CHAPTER V

COGNITIVE RELATION

5.1. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1.1. 'Cognitive relation' - implications

The notion of relation, by definition, involves two or more terms. The term 'cognitive relation' is generally used to denote a specific dimension of a wider phenomenon designated as 'knowledge'. This implies that the phenomenon interpreted in the framework of 'cognitive relation' involves more than one term and these terms are found to be related to each other. It is, therefore, necessary to specify the kind of experience that admits of such a relational interpretation. The different dimensions of this experience have been delineated by Pratt.

Analysing the implications of the conception of knowledge as denoting empirical experience, Pratt points out that it does not connote mere experience but involves an outer reference, or is transcendent. According to him, 'Transcendence' means an active referring beyond the psychologically given. While transcendence refers to one dimension of this experience, viz., the objective reference, judgement refers to the other dimension, the subjective reference. Judgement by definition, presupposes some kind of a thinker, a subject. Pratt, however, recognises the ambiguities involved in the conceptions
of 'subject' and 'object'. The notion of 'object' implies a referent, but this referent may be an experience within the awareness of an individual or it may be an existent, that existentially transcends the private experience of individuals. The identification of the subject is a difficult process in view of the nature of the cognitive situation. According to Pratt, the situation is similar to the process of seeing which may be said to be a bi-polar process, involving a relation which is like a line, but a line with this peculiarity, that we see only one end of it. The line extends towards us, but we are not able to see the hither end. Similarly, every case of knowledge and judgement, he contends, is a bi-polar situation involving an object and a subject or knower and, the knower is not an object of direct experience in the same sense as external objects are.

These observations indicate that the notion of cognitive relation involves the conceptions of subject, object and the relation between the two, which may be described subjectively as cognitive experience, and objectively as cognitive relation. Any satisfactory theory of knowledge, be it idealistic or realistic, should provide a consistent account of the various dimensions of this experience like the feeling of transcendence, the nature and degree of existential independence attributed to the objects, the nature and role of the subject etc. It is necessary at the outset to note briefly the
Regarding the kind of information that is acquired through the cognitive process, realism primarily assures that things can be known as they really are. The secondary assumption is that anything is precisely what it appears to be. In the words of Santayana, "The minimum of realism is the presumption that there is such a thing as knowledge; in other words, that perception and thought refer to some object, not the mere experience of perceiving and thinking. The maximum of realism would be the assurance that everything ever perceived or thought of exists apart from apprehension and exactly in the form in which it is believed to exist: in other words .... there is no such thing as error."

The primary dimension of the cognitive experience is evidently the subject. It should be noted that the term 'subject' has been employed in logical, epistemological and metaphysical senses. Differentiating between the logical and the epistemological implications, Loewenberg remarks, "everything under the sun may indeed be a logical subject, but only a certain kind of thing, the thing capable of awareness, can be an epistemological subject." The distinctive feature of a subject in the epistemological context, therefore, is the capacity for awareness or consciousness. The question of the nature or reality of the knower, relates to the metaphysical dimension of the term. It is rather difficult to specify the realistic position regarding the nature of the
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epistemological subject. Though all of them grant that consciousness is the basic prerequisite of a subject, different views have been expressed regarding its metaphysical nature. The reasons for such a divergence becomes evident when we examine the difficulties encountered in admitting the postulates of the realistic school, both regarding the process of knowing and the relation between the object and the content of cognition.

5.1.3. Objections against the postulates of realism

The epistemological postulates of the realist can be accepted only if they are not contradicted by experience. The primary postulate of epistemological realism is the existential independence of the objects of cognition. This, by implication, introduces the dualism between the subject and the object. The realist has to explain how this gap is transcended in the cognitive experience. Another significant postulate relates to the cognitive process, which is described as a process of discovery, in which things are revealed to the mind as they are, without any distortion. This postulate can be admitted only if it can be established that the objects of the physical world are directly accessible to the subject, i.e., the process of cognition does not involve the possibility of any misrepresentation and reveals the objects as they are.
Many sceptics and idealists have questioned the realistic view regarding cognitive process on the ground that certain experiences contradict the proposition of the realist. The most important argument advanced by these thinkers is generally known as the 'argument from illusion.' It is pointed out that there are experiences involving the misidentification of the object, in which one kind of physical object is confused with another, as in the case of the shell-silver illusion and instances of hallucinations where there is no corresponding external object at all like mirages. Some thinkers have also drawn attention to the variations experienced in the appearances of an object due to perspectival differences like the condition of light, the mental or physical state of the observer, the presence of some distorting medium or a combination of these factors. This refers to phenomena like a round coin looking elliptical from a particular angle, the straight stick appearing bent in water, etc. Ayer, reviewing these arguments, has pointed out that among these, only the first two are generally considered as instances of illusion, because the perceptual variations due to perspectival differences can be discounted, once the causes are understood.

Another class of arguments questions the propositions of the realist on the basis of the causal factors involved in perception as elucidated by science. It is contended that objects of the external world are not directly accessible to us.
The study of the physiological factors involved in the perceptual experience indicates that there are significant differences between the object as a content of experience and as an existential entity in the objective world. A distinction is thereby made between things as they are in themselves and as they can appear to us.¹²

On the basis of these arguments a number of thinkers have argued that the perception of the objects of the world is not immediate, but mediate in nature. A variety of entities like ideas, impressions, sensations, sense data, percept, qualia, etc., have been suggested as the mediating terms.¹³ These terms, it should be noted, are not interchangeable, nor have they been used consistently. But, whatever be the differences in the nature of the mediating term, the mere admission of the reality of a mediate term of any kind would imply that the immediate data of perception are different from the objects perceived in that they are subjective and private. This argument would logically culminate in the view that all that can be known are only the mental states, and that there is no way of establishing any connection between these and the entities that are supposed to generate these mental states, viz., the external objects. This, in turn, would undermine the possibility of establishing the reality of the external world on the basis of experience. Experience, according to this view, can establish only the reality of the subjective
world, which would imply an acceptance of the contention of the epistemological idealist viz., existence is identical with knowledge.

The postulates of the realist regarding both the objects of cognition and the nature of the cognitive process, therefore, can be admitted only if the difficulties posed by illusory experiences are resolved and the gap between the private and the public world introduced by the causal theory of perception is bridged without denying the scientific propositions on which the theory is based.

5.1.4. Objections countered - Western realism

5.1.4.1. New Realism

Different strategies have been adopted by realists to resolve the problem posed by the existential independence attributed to the terms involved in the cognitive relation. The New Realist maintains that experience always involves two terms, viz., the subject and the object and the relation between the two is, like all relations, external in nature.\(^{14}\) The externality of the relation implies that the object is independent of the perceiving consciousness, and it is known as it really is, i.e., what is known is numerically identical with the object apprehended.\(^{15}\) While all New Realists hold that the objects are immediately present to the mind, different thinkers have described the process involved in
such an experience differently. Significant differences are also found in the attempts made by different realists to account for erroneous experience in the context of their theory of direct perception. All of them, however, attribute objectivity to the objects of experiences generally defined as erroneous.

The distinction between, and the existential independence attributed to, the terms of the cognitive relation do not pose any problem to the New Realist. It is maintained that though distinct, the terms are not different metaphysically. According to the New Realist, experience is a natural phenomenon interpretable either from the standpoint of mind or matter. As Holt remarks, "A mind or consciousness is a class or group of entities within the subsisting universe, as a physical object is another class or group. One entity or complex of entities can belong to two or more classes or groups at the same time, as one point can be an integral part of a physical object, of a mathematical manifold, the field of reality and one or any number of consciousness at the same time." Elucidating the New Realist position Evans observes that if experience is considered as independent of knowing, we have the interpretation of experience in terms of matter. If experience is considered in connection with a knowing agent, we have the New Realists explanation of the mind. The subject dimension of experience,
however, has been differently conceived by different New Realistic thinkers. It has been described as a search-light, as a cross-section of the neutral entities that subsist in the universe, etc., as Sinclair puts it, "Knowledge then goes on inside nature. It is one of the natural events among others. It is nature apprehending its own events, recognizing its own objects." 

It may be said that by assigning both the relata to the same order of ontological reality, the New Realist reconciles the existential independence of the relata with the possibility of the two being related to each other. In fact, in his attempts to emphasize the objectivity of the objects of experience, the New Realist almost explains away the subject-object distinction. This is specially evident in the failure to distinguish between states that are purely subjective in nature, like pain, anger, etc., and experiences which apparently involve an objective reference, and between illusory and veridical experiences.

5.1.4.2. Critical Realism

In order to avoid the problems generated by the epistemological monism advocated by the New Realist, Critical Realism offers a three-term interpretation of the cognitive situation. A distinction is made between the physical objects, the datum,
and the mental or \textit{psychic} state.\textsuperscript{23} This implies a dualistic position epistemologically. This dualism has two dimensions viz., the dualism between subject and object, indicated by the distinction between mental and non-mental and the distinction between the external physical object and the datum that reveals the object.

The problem of the possibility of knowledge in the context of the distinction between the subject and object is resolved by Critical Realism by maintaining that the subject is by nature capable of transcending itself. Pratt contends that the transcendental nature of the functioning of the mind must be admitted on the evidence of experience.\textsuperscript{24}

Analyzing the process of knowing, Critical Realism makes a distinction between the datum and the physical object with a view to avoid the defects of extreme objectivism as well as subjectivism. According to the Critical Realist, the cognitive process involves three elements, the mental state, the datum, and the physical object. It is, however, difficult to specify the ontological nature of the datum as conceived by Critical Realist thinkers. It has been described as an existence by Lovejoy\textsuperscript{25} and as an essence by Drake,\textsuperscript{26} Santayana,\textsuperscript{27} and Strong.\textsuperscript{28} The Critical Realist maintains that the mediate nature of the cognitive process does not imply that our knowledge is inferential in nature. The realm of existents, \textit{collageholds} is not inferred but affirmed through the pressure
of experience. According to him, the physical objects are known while the contents are intuited. Similarly, Pratt contends that we see the object and not the percept but the object as seen by means of the percept. The dualism between the datum and the object, the Critical Realist claims, solves the problem of error more satisfactorily. Error, for the Critical Realist, denotes the lack of agreement between the essence intuited and actual character of the object perceived.

