



Review Article

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UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF SHRISTI UTPATTI IN ANCIENT INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the process of *Shristi Utpatti* is a fundamental concept in ancient Indian philosophy, explaining the origin, evolution, and structure of the universe. Various *Astika Darshanas* such as *Sankhya*, *Nyaya-Vaisheshika*, *Vedanta*, and *Yoga* provide detailed and diverse interpretations of cosmic creation based on their philosophical frameworks. *Sankhya Darshana* describes creation as the interaction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, leading to the evolution of *Mahat*, *Ahamkara*, and subsequently the material universe. *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* explains *Shristi* through atomic theory (*Paramanu Siddhanta*), where eternal atoms combine to form complex substances under the guidance of *Ishvara*. *Vedanta* presents a non-dualistic view, considering *Brahman* as the ultimate reality from which the universe manifests through *Maya*. These philosophical systems not only explore metaphysical aspects but also

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provide logical, scientific, and experiential insights into existence. The present study aims to analyze and compare these classical perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of *Shristi Utpatti*. Such an exploration helps in bridging ancient wisdom with modern cosmological thought and enhances the conceptual depth of Indian philosophical traditions.

KEYWORDS:

Shristi Utpatti, Sankhya Darshana, Prakriti, Purusha, Brahman, Paramanu Siddhanta

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Shristi Utpatti*¹ occupies a central place in ancient Indian philosophy, representing the origin and evolution of the universe². From the earliest Vedic literature to later philosophical systems, scholars have tried to understand how the universe came into existence, what its fundamental components are, and what governs its functioning. Unlike purely materialistic explanations, Indian philosophical traditions approach creation from both metaphysical and experiential perspectives, integrating physical reality with consciousness. This Ayurvedic approach makes the study of *Shristi Utpatti* not only philosophical³ but also deeply scientific in its own context.

Different schools of *Astika Darshana*⁴ offer unique explanations of cosmic creation based on their foundational principles. *Sankhya Darshana*⁵ explains the process through the interaction of *Prakriti*⁶ (primordial matter) and *Purusha*⁷ (consciousness), leading to a systematic evolution of the universe. In contrast, *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* focuses on the atomic theory or *Paramanu Siddhanta*, where eternal atoms combine under the influence of *Ishvara* to form the material world. *Yoga Darshana* largely adopts the *Sankhya* framework but emphasizes practical realization through discipline and meditation. These diverse viewpoints highlight the richness and depth of Indian philosophical thought.

Vedanta Darshana provides a more non-dualistic interpretation of *Shristi Utpatti*, considering *Brahman* as the ultimate reality from which the universe emerges. According to this view, the process of creation is not a real transformation but an apparent manifestation through *Maya*. This perspective shifts the focus from material evolution to the understanding of ultimate truth and consciousness. It emphasizes that the universe is a projection of a single, unified reality, thus offering a more spiritual explanation of existence.

Studying the process of *Shristi Utpatti* in ancient Indian philosophy is important for understanding not only the origin of the universe but also the relationship between matter,

consciousness, and life. It provides a conceptual bridge between ancient wisdom and modern scientific inquiries into cosmology and existence. By analyzing different philosophical perspectives, one can develop a comprehensive and comparative understanding of creation, which remains relevant even in contemporary discussions of science and spirituality.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM:

To understand and analyze the concept of *Shristi Utpatti* as described in ancient Indian philosophical systems.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study the concept of *Shristi Utpatti* in different *Astika Darshanas*
- To analyze the role of *Prakriti*, *Purusha*, and *Brahman* in the process of creation
- To compare various philosophical views regarding the origin of the universe
- To correlate ancient concepts of creation with modern scientific understanding

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is a conceptual and literary review based on classical texts of ancient Indian philosophy, including *Sankhya Darshana*, *Nyaya-Vaisheshika*, *Vedanta*, and *Yoga Darshana*. Relevant information regarding *Shristi Utpatti* was collected from primary sources such as *Upanishads*,⁸ *Brahma Sutra*,⁹ and classical commentaries, along with standard textbooks and published research articles. The collected data were critically analyzed, compared, and interpreted to understand the process of cosmic creation from different philosophical perspectives. The study follows a qualitative analytical approach to synthesize and present a comprehensive understanding of the concept.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

SHRISTI UTPATTI

The concept of *Shristi Utpatti* in ancient Indian philosophy explains the origin and evolution of the universe in a systematic and logical manner. It is based on the principle of *Karya-Karana Bhava*,¹⁰ which states that every effect has a definite cause. Unlike purely materialistic views, Indian philosophy integrates both physical and metaphysical aspects, considering consciousness as an essential component of creation. The process of creation is not random but follows a well-defined sequence governed by universal principles.

