Comparison (upamāna), in Indian Philosophy, is the means of valid knowledge, denotative relation between a word and certain class of objects through the intermediary knowledge of similarity, dissimilarity or particular characteristics conveyed by the authoritative statement. When we see a certain object and recall another, this knowledge that we have of the similarity of the recalled object to the seen one is said to be due the upamāna. The stock case of the knowledge of upamāna arises when a city dweller familiar with the cow but unfamiliar with the object denoted by the word ‘gavaya’ (or ‘gayal’) hears from a reliable forest-born person that the ‘gavaya’ is an animal resembling a cow. Sure enough, he happens to go to the forest and comes across such an animal which is similar to a cow. Then he recollects the sense of the statement of the forest-born person and comes to know that the object before him is denoted by the word ‘gavaya’.

The two factors are involved in such argument by upamāna, viz., (i) the knowledge of the object (=gavaya) to be known and (ii) the perception of similarity. As such, upamāna involves the following steps- (a) A person hears an authoritative statement, e.g. ‘the gavaya is like cow’. (b) He observes similarity of gavaya with a cow. (c) He remembers the statement received from the reliable person. (d) He argues by comparison that this kind of object is denoted by the word ‘gavaya’.

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Upāmana is derived from the words 'upa' and 'māna'; here 'upa' means contiguity (sāmīpya) or similarity, i.e. 'sādrśya' and 'māna' means cognition. Etymologically, Upāmana = upa + vā (bhāve) 'lyut', here 'upa' means contiguous and 'māna' means knowledge and therefore 'upamāna' is the knowledge of contiguity (sāmīpya) or the knowledge of the similarity between two things. Contiguity or 'sāmīpya' means the possession of common characteristics (cf. sāmānyā ⇒ samānānāṃ bhāvaḥ). Derivatively it is the knowledge gained by comparison. This derivative meaning, however, requires certain qualifications in order to give a complete definition of upamāna. Though the word upamāna has been variously translated as analogy, comparison, identification, knowledge by similarity and knowledge by assimilation, yet its derivative meaning suggests, that comparison is the proper substitute. In general sense, upamāna is the standard of comparison, that with which anything is compared, just opposite of upameya (comparable with).

The Advaita Vedānta, the Mīmāṃsā and the Nyāya system agree in adopting upamāna as an independent source of valid knowledge, but the other systems reject upamāna as an independent source of knowledge. While going through its details in the texts, we find that the conceptions of different schools or of the same school in different works do not absolutely coincide. The upholders of upamāna as an independent source of valid knowledge also differ in details.
Gautamaaphorizes that *upamāna* is way of proving what is to be proved through a thing's sharing qualities with what is already known. According to him, there are quite a few different theories about precisely what kind of knowledge this resulting knowledge is. He argues that it is exceptional, being neither a *pratyakṣa* (perception) nor an *upamāna* (inference). The reason for its not being perception is that its content includes a reference to linguistic usage of the word 'gavaya', and usage cannot be perceived. Gautama states that it is not *upamāna* since *upamāna* gives us knowledge about things which can be verified through *pratyakṣa*.

In the *Nyāya* system, we have divergence of view regarding instrumentality in *upamāna*. Gautama equates *upamāna* with the well-known similarity, Vātsyāyana accepts it as the authoritative statement conveying similarity, whereas *Udyotakāra* takes it as the knowledge of the well known similarity.

Jayantabhaṭṭa defends Vātsyāyana and attacks *Udyotakāra*. He finds a divergence of opinion among his predecessors regarding the nature of *upamāna*. According to him, we cannot perceive similarity since both ex­hypotheses of the things whose similarity is supposed to be perceived are not present. The similarity is grasped directly from the verbal authority, and

1. Winn; I NS., I.1.6, p.424
as Vātsyāyana believes, it is the memory of this similarity which is the first of the two conditions. According to Vācaspati, the word 'prasiddhasādharmya' forms the essential part of the definition of upamāna².

According to him, the term sādharmya is used elliptically for the properties in general. He suggests that the word 'yatah' should be inserted in the sastra forming the definition of upamāna, so that it should without doubt be applicable to the karaṇa (instrument) only.

Thus, according to the Naiyāyikas, upamāna is the source of knowledge of relation either between name (sarañjñā) and a thing (sarañjñāna) or between word and its denotation³.

