

The *Navya-Nyāya* Concept of *Jāti*: A Fundamental Tool in Linguistic Operation

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Title: The *Navya-Nyāya* Concept of *Jāti*: A Fundamental Tool in Linguistic Operation

Jāti has long been recognized as one of the most discussed and fundamental concepts of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy. The notion *Jāti* has been primarily known as ‘*Sāmānya*’ in Vaiśeṣikās or Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikās technical terminology. This very notion of ‘*Sāmānya*’ has emerged through Vaiśeṣikās’ or Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikās’ ontological view of world where they talked about seven ‘*padārthas*’ or ‘*tatvas*’ (ontological realities) of the universe and ‘*Sāmānya*’ has been considered sequentially as the ‘fourth’ ontological reality amongst them. Maharṣi Gautama in his *Nyāya-śūtra* first introduces this notion of ‘*Sāmānya*’ as ‘*Jāti*’ whereas from western terminology it has got its English equivalent as ‘Universal’ which has been safely adopted by the Indian philosophers as well in their translated works. It is noteworthy that though the notion of ‘*Sāmānya*’ had been introduced by the early Vaiśeṣikas, it was early Nyāya or Maharṣi Gautama’s *Nyāya-śūtra* which initiated a linguistic approach of this notion ‘*Sāmānya*’ or ‘*Jāti*’ apart from considering and explaining it as only an ontological entity. In *Nyāya-śūtra* we see that Maharṣi Gautama brought forth the notion of *Jāti* in the context of discussing meaning of word and considered *Jāti* as one of the meanings of word along with *ākṛiti* and *vyakti*.

Now, as we know word, meaning etc these are discussion regarding language, henceforth consideration of ‘*Jāti*’ as meaning of word surely broadens the range of its (*jāti*’s) discourse in terms of be able to enter into the sphere of linguistic discourse apart from ontological one.

However, later on, following the foot step of Maharṣi Gautama, his ancestors or astute commentators of *Nyāya-sūtra* such as Vātsyāyāna, Uddyotakara, Udayanācārya, Vācaspati Miśra, only to mention a few, continued to proceed further ahead in this regard considering ‘*Jāti*’ as meaning of word. On the other hand, from the Vaiśeṣikas or early Vaiśeṣikas end, they continued with the ontological approach of discussion on the notion of ‘*Jāti*’ until the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikās’ tradition (where both of the views of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika have been merged into one) introduces. While going through the different phases of writing of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika school (from the first period or pre-Diṇṇāga period or early Nyāya and early Vaiśeṣika period <which started with Vaiśeṣika-sutra and ended in 5th century with the advent of the famous Buddhist logician Diṇṇāga> to the ultra-neo period or the recovery period of Navya-Nyāya in 19th century), it seemed in my observation that just like Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika both individually have early and later phases, in the same way the collaborated phase or ‘Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika’ phase has its early and later period of writings as well as ‘early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika’ period and ‘later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika’ period.

8th century might be called as the starting point of Early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika period. It was Vācaspati Miśra who through his writings in late 8th century or since the beginning of 9th century had been appeared as the initiator of the amalgamation or synchronization of the two individual schools Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika as ‘Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. And after him this early period continued up to near about 10th or 11th century with the writings of Jayanta Bhatta, Bhāsarvagyaṇ, Shivāditya, Vyomshivācārya, Shridhar Bhatta, Udayanācārya, etc to mention a few. Then, with the advent of

Gangesha Upādhyāya in 14th century through the magnum opus *Tatva-chintāmani* the enriching Navya-Nyāya period has started when Nyāya epistemological discussion has been seen as reaching at its peak. Raghunāth Śiromoni, Mathurānāth Tarkabāgish, Jagadish Tarkālankār , Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya and so forth all these eminent Naiyāyikas contributed their works in this period of Nyāya which carried on up to around 17th century. With the beginning of 18th century or late 17th century again there had been found another attempt to synchronize the two systems Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika or as referred above as later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika period. In this later period we got *Tarka-bhāṣa*, *Tarka-saṁgraha*, *Bhāṣā-parichheda* and so forth all these inestimable Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts.

