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	Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013 THE CONCEPT OF KARMA IN THE HETERODOX SYSTEM OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY A.Sheela , S. Veerapandian Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Annamalai University Professor&Head,Department of Philosophy,Annamalai University. Abstract: Philosophical systems have a concern on the doctrine of action and its after-effect. The Indian systems of philosophy always show a special interest on the concept of karma, whether they support Vedas or go beyond the authority of Vedas. All the systems of philosophy refer the concept of karma to validate their very foundation of arguments and provide a deterministic view based on moralistic or naturalistic interpretations. The unorthodox systems or the heterodox systems, namely, the Carvakas, the Jainism and the Buddhism differ in their explanation of the concept of karma. This paper examines these issues in the three heterodox systems of Indian philosophy over the concept of karma. Keyword: Indian philosophy, heterodox system, Karma, Carvaka, Jainism, Buddhism 1.INTRODUCTION The merit of Indian philosophy not only lies in the concept of liberation but also lies in the interpretation of how the karma necessitates or to be exhausted. Indian philosophy has been systematically classified into two systems comprising nine different schools of thought. The orthodox system, called as astika, accepts the authority of the Vedas and heterodox system, called as nastika, stands by itself without ascribing to the Vedas. The orthodox system includes the six systems of philosophy, namely, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. The heterodox system includes Carvaka, Jainism, and Buddhism. Concepts from the origination of the universe to ultimate dissolution have been deeply and repeatedly examined in all these systems in different points of view and knowledge. The concept of karma is no exception. Any meaningful inquiry of karma must start from these systems of philosophy. The Concept of Karma The Sanskrit term 'karma' is derived from 'kr' means 'to do.' The term is also used to mean the effect of action. It implies that all good actions produce good effects and bad actions produce bad effects. Merriam-Webster defines karma as “the force generated by a person's actions...to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence.” Though the concept originated in Indian philosophical tradition, its function is equally contemplated in the western tradition as well. This concept is not alien to Western religions. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all teach that a person's actions in this life might determine whether they go to heaven or hell in the afterlife. The additional layers of this concept that are implied with the belief in transmigration are two fold: The circumstances of our present life are determined by our actions in a previous existence; and Karma perpetuates transmigration, meaning that our souls are destined to reincarnate again and again unless we straighten out our Karma. The old saying, “As a man soweth, so shall he also reap,” explains the importance of the concept of karma. The fundamental conception on karma rests in its features as eternal, changeless, invariable, inviolable, and the law of laws of nature. It is the law of cause and effect. The Bhagavad Gita says that none who are embodied can escape it: shining ones, human beings, animals, vegetables, minerals, are all evolving within this universal law; even the God Himself, embodied in a universe, comes within a larger sweep of this law of all manifestation. According to Theosophical philosophy, “so long as any one is related to matter, embodied in matter, so long is he within karmic law. A being may escape from or transcend one or other of its aspects, but he cannot, while remaining in manifestation, go outside this law.”[1] There are different understandings of the concept of karma. In Vedas and Upanishads, the term is used to denote doing certain rites according to Varna. The theory of karma first occurs in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. Yajnavalkya says, 'A man turns into something good by good action and into something bad by bad action.' All karma doctrines are comfortably linked to a theory of rebirth. Invariably, samsara involves pain which necessitates moksha.[2] Explorative Sources The interest in the concept of karma engulfs everyone and different sorts of people including philosophers, occultists, spiritualists, astrologers, common men and the last but not least, the academicians. Number of studies from different points of view and schools of thought exists. It is very difficult to identify the academic research from non-academic research in this case. The publications of Max Mueller and the Theosophical society brought the attention of the western scholars to the Indian tradition of	
