

A Possibility of the Argument from Analogy to Existence of Other Minds in *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy

Nanda Gopal Biswas

Research Scholar, Indian Institute of Technology (ISM), Dhanbad, Jharkhand

Abstract: *Sāṃkhya* philosophy is the oldest philosophical school. *Sāṃkhya* philosophy explains the universe accepting only two fundamental categories which are *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*- where *prakṛti* is unconsciously active and *puruṣa* is consciously inactive. Similarly, *Sāṃkhya* philosophy discusses the mind-body relation in terms of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Sāṃkhya* also talks about the subjective identity as well as objective world. Although *Sāṃkhya* discusses about manyness of selves (*bahu-puruṣa*), but there is an argument that *Sāṃkhya* philosophy would not establish the existence of other minds. So, the argument of *Sāṃkhya* for other minds seems to stop midway. In this paper, I purport to discuss *Sāṃkhya* perspective and existence of other minds presented in *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. The paper also critically examines the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* of *Īśvarakṛṣṇa* to bring out the possibility of epistemological argument of the other minds.

Keywords: *Puruṣa*, *Bahu-Puruṣa*, *Mana*, *Other Minds*, *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, *Argument from Analogy*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Oxford dictionary define 'Mind' as "the element of a person that enables them to be aware of the world and their experience, to think, and to feel; the faculty of consciousness and thought". In Sanskrit, mind is accepted as '*manas*'. In *Vedas*, there are no clear notion of mind, although concept of mind is enunciated with many terms like, awareness (*sajñā*), comprehension (*jñānam*), understanding (*vijñanam*), insight (*drṣṭi*), reflection (*manas*), will (*saṃkalpa*) etc. In *Upaniṣada* we found *prajña*, *citta* with *Vedas* concept of mind. Indian Philosophy try to bring out a clear cut notion of the concept of mind in every philosophical school. It is very easy to understand about our own mind existent. We can easily feel or infer about our mind throughout our experience. The philosophical problem is, how we can reach a certain truth about other person which is same as mine? This problem is found very often in philosophy not only in recent era. From ancient period, Rṣis have discussed about this problem with a standard view. Indian philosophical tradition like, the Buddhist *Yogācharavāda*, *Advaita Vedānta* and *Sāṃkhya* discusses this problem with their own style. What is the problem of other minds? This question can be understood with two dimensions, metaphysically or conceptually and epistemologically. Metaphysics has to try to establish the existence of other minds or try to solve problem, like, how can I extend my concept of pain beyond my own pain? But, epistemology tries to gather the knowledge about other minds. The epistemological problem that, my knowledge, when it can be directly then there is no doubt about it, I can understand my direct knowledge. Then, I can say that my mind exists. But, is there any change to gather direct knowledge about other minds? The answer is definitely not. Nobody can says that he or she has direct knowledge about other minds. This paper analytically examine the "*Sāṃkhyakarikā*" and bring out a possibly argument to prove the existence of other minds which is inferable.

2. MILL'S CONCEPT OF OTHER MINDS AND HIS ARGUMENT FROM ANALOGY

John Stuart Mill makes experience the sole source of knowledge, rejecting a-priori and intuitive element of every sort. He defines matter as a "permanent possibility of sensation", mind is resolved into "a series of feeling with a background of possibilities of feelings", even though Mill is not unaware of the difficulty involved in the question how a series of feeling can be made aware of itself as a series.¹ Mill attacks the skeptic and solipsist who argue that it is not possible to establish the existence of other minds. Mill sets an argument from analogy which solves this problem that how we can know about other minds. Here is the argument given below:

1. I have a mind.
2. I know from experience that my mental state causes my behavior.

¹Falckenberg, Richard. History of Modern Philosophy, p-566

3. Other people have bodies similar to mine and behave similar to me in similar situations.
4. Therefore, by analogy, their behavior has the same type of cause as my behavior like mental states.
5. Therefore, other people have minds.

This analogy is formed by observation of behaviors on other people with a relation of causal connection. Behaviors are accepted as effect and mental states as cause, this analogy also can be formulated as-

1. This behavior has a mental cause.
2. That behavior has a mental cause.
3. That third behavior has a mental cause.
4. Etc.
5. Therefore, many behaviors have a mental cause (I know this from my own experience).
6. Other people exhibit the same types of behavior as cited above.
7. Therefore, those behaviors also have mental cause.
8. Therefore, other people have minds.

