CHAPTER – I

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1. A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION OF RADHANATH PHUKAN

Radhanath Phukan is one of the contemporary philosophers of modern India, who came of a respectable Brahmin family of Assam. He was the son of Kripanath Phukan and Rukmini Devi. He was born on 15th June, 1875 at the town of Jorhat, Assam. He started his educational life at Sibsagar, a small town in Assam in 1881. In 1882, Phukan was admitted to the Government high school of Sibsagar. Phukan also studied in a Sanskrit Tol, which was run by Dinanath Bezbarua. He was a brilliant student and passed the Entrance examination in 1891, with scholarship. Then he took admission in Presidency College in Calcutta and studied there from 1891 to 1897. He passed the F.A. and B.A. examinations from this college in 1893 and 1895 respectively. During that time, Phukan also studied Sanskrit as one of the subjects. The first Assamese post graduate was Radhanath Phukan, who secured M.A. degree in Physics in 1897 from Presidency College. He also passed B.L. examination in 1898 from the then Ripan College (now Surendranath Benarjee College).

Phukan married Chandraprabha Devi, the daughter of Narayan Bezbarua of Jorhat in 1898. His first daughter was born in 1903.

Phukan began his service life in 1898. He started his working career as a lawyer in Jorhat. After that, he joined the government service as an E.A.C. in Guwahati in 1903. Because of his good service record he got promotion in this
government service very soon. In 1910, he joined as the Deputy superintendent of
dsensus. After that, he became an S.D.O. in Sunamganj and Habiganj sub-divisions of
Sylhet district (now in Bangladesh) from 1916 to 1917. In 1931 he retired from his
service as a district Judge and session Judge. After that he started his working life
as a lawyer in 1936. Phukan was also a tea planter. In 1937, he bought a tea grade
near Jorhat named Bahani which was then in a very bad condition and was incurring
huge losses. He started his life as a businessman and tea planter and made the garden
a profit making one by his intelligence and endeavour. He started living in the garden
itself and established his residence there. From 1937 to 1943 he lived in the Bahani
Tea Estate and successfully carried on his business.

Radhanath Phukan was not only a successful businessman and good judge,
his was also a social worker. He felt that he had some responsibility towards the
society as a whole and towards Assamese people in particular. Jagannath Barua,
another eminent Assamese who was the first B.A. of Upper Assam, inspired him to
work for the Assamese people. Jagannath Barua established Sārvajanika Sabhā in
1875. Through this society (sabhā) it was intended to carry on different activities
for safeguarding the cause of Assamese people. The main aim was to perform social
services. Radhanath Phukan was the personal secretary of Jagannath Barua and
supervised all works conducted by the sabhā. Phukan, actually, did all works of
Sārvajanika Sabhā.1 He was also attached with Asamiya Bhāsā Unnati Sadhini
Sabhā, which was established for the development of Assamese language and
literature. Radhanath Phukan became the joint secretary of Asamiya Bhāsā Unnati

1. Cf. Janmasatavāraśar Śraddhānījali, P. 17 as Quoted in Racanāvāli, (Introduction)
P. 15
Sadhini Sabha in 1895, together with Ramakanta Barkakati. He also performed the duty of the secretary of the famous A.S.L. club (an organisation of Assamese students) in Calcutta, of which Assamese students and other learned people were members. This club worked for the welfare of the Assamese students. Radhanath Phukan actively took part in the deliberations of the meetings of the sabha. In these meetings he debated strongly in support of Assamese language and Assamese people. Phukan's endeavour for the development of Assamese language is specially worth mentioning. He did his best for the uplift of his mother tongue. In this matter he was influenced by some other eminent Assamese scholars who were also working for the same cause residing in Calcutta. In his student life in Calcutta he came in close contact with Laksminath Bezbarua, Candrakumar Agarwalla and Hem Chandra Goswami. Their influence inspired him in this matter. He also came in contact with poet Durgeswar Sarma, Pandit Lakshmimath Sarma, Karmabir Nabin Ch. Bordoloi, B.A. Jagannath Barua, Yatindranath Goswami, Dhireswar Bhattacharyya, Acarya Manoranjan Sastri, Tulsi Narayan Sarma, Dr. Mukunda Madhav Sarma and others.

Phukan was also related with various social institutions of Jorhat till 1902. He was the President of the reception committee of the 23rd session of Assam Sāhitya Sabha. He was also involved in the drama movement of Assam. When he was staying in Golaghat and Jorhat, he made efforts for the improvement of theatre or Rangamanca (i.e. stage).2

His contribution on music and drama is also remarkable. Radhanath Phukan and Rabin Bordoloi were the joint authors of the first Assamese drama ‘Jaymati’ which depicted the patriotism of Jaymati Kuwari, the wife of Gadadhar Singha of

2. Ibid., Pp. 16-17.
Ahom kingdom. Radhanath wrote all the songs in this drama. He may be called the first composer of Assamese patriotic songs. He was also a singer and music-composer. He used to give tunes to his compositions. He also loved acting. He was an amateur actor. He acted in different dramas from his college life. When he was working as an advocate, he used to act in different plays in Jorhat Raṅgamañca.

Radhanath Phukan's life is an ideal one. He was successful in almost all his endeavours. After his retirement, Phukan became successful as a businessman being a tea-planter. He was also an ideal father. He proved to be an ideal father by living a disciplined life and making his sons good citizens by giving them good education. He was also an ideal husband. In his work Jamnāntar Rahasya, he has given a picture of his wife and dedicated it to his wife adding the line priyāyai svadhā (offering to my beloved).

Radhanath Phukan was a very righteous person. An example of his righteousness and honesty has been narrated by Saktinath Barua. When he was a Judge in Nagaon he gave death sentence to a certain convict. But afterwards he came to know that the person was not guilty and his judgement was wrong. In order to rectify his mistake he himself told the victim for asking pardon from the Governor. By his initiative the victim prayed for pardon from the Governor. Radhanath also himself approached the Governor and told him about his mistake and also pleaded for his pardon for the person from capital punishment. The Governor did as requested by him. He also remarked, "We have found such a honest judge who does not hesitate to admit his mistakes." Such was Radhanath's honesty and righteousness.

Radhanath Phukan was a religious person and was devoted to God. From

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3. Vide, Smṛtigrantha Radhanath Phukan Vedānta Vācaspāti, P. 4
his very childhood days he performed many religious rites and took part in different religious festivals. He tried to perform these rites strictly in accordance with the rules prescribed in the śāstras. He also believed that a person should visit places of pilgrimage in one’s lifetime. He went for pilgrimage thrice. In 1911, he visited some holy places for the first time. He again went for pilgrimage in 1934 and 1947-48.

Radhanath Phukan died on 23rd June in 1964.

Radhanath Phukan was a scientist as well as a philosopher, who minutely studied the different systems of Indian philosophy especially the Vedānta philosophy. For his scholarship and depth of knowledge, Nalbari Sanskrit Saṅjīvani Saṅha, gave him the title Vedānta Vācaspati in 1957. Noticing his religious mindedness and philosophical knowledge Viswanarayan Sastri called him Rṣikalpa Dārsānik.4 Radhanath’s knowledge in Indian philosophy and western science was commendable which prompted Yatindranath Goswami to call him Tattvadarśī (i.e. the knower of truth).5 Jorhat Saṅhya sabhā also addressed him as Tattvadarśī in the congratulation letter sent to Phukan in 1955 (dt. 4.12.55). Again, Ananda Chandra Barua, who was the poet of Bakulban called Phukan Rajarṣī because though he was a government employee yet he knew the true nature of Brahman (tattvajñāṇī), mediator of action (Karmayogi) and donor (tyāgi).