An analysis of the Critical Realist description of the cognitive process reveals that, according to this theory, the external world is never directly accessible to the subject. Elucidating the implications of the critical realist position Sinclair remarks, "...the object is never directly perceived, since it is an outside existent and the percept is never perceived since it is the means of perceiving, yet the percept is the datum, the given content of perception, and yet by means of the unperceived content I perceive."

The major problem for the Critical Realist, therefore, is to establish the reality and independent existence of the objects the epistemological scheme posited by him. According to Pratt, coherence and pragmatic success establish that a real and existent world is apprehended through the medium of the datum. Santayana attempts to establish the truth of epistemological realism on biological, psychological and logical grounds.
In spite of the modifications introduced by the Critical Realist in order to avoid the defects of extreme objectivism and subjectivism, we find that the problem remains unresolved, due to description of the cognitive process offered by the school. According to the Critical Realist theory of knowing, knowledge in a real sense becomes impossible. The attempts made by the Critical Realists to establish the reality of the objects apprehended on the grounds of coherence and pragmatic success are unsatisfactory, because these are ultimately part of the subjective experience only.

The views of the Critical Realist school have been presented in detail, since these are broadly similar to the approach adopted by Indian realistic systems. The Critical Realist rightly recognises the value of the instinctive belief in the objective reality of the world and the implications of successful experience. The view that the mind is capable of transcending itself resolves the problem posed by the dualism between subject and object. The Critical Realist view exhibits an important insight in recognising the difference between the objects in the physical world and the object as the content of experience. But by denying the possibility of directly apprehending the world, the Critical Realist loses all the advantages gained through these insights. It may be said that the Critical Realist, while adopting the right strategy in resolving the problems generated by the complex nature of
cognitive experience, does not go far enough and fails to explain the connection between the datum and the object adequately. The Indian systems studied here, while advocating a position similar to that of the Critical Realist in many respects, attempt to offer a theory of knowing that is free from these defects.

5.1.5. Indian realistic systems

The epistemology of Indian philosophical systems have been examined extensively by a number of scholars. The present study is restricted to only those issues that have a direct bearing on the realism advocated by the four systems studied here. It has been stated earlier that of the two terms involved in this relation, the notion of object may refer either to the objects of the external world or the internal states of the experience, including the emotional states as well as the experience of self-awareness. But the primary presupposition of realistic epistemology, viz., the existential independence of the object, relates mainly to the objects of the external world, since both emotional states and self-experience are, by definition, subjective in nature. The realist has to reconcile the existential independence attributed to these objects with the possibility of the subject becoming aware of them without any distortion. Therefore, the present analysis is restricted to an examination of the
extent to which the systems studied here have been successful in achieving such a reconciliation.

Analyzing the basic assumptions of Indian epistemology, Barringey points out that Indian philosophy generally assumes knowledge is a kind of relation. Most Indian systems treat knowledge as a transitive verb, which depends as much on the object of knowledge as on the knower for its existence. All the systems seem to accept the conception of the knowledge triad, consisting of the knower, the known and the knowledge. The relational nature of knowledge implied by such a conception, he contends, is responsible for the non-representative nature of the Indian theories of perception. The significance of these observations will become evident in the course of our study of the views of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Viśistādvaīta and Dvaita, regarding the different issues involved in the analysis of cognitive relation.

5.2. NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA ON COGNITIVE RELATION

5.2.1. The terms involved in cognitive relation

For Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, experience constitutes the phenomenon that needs to be interpreted and understood in terms of a metaphysical framework as well as the final court of appeal that validates and justifies the conceptual framework so developed. A study of the epistemological observations of
the system would, therefore, reveal the extent to which the
metaphysical postulates of the system are reinforced epistemo-
logically.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, like most other Indian systems, holds
that cognitive process is three dimensional, involving a subject,
an object and the relation between the two, generally designated
as 'cognitive experience.' We begin our analysis with an
examination of the view of the system regarding one of the
terms of the relation, viz., the epistemological subject.

1.3.1.1. The epistemological subject

The distinctive feature of an epistemological subject, as
has been pointed out already, is the capacity for awareness or
consciousness. The Nyāya considers consciousness to be an
attribute which, by definition, is grounded in a substratum,
thereby drawing attention to the inseparability between the
epistemological and metaphysical dimensions of the subject term.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika arrives at the nature of the knower
through an analysis of experience itself. Apparently, cons-
ciousness is associated with a body, and is absent when a
body is absent, and it can be contended, as is done by the
materialist, that it is an attribute of the body itself.
Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika maintains that though associated with the
body along with other qualities like colour, shape, etc.,
consciousness is distinct from them, in that, while the body
is always associated with these qualities, there are instances of body existing without consciousness. Therefore consciousness requires, it is argued, a different locus as its substrate. It is admitted that consciousness is experienced along with the body. But this does not invalidate the distinctive nature of the substrate of consciousness, since there are instances of the attributes of one substance being experienced along with those of another, as in the case of hot water.

The experiential process also implies an underlying unitary principle. In the absence of a distinct unitary entity functioning as the subject of experience, it is difficult to account for the apprehension of different objects simultaneously, as each sense organ is restricted to only one quality. Similarly the remembrance of other qualities of an object, when only a few of the qualities are perceived cannot be explained without such an assumption. The unitary principle integrating these experiences, it logically follows, can be nothing but the substrate of consciousness. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika postulates a distinct substance, the self, as the substratum of consciousness, which, by implication, is the epistemological subject as well.

Further, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika contends that the subject of experience can be the object of experience also in a real sense. It is held that the self is knowable through
perceptual cognition just like the other substances. It is
cognised by its juxtaposition with the internal organ and this
cognition is expressed in statements like "I am happy," "I know,"
"I will," "I am in pain," etc. If the perception of self
is denied, these expressions will have no referent at all.
The inferential argument based on the attributive nature of
consciousness is intended only to eliminate the possibility of
doubt regarding existence of the self, as perceptual cognitions
are occasionally subject to doubt. Thus, according to
Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the subject of experience is on par with
other objects of experience both in respect of its metaphysical
nature and the process involved in validating its postulation.
The subject of experience is as much a substantive entity as
the other entities experienced by the subject are, and is, in
another sense the object of experience also.

Consciousness is only one of the attributes of the self.
The other features of the self as an ontological entity are
not presented in detail, as they have no direct bearing on the
issue being examined here. Self is said to be eternal, all
pervasive and plural in number. The distinctive feature
of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of the self as compared to
that of the other systems of Indian philosophy is the view
that consciousness is a contingent and not an essential attri-
bute of the self. Such a conception is a necessary corollary
to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika views regarding the relation between
cognition and the subject on the one hand, and the substance and attribute, on the other

5.2.1.2. The object of cognition

While subject represents one dimension of the cognitive relation, objects of experience represent the other dimension. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika classification of ultimate metaphysical entities\(^44\) indicates that, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the objects of experience are real and existentially independent of the subject. The \(\ldots\) offered by idealistic thinkers in order to establish the unreality of the world are examined and refuted by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.\(^{45}\) As Jyāntkār points out, the systē procedē on the assumption that we know that there is a real world of things and persons and a philosopher has to give only a reasonable account of this world.\(^{46}\)

5.2.2. Cognitive process

The next question that needs to be examined relates to the conditions under which the self functions as an epistemological subject. Experience implies an experiencer at one end of the continuum and an experiencee entity at the other. Experience occurs when a relation is brought about between the two terms, resulting in the subject becoming aware of the object, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika recognises four means of knowledge, viz., perception, inference, comparison and verbal testimony.\(^{47}\)
The present analysis is, however, limited to perceptual experience as the other means of knowledge presuppose perception. Pointing out the importance of perception as a means of knowledge, Patra remarks, "It supplies the corner stone of the philosophy of the world. In fact it is always found that a theory of the world either starts with a theory of perception or if starting somewhere else, it has to offer a satisfactory account of perception that fits in with its assumptions." 48

5.2.2.1. Perception

Perception has been defined by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika writers both in terms of the process culminating in the experience as well as the nature of the experience itself. Early Nyāya-writers define it as the knowledge produced through sense-object contact. 49 While later Nyāyāyikas define it as the cognition characterised by immediacy. 50 The process whereby the self perceives the external objects involves, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the contact of the self with manas, manas with the sense organs and the sense organs with their respective objects.

According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, there are six sense organs, viz., five external senses and the internal sense manas. 51 The five external senses are physical in character as they are constituted by the physical elements. Each sense organ is constituted by the physical element whose qualities are sensed by it. 52 Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika maintains that the senses can perceive only such objects which are in direct or indirect
contact with them (prāṇakāri). A study of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika description of the perceptual process reveals that all the elements involved in this chain, viz., soul, body, internal organ, external senses and external object are unconscious in nature. The mechanical and material nature of this theory has been drawn attention by Dasgupta and Hiriyanna.

Types of perceptual contact

In view of the substantive nature of the terms involved in this process, the whole theory of knowledge of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, according to Sarasmithi Chennakesavaiah, is based on samānyakāraṇa, the relation of either samavāya or saṁyoga established between object, manas and self. This is evident in the different kinds of perceptual contacts recognised by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

Six kinds of perceptual contacts are postulated by the school, viz., saṁyoga, caṇya-samavāya, caṇya-kacaravṛtta-samavāya, cakravṛtta-samavāya, caṇya-vīdēśeyabhāva. These account for the perceptions of different ontological categories recognised by the system, viz., substance, attribute, action, universal, inference, etc.