Ryle says “the problem of other minds is compounded by even more serious difficulties given certain assumptions about the way language works”². Michael Lacewing argue that this analogy is not sufficient to prove the existence of other minds. He states:

“Can we object that the argument still relies on analogy, on the contentious claim that like effects (behavior) have like causes (mental states)? For example, even if behavior in *my* case is caused by (my) mental states, that doesn’t mean that the behavior of other people could not be caused by something entirely different (say, brain states without mental states)”³.

He also states

“First, the behavior picked out in the first premises of the argument is not picked out as *mine*, but as a *type* of behavior, e.g. raising an arm, walking to the shops, etc. The claim is that we have experience of many instances of such behavior being caused by mental states. Now, in science, we generalize from the cases we have observed. ‘Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius’ (at sea level) – we haven’t measured the temperature in every case of boiling water, but each time we do, we get the same result, so we make the general claim. We can do the same with behavior. On this understanding, the argument is not from *analogy* at all. It is simply a causal inference”⁴.

Second critique is

“Of course the skeptical claim that these instances are exceptional, that the behavior of other people has a different cause, remains *possible* (just as it is *possible* that water doesn’t always boil at 100 degrees Celsius). But the argument is only intended to make belief in other minds justified. We can think of it as an inference to the best explanation”⁵.

Some of the points which were given by Mill make the argument weak. Although, this is enough for an enquiry, and it is to make one rethink about the concept of the other minds as well as the existence of other minds. Next three portion of this paper try to establish an epistemological argument of the other minds within the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy with the reference to Mill’s argument from analogy.

² Ryle, Gilbert, The Concept of Mind, p-xvi

³ Michael Lacewing. The problem of other minds, Routledge

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

3. FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF SĀMĀKHYA PHILOSOPHY

According to Gopinath Kaviraj, *Sāmkhya* "is not one of the systems of Indian philosophy. *Samkhya* is the philosophy of India⁶". *Sāmkhya* has not only influenced Indian philosophy, but also every phase of Indian culture and learning. Mythology, theology, law, medicine, art and the various traditions of *Yoga* and *Tantra* have all been touched by the categories and basic notions of the *Samkhya*⁷. Vijñāna Bhikṣu says, *Sāmkhya* means knowledge of self through right discrimination. Jadhunath Sinha says:

"The *Sāmkhya* system derives its name from the word 'sāmkhyā', meaning number, since it enumerates the metaphysical principle of reality. Or word *sāmkhyā* may mean perfect knowledge (*sam+khyā*). The system is called *Sāmkhya*, since it gives perfect knowledge of the self or *puruṣa* as quite distinct from *prakṛti* and its evolutes, body, sense-organs, mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), and egoism (*ahamkāra*), which annihilates all kinds of suffering⁸".

Swami Virupakshananda said that '*Sāmkhya* forms one of the most important pillars continuing the six systems (*ṣaḍdarśana*) of Indian Philosophy. Its contribution to our knowledge of reality and world seminal⁹. According to Acharya Sankara, '*Sāmkhya* to be the knowledge of the true of self¹⁰. Larson says, "the term '*Sāmkhya*', appears to be derived from the root, *khyā*, together prefix, *sam*, meaning 'reckoning', 'summing up', 'calculations' etc."¹¹.

Sāmkhya propounded by sage Kapila and his written text "*Sāmkhyapravacanasūtra*" and "*Tattvasamsā*" are not available. The controversy about his date remains unsolved. But, Īswarakṛṣṇa, the pupil of Kapil, wrote in about 400AD that "*Sāmkhakārikā*" is the available authentic text for *Sāmkhya* philosophy. After Īswarakṛṣṇa, Pāramartha, Gauḍapāda, Vācaspati Misra, Vijñāna Vikṣu wrote excellent commentary on "*Sāmkhakārikā*". Else, Yuktidīpikā, Jayamangalā have also written important commentaries on "*Sāmkhakārikā*". *Sāmkhya* philosophy is well known for its doctrine of "*tattvas*" (category). It explains the universe with only twenty five *tattvas* (category). These *tattvas* (category) are four types. Īswarakṛṣṇa says:

