



Dharma, Nyāya, and Dialogue: Indian Knowledge Systems and Indigenous Approaches to Pluralism and Conflict Resolution

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Abstract. In present times the common characteristics of modern societies include social fragmentation, identity-based wars and the loss of public trust in formal legal institutions. Prevailing judicial systems with their Western liberal traditions tend to emphasize codified law, adversarial procedures and institutional authority. While these elements remain key parts of the democratic governance they frequently reduce justice to the strict compliance of procedures. This paper revisits the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in an attempt to explore the indigenous approaches to justice and conflict resolution on the basis of the concepts of Dharma, Nyāya and dialogical engagement. Using qualitative textual and conceptual analysis, the study argues that classical Indian traditions conceptualize justice as restoration of balance, ethical accountability, and social harmony and not as merely formal correctness. Appealing to classical texts in conjoined with contemporary scholarship on restorative justice and legal pluralism, the paper shows the relevance of these frameworks in the case of plural societies. It concludes that dialogic, duty-centered and realising-based approaches to justice can strengthen existing practices in the field of governance and peace building.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems, Dharma, Nyāya, Pluralism, Conflict Resolution, Restorative Justice, Legal Pluralism

1. Introduction

The twenty first century has experienced an increase in polarization in any given society. Ethnic disputes, religious issues, identity politics, and mistrust towards the judicial system have strongly cast doubts on the suitability of the current systems of justice. The procedural fairness, codification, and the rule of law are the main factors in modern legal systems which are largely shaped by enlightenment rationality and liberal constitutionalism. Although these characteristics serve as the pillars of democratic rule, they can easily turn justice into institutional conformity and adversarial adjudication.

The conflicts in culturally plural societies like in India, are not often limited to individual rights claims but are represented in the system of kinship, communal standards, moral obligations and social statuses. Therefore, adversarial legalism can settle cases on paper, but not to regain social peace. Another epistemological and normative basis is provided by Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). Instead of defining justice as institutional correctness (nieti), Indian practices put significant strength on Nyāya, which is realized justice addressing lived injustice. On the same note, the vision of Dharma preempts responsibility, interpersonal responsibility, and context-specific morality. Consensus and reconciliation are emphasized in dialogic traditions of philosophical schools and institutions of the community.

2. Literature Review

In recent decades, there has been an increase in the scholarly interest in the Indian philosophical and socio-legal traditions. The literature on the Mānava-Dharmaśāstra and the Dharmasūtras has presented solid textual foundations on effective early normative systems by Patrick Olivelle (e.g., critical editions and translations of the Dharmasūtras and Mānava-Dharmajātaka) (Olivelle,

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2004/2005). The *Arthashastra* (which has been translated and edited by L. N. Rangarajan) is a highly influential source on the subject of statecraft and responsibilities of government in classical India (Kautilya/Chanakya, trans. Rangarajan, 1992). Philosophical literature Philosophical translations and commentaries on the *Nyaya Sūtras* (e.g. Vidyabhusana, Ganganatha Jha) give insight into the classical focus on logic, proof, and rational adjudication (Vidyabhusana, 1913; Jha, reprints).

These traditions have been applied to the contemporary issues of justice by contemporary theorists. The nuanced differentiation between *niti* and *nyaya* (Sen, 2009) of Amartya Sen introduced the concerns of substantive justice in the mainstream political philosophy with the focus on outcomes and the elimination of overt injustice. The criticisms of the human rights and law by Upendra Baxi in India show that a socially rooted sense of justice is more essential than formalistic proceduralism (Baxi, 2002). The legal anthropologists and socio-legal theorists Sally Falk Moore, John Griffiths, Sally Falk Moore, and Franz von Benda-Beckmann have followed the reality of legal pluralism and semi-autonomous social domains that make unitary legal models more complicated (Merry, 1988; Griffiths, 1986; Moore, 1973; von Benda-Beckmann, 2002).

Another valuable point of comparison is the scholarship of restorative justice. The seminal publication by Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses* (1990) reorients crime and justice towards harm, accountability, and healing which is the same direction Dharma takes with its focus on repair and relational responsibilities (Zehr, 1990). The arguments in favor of restorative practices are further supported by the reintegrative shaming theory (John Braithwaite, 1989) and empirical analysis of the mediation of victims and offenders (Umbreit, 1994/1998) as internationally endorsed alternatives to retribution (Braithwaite, 1989).