The Mīmāṁsakas also accept upamāna as an independent source of knowledge, but it is fundamentally different from the Naiyāyikas. It is remarkable that Jaimini, the author of the Mīmāṁsā-sūtra does not speak of upamāna. It is Śabara who discusses the nature of upamāna. The Prabhākara and the Bhaṭṭa school of Mīmāṁsā commented upon Śabara's exposition.

Śabaravāmin defines upamāna as knowledge of an unperceived object as being similar to some known objects ⁴. He uses the same term for the

². साध्यसाधनमित्युच्चमाने प्रत्यशादिसाधने भुत्व खसाधने प्रसंग: अत: उक्त: प्रसिद्धसाधाम्यादिति। NVTT., I.1.6
³. ‘यथा गौः एवं गव्यः’ इत्युपयुक्ते गौ समानधर्मार्थमुलद्रिग्यार्थे-सत्विकाव्यौ उपलभ्यमानः। अत्य गव्य-शब्दः संज्ञा इति संज्ञा-संज्ञिसाधनेन्द्र द्रिपि। NBh., (I.1.6), pp.169-170
⁴. उपमानमयपि सादृश्यमुः असत्विकाव्यमञ्ज्य चुद्मुः उत्तप्तति। SBh., I.1.5
means of knowledge and the resultant knowledge. The definition leaves the nature of resultant knowledge unexplained.

He has expressed it with the help of an example - 'just as the perception of the gavaya is the cause of the remembrance of the cow'\(^5\). Kumarila Bhaṭṭa rejects his interpretation on the ground that it would amount to remembrance\(^6\).

Prabhākara also understand similarity as the means of upamāna. He construes the term 'gosmaraṇa', from the example of Śabara, in the sense of the agent in upamāna and renders it as in the case of pratyakṣa (perception) of one who has already seen a cow\(^7\).

The Vaiśeṣika system accepts two pramāṇas, viz. (i) pratyakṣa and (ii) upamāna. This system reduces upamāna to anumāna. They refuse to accept upamāna as an independent source of knowledge. The Vaiśeṣika-sūtra does not refer to upamāna. Praśastapāda says that it is the means of conveying the knowledge of 'gavaya' by an authoritative person through the similarity to the cow to a man who does not know it earlier. However, it is nothing other than śabda (verbal testimony). On the other hand, verbal testimony is also a case of anumāna (inference), and hence, upamāna (comparison) is also a

5. यथा गवयदर्शनं गोस्मरणस्य। *ibid.*
6. सदृशादुपपनावतं या मतिः सदृशान्तः।
   ध्यानादिस्मृतिप्रयत्नत्वात् सा नराणां कथं भवेत्? *SV., (उपमान ४)*, p.308
7. गोस्मरणस्येति, अनुभूतगो: पुरुषस्य। *Brh., p.107.*
case of inference. The *Paribhāṣākāra* questions the *Vaiśeṣika* as to what the knowledge of the mark (*liṅga*) is in arriving at similarity to *gavaya* (*gavayasādṛśya*) in the cow. The author argues that even if such inference (*anumāna*) is made deliberately, the knowledge of similarity of 'gavaya' which exists in the cow (*goniśṭhagavayasādṛśyajñāna*) is arrived at by ordinary experience. Therefore, that should be a *vyabhicāri liṅga*. In addition to this Dharmaṛaja argues that there is the apperception 'I am comparing' *upaminni)* in such cases and as such it is only a case of analogical knowledge. So *upamāṇa*, i.e. comparison cannot be replaced by inference.

The *Sāṁkhya -Yoga* system explains *upamāṇa* as a form of *anumāṇa* and therefore, neither accept *upamāṇa* as a distinct type of knowledge nor as an independent way of knowing. The *Sāṁkhyakārikā* states that the additional means postulated by other systematists are included under *pratyakṣa*, *anumāṇa*, and *śabda* only. As 'gavaya' is like the cow, thus *upamāṇa* has been illustrated by means of *śabda* (verbal testimony). This is purely verbal when it is uttered by an elderly-experienced person (*vrddhavyavahāra*) to cognize an un-experienced person about the unknown beast 'gavaya'. The *Yuktidīpikā* takes notice the view of the *Nyāya* on *upamāṇa* only and includes *upamāṇa* under verbal testimony (*śabda*). It is the valid statement which lead one to the knowledge arrived at through *upamāṇa*.