The different kinds of contacts posited by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as accounting for the perception of different kinds of ontological entities suggest a recognition of the difference in the nature of entities perceived thereby. It also serves the purpose of establishing or reinforcing the metaphysical
propositions advocated by the system. The Nāyāyika, unlike the empiricist, who, while admitting the apprehension of attributes, denies the perception of any underlying substantive entity, holds that the subject perceives not only the qualities and relations but also the underlying unitary substance as well. As Darling remarks, "Thus, when I have knowledge of the things and then the knowledge of the qualities, because the qualities belong to the thing, I have thus knowledge not of qualities, but as qualities belonging to the thing. The qualities belong to the thing through a permanent relation. That is, the qualities inhere in the things. The knowledge of the qualities is therefore through the contact of the thing, and through the permanent relation between the thing and its qualities." The Nāyāyika affirms the reality of both the substance and the attributes. The said idea is reinforced by the contention of the Nāyāyika that the whole is apprehended as a distinct entity apart from the parts.

2.2.2.3. Types of perception

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika makes a distinction between the stages of perceptual apprehension viz., the indeterminate stage, (nirvikalpaka) and determinate stage (svaikalpaka). Nirvikalpaka is defined as the knowledge of a thing without its qualities as "this is something," Svaikalpaka in the knowledge of the thing with all its qualities like, "This is a Brāhmaṇa," "this is dark" etc. This should not be taken to imply that Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika admits the possibility of
cognition of an abstract universal, or more existence. The difference between the two types of perception, as conceived by this system, has been clearly stated by Chatterjee. He points out that according to Nyāya even at the level of nirvikalpa perception there is a cognition of both the universal and the particular properties of the object. But these are not apprehended in a substantive-adjective relation. Savikalpa, on the other hand, refers to the apprehension of an object as qualified by certain attributes. It is the knowledge of the entity in a substantive-adjective framework. Though the two types are held to represent two different stages of perceptual experience, the Nyāya holds that the former stage is not perceived, but is implied by the savikalpa stage, and has to be admitted on inferential grounds.

According to Mohanty, the distinction between nirvikalpa and savikalpa suggests that the Nyāya recognises two stages in the growth of perceptual knowledge—viz., the initial non-linguistic, non-propositional apprehension followed by a linguistic propositional knowledge. The admission of a non-propositional and non-linguistic knowledge, in which the thing itself is apprehended without the intermediary of logical or epistemic entities, Mohanty maintains, is required by the realism advocated by the system.

It is also relevant to examine whether the theory of perception advocated by Nyāya-Vaisēsika is mediate or immediate.
in nature. In the context of the types of contact posited by the system, some of which seem to involve more than one step, it may be contended that perception is mediatised according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. But Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika maintains that the object is directly perceived through the senses. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory appears to be broadly similar to the position generally described as Naive Realism and is open to the objections raised against Naive Realism. But, as Jainankar points out, this argument has no bearing on the Nyāya-position, as there is no gap between the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika physics and the theory of knowledge advocated by the system. The pre-established harmony between the four elements, the physical objects and the four sense-organs implies the possibility of a direct awareness of the physical objects on the part of the subject, invalidating thereby a sceptical approach with regard to such cognitions. 63

5.3.3. Cognition

5.3.3.1. Cognition and the subject

The third term of the cognitive relation is the product of the contact between the cogniser and the cognised, i.e., cognition. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds that cognition, like desire, aversion, pleasure, etc., is one of the attributes of the self. 64 Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika contends that the association between cognition and the self is a contingent one in spite of their empirical inseparability. It is pointed out that cognitions
have always been transient and are generally associated with different time periods, as is evident in expressions like, 'I know,' 'I have known' etc. These indicate the possibility of production and destruction of cognitions.65 Further, the nature of process involved in the cognitive experience suggests that it is an experience that originates under certain circumstances and cannot be associated with the self permanently.

The contingent nature of the association of the attribute of consciousness with the self logically follows from the previous propositions. Given the contingent nature of cognitive experience, there is no empirical justification for the attribution of consciousness to the self on an eternal basis, since the existence of this attribute is established only when there is the apprehension of some object, internal or external. Consciousness refers to the capacity of the self to apprehend the objects, while cognition refers to the manifestation of this capacity under certain conditions. Both, however, are found to be associated with the substantial entity, viz., self, only under certain circumstances. As Joshi points out, the Vaiśeṣikas do not conceive of the self as a logical subject, but consider it a metaphysical entity like the object, and knowledge is said to take place when there is a sort of existential conjunction between the two. Consciousness arise only in consequence of their existential impact.66 Cognition, and by implication consciousness are, therefore,
associated with the self only contingently and are not the essential attributes of the self. Being attributes, both are related to the self through sarvānyā, which explains their inseparable association with the self at the empirical level.

Cognition, though an attribute of the self, is not self-revelatory in nature, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds that it is known through a secondary act of cognition which has the first cognition as its object. Such a position logically follows from the initial premises of the system both regarding the terms involved in the relation and the nature of the experience itself. In the context of the observations of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika regarding the subject and the object of cognition, cognitive function is reduced to the level of a mechanical activity, as is true of the relation between any two material objects. Further, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, cognition by nature, always transcends itself, referring to something beyond itself and revealing something other than itself. Consequently both cognition and the object of cognition cannot be apprehended by the same act. This, however, does not preclude the possibility of an act of cognition becoming the object of another cognition. Pointing out the similarity between the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of cognition and that of Laird, D. J. T. quotes Laird: "Our cognitive processes are in their usual exercise, the processes with which (not at which) we look, and none of them, perhaps can look at itself."
It does not follow however, that another (introspective) look cannot be directed towards this process of looking. According to him, the Mañññyāyika, like a consistent realist, objectifies the subjective cognition.

5.2.3.2. Cognition and the object

The realistic approach of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is evident not only in its view regarding the relation between the subject and cognition, but the relation between cognition and the object cognised as well. As has already been pointed out, cognition transcends itself and refers to and reveals something other than itself. The point to be examined is whether the cognitive process interferes in any way with the nature of the object apprehended through it. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, cognition reveals the object as it is without any distortion. It may be said that cognition is related to the object by the relation of visyātā, or the relation of objectifying it. The observations of the Mañññyāyika regarding the relation between cognition and the object cognised reveals that he holds a position advocated by realism in general, viz., cognition is a process of discovery revealing the object as it is.

5.2.3.3. Erroneous cognition

The major difficulty encountered by the epistemological realist is that of accounting for erroneous experiences.
Nyaya-Vaiseshika recognises the distinction between valid and invalid cognitions. It is contended that the validity or invalidity of a particular cognition is generated by conditions external to the cognition itself and is ascertained through its capacity or incapacity to lead to successful activity. In the words of Pralingsa, "...The existence of an object is proved by the behaviour of the object itself."71

Nyaya-Vaiseshika recognises the possibility of the individual encountering erroneous experiences like dreams, hallucinations, illusions, etc., which, apparently contradict the basic postulates of the realist, viz., that cognitive process reveals the objects as they are. These experiences are termed erroneous, since the content of cognition in all these instances is found to be sublated by subsequent experience.

The problem of error has been discussed elaborately by almost all the systems of Indian philosophy. The issues examined include the need to distinguish between valid and erroneous cognitions, the ontological status of the object of erroneous cognition, the causal conditions producing erroneous cognition, etc. The analysis offered by these systems is concerned mainly with the perceptual error, and among perceptual errors the emphasis is on visual error. Visual errors include the shell-silver illusion, doublemoon, mirage, yellow coach perception, etc. Of these, shell-silver
experience has been subjected to the most elaborate analysis by all the systems. In the present study also the observations of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika regarding the erroneous apprehension of shell as silver is examined in order to understand how it reconciles this experience with its theory of direct perception. The explanations offered regarding this experience will indicate the general strategy adopted by the system vis-à-vis erroneous cognitions in general. Erroneous cognition is defined as the cognition of one thing as another which is different from it. It is, therefore, known as anyathākhyāti. It is admitted that in erroneous cognition one thing is apprehended as another, e.g., shell is cognised as silver. This does not, however, imply that one of the terms is unreal. It is held that both the terms, viz., shell and silver, are real in an absolute sense.

This raises the question of how in a real shell, real silver comes to be cognised. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, in the shell-silver experience, there is the visual perception of the shell in a general sense as this (iṣṭa) and the attribute of silverness which belongs to a real silver existing elsewhere, is presented in this cognition as an attribute of the shell due to certain points of similarity between the two.

The Nyāyaśāstra is aware that the real silver being present elsewhere cannot be cognised in this cognition through any of the six types of direct perceptual contacts elucidated
5.3. SĀṆKHYA ON COGNITIVE RELATION

5.3.1. The terms involved in cognitive relation

Sāṅkhyā, like the other systems of Indian philosophy holds that cognitive relation is three dimensional in nature. Sāṅkhyā recognises two ultimate ontological entities, viz., puruṣa, the conscious principle and prakṛti, the material principle. It may, therefore, be contended that the primary requirements of cognitive relation, viz., a conscious entity which has the potentiality to become an epistemological subject and entities that can function as the objects of cognition are met by these two principles respectively. A closer analysis of the Sāṅkhyā position, however, reveals that Sāṅkhyā encounters serious difficulties in determining and distinguishing the different terms involved in the cognitive relation in view of the dualistic ontology advocated by the system.