4. Vide, Janmasatavarsar Śraddhānjalī, P. 39 as Quoted in Racanāvalī, (Introduction) P. 13
5. Racanāvalī, P. 13 (Introduction)
6. Vide, Śraddhānjalī P. 97, as Quoted in Racanāvalī, P. 13 (Introduction)
7. Vide, Janmasatavarsar Śraddhānjalī, P. 48 as Quoted in Racanāvalī, P. 13 (Introduction)
The honour of *Raybahadur* was conferred on him by the British government in 1914. Radhanath Phukan was awarded honourable D. Lit degree by the Gauhati University in 1964.

Phukan contributed a lot to the field of Indian language, literature and philosophy by writing fundamental books with the explanation, word-meaning, self-analysis of the Sanskrit books both in Assamese and English. The number of fundamental works on philosophy in Assamese language, was less before him. His works are great sources of inspiration and new thinking for future generations.

Phukan’s farsightedness made him aware that if he writes only in Assamese, then his new ideas, his contributions to the field of science and philosophy would not be known to many people. Hence, he composed his works *Samkhya Darśana* and *Janmāntar Rahasya* in English language also. He had a great interest in his own language and literature and he was always proud of it. He proudly declared, “The *Gītā* was translated into our language both in prose and poetry 450 years ago. Other provincial languages, have not had such luck. Bhaṭṭadeva’s *Kathāgītā* is a beautiful translation”.

Phukan was very much eager for the improvement of the Assamese people and his ideas were expressed through his prose writings like *Āmār Unнатi nāi kiya* (Published in *Jonāki*, edited by Satyanath Bora) *Asamīyār Bhaviśyat* (Published in *Uṣā* Byabasāy, B.A. Jogannath etc.

2. WORKS OF RADHANATH PHUKAN

Radhanath Phukan was interested in scientific as well as philosophical studies. The poet philosopher, Durgeswar Sarma advised him to study the *Gītā*, when he was serving as a sub-Judge in Dhubri in 1920. Accordingly, Radhanath

Phukan studied the Gita and he became interested in the classical Sanskrit works. After his retirement, he started studying earnestly the Upanisads, the philosophical systems of India, especially Sāmkhya system, the Vedānta system and Saṅkarācarya’s writings besides studying modern science which was his chosen subject in his student life. He studied these systems very minutely and extensively.

Radhanath Phukan’s stature as a philosopher was growing. This is evident from his works on philosophy. He slowly grew as an authority on various Indian philosophical systems. His important works are: Śrīmadbhagavadgīta, Vedāntadarsana, Kathāre Upaniṣat, Vĳñānar Sīpāre, Janmāntar Rahasya and Sāmkhyadārsana. These works are written in Assamese language. Again, he translated Sāmkhyadārsana into English, entitled The Sāmkhyakārika of Īsvarakṛṣṇa and he also translated Janmāntar Rahasya into English, entitled The Theory of Rebirth. Phukan wrote thirty one philosophical articles, which were published in the journal Paṅcajanya of Gitarth Śrīmaṇa of Jorhat. His works undoubtedly establish the keenness of his logical thinking and scientific insight.

(1) Śrīmadbhagavadgīta

This work is the Assamese translation of Śrīmadbhagavadgīta. This work was first published in 1952. The Śrīmadbhagavadgīta is a superb contribution of the author who happens to be an erudite scholar of great repute. The introduction of this work is a very learned one and shows the writer’s erudition in the field of Indian philosophy as well as his scientific knowledge. Here, he added a brief summary of each chapter of this work. In the work proper, firstly Radhanath Phukan has given the prose-order of the verse and the meaning of each word. After that he gives the Assamese translation of the complete verse. For translating this work Phukan has
taken the help of the commentary of Sridharasvāmin, the translation of the Gītā by Govindamisra and the Kathāgītā of Bhattadeva. In some places, he accepted the views of Govindamisra in lieu of the commentary of Sridharasvāmin. Whenever he deemed it necessary, he has added his own explanation also. It is the speciality of Radhanath that he always tried to synthesise the traditional views of Indian thought with modern science. Hence, while translating the Gītā, he felt that though there were other translations of the Gītā in Assamese language, even then it was necessary to translate this work in order to show its significance from the point of view of modern science.9

(2) Vedāntadarsāna

Written way back in 1951, Vedāntadarsāna is still regarded as one of the excellent contributions of Radhanath Phukan. This work is the explanation of Brahmasūtra of Bādarayana and is written in Assamese. Though he had taken the help of the commentary of Sāṅkara yet he also mentioned the views of other commentators such as Rāmanuja, Madhva, Nimbārka and others. It contains an extensive Introduction. In this Introduction, Phukan has tried to include the seemingly contradictory and distinct views of different commentators. He himself says that the duty of a modern expounder of Vedānta is to bring about some synthesis between the views of the different exponents and not to divide the views more. Phukan says that there is difference only in the perspectives; basically all the systems endeavour to arrive at the same truth. Hence, he has made utmost effort to show the similarities between Sāṅkhya, Vedānta and Bauddha philosophy. Moreover, as in

9. Cf. Ibid.
Sāṃkhya-darsāna, he has also showed the similarity of this philosophy with the western scientific inventions. Phukan’s language is simple and lucid. People can easily comprehend the significance of the sutras from his explanations.

(3) Kathāre Upaniṣat

Phukan wrote this work in 1954. This is a collection of the stories narrated in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are full of such stories and legends through which the seers of these works endeavour to convey the greatest truth about the ultimate Reality as well as the cosmological thoughts. Phukan has narrated some of these stories in simple Assamese. This is not a translation of the Upaniṣads, rather this is a free narration of the stories. While narrating the stories Phukan has also given some idea of the great philosophical truths which are imbibed in these stories. However, he has not gone in depth of these ideas and has avoided the subtle arguments and elaborate expositions. His main aim was, as declared by him, to educate the students of the Tols about these great teachings of the Upaniṣads. As has been his custom, here also he has referred to the scientific views where necessary. In this regard also he has mentioned only those scientific truths which are understandable to the students of such level.

(4) Vijnānar Sipāre

This is a small compendium written in Assamese by Radhanath Phukan in order to bring out the salient features of Sāṃkhya philosophy from the standpoint of modern science. It was written in 1955. Radhanath has also tried to bring out the synthesis between the Sāṃkhya and Vedānta philosophy in this book. Here he has shown that though modern science can give explanation to the facts of this world, it cannot go beyond it. For this it is necessary to study the śāstras.
In 1957, Phukan wrote a work, entitled *Janmāntar Rahasya*, which is one of his original contributions. From the standpoint of science, Phukan illustrated the theory of rebirth, which is accepted by almost all the philosophical systems of India. It has already been mentioned that this work is translated into English and is published as *The Theory of Rebirth* in 1962.

As a consequence of his study, Phukan wrote *Sāmkhyadarsana* in 1942. It has already been mentioned that he translated this work into English and published it as *The Sāmkhyākarikā of Isvarakṛṣṇa* in 1962. The *Sāmkhyākarikā* is the most popular work of the Sāmkhya System. It is written by Isvarakṛṣṇa. It consists of seventy verses. The *Sāmkhyāsūtra* written by Kapila is believed to be lost to us. The *Sāmkhyapravacanasūtra* attributed to Kapila is actually a work of 14th century A.D. 10 That is why *Sāmkhyākarikā* is accepted as the most important and ancient work of the system. This work gives a lucid exposition of all the main topics of the Sāmkhya system. Gauḍapāda wrote a commentary on this *Sāmkhyākarikā*. Gauḍapāda’s style is simple and his commentary is very useful in understanding the *Kārikās* properly. Vacaspati Misra also wrote an illustrious commentary on this work which is undoubtedly a very learned one.