8. उपमिन्निमि इत्युपमावसायच्छ । तस्मादुपमानमनन्तरम् । *VP.*, p.84
9. कथा गौरवें गवयेति चातोपदेशशब्लानु । प्रतिपः अप्रतिपः गवयमुपलभते न सादृश्यमाचातु । तस्मात् न शब्दात् पूथपुष्पमाम् । *YD.*, 4

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The Sāṃkhya system objects that *upamāna* is not a separate means of valid knowledge, i.e. *pramāṇa* but say it is a case of perception (*pratyakṣa*). The Sāṃkhya thinkers argue that the features from which a statement of similarity between the 'gavaya' and the cow is obtained are identical in the cow and the 'gavaya'. So they hold just like the knowledge of similarity to the cow (gosādrśyajñāna) present in the 'gavaya' due to 'sannikarṣa', so also in the recollected cow also (gavayasādrśyajñāna) is (pratyakṣa) perceptible. Therefore, *upamāna* cannot be a separate *pramāṇa*.

The Advaita Vedāntin rejects the view of the Sāṃkhya on the ground that the cow is not in proximity with the sense organ when the resulting knowledge (*jñāna*) is produced and hence it cannot be a case of *pratyakṣa*.

The Cārvākas contend that *upamāna* is not a source of knowledge, if knowledge at all; since *upamāna* cannot give us any true or valid knowledge about the denotation of words.

The Bauddhas recognize *upamāna* as a form of valid knowledge, but do not admit *upamāna* to be an independent source of valid knowledge. The Buddhist logicians include it within *pratyakṣa* or śabda.

The Jaina system reduces *upamāna* to 'pratyabhijñā' (recognition). According to the Jains *pratyabhijñā* is a kind of synthetic judgment of perception and remembrance. As for example, 'the cow is like the *gavaya*'. This is the example of judgment arising out of similarity.
The *Advaita Vedānta* like the *Mīmāṃsā* gives an independent status to *upamāṇa*, but the other schools of *Vedānta* disagree in this matter.

The *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school of *Vedānta* accepts *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāṇa* (inference) and *śabda* (verbal testimony) only as the independent source of knowledge, and includes the additional sources postulated by other systematists under these three only. Regarding sources of knowledge or epistemology, Rāmānuja states that valid knowledge is the knowledge which apprehends an object as it really exists. Śrīnivāsa and some other post-Rāmānuja *Viśiṣṭādvaita* philosophers have admitted one more source of valid knowledge and that is *upamāṇa*.

According to the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school, *upamāṇa* can be included under any of the perception, inference and verbal testimony in accordance with the stress upon a particular aspect of *upamāṇa*.

The *Dvaita* school of *Vedānta* also admits *pratyakṣa*, *anumāṇa* and *śabda* only as independent sources of knowledge, any other sources are included under one or the other of these three, Mādhavācārya states that like *arthāpatti*, *upamāṇa* is the particular form of inference. Specially, Jayatīrtha, a famous

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10. तानि प्रमाणानि प्रत्यक्षानुमानानुमानक्रियानि जीणि | *YMD*, p.8
11. अर्थापत्तुपमे अनुमानविशेष: | *PPr*, p.44

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commentator on the *Pramāṇa prakaraṇa* of Madhava-cārya discusses the inclusion of *upamāṇa* under other source of knowledge more elaborately.

Vallabhācārya, the founder of the pure non-dualistic school of Śuddhādvaita and Nimbārka, the founder of the Dvaitādvaita dualistic monism) of the Vedānta also accept only above mentioned three sources of valid knowledge, viz., (i) perception, (ii) inference and (iii) verbal testimony. According to them, *upamāṇa* is included under these three.

The Advaita Vedānta is one of the upholders of *upamāṇa* as an independent source of knowledge or *pramāṇa*. However, the Advaita Vedānta account of *upamāṇa* fundamentally differs from that of the Naiyāyikas. There is divergence of opinion regarding the nature of resultant knowledge through *upamāṇa*.

According to Naiyāyikas the resultant knowledge is the knowledge that a certain word denotes a certain class of objects. But, according to the Advaita Vedāntins, like the Mīmāṁsakas, the resultant knowledge pertains to the similarity which the remembered object bears to the directly perceived one.