The new legal common sense that promotes local, plural and emancipatory forms of legal imaginaries has been proposed by decolonial and comparative legal theorists, most famously Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 2002). This is the intellectual project who are comparable to the attempts to recover indigenous epistemologies. The practice of legal pluralism is examined (Merry, 1988; Griffiths, 1986; von Benda-Beckmann, 2002) in the context of the intersection of law in practice with normative custom, community adjudication and the multivariied normative order contexts where Dharma, *Nyaya*, and dialogic practices have historically existed.

Primary sources are focused on religious and philosophical sources. Prescriptive and duty-based are the models of Brahmanical jurisprudence, which are exemplified by the *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* (Manusmṛiti) and the *Yājñanavalkya Dharmaśūtra* (as edited and translated by Olivelle) (Olivelle, 2004; Olivelle, 2018). These ethical systems of nonviolence, manifoldness of truth (*anekantavada*), and mental development are expressed in the Jain and Buddhist literature (most famously the *Tattvārtha-sūtra* (Umasvami/Umaswati)) and in the *Dhammapadam* and inform dispute resolution modes throughout South Asia (Dundas, 2002; Easwaran, 2007; Umasvami translations).

Additionally, interdisciplinary analyses of contemporary legal organizations, like those of Upendra Baxi and Amartya Sen, provide good grounds to bring indigenous practices into contemporary governance. Practical feasibility of dialogic and restorative methods in resolving the daily disputes is evidenced by empirical studies on the local councils, *panchayats* and community mediation programs (Merry, 1990; Harrington, 1988).

Although there is an increasing scholarship on Indian Knowledge Systems and justice, there are very few systematic syntheses between classical textual exegesis and contemporary restorative justice and decolonial theory. This article is part of that synthesis, which is filling the gap between textual sources, socio-legal theory, and restorative practice literature.

3. Methodology

The research design taken in this study will be a qualitative interpretive research design to explore the indigenous approaches to justice and conflict management of the Indian Knowledge Systems. The study is based on the assumption that modern justice discourses, which are in most cases constructed through the influence of Western traditions of law, are in need of critical interrogation of other forms of epistemologies that have their origins in non-Western traditions of thought.

Although plural legal cultures and practices of community-based dispute resolution are still present in India and other postcolonial societies, prevailing justice systems remain inclined to formal institutional legality at the expense of relational and restorative ones. This leads to a significant theoretical and practical query of the applicability of indigenous normative frameworks to modern day governance and peace building.

Research Questions

The questions that guide the study are as follows:

1. What are the classical traditions of Indian philosophies in the conceptualization of justice, moral responsibility, and conflict resolution?
2. How do the principles of Dharma and Nyaya as well as dialogic engagement offer alternative forms of normative and procedural framework to adversarial legalism?
3. What can these indigenous solutions bring to modern discourse in legal pluralism and restorative justice and democratic conflict management?

Textual analysis and conceptual synthesis are the key methods that are used in the study. The main materials are the Dharmashastra literature, the texts of Buddhist philosophy (Nyaya) and Jain and Buddhist morality texts and Gandhian political thought. Among secondary sources, the scholarship of legal pluralism, restorative justice, comparative political theory, and decolonial studies is found.

The analysis compares the ideas of indigenous justice with the mainstream legal frameworks in the west in a comparative analytical format. This allows assessing not only normative assumptions but also practical implications to governance and transformation in conflicts.

It is a theoretical and interpretive study that does not entail any empirical investigation or case study research. Although classical sources are actively choosy, as they are analyzed to detect conceptual trends, the variety of the Indian intellectual traditions implies that the results should be interpreted as analytical accounts, but not as comprehensive ones. Besides, the historical practices that relate to these traditions are critically evaluated through the contemporary constitutional principles of equality, human rights and social justice.

4. Theoretical Framework: Indian Knowledge Systems and Justice

Indian Knowledge Systems are huge collections of philosophical, legal, ethical, and political ideas which have been developed over thousands of years. In contrast to the contemporary disciplinary divisions, the classical Indian traditions were the ones that incorporated the metaphysics, the ethics, the jurisprudence and the government as the entire vision of the world.