5.3.1.1. The epistemological subject

Sāṅkhyā maintains that experience presupposes a conscious principle on the one hand, and a material principle on the other. The process whereby the system arrives at the underlying principle of the material universe and the nature of that principle has already been stated. Sāṅkhyā justifies the positing of a conscious principle on various grounds. It is contended that experience presupposes an experiencer and more specifically, the tendency towards the achievement
of liberation observed in the world implies a conscious principle striving towards a goal. A conscious principle, it is also argued, is presupposed by the material principle as well. It is maintained that prakṛti, being unconscious, requires a conscious controlling principle to direct its operations. Further, since all composite objects are generally found to be for another's use, Sāṅkhya holds that a conscious principle has to be admitted as the enjoyer of these objects. Sāṅkhya, therefore, posits puruṣa a conscious entity, as a necessary counterpart to prakṛti, the material principle.

It is necessary to understand the difference between the self of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the puruṣa of Sāṅkhya. The self, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, is a substance, which the consciousness as one of the attributes. The puruṣa of Sāṅkhya cannot be interpreted in substantive terms at all, since it is by definition non-substantive. Sāṅkhya holds that the nature of puruṣa is just the opposite of prakṛti. Puruṣa is said to be without the three attributes, non-productive, non-objective and sentient. In the context of the Sāṅkhya description of puruṣa, consciousness cannot be described as an attribute or action of any other entity. It is an independent non-material principle. Sāṅkhya advocates a plurality of puruṣas on various grounds like the non-simultaneity of activity, the possibility of birth and death, etc.
5.3.1.2. The object of cognition

The material dimension of experience is held to be independent of the experiencer. Elucidating the similarities between the manifest and unmanifest levels of prakṛti, Kārikā describes it as objective (viṣṇyaḥ). Commenting on this, Vācaspati Mīśra points out that this is intended to establish that the object apprehended is external to the apprehension. And such a position is suggested by the public nature of the apprehension. The objects of the manifest world are apprehended simultaneously by a number of persons. It may, therefore, be said that the existential independence of both the terms involved in the cognitive relation is assumed as a necessary presupposition of any experience by Sāṅkhya.

5.3.2. Cognitive process

It is necessary to examine the conditions under which cognitive relation occurs under the Sāṅkhya scheme. Sāṅkhya describes puruṣa not only as a sentient entity, but also a 'witness' and 'seer'. Specifying the conditions under which puruṣa may be described as a witness, Vācaspati Mīśra says, "One can be 'seer' and one can be 'witness' only when the things have been seen to him, i.e., when prakṛti exhibits its products before him." This does not, however, mean that puruṣa can be designated as an epistemological subject. The problems involved in attributing cognitive agency to
purusa become evident when we examine the views of Sāṅkhya regarding the conditions under which it is meaningful to speak of experience.

Sāṅkhya recognises three means of knowledge, viz., perception, inference and verbal testimony. Sāṅkhya adds five organs of action to the six sense organs postulated by Nyāya-Śīla-sūtra. Sāṅkhya holds that the senses are not constitutive of the physical elements, but the senses as well as the substances are derivatives of the same principle shankāra. The Sāṅkhya description of the evolution of the prakṛti indicates that both vehicles of experience and the objects of experience are derived from the same root cause, prakṛti. It may be said that they are ontologically of the same nature in the ultimate sense.

5.3.2.1. Perception

Perception is defined as definite cognition of particular objects through the contact of the senses. The process is more explicitly described by Kapila who defines perception as the cognition which takes the form of the object through being related to it. Elucidating the same, Vijñānabhikṣu states that it is the budhi that gets modified in accordance with the form of the object to which it related.
The different stages of perceptual process are described by Vācaspati Miśra as follows: The external organs, having perceived an object, present it to the mind, which observes it and presents it to the 'I' principle which delivers it to buddhi. It is through the modifications of buddhi that puruṣa cognises both the objects of the external world and the internal states. 87

The role of buddhi in the Śākhya scheme is broadly similar to that of manas in Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika as both represent the terminating point of the perceptual process. But, buddhi as conceivably by the Śākhya, is not a passive principle, but is endowed with a certain amount of self-activity. Differential potentiality is attributed to the buddhis of different individuals by Śākhya and each is held to be the abode of innumerable impressions acquired through experience during the beginningless past. Consequently each buddhi has its distinctive features and different individuals may not, therefore, be affected in the same manner by the same object. As a result, in the words of Kiriyantha, "Though one, the object becomes severally as it were, in the act of being apprehended on account of the bias of individual perceivers." 88 Śākhya does not maintain that the activity of buddhi adds any new feature to the object. According to Sankhya, the role of buddhi is only selective revealing only part of what is given. This implies that the external object is never completely known. 89
5.3.2.2. Types of perceptual contact

The six types of perceptual contact postulated by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikā are not admitted by Sāṅkhya. 90

5.3.2.3. Types of perception

Sāṅkhya also distinguishes between two stages of perception, viz., the indeterminate and determinate. According to Vaiśeṣikādhyāya, indeterminate perception is the first act of immediate cognition, which apprehends the object devoid of the relationship between the qualified and the qualifications. Determinate perception refers to the definite apprehension of an object with its generic character specified characteristics, etc. Vaiśeṣikādhyāya holds that the external senses are the organs of indeterminate perception and reveal the object as merely 'this'. The assimilation and description involved in determinate perception are the functions of manas. 91

Vijñanasāstra admits the distinction between indeterminate and determinate perception. But he contends that both indeterminate and determinate perception are due to the operation of external senses only. 92

5.3.3. Cognition

The product of the contact of the subject with the object, viz., cognition can be described as material in nature. It denotes the modifications of buddhi. In the context
of the Sākhyya theory of evolution, buddhi is a neutral principle that accounts for both the mental and non-mental dimensions of experience. But buddhi is not the sufficient condition for experience. Experience occurs only when buddhi is combined with another necessary principle, viz., the sentient principle, puruṣa. So, cognition, according to Sākhyya, is a temporal event which occurs in certain circumstances. As Vaitra remarks, "Empirical knowing according to Sākhyya is a composite effect, a transformation of prāṇānti shining by the light of puruṣa who is pure intelligence." 33

8.3.3.1. Cognition and the subject

A specific description of the Sākhyya view regarding the relation between cognition and the subject of cognition is difficult in view of the Sākhyya observations regarding the nature of the conscious principle, puruṣa. Sākhyya described puruṣa not only as a 'witness' and 'seer' but also as 'neutral' and non-deer'. Commenting on these adjectives, Viśvesaṭi hiṣa points out that puruṣa is neutral because as an entity devoid of the three attributes, he is free from the feelings of pleasure, pain, etc. Similarly, the non-deership of puruṣa is implied by his discriminative and non-productive nature. 34 Sākhyya, however, recognises that such a conception of puruṣa fails to explain empirical experience wherein sentience and activity are found to co-exist in the same person. Sākhyya maintains that it is only due to the conjunction of puruṣa
with prakṛti that puruṣa who is really neutral, appears to be active, while activity really belongs to prakṛti. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the views of Sāṅkhya thinkers regarding the nature of conjoining of the two ontological entities that accounts for empirical experience.

The conditions under which puruṣa, apparently experiences the modifications of buddhi have been elucidated differently by Vācaspati Mīra and Vījñānabhaṭṭa. Vācaspati Mīra holds that there can be no real conjunction (sammāyoga) between puruṣa or prakṛti since both are omnipresent. Further, admission of such a conjunction would imply the possibility of puruṣa undergoing modifications, thereby contradicting the neutral and inactive nature of puruṣa. He maintains that due to proximity (samādhi) between prakṛti and puruṣa, the latter gets reflected in the states of buddhi with the result that the modifications of buddhi, which are really unconscious appear to be conscious. According to Vācaspati Mīra, this does not imply any spatial and temporal contact between puruṣa and buddhi. It only relies a special kind of capability (yogavātā) on the part of puruṣa to enlighten the modifications of buddhi, producing thereby an apparent sense of unity and identity.

The neutral and indifferent nature of puruṣa, Vācaspati Mīra argues, is not contradicted by his appearing as a cogniser of the states of buddhi.
Vigānabhikṣu objects to the views advanced by Vācaspati Misra on various grounds. He contends that attributing a potentiality to illumine the modifications of āthathā to puruṣa would imply the permanency of the false sense of identity and unity. Further, the relation posited by Vācaspati Misra is only between the image or reflection of puruṣa and buddhi and not between buddhi and the real puruṣa. Such a view makes buddhi, he argues, both the revealer and the revealed. Against Vācaspati's single-reflection theory, he therefore advocates a double reflection theory. According to him, buddhi reflecting the consciousness of puruṣa becomes intelligised, with the result that the vrittis of buddhi are reflected back to the puruṣa in the next stage. Puruṣa consequently appears to be the subject experiencing the objects revealed by the modifications of buddhi, since an intimate relation between buddhi and puruṣa is established through this double reflection. According to him, a real conjunction between puruṣa and prakṛti does not imply any modification on the part of puruṣa. Change, he holds, implies the creation of new qualities and no new quality is generated in puruṣa as a result of its union with buddhi through reflection.

Attempts have been made by some recent scholars to resolve the problem of relating puruṣa with the modifications of buddhi, as it is contended that reflection between two absolutely heterogenous objects is not possible. In this
The context Sinha mentions that the dualism of Śāṅkhya is modified by the admission of different grades of existence amongst modifications of prakṛti, the highest of which is buddhi. It is contended that buddhi, being the intermediary term, shares the nature of both puruṣa and prakṛti. It is transparent like puruṣa and unconscious like prakṛti, thereby providing for the possibility of contact between the two. A similar view is advocated by Panjé also. Commenting on these views, Saxena points out that even the subtlest and the finest evolute of prakṛti is after all prakṛti and cannot share the nature of puruṣa. He remarks, "If 'puruṣa' and 'prakṛti' meet in 'Sūtra' as is supposed above, the dualism of Śāṅkhya-yoga is virtually given up." The observations of Saxena bring out the serious nature of the problem generated by the dualistic position advocated by Śāṅkhya. This difficulty which is true of all dualistic ontologies, acquires a special significance in the context of the Śāṅkhya description of puruṣa as 'neutral' and 'inactive'.