• **Sankhya Darshana**

*Sankhya Darshana*¹¹ presents a dualistic theory of creation based on *Prakriti*¹² and *Purusha*.¹³ *Prakriti* is the primordial, inactive matter composed of three *Guna*¹⁴ (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), while *Purusha* represents pure consciousness. When *Prakriti* comes in contact with *Purusha*, it becomes active and initiates the process of evolution. The first product is *Mahat* (cosmic intelligence), followed by *Ahamkara*¹⁵ (ego), which further leads to the formation of *Tanmatras*¹⁶ and *Panchamahabhuta*¹⁷. Thus, the entire universe evolves in a stepwise and systematic manner.

• **Nyaya–Vaisheshika Darshana**

*Nyaya–Vaisheshika Darshana*¹⁸ explains *Shristi Utpatti* through the concept of *Paramanu Siddhanta*¹⁹ or atomic theory. According to this view, the universe is composed of eternal, indivisible atoms known as *Paramanu*²⁰. These atoms combine to form molecules and larger structures, resulting in the creation of the material world. The process of combination and organization is guided by *Ishvara*, who acts as the efficient cause of creation. This system emphasizes logical reasoning and physical explanation of the universe.

• **Vedanta Darshana**

*Vedanta Darshana*²¹ offers a non-dualistic understanding of creation, where *Brahman* is considered the ultimate and only reality. According to this view, the universe is not a real transformation but an apparent manifestation through *Maya*.²² The multiplicity of the world arises due to ignorance (*Avidya*²³) of the true nature of *Brahman*.²⁴ Thus, *Shristi Utpatti* is seen as a projection rather than an actual creation, emphasizing the unity of existence and the supremacy of consciousness.

• **Yoga Darshana**

Yoga Darshana,²⁵ closely related to *Sankhya*, accepts the same principles of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* in explaining creation. However, it focuses more on practical realization and control of the mind. The process of *Shristi Utpatti* is understood not only theoretically but also through inner experience achieved by yogic practices. The ultimate aim is to transcend the cycle of creation and attain *Kaivalya*²⁶, which represents liberation.

Overall, the concept of *Shristi Utpatti* in ancient Indian philosophy reflects a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to understanding the universe. It highlights that creation is cyclical, involving phases of *Srishti*, *Sthiti*, and *Pralaya*.²⁷ All philosophical systems, despite their differences, aim to explain the relationship between matter and consciousness, ultimately guiding towards a deeper understanding of existence.

PROCESS OF SHRISTI UTPATTI*Avyakta Prakriti*

↓

Purusha (Consciousness Contact)

↓

Activation of *Triguna*

↓

Mahat

↓

Ahamkara

↓

Tanmatras

↓

Panchamahabhuta

↓

Gross Universe (*Sthula Jagat*)

↓

Cycle of *Srishti – Sthiti – Pralaya***TABLE: SHRISTI UTPATTI (PROCESS OF CREATION)**