Justice was never considered as a simple enforcement of law, it was impossible to discuss justice outside of cosmic order (rta), moral duty (dharma), and social balance. The political authority was also justified by the means of power and compliance to the principles of ethics.

This is unlike hegemonic Western models which are based on Hobbesian sovereignty, Lockean rights, and Kantian procedural morality. The liberal models put the emphasis on individual autonomy and codified law, whereas the Indian traditions entrench the individual in the relationship and moral networks.

It is especially important to differentiate *niti* (rules and institutions) and *nyaya* (realized justice). Justice should not only be judged by the excellence of the institutions individually as Sen (2009) claims but by the removal of the apparent injustice. This result-focused orientation is close to the indigenous traditions.

Conceptual Framework: Triadic Model of Justice in Indian Knowledge Systems

The paper suggests the triadic conceptual framework in interpreting the native responses to justice and conflict resolution in the Indian Knowledge Systems. The framework combines three dimensions that are reinforcing to each other and include ethical orientation (Dharma), epistemic rationality (Nyaya), and dialogic process (Samvada or deliberative engagement). These dimensions put together form a complete model of justice that focuses on the restoration of justice, contextual reasoning, and participatory consensus.

Comparing to the contemporary legal systems where the priority is to meet the procedures and institutional power, the triadic model views justice as a relational and realization-based process. Justice does not only come out of formal adjudication but rather out of ethical discharge of obligations, rational analysis of facts and dialogical reconciliation among the involved parties.

Ethical Foundation: Dharma

Dharma is the normative foundation of the framework. It is focused on contextual morality, relational responsibility and social harmony. The idea of justice in this dimension is considered according to the reestablishment of balance between the relationships of people in interpersonal and community relationships. The moral virtues like truthfulness, non violence, compassion, and self restraint serve as stabilizing factors which influence dispute resolution.

Nyaya as Rational-Adjudicative Dimension

Nyaya offers epistemic framework that is required to make just judgments. It prefigures the reasoned thinking, evidentiary questioning and polemic. This aspect makes sure that justice is not confined to moral persuasion but rather it is founded on verifiable truth and rational justification. The realisation-based differentiation between institutional correctness and lived justice supports the value of substantive outcomes.

Dialogic Engagement as Processing Mechanism

The framework operational dimension is made up of dialogic traditions. Debate, community discussion and consensus-building processes are strategies that help change conflict into cooperative problem management. Dialogic engagement is based on reconciliation rather than coercion and participation rather than unilateral authority.

Integrative Logic of the Framework

The triadic model works based on the interplay of these 3 dimensions. Ethical guidance relies on Dharma, rational validity on Nyaya and social acceptance and legitimacy through dialogic processes. Justice is therefore understood as a process of negotiation and dynamism as opposed to an institutional structure of justice.

This integrative mode is especially applicable in cases of plural societies where different moral worldviews are present. The framework has the potential to provide a culturally-based, yet normatively diverse model of conflict resolution and democratic governance through the combination of ethical responsibility, rational enquiry and participatory deliberation.

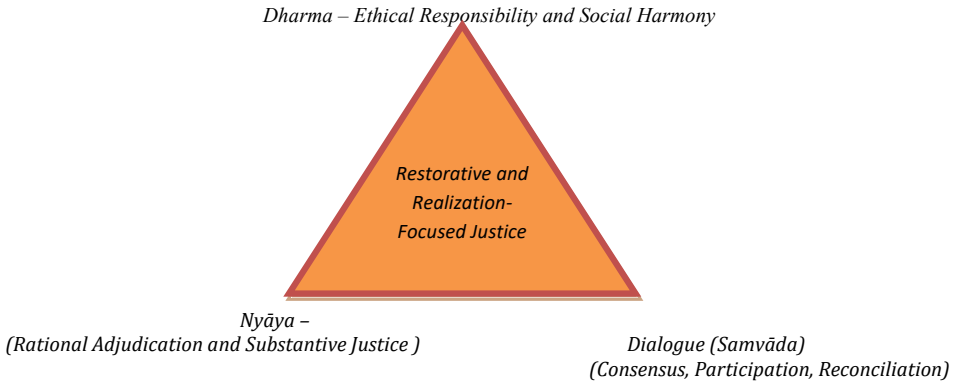


Fig.1. Conceptual representation of the integrative justice framework combining ethical duty, rational reasoning, and dialogic conflict transformation

5. Dharma: Contextual Morality and Social Harmony

Dharma has its origin in the Sanskrit word *dhṛ*, which is translated as to maintain, to support or to hold. In its most basic definition, Dharma means that which nourishes the individual, society and the universe. Neither is it just a moral principle or religious dictum; it is the principle of organization which holds together cosmic order (*ṛta*), social stability, and personal moral behavior. The classical Indian thought is tied up with the moral, social, and metaphysical worlds and the Dharma acts as the medium between the two worlds.