The foregoing observations suggest it is not meaningful to talk of the relation between cognition and the subject in Śāṅkhya, because, there is no real relation between cognition and puruṣa. It may, however, be said that puruṣa is the necessary condition for origination of cognitive experience as it is only due to the reflection of puruṣa that the modifications of buddhi attain the status of the apprehended entities.
5.3.3.2. Cognition and the object

According to Sāṁkhya the process resulting in the experience of the objects terminates in the modifications of buddhi. It may be contended, therefore, that Sāṁkhya advocates some form of representational theory of perception. But, according to Sāṁkhya, in an ultimate sense, the cognitive apparatus, cognitive experience and the objects of cognition, fall under the same category of reality viz., prakṛti. Both the apparatus and the objects of experience represent only different stages of evolution. There is no ontological difference between the modifications of buddhi revealing the objects and the objects revealed thereby. Differential epistemological status is assigned to different evolves only in terms of the variations in their role in the epistemological process. But, the process, as described by Sāṁkhya does not imply any possibility of the object being misrepresented.

But gap between the subject and object implied by realistic epistemology remains unbridged in Sāṁkhya in a fundamental sense, as there is no real connection between the subject and the object. At the level of experience, however, this gap is transcended in that both the apparatus of cognition and the objects of cognition are said to be constituted of the same material principle.
5.3.3.3. Erroneous cognition

Sāṅkhya recognises the distinction between valid and invalid cognitions. It is maintained that both validity and invalidity of cognition are intrinsic to the cognition itself and are also ascertained along with the cognition itself. While it is possible to admit the self-evident nature of the validity of cognitions, the Sāṅkhya view that the invalidity is also self-evident is open to criticism. The Sāṅkhya theory of error itself contradicts this view.

Unlike the Nyāya school contends that the object of illusory cognition is also a real existent, Sāṅkhya recognises that erroneous cognition involves both real and unreal elements. Sāṅkhya advocates the theory of śācāsatkhyāti. The objects of the external world are held to be apprehended through the modifications of buddhi. According to Sāṅkhya in the case of the shell-silver illusion, buddhi falsely identifies the 'shell' which is given with the 'silver' which is not given and becomes modified as 'silver' and is cognised as such by the subject. A distinction is, therefore, made between the object (viśeyas) of knowledge and the thing (vyāstas) that is actually present and in the case of false knowledge the object is said to be different from the thing. As Roy puts it, erroneous cognition in Sāṅkhya, therefore, is neither of the real, nor of the unreal only, but is grounded in the perception of both --
sat and asat, or more precisely, asat in sat.\textsuperscript{102} Erroneous cognition arises when buddhi fails to distinguish between the real and the unreal.

Sānkhyā explains the occurrence of erroneous experiences in terms of the difference in the potentiality of the buddhi element of different individuals. According to Hiriyanna, "it is this power of attending with the object which the buddhi possesses that leads to error."\textsuperscript{103} According to this explanation, erroneous cognition is a product of a process of illusion in that there is a selective perception of what is given, resulting in the object not being cognised in its totality, thereby cognised wrongly. Sublating cognition reveals that what was cognised earlier was not the whole of the fact. Therefore, according to Sānkhyā, that there is no subjective element in error.

Later Sānkhyā, however, offers a theory which introduces a subjective element as a necessary constituent of erroneous experience. According to Vijnānabhairava, in the shell-silver illusion, it is not the 'shell' alone that is given, but the 'silver' also, as a mode of buddhi, through the revival of an old perception caused by the perception of the lustre of the shell. The illusion is due to a confusion between the 'shell' which is actually given and 'silver' which is given in the form of a buddhi-vṛtti,\textsuperscript{104} or in the words of
Kiriyanna, "between what is presented and what is represented,"\(^{106}\) A comparison between the earlier and later accounts of erroneous cognition, however, reveals that Vijñānavilāsa explicitly states what is implicitly admitted by the earlier theory. It may, therefore, be said that any account of erroneous cognition necessarily involves subjective factors in some form or another.

The Śākhyā theory of error has been presented in detail, in error constitutes the foundation on which the whole structure of empirical experience has been constructed by Śākhyā. As Mādhyamik state, strictly speaking neither the puruṣa, by himself nor buddhi by itself, constitutes the subject. Experience becomes possible only when there is a failure to recognise the distinction between the two. This failure which is a pre-condition of experience itself is termed aviveka or non-discrimination.\(^{106}\) This lack of discrimination which may be termed as 'metaphysical error', initiates all experience.

All knowledge is erroneous in the sense that it originates in this initial error. But a distinction has to be made between the initial error and error at the level of empirical experience. Error in the case of the initial non-discrimination, refers to the failure on the part of puruṣa to distinguish between himself and the vṛttis of buddhi and does not imply anything regarding the vṛttis of buddhi. At the level of empirical experience, it is the failure to distinguish between a subjective element and the external existent.
Sublating cognition in the latter case reveals the real nature of the object, whereas in the case of the metaphysical error, it refers to a complete knowledge or the realisation on the part of purusa that he is distinct from the modifications of buddhi.

An important question that needs to be examined relates to the possibility of the Sākhya theory being interpreted as suggesting epistemo logical idealism, since strictly speaking the objects of the world are not apprehended directly. Interpreting the vṛttis of buddhi as a medium would result in the theory being interpreted as subjective idealism. But, Sākhya being realistic postulates that knowledge necessarily points to some object outside it and, therefore, cannot be described as subjective idealism.

3.4. VISISTĀDVAITA ON COGNITIVE RELATION

3.4.1. The terms involved in cognitive relation

Visistādvaita maintains that cognitive experience is three-dimensional in nature. Commenting on the root jñā generally used to denote cognitive experience, Rāmānuja points out that it refers to a particular mental activity which is relative to an object and belongs to a subject. Once the possibility of knowledge is granted, the reality of the subject and the object of knowledge follows necessarily from this initial presupposition. As Bhāskarachārya puts it, "The
knowing principle or the fact of knowing cannot be explained
any and the known entity be considered real.108

5.1.1.4. The epistemological subject

The subject, whose existence is presupposed in any
experience in one of the substance recognised by Viśiṣṭādvaita
viz., the self. Like the Nyāya, the Viśiṣṭādvaita offers
a number of arguments to establish the existence of a self,
distinct from the body, senses, mind, etc. It is contended
that experiences like, 'This is my body,' 'I see with my eyes'
or 'I know,' etc., establish the reality of self as a distinct
substance.109 Detailed descriptions of the self as metaphys-
cial entity are found in Viśiṣṭādvaita literature. It is
said to be atomic in size, different for each body and eternal
in nature.110 Here, we are concerned only with those features
which have a direct bearing on the nature of the self as the
subject of experience.

The primary characteristic of an epistemological subject
is the potentiality of consciousness or in other words, sentience
or consciousness. Viśiṣṭādvaita agrees with the Nyāya-
Vaiśeṣika, viz. that the subject of experience is a substance.
But Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika maintains that consciousness, the pre-
requisite of experience, is a contingent attribute of the
self on the ground that the existence of consciousness can
be established only on the basis of experience which is
contingent in nature. Vidyatva, on the other hand, holds that consciousness is a permanent attribute of the self.\textsuperscript{111} Vidyatva admits that there are breaks in consciousness, during unconscious states, sleep, etc. This, however, does not imply the contingent nature of consciousness itself. According to Vidyatva, an essential attribute need not manifest itself all the time, as there are attributes which are permanently associated with an entity but which get manifested only occasionally.\textsuperscript{112}

1.4.1.2. The object of cognition

Consistent with its realistic orientation, Vidyatva affirms the reality and existential independence of the objects of cognition. Various arguments advanced by the idealist thinkers justifying the attribution of unreality to the empirical world are countered by Vidyatva.\textsuperscript{113} The reality of the world is asserted both on empirical and scriptural grounds.

1.4.2. Cognitive process

Vidyatva also admits three means of knowledge, viz., perception, inference, and verbal testimony.\textsuperscript{114}

1.4.2.1. Perception

Perceptual knowledge is defined as immediate knowledge by Vidyatva also.\textsuperscript{115}
The apparatus involved in the experience of external object is broadly similar to that of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. But, in addition to the sense organs and manas, Visistādvaita recognises an additional principle as one of the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. Visistādvaita makes a distinction between consciousness as constituting the essential nature of the self in a substantive sense, the dhammrajñāna, and consciousness relating to the cognition of other objects, the dhammabhūtajñāna. Dhammabhūtajñāna is described as an unconscious, but non-material substance, all pervasive, but subject to contraction and expansion. It is defined as both a substance and an attribute. As an entity capable of undergoing modifications, it is a substance, but as a property of the self it is an attribute.

According to Visistādvaita, the perceptual process involves the joining of the self (i.e., the dhammabhūtajñāna aspect as self) with the manas, manas with the senses, and the senses with the object, the process terminating with dhammabhūtajñāna assuming the form of the object. The object is then cognised by the self. Further, Visistādvaita holds that all mental states also represent modifications of dhammabhūtajñāna.

In view of the distinctive nature of dhammabhūtajñāna, it is necessary to examine its epistemological implications. According to Visistādvaita, both in its substantive and
attributive aspects, has the property of self-luminosity in the sense that it has the capacity to reveal itself and does not need any other entity like the objects that are cognised. But the attributive consciousness is objective in orientation, in that it reveals the objects, whereas the substantive consciousness has the capacity of inwardness or subjectivity. Further, dharmaabhūtajñāna is not aware of itself like dharma-jñāna. As P.T.Srinivasachari puts it, it can reveal itself and the objects, but is only self-revealing and not self-realised like the Atman.