*Upamāṇa* has been defined by Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra in the *VP* as the instrument, i.e. *karaṇa* of *upamiti* which in turn is the resultant knowledge in the form of similarity. The stock case of the knowledge of *upamāṇa* arises when a man perceives a cow in the city and comes across a 'gavaya'.

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12. तत्र सादृश्यप्रमाणकरणं उपमानम् | *VP*, p.83
in the forest, he comes to understand that object perceived is like the cow. Sure enough, 'my cow is like the object perceived' and asserts the knowledge of cow as qualified by its similarity to the 'gavaya'.

The Paribhāṣākāra is of the opinion that the instrumentality is the knowledge of the similarity which the gavaya bears to the cow and the resultant knowledge is the knowledge of similarity which the cow bears to the 'gavaya'. Here, the psychological process involves four steps: first, there is the knowledge or perception of points of similarity in the 'gavaya'. Secondly, through the similarity is revived the memory of the cow seen earlier in the city.

Thirdly, there arises the knowledge that the perceptible 'gavaya' is like the cow and lastly there is the consequent knowledge that the cow seen earlier is similar to the 'gavaya' seen at present, or, in other words, the cow seen earlier is qualified by the similarity to the 'gavaya' seen at present.

Ānandapūrṇa Munindra also called Ānandapūrṇa Vidyāsāgara in his Nyāyacandrika defines upamiti as the knowledge of similarity which the object situated at a distance bears to that present near the observer. He explains the position with the help of the example containing the psychological process.
in *upamāna* that the resultant knowledge through it refers to the cow qualified by the similarity to 'gavaya'\(^\text{16}\).

The *Advaita* Vedāntins try to establish the independent position of *upamāna*. Accordingly they opine that the knowledge of cow qualified by its similarity to the *gavaya* can not be a case of *pratyakṣa* or others. This can be accepted that the similarity is perceived through sense-object contact which makes it a case of *pratyakṣa*, but still, it can not be a case of *pratyakṣa*. Because, the knowledge of cow as qualified by its similarity to *gavaya* is not perceived at the time of knowing it. Hence, it remains to be classed apart\(^\text{17}\).

Keeping in view the independent status of *upamāna*, the Advaitins state that *upamāna* cannot be a case of *anumāna* as well. To put it more clearly, the *Advaita Vedānta* argues that the resultant knowledge supposed to be acquired through *upamāna* is acquired through *anumāna* also.

This cow bears the similarity to that *gavaya*, because of having same quality etc., as that *gavaya*. Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra further says that the knowledge of similarity cannot be acquired through *anumāna*, because the similarity cannot be acquired through *anumāna*, because the similarity which the *gavaya* bears to the cow can not serve as a mark or probans in *anumāna*\(^\text{18}\). It can not be acquired from *anumāna*, for similarity existing in a wild cow with a

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\(^{16}\) *Sādārāṇविनशिष्टगोमानयुपायितः* \(\text{ibid.}, \text{p.279}\)

\(^{17}\) *त च प्रत्यक्षण सम्भवति, गोपिण्डस्य तदेनितियसास्लिक्षणः* \(\text{VP,} \text{p.84}\)

\(^{18}\) *नाप्युपायेन, गवयनिष्टगोसूचयस्य अतिलिङ्गयावतः* \(\text{ibid.,} \text{p.84}\)
cow cannot serve as a mark of *anumāna* as follows: My cow is similar to this wild cow (*gavaya*), because she is the correlate of similarity existing is this wild cow, whatever is the correlate (*pratiyogi*) of similarity with another thing is similar to it, as Caitra, the correlate of similarity existing in Maitra, is similar to Maitra.

The Advaitins and the Mīmāṃsakas consider *upamāna* as a distinct means of mediate knowledge, which is different from *anumāna* or inference. According to the Vedantin who follows the Mīmāṃsaka, knowledge obtained through *upamāna* is as: A person who has the knowledge of the cow goes to a forest and sees a *gavaya*, then he cognizes the similarity that the *gavaya* is like his own cow. At that moment the person forms the judgment that his cow is like that *gavaya*. This perception of the similarity to the cow present in the *gavaya* is the special cause of the *upamiti*, the cognition of the similarity in the cow to that of the *'gavaya'* is the result. This type of knowledge by comparison is neither perception nor inference.

