In chapter two of the present dissertation, we have already stated about Prakṛti and Puruṣa in brief. Here we propose to make a detail account of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

Prakṛti is the first and foremost of all the twenty-five principles of the Sāṁkhya system. Prakṛti is not a product. Therefore, it is called Avikāra. It is also called Mūlaprakṛti which produces. It is called Pradhāna which represents the three attributes of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in the state of equilibrium. They are in a state of equipoise which is not inactivity but a kind of tension. Prakṛti is the triad of Guṇas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and not a different entity which is their substratum. They are not its attributes, but its very form. This is the definition of the original Prakṛti (mūlaprakṛti), the root evolvent, which is not caused. It is the uncaused cause or the First cause. Prakṛti is imperceptible owing to its subtlety. Subtlety does not mean atomic nature, since prakṛti is all pervasive. Subtlety means a general attribute

1. prakaroti prakṛtiḥ pradhānam, sattvarajastamasām
   sāmyāvasthā, sā avikṛtiḥ. STK, under SK. K, 3.
which prevents the right cognition of it by perception.

Prakṛti is called Pradhāna, because all effects are founded on it. It is absolutely unmanifested, while its evolutes are manifested. So it is called avyakta. Prakṛti cannot be called primal matter, because it is the ground of all modifications, physical psychical. All inorganic, organic, and mental products are modifications of Prakṛti, which is the prius of all creation. Prakṛti is the unconscious matrix of all modifications, physical and psychical - the root cause of all objective existence. 2

Following are the proofs for the existence of the Prakṛti according to Śāṁkhya philosophers.

(1) All the things of our experience in the world are limited in magnitude, and are dependent on one another. Whatever is limited is dependent on something more enduring and pervasive than itself. The finite is finite and cannot be the source of the universe. The source of the universe must, therefore, be an unlimited, infinite and self-dependent substance, which is Prakṛti.

(2) Things of the world possess certain common characters by virtue of which everyone of them is capable of producing pleasure, pain and indifference. Therefore,

2. SPS, i, 61, 67 and 126.
they must have a common source from which they issue. This common source is Prakṛti with its three constituents Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

(3) All effects proceed from the activity of some cause which contains their potentiality within it. Therefore, the word which is an effect, must have been implicitly contained in some world-cause. This world-cause is Prakṛti.

(4) An effect arises from its cause, and is again resolved into the cause at the moment it is dissolved. The effect is the manifestation of the cause into which it is re-absorbed at the moment of destruction. The empirical universe is the manifestation of Prakṛti.

(5) The existence of Prakṛti cannot be denied on the plea that it is imperception. There are ever so many things which are accepted as real, though they are not open to perception. The fineness of Prakṛti renders it imperceptible. From the perception of the effect we can infer its cause, since there can be no effect without a cause. The world as an effect, must also arise from a cause, and this cause is Prakṛti. 

3. bheda-anam parima-nah samanvayat saktitah pravṛttesa' / karaṇakāryavibhāgad avibhāgadvaisvārūpyasya //

SK. K. 15.
The Sāmkhya advocates the dualism of Prakṛti and souls. They are entirely different from each other, because they have opposite characteristics. Prakṛti is composed of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, while souls are not discriminating. Prakṛti is an aggregate, while souls are simple. Prakṛti is the object of knowledge, while souls are the subjects of knowledge. Prakṛti is common to many persons, while souls are different in different bodies. Prakṛti is unconscious, while souls are conscious. Prakṛti is productive and transformed into modifications, while souls are non-productive and not subject to modification. Souls are neither causes nor effects. They are unchangeable and immutable. All things change every moment except the conscious souls. Prakṛti is active, while souls are inactive. Prakṛti is constant in the midst of mutation, while souls are eternal and beyond all mutations. The essential difference between Prakṛti and souls lies in that the former is the unconscious and known object, while the latter are the conscious knowers of subjects.

