

# THE CONCEPT OF RELEVANCE (SANGATI) IN GAṄGEŚA

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Relevance is a relation which holds between the contents of expressions or sentences. According to some Indian logicians such as Gaṅgeśa, if P is relevant to Q, then Q is an answer to a question, say S, and S is due to a cognition, say T, and the content or the object of this cognition, say R, is the relation of relevance. Hence the property of being the content of this type of cognition would be the defining property of the relation of relevance. Since the content of P is related to that of Q by the relation R, the former is the second term and the latter is the first term of this relation, and the latter is characterized by this relational property. The causal condition for Q is S which, in turn, is causally related to T. Since R is the object of T, it (R) is related to T by the relation called 'the property of being the object-possessor'. For example, after stating the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire, which is a causal condition for the inferential cognition, say, The hill has fire, one way to ask the question is: what are the other causal conditions for this inferential cognition? In reply it may be said that the hill has smoke which is pervaded by fire. In the technical language of the Nyāya, it is called 'operative causal condition' ('*parāmarśa*'). The content of the cognition which is a causal condition for this question is the relation of relevance which relates the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire to the content of the sentence 'The hill has smoke which is pervaded by fire'. In this case the latter cognition is another causal condition of an inferential cognition other than the invariable concomitance. Hence the relation of relevance may be defined in the following way: P is relevant to Q Df The content of P is related to that of Q by the relation R which is the object of the cognition T and T is causally related to the question S which is causally related to Q.

According to Gaṅgeśa there are six types of relation of relevance.

(1) Memory-context (*prasaṅga*) or the context in which there is need for memory objects. Let us call this type of relation R1 and define it in the following way:

- (i) P is related to Q by R1 Df R1 is a memory-object, (ii) it is revived by the cognition of P, (iii) it is related to the content of P,

(iv) it is not something which can be ignored, and (v) the cognition of it (i.e. R1) will give rise to a question to which Q is an answer.

This type of relevance emphasizes both the ontological and the epistemic nature of it. In this case R1 is related to the content of P and it is revived as a memory object due to the cognition of P, and the previous knowledge of the fact that P (not the expression 'P') is associated with R1. Moreover, if it is ignored, then we cannot succeed in saying what we intend to say. For example, consider the relation between a valid and an invalid inference. The statement or the definition of validity of an inference will give rise to a cognition of validity. But the cognition of validity may give rise to the memory-cognition of invalidity by the relation of opposition. Since invalid or fallacious inferences cannot be ignored from our discussion of inference, the cognition of invalidity will give rise to a question about invalidity, which is answered by defining 'invalidity'. Hence the content of the definition of 'validity' is related to the content of the definition of 'invalidity'. The statement or the definition of 'invalidity' would be an answer to the question, What are the inferences which are different from or opposed to valid inferences? Here the object of the cognition of inferences which are different from or opposed to valid inferences would be the relation R1, and the invalid inferences are characterized by this relation. According to a broader interpretation of this type of relevance any context, not only memory - context, can be included under this type of relevance.

(2) Justification (*upodghāta*):

This type of relevance deals with the justification of what the speaker intends to say. It may be defined in the following way :

P is related to Q by R2 if P is related to Q by the relation of justification. Since the speaker intends to establish P, he justifies this in terms of the statement Q. For example, an inferential cognition has been defined in terms of the operation (*parāmarśa*). Now the question is, how do we establish that an operation or an operative cognition is a cause of an inferential cognition? Hence the reason for the need of operation or the arguments for its causal role will constitute this type of relation of relevance. Similarly, when we talk about the knowledge of knowledge, the arguments for its utility will be this type of relation of relevance. For example, the use of cognition depends upon the cognition of cognition or higher order cognition.

(3) Cause (*hetu*):

This type of relevance refers to the causal conditions of the object of our statement. For example, the definition of perception is followed by the question about the causal conditions of perception. If perception is

defined as the cognition which is due to sense-object contact, then the questions about other causal conditions would arise. Hence the other causal conditions of perception would be this type of relation of relevance. Since external sense organs, objects, the relation between them, etc., are causal conditions for perceptual cognitions this type of relevance will characterize these causal conditions.

(4) Cessation of objectionable questions (*avasara*) :

This type of relevance emphasizes the sequence of statements or topics and the answers to questions which will prevent us from stating what needs to be stated. Since three statements or topics or three sets of statements are involved, let us consider the relation between such statements, or topics, say p, q and r.

This type of relation of relevance presupposes that there is a type of relation of relevance between p and q, and in order to establish r we require p. Moreover, the relation of p to q and r is also a relation of relevance. Now the question is, why should we state or establish q before establishing r? In reply it is said that the questions about q would prevent us from establishing r. Hence the determination or the establishment of q would pave the way for the determination of r by answering questions about q. Therefore, after answering questions about q, we answer the question about r. Moreover, the determination of r may take various forms. In some context it will amount to the definition of r, in some other context it will take the form of statement about the causal conditions of r (not the statement 'r'), or the refutation of the thesis of the opponent about r.

Let us consider the relation between perception, inference and comparison which are sources of valid cognition or knowledge. There is a relation of relevance between perception and inference as well as between inference and comparison. Since the questions about inference are presupposed by questions about comparison, inference is to be discussed prior to comparison. Hence our answers to questions about inference would pave the way for our discussion of comparison and the relation of perception to comparison would be this type of relation of relevance. After completing our discussion of inference the question would be: What else needs to be stated about the sources of valid cognition, or are there other sources of valid cognition?

This type of question presupposes the cognition of something more to be stated or the cognition of other sources of valid cognition. Hence the object of this cognition would be this type of relation of relevance which relates perception to comparison. Since perception is relevant to comparison, there would be a question which would be answered by stating comparison. The question might take the following form: What else is to be stated as the source of knowledge once we have known the

nature of inference? Hence the object of the cognition which is causally related to this question would be this type of relation of relevance, and the property of being what needs to be stated after inference would *characterize* (or reside in) the object of our statement about comparison.

(5) Having the same cause (*nirvāhaka-aikya* or *nirvāhaka-ekatva*)

After determining or stating the effect of some cause, the question would be: What are the other effects of the same cause? If there is any other effect, it is to be stated. Hence the relation of the object of the previous statement to the object of the latter statement would be this type of relation of relevance. For example, perception is the cause of both inference and comparison. Hence the relation of inference to comparison is the relation of having the same causal condition. Similar is the case with the relation of comparison to inference. Cooking is another example of this type of relation. If both the softening of the food and the change of colour of the food are due to the action of cooking, then they are related to each other by the relation of having the same cause, and the statements about them are related to each other by this type of relation of relevance.

6) Having the same effect (*kārya-aikya* or *kārya-ekatva*)

If a particular effect is due to several causal conditions, then they are related to each other by the relation of having the same effect. For example, the inferential cognition is due to the cognition of invariable concomitance or pervasion (*vyāpti*) and the cognition of the property of being the locus of inference (*pakṣatā*). Hence the relation between these two causal conditions is one of having the same effect. Similarly, since both water and air are causal conditions for the sapling, they are related to each other by the relation of having the same effect, and the statements about them exhibit this type of relation of relevance.

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