

Research Methodology: As Followed in Indian Philosophy

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Abstract: *Research is an intellectual process. The research work came into practice to solve any practical and theoretical problem. The main instrument of research is its methodology. At present, research in almost all fields i.e. education, arts, business, trade, sports, etc., is advancing based on the results or statistics obtained. However, research is not only a part of modern education system, it was in practice in the distant past as well. Evidence of this can be found in many places in Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literature. So the methodology or research method has been around since ancient times, not newly invented. However, it is true that some changes and refinements have taken place over time. The similarities between the current research methodology and the judging style of Indian philosophy are highlighted here. Many similarities between the present style of judgment and the style of judgment mentioned indirectly in various sections of Indian philosophy have been discussed.*

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Research Methodology

Research is the driving force of the evolvement of civilizations. In the Stone Age, man was continuously engaged in sharpening his weapons. This effort, in the due course of time, resulted in the discovery of metals and later on succeeded in taming fire for own benefits. Quest of motion resulted in the invention of wheels. Behind this never ending process of inventions, in one hand there was the need of making life more comfortable; on the other hand there was the indomitable desire to explore the mystery of nature and to know the unknown. So it can be said that the commencement of research is contemporary to the rise of human civilizations. Presently, in the university syllabus, *Research* is an inseparable aspect. Research is a very important part in modern sociology as well. If we analyze the word *research*, we can find that it means *rei*.i.e. again, *search* i.e. to find. In a word, it means ‘to find again’. So, it can be said that research is the process of exploring the unknown areas of known fields. According to D. Slessiger and M. Stevenson, research is “the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalizing to extend, corrector verify knowledge”.¹ Experts have given different opinions on what research is. Prof. Samiran Chandra Chakraborty has said, “Research should be finding out new facts of establishing new relations between facts and facts”.²

In English Dictionary, ‘Methodology’ means ‘a way of doing something based on particular principles and methods’. *Methodology* consists of two words – *Methodos* and *Logos*. *Methodos* means ‘pursuit of knowledge’. Method means ‘special form of procedure of orderly arrangement of ideas’. *Logos* means ‘something expressed in words’. According to Prof. RatnaBasu, “When the method or way of structure or development of a concept, subject, object, text and so on in pursuit of some knowledge is explained, illustrated, analyzed and forwarded in so many words it can be somewhat called ‘methodology’”.³

This research methodology works in a scientific and sequacious manner. There are different methods in different researches. But there are some common rules followed in all types of researches. For research or preparation of research field, a researcher should abide by the following five things:

1. Selection of original topic and defining its area. Determining the goal and purpose of the selected subject. Marking the relation and difference of the selected topic of research with the previous works in that field.
2. Evaluating the previous works those are related to the selected topic of research. Collecting own study materials from the bibliographies of the previous works.
3. Proper arrangement of collected data and materials.
4. Detailed analysis of the research topic with proper examples, based on collected data and materials.
5. Researcher’s own hypothesis i.e. conclusion.

The above mentioned things are written in a research paper in four parts:

- I. Introduction: Nos. 1 & 2 are covered in this part.

- II. The main bulk of work done by the researcher: Nos. 3 & 4 are covered in this part.
- III. Conclusion: No. 5 is written in this part.
- IV. Bibliography: Account of the materials used in the research work. ⁴

The research methodology and the steps of a research work we follow today can be traced back to the ancient Sanskrit scriptures. Lot of similarities can be found between modern research methodology and analytical techniques of the ancient scholars. There are five distinct parts of scriptural analysis: subject, the conflict, existing notions, researcher's point of view and conclusion or hypothesis. These five parts should always be present in any scriptural analysis. These analytical techniques are also found in Indian philosophy which is quite similar to modern research methodology. The resemblance between the analytical techniques of the *Navya-Nyaya* in Indian philosophy and modern Research Methodology is inspiring for research works. But now we shall only concentrate on the research methodology depicted in the two canons of *Navya-Nyaya – Tarkasangraha* and *Bhashaparichhed*.

In the general sense, the meaning of *darshana* (philosophy) is 'visually perceived'. Philosophy(*darshana*) is the practical knowledge and perception of truth by the visionaries. More specifically, philosophy is the perception of life and world. The knowledge which is extracted from the amalgamation of deep thoughts, reasoning and arguments can be considered as philosophy.