Dharma is a normative but adaptable system in contrast to the contemporary legal systems that rely on codified and universally applicable laws. It is both descriptive and prescriptive: it defines how things should be but gives orders that carry the way things are supposed to be. The 9th book of the Rig Veda identifies Dharma with *ṛta*, the cosmic law which orders both natural and moral existence. Late literature and texts, in particular, the Upanishads, internalize Dharma, which is associated with self-realization and the disciplined quest of truth. Therefore, Dharma becomes a cosmic principle and transforms into a very ethical and social concept.

Dharma is defined as a system of duties that is sensitive to the context in the Dharmashastras especially in books such as the Manusmriti, the Yajñavalkya Smṛiti, etc. These texts also acknowledge that there are varying moral responsibilities based on *varṇa* (social order), *āśrama* (stage of life), gender, profession and situation. An example would be the dharma of a ruler (*raja-dharma*), as opposed to the dharma of a householder (*grihastha-dharma*), an ascetic (*sannyasi-dharma*). This distinction does not necessarily mean strict hierarchy taken in isolation; it is a sign of the rewarding of ethical responsibility as a responsibility based on role and relationship.

Another conceptuality of Dharma is observed in the awareness of *apad-dharma*- rules to be applied in time of crisis. Exceptional norms can be slackened under exceptional conditions in order to

protect life or interpersonal relationships. This shows that Dharma does not involve unreflective following of rigid rules but a flexible system of moral thought that takes into account the complexities of the real world. The moral agent is supposed to be discerning (*viveka*) instead of being obedient.

In addition, Dharma incorporates individual moral virtue with general well-being. It includes the values like truth (*satya*), non-violence (*ahimsa*), compassion (*daya*), generosity (*dana*) and self-restraint (*dama*). Such virtues are not personal qualities, but social stabilizers. Ethical self-regulation helps people bring more general peace.

Notably, Dharma does not mean law in our present positivist context. Though it educates legal norms, it surpasses the boundaries of juridical rules. It contains ritual obligations, ethical demands, social conventions (*achara*), and even traditions not written, which are confirmed by the social consensus. In this regard, Dharma is institutional and lived; it is as much a practice as it is a written text.

Thus, the paradigm of Dharma is based on its multidimensional nature that is cosmic, social, ethical, and personal. It is not fixed but evolving, subjective as opposed to objective and collective as opposed to individualistic. Such elasticity made it endure and in terms of this elasticity, it could adjust to the evolving historical and social circumstances, and still preserved its role, which is to maintain order, justice, and harmony.

6. Dharma: Contextual Morality and Social Harmony

Dharma is not a strict code of law, but an orienting moral principle. Whereas contemporary ethics tend to promote universal rights or personal autonomy, Dharmic ethics preempt obligations, interactions and societal duties. It is inherently relational, focused not on the abstract entitlements, but in maintaining the balanced interdependence.

The framework of Dharmics organizes moral life in terms of role requirements. They are divided into duties based on varna (social function) and ashrama (life stage) yet are also based on situational circumstances. Just as an example, the duties of a teacher and a warrior are not the same, the duties of a householder and an ascetic are not the same. It is a differentiation that acknowledges the complexity of social life and denies the applicability of some moral prescription.

The result of such elasticity is contextual morality. When making ethical choices, it is not only possible to apply universal principles but also to consider relationships, consequences and duties. Moral dilemmas tend to exemplify this intricacy in epics like Mahabharata. The characters have to face the rivalry of the Dharmas, such as family loyalty and political obligation, personal righteousness and national existence. The story indicates that Dharma is subtle (*sukshma*) and needs to be appreciated instead of being followed by the book.