Radhanath Phukan has undertaken the task of expounding the views of the Sāmkhya system by writing this learned exposition of the *Sāmkhyākarikā*. He has taken help of Gauḍapāda’s *Bhāṣya* for this purpose. In his work he has actually included this commentary. While writing this work Phukan has followed a

First of all he gives the prose-order of the verses; secondly, the meanings of the words. Thirdly, he mentioned the commentary of Gaudapada and at last he has given his own exposition. His *Sāmkhyadarsana* is a perfect example of a scholarly work. It contains an extensive introduction, which gives us a clear idea of his views. In translating the *Karikās* of Isvarakṛṣṇa he followed the classical commentators. But where necessary he expressed his own views also. His illustration is lucid, but grave, where he has discussed the theory of Sāmkhya philosophy, from the viewpoint of science.

In the Introduction of this work he has first discussed about the great revolution in the field of science acquired by the western scientists. In this content he has referred to the discoveries made by these scientists. The scientific views of Einstein, Eddington, Rutherford are referred to by him. Radhanath has taken special note of the Theory of Relativity. He then proceeds to prove that the fundamental principles of Sāmkhya philosophy tally with the views of these scientists.

Radhanath Phukan has shown that there are fundamentally two categories in Sāmkhya philosophy, viz. *Vyakta* and *Avyakta*. Purusa of the classical Sāmkhya is included by him in *Avyakta*. The *Vyakta* comprises the entire universe, the *Avyakta* is the cause of this universe. Radhanath has here forwarded arguments to show that the first creation of *Avyakta*, i.e. *Mahattattva* and the subsequent creations can be explained with the help of the theory of wave mechanics of modern science.

In part III of the Introduction Radhanath has argued strongly to establish the fact the Sāmkhya philosophy is not atheistic. It is generally believed that classical Sāmkhya does not believe in God, i.e. it is an atheistic philosophy. But Radhanath is against this view. Explaining the relevant *karikās* and quoting lines from Gaudapada’s
commentary Radhanath has come to the conclusion that “Neither Śaṅkaracārya nor Kapila was an atheist: both were Supertheists”.

In Part IV we find a short discussion about the creation process of the Sāṃkhya system. In the next section of the Introduction, Radhanath has critically discussed about the three Guṇas accepted by the Sāṃkhya. He has compared these three Guṇas with Newton’s Three Laws of Motion. In part VI of the Introduction, he has discussed the Sāṃkhya view of the plurality of soul. He has shown that Sāṃkhya system has to accept this view “for the obvious reason that Sāṃkhya has begun its investigation by assuming that the world is real.” He said that the reality of the practical world has prompted the Sāṃkhya to accept the plurality of the Puruṣas.

In the last part of this very extensive and learned Introduction Radhanath has put forward his views about Sāṃkhya psychology.

(9) Some Other Write-ups of Phukan

Besides the above mentioned works, Radhanath Phukan has to his credit some more writings which attract attention. His presidential speech of the Reception Committee of the 23rd session of Assam Sāhitya Sabhā in 1954 is a valuable booklet. Also his Presidential speech at the 22nd convocation meeting of the Assam Sanskrit Samiti held in 1956 is a precious booklet.

He also wrote some songs and some articles which are called Bibidha Racaṇā. Tuhu Din Tāran (Published in Ṩaṣā), Bāje Āpuni Purāṇi Bīnā (Published in Ṩaṣā), Kiyano Pāhara Asmiyā Herā (Published in Lakṣmidhar Baruā

11. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 583
12. Ibid., P. 589
Sahgitkosa) are his songs which were published from 1906. Phukan’s other articles are Samsārar Dukh, Jīvanar Uddesya, Parā-Bhakti, Duṭā Praśnar Uttar, Abhyās-Yoga, Praśnottar, Viññān Āru Vedānta, Janmāntarvād, Āgar Din Āru Etyār Din, Prānāyām, Īśvare Kariva Novārā Kām Āchein?, Dharma Bisvās, Gītā Āru Devī Sukta, Naṁ-Dharma, Samsār Ne Samājik, Īśvar Kuruṇāmay, Dūṛgāpvājī, Sukh Āru Sānti Kot?, Punarjjanma, etc. These songs and articles are show his consciousness about Assamese Nationalism.

3. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF RADHANATH’S PHILOSOPHY

The works of Radhanath clearly establish his depth of knowledge, vast genius, scholarship and power of minute observation. Phukan started his writing career after his retirement from his official job. Hence, his works were production of his mature age. Phukan was a man of varied interest and studied different subjects. His main interest was in philosophical works, specially Indian philosophy. Though he was an M.A. in Physics, yet he has not written anything in pure physics. However he studied minutely the works of modern physicists like Einstein, Eddington, Jeans and others. He always tried to relate these physical theories with the mythological and philosophical ideas of India.

There are some distinctive characteristics of Radhanath’s works. In the following lines we are going to discuss these characteristics.

(i) Treatment from Scientific viewpoint

Being a man of science, Radhanath always tried to explain some of the important concepts of Indian philosophy from the standpoint of modern science. In all his works this characteristic of Phukan is very much pronounced. In his explanation of different concepts of the Gītā as well as of Vedānta philosophy we find that
whenever possible he has alluded to the scientific theories of modern physics. The Theory of Relativity, Quantum Theory, Newton’s laws of Motion, Laws of Thermo Dynamics etc. figure in his writings to a great extent. He has shown the relevance of these laws to the concepts of Indian philosophy. He wanted to show the modern scientific theories such as the Theory of Relativity and Quantum Theory etc. have similarity with some fundamental theories of Indian philosophy.

Phukan’s Sāṃkhya-dārsāna is not an exception in this regard. Rather he declared that his main purpose was to study the Karikās of Sāṃkhya with the help of modern scientific theory such as the Quantum Theory and the Thermo Dynamics.\textsuperscript{13} In his words: “The method of analysis is the same in the Sāṃkhya as in the modern science. In science also gross matter is taken up first for analysis which is carried ultimately to such a subtle stage that one may doubt whether the universe is at all real. The Relativity and the Quantum theories lend support to the conclusions of the Sāṃkhya philosophy.”\textsuperscript{14} He has also maintained that the cosmology of Sāṃkhya philosophy is the same as that of the Gītā and modern science.\textsuperscript{15}

According to Radhanath Phukan, some stories found in the Purāṇas, which appear as imaginary and unreal also have scientific basis. For example he has referred to the story of princess Revati of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Revati was a princess who lived in Satya age. When she grew up, her father took her with him to the heaven to consult Brahmā about her marriage. Brahmā directed Revati’s father to give her in marriage to Balarāma. They spent only a few moments in the heaven. But

\textsuperscript{13} SD, Phukan, Radhanath, P. 9 (Introduction)
\textsuperscript{14} Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 569 (Introduction)
\textsuperscript{15} Srimadbhagavadgītā, Phukan Radhanath, P. 1
in the meantime Satyayuga and Tretayuga had passed away and Dvaparayuga was also about to end. But since Revati went with her father her age did not increase. This happened because the measure of time in heaven and earth is not the same.  

Now this story appears to us as a fantastic story imagined by the author. But Radhanath Phukan has pointed out that this story is not without any truth. This story can easily be explained with the help of the modern theory of space and time. Modern science has proved that real time is one and indivisible. What we call time is only relative time which is expressed in relation to the space occupied by the speaker. This relative time is true for all persons living in the same world. But the measurement of time is different for a person living in a different world. Hence, the story of Revati refers to this scientific truth which was known to our sages. In the words of Phukan, “But it seems that the sages who thought out such stories had a clear idea about the truth regarding space and time. They knew quite well that the measure of time was not the same everywhere.” Similarly, some theories of Vedanta philosophy, which appear to us as apparently impossible can be explained with the help of modern science. 