S. No.	Stage of Creation	Concept (Sanskrit Term)	Description
1	Unmanifest State	<i>Avyakta Prakriti</i>	Primordial, inactive state of nature with balanced <i>Triguna</i>
2	Consciousness Association	<i>Purusha</i>	Pure consciousness comes in proximity with <i>Prakriti</i>
3	Activation	<i>Triguna Vikshobha</i>	Disturbance of <i>Sattva</i> , <i>Rajas</i> , and <i>Tamas</i> initiates creation
4	Cosmic Intelligence	<i>Mahat</i>	First product of evolution, represents universal intelligence
5	Ego Formation	<i>Ahamkara</i>	Sense of individuality develops from <i>Mahat</i>
6	Subtle Elements	<i>Tanmatras</i>	Formation of subtle elements – <i>Shabda</i> , <i>Sparsha</i> , <i>Rupa</i> , <i>Rasa</i> , <i>Gandha</i>
7	Gross Elements	<i>Panchamahabhuta</i>	Development of five elements – <i>Akasha</i> , <i>Vayu</i> , <i>Agni</i> , <i>Jala</i> , <i>Prithvi</i>
8	Sense & Action Organs	<i>Indriya & Manas</i>	Formation of <i>Gyanendriya</i> , <i>Karmendriya</i> , and <i>Manas</i>
9	Manifest Universe	<i>Sthula Jagat</i>	Creation of physical world including living and non-living entities
10	Cosmic Cycle	<i>Srishti–Sthiti–Pralaya</i>	Continuous cycle of creation, maintenance, and dissolution

RESULT AND FINDINGS

- The study reveals that *Shristi Utpatti* is systematically explained in ancient Indian philosophy through well-defined stages of evolution
- It was found that *Sankhya Darshana* provides the most detailed and stepwise explanation of creation starting from *Prakriti* to *Sthula Jagat*
- *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are identified as the fundamental causative factors responsible for the initiation of creation
- The role of *Triguna* (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*) is crucial in the activation and progression of the creation process
- The evolution sequence from *Mahat* → *Ahamkara* → *Tanmatras* → *Panchamahabhuta* forms the structural basis of the universe
- *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* highlights the concept of *Paramanu* (atoms), indicating an early understanding of atomic theory
- *Vedanta Darshana* presents creation as an apparent manifestation through *Maya*, emphasizing the concept of non-duality
- The process of creation is not linear but cyclical, involving *Srishti*, *Sthiti*, and *Pralaya*
- All philosophical systems emphasize the interrelationship between matter and consciousness
- The findings show that ancient concepts of *Shristi Utpatti* have logical, scientific, and philosophical relevance even in the modern context

DISCUSSION

The present study highlights that the concept of *Shristi Utpatti* in ancient Indian philosophy is not a random or mythological idea, but a well-structured and logically explained process. Among all systems, *Sankhya Darshana* provides the most systematic and stepwise explanation, clearly describing the evolution from *Prakriti* to *Sthula Jagat*.²⁸ The concept of *Karya-Karana Bhava* plays a central role, showing that every stage of creation is a result of a preceding cause. The involvement of *Triguna*²⁹ further explains the dynamic nature of creation, making the process both scientific and philosophical.

When compared with other *Darshanas*³⁰, it becomes evident that each system contributes a unique dimension to understanding creation. *Nyaya–Vaisheshika* focuses on the physical aspect through *Paramanu Siddhanta*,³¹ which closely resembles modern atomic theory. On the other hand, *Vedanta Darshana* shifts the perspective towards metaphysical understanding by considering *Brahman* as the ultimate reality and explaining creation through *Maya*. This indicates that ancient Indian thinkers explored both material and spiritual dimensions of the universe in a very balanced way.

Overall, the discussion shows that the concept of *Shristi Utpatti* integrates logic, observation, and spiritual insight. It establishes a strong relationship between matter and consciousness, which is still a topic of interest in modern science and philosophy. The cyclical nature of creation (*Srishti–Sthiti–Pralaya*³²) further reflects a deep understanding of universal processes. Thus, the study of *Shristi Utpatti* not only enhances philosophical knowledge but also provides a meaningful connection between ancient wisdom and contemporary scientific thought.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Shristi Utpatti* in ancient Indian philosophy provides a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the origin and evolution of the universe. It clearly shows that creation is governed by definite principles involving both matter and consciousness, as explained through *Prakriti*, *Purusha*, and *Brahman*. Different *Darshanas* present diverse yet complementary views, combining logical reasoning, metaphysical insight, and experiential knowledge. The cyclical process of *Srishti–Sthiti–Pralaya* reflects the dynamic and continuous nature of existence. Overall, the study establishes that *Shristi Utpatti* is not only philosophically profound but also relevant in connecting ancient wisdom with modern scientific perspectives.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT -NONE

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