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Research Methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad: An Analytical Study

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Vedanta, Upaniṣads, Kaṭhōpaniṣad, Research, Research Methodology, Realization, Dialectical inquiry.	Research is a process featuring various steps. The collection and analysis of the data with unbiased attitude enhance the understanding of any subject. Research Methods are the different techniques for doing research. Research Methodology is the comprehensive study behind taking up any particular type of Research method. Upaniṣads are termed as Vedanta. Vedānta means the essential outcome of the Vedas and is the knowledge portion of the Vedas. Kaṭhōpaniṣad is one among the primary Upaniṣads. The Research is on the most basic question, what happens to a man after death? The research methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad is the anubandha catuṣṭaya; means, four-fold in nature and content. The three basic steps in Upaniṣads for realization śravaṇa manana nididhyāsana are the research methodology and Kaṭhōpaniṣad is no exception. The kind of śravaṇa will be varying in the different Upaniṣads. The sages impart the knowledge to the disciple according to his temperament and the need. Researches in the Upaniṣads have always focused on the highest principles of Dharma and Mokṣa. The sages of the ancient Vedic age were like Scientists, engaged in the deepest form of Researches with utmost unbiased outlook. They were eager to impart their knowledge and experience to the fit recipient without any thought of return. Kaṭhōpaniṣad elaborates this theme in the form of a dialogue between the god of death and the boy Nachiketā.


Introduction

Kaṭhōpaniṣad is the most widely read Upaniṣad among the ten principle Upaniṣads. The method of

inquiry in this particular Upaniṣad is of questioning and introspection. These two methods are the key for the Research. The main character of the

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Kaṭhōpaniṣad is Nachiketā, son of sage Vājashravas. He was very tender in age but full of Śraddhā. His father was performing Viśvajit Yajña but violating the very basic principles. Nachiketā was deeply pained because in the Viśvajit Yajña, his father was supposed to give away everything. The sage Vājashravas out of ignorance was giving away the old cows and worthless things. In this situation, Nachiketā got possessed with Śraddhā. He started reflecting that this human life is fleeting. Moreover, what my father will achieve by performing such Yajña for namesake. He thought that being his worthy son I must do something so that my father should not attain bad merits. The teaching of Kaṭhōpaniṣad begins on this background. This mental state of Nachiketā makes him dive deep in introspection. He, as it were in modern terminology started doing investigations and Research. This Research paper deals with the Research Methodology in the Kaṭhōpaniṣad. The following subhead delineates the research paper.

- The Research methodology of Kaṭhōpaniṣad an overview
 - Dialectical inquiry
 - Śravaṇa Manana and Nididhyasana
 - Anubandha chatuṣṭaya
- Dialectical inquiry as the Research methodology of Kaṭhōpaniṣad
 - Dialectical inquiry - Difference in Western and Indian approach
- Śravaṇa Manan and Nididhyasan as Research Methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad
- Anubandha chatuṣṭaya as Research methodology in Kathopaniṣad
- Conclusion

The Research methodology of Kaṭhōpaniṣad- An overview

The Research dealt in the Kaṭhōpaniṣad would classify as qualitative research because here the discussion about Death is the central theme. It also falls under the category of descriptive Research since the abstruse questions like, "What happens to an individual after death?" is described in the whole text.

yeyaṃ prete vicikitsā manuṣye'stītyeke nāyamastīti caike¹

It can also be termed as Explanatory Research since the problem of Death is explained as a universal and the most important problem. The seriousness of this questioned is reflected by mentioning that even gods are eager to find the answer about Death. However, it is very difficult to know this mystery².

devairatrāpi vicikitsitaṃ purā na hi suvijñeyamaṇuṣeṣa dharmāḥ³

The research methodology⁴ is the science behind the Research methods applied for some Research problem. The research methods required in any Research problems are like the application part and Research methodology is the theoretical portion.

Dialectical inquiry

The beginning of Kaṭhōpaniṣad initiates with the questioning from the boy Nachiketā. The method of questioning is termed as dialectical Research method. The Research methodology will be 'Dialectical inquiry'⁵. Nachiketā was applying analytical method to find the solutions of the questions arising in his conscience. The main teacher of Kaṭhōpaniṣad is the Death god. He uses descriptive methods and analytical method to

explain the solutions of the problems posed by Nachiketā.

The questions raised in the Kaṭhōpaniṣad were not out of some intellectual curiosity. It was the seeker's deep desire of finding solution to the basic existential problems faced by the Mankind. Apple falls down from an apple tree but only a scientist like Newton will try to know the reason of this phenomenon, happening every day. Everybody knows the questions posed by Nachiketā in Kaṭhōpaniṣad about the problem of death. However, they are not keen to get the solution since the effort demanded to achieve the result is missing. This makes Śravaṇa Manana and Nididhyasana as another Research Methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad.

