# National Seminar on

# "Vad Vidhi Perspectives of Nyaya Buddhism, Jain Vedant and other systems"

# Venue : ICPR Academic Centre, Lucknow

# CONCEPT NOTE

However, many animals communicate but a sophisticated logical communication is something so special to humans. This skill enabled the humans grow and preserve their knowledge and pass it to the coming generations. The advent of linguistic communication was really a very important step in the history of human civilisation. The power of linguistic communication enabled the humans explore their rationality in a well-organised manner. People think differently and the difference of opinion was inevitable. In this process the humans invented various ways to put their points clearly in order to convince the fellow beings. Now the debate had to come into existence. The debater had a twofold purpose, to reach at a conclusion themselves and also to defeat the opponents. When we think an internal debate, an internal dialogue, goes on. We decide between thesis and antithesis. Many a time we engage ourselves in a dialogue with another person in order to reach at a conclusion and sometimes only to defeat others because we are so confident about our own position, our own point that the opposite thesis appears to us purely impossible.

This is amazing to note that India has the longest living history of debate. The signs of debate can be discovered even in the Upaniṣads. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad is a famous example of debate in which we find Yājṇavalkya and Gārgī debating on various philosophical issues in the court of King Janaka. The style may differ but Kathāvatthu is another example of Vāda belonging to the Śramaṇika tradition. The assertion would not go wrong if we assert that in India the development of logic was very much dependant upon the tradition of Vāda. These debates were carried on frequently on several issues related to philosophy, religion, ethics, morality and science, specially medicine. These debates present a sophisticated way of a rational inquiry. They have been also used as a powerful tool to reach at a conclusion. Even, in the way in India these were in practice, these debates in a sense appear to be a form of a collaborative research. In the Caraka-Saṁhitā, a text of medical science, we find a discussion on this topic. It explores the different ways in which the doctors should engage in a debate in order to discover the root cause of a disease and also its remedy.

A curious observation of Indian History would indicate that it was indeed a popular way to settle down issues of common interest specially related to medicine, philosophy, morality and religion. The philosophies of India flourished fighting one another, defending their own views and rejecting that of other. As the Indian philosophies are knwon as various schools, we cannot identify any of them with a single person. The schools of various philosophical systems are actually various thought currents having their own logic, their own epistemology and their own justification. Therefore, we witness a long series of intellectual encounters between various philosophical systems. The most famous series of these intellectual encounters is between the Nyāya and the Buddhist schools. We have evidences that this series of encounters must have started during second century AD when Nāgārjuna wrote Vigahavyāvartanī, Madhyamakaśāstra and Vaidalyasūtra, if not before that. However, I have strong reasons to believe that this might have started much earlier. It had been carried on by the great logicians like Akṣapāda Gautama, Vātsyāyana, Udyotakara,

Vācaspati Miśra, Udayanācārya and Vardhamāna from the side of Nyāya and no less greater logicians like Nāgārjuna, Dińnāga, Dharmakīrti, Jñānaśrīmitra, Ratnakīrti etc. from the side of Buddhism. This amazing encounter had lasted more than one thousand years. With the advent of

Mādhva school of Vedānta, we witness another such series of encounters between two living philosophical systems, Śańkara’s school of Advaita and Madhva’s school of Dvaita. The encounters are still going on. These are only a few great examples of these philosophical debates. In fact, there are some more such debates. For example, we cannot forget the encounters between Śańkara’s school of Advaita and Rāmānujācārya’s school of Viśiṣṭādvaita. This is no way less important.

The best way to settle down an issue, I think, is an open debate and an open debate means a debate with open minds. When one comes having very well decided, in advance, in the favour of a particular theory or concept, the truth is never discovered. Therefore, the best way to participate in a fruitful dialogue is to come with an open mind, always ready for corrections. Therefore, the formulation of a proper way of debate was required. These living traditions of debate gave rise to various branches of Indian Logic. Many traditions of Logic emerged. The rules were formulated and several Vāda manuals like the Caraka-Saṁhitā, the Nyāya-Sūtras and the Vādavidhi came into existence in order to enable the student differentiate the good arguments from bad arguments.

