CHAPTER – 5

CONCLUSION
5. Conclusion:

It has been our purpose through the forgoing discussions to have a critical appraisal of Sāṅkhya philosophy of prakṛti with special reference to Sāṅkhya-Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa as this particular text has been playing a crucial role in this oldest Indian philosophical school. In other words it can be said Sāṅkhya-Kārikā is leading the whole tradition in its own typical way although the author is much later from Kapila’s time. It seems Īśvarakṛṣṇa has given a new life to a dying system in Indian philosophical tradition, as till then there was no systematic text available on Sāṅkhya like other schools. The non-availability of pre-Kārikā text since the time of exponent Kapila is a mystery. Nothing can be said exactly about Kapila, regarding his time, his Sāṅkhya-Sūtra, whether he was a mythical figure and whether he was a theist or an atheist. This research work has been performed on the basis of available documents on Sāṅkhya and some logical analysis of it with a rational attitude.

It can be said, Īśvarakṛṣṇa has done the most significant work by giving a systematic leading text to this particular tradition though he is not the propounder. Credit must be given to him for his rational treatment of this system without much biasness towards any sect. After the Buddhists he was the prominent philosopher who was talking about atheism or whose philosophy was in reverse position to idealistic dominance. But if we see the content of this text, lots of confusions arise mainly due to its inner inconsistencies. As for example, though in Indian tradition Sāṅkhya is known as an āstika school, still
Iśvarakṛṣṇa has given less importance on the Vedic knowledge. Secondly, though Sāṁkhya is said to be the follower of Veda still it is not talking about existence of God which is a very controversial issue. Generally it is found the believers of Vedas have accepted the existence of God although the Mīmāṃsā School is something different from it. Critic says, probably in the judgment of Kapila the Vedic system is not perfectly efficient and sound. If it is so, here an important question arises regarding the inclusion of Sāṁkhya in the āstika tradition. The other inconsistencies in Sāṁkhya-Kārikā are related to the inclusion of puruṣa. Sometimes Iśvarakṛṣṇa make puruṣa responsible for the world evolution and sometimes he totally ignores it. After examining this issue the later is found to be more consistent and scientific. In maximum number of kārikās he makes the puruṣa principle secondary which can also be an indication of Iśvarakṛṣṇa's failure to fit puruṣa properly in the Kārikā. These inconsistencies may imply that Iśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṁkhya is not fitted in the orthodox tradition of Indian philosophy. From the rational thinking and practical approach of Iśvarakṛṣṇa, it can be imagined that probably he was about to propound a fully scientific and rationalistic system without any idealistic influence. But it seems, he had hesitations to propound a view completely opposite to the full blown idealistic tradition. The Buddhists could have been more or less the supporters of Iśvarakṛṣṇa but till then the Buddha philosophy itself was not much influential in front of idealistic dominance. That is why it can be thought, Iśvarakṛṣṇa might have made some compromises
with the idealistic tradition which resulted in the inconsistencies in Sāṃkhya-Kārikā.

As it is mentioned above, the inclusion of the spiritual principle puruṣa is one of the chief causes of the inconsistencies in Sāṃkhya. Īśvarakṛṣṇa kept puruṣa in his philosophy as a shadow of the Upaniṣadic ātman. But even then he brought down that puruṣa from the status enjoyed by an Upaniṣadic ātman. He allowed a multiplicity of puruṣas to be there which cannot be understood in other way but as empirical beings. It can be thought like the concept of God, the concept of puruṣa is also an unnecessary appendix to the Kārikā. Of course there are strong opponents according to whom without the spiritual principle like puruṣa the explanation of evolution of the world is not possible. But it can be said; most often they overlook the inconsistencies created by the inclusion of puruṣa in Sāṃkhya-Kārikā. It seems they always feel comfortable with some conventional orthodox views regarding the explanation of the origination of the world. With that it is to be remembered that philosophy will have to develop consistently with the progress of time and its approaches should be rationalistic rather than emotional. It will have to grow with the development of science. As in Sāṃkhya philosophy lots of scope can be observed for scientific development so such types of tendencies should not be suppressed by some metaphysical impositions.

Here one thing is needed to be kept in mind that some philosophers go to compare Sāṃkhya theory of evolution with the findings of modern physics and thereby try to establish Sāṃkhya as a fully scientific school. But this type
of over-enthusiasm also proves itself to be unscientific as it goes to deny the fact of change and development over the ages. It was not possible on scientific grounds for Sāṃkhya to discover all the truths of modern relativism and quantum physics. However we may say that Sāṃkhya started with scientific approach in not inviting any non-natural elements to take major part in the process of evolution. This tendency of Īśvarakṛṣṇa can be evidenced by many kārikās. For example in the kārikā no- LVII Īśvarakṛṣṇa says, the evolution of the world takes place without the guidance of any conscious principle, just as milk moves within the cow for the nourishment of the calf without being guided by any conscious principle. Here, it seems, Īśvarakṛṣṇa is trying to give importance on the doctrine of svabhāvavāda. Of course, it can be said, this example given by him is not based on sound logic. Yet the effort of Īśvarakṛṣṇa to give Sāṃkhya a scientific orientation must be appreciated.