Indian philosophy commenced with the *Rig-Veda*. The hymns of the *Veda* give a glimpse of the multi-dimensionality of human mind. The motto of Indian philosophy is to control the behavior with the understanding of truth, to connect thoughts with practice, to create uniformity of judgement and behavior. In the due course of time this Indian philosophy has been divided into many branches.

'*Nīyateprāpyatebibakṣitārthāsiddhiraṇenaiti nyayah*'⁵— *Nyaya* is the way to prove what one wants to say. The great saint Goutama (Akshapaada) is the pioneer of *Nyaya* philosophy. The *Nyaya* of Akshapaada has three stages – ancient(*prachina*), middle(*madhya*) and modern(*navya*). *Nyayasutra* by Akshapaada, *Nyayavashya* by Batsayana, *Nyayabaartik* by Uddyotkar, *Nyayabaartikataatporyatika* by Bachaspati Mishra and *Taatparyaporishuddhi* by Udayana – these are the five canonical texts of ancient *Nyaya*. Based on *Nyayasaara*, the middle stage of *Nyaya* came into place in the Kashmir region. After that, with the amalgamation of the main substances of *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshika* philosophy and refined practical thoughts, the modern stage of *Nyaya*(*Navya-Nyaya*) arrived. Some important texts of *Navya-Nyaya* are *Saptapadarthibya* Shabaditya Mishra, *Lakshanabali* by Udayanacharya and *Tattwachintamani* by Gangeshapadhyay. Acharya Gangesh was successful in providing modern *Nyaya* with solid grounds. *Tarkasangraha* by Acharya Annangbhatta and *Bhashaparichhed* by Biswanathacharya– these two are the milestone texts of *Navya-Nyaya*. Study in Indian philosophy predominantly is divided into three ages. The first philosophical age is based on *Sutra*. The ancient study in philosophy was based on memory which consequently gave rise to

substance-like *Sutras*. This characteristic of summarization makes the *Sutras* more complex and unintelligible. In the second age, with the introduction of commentaries, annotations and explanations, an attempt was made to simplify the complex and unintelligible *Sutras*. Consequently the main philosophies became so big in volume that it was not everyone's cup of tea to master that. So in the relatively modern age, a new kind of book was being written, named 'Prakarana'. Those who are unable to read complete philosophy with all its commentaries can experience philosophy with the study of *Prakarana*.

As stated in the *lakshana* of *Prakarana*—

“Śāstraikadeśasṃbaddhamśāstrakāryāntaresthitam,
Āhūhprakaranaṃnāmagranthabhedam bipaśchitaḥ.”⁶

While writing Sanskrit scriptures, *mangalacharanis* a special ritual. Before any cherished work, the practice of remembering, praising and showing complete devotion toward God, is known as *mangalacharan*. This practice is followed, to a certain extent, in research works as well in its introduction part. In this part, the researcher expresses his/her gratitude toward his/her guide and other teachers.

As the *mangalacharan* is of great importance at beginning of a book or scripture, similarly another essential factor is determining the *anubandhachatushtaya*. *Anubandha* are those, knowledge of which helps in the study of any scripture or book. *Anubandhachatushtaya* are – *vishaya* (subject matter), *prayojana* (purpose), *sambandha* (relationship) and *adhikari* (the qualified student).⁷ Among these, *vishaya* and *prayojana* are most important. *Sambandha* and *adhikari* are understandable by *vishaya* and *prayojana* respectively. By the expression 'the objective of the book', it is meant that the book is the conveyor and the subject matter is the objective. This objective-conveyor relationship is called *sambandha*. If the *adhiakaran* perceive the objective of the book, he can easily acquire knowledge. An inquisitive person becomes *adhikari* by reading those concerned books. Acharya Annangbhatta has tried to define *anubandha* by this verse:

“Nidhāyahṛidibiśweśambidhāyagurubandanam/Bālānāmsukhabodhāyakṛiyate

Tarkasamgraha.”⁸ By the word *Tarkasanggraha*, the *vishaya* has been indicated. The subject matter of this book is to introduce the seven *padartha*(ingredients) of *Vaisheshika* philosophy. If the brief account of the *padartha*(ingredients) of *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* philosophy is the *vishaya*, then the book *Tarkasanggraha* is the conveyor of the subject matter. The relationship between the *vishaya* (subject matter) and the book is what we call *pratipadya-pratipadakavabasamandha* (objective-conveyor relationship). *Prayojana* (purpose) is the main content, root of all other things. By the words *sukhabodhaya*, the purpose (*prayojana*) of the book *Tarkasanggraha* has been indicated. Here the word *balanam* denotes the *adhikari*. The person who understands the work is his motto and within his capability, he engages in the assignment.