The Caraka-Saṁhitā presents two types of debates Sandhāya Sambhāṣā and Vigṛhya Sambhāṣā. The first type of debate is an amicable debate. It is a kind of discussion which used to be held between fellow scholars with open minds. The second type is Vigṛhya Sambhāṣā*,* a hostile debate. The purpose of these different debates is clearly different. On the one hand the purpose of Sandhāya Sambhāṣā is to reach at a conclusion, on the other the purpose of Vigṛhya Sambhāṣā is to win the debate. Reaching at a conclusion was not a goal in this type of debate. But whatever be the type of debate before one enters into a debate, one must carefully examine the good and bad points of the opponent as well as one's own.

In the Nyāya schools, there are many texts written on the issue. The Nyāya-Sūtras itself is a manual of debate. It presents a proper method of inquiry and a well-defined way of argumentation or debate. The Naiyāyikas have classified *kathā* (discussion) into three *vāda, jalpa* and Vitaṇḍā. In Nyāya *Vāda* is almost a Guru-śiṣya-Saṁvāda, a dialogue between a disciple and a teacher. In this type of debate there is no question of victory or defeat. *'jalpa'* is very much similar to Vāda but here both the parties try to justify their own position and to win the debate. The purpose of *jalpa* isvictory and the defeat of opponent. Therefore, the proponent might play with different types of tricks. *'Vitandā'* is very much similar to *jalpa,* in its purpose but here there is a subtle difference. A Vaitanḍika doesn’t put forward her/his own position. He/she simply tries to reject the position proposed.

From the Buddhist side one of the oldest texts available on the issue is Vasubandhu’s Vāda-Vidhi or "The Method for Argumentation". The title indicates that Vasubandhu's main concern with logic was to chalk out the rules of argumentation and debate. Asanga's "Rules of Debate", and the Buddhistic Tarka-śāstra are also discussed here. The Vāda-Vidhi differs from these works in this vital sense that its discussions of inference contain complete criteria for determining the logical validity of an argument. The details on this issue can be seen in the Vādanyāya written by Dharmakīrti.

The Buddhist idea of debate differs significantly from that of Nyāya. What Nyāya calls Vitaṇḍā that completely disappears in Buddhist framework. The Nyāya concept of Vāda is not the same what Buddhists call *Vāda.* What Naiyāyikas call *vāda* that is *prapañcakathā* according to Dharmakirti*. Prapancakathā* is a diffuse discussion which is not governed by any rules concerning defeat or victory. What Naiyāyikas call *jalpa* that is very much similar to *vāda* in the opinion of Dharmakirti*.* Therefore, we could see that here there are only two ways to argue.

The goal of these texts was to introduce the students the key concepts of argumentation in order to enable them conduct the debates successfully, avoid the mistakes, steer clear of being trapped in the opponent’s wrong arguments. It was also aimed at finding the mistakes made by opponents. Doing so the goal was to eventually defeat the opponent, win the debate and prove their own position. All this would not have been possible without knowing the rules and learning their usage carefully. As a result, different theories of debates were formulated. We may call them different methods of debate. These methods are very much similar on certain issues but are radically different. In one type of debate what was a permissible practice in the other one that was completely improper.

The goal of this seminar is to evaluate the methods of argumentations as they are formulated in different philosophical systems also to understand their merits and demerits in a comparative manner. This is also the aim of this seminar to understand its contemporary relevance. The tentative themes are as follows—

1. The Early forms of debate
2. The history of debate in India
3. The Logical traditions and Debate
4. Good Vs Bad debate
5. Debate and Pramāṇa
6. Debate and Logic
7. Tricks in debate
8. The Buddhist idea of Debate and its development
9. The Nyāya idea of debate (Kathā) and its development
10. Jaina contribution to debate
11. The Vedāntic ideas of debate
12. The points of defeat (Nigrahasthāna)
13. Śāstrārtha and its rules
14. Classical Debates in Contemporary world

**Important Dates:**

Submission of Full Paper with abstract: 31st January, 2019

Interested scholars from College/University/Institutions etc. may please send their Papers (Hindi or English in a single file word or PDF only) along with brief CV via email to coordinator Professor Sachchidanand Mishra, Dept of Philosophy and Religion, BHU to email - sachchitmishra@gmail.com with a copy to Director (Academic) Luckow, Dr. Pooja Vyas at icprlkw@gmail.com and [seminar.icpr@gmail.com](mailto:seminar.icpr@gmail.com)