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THE CONCEPT OF KARMA IN THE HETEROODOX SYSTEM OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY A.Sheela ,S. Veerapandian	Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013 thought. However, the Acharyas and the Sanskrit pundits debated and interpreted extensively on the doctrine of karma right from the ancient time. Few studies were carried out in the early decades of the twentieth century. Karma: A Story of Early Buddhism by Paul Carus, Karma by Annie Besant, Karma and Redemption by A.C. Hogg, Exposition of the Doctrine of Karma, by W.S. Bowes-Taylor, The Karma Philosophy by V.R. Gandhi, Manifestations of Karma by Rudolf Steiner, Karma and Rebirth by C. Humphreys, The Problem of Rebirth by Sri Aurobindo, and Swami Abhedananda's, The Doctrine of Karma: A Study in the Philosophy and Practice of Work remain classical studies on the concept of karma from different schools of philosophy. General studies on Indian philosophy have referred the concept of karma and provided sufficient space for accommodating the related concepts such as, causation, rebirth, types and effects of karma, and ultimately the moksha. In this effort, the following works are very relevant: S. Radhakrishnan's Indian Philosophy, Surendranath Dasgupta's A History of Indian Philosophy, Jadunath Sinha's, Indian Philosophy, M. Hiriyanna's, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, and C. Sharma's, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy. To mention some specific studies in relation to Carvakas, Jainism and Buddhism, the following works can be helpful. Karl Potter's "How many karma theories are there?" Johannes Bronkhorst's Karma and Teleology, B.R. Reichenback's "The Law of Karma and the Principle of Causation," Thrangu Rinpoche's The Twelve Links of Interdependent Origination, Aparna Chakraborty's Karma, Freedom, and Responsibility, R. Prasad's Karma Causation and Retributive Morality, Y. Krishan's "The Doctrine of Karma and the Law of Causation," Bruce Reichenbach's The Law of Karma, S.R. Bhatt's "The Theory of Karma: A Philosophical Analysis," Arvind Sharma's "Karma and the Arhant in Jainism," Ramkrishna Bhattacharya's Studies on the Carvaka/Lokayata, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya's Carvaka/Lokayata: An Anthology of Source Materials, and O'Flaherty's, Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions. Karma in Carvakas There are various views regarding the origin of the term 'carvak'. The term, 'caru' means 'beautiful' and 'vak' means 'words.' According to some scholars, Carvak, a sage, is said to have propagated this philosophy, and hence it acquired the name 'Carvak.' Some hold that the word 'carvak' rests in the verb 'carva' which means 'to chew.' Thus greater emphasis is given to eating and drinking. The charvakas believe in the dictum, "Peeba, khad cha varlochane" which means "eat and drink whatever is beautiful to behold." The term 'carvak' also means 'sweet speech' or 'sweet words'. They say that ordinary people found this philosophy sweet to listen to. There is also an interpretation that the Carvak is Lokayat. This is because this philosophy had spread widely. Since it had diffused all over the 'lok', it got the name 'Lokayat.' It accepts the evidence of the senses or sense perception as the only source of valid knowledge or authority. It is 'jadvad' or 'matter based' which is the only truth. Not accepting the validity of other truths such as the soul, God, dharma, or karma, they acknowledge everything which can be experienced in terms of fundamental matter alone. Thus this philosophy came to be called by names such as charvak, lokayat, and jadvad. It is believed that the author of the carvaka philosophy is Brihaspathi. But the doctrine has no chief preacher or followers. It has no written text of its own. One can find references in the texts of other schools in the course of refutations Carvaka's materialism. A brief introduction is found in the Shadadarshan Samucchaya written by Haribhadra Suri. A more detailed account is found in Sayan Madhav's Sarvadarshan Sangraha. The main tenet of this philosophy is to secure material happiness in the present life by any means. The Carvaka says, "as long as one is alive, one should live happily. There is no one who will not meet with death. Once the body is burnt, how can it come back again? The innate tendency of man is towards acquisition of wealth and enjoyment of pleasures." Thus man has a natural tendency to be attracted towards the Carvaka philosophy. Consequently, it appears that even without any formal teaching or propagation, people of their own accord tend to drift towards the Carvaka doctrine. Hence the name Lokayata seems to be appropriate.[3] According to the Carvaka doctrine, the body is made up of four mahabhutas, namely earth, water, fire, and air. The fifth element, 'akash' is not accepted because it cannot be perceived directly by the senses. The akash cannot be directly seen with the eyes and it can only be proved or established indirectly by inference. According to the Carvaka belief, the body itself is the Atma. The essential truth of self-consciousness experienced by the body of a sentient being is nothing different from the body and there is no truth like the soul. Not only that, consciousness arises from the four fundamental elements. Just as a drug or seed used for fermentation while making spirits and other intoxicants generates the power of intoxication, in the same manner, when the fundamental elements of matter are transformed into a body, it is from the combination of same four truths that intelligence or consciousness arises. When the consciousness