The Sāmkhya puts forward the following arguments to establish the existence of a soul. (1) Prakṛti, cosmic intellect, cosmic egoism and the like are aggregates of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and therefore means to the ends of other beings, like beds, chairs, and the like. They are unconscious and serve the ends of conscious souls. The body is an aggregate of the five gross elements and enjoyed by a
soul even as a bed is enjoyed by it. The soul is not an aggregate. It is different from the body, mind, intellect and egoism, which are aggregates of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. (2) All knowable objects are non-intelligent, non-discriminating, objects of knowledge, and composed of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Therefore, they presuppose and intelligent, discriminating subject of knowledge, devoid of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. All knowable objects presuppose the knowing self. (3) All non-intelligent products of Prakṛti, inorganic things, plant organisms, and animal organisms, must be controlled and directed by the intelligent souls even as non-intelligent chariots move when they are controlled and guided by charioteers. Matter is inert and cannot act by itself; it can act only when it is controlled by a soul. So all material objects of the world require guidance by intelligent souls. Prakṛti and its activities are guided by the souls which supervise them. (4) Prakṛti is composed of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which are held by some to be feeling-substances - pleasure, pain and delusion. They are object of experience, and presuppose of subjects of experience. The mind (buddhi) cannot be the experiencer, because it is unconscious. pleasure and pain are mental modes. The mind cannot be self and not-self, subject and object at the same time, since it is self-contradictory. The self, which is different from the mind, is the experiencer of pleasure and pain which are its modes.
Each self feels its own pleasure and pain, which are modes of its mind. Experience belongs to the immutable self. It cannot belong to the body, or the mind, which is not self, and cannot, therefore, become the knowing self. (5) Some spiritual aspirants strive and struggle to achieve liberation. Liberation consists is absolute cessation of three kind of pain. The mind and the like are themselves in the nature of pain. They are mental modes. So the mind can never be relieved from pain. It is only the self, which is distinct from the mind and the like, which can be relieved from pain and achieve liberation.

The most perplexing point of the Sāmkhya is the problem of the relation between Puruṣa or self and Prakṛti, without which evolution is impossible. Puruṣa, according to Sāmkhya is conscious but inactive and without any quality. Puruṣa is eternal, pure, conscious, liberated. Prakṛti, on the other hand, is unconscious but eternally evolving or changing. Puruṣa and Prakṛti are two separate and independent realities. Puruṣa is only a passive witness of the evolution. Prakṛti and Puruṣa are opposite in nature. Prakṛti is unconscious, while Puruṣa is consciousness. Prakṛti is active and ever evolving, but Puruṣa is

4. saṁghātaparārthatvāt tṛguṇādiviparyayādhiṣṭhānāt /
   puruṣo'sti bhoktṛbhāvātkāivalyārtham pravṛttesa //

Sk, K, 17.
beyond change and activity. The Śāṁkhya, however, holds that evolution of the world is due to the contact and cooperation of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The evolution of Prakṛti is not mechanical. Prakṛti act to realise the ends of Puruṣa. Prakṛti evolves the world to "raise the soul from its slumber". It evolves the world for the experience (bhoga) of Puruṣa and for its liberation. The evolution of the world is due to the activity of Prakṛti, which, "though mechanical, effects results which suggest strongly the wisest compulsion of sagacity". But the Śāṁkhya makes it quite clear that the activity of Prakṛti is not due to any conscious reflection. The Śāṁkhya employs analogies to explain the activity of unconscious Prakṛti to fulfill the ends of Puruṣa. The non-intelligent Prakṛti is said to act even as the non-intelligent trees grow fruits or even as the milk of the cow is secreted for the purposes of nourishing the calf.

If Prakṛti were spontaneously active, then there can be no liberation, because Prakṛti's activity will be unceasing. If, again, Prakṛti were spontaneously inactive, then the world will never be produced. "The Śāṁkhya admits that the activity of Prakṛti implies a mover not itself in motion, though it produces movement". The evolution of Prakṛti implies spiritual agency. But the Puruṣa is incapable of exerting any direct influence or Prakṛti. The Śāṁkhya says that mere presence of Puruṣa
excites Prakṛti to activity and development. Though Puruṣa is not endowed with any creative efficiency, Prakṛti produces the manifold world on account of its union with Puruṣa. The union of the two is compared to a lame man of good vision mounted on shoulders of a blind man of sure foot. A lame man and a blind man, deserted in a forest, co-operate with each other to come out of the forest. The lame man is mounted on the shoulder of the blind man, while the blind man pursues the route by the directions of his companion. The lame man can see but cannot move, while the blind man cannot see but can move. In the same manner, faculty of seeing is in the Puruṣa, though not that of moving, it is like the lame man, the faculty of moving is in Prakṛti, but not of seeing, which resembles, therefore, the blind man. Prakṛti evolves the world under directions from Puruṣa. As a separation takes place between the lame man and the blind man when their mutual object is accomplished and when they have reached the end of their journey, so Prakṛti having effected the liberation of Puruṣa having the knowledge of its distinction from Prakṛti, obtains liberation. Their respective purposes are effected, and the connection between them is dissolved. 5

