

# Mimansa Principle of Interpretation

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## Abstract:

Numerous scriptures have been found that have been crucial to understanding the Hindu texts. These texts included the complex procedures for determining the true meaning of terms and expressions found in the Vedas and Puranic texts. The Mimansa is the most significant scripture among all others that contained the guidelines for this kind of interpretation. Hindu civilization and culture developed complex norms of interpretation even in their earliest days. Smritis were interpreted according to the guidelines provided by "Jaimini," the author of the Mimamsat Sutras, which were first intended for srutis. One could refer to Mimansa as the Dharmasasthras' stepping stone. This article deals with the various axioms and scientific nature of interpretation, how it differs from maxwell's interpretation and how it applied in current scenario.

**Keywords:** Scriptures, Hindu Texts, Vedas, Mimansa, Jaimini, Srutis, Smritis, Dharmasasthras, Axioms, Maxwell

## Introduction:

Jaimini established the Mimansa Rules of Interpretation, which are our customary guidelines for interpretation. Shabar, Kumarila Bhatta, Prabhakar, and others expounded the Sutras of Jaimini. Our great jurists, such as Vijnaneshwara (author of Mitakshara), Jimutvahana (author of Dayabhaga), Nanda Pandit, and others, would frequently refer to these Mimansa Principles whenever they discovered a contradiction between the numerous Smritis or any ambiguity, incongruity, or casus omissus within. The objective of Mimansa is to provide guidelines for interpreting the Vedas, which are the oldest texts in Hinduism, as well as a rationale for the philosophical significance of observing Vedic rites. The Mimansa principles were originally developed for religious purposes, but because they were quite reasonable and logical, they later found application in other fields like as law, grammar, logic, and philosophy. Among the six Indian philosophical systems (darshans), the Mimansa system is essential to Vedanta and had a major effect on the creation of Hindu law.

## Axioms of interpretation:

For the interpretation of shastras, six axioms of interpretation have been developed. These are

1. The Sarthakyata axiom, according to which each word and sentence needs to have a meaning.
2. The Gauravah doshah, or Laghava axiom, which asserts that the construction that shortens and simplifies the meaning is preferred.
3. The Arthakatva axiom, which asserts that a word or sentence occurring in the same place should not have two meanings. A Vakyabheda is a flaw (dosh) that has this double meaning.
4. The Gunapradhan Axiom, which says that a word or sentence that seems to express a subordinate notion should either be changed to reflect the major idea or ignored altogether if it conflicts with it. The saying, "bigger fish eats smaller fish" (matsyanyaya<sup>27</sup>) can be used as an analogy to demonstrate

this idea. To shed insight into this, consider the fact that Yajurveda verses are usually said quietly and Samaveda verses are typically recited loudly. The Gunapradhan axiom was employed to determine that recitals must be made in a softer voice because they are required to be recited as part of the Yajurveda rituals. This helped to settle conflicts in some Yajurveda ceremonies, such as Agnyadhana (Primary), which involves the recitation of the lines of Samaveda (Accessory). This is so that the Accessory can fulfil its responsibility of ensuring that the Primary's goal is achieved, as it was created with the Primary in view.

5. The Samanjasya Axiom, which says that every effort should be made to reconcile writings that seem to be at odds with one another. This idea has been used by Jimutvahana to resolve discrepancies between Manu and Yajnavalkya's texts about the succession rights. The Nashtasvadagha Ratha maxim, which was utilised to resolve the discrepancies between the Manu and Yajnavalkya Smriti texts about self-acquired property and ancestral property, serves as one example of the Samanjasya axiom. It is based on a story in which two men set out on a voyage in separate horse-drawn chariots, and when a fire burst out, one man lost his horse while the other's chariot was destroyed by fire. So, utilising the last horse and chariot, they both completed their voyage together for mutual benefit.<sup>i</sup> As a result, it is well-established that contradictory provisions should, whenever feasible, be interpreted to complement one another since the court has an obligation to prevent "head-on clashes among the provisions of the statute."
6. The Vikalpa axiom, which says that the rule more in accordance with fairness and usage should be accepted at one's discretion if there is a genuine and irreconcilable disagreement between two legal norms of equal force. Consequently, when a regulation is a higher legal standard as according to the Badha principles, one takes precedence over the other when comparing, for example, a Shruti and Smriti.

### **Characteristics of mimamsa school:**

Mimamsa schools are characterized by the following:

- Emphasis is placed on the interpretation of Vedic texts such as the Samhita and Brahmana;
- They contend that the Vedas contain the ultimate truth and are the source of all knowledge;
- While performing rituals may help one attain paradise, understanding the rationale behind Vedic ceremonies is equally necessary;
- One must comprehend this rationale in order to perform the rites properly and earn atonement;
- A person's actions determine their strengths and weaknesses;
- If their good deeds persisted, they would enjoy the pleasures of heaven;
- However, they will be immune to the eternal cycle of life and able to break free from the never-ending cycle after they have atoned.
- Purva Mimamsa is a Karma-Mimamsa system that studies Vedic teachings through Karma-Kanda ceremonies.
- The Mimamsa school emphasises the necessity of performing a Yagya in order to receive material and spiritual advantages.
- As a result, the philosophical foundation of the Vedas is provided by the Samhita (and Brahmana) sections.
- This worldview placed a strong emphasis on the Vedic ritual aspect, which is performing Vedic procedures to achieve salvation.