The notion of dharmaabhūtajñāna, however, appears to be self-contradictory in that it combines the self-revealing nature of consciousness with properties that are generally associated with material entities. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the possible reasons for such a conceptualisation on the part of the Viśiṣṭādvaita. In this connection, Viriyamā remarks, "It is, however, difficult to see the reason for postulating two kinds of jñāna, except it be the desire to make the spirit in itself changeless and thus harmonise the doctrine with the teachings of Upaniṣads, whose whole weight, as Śākara is never tired of insisting, is in favour of its constancy (svākṣariyatva)."

These observations suggest that the distinction between the subjective and the objective dimensions of consciousness is intended to accommodate the persistent as well as the
fluctuating aspects of experience in a consistent framework. More significantly, the fact that attributive consciousness which is concerned with the apprehension of entities that can be classed under the category of non-self is described as all-pervasive, implies the reality and permanence of both the subject and the objects of experience, and reiterates the realistic approach of Visistadvaita.

5.4.2.2. Types of perceputual contact

Visistadvaita does not accept the different kinds of perceptual contact formulated by Nyaya-Vaiseshika. It is maintained that a substance is perceived through samyoga while the contact involved in the case of other entities is samyuktanayata.

5.4.2.3. Types of perception

Visistadvaita also recognizes two stages, in perception, and uses the Nyaya-Vaiseshika terminology to distinguish between the two. According to Advaita, however, the object known through both the stages is a differentiated one. Indeterminate perception refers to the apprehension of an object belonging to a particular class for the first time. Determinate perception, on the other hand, refers to the apprehension of the second and third entities belonging to the same class. The object apprehended in both stages is a qualified entity. The only difference between the two stages
5.4.3.3. Erroneous cognition

\textit{Vaiśeṣika} holds that the validity or invalidity of a cognition is intrinsic to the cognition itself. A distinctive feature of \textit{Vaiśeṣika} is the denial of cognitions being invalid in a real sense.\textsuperscript{126} In the context of the realistic approach adopted by the system, a cognition is valid when it corresponds with the object cognised, and invalid or erroneous when the object is misrepresented. According to \textit{Vaiśeṣika}, all cognitions correspond with reality.\textsuperscript{129} The invalidity of a cognition refers only to its inadequacy to lead to successful entity. Erroneousness, in other words, connotes only failure to lead to successful activity.\textsuperscript{130}

\textit{Vaiśeṣika} attempts to explain such failures without denying the \textit{pāth labhī} theory. The \textit{Vaiśeṣika} doctrine of quintuplication (\textit{pancika\textsuperscript{ra}p\textsuperscript{ra}}) is made use of in this connection. \textit{Vaiśeṣika} maintains that the material world has been created by the intertwining of the basic elements like fire, water, earth, etc., on the basis of scriptural tants. Therefore, all the elements are to be found in each entity. However, when a particular element predominates in an object, it possesses more qualities of that element and serves practical needs accordingly.\textsuperscript{131} In the case of shell-silver illusion, this implies that the shell contains the element of silver also. But the content of silver is so limited that it cannot serve any practical purpose. According to
Visishtādvaita, it is the partial identity between the two entities that is responsible for the similarity which underlies the apprehension of shell as silver. And it should be noted that the entity perceived is present in an objective sense. Other kinds of visual illusions like snake-rope illusion, double moon, mirage, etc., are all interpreted as real cognitions. Hiriyanna remarks, "Pāṇini justifies his view of satkāra in such cases by pointing to what is a fundamental tenet of his system viz., the unity of the physical and the structural affinity that is discoverable among all things that belong to it." As Anima Sen Gupta points out, according to this theory, logically, ontologically and psychologically, there is a difference between valid and erroneous cognitions. Difference lies only in pragmatic

The experience of erroneous cognitions, therefore, does not contradict the objectivity attributed to cognitions in general by Visishtādvaita. Erroneous cognitions only imply that all that is objective is not apprehended. In the words of Hiriyanna, "The fact is that while satkāra postulates that only what is given is known, it does not admit that all that is given is known." Such a view also suggests that, according to Visishtādvaita, there may be elements of omission even in true cognitions, so for instance, when shell is perceived as shell, the silver element is ignored.
5.5. DVAITA ON COGNITIVE RELATION

5.5.1. The terms involved in cognitive relation

Dvaita, in line with the other three systems, holds that cognitive relation presupposes the subject and the object as distinct constituents. The nature of the ontology advocated by Dvaita presented earlier reveals that such a distinction is made at the metaphysical level also.

5.5.1.1. The epistemological subject

The subject of experience is one of the substances recognised by Dvaita, viz., the self. Like the Viśistādvaitins but unlike the Naiyāyikas, the Dvaitins also hold that consciousness is the primary requisite of the subject, is an essential characteristic of this substance. Self is said to be atomic in nature and plural in number. 137

5.5.1.2. The object of cognition

A study of the observations of Dvaita regarding the metaphysical relations reveals that Dvaita is equally emphatic about the reality and existential independence of the material world. Dvaita writers have elaborately countered the various arguments offered by Advaita in support of their view that the empirical world is ultimately unreal. 138 The Dvaitins hold that the reality of the objective world is
established by experience itself and the same is reinforced by scriptural statements also.\textsuperscript{139} It is contended that the cognitive process reveals the world as it is, and this experience has not been subsequently sublated.\textsuperscript{140}

5.5.2. Cognitive process

Dvaita holds that perception, inference and verbal testimony are the three means of knowledge.\textsuperscript{141}

5.5.2.1. Perception

Perception is defined as immediate cognition produced through contact between sense organs and the object.\textsuperscript{142}

The Dvaita view regarding the apparatus involved in the generation of cognitive experience is similar to that of Viśistadvaita in broad sense. The role attributed to the external sensor and manas is similar in both the systems. Like Viśistadvaita, it also posits an additional entity as a necessary element in explaining cognitive experience. The entity posited, however, is of a different nature. Dvaita introduces a seventh sense, viz., sākṣi and describes it as a svarupendriya.\textsuperscript{143} Though defined as a sense, sākṣi, as conceived by Dvaita, seems to denote the faculty of knowing of the self. As Ramanujacharīya remarks, "The sākṣin is not an entity apart from the self. It is the self's own permanent quality or sentiment."\textsuperscript{144} Dvaita seems to hold that
consciousness, a permanent attribute of the self, can be distinguished from the self. Such a differentiation between the substance and its attribute is possible, according to Dvaita, due to the operation of visesa.

Dvaita makes a distinction between vrtti-jñāna and sākṣajñāna. Vrtti-jñāna refers to the cognition produced through the operation of the senses. These are cognised by sākṣa indirectly, through the modifications of the manas.

These are distinguished from the entities such as self, manas, the different states of manas, time, unmanifest ēkaśa, etc., which are cognised by sākṣa directly. This distinction suggests that Dvaita recognises the difference between cognitions that are intuitive in nature from those that require the reduction of sense sense.

§ 5.2.2. Types of perceptual contact

Dvaita does not accept the types of contact formulated by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

§ 5.2.3. Types of perception

Dvaita holds that the object revealed through perceptual contact is always determinate and differentiated in nature, and denies the possibility of non-relational knowledge posited by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Perceptual experience is always nirvikalpaka in nature. Unlike Viśistadvaita which re-interprets the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika distinction between nirvikalpaka
and svākālpāka to suit its views regarding the relation between substance and attribute, Dvaita affirms the logical implications of its metaphysical position explicitly, and denies the possibility of cognition revealing any thing but a determinate entity.

5.3.3. Cognition

5.3.3.1. Cognition and the subject

Cognition, according to Dvaita, is an experience generated in the subject when it comes into contact with the object and is a quality of the subject. Dvaita admits that though consciousness is a permanent quality of the self specific cognitive acts are intermittent and transitory. Dvaita distinguishes between sākṣejñāna and vṛttijñāna, the cognitions produced through the operation of manas, sense organs, etc. The cognitions produced through the operation of manas and sense organs are transitory. But sākṣi being a svarūpāntara, sākṣijñāna is permanent.

Cognition is held to be self revelatory by Dvaita. Dvaita holds that sākṣi encompasses both cognition and the object cognized thereby simultaneously.

5.3.3.2. Cognition and the object

The Dvaita definition the object also reveals the realistic orientation of the system. Object is defined as that which determines the kind of cognitive experience generated
in the subject when the subject comes into contact with it, without in any way being affected by it. The relation between the subject and object, therefore, is external. It is described as **visaya-visayabhāva**, the relation between the revealer and the revealed.

**6.5.3.3. Erroneous cognition**

Dvaita recognises the distinction between valid and invalid cognitions. In the context of the distinction between sākṣī-jñāna and vṛtti-jñāna stated earlier, the problem of validity or invalidity of cognitions is meaningful only with reference to the objects cognised through vṛtti-jñāna. Dvaita holds that objects directly cognised through sākṣī are by nature valid and known as such. Dvaita advocates the intrinsic view regarding generation as well as ascertainment of validity.

Dvaita, however, admits the possibility of some cognitions being erroneous. The erroneous nature of cognitions is generated externally and is also ascertained externally by their failure to lead to successful activity. The intuitive faculty of sākṣī, has no role here except that of realising the erroneous nature of these cognitions.

