

**A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF JĀTI AND UPĀDHI  
FROM THE REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE:  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA  
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Since the time immemorial, one of the most important problems of philosophy is centered on the problem of the nature of reality. What is the reality? Whether it is universalistic or particular in nature? etc..In its treatment of the problem of reality, the Indian philosophical schools are broadly classified into two, namely, realistic and idealistic. On the one hand, Realism is the view that the external world is real and exists independently of our experience. It also holds that the mind apprehends an external object which exists irrespective of its being apprehended by the mind. On the other hand, Idealism holds that, the external world does not exist independently of our knowledge. That is, according to them the objects of our experience are mind- dependent. It has been accepted that the foundation for the realism is made not only by the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣikas but also by other orthodox realist schools with slight modifications. Based on this conception, I would like to explore the concepts like jāti and upādhi, the difference of its universal nature, and its epistemological positions in Indian Philosophy in general and Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika school in particular.

Among the Indian philosophical schools, Nyaya- Vaiśeṣikas are regarded as the chief exponent of realism. It is well known that these two schools, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, were separate in their origin and develop-

ment as well. That is, the Nyāya system was mainly concerned with the method of debate and syllogism. At the same time the Vaiśeṣikas formulated its ontological structure on the basis of categories. However, belief in the reality of the external world is deeply fixed in the human mind independently of its knowledge by a knower. Moreover, whatever we experience directly must have an external existence. With regard to this idea the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣikas proposed that 'experience is the sole criterion of our acceptance of the reality of external objects.'<sup>1</sup> Therefore, they strongly argue that the reality of the external objects is based on the theory that a universal has an external reality which is different from that of its particulars. Hence, the external objects must be admitted to possess some common features which enable us to distinguish and give them a common designation. According to the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika school these common features are regarded as *jāti*. Here the problem lies in the idea that whether a universal has an independent reality or not. Meanwhile the conceptualists or nominalists consider that the universals have no external existence. They regarded that it is only in the exclusion of other objects from the concept of one object. For example, horse-ness means the exclusion of non- horses, from the horse. Hence, the exclusion which is the essence of the universal is a mere thought- construction<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, being a thought- form, there can be no question of its being an independent reality. It is for this reason, the issues related to universals are considered as the epistemological problem of the relation of thought to reality.

Here, it is important to mention that, the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣikas proposes the pluralistic standpoint of realism concerned with the universals. They say that the manifold nature of our cognitions are necessarily implies the plurality of reals. And hence, the world reveals to us on the basis of the fact of unity inherent in the objects. It is just as the variety of our cognitions implies diversity and, here, the possibility of cognitions implies the fact of unity. And these are the universals existing in the external world and uniting the particulars into various classes. However, they hold that the universal is the natural and eternal class-essence, which is the permanent

feature of different particular things. Accordingly the world is constituted by the real objects existing independently of the cognizing mind. One can directly cognize the objects of the world, that is, without any intervention of ideas. The Naiyāyikas point out that the possibility of ideas rests on the existence of the external objects. Hence, we cannot make any question of our knowledge of external reference. Therefore, the result of such questioning would be the complete destruction of the knowledge.

The Naiyāyikas define the universals as, 'that which is eternal and inherent in many individuals'.<sup>3</sup> Based on this definition, they propose three essential characteristics of universals-namely, (a)eternality,(b)commonness, and (c)inherence. The first qualification is necessary to prevent conjunction (samyoga), which possesses the other two characteristics, but it is not eternal. The second qualification is necessary to exclude the dimension (parimāṇa) of ākāśa which is both eternal and inherent, but not common. The third condition is indispensable to avoid the inclusion of absolute non-existence (atyantābhāva) under the definition of the universal. These characteristics of the universals show that, there is nothing explicitly about the relation of the universal to our knowledge. Thus, for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, though the universal and particular are intimately related, they are regarded as existentially or ontologically different, and, the universals has an existence distinct from the particulars.

The most important controversy over the problem of universals was provided by the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika doctrine of jāti or sāmānya. Even though they propose a wide range of universals, it does not recognize all the general characteristics of objects as universal (jāti). According to them, when we take the universal as the natural and eternal class- essences, it is like whiteness, potness, cowness, etc' It is obvious that these class- essences are the permanent feature of particular things. But, though the concepts like, 'blind-man', 'student', 'talk', etc. are based on objective features of the external world but they do not imply universals. The reason is that they do not correspond to natural classes. That is, they do not correspond to their permanent class-essencebut, certain adventitious features of things. That is

why these characteristics are recognized as upādhis and not as jāti.

The distinction between jāti and upādhi becomes necessary for the Naiyāyikas because of its conception of the categories of reality (padārthas). With regard to the conception of universal, the categories of substance, quality and action alone legitimately possess the genuine class nature (jāti). Obviously, we have the general conception of the other categories like universality, particularity, inherence, and non-existence. But, we cannot say that these categories have the real class natures (jāti) inhering in them. In order to understand this point, Udayana, one of the well-known Naiyāyikas, proposes six impediments known as jāti-bādhakas. They are, 1) vyakterabheda, 2) tulyata, 3) saankarya, 4) anavasthā, 5) rūpahāni, and, 6) asambandha. He says, according to this jāti-bādhakas, the presence of anyone of which is said to be sufficient to disqualify a characteristic from being recognized as a universal.<sup>4</sup> Let us explain some of the characteristics of these six impediments individually.