- The Brahmanas employed this strategy to maintain their authority over the populace and to maintain control over the social system.

### **Scientific nature of Mimamsa principle:**

The division of concepts into categories and subcategories for simple understanding demonstrates the scientific and systematic character of the Mimamsa principle. The Vakya principle, for instance, used the subcategories Adhayaahra and Anusanga to fill in words and expressions that were missing, and Upakarasha and Apakarsh to move clauses within sentences so that they could be understood clearly. Notably, there are contemporary interpretation guidelines that like Maxwell's, which allow for violence in certain scenarios, just as the statute does. According to the Supreme Court of India, "courts can sometimes supply words which have been accidentally omitted" in *S.S. Kalra v. Union of India*.<sup>ii</sup>

In *Tribhuvan Misra v. D.I.O.S* the Saamanjasy concept of interpretation was applied in to reconcile two opposing division bench findings. This was done on the basis of the aphorism "lost horse and burned chariot" (*Nasarhatastva Dagdhartha Nyaya*).

In *Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi v. State* the Anusanga principle of interpretation was applied in-depth to make the statute more democratic and equitable, something that could not have been accomplished with Western principles.

In *Vinay Khare v. State of U.P.* the Allahbad High Court resolved the dispute over candidate selection by using the Laghava principle of interpretation and concentrating on the written exam rather than the in-person interview to reduce the possibility of bias, favouritism, and arbitrariness. The candidates received equal marks overall.

### **Mimamsa vs maxwell:**

There are two different legal interpretation theories: Mimamsa and Maxwell.

While Mimamsa principles are a scientific system of interpretation that was developed in India from very early times, Maxwell's principles of interpretation are primarily used in Western law courts. Interpreting the law so that it can be successfully applied to a specific scenario before him is one of a judge's main responsibilities. The foundation of Maxwell's rules of interpretation is the notion that a statute's language should be interpreted normally and that the legislature's aim should be inferred from the words used.

On the other side, the Mimamsa principles are more thorough and systematic. While Maxwell's concepts are limited to the interpretation of statutory law, they can also be applied to the interpretation of judgements.<sup>iii</sup>

The Mimamsa principles are superior to Maxwell's principles of interpretation in two ways:

1. they are more comprehensive and methodical, and
2. they can be applied to the interpretation of judgements as well as statutes, whereas Maxwell's principles are limited to statutory law interpretation. Adhyahara is the term for casus omissus in Mimamsa. The adhyahara concept allows us to amend a legal document. Nonetheless, Maxwell's lack of further explanation and reference of the subcategories falling under the broad category of casus omissus illustrates the superiority of the Mimamsa principles over his concepts in this specific field.

The usefulness of Mimamsa principles is not diminished by the fact that they occasionally produce diverse outcomes. Different outcomes are also produced using Maxwell's concepts. This merely serves to highlight the need for care when applying interpretation principles. Interpretation principles make good servants but

bad masters. Just because something is foreign doesn't mean it has to be rejected. Westerners have a lot to teach us that is beneficial.

### **Use of mimansa in current legal system:**

The meaning of the legal provisions has been investigated through the use of the Mimangsa Rules of Interpretation.

After citing a "Shloka," the Supreme Court took one of these principles into practise. In the case of UP Bhoodan Yagna Samiti, UP V. Braj Kishore, the Supreme Court of India made the following observation: "In this country, we have a heritage of rich literature, it is interesting to note that literature of interpretation also is very well known." Many Shlokas that have been recognised for hundreds of years have articulated the fundamentals of interpretation.

In Beni Prasad v. Hardai Bibi, Sir John Edge, the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court at the time, made reference to the Mimamsa concept. Similar to this, the Gunapradhan Axiom of the Mimamsa principle had been applied in Amit Plastic Industry, Ghaziabad v. Divisional Level Committee, Meerut to interpret section 419 of the UP Sales Tax Act.

In the cases of M/s Ispat Industries Ltd vs. Commissioner of Customs and M/s Craft Interiors Pvt. Ltd vs. Commissioner of Central Excise, the Supreme Court recognised the significance of the Mimamsa Rules of Interpretation.

### **Conclusion:**

In summary, the Mimamsa Principles provide a customary framework for interpreting legal texts, especially when it comes to Hindu law. The Mimamsa Principles were initially developed for the purpose of understanding religious texts, but they are now seen as sufficiently reasonable and scientific to be used to the interpretation of contemporary laws and rulings. With a flexibility and reason lack from Western principles of interpretation, the Mimamsa Principles offer a distinctive method for statutory interpretation. They are characterised as scientific and rational, with the goal of improving the democracy, equity, and reason of the law. The Indian legal system has recognised and applied the Mimamsa Principles, proving their applicability in contemporary statute interpretation. When used by judges, they can be an effective tool for reshaping the law to make it more democratic, fair, and logical. The Mimamsa Principles have a historical basis in religious practises, but they have progressively found application in other domains like as philosophy and law, demonstrating their flexibility and relevance in modern legal interpretation. In general, the Mimamsa Principles give an alternative perspective to Western legal principles by providing distinctive and historically grounded method of interpreting legal texts within the framework of Hindu law.

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