Now, it is to note that, in the context of presenting the notion of *Jāti* from linguistic standpoint, except the early Vaiśeṣikas almost all scholars from the different phases as shown above from the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika system have considered *Jāti*'s role in language usages. And in all places of their discussion with regard to this they have shown *Jāti* basically as one of the primary meanings of word (*mukhyārtha*/*śakyārtha*) which is subjected to be denoted or referred by the word itself in terms of its(word's) significatory relation(*vṛitti-sambandha*) with meaning. Apart from *Jāti* there are two more meanings (*vyakti* and *ākṛiti*) which have been considered by them as meanings of a word simultaneously. We find exact in this context a very debated issue on which language philosophers of India have been arguing over since years that is, which meaning amongst these three aforesaid meanings should actually be taken as the primary one? Not very surprisingly, we got to see many different views with one considering only *Jāti* as

primary meaning of word whereas other one considers *Vyakti* as the primary one or *ākṛiti* as the primary meaning of word And that's how evolved '*Jātiśaktivāda*', '*Vyaktiśaktivāda*' and '*ākṛitiśaktivāda*' these three doctrines in Indian philosophy of language. Vaiyākaraṇ Vyādi, Navya-Naiyāyika Raghunāth Śīromoṇi are known as *Vyakti-śaktivādins*. Vaiyākaraṇ Vājapyāyana and Mimāsakas are identified as *Jātiśaktivādins* whereas Mimāṃṣaka Śabara Svāmi seemed to uphold *ākṛiti-śaktivāda*. But very unlike to all these three views early Naiyāyikās, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikās went on considering '*Jātyākṛitivyakti- śaktivāda*', though Navya-Naiyāyikas are found to accept *Jātiviśiṣṭa-vyakti-śaktivāda* in this regard.

However, '*Jātyākṛitivyakti- śaktivāda*' entails that all of the three meanings (*jāti*, *vyakti* and *ākṛiti*) should be considered as meaning of a word with one condition added to it that given a specific context one meaning would be prevalent over other two. Thus, the word 'cow' according to them though has got three primary meanings(*śakyārtha*); *Jāti*(universal), *Vyakti*(individual) and *ākṛiti*(configuration) as in cow-hood, the individual cow and the pattern or configuration of cow, in the context of sentence like 'bring the cow', the meaning as individual cow will prevail, or when someone asks 'make a cow using clay' then the word cow prevalently denotes the configuration of cow ,and in another context if it is said 'one should not touch cows with feet' then here cows will mainly denote the meaning as cow hood or *jāti*. In this regard Naiyāyikās firstly assuming the main *purvapakhsin* presented the two thesis of *vyaktiśaktivādins* and *ākṛitiśaktivādins*, then have shown the refutation of these two by the another *purvapakhsin*

Mimāsakas through their *jāti-śaktivāda* and finally they refuted this *jātiśaktivāda* and established their own doctrine as '*jātyākṛiti-vyākṛtiśaktivāda*'.

Thus, in Indian tradition whenever philosophers attempted to discuss the notion of *Jāti* from the standpoint of language they ended it with discussing these doctrines and continued debating on whether *Jāti* should be considered or prioritized as meaning amongst the three meanings of word or not? But somehow it seemed that as *Jāti* unlike the other two (*vyakti* and *ākṛiti*) is not a concretely existent entity (*murta-dravya-viśeṣ*), hence there should be detail discussions on how *Jāti* is meant to be a 'meaning' of word in a sentence. And moreover, as it(*jāti*) indeed has been considered as meaning of word in a sentence then there should also be discussions on how it performs its function as meaning in sentences for a successful sentential understanding or linguistic communication. To put it more simply, we got the point that *Jāti* should be regarded as meaning of word but being a meaning how does it help or contribute in the entire mechanism of cognizing sentence-meaning (*Vākyārtha*)?

As far as my observation goes, it is seen that in Indian tradition the discussions regarding *Jāti*'s role in linguistic usages centred around these śaktivādins doctrines. But it seems that only discussing these mentioned doctrines while knowing *Jāti*'s role in this regard would just be a partial representation of *Jāti*'s function in linguistic operation and moreover, we can not find any full-fledged initiative been taken to find *Jāti*'s specific roles or actions as primary meaning of word (*śakyārtha*) in the causal mechanism or process of a fruitful sentential understanding.