According to Udayana, the first impediment, vyakterabheda means that the character belonging to a single thing. For instance, when we consider ākāśatva, it is not regarded as universal. In the case of second impediment tulyatva, when the two general names having the same meaning but do not stand for different universals. For example, 'ghatatva' and 'kalaśatva', both of them means different universals. The third, sānkarya, means the cross-dividing character which coexists in some instances and also exclude one another in others. For instance, bhūtatva (being an element) and mūrtatva (having limited dimension), are not to be regarded as universals. According to Naiyāyikas, both bhūtatva and mūrtatva are present in the four elements of earth, water, air and fire. But the former is present without the latter in ākāśa and, the latter without the former in manas or mind. They regarded that such a general characters are upādhis, not jāti. Anavasthā, the fourth impediment regarded that, the character, the recognition of which as a universal leads to infinite regress. For example, 'universality' (jātitva) is not regarded as a jāti but it is regarded as an upādhi. The reason is that, if we take 'universality' as universal inhering in all the universals, then a

second universality will be required to synthesise the former with the latter. In the same way, a third 'universality' would be needed to synthesise the second with the other 'universals' in which it inheres, and so on. As a result, the concept of 'universal' is not to be regarded as corresponding to one or more universal as 'universality'. In the case of the fifth impediment rūpahāni, the Ultimate differences (viśeṣas) of the Vaiśeṣikas cannot have any principle of unity, as it would contradict their essential nature. The mutual difference would be completely destroyed if we regard 'viśeṣatva' as an identity (universal) inhering in the 'viśeṣas'. It should be noted that, being the principles of ultimate differences, viśeṣas cannot be differentiated from one another on the basis of any other characteristic. If they were considered as identified in being viśeṣas it would contradict their self-differentiating nature, and they will be no more viśeṣas. When we take the sixth and the last impediment asambandha, we have to consider the already mentioned view of universals as, it is inherent in its subject. This implies that the thing in which nothing can 'inhere' cannot be the basis of a universal. For example, the categories of inherence (samavāya) and non-existence (abhāva) cannot have anything as inhering in them. That is, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, if samavāyatva is considered as a universal inhering in inherence (samavāya), then it would have to inhere in both its substance and its relation with it, which is nonsensical. This will also lead to infinite regress. So, according to them nothing can be conceived as inhering in inherence. In the same way, no universal can be conceived to inhere in negation, because, it is not a positive entity. Therefore, 'samavāyatva' and 'abhāvatva' are not to be regarded as universals.<sup>5</sup>

In short, it is evident that, among the six impediments, the first and the third impediments debar a character from being considered as a universal. The second impediment also rejects the apparent distinction between two characters each claiming to be a separate universal. Udayana, maintains that two universals cannot coincide if their extensions are mutually exclusive. If they coincide, the extension of one must completely include the extension of the other. He argues that if two mutually exclusive universals

can be coincident, then the possibility of the co-inherence of 'cowness' and 'horseness' also would have to be accepted.<sup>6</sup> One can argue that these two cannot be coinciding, because, the producing causes are different in cows and horses. Thus, Udayana rejects that from the imperceptible causes, we cannot make any definite assertions about them. His argument can be concluded as two universals, for e.g., both cowness and horseness, may inhere together in some creature somewhere at some time. However, the special function of the last three impediments keeps the inherence of the universal (jāti) which are restricted to the categories of substance, quality and action. Therefore, it is clear that the entire theory of jāti-bādhakas is formulated on the basis of the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika ontology. And, hence any character in the case of which one or more of these impediments are present, is to be regarded as an upādhi.

In order to understand the distinction between jāti and upādhi, Udayana takes the third impediment, the cross-dividing character of universals. He refuses to recognize cross-dividing attributes as universals. According to him, the classes, that is genera and species are systematically divided from the highest to the lowest. Though the lower class included in the higher class, it mutually exclude each other. Hence, there is nothing in reality which belongs to two mutually exclusive natural classes at any time. Thus, according to Udayana, if nature permitted any overlapping in mutually exclusive natural classes, then all class- divisions would completely become meaningless. Obviously, he assumes that there is no cross- division in nature. However, if nature is what Udayana thinks it to be, then cross- dividing attributes cannot be regarded as real class- essence (jāti) and they may be regarded as general attributes or upādhis of things<sup>7</sup>. However, this distinction of jāti and upādhi leads us to hold the view that the Nyaya- Vaiśeṣikas conceptions of universals are real natural class- essences existing in the objective world. It is also the same with the upādhis, that is, they are also real characters of thing in the external world. And, hence, they say that these general attributes are considered as the bases of many of our generalizations and classifications.

5. Lawnade, G. N. The Problem of Universals, New Book Company, Bombay, 1943.
6. Raju. P.T. Thought and Reality, Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1940.
7. Shastri, D.N. Critique of Indian Realism, Agra University, 1964.

Contrary to the views of Udayana, the Neo- Naiyāyikas say that there is no convincing reason to support Udayana's contention that two co-inhering universals must be related as higher and lower. They argue that Udayana's argument shows that, if mutually exclusive universals are admitted to coexist in the same substrate, then 'cowness' and 'horseness' may be admitted to coexist in some creature. They reject these arguments and say that those universals which are found to be totally exclusive of one another need not be conceived as existing together. Now, they hold that in the third impediment the characters like bhūtatva and mūrtatva are partially coincident and partially exclusive are facts of experience like other universals. However, they must be regarded as genuine universals. Thus we can see in the arguments proposed by neo- Naiyāyikas and Udayana that, there is disagreement on cross- division and both of them agree on other five impediments. Any attribute which is subject to one or more of these impediments is not to be recognized as jāti but as upādhi.