If Īśvarakṛṣṇa would have talked about the existence of God and made him responsible for the world evolution then there would have been nothing to be said much; because in Indian tradition there is a tendency to give all the responsibilities to God. But as Īśvarakṛṣṇa has come forward by not talking about the existence of God, and is found the spiritual principle puruṣa very much inconsistent in the Kārikā, so a rational and neutral discussion is needed to find out the true motive of Īśvarakṛṣṇa and Sāṃkhya tradition. Probably, due to the dominance of idealistic dogmatism, Īśvarakṛṣṇa was not able to say what was really in his mind or what he found in the pre-Kārikā Sāṃkhya elements.
and may be because of that he includes *puruṣa* in his *Karikā* inconsistently and illogically to go in the same tune of the prevalent idealistic schools.

5.1: A Résumé:

At this culminating point of our study where we have concluded just above that *Sāṁkhya-Karikā* of *Īśvarakṛṣṇa* is full of inconsistencies though it is accepted as the popular leading text of the system. This may be because of his compromising attitude as he has brought some idealistic tendencies in spite of the domination of materialistic and atheistic elements in *Sāṁkhya-Kārikā*. Whatever may be the case, it must be said that *Īśvarakṛṣṇa* has done a great job for *Sāṁkhya* tradition, firstly by giving a leading text to the system and secondly making the system a rationalistic one barring some shortcomings.

We have started with an effort to discuss ‘what is *Sāṁkhya*’ and “what is the meaning of the word ‘*Sāṁkhya*’” which have got different meanings in the hands of different philosophers. Firstly, *Sāṁkhya* is found to be one of the oldest systems of Indian philosophy. Tradition regards Kapila as the founder. References of *Sāṁkhya* can be found in several *Upaniṣads, Gītā, Smṛties*, and the *Purāṇas* etc. for which interpreters even try to label *Sāṁkhya* as ‘philosophy of India’. *Sāṁkhya* system is very much remarkable for its rationalistic approach to the philosophical problems. For this rational attitude Garbe describes it as ‘the most significant system of philosophy that India has produced.’
Then we have discussed the historical development of Sāṁkhya which can be arranged conveniently into four basic periods i.e. Ancient speculation, Proto-Sāṁkhya speculation, Classical Sāṁkhya speculation including \textit{Sāṁkhya-Kārikā} and Later Sāṁkhya speculation. Different philosophers have interpreted Sāṁkhya differently, one section accepts it as fully orthodox school on the other hand some others hesitate to accept the same. Rather they try to project Sāṁkhya in the Class of Buddhism if not that of Cārvāka.

Afterwards we have entered into the exposition of the different concepts of \textit{Sāṁkhya-Kārikā} mentioned by Īśvarakṛṣṇa. The concept of evolution has covered the zest of Sāṁkhya. With that the theistic and atheistic Sāṁkhya traditions have been discussed. Here it is found though the Indian tradition is largely dominated by theistic school still even in the \textit{Ṛg Veda} itself atheistic idea was present in the form of skepticism and agnosticism. Pañcaśikha the well known Sāṁkhya teacher seems to have interpreted Kapila's Sāṁkhya in an atheistic manner which has got more systematic development in the \textit{Saṁhitā} of Caraka. After Caraka, Īśvarakṛṣṇa has given the atheistic account of Sāṁkhya which influence the whole tradition.

In the comparative analysis of \textit{Sāṁkhya-Kārikā} with early Sāṁkhya, Buddhism and \textit{Brahma Sūtra} it is found, the available scope for early Sāṁkhya elements are \textit{Vedas, Purāṇas, Mahābhārata, Gītā, Caraka-Saṁhitā} etc. but yet it is not easy to say whether the early Sāṁkhya was basically theistic or atheistic. If it is accepted as theistic then questions will arise -- from where
Iśvarakṛṣṇa has interpreted Sāṁkhya as atheistic school, what is the source of Iśvarakṛṣṇa’s Sāṁkhya-Kārikā, is it totally new account of Sāṁkhya etc.

Regarding the comparison with Buddhism it is found both of them are very much silent about the existence of God. Both of them have started their philosophy from the problems of our practical life not from some speculations of transcendental realities. Both of them have accepted that there is the possibility of cessation of the sufferings without considering the favour of the Almighty. Regarding chronology also, it can be imagined the early Sāṁkhya and Buddhism are contemporary to each other. That is why it can be thought, both of them might have had same philosophical attitude.