5. puruṣasya darsanārtham kaivalyārtham tathā pradhānasya/ paṅgavanidhavidubhavorapi saṁyogastatkṛtāḥ sarvāḥ //

SK, K, 21.
The first cause in the cosmic process is the Puruṣa. But the causation of Puruṣa is purely mechanical, being due not to its volition, but to its mere proximity. Puruṣa moves the world by a kind of action which is not movement. It is compared to the attraction of a magnet for the iron. Just as a magnet attracts iron by its proximity, so the Puruṣa moves Prakṛti by its mere proximity. Just as the magnet is the unmoved mover of the iron, so the Puruṣa is the unmoved mover of Prakṛti.

The Puruṣa or the self really exerts influence in Prakṛti. But the nature of this influence is unintelligible. The relation between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is a mystery. The analogies employed by the Sāmkhya have not been able to explain the relation. The analogy of the lame man and the blind man cannot be extended to Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Both the lame man and the blind man are conscious and intelligent while Prakṛti is non-intelligent. The analogy of the magnet is also untenable, since the magnet, though apparently unmoved mover, is not really inactive. The question of the purpose of the activities of Prakṛti, raised by Śaṅkarācārya, deserves mention. The evolution of Prakṛti cannot be for the enjoyment of Puruṣa, since Puruṣa is incapable of pleasure of pain. If it is still argued that Prakṛti's activities are for the liberation of Puruṣa, then Puruṣa can never attain its release. Purusa, being inactive will never...
make any effort to attain release, and Prakṛti, being uncon­
scious, will go on evolving without feeling and necessity to stop the process. If release or liberation be the ultimate end of the activities of Prakṛti then it is to be said that Puruṣa, who was all along liberated before the equilibrium of three Guṇas were disturbed, co-operates with Prakṛti to be caught in its web. This is impossible. Hence, we are to conclude that the activities of Prakṛti is not due to the presence of Puruṣa, who are always present. The evolution of Prakṛti is due to their non-discrimination. The activities of Prakṛti are meant for the consumption of the jīvas, who, on account of imperfect insight, identify themselves with their liṅgaśārīras or subtle bodies, and stand in need of discriminative knowledge. The Sāmkhya finds it extremely difficult to account for the relation between Puruṣa and Prakṛti since it starts with an un-compromising dualism. The analogies are poor intellectual device to relate the two heterogeneous realities.

Plurality of Puruṣa:

One of the special features of the Sāmkhya system is the plurality of souls. According to Advaita Vedānta there is one universal soul abiding in all bodies. But the Sāmkhya system does not accept this. According to Sāmkhya, there are many selves, each body is inhabited by an independent self. This doctrine of Sāmkhya is known as the
doctrine of the plurality of self (Puruṣa bahutva). We find about this in the Sāmkhya Sūtra of Kapila.6

Īśvarakṛṣṇa Misra, in his Sāmkhya-Kārika, mentions the arguments in support of establishing this doctrine. According to him the arguments are: (1) there is definite adjustment of birth, death and the sense organs, (2) there is non simultaneity of activity and (3) there is diversity due to the three attributes.

Vācaspati Misra, while commenting on the Kārika of Īśvarakṛṣṇa referring to the doctrine of plurality of soul, elaborates the arguments. The birth of Puruṣa consists in its connection with a new set of body, sense organ, mind etc. formed of a composit particular character. It does not mean modification inasmuch as Puruṣa is essentially unchangeable. In this way death also consists in giving up of the body and rest. It cannot mean destruction as Puruṣa' is unchangeably eternal. The sense organs are thirteen beginning with Great principle. The definite adjustment of these, birth and the rest stands for the fact that one set of these - body etc. are connected only with one spirit or Puruṣa. This cannot be explained on the hypothesis of there being only one Puruṣa. For, if the Puruṣa were one and the same in all body, then on

7. jananamaraṇakaraṇānāṁ pratiniyamādayugapratpravṛtttesca /
   puruṣabahutvam sidham traiguṇyaviparyāccaiva//
   SK. K. 18.
the birth of one all would be born, on the death of one, all would die. So, there would be no adjustment. On the other hand, if there is a distinct spirit belonging to each set of body etc., adjustment becomes secured. The adjustment cannot be explained by attributing it to the single spirit.