Such a view may appear to contradict the basic realism the advocate of vṛtti-system Dvaita defines real as anything that is not superimposed, thereby categorising a wide range of
phenomenon as real. Dvaita, however, admits that certain cognitions fail to reveal the objects as they are. Error has been defined as the conscious certitude that a thing exists, just where as a matter of fact it does not exist. More explicitly, it is defined as "involving the apprehension of the non-existent as existent or existent as non-existent or as different from what it is." Dvaita, therefore, defines the illusory object as unreal. It maintains that the ontological status of the illusory object is to be determined in terms of the subsequent cognition which contradicts the earlier experience. In the case of shell-silver illusion, it is in the form that 'there is no shell there and only a non-existent silver has appeared to exist.' Therefore, the status of the object of illusion, it is argued, is absolute unreality.

Dvaita position is similar to that of Śāṅkhya. Dvaita, while admitting the role of previous experience of silver in the generation of illusory experience, denies the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view that the silver perceived in illusory experience is an existent entity. According to Dvaita experience reveals not only existent entities but non-existents also. Dvaita argues elaborately to establish the possibility of the cognition of non-existence as a necessary condition to distinguish between the cognition of real and unreal entities. It is maintained that only such a position would explain the apprehension of silver in shell in the shell-silver illusion.
This does not imply that Dvaita advocates the aṣṭākhyāṭi theory of the Buddhist. While denying the non-existence of silver, Dvaita affirms the existence of the shell. According to Vaiśeṣika, the substrate and the similarity between substrate and the object of illusory cognition are the two necessary ingredients of illusory experience.¹⁶⁰ The ontological status of both the silver and the shell is determined by the sublating cognition which reveals the unreality of silver and the reality of the shell. It is pointed out that the sublating cognition reveals the unreality of the silver and the erroneous nature of its identification with the shell. The Dvaita theory which defines error as the apprehension of an existent thing as other than what it is, is also designated as anyathākhyāṭi. But in view of the unreality attributed to the super imposed entity, it is different from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory and hence, designated as abhinava-anyathākhyāṭi.¹⁶¹

Dvaita recognizes the possibility of sense experience being untrue, but draws attention to the fact that this happens occasionally under clearly defined conditions. As Ramanātha remarks, "The Dvaita theory of error seeks to maintain the balance between the theories which enhance error to the level of truth and the theories which reduce truth to the level of error. It maintains a clear distinction between truth and error."¹⁶²
5.6. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

5.6.1. The terms involved in cognitive relation

The primary distinction implied by cognitive relation is the subject-object distinction. All the four systems studied here emphasise the reality and existential independence of both the subject and object of experience. Each system, however, delineates the nature and functioning of these terms differently.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita hold that the subject of experience is ontologically similar to the object apprehended by it. The self, the subject, is described as a substance by all the systems. Consciousness is defined as an attribute requiring a distinct entity as its substratum by all the three systems. But Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika defines it as a contingent attribute of the self, while Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita hold that it is an essential attribute of the self. Śāṅkhyā, diverging from this general trend, maintains that consciousness is not an attribute, but an independent principle unlike matter by definition.

An analysis of the subjective aspect of experience reveals that it is a complex phenomenon involving static as well as dynamic dimensions. The static element is represented by the persisting sense of identity that characterises the experience of the subject, while the dynamic dimension is
evident in the contingent and variable nature of the experience it undergoes. This two-dimensional nature of consciousness has been recognised by all the four systems. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, while recognising the need for a permanent entity as the underlying substratum, emphasises only the contingent dimension of experience. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds that consciousness is a contingent attribute of the substance, self. Since the presence of consciousness is manifest only at the time of cognitive experience, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika contends there is no empirical justification to hold that it is an essential attribute of the self. Visistāvaita and Svaite maintain that consciousness is an essential attribute of the self. But Visistāvaita distinguishes between the self-conscious dimension of consciousness and the unconscious dimension concerned with the apprehension of objects. Similarly, Svaite distinguishes the self (the cogniser) from sākṣi defined as its cognising ability. The Sākhyā solution is more radical in nature. Sākhyā denies any real connection between the eternal conscious principle puruṣa and the variable contingent modifications of budhi, the evolute of prakṛti. However, the attempts made by the system to account for their combination at the empirical level reveals an awareness of their inseparability at the empirical level.

All the four systems hold that the material dimension of experience is epistemologically and existentially independent
of the subject. A study of the views regarding the objects of empirical experience reveals that though they are held to be existentially independent of experience, ontological permanence is not attributed to them. The reluctance to attribute permanence may be due to the fact that empirical phenomena are subject to continuous change and appear to be transitory. However, the dynamism and transitoriness of the empirical objects, it is argued, do not deny their essential independence. It is contended that the material world, as experienced by the subject, is a manifestation of a certain underlying permanent principles which are eternal in nature. The underlying principle, however, is conceived differently by different systems. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, trying to retain the diversity and plurality even at the ultimate level advocates the atomic theory. Śāṅkhyā Viśistādīvaita or Dvaita asserts a unitary principle, prakṛti, as the underlying material entity. The internal dynamism that characterizes prakṛti accounts for the diversity at the manifest level. In spite of these variations, all the systems maintain that the objective dimension of experience is different from the conscious dimension and is existentially independent of it.

5.6.2. Cognitive Process

Regarding the process involved in the apprehension of objects, all the systems admit the distinction between the awareness of states that are purely subjective and of objects that are external to the experience. It is contended that
there is a need for a distinctive sense organ to account for the awareness of purely subjective states and manas is posited as the sense accounting for the awareness of internal states. It also functions as a link between the subject and the sense organs, and plays a primary role in the perceptual process.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, however, starts with the introduction of manas, and manas is not only the link, but also the terminating point of the perceptual process, the objects of the world being apprehended by the self through the modifications of manas.

Sāṅkhya holds that it is buddhi, the primary evolute of prakṛti, that reveals the objects to purusha, though the importance of manas in the generation of cognition is recognised. Viśistādhyai also recognises the role of manas in the perceptual process, but holds that the objects are apprehended not through the nature of manas, but through the modifications of the dharma-bhutaśajña aspect of the subject’s consciousness. On similar lines, Dvaita also defines the cognising ability of the self as a distinct sense organ, though it is by nature distinct from other sense organs.

Some variations are found in the nature and number of sense organs involved in the perceptual process. But all of them agree that the external sense organs contribute to the cognition of their objects by coming into direct contact with them. They all are said to be pratyakṣa in their functioning. It may be contended that this account of the operation of
sense-organs contradicts the views of modern science.

Barlingay, elucidating the reasons underlying the approach of
Indian systems, reports, "What perhaps they want to say is
that some kind of action is involved in the act of perceiving.
This action either accompanies perceiving or is part of it."

He further points out that it is necessary to remember that
words like 'touch' or 'doing' are used only figuratively.

It may be said that the Indian realistic systems transcend
the gap noted between the subject and the object not only
through their views regarding the subject, but establish an
ontological connection also. All the systems derive the
psycho-physical apparatus involved in the perceptual process
from the same material source that is said to underlie the
material objects in a different sense.

Regarding the kinds of contact involved in the perceptual
process, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika postulates six types of contact.
The other systems do not accept the classification and terminol-
ogy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

It is difficult to interpret the theory of sense-percep-
tion advocate by these systems in the presentative or
representative framework. The objects of the external world
are held to be apprehended by the subject through the modifi-
cations of one of the elements of the psycho-physical appara-
tus by all the systems. This function is performed by manas
in ñ̄yāya-Vaiṣeṣika and Dvaita by buddhi in Sākhya, and by
dharma-bhūta-jñāna in Viśistādvaïta. This does not imply that
these systems advocate a representative theory, since all of
them explicitly state that the objects are directly apprehended
by the subject. This is reinforced by the common nature of
the ontological base of both the medium and the objects per-
ceived with the help of the medium.

5.6.3. Cognition

Cognition, the product of the contact between the subject
and the object, has been defined as a quality of the subject by
ñ̄yāya-Vaiṣeṣika, Viśistādvaïta and Dvaita. Consistent with
the empiricist approach, ñ̄yāya-Vaiṣeṣika maintains that it is
a contingent quality, while both Viśistādvaïta and Dvaita
contend that it is a permanent quality. But it admits that
there are limitations to its manifestation at the empirical
level. According to Sākhya, it is an empirical event, which
cannot be said to characterise puruṣa in a real sense.

The self-revelatory nature of cognition has also been
examined by these systems. Excepting ñ̄yāya-Vaiṣeṣika who
holds that cognition is known through a subsequent act of
cognition, all the other three systems maintain that cognition
and the object of cognition are apprehended simultaneously.
Sākhya, Viśistādvaïta and Dvaita emphasise that the apprehension
of an object necessarily involves the apprehension of the
cognitive act that reveals it. The point of view advocated
by Nyāya-Vaśesika is also significant because, while appre-
hending the object, one does not apprehend the cognitive act
involved therein, and the distinction between the two is re-
vealed only through a subsequent introspective act.

All the systems hold that cognition generally reveals the
object without any distortion. But the distinction between
valid and invalid cognitions is admitted by all. Nyāya-
Vaisesika holds that the validity or invalidity a cognition
is produced by causes external to it, while the other systems
maintain that it is intrinsic to the cognition itself.
Similarly Nyāya-Vaisesika contends that the valid or invalid
nature of a particular cognition is also ascertained externally,
through its leading to successful activity or failure to do so.
The other three systems, however, hold that the validity of
cognition is self-evident. This view seems to be based on
the human predisposition to accept most experiences as true
until and unless proved otherwise. Bhatt says, "Our primary
attitude towards knowledge seems to be that of belief....
Our belief in the truth of our perception appears to be
instinctive while falsehood is a discovery that is made when
there is an experience of contradiction or practical dis-
appointment."
Regarding the criterion of certainty, Dvaita utilises the feeling of certainty associated with certain intuitive experiences as the determining principle in this regard. In a broad sense, all the systems consider the pragmatic test as the ultimate confirmatory criterion, because all, excepting Sāṅkhya admit that the invalid nature of certain cognitions are revealed through their pragmatic failure. The Sāṅkhya view that even invalidity is self-evident is contradicted by the admission by the system of the possibility of certain experiences turning out to be erroneous subsequently.

