



## Classification of Inference in Nyāya Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

*Classification of inference. Nyāya provides three general classification systems for inference. The first classification system is based on psychological grounds; the second is based on the nature of vyāpti or the universal relationship between the middle and major terms; and the third is based on the logical construction of the inference.*

### KEYWORDS :

#### Introduction:

*Anumāna* literally means such knowledge as follows some other knowledge. It is the knowledge of an object due to a previous knowledge of some sign or mark (*liṅga*). The previous knowledge is the knowledge of the *liṅga* or mark as having a universal relation with the *sādhya* or major term and the being present in the *paska* or minor term. Hence *anumāna* has been defined in the Nyāya system as the knowledge of an object, not by direct observation, but by means of the knowledge of a *liṅga* or sign and that of its universal relation (*vyāpti*) with the inferred object.

The first classification, which is found in almost all the systems, is the classification of *anumāna* into *svārthānumāna* (Inference for one's own self) and *parārthānumāna* (Inference for others). This classification is made on the basis of the purpose (*Prayojana*) to be served by an inference. There may be two purposes which may prompt a subject to make an inference – one is to gain knowledge about something and the other is to prove a thesis to someone who is in doubt regarding the truth of the thesis. When an inference is made for the first purpose it is *svārthānumāna* and when it is made for the second purpose it is *parārthānumāna*. The first one can be said to be a way of knowing and the second one a way of proving.

According to the Nyāya philosophers, inference for others consists of five constituents. An example of the five constituents of inference follows.

- 1 Pratijnā – There is fire on the hill.
- 2 Hetu – Because (on the hill) there is smoke.
- 3 Dṛṣṭānta – Where there is smoke there is fire, as in the stove.
- 4 Upanaya – There is smoke on this hill.
- 5 Nigamana – Hence, there is fire on this hill.

Hence shows the reason for the Pratijnā. Drastānta is a complete comprehensive sentence which, along with an example, shows the invariable relation between *sādhya* and *hetu*. Upanaya shows that *drastānta* sentence applies to this particular. In this inference the *liṅga* is observed thrice.

The second classification system divides inferences into three categories: *pruvavat*, *śeṣavat*, and *samanyatodrsta*. Both *pruvavat* and *śeṣavat* inferences display casual uniformity between the middle and major terms, while *samanyatodrsta* inferences exhibit non-casual uniformity of the middle and major terms.

**Pūrvavat:** A *pūrvavat* inference is the inference of the effect from the cause. A cause is perceived, and from this the unperceived effect is inferred. We see dense clouds and infer the future rain.

**Śeṣavat:** A *śeṣavat* inference is the inference of a cause from an effect. The effect is perceived, and from this perception the unperceived cause is inferred. When we see a river in flood and infer that there was rain, we have a case of *śeṣavat* inference.

**Sāmānyatodrsta:** That inference which provides knowledge of any imperceptible or unperceived object is called *Sāmānyatodrsta*, such as the inference of motion in the sun by observing it in the East in the morning and in the West in the evening. This inference is not based

upon the relation of casuality, but it is based on the fact that there is motion in the sun. It is inferred from the change of position because when other objects change their position, motion is always apparent. Hence *Sāmānyatodrsta* resembles comparison to some extent.

Inference has been further divided into three by the neo Nyāya School, on the basis of the method of establishing *vyāpti* or the relation of invariable concomitance – *Kavalanvnyi*, *Kevalavyatireki* and *anvaya vyatireki*.

**Kevalānvayi:** This applies to the case where the means and the object are always found going together, meaning thereby that case in which the *vyāpti* is established by an agreement in presence between the middle and the major term, and in which there is no exception. For example:

All knowable objects are nameable;  
The pot is a knowable object;  
Therefore the pot is nameable;

or that which can be known must also have a name. The pot can be known; hence it must also have a name.

In the first sentence of this inference there is a relation or *vyāpti* between the subject and the object.

**Kevalavyatireki:** An inference is *kevalavyatireki* when it is based on a middle term which is only negatively related to the major term. It is based on the invariable concomitance between the middle term, which is established by the method of agreement in absence (*vyatireka*), since there can be no positive instance of agreement in presence between the terms.

No non-soul substance has life;  
All beings possessing animal functions have life;  
All beings possessing animal function have soul.

In this inference, a positive instance is not possible. We can only point out that chairs and tables have no animal functions, and therefore no souls, but cannot give any positive instance, since souls and beings that possess animal functions are co-extensive in their nature.

**Anvavyatireki:** An inference is *anvavyatireki* when it is based on a middle term which is both positively and negatively related to the major term. The universal relation (*vyāpti*) in this inference is established by the method of agreement in presence (*anvaya*) and agreement in absence (*vyatireka*). For example:

1 All Smoky objects are fiery;  
The hill is smoky;  
The hill is fiery.

2 No non-fiery objects are smoky;  
The hill is smoky;  
The hill is fiery.

## REFERENCES

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