Conflict resolution is also informed by this contextuality. Instead of presenting disputes as mainly concern with rights violation, Dharmic reasoning aims at restoring a balance. Justice is not punitive at all but rather restorative and reconciliatory. The objective is to restore broken relationships and restore social balance. This method concurs with the notion that chaos (*adharma*) disturbs social unity as well as the universe.

This focusing on the responsibility, but not on the rights does not deny justice; but it reinvents it. Social harmony will be attained when people diligently discharge their roles with honesty and self-control. The Dharma of a ruler requires impartiality and the security of people; otherwise, the ruler will bring about defamation and corruption. Therefore, even power is conditional on ethical performance.

Noteworthy, Dharma does not presuppose moral relativism. Although contextual it is not arbitrary. Essential virtues: truthfulness, non-harm, compassion, and promise fidelity are the most important in any situation. The difference is in their application. The Dharmic model recognizes plurality of morality and also has normative anchors.

Moreover, Dharma is a combination of individual and society morals. Informal coercion is not the way but rather internalized moral discipline where social harmony is created. People develop virtues which by definition bring them into larger harmony. The internalization minimizes the need to look in the outside world in order to enforce sanctions and enhances moral community.

Dharmic contextual morality is a different paradigm in modern discourses of governance and social justice. It focuses on obligations as well as rights, restorative as well as retribution and moral leadership as well as institutional power. Based on the relational responsibility, Dharma maintains social harmony not by strict adherence to moral norms but by adaptive moral interaction.

Therefore, contextual morality as Dharma is not stagnant tradition or theory. It is a dynamic ethical theory that maintains a balance between flexibility and core values in such a way that societies are able to manoeuvre the complexity without losing cohesion.

7. Nyāya: Substantive Justice and Rational Adjudication

One of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy, the Nyaya tradition, offers an advanced system of inquiry based on reason, epistemic responsibility and truth. The school was founded on the Nyaya Sutas of Gautama (c. 2 nd century BCE2 nd century CE) and is mostly interested in valid knowledge (pramana) and the path to obtaining it (pramana). It has a jurisprudential value in that it is systematic when it comes to logic, argument, and persuasion. As opposed to the moral systems of duties or virtues found in moral systems, Ny23 assists in the inclusion of a procedural and epistemic element to justice--that decisions should be made on rational grounds instead of the dominance of authority or custom (Matilal, 1986).

According to Nyaya, there are four main pramana, which are perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana), comparison (upamana), and verbal testimony (sabda) (Gautama, Nyaya Sutra 1.1.3). It is not just an abstract philosophy but this systematic epistemology has a direct impact on adjudication. To make a fair judgment, one has to use sound cognition, prudent inference, and evaluation of testimony. Critical reasoning turns into a normative quality with the focus on the debate (vada), the discovery of fallacies (hetvabhasa), and logical order. In this sense, justice cannot exist apart of epistemic discipline.

Notably, even the word nyaya has the sense of rightness, right procedure, and righteousness. According to classical commentators, there is niti (rules, policy or institutional order), and nyaya (actualized justice). This difference in question is of special interest in a contemporary political discourse, namely the writings of Amartya Sen. Sen explicitly uses the Sanskrit difference between nīti and nyāya in *The Idea of Justice* (2009) to argue that justice is not to be measured by ideal institutional forms of organization, but by social achievements realized. According to Sen, the eradication of the manifest injustice and the improvement of the lived freedoms are more pressing than the construction of the perfectly just institutions (Sen, 2009).

The school of Nyaya was oriented towards this realization view. Justice is not a pure concept but it can be evidenced in the world by proper reasoning and fair hearings. Any verdict that cannot be proved by an acceptable evidence, regardless of being procedurally authorized, would not pass the Nyaya test of rational justification. Therefore, Nyaya creates a substantive aspect: justice should be factual, not only formal.

Besides, the dialectical approach of Nyaya promotes claims antagonism. By way of organized argument, stands are brought into focus and falsehoods are brought out and truth estimated. This predicts contemporary tenets of due process, cross-examination, and rationality. It is not to win in an argument but to do away with false cognition (mithyajnanaya). Justice is developed by the chastisement of mistake.