Śravaṇa Manana and Nididhyasana

Śravaṇa, Manana and Nididhyasana is the basic Research Methodology to attain the Realization in Kaṭhōpaniṣad. The questioner in Kaṭhōpaniṣad is Nachiketā. He was mere a young boy⁶, but a very serious aspirant since Śraddhā had entered into his personality.

Śraddhāviveśa so'manyata⁷

Śraddhā⁸ is a Sanskrit word. The translation of the word 'Śraddhā' in English is not possible. According to Ādi Śankarāchārya⁹ Śraddhā is Āstikya Buddhi- that means having faith in the words of teacher and scriptures.

śāstrasya guruvākyasya satyabuddhyavadhāraṇam |
sā śraddhā kathitā sadbhīryayā vastūpalabhyate ||¹⁰

Nachiketā being possessed with Śraddhā becomes a fit recipient to receive the teachings of Kaṭhōpaniṣad. This ability only makes Nachiketā ponder and dive deep into the teachings of the

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Upaniṣads¹¹. The eligibility for attaining Realization is the important part of *Anubandha chatuṣṭaya* and a Research methodology in Upaniṣads.

Anubandha chatuṣṭaya

Anubandha chatuṣṭaya¹² is four-fold in nature and content.

1. Adhikāri (the qualified aspirant)
2. viṣaya (subject matter under discussion)
3. prayojantā (Desiring result)
4. sambandha (relationship)

between adhikāra, viṣaya and prayojantā.

Sadananda refers in Vedāntasāra-anubandho nāma adhikāri viṣayasambandhaprayojanāni |¹³

These primary questions in the Upaniṣads are the Research Methodology, which determines the competency of the student, the subject matter and its connection with the text and the necessity of the study.

Dialectical inquiry as the Research methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad

The Research methodology of Kaṭhōpaniṣad is 'Dialectical inquiry' in the first chapter. It can be termed as a Qualitative form of Research in western terminology. The seriousness and candidature of the questioner is the benchmark for the questions framed in the 'Dialectical inquiry'. Aspirant is not supposed to be lacking in the mentioned qualities, otherwise there is no hope of getting the answers. Nachiketā asked the question about the state of human being after death. The 'death god' tested the keenness of Nachiketā. He tempted Nachiketā by offering him various mundane pleasures.

śatāyusaḥ putrapauṭrānvr̥ṇiṣvā bahūnpaśūn

hastihiraṇyamaśvān |bhūmermahadāyatanam
vṛṇīṣva svayaṃ ca jīva śarado yāvadicchasi ||
etattulyaṃ yadi manyase varaṃ vṛṇīṣva vittaṃ
cirajīvikāṃ ca |mahābhūmau naciketastvamedhi
kāmānāṃ tvā kāmabhāṃ karomi ||
ye ye kāmā durlabhā martyaloke sarvān
kāmāśchadataḥ prārthayasva |imā rāmāḥ
sarathāḥ satūryā na hīdṛśā lambhanīyā manuṣyaiḥ
|ābhirmatprattābhiḥ paricārayasv naciketo
maraṇaṃ mā'nuprākṣṭh ||¹⁴

Nachiketā was intelligent enough to know the transient nature of the mundane pleasure. It was the firm conviction of Nachiketā that the mundane pleasure will wither away the vital life force of the human beings.

śvobhāvā martyasya yadantakaitat sarveṃdriyāṇāṃ
jarayanti tejaḥ |api sarvaṃ jīvitamaḥpameva ||¹⁵

Human beings have the desire to achieve highest knowledge since time immemorial. However, the desire will remain a distant dream, if the necessary qualification to achieve the knowledge is unfulfilled. It is as true in any profession as in the Upaniṣadic realization¹⁶.

The same set of rules is applicable to the teacher also. He must be qualified and accomplished in his field. Nevertheless, he will not open up until unless he feels that the recipient is eager and fit to receive the knowledge. Nachiketā knew that the inquiry about death cannot be answered in a better way other than by the death god himself. This made him even more passionate and restless to press the death god to know about the existence or the non-existence of any being after death.