(ii) Synthesis of Different Systems

Synthesis is another characteristic of his works. In his works, Phukan has clearly established that there is no basic difference among the views of different philosophical systems of India. He always tried to bring about this synthesis among the different philosophical schools. He tried to establish the idea that there is no  

16. VP., 4.1.66-92  
17. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 573  
18. Vide, VD, Phukan, Radhanath, P. 8 (Introduction)
real difference among the Gītā, the Bhāgavata and the philosophical views of Samkhya and Vedanta. It is generally considered that the Samkhya, the Vedanta and the Baudhāya philosophy are totally opposed to each other. But Radhanath Phukan has tried to establish the fact that this opposition, is only due to the difference of viewpoint; their difference is not fundamental. He said, “We should try to combine all the Indian philosophies. We should synthesise the views of all philosophers. We must not criticise them.” Moreover, his endeavour to synthesise the philosophical systems and modern science deserves special attention.

(iii) Relation with Prasthānatraya

Another important characteristic of his works is related to the Vedanta’s Prasthānatraya. The meaning of the term prasthāna is the place of origin or starting point. Traditionally, it is held that the foundation of Vedanta stand on three prasthānas. The Vedanta’s three prasthānas are: (1) the Sruti-prasthāna, (2) the Smriti-prasthāna and (3) the Nyāya-prasthāna. Sruti means the Vedas.22 That part of the Vedas is the Sruti-prasthāna which gives the fundamental knowledge of the self as realised by the sages. Hence, the Sruti-prasthāna of Vedanta philosophy ultimately means the Upanisads which impart the true knowledge of the self as realised by the sages.

Again the Smṛti means the Dharmasūtras.23 Srimadbhāgavatam is the fundamental smṛti which being a re-statement of the truth realised by the sages.

19. Ibid., P. 207; vide, SKI, Phukan, Radhanath, P. 570 (Introduction)
22 srutistu veda vijñeyo .......... / Manusamhita, 2.10
23. dharmasūstrāṃ tu vai smṛthi / Ibid.
denotes the \textit{Smrtiprasthāna} of Vedānta. This is helpful in understanding the truth contained in the Upaniṣads.

Literally, the term \textit{Nyāya} means that by which man is guided. Generally, as man is guided by reasoning, the term ultimately means reasoning or logical argument. Accordingly, Vedānta’s \textit{Nyāyaprasthāna} means that fundamental work in which the truth contained in the Upaniṣads has been established by means of logical arguments. Thus the \textit{Nyāyaprasthāna} of Vedānta means the \textit{Brahmasūtra} written by Bādarāyana. The \textit{Brahmasūtra} has undertaken this task of presenting the Upaniṣadic ideas in a logical way. So, the works the Upaniṣads, the \textit{Bhagavadgītā} and the \textit{Brahmasūtra} are the three \textit{prasthānas} of Vedānta.\textsuperscript{24}

As in the case of Vedānta philosophy, Radhanath Phukan has also tried to establish his views through three types of works which may be deemed as the \textit{prasthānatraya} of Radhanath’s philosophy. Radhanath Phukan’s \textit{Sruti prasthāna} is his \textit{Kathāre Upanisat} which work contains some stories narrated in the Upaniṣads. Here, Phukan has given some idea of the great philosophical truths which are imbibed in these stories.

As for \textit{Sruti prasthāna} Radhanath Phukan has translated the \textit{Bhagavadgītā}. Similarly, true to the vedantic tradition Radhanath Phukan has written \textit{Vedāntadarśana} as the \textit{Nyāyaprasthāna}. Hence, Dr. Mukunda Madhava Sarma opines that Radhanath Phukan truly follows the vedantic tradition of propounding philosophical views through these three fundamental works.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} Vide, \textit{Vedāntadarśana - Advaitavāda}, Vol.1.P. 35

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Racāνāvali}, Published by Assam Prakashan Parisad, (Introduction) P.10
(iv) Respect for Śaṅkaradeva and Neo-Vaiṣṇavism

Radhanath Phukan had a great regard for Śaṅkaradeva and his Vaiṣṇava religion. Śaṅkaradeva, a great religious philosopher of mediaval Assam, has propagated the Neo-Vaiṣṇavite cult. His religious view is known as Ekaśaraṇā-nāma-dharma. It is also known as Mahāpuruṣā-dharma and Bhāgavati-dharma. Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophy is a kind of Advaitavāda.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣna is the ultimate Reality, who is ekamevādviṁśīyam (one, without a second).²⁶ Śri Kṛṣna is the Absolute Reality (Para Brahman).²⁷ Śaṅkaradeva has repeatedly asserted the non-dual character of Śrīkṛṣṇa. He has also maintained that the ultimate Reality is nirguṇa (qualityless) and nirvikāra (changeless).²⁸ But at the same time Śaṅkaradeva has given stress on the saguṇa (qualified) aspect of Śrīkṛṣṇa also. Various good qualities of Isvāra like omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence etc. are described by him in great detail. God is also described as the cause of creation, sustenance and destruction of the world.²⁹

Śaṅkaradeva has made an attempt to synthesise nirguṇa Brahman with saguṇa Brahman. According to him, nirguṇa Brahman is transcendent lord devoid of any quality. Isvāra is anādi, ananta, etc. The creative principle of māyā remains in an unconscious state in the nirguṇa Brahman. The nirguṇa Brahman becomes the saguṇa Brahman with a view to creating the multiplicity of the world.³⁰

²⁶. Cf. Vedastuti, 1; Kīrtanaghoṣā, Uresāvarṇana, 83 etc.
²⁷. Kīrtanaghoṣā, 64/744, Bhāgavata, 10.1140
²⁸. Cf. Kīrtanaghoṣā, 1956; Bhaktipradīpa, 121, 131 etc.
²⁹. Cf. Kīrtanaghoṣā, 1664; Anādipatana, 140; Bhāgavata, 10, 939 etc.
³⁰. Bargit, Madhavadeva, P.53
Now, the philosophy of Sāṅkaradeva has some similarity with the Advaita Vedānta of Sāṅkarācārya, though there are many differences also. Like Sāṅkarācārya, Sāṅkaradeva also regards this world as unreal. In the Kṛtanaṅghoṣa of Sāṅkaradeva it is said that the unreal world appears as real being originated from god.\textsuperscript{31} It is also said that the world is originated from Ṣvāra and as such is non-different from Him. Just as golden earrings are not different from gold, so also this world is non-different from the God.\textsuperscript{32} This view tallies with the view of Sāṅkarācārya.

Sāṅkaradeva has accepted māyā as the real power of God, which causes illusion to all because of which the one Lord appears as many.\textsuperscript{33} Māyā conceals the real nature of a thing and projects something else in its place.\textsuperscript{34}

According to Sāṅkaradeva, the jīvas and the world are the parts of God; they constitute the body of Śrīkṛṣṇa.\textsuperscript{35} The jīvas are not identical with, but different from God.\textsuperscript{36} However, he has also maintained that the jīvas are not really different from Him.\textsuperscript{37} The difference here is only like the difference between the parts and the whole. The parts are not totally different from the whole, nor are they non-different from it. He has emphasised that the jīvas are dependent on God. The jīva is a servant, God is the master.

The cardinal point of Sāṅkaradeva’s philosophy is bhakti or devotion. Bhakti plays the central role in his teachings. In his view, it is the best path of

\textsuperscript{31} Kṛtanaṅghoṣa, 1669
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 1670; Bhāgavata, 1300
\textsuperscript{33} Bargī, 4; Bhāgavata, 11.79
\textsuperscript{34} Kṛtanaṅghoṣa, 2101
\textsuperscript{35} Bargī, 4; Bhāgavata, 11.79
\textsuperscript{36} Bhaktiratnākara, 22. 1-10
\textsuperscript{37} Bhāgavata, 10.1695
attaining liberation.\textsuperscript{38} He points out that this devotion is to be practised with complete self-surrender. Unflinching devotion with supreme surrender to Śrīkṛṣṇa discarding worship of all other deities is the best and the easiest way of liberation.\textsuperscript{39} Moreover, according to Sāṅkaradeva, bhakti is not only the means, it is greater than liberation, it is the ultimate end of human life. A devotee never hankers after liberation, rather he takes delight in the service of God.\textsuperscript{40} Absolute liberation or line mukti, as propounded by Śaṅkarācārya, is not accepted by Sāṅkaradeva, as in such liberation there is no room for devotion or worship.