But some thinkers like the Vaiśeṣikas argue that the Vedāntin's *upamāna* can be reduced to an inference. The Vaiśeṣikas say that it is possible to derive *upamāna* through a syllogism as: 'My cow is similar to this *gavaya*, since it is the correlate (*pratiyogi*) of similarity present in this'.

19. [ibid., p.83](#)
In reply to this objection, our author argues that even the form of syllogism is not actually observed in our common life as leading to the knowledge that my cow is similar to the 'gavaya' present before. On the other hand, the similarity which the cow bears the gavaya is cognized through common experience and is not deduced through syllogism. However, the 'anuvyavasāya' which determines the nature of the source of knowledge is in the form that 'I know through similarity' and not through the function of syllogism. Upamāna cannot be brought under śabda or verbal testimony also. Such knowledge does not obviously arise from verbal testimony, since the person who hears that a gavaya is like a cow is not given any further idea of the gavaya's attributes and so does not know that gavaya denotes that animal until he sees it. In other words, verbal testimony is not a factor to decide the invariable concomitance.

Dharmarāja suggests to the Vaiśeṣikas two alternatives, viz. Is it that, in arriving at the knowledge of similarity of gavaya which exists in the cow (goniṣṭha gavaya sādṛśya) the knowledge of similarity of a cow 'gavaya' (gavayaniṣṭha gosādṛśya) is the līrīga in which case, since the similarity to the cow present in the 'gavaya' (gavayaniṣṭha gosādṛśya) is not present in the cow, it cannot be held to be present in the subject (pakṣa) as it will be a fallacious reasoning. In the alternative if it be argued that it is 'gavayaniṣṭha gosādṛśya pratiyogītvam' that is the līrīga in arriving at ('goniṣṭha gavaya
sādṛṣya jñāna), the knowledge of the similarity of 'gavaya' which exists in the cow and therefore, anumāna (inference) is possible 20.

Our author is of opinion that the instrumentality is the knowledge of the similarity which the gavaya bears to the cow and the resultant knowledge is the knowledge of similarity which the cow bears to the gavaya 21. It is seen here that the psychological process involves four steps, viz., first, there is the knowledge or perception of points of similarity in the gavaya. Secondly, through the similarity is revived the memory of the cow seen earlier in the city. Thirdly, there arises the knowledge that the perceptible gavaya is like the cow and lastly, there is the consequent knowledge that the cow seen earlier is similar to the gavaya seen at present, or, in other words, the cow seen earlier is qualified by the similarity to the gavaya seen at present.

The Advaitins hold that a knowledge of the relation of the samjña and the samjñīn is the result of knowledge of similarity (sādṛṣya). According to them, knowledge of similarity (i.e. upamāna) is the instrument (i.e. karaṇa) and recollection of a forester's statement is the activity (vyāpāra).

As such, it should be noted that the Advaitin accepts the essentials of upamāna as postulated by the Mīmāṃsakas, but still, the practical utility of upamāna accepted by the Mīmāṃsakas may not be accepted by the Advaita Vedānta. The Mīmāṃsakas hold that upamāna in replacing one object by the

20. ibid., p.84, SM., pp.233-234.
21. गवयनिष्ठयोसादृश्यज्ञानं करणम्, गोनिष्ठगवयसादृश्यज्ञानं फलम्। VP, op.cit.
other similar to it in the context of the sacrificial rites. It would not be consistent with the spirit of the Advaita Vedānta. They would accept upamāṇa for the purpose of explaining super natural experience on the analogy of common worldly experience, i.e. to explain the unobserved fact through its similarity to the observed one. Thus, the sole purpose of the Vedānta unlike the Mīmāṃsā, is not fulfilled with the ritualistic interpretation of the scriptural statement. On the contrary, the Vedānta system aims at providing the correct interpretation of scriptural statement regarding the knowledge of ultimate reality. Therefore, the purpose of the upamāṇa should be accepted as the explanation of the analogy of the common experience. The Advaita Vedantins would accept upamāṇa for explaining the passages speaking of super natural experience of reality which reminds the experience of common life.

Thus Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra who follows the Mīmāṃsakas in the upamāṇa-pariccheda of his VP try to establish upamāṇa (comparison) as a distinct means of mediate knowledge.