āścaryo vaktā kuśalo'sya labdhā | āścaryo jñātā
kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ ||¹⁷

In the commentary of Ādi Śankarāchārya¹⁸ on Kaṭhōpaniṣad the mantras (in Sanskrit मन्त्र) are explained in a dialectical process. The method employed is similar to the most common method of Indian philosophical traditions by most of the philosophers. Āchārya¹⁹ while explaining the text will first take up others view about the text. It is the views or other standpoints (Pūrva pakṣa). The Pūrva pakṣa²⁰ follows the refutation of the views established through Pūrva pakṣa itself. This method employs various arguments²¹ and illustrations from the scriptures. In plain language -it is the refutation of the Pūrva pakṣa view. The refutation of the Pūrva pakṣa and presenting the arguments in favor of the desired principle 'Uttarapakṣa (उत्तरपक्ष)' will lead to the conclusion. The conclusion is called as Siddhāntapakṣa (सिद्धान्तपक्ष)- means the correct meaning of the text.

Dialectical inquiry – Difference in Western and Indian approach

This method is somewhat similar to the dialectical method in the western philosophy. Dialect usually refers to the Socratic method of philosophizing through discussion²². It was set forth in Plato's early dialogues featuring the Socratic figure as the central character conducting the session. According to Socrates, the dialectics is a method of argumentation. However, the main difference in the dialectical inquiry of the Vedic philosophy and the western philosophy is that, in western Philosophy questioning leads to a rational logical conclusion. In Vedic Philosophy, the questioning is a very primitive step. In the Western Philosophy, it is more of an arrival on some intellectual conviction through open discussion. However, in the

Upaniṣadic realm of knowledge, questioning would be a means to attain the Realization. Realization in Kaṭhōpaniṣad is described as- the state of immortality, where a human being crosses over the mire of birth and death.

yastu vijñānavānbhavati samanaskaḥ sadā śuciḥ | sa tu tatpadamāpnoti yasmādbhūyo na jāyate ||²³ This only is termed as Mokṣa in Indian philosophy²⁴.

Śravaṇa Manan and Nididhyasan as Research Methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad

The Dialectical inquiry in the Indian Philosophy of the aspirant reaches the state of realization through the three steps- Śravaṇa, Manan and Nididhyasan.

Śravaṇa (श्रवण) refers to the first of three stages of learning according to the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad²⁵. The finding out of the true significance of the meaning of the scriptures is the Śravaṇam. Śravaṇa (श्रवण) is followed by manana (मनन).

Manana (मनन) means ‘reflection’ on the teachings of the Āchārya.

itthaṃ vākyaistadarthānusandhānam śravaṇam bhavet | yuktyā sambhāvitatvānusandhānam manantu tat ||²⁶

Manana is to arrive at the possibility of its validity through logical reasoning.

Nididhyasana (in Sanskrit निदिध्यासन) is the stage after Manan. Nididhyasana leads to the supreme knowledge, which is beyond any doubt.

śruteḥ śataguṇam vidyānmananam mananādapi | nididhyāsam lakṣaguṇam anantaṃ nirvikalpam||²⁷

Manan (Reflection) should be considered a hundred times effective than a mere Śravaṇa (hearing) the instructions from the teacher.

Nididhyasana (constant meditation) is hundred thousand times fruitful than Manan (Reflection).

The three are all the processes and reaching the state of Realization beyond doubt Nirvikalpa is beyond any comparison. The state of Realization is beyond doubt is explained in the Kaṭhōpaniṣad.

yadā sarve prabhidyante hṛdayasyeha granthayaḥ |atha martyo'mṛto bhavatyetāvaddhyanusāsanam ||²⁸

The ties of the heart should be cut asunder here on the earthly plan. Then the mortal becomes immortal. The crookedness of the heart is the ties, which binds the individual and keeps him away from the Realization. This much alone is the teaching of the Upaniṣad. This only is the path.

The goal of the teachings of Kaṭhōpaniṣad is to be one with the truth, not just some intellectual conclusion. This is the major difference between the present education and the Upaniṣads²⁹.

Education³⁰ in the present age is mainly some gathering information and the correlation of the information. In Upaniṣadic philosophy, Darśana means- Realization. Darśana is loosely translated as ‘Philosophy’ in English language, and do not convey the same meaning. Philosophy is derived from the addition of the Greek word ‘philos’ and ‘Sophia’.

‘Philos’ means ‘love’ and ‘Sophia’ signifies ‘Wisdom’. Thus, Philosophy is more of an intellectual exercise. However, Upaniṣads demands that the knowledge from a teacher should lead to the realization of attaining the truth after manana.

tābhyāṃ nirvicikitse'rthe cetasaḥsthāpitasya yat |ekatānatvametaaddhi nididhyāsanamucyate ||³¹

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad describes Nididhyasana as a state of meditation when, instruction about the Self

(Atman) is confirmed by three proper reasons. The reasons are- 1. The scriptural injunctions; 2. The instructions of the teacher and; 3. One's own experience.