of the body is destroyed, the body perishes automatically. This is called death. After death, consciousness has no existence. Thus, the above mentioned body endowed with intelligence or consciousness is alone called the self or the soul. The body itself is the self or the soul. Consequently, the destruction of the body constitutes Moksa. There are no separate worlds like hell or heaven. The sorrows that arise due to various reasons connected with matter alone constitute hell and likewise happiness alone is heaven. The Universe comes into being and also ceases to exist of its own accord. Therefore as regards the world, there is no Ishvara. Each sentient being gets a life once only. So long as the power of consciousness exists in the body, it has life. No sooner the power or force of consciousness ends, the body is destroyed. Therefore, the body has no link or connection with the past. Keeping this principle in mind, Charvaka says, "Hrunam krutva dhritam peeбет" means "borrow if need be to consume ghee." This implies that if you don't have funds or good things of life with you, you should borrow from others to ensure a happy life of enjoyment. This is because	
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	after death, consciousness has no existence. In that case, the question of repayment of debts does not arise. It is obvious that the Carvaka is rooted in materialism. It accepts the direct evidence of the senses as the only valid source of knowledge. In this world, whatever we experience with our sense organs is deemed as direct perception. Therefore, basic matter is regarded as the only philosophical truth. Ishvara, soul, heaven, hell, eternal life as also maya etc are directly imperceptible. Consequently it does not accept such concepts as valid. As direct perception is the cornerstone of Carvaka, intangible or invisible things not directly connected with the body are not relied upon. The feeling of consciousness that is experienced within the sentient body is in reality a characteristic quality of the body itself. The coming together of the four basic elements results in the creation of the body and along with it, the intelligence or consciousness is also formed. If it be asked as to how intelligence could possibly arise from inert matter, the Carvaka replies that it does just as the power of intoxication arises when kinva and other intoxicants are mixed with food. As mentioned in the Sarvadarshana Sangrahaa, “Kinvadibhyo madshakthivat chaitanyam upajayate”, just as the combination of betel leaves, betel nuts, and edible lime produces a red colour, in the same way, the coming together of the four fundamental elements gives rise to intelligence or consciousness in the body. Therefore, the body and intelligence are not different principles or truths. They are essentially the same. In our daily lives, almost all people go about under the assumption that the atma and the body are one. Their utterances such as, “I am fat”, “I am thin” proves the point. A question may be raised that if intelligence is said to arise from the four fundamental truths of matter, and if the sentient being gets life thereby and if the body has no connection with the past, then all existing sentient beings should be of the same form and nature. But it is not so. If some are happy from birth, then others are unhappy from the day they are born. If someone is a Master then another is a servant. Some are intelligent while others are dullards. Some are wealthy and some are poor. Even after working hard, day and night, some are unable to procure enough food for one meal while some others are able to get all that they may desire without any effort. The Carvaka says, “Putting faith in intangible or invisible things, men strive to attain the invisible or illusory happiness of heaven which they will never secure. Nor will they experience the perceivable happiness of the present world. These are the unhappy people. They will remain servants all their lives. And those who accept the evidence of their senses and do not sacrifice the enjoyment of material things are truly happy people. Thus man alone has created this adverse contrast.”[4] It is obvious that the Carvaka completely rejects the orthodox view of karma and subscribes to its fragile materialistic outlook that the decision of the human will and motivation would alter the action and thereby brings happiness. Relief from pain and sorrow depends upon the human efforts and not on the supernatural karmic effects. KARMAIN JAINISM The word 'jain' is derived from the word 'jin' or 'ji'	which means 'to win.' A jin is one who is victorious. That is to say, one who has brought under control the wandering mind. The founders of the Jain doctrine are said to be the 24 Tirthankars, who have crossed the ocean of worldly life. Of these, the first founder of the doctrine is Rrushabdev. Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankar, is said to be the most influential exponents. In the Jain faith, release from the bondage of Karma is itself considered as Moksa. Eight main categories of Karmas are believed to be the cause of bondage as follows:[5] Gnanavarneeeya Karmas: They are the Knowledge Obscuring Karmas, which are of five types namely, Shruti (Scriptures Study), Avadhi (Remote), Man Paryâya' (Mind Reading), Mati (Sensory), and Kewal (Omniscient) are the five types of knowledge obstructing Karmas. Darshanavarneeeya Karmas: They are the Perception Obscuring Karmas. These Karmas obstruct all types of knowledge which are obtainable through direct perception. Antaraya Karmas: They are the Desirable Internal Qualities Obstructing Karmas. The desirable internal qualities such as dana (charity), bhoga (enjoyment), labha (profits) etc which constitute man's internal strengths and which help him to perform good actions and attain desirable ends, are obstructed by these Karmas. Mohaneeya Karmas: They are the Deluding Karmas. These Karmas obstruct the soul's efforts to acquire right faith and perfection in right conduct and also delude the personality and character. Âyush Karmas: They are the Life-Span Karmas. These determine the life-spans of human beings, animals, as well as those of the denizens of hell and heaven. Nam Karmas: They are the Body-Personality Characteristics Karmas. The Nam Karmas determine the characteristics of the body an individual's soul will occupy together with personal qualities and characteristics. Gothra Karmas: They are the Birth-Status Determining Karmas: These Karmas determine whether an individual will be born in a family of high or low rank and status. Vedneeeya Karmas: They are the Worldly Pleasure or Pain Karmas. These are Karmas which give rise to pleasure or pain. They obstruct the natural tendency towards happiness that is inherent in the self. Freedom from the bonds of Karma constitutes the highest and best path to Moksha. The means towards this end is called 'Triratna' or 'The Three Jewels'. Moksha can be secured only by these means. Jainism regards the Jiva as the doer and the enjoyer. The fruits of the Karmas of every Jiva are inevitable. These fruits cannot be destroyed without enjoying or suffering them. One has to pay the penalty for one's own Karmas. Each Jiva gets the fruits strictly according to its own Karmas and there is no reality like Ishwara in between, who dispenses the fruits of the Karmas. Hence, God is not the arbitrator or dispenser of the fruits of Karmas. As the Jiva performs Karmas, so will the Jiva reap the fruits thereof in strict accordance with the Karmas done, for this Jainism does not accept that there exists any reality such as Ishvara in between who controls the allotment of the fruits of Karma.[6]	THE CONCEPT OF KARMA IN THE HETERODOX SYSTEM OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY A. Sheela , S. Veerapandian
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THE CONCEPT OF KARMA IN THE HETERODOX SYSTEM OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY A.Sheela , S. Veerapandian	Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013 Karma in Buddhism The law of karma describes the connection between actions and the resulting forces, as wholesome actions lead to wholesome states while unwholesome actions lead to unwholesome states, individually as well as collectively. It is outlined in the Noble Eightfold Path. Action springs from volition, which springs from intention, which springs from thought, and so forth. The quality of actions can be described in ethical terms, simply as either good or bad, or both good and bad, or indifferent. There are various grades of ethical qualities; and most people have an intuitive understanding that enables them to discern between good and bad, although the discerning ability depends on the person's state of mental development. Wherever the three defilements - delusion, greed, and aversion - are present, they blur the view and increase the level of confusion in the individual or group. Consequently, if the defilements are present, there is a low level of skill in distinguishing between good and bad actions. Thus it makes sense to say that we have good and bad thoughts, we speak good and bad words, and we act either in a good or in a bad way. The Buddhist Precepts and the Ten Perfections give concrete meaning to good and bad and explain skillful and unskillful volitional acts in detail. Since everything in Buddhism is interrelated, the Eightfold Path must be seen in connection with the Four Noble Truths, the concept of karma, and the tenet of rebirth.[7] The law of karma states that there is a connection between the moral quality, the level of skill in volitional actions, and the resulting states. What we are is determined largely by what we thought, said and did in the past, while what we are thinking, saying, and doing now will form our future. The karma of past, present, and future events are connected by the law of cause and effect. For instance, if one generates bad karma by hurting or killing sentient beings, one will have to endure the negative consequences of these deeds in this or another lifetime. Similarly, if one generates good karma by observing the precepts, positive consequences will follow inevitably. Buddhists understand karma as a natural law. There is no higher instance, no judgment, no divine intervention, and no gods that steer man's destiny, but only the law of karma itself, which works on a universal scale. Buddhism holds that the retributive process of karma can span more than one lifetime. Rebirth has always been an important tenet in Buddhism; and it is often referred to as walking the wheel of life (samsara). It is the process of being born