Secondly, since activity is not simultaneous spirit must be different with different bodies. Though activity is not simultaneous the form of effort is a function of the internal organs, yet it is here attributed to this spirit. If this spirit were one, the activity of one man would lead to the similar activity in all other noun. But this is not so. Therefore, plurality of the spirit is to be admitted.

Thirdly, the spirit must be many as there is diversity because of the three attributes. Here diversity of these means differentiation. Some persons abounding in the

8. teṣām janamamarāṇakaraṇānāṁ pratiniyāma vyavasthā. 
   sā khalviyāṁ sarvārīṛeṣvekasmin puruṣe nopapadyate. 
   tadā khalvekasmin puruṣe jāyamāne sarve jāyeren, 
   mṛyamāne ca mṛyeren. STK under SK. K. 13.

9. tatha ca tasminnekatra sarire prayatamāne, sa eva 
   sarva sarvārīṛeṣveka iti sarvatra prayateta, tatasca: 
   sarvāṁya eva sarārāṁi yugapaccālayet. Ibid.
Sattva represents aggregates of that attribute. Others again abound in the Rajas and some others again abound in Tamas. This diversity due to the distribution of the attribute in various entities could not be explained if the spirit were one and the same in all.

In spite of the Sāmkhya efforts to establish the theory of many selves, it appears that the Sāmkhya arguments for the plurality of selves have not established the theory beyond doubt. Birth, death, sense etc. are the characteristics of the body, and not of the self. The self, according to Sāmkhya's own admission, is neither the agent nor the enjoyer. The arguments of the Sāmkhya for the existence of many selves prove only the many-ness of the body and not the many-ness of the self. The Sāmkhya description of the nature of the self goes against its many-ness. If the self is, in nature, pure consciousness beyond change and activity, it can never be many.

According to Dr. Rādhākrīṣṭan the Sāmkhya view of Puruṣa is determined by the conception of Ātman in the Upaniṣads. It is without beginning or end, without any

10. kecitkhalu sattvanikāyāḥ sattvabahutāh, yathordhasrotasah; kecidrajobahutāh, yathā manusyabhūkṣeittamobahutāh puruṣabhide tvayamadoṣa iti. Ibid.
qualities, subtle and omnipresent, an eternal seer, beyond the senses, beyond the mind, beyond the sweep of intellect, beyond the range of time, space and causality, which form the warp and woof of the mosaic of the empirical world. It is unproduced and unproducing. Its eternity is not merely everlastingness, but immutability and perfection. It is of the form of consciousness (cidrūpa), though it does not know all things in the empirical sense, for empirical cognition is possible only through the limitations of body. When the self is set free from these limits, it has no cognition of modifications, but remains in its own nature. Purusa is unrelated to Prakṛti. It is mere witness, a solitary, indifferent, passive spectator. The characteristics of Prakṛti and Purusa are opposed in nature. Prakṛti is non-consciousness (acetanam), while Purusa is consciousness (sacetanam). Prakṛti is active and ever-revolving.

12. SPS. Vṛtti, VI. 59.
14. tasmācc ca viparyāsātsiddham sākṣitvamasya puruṣasya / kaivalyamādhyasthyam draṣṭṛtvamakatśbhāvasca // sk.k. 19.
amūrtasa' cetano bhogī nityaḥ sarvagatōkriyaḥ / akartā nirguṇaḥ sūkṣma ātmā kāpiladarsane //
while Puruṣa is inactive (akartā). Puruṣa is unalterable constant, while Prakṛti is so alterably. Prakṛti is characterised by the three Guṇas, while Puruṣa is devoid of the Guṇas; Prakṛti is the object, while Puruṣa is the subject.

As rightly observed by Prof. K.P. Sinha, the Sāmkhya theory of the plurality of the empirical selves may lead to different position regarding the transcendent existence of the selves, and it is risky to say that some or the other is the real position of the Sāmkhyāits. Hence, it is better to state plainly that the Sāmkhyāits accept the plurality of the empirical selves, but are silent on the problem whether the transcendent self is one or many.

15. RIP, p. 173.