Śaṅkaradeva’s New Vaiṣṇavism like the Upaniṣads and the Gītā emphasises niskāma karman as the key to the individual and social welfare, healthy social relationship and attainment of the final goal.

Radhanath’s respect for Śaṅkaradeva is evident from the fact that the benedictory verse of his Sāṅkhya-darśana is quoted from Kirtanaghoṣā\textsuperscript{41} of Śaṅkaradeva.

According to Radhanath Phukan, Śaṅkaradeva was the greatest philosopher of the world after Gautama Buddhadeva.\textsuperscript{42} He is of the view that Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophical views have much similarity with those of Śaṅkarācārya. From our discussion on Śaṅkarācārya’s philosophy it can be presumed that Śaṅkaradeva’s (views on māyā and nature of the world) are not much different from Śaṅkarācārya’s

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\textsuperscript{38} Kirtanaghoṣā, 137, Bhaktiratna-kara, 5.11
\textsuperscript{39} Bhaktipradīpa, 29-30, 90-91, 100-101.
\textsuperscript{40} Nāmghoṣā, 514, Bhaktiratna-kara, 11.6
\textsuperscript{41} prathame pranamo brahma-rupi sanatana / sarva awatārara kāraṇa nārāyaṇa // Kirtanaghoṣā, Caturviṃśatāvatāra, 1
\textsuperscript{42} VD, Phukan, Radhanath, 2nd edn, P.208 (Introduction)
\end{flushleft}
Radhanath Phukan also said that like Mahāpurūṣa Saṅkaradeva, Saṅkarācārya also takes devotion to Lord Viṣṇu (Govinda) as the principal religious duty in his work Mohamudgara. Noticing the similarity between these two great philosophers, Radhanath Phukan has declared that as if there is one philosophy of two Saṅkaras. Radhanath also maintains that Saṅkaradeva’s place in Indian philosophy should be higher than that of Saṅkarācārya. The arguments forwarded by Saṅkarācārya for establishing his māyāvāda is very difficult to understand whereas Saṅkaradeva’s argument is very simple and easily understandable by all. Radhanath also points out that Saṅkaradeva could not get true appreciation of his philosophy as he wrote his works in Assamese language. If he used Sanskrit instead of Assamese in his writings then he would have surpassed Saṅkarācārya in fame.

Phukan’s writings are very simple. He has not used any hard sanskrit word in his works. He has explained the difficult topics of Saṅkhya, Vedānta, modern science etc. But he can easily discuss these topics with the help of example of day to day life.

Just as in his writings, so also his own life was an example of synthesis. In his life synthesis of Lakṣmī and Saraswatī i.e, of wealth and Knowledge is visible. In his writings he has brought out the synthesis of Saṅkhya and Vedānta of Indian philosophy, of modern western science, of thinking of past and present. Phukan was a man of broad outlook. He believed that all classes of people should perform sandhyā, vandanā, nām, kīrtan, dhyān, jap etc.

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43. bhaja govindaḥ bhaja govindaḥ // Mohamudgara, 1
44. VD, Phukan, Radhanath, P. 205 (Introduction)
45. Racanāvali, Published by Assam Prakasan Parisad, P.11 (Introduction)
From the above discussion, it is clear that Radhanath Phukan was a versatile genius. He was a philosopher, the knower of *tattva*, scientist, tuner, lyricist, actor and social worker. For the people of Assam, Phukan’s contribution is immense.

4. ANUNDORAM BOROOAH, KRISHNAKANTA HANDIQUI AND RADHANATH PHUKAN

Some similarities have been seen between Radhanath Phukan and Anundoram Borooah, another great son of Assam. The first Assamese graduate was Anundoram Borooah, who secured B.A. degree in 1869 and the first Assamese post graduate was Radhanath Phukan, who secured M.A. degree in Physics in 1897 from Presidency College. The two Assamese persons also obtained B.L. degree. Both were also E.A.S. Both studied Sanskrit and were influenced by this language. Both of them contributed much to the field of Sanskritic studies. However, Anundoram Borooah accepted English as his medium of expression, while Radhanath Phukan concentrated on his mother tongue i.e. Assamese.

It has already been mentioned above that Phukan’s life is an ideal and successful one. As a successful and scholarly businessman Phukan can be compared with another great scholar of Assam, Krishnakanta Handiqui. Both these great persons possessed great wealth and knowledge. Like Handiqui, Phukan also donated all his works to Jorhat Gitarthi Samāja. Both Phukan and Handiqui were scholars, the former being a writer of philosophy and the latter of literature.

5. THE NATURE OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Etymologically the term ‘Philosophy’ means ‘love of wisdom’. It is derived from two Greek words ‘philos’ meaning ‘love’ and ‘sophia’ meaning ‘wisdom’ and hence, the literal meaning of the term is ‘love of wisdom’. Human being is a rational
being and desire for knowledge naturally arises from the rational nature of man. Philosophy is an attempt to satisfy this desire. Its purpose is to know the truth. The philosophy enquires into the nature of the world where we live, the nature of the soul and its destiny. It also enquires into the nature of God or the absolute, matter, time, space, causality, evolution, life and mind and their relation to one another. Philosophy deals with the supreme value, viz. Truth, Beauty and Good which satisfy the deepest aspirations. Philosophical knowledge is comprehensive knowledge.

Philosophy has been termed as Darśana in Indian literature. The word Darśana is derived from the root drṣṭ which means to see. The root drṣṭ means vision and also the ‘instrument of vision.’ Darśana stands for the direct, immediate and intuitive vision of reality and the actual perception of truth. It also includes the means which lead to this realization.46 ‘See the self’47 is the keynote of all systems of Indian philosophy. In the words of Pradip sengupta, “Philosophy is a systematic study of the facts and phenomena of nature including our own beings and the ultimate aim of such a study appears to find-out the proper significance of our own reality.”48 Jagadiswar sanyal also says, “Darśana applies to all views of reality that are taken by the mind of man. It also means any scientific account of reality.”49 Radhakrishnan explains the term ‘Darśana’ as spiritual perception, a whole view revealed to the soul sense.50

46. drṣṭye yathārthatatvamanena iti darśanaṁ. SKD, Vol. II, P. 689
47. ātma vā are draṣṭavyah / Br U, 2.4.5
48. Sengupta, Pradip, An Introduction to Philosophy, P. 2
49. Sanyal, Jagadiswar, Guide to Indian Philosophy, P. 2
50. Vide, Ibid.
*Darsana* means vision which is attained without the help of eyes, but with the help of mind. Literally *Darsana* means perceptual knowledge. We can know only the phenomenal aspect of a thing by ordinary perception. Real nature of a thing cannot be known by perception. Real nature of a thing can be known only by intuitive vision. This realization or vision of the real nature of a thing is called *Darsana* or Philosophy.

In the *kathopanisad*, it is also found that the purpose of philosophy is an insight into the nature of the whole reality because of which philosophy is termed as *Darsana*.  

In the field of philosophy and religion, India has made immense contribution. Indian philosophy is extremely spiritual and has always emphasized the need for practical realization of fact. Indian philosophy signifies a natural and a necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they live and move and have their being.  

In Indian philosophical thinking began with the *Rgveda*. Mainly it is revealed in the *Devisukta*, *Puruṣa sūkta* and the *sūktas* ascribed to *Dirghatamas*. The germs of monistic idealism is found in the *Puruṣasūkta* and the *Devisūkta* and the germs of the dualistic realism is found in the *sūktas* of *Dirghatamas*.