Hence, I would like to put forth this particular query on *Jāti*'s contribution in sentential cognition as the focal point of this present work. And moreover, I will be particularly dealing with Nyāya or Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas perspective on this, hence understanding the procedure of our language usage or language mechanism to meet this particular query will be elaborated based on the said system of philosophy mainly. My chief concern shall be to explain *Jāti* and its functions from the perspective of language but at the same time keeping in mind its ontological approach as the broader range of it.

However, in the context of Nyāya discussion on philosophy of language one thing must be noted that they have been dealing with two forms of language; one is the general form or the spoken form of language which is also known as 'natural language' and the other one is artificial form of language which from the Naiyāyikās end has been invented by the Navya-Naiyāyikas themselves for bringing forth ambiguity free sentential understanding of the ancient scriptures. So, the point is that when it comes to the matter of sentential understanding (*vākyārthabodha*) and the role being performed by *jāti-dharma* in sentential understanding in accordance with Nyāya thought, it is important to keep these two forms of language in mind.

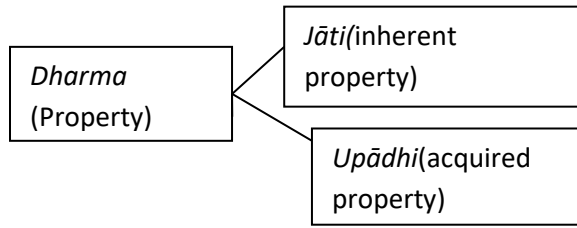
With regard to the exposition of sentential understanding given before Navya-Nyāya era we find that Nyāya philosophy of language has actually been started of depending on their basic epistemological stand according to which our knowledge of object can not be differentiated from the way object has been presented in our awareness of knowledge. And moreover, it has also been seen that Naiyāyikas while explaining four kinds of *pramā* (*pratyakhsa*, *anumāna* etc) they

have specified the structure in which the object is being presented in our awareness and that is ‘the qualifier-qualificand structure of cognition of object’. Whenever we are aware of an object, we are aware of the object as something which involves two elements; qualificand or *viśeṣya* and qualifier or *viśeṣana*. And thus, implicitly there involves a propositional structure as well while having knowledge of objects. To say, ‘knowledge of object a’ will presuppose a verbalized or propositional structure as F(a) which means ‘a, the qualificand is qualified or distinguished by the qualifier F-ness’. And that is how, when any verbal communication takes place between a speaker and a hearer, speaker’s particular utterance of words generates the knowledge of object which is qualified by a qualifier or property in hearer’s mind. Now, this qualifying property must be a distinguishing property as well through which the object under consideration will be cognized as that specific object only and not anything else or any other object. In accordance with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika ontology, it is *jāti-dharma* of an object which is considered to be the reason for generalized and differential both of the cognition. Hence, *jāti-dharma* is able to distinguish an object from all other things as well. Such as, it is the *jāti-dharma* ‘tablehood’, of the object ‘table’, which is able to distinguish ‘table’ from any other objects in this world. Hence, it is *jāti-dharma* which presents as qualifier or *viśeṣana* in knowledge and accordingly in the sentential understanding of that knowledge when it is expressed through language. So, that’s how in the contexts of natural language considering *Jāti* as an qualifier, early Naiyāyikas clarifies the role of *jāti* in sentential understanding for natural language.