In the comparative analysis between Sāṁkhya-Kārikā and Brahma-Sūtra, first of all, the chronological gap between both of them can be noticed. Though Brahma-Sūtra is found to be earlier to Sāṁkhya-Kārikā, yet the commentaries including that of Śaṅkara are much later than the Kārikā. It is well known that the philosophical position of Brahma-Sūtra can be understood only by depending on the major commentators on it. It is found, Sāṁkhya, specially the Classical Sāṁkhya, is the prime opponent of the Vedānta philosophy and it seems Brahma-Sūtra took greatest care to refute the Sāṁkhya philosophy and in fact looked upon it as the most important challenge to the Vedānta system. It can give us the real indications as to the nature of original Sāṁkhya. After the discussions of these two traditions, it can be imagined, Vedānta is mainly based on faith while Sāṁkhya seems to adopt pure rationalism. Although Sāṁkhya is in the same class with Vedānta i.e.
āstika tradition, yet it has its own arguments and judgments. It formulates its own premises and draws conclusion from them. On the other hand the Vedānta takes its primary premises from the Vedas and Upaniṣads, and draws conclusion from them.

Chapter no - IV is devoted to some crucial issues which constitute the discussion of critical analysis of the Kārikā, its proximity to Lokāyata darśana, its naturalistic and scientific approaches which are very much important to have a proper investigation of Sāṁkhya. By the help of critical analysis of the Kārikā, the inner inconsistencies of it are found with evidence. The main inconsistencies are found to be due to the inclusion of inactive puruṣa, for criticizing Vedic knowledge as impure, for not talking about God in spite of being a Vedic system and some other self-contradicted and illogical views. In Sāṁkhya-Kārikā sometimes Īśvarakṛṣṇa says, evolution is due to the influence of puruṣa, and for this reason it comes into bondage and finally gets liberation. Prakṛti evolves due to the influence of puruṣa. On the other hand, in some other kārikās, specially in the kārikā no – LXII and LXIII Īśvarakṛṣṇa says, it is only prakṛti not puruṣa who evolves, comes into bondage and gets liberation by herself. If it is so, question arises regarding the relevance of puruṣa in Sāṁkhya philosophy. This view comes closer to the doctrine of Natural Law (svabhāvavāda) which can nullify the necessity of puruṣa in Sāṁkhya. Again whether the multiplicities of puruṣas are the ultimate principles or it is empirical jīvas is not very clear here. Question may arise, how the
multiplicities of puruṣas come into contact with one prakṛti and for how many
times? Is it for once or again and again?

After getting such types of inconsistencies in Śāṅkhya an observation
has been made whether Śāṅkhya can come closer to Lokāyata darsāna. At the
very beginning it is found that both these tradition give importance to the
matter first as the ultimate principle of the universe. Though Śāṅkhya is said to
be an āstika school still Īśvarakṛṣṇa was not a blind follower of the Vedas. He
has not started his philosophy from metaphysical assumption rather from
practical problems. Śāṅkhya explanation of the world evolution from the
material standpoint is significant. It seems pradhānakārānavaṇḍa of Śāṅkhya
combined with svabhāvavāda of Cārvāka may impart Śāṅkhya a completely
materialistic character. It will again establish Śāṅkhya as a naturalistic system.
Of course the inclusion of puruṣa in Classical Śāṅkhya is an obstacle here.
Actually this is the biggest controversy in Śāṅkhya whether puruṣa is essential
in Śāṅkhya evolution or not. If yes, Śāṅkhya need to be more clear about the
puruṣa so that it becomes consistent with the system and if no, then the Natural
Law (svabhāvavāda) is needed to be established in Śāṅkhya evolution which
is partially indicated by Īśvarakṛṣṇa himself in some kārikās.

Śāṅkhya is said to be the first rationalistic philosophy of the world
which is again supposed to have laid down the foundations of scientific thought
in India. Actually philosophy is not only to concern with the metaphysical
speculations because such types of realities are always uncertain. Rather it
should take care of the problems of our practical life with rational attitude and
try to solve it. Again the questions like ‘how the world has been originated’ and ‘who have done it’, these should not be bigger issues in front of the problems related to our practical life. Īśvarakṛṣṇa has taken the big step by starting his Kārikā with the problems of suffering of our practical life. It can be imagined, his aim and intention was very practical and scientific but due to the situation of that time he might have somewhere failed to actualize his intention.

So, we conclude that though Īśvarakṛṣṇa has done a great job by giving Sāṅkhya tradition a systematic written text with a rationalistic approach still he could not recover himself fully from the Upaniṣadic influence. Again due to the unavailability of Kapila’s work, it cannot be exactly said whether Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s works are just the repetition of Kapila’s work, whether Sāṅkhya-Kārikā is just the systematization of pre-Kārikā elements or Īśvarakṛṣṇa has totally given a new direction to the Sāṅkhya tradition. Yet credit must be given to Īśvarakṛṣṇa for his initiative to give philosophy a new direction, specially in the orthodox Indian philosophical tradition. His rationalistic approach towards the issues concerned must be appreciated except some exceptions.