51. Cf. *dṛṣyate tvagryaya buddhyā suñśmayā suñśmaṛdaṁsibhiḥ /Kath U, 1.3.12*
52. *Samkhya-Yoga-Epistemology*, Biswas, Mukta, Pp. 1, 2
53. *Rgveda*, 10.125
54. Ibid., 10.90
55. Ibid., 1.164
6. TWO BROAD DIVISIONS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The schools of Indian philosophy are divided into two broad classes *Astika* (orthodox) and *Nastika* (heterodox). In Indian philosophy, the terms *Astika* and *Nastika* are used in different senses by different thinkers. In general parlance the term *Astika* means theist i.e., one who believes in the existence of God. And the term *Nastika* means one who does not believe in the existence of God or the Absolute, i.e., atheist. However, in the view of the Indian philosophers, *Astika* is one who accepts the authority of the Vedas and the *Nastika* is one who does not accept the authority of the Vedas.\(^56\) The *Sābdakalpadruma* also explains these two terms *Astika* and *Nastika* in the similar way.

The terms *Astika* and *Nastika* are used in various senses: (i) one who denies the existence of God is a *Nastika* and one who believes the existence of God is a *Astika*.\(^57\)

(ii) One who denies the existence of the other world is a *Nastika* and one who believes the existence of the other world is a *Astika*.\(^58\)

(iii) One who does not believe in the authority of the Vedas is a *Nastika* and one who believes in the authority of the Vedas is a *Astika*.\(^59\)

Among these three meanings of the terms *Astika* and *Nastika*, the first meaning is used by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa in his *Slokavārttika*. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa holds that generally Mīmāṃsā has been explained in the line of the *Lokāyātikas* and that he

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56. *nāstiko vedanindakaḥ* ............... / *Manusahhitā*, 2.11
58. *asti iṣvāra iti matīryasya, nāstītparaloka iṣvārovetī matīryasya*. Ibid., P. 874
59. *vedā pṛāmāṇyavādī* (*astikah*) *vedā pṛāmāṇyavādī* (*nāstikah*). Ibid., P. 198
has undertaken the task of explaining the same in the line of the Astikas. No doubt, Mimansakas believe in the other world and in the validity of the Vedas. But doubts may arise about Mimansaka’s belief in God or the Absolute, since neither the Mimansa sutra nor its early commentaries have ever referred to such a Reality. So, Kumarila Bhatta has felt the necessity to prove that Mimansa believes in God or the Absolute. Hence the Mimansa system is regarded as Astika.

The second meaning of the terms is explained by the grammarian Panini in the sutra asti-nasti distam matiḥ in his Astadhyaayi. It means that the suffix kan is added to asti, nasti and dista in the sense of mati. While explaining this sutra, the grammarians like Patanjali, Kaiyata, Nagesa Bhatta, Bhattogi Diksita and others said that Astika is one, in whose view there is a paraloka or other world. And the Nastika is one, in whose view there is no paraloka or other world. Here the other world means not only a life beyond death in heaven but also rebirth in this world, the adṛṣṭas or moral deserts, the self, God or the Absolute and such other realities which are not attested by our perceptual knowledge. The author of Vācaspatyam also holds the same view. K.P. sinha holds that the grammarians, which adopted the second meanings of the terms are the most reasonable ones. Principally in the epies and other sāstras, also, these terms Astika and Nastika are

60. prayenaiva hi mimansa loke lokayati kṛta, tām āstikapathe netum ayaṁ yatnaḥ kṛto mayā. MSV, 1.10
61. Astadhyaayi, 4.4.60
62. asti paralokah iti matir yasya (āstikah); nāsti paralokah, tat-sadhanam adṛṣṭam tat-sākṣisvarah vā tī matirasya (nāstikah). Vācaspatyam as Quoted in Reflexions on Indian Philosophy, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P. 30
63. Reflexions on Indian Philosophy, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P. 24
used in the second sense. In the *Mahābhārata*, the term, *Nāstika* is used in many places to denote one who denies the other world or the unseen moral deserts or any reality not attested by perception.\(^{64}\) Again in different places of the *Manusmṛti*, the word *Nāstika* is used in the same sense. The famous commentators of the *Manusmṛti* Kulluka and Medhātithi describe the term in the same line.\(^{65}\) In the *Prabodhacandrodaya* also, Kṛṣṇa Misra has accepted this meaning.\(^{66}\) Though the last meanings of the term i.e. who believes in the validity of the Vedas is a *Aśṭika* and who does not believe in the validity of the Vedas is a *Nāstika* have not been referred to by any commentator of *Aśṭādhyāyī* or by the author of *Vācaspatyam*, but have been adopted by the philosophers themselves.

Hence orthodox is the *Aśṭika* school and heterodox is the *Nāstika* school. Nyāya, Vaiṣeṣika, Saṁkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta are the six orthodox schools whereas Cārvāka, Baudha and Jaina are the three heterodox schools.\(^{67}\)

Though Haribhadrasūri includes the Jainas in the orthodox school yet the Jainas are regarded as heterodox school because Jainas deny the authority of the Vedas and also because they deny the existence of God.\(^{68}\)

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64. nāstikyaṁ bhāvam. *Mahābhārata, Vanarpan*, 30.40; naitad-astitā vādinaḥ. Ibid., *Sāntiparvan*, 19.23


66. nāstī paralokāḥ mṛtyureva apavargah. *Prabodhachandrodaya, Act* 2

67. gautamasya kaṇādasya kaṅālasya patañjaliḥ // vyaśasya jaiminescāpyi darsānāṁ śaṭeva hi // *A History of Indian Logic*, Vidyabhusan, Satischandra, P. 153

68. *Syādvaḍamaṇḍari*, 6
Again, though some ancient thinkers include the Buddha in the group of the Astikas actually the philosophers regard that the Buddha is a Nastika since he does not believe in the validity of the vedas. In the Ramayana, Buddha has been looked down upon as a Nastika.69 Vijnanabhiksu also has described the Madhyamika Buddhists as Nastikas.70

7. THE IMPORTANT TENETS OF SĀMKHYA SYSTEM

Among the Indian philosophical systems, Samkhya has been regarded as the oldest system. Traditionally there are many Samkhya thinkers, viz, (1) Kapila, (2) Asuri, (3) Pancasikha, (4) Vindhyavasa, (5) Varsaganya, (6) Jaigisavya, (7) Voelu, (8) Devala, (9) Sanaka, (10) Sananda, (11) Sanatana, (12) Sanatkumara, (13) Bhrigu, (14) Sukra, (15) Kasypa, (16) Parasara, (17) Garga, (18) Gautama, (19) Narada, (20) Arstisena, (21) Agastya, (22) Pulastya, (23) Harita, (24) Uluka, (25) Valmiki and (26) Suka.71 However, no work of most of these scholars are found at present. Kapila, the traditional author of the Sāmkhya sutra was the first person who realised through intellectual discipline and penance the reality of the indeterminate self. For this reason he is designated as ‘First learned’ (ādividvān).72 However, the work is not available now. Sāmkhya pravacanasutra which is attributed to him is not an authentic one and is generally regarded by scholars as a work of 14th century A.D. Isvarakrṣṇa’s Sāmkhya karika is the most popular work of this system which work is the earliest available.