*"mūlaprakṛtiḥ avikṛtiḥ mahadādyāḥ prakṛtīvikṛtayaḥ sapta,
ṣoḍaśakas tu vikāro na prakṛtir na vikṛtiḥ puruṣa"¹².*

Four types of *tattvas* (category) are *prakṛti* (cause in this *kārikā*), *prakṛti- vikṛti* (both cause and effect), *vikṛti* (effect), and *naprakṛti na vikṛti* (neither cause nor effect). Vacaspati Miṣra explains this stanza in his excellent commentary "*Sāmkhyatattvakaumudī*". He says, *prakṛti* is called *mūlaprakṛti* (primal nature) which is the root every material things. Everything depends on *prakṛti* (primal cause) but *prakṛti* (primal cause) has no cause. *Prakṛti* (primal cause) is the only single one cause in this sense. Second *tattvas* are *prakṛti- vikṛti*, which means some *tattvas* have power of causality and as well as they are effective also. According to "*Sāmkhakārikā*" and its commentary *mahat* (the great one or intellectual), *ahamkāra* (I or ego) and five subtle element (*rūp*, *ras*, *gandha*, *sparṣa* and *śabda*) are the both cause and effect. Again, Vacaspati explain the nature of *vikṛti* (only effect), *pañca jñānendriyo-* five sense organs viz. *cakṣu* (eye), *karṇa* (ear), *nāsikā* (nose), *jihvā* (tongue) and *tak* (skin or touch), ii. *pañca karmendriya-* five motor organs viz. *mukh* (mouth), *pāni* (hand), *pāda* (feet), *pāyu* (rectum or anus) and *upostha* (sex organ), *pañcamahābhuta* viz. *ksiti* (earth), *ap* (water), *tej* (fire), *marut* (air) and *voym* (eather) these fifteen and including *mana* (mind) are only effects. Another category is neither cause nor effect (*naprakṛti na vikṛti*) is *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is naturally *jñā* (knowledge).

⁶Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy (v-IV), p-xi

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Indian philosophy, p-1

⁹ Sāmkhya kārikā, p-ii

¹⁰ Origin and Development of the Samkhya of thought-P.B.Chakravorti, p-1

¹¹ Classical Samkhya, p-1

¹² III- "*Sāmkhyakārikā*"

organ of knowledge, and also it is an organ of action inasmuch as sensory organs like eye and the rest. And the motor organs like speech and the rest operate on their respective object only when the mind cooperates with them. The mind for its part internally constructs a representation of objects of the external world with the data supplied by the senses. The ego (*ahamkāra*) contributes personal perspective to knowledge claims. The intellect (*buddhi* or *mahat*) contributes to the understanding of knowledge. The *puruṣa* adds consciousness to the result: it is the mere witness of the intellectual processes. According to a simile, the *puruṣa* is the lord of the house, the tripartite psyche is the door-keeper and the senses are the doors. Intellect, ego and mind together constitute the *antaḥ-karaṇa* (internal organ), or the material psyche, while the other *indriya*-s (powers) collectively are called the external organ. Īswarakṛṣṇa describes *antaḥ-karaṇa* (internal organ) in “*Sāṃkhyakārikā*” as- “*antaḥkaraṇam trividham...*” (SK-XXXIII), *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* and *manas*.

The internal organ as is inseparable unit and it is the principle of life (*prāṇa*). In cognition the internal organ’s activity follows upon that of the external, but they are continuously active, so their activity is also simultaneous. The external organ is strictly bound to the present tense, while the psyche is active in the past and future as well (memory, planning, and the grasping of timeless truths).

While, “*Sāṃkhyakārika*” is the only authentic available text for Sāṃkhya philosophy, but in “*Sāṃkhyakārika*” Īswarakṛṣṇa does not bring the concept of other minds. For this reason some scholar agree that it is not possible to establish the concept of other mind within the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. Although, concept of plurality of selves (*bahupuruṣa*) gives an abstract concept about other minds. Ramesh Kumar Sharma and others in recent days are trying to prove that the existence of other mind is possible by the *Sāṃkhyian* philosophy. Ramesh Kumar Sharma says:

“We have observe that *Sāṃkhya* argument for the plurality of selves or what is called ‘other minds’ naturally requires supplementations by the analogical argument as it is traditionally conceived. And we so observed, first, because the *Sāṃkhya* argument seems to stop midway, even though it regards other’ bodies as a primary datum as require under the terms, and, second, because it apparently suffers from the defect of starting by assuming as fact what it sets out to prove, namely that there are selves animating other bodies.”²⁴