All the systems admit the possibility of certain cognition failing to lead to successful activity and attempts are made to account for such experiences in the framework of the position that cognition reveals the object as it is. The various theories offered in this regard, viz., the anyathākhyātī of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, satkhyātī of Viśistādvaita, and the sadagat-khyātī of Sāṅkhya and Dvaita concentrate on perceptual errors and are concerned with specifying the ontological status of the object of erroneous cognition.

But the primary issue that needs to be investigated in erroneous cognition is not the ontological status of the object of erroneous cognition. So far as experience and activity are concerned, it is the practical value and not the ontological status of the object that is relevant, and, in spite of the differences in their descriptions of the ontologic
status of the illusory object, all the systems agree that it fails to serve the practical needs.

Further, these systems ignore many relevant dimensions of erroneous experience. We have to recognise that shell does not always produce the silver illusion, nor is this illusion experienced even by the same individual at all times. We find that different objects function as the substrata of different illusions under varied conditions. Similarity between the two objects may be a necessary, but not the sufficient condition to generate illusion. Perception is not determined entirely by what is given in the external stimulus. Selectivity operates in all perceptual experiences and determines the perception as well as interpretation of what is presented. Any cognition, therefore, is a joint product of both the objective stimulus, and the subjective state of the individual. The theories of error advocated by these systems, recognise the role of the subjective element, as is revealed by their emphasis on the role of recollection in producing the erroneous cognition. But in view of their preoccupation with determining the ontological status of the object of erroneous cognition, the subjective dimensions of erroneous cognition are not explored in depth.
3.6.4. Realistic implications of the views of the Indian systems

The views of these systems regarding the various dimensions of the cognitive relation reveals that the basic postulates of epistemological realism are accepted by all. All the systems maintain that the cognitive relation presupposes two terms, the subject and object and advocate related realistic propositions like existential independence of the objects of perception, the cognitive process being a process of discovery, revealing the object as it is without any distortion. But the grounds on which these postulates are established vary from system to system.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika not only attributes existential independence to the objects of external world, but treats both the subject (the self) and the relation between the two (cognitive experience) also as objects, though the nature of objectivity attributed to them differs from that of the object. As Kurti puts it, "Though existentially knowledge and its object are two different entities, they do not differ in kind."16 The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of knowledge attempts to establish the reality of independence of all that is experienced including the experience and the experiencer.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika description of the process involved in the generation of cognition implies that the cognitive
relation is external in nature and does not modify either of the terms in any way. The objects are revealed to the subject without any distortion. The realistic implication of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position has been pointed out by Mohanty. Mohanty contends that the two theses (1) that knowledge is not self-referential and (2) that its form is in fact the form of the object, so that in reality knowledge is formless, jointly entail a realistic ontology.

The Sahāyya views regarding the nature of puruṣa and the conditions under which prakṛti becomes manifest and is apprehended by puruṣa have led to doubts being expressed regarding the realistic orientation of Sahāyya. But the Sahāyya theory of evolution only implies the transitory nature of the manifest world and not its unreality. While the manifest state of prakṛti is not permanent, prakṛti, the unmanifest root cause, is as real and eternal as the conscious principle, puruṣa. The realistic nature of Sahāyya can be denied only if it is contended that realiser requires that the objects of the world should be eternal existents in the form in which they are apprehended. But, if this proposition were to be admitted, realiser cannot be attributed to many other systems which attribute transitoriness to the empirical world.

It is, however, difficult to estimate the extent to which Sahāyya has been successful in establishing a realistic position. As Pātra points out, in one sense, neither of the two
metaphysical principles postulated by the system is an object of direct experience, but is presupposed by and in every experience. But we admit the reality of both the ultimate principles and grant the additional propositions advanced by the system to explain the possibility of epistemological processes, the process, as delineated by the system implies that the objects of cognition are independent of the subject.

The realistic interpretation of experience finds its logical culmination in Visistādvaīta which denies the possibility of any cognition failing to reveal the reality. Cognitions which fail to lead to successful activity are, according to Visistādvaīta, not erroneous, but only incomplete. Dvaita attempts to develop an epistemology in which all the dimensions of experience are accorded due recognition within the framework of the realistic postulates. This is evident in the Dvaita account of erroneous cognitions.

As pointed out earlier, erroneous cognitions constitute the primary objection against the realistic postulate that cognitive process is a process of discovery. A study of the theories of error advocated by these systems reveal that erroneous cognitions emphasize rather than deny the importance of objective element in cognition. As Chāttopādhyāya points out, there is a selectivity, a regularity involved in the cases of common illusions, which can be explained only by positing an element of objective coercion. Only a rope or shell can
be mistaken for a snake or silver respectively. He remarks, "There is thus something in the objective world, something actually present before you which dictates terms to the illusory or more precisely, to its specific form." Further, the sublating cognition, as pointed out by these systems, only denies the identity between the illusory object and the object presented and does not deny the reality of the presentative basis of erroneous experience. It may, therefore, be said that erroneous cognitions do not contradict but reinforce the realistic postulate of the reality and existential independence of the objective world.

5.6.4. Reasons underlying the differences in the views of different Indian systems

The primary postulates of realism like the ontological distinction between the subject and the object of cognition, the existential independence of the object of cognition, the cognitive process being a process of discovery, etc., are admitted by all the systems studied here. But we find some differences in the views of different systems regarding the process involved in perceptual apprehension, types perceptual contact, types of perception and various questions related to cognition like the validity or invalidity of cognition, the possibility of erroneous cognition, etc. The most significant difference, however, relates to the description of the nature of the epistemological subject offered by different systems.
The subject is a substance according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Dvaita and Īśāvāsa. But it is distinguished from other substances in terms of its distinctive feature, viz., sentence. Īśāvāsa defines it as a non-material conscious principle.

Both Viśistādvaita and Dvaita agree with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in that the ontological nature of the subject, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view that consciousness is a contingent attribute of the self is not admitted by them. Viśistādvaita and Dvaita hold that consciousness is an essential attribute of the self.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of self has been criticised by thinkers belonging to other schools as well as modern scholars. But Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view in this regard is consistent with its views regarding the substance-attribute relation. Substance and attributes are held to be ontologically distinct, though apprehended together in experience. Consequently, all the attributes are contingently associated with the substrata underlying them. Consciousness an attribute, is therefore, contingently associated with the self, its substratum. Chattopādhyāya offers an explanation of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view in terms of the general orientation of the system. He remarks, "This transient character of the really spiritual elements in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, understood along with its emphasis on the eternal reality of atoms, can, in modern terminology
only mean that in this view spirit is secondary as compared to matter."

The views advocated by Visishtādvaita and Advaita are also explainable on similar lines. Both the systems maintain that substance and attributes, though distinguishable, are not ontologically independent. Consequently, consciousness, the primary attribute of the self, is held to be permanently associated with it. Further, their reliance on scripture necessitates that the self be defined as essentially conscious in nature.

It is difficult to identify the reasons underlying the Sākhyā views regarding the subject. Sākhyā contends that consciousness is an irreducible non-material principle. But in the context of the Sākhyā description of the nature and functioning of the puruṣa, epistemological agency cannot be attributed to puruṣa, the only principle which has the potentiality to be the epistemological subject. Many epistemological issues remain unresolved in Sākhyā due to the absolute dualism between consciousness and matter postulated by the system at the metaphysical level.

The influence of metaphysics is evident in other aspects of epistemological analysis. The Nyāya-Vaiśesika classification of the types of perceptual contact is dependent upon the recognition of the category of saravēya. The other systems do not admit the Nyāya-Vaiśesika view as they do not admit
the samavaya category. In order to establish the view that the ultimate reality is essentially attributive and determinate in nature, Visistadvaita and Dvaita deny the possibility of indeterminate perception. The views of the different systems regarding the various aspects of cognition are also influenced by their views on related metaphysical issues.

The foregoing observations reveal the interdependent nature of the metaphysics and epistemology advocated by these systems. To also find that in terms of relative importance, epistemology presupposes metaphysics. This accounts for the variations in the analysis of cognitive relation offered by these systems, though all of them are realistic in orientation.

5.6.6. Western and Indian views - a comparative account

Advocacy of epistemological realism demands the resolution of certain problems. These include, the specification of the process whereby the gap between the subject and object is transcended during the cognitive act, and the reconciling of the view that cognition reveals the object without any distortion, with the causal theories of perception and the possibility of erroneous cognition.

The strategies adopted by Western and Indian realists in order to resolve these problems differ in an important respect. Both New Realism and Critical Realism attempt to counter the objections raised against the propositions of empiricist
epistemology, which underlie these objections. Consequently, the epistemological analysis offered by both fails to achieve this goal. The Indian systems studied here adopt a different approach. They contend that the gap posited between the subject and object is an artificial one. The admission of a distinction between the subject and the object, they argue, does not imply an ontological gap between the two. According to them the subject is, by definition, capable of transcending the gap and apprehend the object. It is contended that the subject's awareness of the object, does not negate the ontological independence of either. Further Nyāya-Vaśesika, Viśistādvaita and Īvaita include the subject and one of the objects of experience under the same category, viz., substance.

The importance of the problem posed by erroneous cognitions is recognised by both Western and Indian Realists. In order to reinforce the realistic postulate, New Realism attributes objective reality to the object of erroneous cognitions. Critical Realism posits a distinction between the datum and external object to account for the possibility of error. The Indian systems studied here also discuss the problem of error in detail and different theories are offered by different systems. But all the theories suggest that erroneous cognitions do not contradict but emphasise the objective determination and true nature of cognitions in general.