Śāstracāryānubhavanairhetubhīṣca samarthitaḥ |
īdṛgaikātmyasaṃbodho nididhyāsanamucyate ³²

The Śravaṇa Manan and Nididhyasan is possible, if the student has the required qualifications termed as Anubandha chatuṣṭaya. Anubandha chatuṣṭaya is also a type of Research methodology in the Upaniṣads.

Anubandha chatuṣṭaya as Research methodology in Kathopaniṣad

Nachiketā the main character of Kathopaniṣad asked the questions, which became the basis of all the instructions in the text. The first part of Anubandha chatuṣṭaya is Adhikāri (the qualified aspirant). Nachiketā was tempted and scared by the death god before delivering the message of the Upaniṣad. The death god praised Nachiketā for his renunciation.

sa tvam priyānpriyarūpāṃśca

kāmānabhidhyāyannaciketo'tyasrākśīḥ | naitāṃ
sṛṅkāṃ vittamayīmavāpto yasyāṃ majjanti

bahavo manuṣyāḥ || ³³

The death god extolled Nachiketā further declaring knowledge and ignorance as diametrically opposite. The path of knowledge and ignorance leads to the different destinations. Nachiketā, the aspirant of knowledge has given up the mundane pleasures even after lots of persuasions.

dūramete viparīte viṣūcī avidyā yā ca vidyeti jñātā
|vidyābhīpsinaṃ naciketasam manye na tvā kāmā
bahavo'lolupanta ||³⁴

The qualifications of the aspirant to achieve the
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goal of Realization is called as- Sādhanacatuṣṭaya (साधनचतुष्टय)³⁵. Kathopaniṣad demands Sādhanacatuṣṭaya³⁶ as the prerequisite to understand, practice and realize the knowledge taught in the text.

The second among the Anubandha chatuṣṭaya is viṣaya- subject matter. The subject matter of the Kathopaniṣad is to know the solution of the confusion about death³⁷. There is always a fear among the mortals about death. Human being can overcome death only by attaining the state of immortality, which is- soundless, touchless, formless, undecaying, tasteless, eternal and scentless, beginningless, endless, beyond the *Mahat* (the first evolute of *Prakriti*) in the, and unchanging, knowing that (nicāyya), man escapes from the mouth of Death without beginning and end.

aśabdamaśparśamarūpamavyayaṃ

tathā'rasannityamagandhavacca yat |anādyanantaṃ
mahataḥ paraṃ dhruvaṃ nicāyya

tanmrtyumukhātpramucyate ||³⁸

The third among the Anubandha chatuṣṭaya is- prayojantā (Desiring result). The desired result in the Kathopaniṣad is to attain the result of the teaching about death through rigorous practice. Fourth and the final thread in the Anubandha chatuṣṭaya is- sambandha (relation).

The god of Death leads Nachiketā to that knowledge- which reveals the state of immortality beyond birth and death. The subject matter is what happens to a human being after death? The sambandha (relation) can help any individual, possessing the qualities of

Sādhanacatuṣṭaya to decide whether he should associate with the subject matter of the study of the Kathopaniṣad or not.

Conclusion

Research methodology in Kaṭhōpaniṣad is the basic theory involved to chalk out the problem stated in the text. The problem discussed in the Upanishad is about death. Human beings from time immemorial have grappled with this problem. However, until now there is no proper solution. Death has always remained a mystery. It is called as- ‘a great leveler’, because death brings every human being to the same fate, irrespective of his achievements. The boy Nachiketā, the main character filled with Śraddhā asked questions to his father Vājashravas to prevent him of bad results of his deeds. Nachiketā was introspective even at the tender age. It suggests that age can never be the factor related to maturity. The questions asked by Nachiketā were the proof of his high caliber. The high caliber is termed as Sādhanacatuṣṭaya. The Sādhanacatuṣṭaya has only made Nachiketā fit to do ‘Śravaṇa Manan and Nididhyasana’, which is a Research methodology in the Kaṭhōpaniṣad³⁹. Anubandha chatuṣṭaya is a guide for any suitable aspirant to provide him the understanding about the scripture. The suitability of the scripture in question for the aspirant is prayojantā in Anubandha chatuṣṭaya. The episode of Nachiketā in the Upaniṣad is the proof that human being can strive to attain the highest Realization at any stage of life. The young age of Nachiketā was never a barrier in practicing severe conditions required to attain the rarest of the rare Realization of the Upaniṣads.

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