Gaudapāda’s Sāmkhyakārikā bhāsyā, Vacaspati Misra’s Tattva-vaumudi, Vijnānabhikṣu’s Sāmkhya-pravacana-bhāsyā and Sāmkhyasāra, Pancasikha’s Saśtitantra, Tattvasamāsa of Kapila, The Sāmkhya-tattva pradīpa of Kavirāja Yati, Tattvacandra of Vacaspati Misra,

69. tathāgatam nastikatvam viddhi. Ramayana, Ayodhyakanda, 109.34
70. ksanika jñānāvam eva atma....... iti yamāstika matam. SPB on SS, 5.77
71. SKI, T.G. Mainkar, P. 13
72. Yogabhāṣya, 1.25

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Samkhya is a school of ancient Indian philosophy, developed by the sage Kapila. The term Samkhya is derived from the root khya preceded by the suffix sam. The root khya means 'to know'. Thus the term Samkhya means perfect knowledge (Samyak-jñana). Again, according to the others, the word Samkhya is derived from the word Samkhya which means number i.e. counting. Here, it means numeration or counting. The Sastra where there is the counting of tattvas is called Samkhya. It is the common derivation of the term Samkhya. Hence, the word Samkhya is used in the sense of thinking and counting. Thinking may be with reference to basic principles or knowledge of the self. Counting refers to the twenty five principles. The double implication of the word has been set forth by Vijnadhyakṣu in his preface to Samkhya-pravacanabhasyam, by a quotation from the Mahābhārata. Samkhya again means knowledge of the self through right discrimination. The term Samkhya has been used in the sense of spiritual discipline in the Mahābhārata. Vyasa-smṛti also defines Samkhya to be the knowledge of the true nature of the self. The Gītā uses this term in the sense of jñāna i.e. right knowledge. In the Srimadbhagavadgītā, the alternative name of jñānayoga is Samkhya.

73. sāmkhyam Samkhyaatmakatvaṁca kapilādibhirucyate. MP, 3.26
74. sāmkhyam prakurvate caiva prakṛtiṁ ca pracaṅgēte / tattvāni ca catuviniśat parisāmkhyāya tattvataḥ // Mahābhārata, 306.42.43
75. sāmkhyā samyagvivekenā atmakathanam. SPB, Introduction, P. 6
76. droṇa api śastraṁyutsṛgya paramāṇaṁ sāmkhyamasthitah / Mahābhārata, 7
77. jñānayogena sāmkhyānām / Gītā, 3.3; yat sāmkhyaiḥ sthānam / Ibid., 5.5
The Sāmkhya system is a dualistic system where three categories are accepted, viz. Vyakta, Avyakta and Puruṣa. Among these the Avyakta and the Puruṣa are the ultimate categories, while the Vyakta constitutes the world of experience.

The Sāmkhya philosophy regards Avyakta as the ultimate cause of the material world which is also known as Prakṛti or Pradhāna in this philosophy. Avyakta is the primordial matter. It is the cause of the whole universe. All the effects depend upon it. This ultimate cause which is called Avyakta is causeless. Avyakta is the state of unmanifestation of all worldly effects. It is called Avyakta because it is absolutely unmanifested, while its evolutes are manifested. Avyakta is subtle and supersensuous. It is described as material, indeterminate and eternal. Avyakta or Prakṛti or Pradhāna is constituted of three guṇas viz. sattva, rajas and tamas. It is the motive force behind the world process. The whole world of multiplicity is evolved from it. Īśvarakṛṣṇa holds that Avyakta is the opposite of Vyakta. 78

The Vyakta comprises the entire world everything contained in it, whether it is perceived or only inferred. Vyakta is the effect, Vyakta or effects always remains latent in their cause. In proper time Vyakta or effects are revealed by causal activity. According to Sāmkhya philosophy, manifest or Vyakta are: Mahat or Buddhī, Ahamkaraḥ. Pañcatanmātras, eleven indriyas and five mahābhūtas. The first product of the evolution is called Mahat. It is produced from the root cause Prakṛti. Mahat produces Ahamkara. Ahamkara produces the Ekādasendriyas i.e. five sensory organs, five motor organs and manas. Again, the Pañcatanmātras i.e. sābda (sound), sparsa (touch) gandha (smell), rasa (taste) and rūpa (colour) are produced from Ahamkara. And the Pañcamahābhūtas i.e. kṣiti (earth), ap (water), teja (fire), marut (wind) and vyoma (ether) are also produced from

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78. hetumadantryamāvāpyi sakriyamanekamāṃsītagamam/ sāvayavāṁ paratantrāṁ vyaktāṁ viparītamāvyaktam // SK, 10
Ether is produced from sound, wind is produced from touch, earth is produced from smell, water is produced from taste and fire is produced from colour.

According to Saṁkhya philosophy, Ṛṣā means Puruṣa. It is the ultimate principle in Saṁkhya philosophy which is pure consciousness. Puruṣa is the soul, the self, the spirit, the subject, the knower. It is neither senses nor mind nor ego nor intellect. It is eternal, changeless and all-pervading. It is the silent witness. Puruṣa is not a substance which possesses the quality of consciousness. It is neutral seer. Puruṣa is beyond time and space, beyond change and activity. It is uncaused, It is devoid of three guṇas. Puruṣa are many in number.

The Saṁkhya philosophy believes in Saikāryavāda. According to Saikāryavāda, the effects pre-exist in their cause. Though, the effect is a new appearance yet the effect was already existent there in the cause. In the Saṁkhya-kārikā Isvāra-kṛṣṇa has forwarded different arguments for proving the prior existence of the effect in their cause. The whole manifest universe remains in an unmanifested form in Prakṛti, the cause before its creation.

According to Saṁkhya philosophy liberation consists in absolute cessation of three-fold sufferings. The earthly life is full of three kinds of pain. These are Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika. Adhyatmika is due to intra-organic psychophysical causes and includes all mental and bodily sufferings. Saṁkhya philosophy maintains that these sufferings of human life cannot be removed by religious practices and other known means. Actually, all these sufferings are due to ignorance. Buddha and Puruṣa are distinct and different. But through ignorance, a seeming unity between the two is wrongly established, as a result of which there are pains and

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79. jñaḥ puruṣa. GB on Ibid., 2
80. tasmāca viparyyāṣat siddham sākṣitvamasya puruṣasya / kaivalyaṁ mādhyastham draśṭtvamakartṛbhāvasca // SK, 19
81. jananamarpaṇakarāṇāṁ pratiniyamādayugapat pravṛttesca / puruṣavahuttoṁ siddham .............................................. // Ibid., 18
With the help of the knowledge one will attain liberation from the sorrow and sufferings of the world.

8. A BRIEF NOTE ON SĀMKHYA EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology or Pramāṇavāda occupies an important position in all the philosophies of India. The Sāmkhya philosophy is also not an exception in this respect. Pramāṇa is the instrument or the means of pramāṇa or valid cognition. Pramāṇa is generally used to designate a true or valid cognition, which is new, i.e. not previously known and which has its content uncontradicted. A kāraṇa is conceived as the unique or special cause through the action of which a particular effect is produced.

The Sāmkhya defines valid knowledge as the mode of buddhi which apprehends an object, undoubted, real and not known before. Pramāṇa has also been defined as pauruṣeya bodha. The Sāmkhya philosophy also maintains that the pure consciousness is the knower or pramāṇa; the modification of buddhi is the pramāṇa and pramāṇa is the reflection in consciousness of the modifications in the form of the objects.

In the Yogasūtra, Patanjali holds that pramāṇa is the function of citta. Patanjali shows the superiority of yogic practices and consequently the yogic perception acquired through them over the ordinary means of knowledge. According to him, the buddhi, through the discipline of yoga gets truthbearing knowledge (ṛtambhara) having no trace of wrong or perverted knowledge. The Sāmkhya holds that our knowledge can be accepted as valid only when it is

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82. Cf. The Six Ways of Knowing, Datta, D.M., Pp. 20–21
83. vyāpāravadaśāhāraṇāṁ kāraṇāṁ karaṇaṁ. TSa, 36.
84. asandigdhāviparītanadhiţāgataviśaya cittavṛttih. bodhaśca pauruṣeyaj phalaṁ pramāṇa, STK on SK, 4
85. SPB, 1.87, vide, Indian Philosophy, S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II. P. 294
86. pramanaviparyayavikalpanidrasmrtayoh, YS, 1.6
87. ṛtambhara tatra prajñā. Ibid., 1.48

32
got through the recognised means of knowledge.

