procedures should, therefore, promote critical reflection, analysis, concentration, harmony, balance, dynamism and control. It should be a process of empowerment of the individual and basically an enabling exercise so that emancipation is attained by practicing education in the true sense of the term **Sa Vidya ya vimuktye**.

Thus, **Sankhya** philosophy envisions a broad and holistic basis for education where there will be stress on promoting highest levels of transformation and realizations which are the essence of true pedagogy. In this conceptualization formal, non-formal and informal processes of education have to be integrated and a proper attention is to be laid on the empowerment of the pupil through the exercises which will subject him to undertake Shrivāna (reading, listing and gathering information), Manan (intellection through deeper understanding of the contours of knowledge and Nididhyasan (application through working out the detailed implication of intellectual processes and understanding). Needless to mention that these have been the age old pedagogical devices used and adopted by Indian seers and savants from the hoary past of the vedic times.

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