over and over again in different times and different situations, possibly for many thousand times. As long as there is delusion, greed, and aversion, and as long as passions are not extinguished, we generate karma. Because we eventually accumulate unmaterialised karma, there is a next lifetime in which the accumulated karma will take form. Only when all accumulated karma is realized and the generation of new karma is calmed, one can enter the stream that leads to Nirvana. This process continues until Nirvana is reached, which signifies the cessation of rebirth and, hence, the end of suffering. It is notable that this also entails the avoidance of good karma. Once the stream that leads to Nirvana is entered, creating wholesome karma is not an object anymore. Although wholesome karma leads to entering the stream, it does not lead to Nirvana, only the extinguishment of all karma leads to Nirvana. Buddhism denies the existence of a self or a soul. In Buddhism, the idea of self is merely an illusion. Man wrongly identifies perception, consciousness, mind and body with what he calls self. In reality, there is no abiding entity that could be identified with a self, because the states of perception, consciousness, and mind and body constantly change. The body is mortal and when it dies, all mental activities cease. That is why there is no soul. The idea of soul is simply an extension of the self; in fact it is an immortal version of the self that supposedly survives physical death. Buddhism denies the existence of such an entity. Instead, what we call self is just a stream of consciousness that draws identity from concepts and memories, all of which are impermanent. The idea of an abiding self is deceptive, because it is derived from unenlightened reasoning. The word self simply provides a reference frame for the mind-body phenomena of sentient beings. We usually identify it with our body and the stream of consciousness that is sustained by sense perceptions and thoughts. In reality, what we call self is neither abiding nor detached from the rest of the world and other beings. Buddhism calls this the 'neither self nor non-self.' In the Buddhist analogy, the universe is in motion due to karmic forces. A ripple, a wave, or a billow may seem as an individual entity for a moment, creating the illusion that it has a self, but it is gone in the next moment. The truth is that all individuals are one. A ripple is a temporary phenomenon; it is just water in motion. We know that kinetic energy causes wave forms on a body of water and it would be ridiculous to say that a single ripple or wave has a self. Similarly, in case of beings, the process of coming into life and being conditioned in a particular way is caused by karmic forces. The up and down of the ocean's waves corresponds with the rotation of the wheel of life. The sea that surges, falls, and resurges, is the life that is born, dies, and is reborn again. It is therefore obvious that we should not focus on the temporary phenomenon of the wave, but on the force that causes, forms, and drives it. Nothing else is said, although in more practical terms, in the Eightfold Path. In Buddhism, the karma is used specifically for those actions which spring from the intention of an unenlightened being. The Buddhist theory of action and result (karmaphala) is fundamental to the Buddhist doctrine, because it provides a coherent model of the functioning of the world and its beings, which in turn forms the doctrinal basis for the Buddhist explanations of the path of liberation from the world and its result, nirvana. The Buddha emphasized his doctrine of karma to the extent that he was sometimes referred to as kammavada, the holder of the view of karma or kiriyavada, the promulgator of the consequence of karma. The Buddha makes a basic distinction between past karma (puranakamma) which has already been incurred, and karma being created in the present (navakamma). Therefore in the present one both creates new karma and encounters the result of past karma (kammavipaka). Karma in the early canon is also threefold: Mental action (manahkarman), bodily action (kayakarman) and vocal action (vakkarman).[8]	
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	Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013 The Buddha's theory of moral behavior was not strictly deterministic. It was conditional. His description of the workings of karma is not an all-inclusive one, unlike that of the Jains. In the Buddhist theory of karma, the karmic effect of a deed is not determined solely by the deed itself, but also by the nature of the person who commits the deed and by the circumstances in which it is committed. There is a further distinction between worldly, wholesome karma that leads to samsaric happiness (like birth in higher realms), and path-consciousness which leads to enlightenment and nirvana. Therefore, there is samsaric good karma, which leads to worldly happiness, and there is liberating karma as it ends suffering forever. In Buddhism, karma is not pre-determinism, fatalism or accidentalism, as all these ideas lead to inaction and destroy motivation and human effort. These ideas undermine the important concept that a human being can change for the better no matter what his or her past was, and they are designated as wrong views