What is the discussion method of the scriptures? It has three steps – *uddesh*, *lakṣmaṇa* and *parikṣha*. The analytical method of *Navya-Nyaya* follows the same steps.⁹ The interaction between numbers and things is called *uddesh*. So, expressing the subject matter by divisions can also be included in *uddesh*. For example– it is mentioned in *Tarkasangraha* that the sentence “*Dravyaguṇakarmasamānyabiśeṣasamavāyāvābah saptapadārthāh*”¹⁰ is an *uddesh*-sentence. Here, mentioning the series of things is also a special skill. Here *drabya* is mentioned first because all the six ingredients (*padartha*) like *guna* are dependent on *drabya*. As *drabya* and *guna* are closely related, *guna*, instead of *karma*, is mentioned just after *drabya*. Since the *abhabas* are under the impact of *bhabas*, the *bhaba* ingredients are placed before *abhaba*. This practice is followed everywhere in *Nyaya*. For example, Maharshi Goutam’s *suddesh*-sentence related to *pramana* is – “*Pratyakṣānumānopamānaśabdāh pramaṇani*”¹¹. As *pratyakṣapramāṇa* is superior, it is placed first. As *anumāna* etc are below to *pratyakṣapramāṇa*, they are mentioned later. This analytical technique is also used in research methodology.

Wise men say that a philosopher’s duty does not end only with the appraisal of any ingredient (*uddesh*). After *uddesh*, he has to determine the *lakṣmaṇa*. Then examining or finding out the merits and demerits of the *lakṣmaṇa* is the duty of the philosopher. *Lakṣmaṇa* and *asādhāraṇa dharma* (excellent feature) are quite synonymous. “*Lakṣatejñapyate anenaiti lakṣaṇam*.” The *asādhāraṇa dharma* (excellent feature) of any thing is its *lakṣmaṇa*. What is this *asādhāraṇa dharma* (excellent feature)? The answer is given in *Tarkasangraha*— *lakshyatabacchedakasamaniyatatwamasādhāraṇatwam*¹². *Lakshya* is the thing of which *lakṣmaṇa* is determined. For example, if we decide the *lakṣmaṇa* of the cow, then the cow is the *lakshya*. The feature which is present in *lakshya* is called *lakshyata*. The controlling factor of this *lakshyata* is the ‘cowness’. The identical thing with the ‘cowness’ is the *lakṣmaṇa* of the cow. That is the *byapya* and *byapak* of the ‘cowness’. The *lakṣmaṇa* of the cow is *dewlap*. As the *dewlap* is the *byapya* and *byapak* of ‘cowness’, it is identical with the ‘cowness’. This *lakshyata*-monitored trait is the *asādhāraṇa dharma* (excellent feature) i.e. *lakṣmaṇa*. *Lakṣmaṇa* should always be flawless. The feature, devoid of the flaw like *abyapti* (under-coverage) or *atyapti* (over-coverage), *asambhaba* (absurdity), is *Lakṣmaṇa*— “*etiddushanatrarahito dharma lakṣaṇam*”.¹³ The examination of the probability of *lakṣmaṇa* of a thing is called *parikṣa*. In this phase one establishes a new honest hypothesis refuting a previous one. The previous thought is expressed as ‘*nanu...chet*’. The propagator of the new hypothesis or the author uses the expression ‘*na...*’ to reach to his claim. *Uddesh*, *lakṣmaṇa* and *parikṣa* – among these three, one acquires knowledge from *uddesh*; by *lakṣmaṇa* one can distinguish one thing from others; and by *parikṣa* the flaw can be rectified, if there is any, from the *lakṣmaṇa*. This technique is also followed in modern research methodology.

These are some of the similarities which can be found between the original analytical technique of the landmark works of *Navya-Nyaya* like *Tarkasangraha*, *Bhashaparichheda* and modern research methodology. Finding out and analyzing the other similarities between these two, apart from these, is the aim of the main research work.

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12. Tarkasanggraha, Verse 3.
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