The Śamkhya accepts the three means of valid knowledge viz. perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna) and verbal testimony (āgama). Perception is the primary and fundamental of all the sources of valid knowledge and it is universally recognized. Perception is the most powerful among the means of valid knowledge, because it gives a direct or immediate knowledge of reality of an object and therefore is the root of all other pramānas. Perception is the direct cognition of an object through its contact with some sense-organ. The Śamkhyaśūtra defines perception as that cognition which being in contact with an object portrays the form thereof.88 Perception as again defined as the operation of cognitive organs like ear and the rest.89 It is ascribed to the followers of Varsaganya. Vindhyavāsin revised the definition given by Varsaganya by embodying the epithet avikalpikaa.90

The definition of perception (dṛṣṭa), given by Īśvarakṛṣṇa in his Śamkhyaśūtra,91 is as follows: Perception is the definite cognition that arises due to the relation between a sense-organ and its object.91 According to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, knowledge of all kinds is the function or attribute of buddhi.92

Except the Carvakas, all the Indian systems accept anumāna (inference) as a distinct valid knowledge. The Śamkhyaśūtra defines anumāna as the knowledge derived from sign and signate.93 The definitiion of anumāna is explained elaborately by Vacaspati Misra. Vacaspati Misra states that linga means vyāpya and lingī means vyāpaka. Thus, inferential knowledge

88. yat samvandham sat tadākārollekhi vijnānam tat pratyaksam. SS, 1.89.
89. śrotādīvṛtireva pratyaksam. YDi on SK, 5
90. Vide, Origin And Development of the Śamkhya System of Thought, Chakrabarti, Pulinbihari, P.137
91. prativisayadhyavasāyo dṛṣṭam ............. / SK, 5, STK on it.
92. adhyavasāyo buddhidharma ............... / SK, 23
93. tallingaliṅgapurvakam ...................... / Ibid., 5
comes through the knowledge that probans like smoke is pervaded and probandum like fire is pervasive.\footnote{lingam vyapaṁ lingī vyāpakam, dhūmādīvyaṁ yah yāpyaṁ STK on Ibid.} There are three kinds of inferences\footnote{trividhamanumānānākhyātām / Ibid.} viz. pūrvavat, sēṣavat and sāmānyatodṛṣṭa. The pūrvavat is that in which an effect is inferred from its cause. For example- from the existence of cloud in the sky it is inferred that it will rain. The sēṣavat is that in which the cause is inferred from its effect. Seeing the water of river as different from that in the past, as also the fullness of the river and the swiftness of the current, it is inferred that it had rained. The sāmānyatodṛṣṭa is illustrated by the example that seeing the changes in the position of the sun, it is inferred that there is movement of the sun, though imperceptible. Because the change in the position of an object is generally caused by its movement.\footnote{GB on SK, 5}

According to the Śāmkhya philosophy, the third pramāṇa is the verbal testimony. Isvarakṛṣṇa defines verbal testimony as the statement (śrutī) of a reliable person (āpta).\footnote{āptasrutirāptavacanam / Ibid.} The Śāmkhya admits the verbal testimony as an independent means of knowledge in addition to perception and inference. It consists of verbal statements of some person or the śrutī. It is an important source of knowledge. Mukta Biswas rightly observes, “A major portion of a person’s stock of knowledge is acquired from the oral or written testimony of other persons. The verbal testimony requires an understanding of the meaning conveyed by words without which there is no possibility of verbal communication. The words of a foreign language carry no sense unless their meanings are clear. Thus, verbal testimony depends upon employment of words and understanding of their meanings. In verbal testimony knowledge arises through words and this fact differentiates it from the other two means of knowledge, i.e. perception and inference.”\footnote{Biswa, Mukta, Śāmkhya-Yoga Epistemology, P.184}

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{94. liṅgāṁ vyāpyaṁ liṅgī vyāpakam, dhūmādīvyaṁ yah yāpyaṁ STK on Ibid.} There are three kinds of inferences\footnote{95. trividhamanumānānākhyātām / Ibid.} viz. pūrvavat, sēṣavat and sāmānyatodṛṣṭa. The pūrvavat is that in which an effect is inferred from its cause. For example- from the existence of cloud in the sky it is inferred that it will rain. The sēṣavat is that in which the cause is inferred from its effect. Seeing the water of river as different from that in the past, as also the fullness of the river and the swiftness of the current, it is inferred that it had rained. The sāmānyatodṛṣṭa is illustrated by the example that seeing the changes in the position of the sun, it is inferred that there is movement of the sun, though imperceptible. Because the change in the position of an object is generally caused by its movement.\footnote{96. GB on SK, 5}
\item \footnote{97. āptasrutirāptavacanam / Ibid.} The Śāmkhya admits the verbal testimony as an independent means of knowledge in addition to perception and inference. It consists of verbal statements of some person or the śrutī. It is an important source of knowledge. Mukta Biswas rightly observes, “A major portion of a person’s stock of knowledge is acquired from the oral or written testimony of other persons. The verbal testimony requires an understanding of the meaning conveyed by words without which there is no possibility of verbal communication. The words of a foreign language carry no sense unless their meanings are clear. Thus, verbal testimony depends upon employment of words and understanding of their meanings. In verbal testimony knowledge arises through words and this fact differentiates it from the other two means of knowledge, i.e. perception and inference.”\footnote{98. Biswa, Mukta, Śāmkhya-Yoga Epistemology, P.184}
\end{itemize}
As a source of knowledge verbal testimony is applied by all human beings in their day to day dealing.

9. SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Śāṅkhya philosophy has attained a high status among the philosophical schools of India. As a matter of fact the philosophical importance of the system cannot be over estimated. It is obvious from the fact that there many modern scholars have discussed the salient features of this school. Probably Henry Thomus Colebrooke was the first European scholar who published some articles on Śāṅkhya philosophy in the transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society. Again, Prof. Gold Stukar made all arrangements for publishing the original Śāṅkhya-kārīka with its English version but his premature death stood in the way of his great aspiration. Sir Horace Hayman wilson published the work with his own commentary in 1837 A.D. In 1832 A.D, prof. Larsen published the original Śāṅkhya with its Latin version in Germany. Again in 1833 A.D. Prof. Panthere published the Śāṅkhya-Kārīka in Roman syllable with French translation in paris. Prof. Hall published Śāṅkhya-pravacana śūtra with the commentary of Vijnānabhikṣu in 1854-55 A.D. Later on, in 1862-65 A.D. Prof. Ballantyne published the English translation of Śāṅkhya-sūtra under the name Śāṅkhya Aphorisms of Kapila. In 1894 A.D. Garbe published the work 'Die Śāṅkhya Philosophie in German language which is the best book on Śāṅkhya in Foreign countries. Prof. Max Muller also discussed Śāṅkhya philosophy in his work Six Systems of Indian Philosophy. Another important and interesting book entitled the Śāṅkhya System was published by prof. A.B. Keith in 1919 A.D.

Thus we find that the philosophy of Śāṅkhya school has dealt in many works from nineteenth century A.D. onwards. However, in Assamese language there is a dearth of such work dealing with this philosophy. Some articles have been written here and there by some
scholars. But before Radhanath Phukan no comprehensive approach in this direction is noticed. Moreover, the uniqueness of the works of Radhanath Phukan lies in the fact that he has tried to explain the Samkhya tenets from the viewpoint of modern science. No such attempt has been done elsewhere so far as our knowledge goes.

Hence, a detailed study of the contribution of Radhanath Phukan is felt necessary. This will undoubtedly contribute to the understanding of Radhanath’s works. Accordingly, the present study has been undertaken in order to show the distinctive feature of his philosophical views and to ensure his proper place among the contemporary philosophers of India.