**1. What is Pramana?**

* **Pramāṇa** is a Sanskrit word which means **‘measure’.** The concept of pramanas is very critical for understanding the laws of Indian Logic and the philosophy of knowledge.
* In Indian philosophy, the word represents all the means through which true and accurate knowledge about the world can be obtained. A different school of thoughts and philosophies have a varied number of means through which one can make the sense of the world.
* As per the Vedas philosophy, Pramanas are six in number. Therefore, there is the valid means of knowledge available to us and we should be careful enough to use various faculties of mind to arrive at the true knowledge. We will be discussing each one of these in detail here.

**2. What are the types of Pramanas?**

**a. Pratyaksha Pramana (Perception):** Pratyaksha means knowledge gained through perception. Perception takes place with the help of sensory organs.

* It can be direct as well as indirect.
* **Direct perception** is the cognition of the sense objects by our sense organs alone– smell (nose), touch (skin), form (eyes), sound (ears) and taste (tongue). Knowledge takes place when the object of knowledge comes in direct contact with objects of sense. Direct sensory perception is also referred to as anubhava (meaning experience).
* **Indirect perception** creates knowledge based on memory (Smriti). Once we have known what an apple looks like, this gets feed into our memory or stock of knowledge. In later instances, whenever we see any red-coloured and round shaped fruit, our previous memory directs us to categorise them as apples.

**b. Anumana Pramana (Inference):**Knowledge that cannot be gained through sense organs becomes the object of inference. We infer knowledge of what we don’t see from what we can see. This is also considered to be the source of valid mediated knowledge. For example, we can infer fire from the smell of smoke; or we can infer physical or emotional pain when we see the other person crying, etc.

**c. Upamana Pramana (Comparison or Analogy):**This kind of knowledge is acquired by the perception of similarity between two different objects of knowledge.

* It is different from mere perception and inference and is based on a comparison.
* **For example,** a person who has known that a Monkey animal that Jump on the trees is called a Monkey in his City. When this person goes to the jungle and sees a similar looking animal which jump on the trees, he can say that ‘this wild Monkey is like the Monkey in my city’ or ‘the Monkey in my City is like this wild Monkey’.
* Such knowledge is possible when there is a prior familiarity with a particular thing which lets the person compare both the things based on the known familiarity.

**d. Arthapatti Pramana (Assumption or Implication):** Knowledge gained through seeing the relation between **cause and effect** are Arthapatti pramana.

* It includes **postulation, supposition, and presumption.**
* This form of knowledge is either gained from what we have seen or heard, and are assuming rightly.
* **For example,** a healthy person says that he doesn’t Walk at night. From this proposition, we can postulate that this person Walk during the day. Without this assumption, it is not possible to explain why this person is not walk during Night. Assumption and implication are very useful concepts to make logical arguments about the world.

**e. Anupalabdhi Pramana (Apprehension and Non- Apprehension):** This is based on the apprehension of a non-existent thing based on non-perception. This means that perception, as well as non-perception, can be the source of valid knowledge. **For example,** there is no student in the class; there is no water in the glass. Because we cannot perceive student in the class at the moment, we can conclude that there is no student in the class.

**f. Shabda Pramana (Word or Verbal Testimony):**This is gained through verbal testimony. A lot of knowledge that we gain about the world is through verbal testimony, texts, symbols, or words. It is either uttered or written.

* A verbal testimony must have a valid source for its object of knowledge to be true. In ancient times, Vedas were considered to be the most authentic source of knowledge by most of the Indian philosophers. Some western philosophers totally rejected this idea and called for context-based knowledge. This also opened the debate that there can be various sources of knowing objects and its validity and reliability depends on the source as well as the context.
* In modern days, we rely on newspapers, books, journals, TV news etc. to form our object of knowledge or opinion.