in Buddhism. The Buddha identified three: Pubbekatahetuvada: The belief that all happiness and suffering, including all future happiness and suffering, arise from previous karma, and human beings can exercise no volition to affect future results; Issaranimmanahetuvada: The belief that all happiness and suffering are caused by the directives of a Supreme Being; and Ahetu-appaccaya-vada: The belief that all happiness and suffering are random, having no cause. Karma is continually ripening, but it is also continually being generated by present actions, therefore it is possible to exercise free will to shape future karma. The Visuddhimagga states that the kamma that is the condition for the fruit does not pass on there to where the fruit is. In the canonical Theravada view of kamma, the belief that deeds done or ideas seized at the moment of death are particularly significant. The Pudgalavadins argued that karma was a composite entity consisting of several temporal components and one atemporal one. Following the Buddhists sutras, they claimed that mental samskaras were of the nature of volition. Vocal and bodily karma, however, consisted only of the motion that could be observed. The motion itself is conditioned and therefore impermanent. The Pudgalavadins were, however, aware that the Buddha also taught the persistence of karma. In Mahayana traditions, karma is not the sole basis of rebirth. The rebirths of bodhisattvas after the seventh stage are said to be consciously directed for the benefit of others still trapped in samsara. In the Yogacara formulation, all experience without exception is said to result from the ripening of karma. Karmic seeds are said to be stored in the storehouse consciousness until such time as they ripen into experience. The term vasana is also used, and Yogacarins debated whether vasana and bija were essentially the same, the seeds were the effect of the perfuming, or whether the perfuming simply affected the seeds. The seemingly external world is merely a by-product of karma. The conditioning of the mind resulting from karma is called samskara. A Comparative View Both Jainism and Buddhism logically explain the doctrine of karma. But the Carvaka neglected the discussion as it would weaken its materialistic assumptions. Buddhism put forth the doctrines of anityata, ksanabhangavada and anatmavada. It does not view that karma is governed by a moral executive. For Buddhism, the karma is an autonomous process and does not depend upon any metaphysical entity. It is the karma which is the root-cause of bondage and liberation is possible only through right knowledge in accordance with the noble Eight Fold Path. Like Buddhism, Jainism also holds that karma does not depend on any moral administrator of the world, that is, God. It is an impersonal law which works by itself without any divine agency. But, unlike Buddhism, Jainism believes that the doer of action, that is, self or jiva is permanent and beyond creation and destruction in its essence.[9] Karma phala does not perish before its doer coming to experience it. The doer of action gets the result of his action sooner or later. It holds that man is wholly responsible for his birth, death and suffering. Whatever he gets is determined by his past deeds. Carvaka also holds that, without referring to the concept of karma, man is responsible for getting pleasure or pain depending upon his perception and intelligence. Jainism also believes that karma is a subtle matter which is infra-atomic in size and imperceptible which pulls down the jiva from its spiritual height. Besides, it holds that no action is possible without jiva. Samskaras do not transmigrate from birth to birth without a transmigrating self. Buddhism denies the materialistic aspect of tiny size self as well as its permanent status in the transmigration.[10] The concept of karma forms varying degree of significance in Carvaka, Jainism and Buddhism. It does not form the core inquiry in Carvaka as it denies metaphysical as well as moral treatment connected with the concept of karma. The world in all its diversity is only the result of various combinations of the material elements. There is no determinative principle, such as God or karma, which is responsible for the properties of things. It is of fundamental and symptomatic importance that the Jainism describes karma as something material. It is neither an inner mental disposition nor a subtle cosmic power, but something that the soul literally attracts from the external world. It is a subtle material substance consisting of atoms like all other matter, that can attach itself to the soul, that actually enters into it, i.e., into the space occupied by the body belonging to the soul. The very important principle of final liberation emphasizes that the soul must be freed from the influence of karma. It forms the basis of the entire Buddhist edifice as karma is the fundamental explanation of sentient beings and of the receptacle world and it is in accordance with karma that the Buddhist scholars have built their philosophy. REFERENCES I.Annie Besant, A Study in Karma, The Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, 1952 II.Surendranath Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1997 III.D. Chattopadhyaya, ed. 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