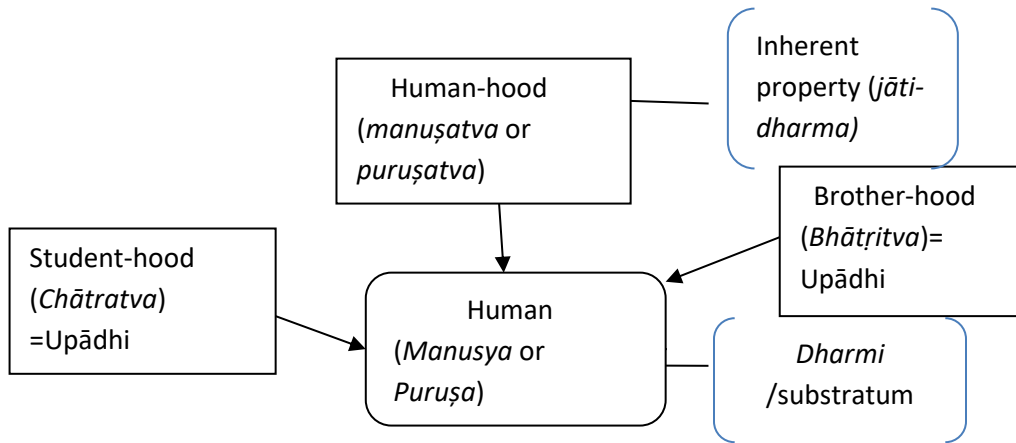
The foundation of Indian tradition is solely based on its enriched treasure in the form of inestimable ancient texts (*śāstras*), therefore since the very beginning eminent scholars from different fields with different approaches started to comprehend these texts in their own. But as we know individual comprehensions may differ due to their own different understanding of it, and naturally the opposite did not happen in this case as well, while interpreting and elucidating their individual thought they faced huge difference and clash while debating on various issues from a particular text and in consequence people refrained themselves from an appropriate understanding to even out their dispute. It has been observed that in most of the cases dispute occurs while debating over any topic for misinterpretation or miscommunication. And this miscommunication or misinterpretation happens due to lack of understanding of what opponent wants to communicate and this kind of poor understanding comes through usages of ambiguous language. Natural language i.e. the common language used by layman involves ambiguity hence it has been understood that for communicating or debating on textual discourse, the communicators should not use or depend on this ambiguous natural language. Now, Navya-Naiyāyikas to resolve this issue, realized the necessity of removing the usage of natural language in textual or *śāstric* discourse and thus they bring forth one technical model of language that consists of technical linguistic notions and expressions meant for having a successful or fruitful communication.

In natural language one main ambiguity occurs when speaker needs to make hearer understand about object's contextual properties. As we know Naiyāyikas have mentioned another kind of

property of an object apart from inherent property (*jāti*) and that is the occasional or acquired or adventitious property (*upādhi* in Nyāya terms). ‘*Dharmasya prathamata dvividha jāirupādhishcheti*’



Although an object possesses its *Jāti-dharma* (inherent property) from the moment it (the object) originated to till its decay and moreover, an object possesses only one *jāti-dharma*. On the other hand, the same object can possess at the same time many other *upādhi-dharma* (contextual properties) which all cease to exist depending on particular contexts or when the particular context over. To give an example, Human-being who possesses human-hood as *jāti-dharma*, the same being acquires some other properties in that same life span as well such as he or she becomes brother or sister, And thus that same human also possesses these properties like brother-hood or sister-hood, student-hood, teacher-hood etc. which all are his or her acquired or occasional properties because these are not going to stay with him or her forever, rather all these will stay till a certain period of time or temporarily (like when a person is not teaching at his college, he is staying at home, the property teacher-hood does not exist in him at that moment whereas he still possesses the inherent property human-hood).