Sāṃkhya adduce three arguments to prove that there is a separate *puruṣa* for each individual. The argument given by Īswarakṛṣṇa to establish the existence of mannyness of selves is mentioned in “*Sāṃkhyakārika*” as:-

“*jananamaraṇakaraṇānāma pratiniyamād ayugapatpravrṭteś ca
puruṣabahutvam siddham traiguṇyaviparyayāc cai’va*”²⁵

The plurality of *puruṣas* is established,

- Birth, death and the personal history of everybody is different (it is determined by the law of *karma*, according to our merits collected in previous lives). If there were one *puruṣa* only, all bodies should be identical or at least indistinguishable for the function of the self or *puruṣa* is to be the supervisor of the body. But this is clearly not so. Hence, there must be a plurality of distinct *puruṣa*-s.
- If there were only one *puruṣa*, everyone would act simultaneously alike, for the *puruṣa* is the supervisor of the body. But this is clearly not so. Hence, there must be a plurality of distinct *puruṣa*-s.
- If there were only one *puruṣa*, we would all experience the same things. However, it is evident that the opposite is true: our experiences are inherently diverse and private, and they cannot be directly shared. Hence, there must be a separate *puruṣa* for us all.

If there were only one *puruṣa*, birth and death should be one for the whole universe. So, too, if one person be blind or deaf, all others should be blind or deaf, and when one engages in activity, all others should engage in the same activity. We do not see like this. The arguments mentioned above, clearly indicates the concept of plurality of selves with adherence to the concept of other minds also. It is not alike argument by analogy given by Mill, but we can

²⁴ Manyness of selves, Sāṃkhya and K.C. Bhattyacharya, Philosophy East and West, vol-54, no-4, 2004.

²⁵ *Sāṃkhyakārikā*-XVIII

easily draw an analogical argument by these three concrete inference to prove the existence of other minds within the *Sāṃkhya* School. Here the probable argument by analogy:-

1. Human body has *puruṣa*,
2. And human body has mind,
3. Mind is doing action for knowledge for the sake of *puruṣa*,
4. *Puruṣa* are many,
5. Therefore, minds are many.

This argument is not same like Mill's analogy, but this is a probable argument from analogy is made from the concept of *bahu- puruṣa* in *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. First premise is based on the existence of the *puruṣa* in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*-XVII, second premise is based on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*-XXVII, third premise is taken from *Sāṃkhyakārikā*-XVII, and fourth premise is manyness of spirits from *Sāṃkhyakārikā*-XVIII. Basically, if we do not accept the existence of the other minds, we face big trouble in our daily life. It is necessary to accept not only the concept of other minds, but also we have to believe that other minds exist same as mine.

5. CONCLUSION

With the Mill's argument on analogy, the paper proves the existence of other minds within the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, with special reference to *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. It is clear in *Sāṃkhya* that it accepts the separate body alike other. And *puruṣa* which is the conscious part of the universe is not one, it is many. Reflection of *puruṣa* in buddhi (intellect), *ahamkāra* is manifested from buddhi then manas (mind) is manifested from *ahamkāra*. So, in that way, we can say *puruṣa* also reflected in mind. And this is happened only when the knowledge of discrimination arise between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. This is called *kaivalya*. However, many mind or concept of others mind in *Sāṃkhya* is accepted in way of discussing the selves and plurality of selves. For this reason they did not give any argument or no discussion on this topic. *Sāṃkhya* admits a plurality of pure selves or *puruṣas*. The plurality is also taken to be inferred from the circumstance of the birth, death, organ, willing and feeling differing in different embodied selves. A prior enquiry, however, is how a body of other than mine is known to be of another self, for such knowledge it is obviously assumed in the above mentioned inference. We cannot say that where there is *puruṣa* there is mind but we can obviously say that where there is mind there is *puruṣa* (from third premise), Mind are many and other minds exist.

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Nanda Gopal Biswas is a research scholar in Philosophy at Indian Institute of Technology (ISM), Dhanbad with a special interest in *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy. He completed Masters of Arts from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. He serves also as a Guest Lecturer in Philosophy at Khatra Adivasi Mahavidyalaya, Bankura, West Bengal.