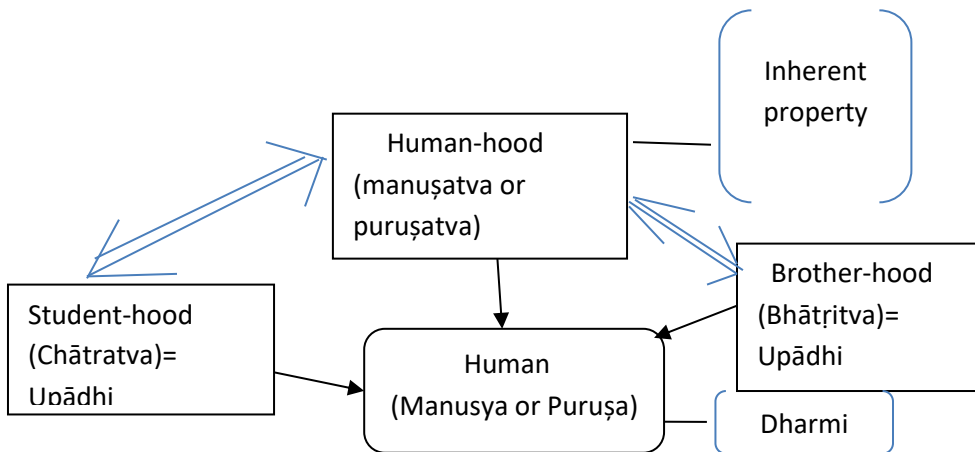


Now, the ambiguity occurs when speaker wants to talk about occasional properties of human being in natural language, let's say the speaker is talking about human being as being student or as brother and so forth. Each context is different and so the properties exist in that human-being at each moment are different as well like student-hood, brother-hood respectively. So, for this reason speaker needs to specify everytime which contextual property he or she is talking about. But natural language due to its scarcity of advanced causal linguistic instruments can not be able to specify a particular property for that same human-being in each context and hence hearer will fail to understand or grasp on which property of that human being the speaker is speaking about and thus very naturally there occurs ambiguity in communication. So it is no longer difficult to understand that language needs any or some other linguistic instruments for this specification to happen and successful communication to happen at the same time. To resolve this very specific kind of ambiguity in sentential understanding Navya-Naiyāyikās in their artificial language introduces the concept of *Avachhedaka* or Delimiter .

The notion of *avachhedaka* or delimiter (which has specified or limited something within a certain point or scope) has been one of the most significant notions amongst all. Although ‘*avachhedaka*’ has been defined by the Navya-Naiyāyikas in many sense and hence accordingly *avachhedaka* has been interpreted as many kinds as well but amongst all kinds of *avachhedaka* one kind has been defined as ‘*Anyūna-anatiriktavṛittitva*’ which indicates that a delimiter should not be too general (wide) or too specific (narrow) to the delimited. *Avachhedaka* as ‘*anyunatiriktavṛittitva*’ indicates a *dharma* that is ‘*anyuna*’ (not too less or narrow) and at the same time ‘*anatirikta*’ (not too more or wide) from the referred *dharmi* or the object of the cognition, rather it (the *dharma*) exactly indicates the *dharmi* or only resides in that *Dharmi* and not anywhere else. To give an example, if we are going to understand the *dharmi* or object of cognition ‘cow’ with its *dharma*s then there are many *dharma*s we can think of such as ‘*prānitva*’ (animal-hood), ‘*kapilatva*’ (kapil denotes the color which has two amalgamated color: yellow and blue), and also ‘*gotva*’ (cow-hood). Now, ‘*prānitva*’ as a *dharma* resides in all other *prānis* (animals) as well apart from ‘*go*’ (cow) and in this sense it (the *dharma prānitva*) is too wide for the *dharmi* ‘cow’. Whereas, the *dharma* ‘*kapilatva*’ is too narrow for the *dharmi* ‘cow’ since apart from *kapil* (cows of a particular color) there are other cows of different colors also which this *dharma* ‘*kapilatva*’ does not cover. But when we are thinking of cow (*go*) as that *dharmi* main *dharma* of which is ‘*gotva*’ (cow-hood) then this kind of difficulties do not occur in any instance since *gotva* (cow-hood) as *dharma* pervades the entire *dharmi* i.e. all the cows. And as we know ‘*gotva*’ (cow-hood) is the *jāti-dharma* of cow, thus in the same way, all specific *jāti-*

dharmas of specific *dharmis* being ‘*anyunatiriktavṛitti*’ *dharma* perform their function as *avachhedaka* (delimitor). Thus, it seems quite evident that considering *avachhedaka* as ‘*anyunatiriktavṛitti*’ is implied to considering *jāti-dharma* as *avachhedaka* (delimiting property) because it is none other *dharma* than *jāti* which does not extend more or less from its *dharmi*.

According to Navya-Naiyāyikas it is *jāti-dharma* which functions as *avachhedaka* to resolve this aforesaid specific kind of ambiguity occurs in natural language and thus plays the fundamental and very significant role in linguistic operation. Following the Navya-Nyāya text *Navya-Nyāya-Bhāṣā-Pradīpa* by Shri Mahesh Ch. Nyāyaratna an attempt will be made to demonstrate how *jāti-dharma* as *avachhedaka* resolves the ambiguity in sentential understanding. If we look at the example of human-being mentioned earlier then in that context the ambiguity can be resolved if everytime speaker is speaking about any contextual property (like brother-hood, sister-hood etc) he or she uses *jāti-dharma* human-hood as *avachhedaka* in his or her utterance for delimiting a specific contextual property in a specific context. The diagram of it will be like then as follows:



Here in this diagram the double arrows between human-hood and student-hood and on the other side between human-hood and brother-hood are actually indicating the delimitor and delimited relationship where *jāti-dharma* in both of the cases is the delimitor(*avachhedaka*) and both the contextual properties are being delimited by *jāti-dharma*. And thus it leads to a successful sentential understanding.

For an appropriate and structuralized presentation, I will be discussing the entire matter of this work segregated into four chapters along with Introduction and Conclusion. Let's move on to discuss in brief on the way all the four chapters have been planned to accomplish the work.

First Chapter: Word, Meaning and *Jātyākṛitivyakti* as meaning of word:

In this chapter I will be discussing first the idea of 'word' (or '*Vāk*' as mentioned in the ancient texts) to begin with the references from Veda, Upaniṣda, Vyākaraṇa and then will bring forth its(word's) concept in accordance with the Indian philosophical schools. After that, concept of 'meaning' will be discussed since the ability to denote meaning has been regarded as the main characteristic feature of word or *śabda*. In Indian tradition, three types of meaning of word have been accepted, they are *Vyākṛti* (individual), *Ākṛiti* (configuration) and *Jāti* (Universal). And amongst these three meanings *Jāti* as meaning of word will be elaborated from the perspective of Indian philosophy of language along with the views of Vaiyākaraṇas. And finally in this chapter +an attempt will be made to show how Naiyāyikas establishes their theory of

Jātyākṛitivyaktiśaktivada after refuting *vyaktiśaktivada*, *ākṛitiśaktivāda* and *jātiśaktivāda* all of these doctrines.

Second chapter: Concept Of Universal in Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika Philosophy:

As the title suggested, in this chapter I will be discussing the concept of *Jāti* or Universal in accordance with Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika system will be elucidated. Here, concept will refer to the ontological concept of *Jāti*. How *Jāti* as one of the seven ‘*padārthas*’ is being ontologically understood with all its features, classifications in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas terms will be discussed. Since, Buddhist system of philosophy completely denies Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas’ view on existence of Universal hence, a critical aspect of analysis between these two systems with regard to Universal’s ontological existence will also be included in this chapter.

Third chapter: Cognition, Language and its process of functioning in Nyāya,Vaiśeṣika framework :

An attempt has been made in this chapter to bring forth the main backdrop of this work. Before demonstrating the verbal cognition and its process considered in Nyāya,Vaiśeṣika system I will elaborate a little on cognition(*jnāna* in Nyāya terms), its nature, distinct nature of *jnāna* and *pramā*(valid cognition).In the final section of this chapter, I will be focusing on the entire process and causal mechanism required for sentential understanding (*Vākyārthabodha* or *Shābdabodha*) according to the said system.

Fourth chapter: Understanding *Jāti*(Universal) in Navya-Nyāya method of linguistic operation:

After putting forth the elaboration on the process of language usage and linguistic framework of Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika system, in this chapter I will be making an attempt to show *Jāti*'s indispensable and fundamental role in this previously mentioned process of understanding or cognizing from words. Navya Nyāya is eminently known for their methodology on language by which they introduced an all new, reformed, meta-language or artificial language equipped with technical terms and process. In the course of time they came to realize that most of the disagreement, misunderstanding regarding any specific subject matter of scriptures occurs because of the ambiguous usage of language or ambiguity of the natural language. Hence, this initiative of the Navya-Naiyāyikas was to keep language free from ambiguity and more importantly for a better and successful understanding of the ancient scriptures so that valid and appropriate argumentations amongst the scholars can be carried on. Now, in this chapter in the context of fulfilling the main objective or to get an appropriate resolve to the main query of this present work (that is to say, *Jāti*'s function in verbal understanding), I will be mostly relying on this Navya-Naiyāyikas methods and technical analysis of language. Following the renowned Navya-Naiyāyika text *Navya-Nyāya Bhāṣā Pradīpa* by Shri Mahesh ch. Nyāyaratna I will be making an attempt to demonstrate using diagrams how *jāti* serves as one fundamental linguistic tool in sentential understanding.

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