When read together with restorative models based on Dharma, Nyaya brings procedural rigor. Dharma can be used to steer moral direction and relational restoration; however, through Nyaya, moral restoration must have verifiable truth as its foundation. They are complementary to each other: Dharma maintains an ethical balance whereas Nyana protects rational fairness.

The epistemic commitments of Nyāya are still of relevance in the modern jurisprudence, particularly in the plural societies such as India. Evidence, inference, and credible testimony which are structurally comparable to the Nyaya pramana are all the things that courts use. Moreover, the fact that Sen adopts the line of differentiating between the two approaches of justice as the standard of actual human capacity and liberty and justice as an institutional perfection strengthens the emphasis on the need to judge justice based on the actual human capacity and liberty instead of just institutional perfection.

Accordingly, Nyaya has more in common with ancient logic than substantive justice founded on rational adjudication, epistemic responsibility and real consequences. It is a combination of rational thought and moral intent that these two aspects of philosophical critique and pragmatic rule strengthen the idea that justice is not to be merely a declaration but must be proven to be accomplished.

8. Dialogic Traditions and Consensus-Building

The Traditions Indians have always been dialogic in intellectual, philosophical, and social matters. Classical Indian thinking did not envisage the quest of truth as standing alone, but more frequently as a process that would be acted out in terms of organised argument, interpretative dialogue and collective argument. Formal commentary on the Sanskrit scriptures (shastras) between philosophers, or debate at the village level in the form of village assemblies, dialogue was not just a form of communication, but a normative process of arriving at the truth and conflict resolution.

Such dialogic ethos is represented in the practice of śāstrārghata. There were schools of philosophy including Nyaya, Mimamsa, Vedanta and Buddhism, which held intensive debate activities which are governed by procedural rules. All these arguments needed the clarity of thesis (pratijñanam), logical argument (hetu) and orderly refutation of the counter argument. It was not just a desire to win the fight rhetorically, but a desire to refine the epistemic skill-thus the progressive means of eradicating error by the rigorous give and take (Matilal, 1986). These traditions institutionalized intellectual pluralism; conflicting opinions were not suppressed but put to the test in a severe way.

Outside academic institutions, dialogic processes existed in local systems of governance. Village councils or panchayats were and are traditionally a place of resolving disputes by collective deliberation. These bodies did not use punitive mechanisms in isolation but instead, reached a consensus based on the community norms, moral conviction, and relational restoration. The focus was frequently healing and not confrontational and this was a feature of the Dharmic predisposition to uphold social peace. The process of making decisions was dialogical and participatory and was context-sensitive, and the legitimacy was built up by dialogue and not coercion.

It was also in this dialogic orientation that religious and social reform movements were influenced. An example of this is the Bhakti and Sufi traditions who practiced communicative traditions that destabilized the hierarchy with devotional discourse and collective spiritual experience. Ethical revolution came to be a tool of argument, poetry, and exchange between individuals. The notion that truth is manifested in the interaction process as opposed to the imposition process became culturally ingrained.

During the contemporary era, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi changed this dialogic legacy into an effective political approach using satyagraha. Gandhi theorized the term satyagraha as a kind of truth-force or soul-force; it focused on nonviolent opposition based on moral conversation instead of conquest (Gandhi, 2001). Conflict to Gandhi was not to be destroyed but converted. This opponent was not an object who should be destroyed but an agent of morality, who could be persuaded. The struggle over politics became then a long conversation that was to wake up conscience.

Satyagraha is based on three principles of dialogue: the truth (satya), nonviolence (ahimsa), and readiness to suffer instead of harming. These principles transform power into moral and not coercive. Protest is a communicative act- publicly revealing injustice as well as bringing the oppressor to the economic and moral soul. Gandhian politics in this sense radicalizes the dialogic tradition, but in a broader sense by taking it beyond philosophical and local spheres and making it national and global.

The dialogic model is the opposite of adversarial or majoritarian modes of politics. The tradition of consensus-building in India does not mean that there is no disagreement but is a process that attempts to reach an agreement by virtue of negotiation that is stratified. Even the Indian Constitution itself, is the product of this dialogic spirit as it was developed through a long debate of the Constituent Assembly. The institutional form of deliberative ethos involved members of a reasoned disagreement, persuasion and compromise.

The dialogic traditions articulate well in the deliberative concept of democracy which focuses on the use of reason and communicative action in publics (Habermas, 1996). The Indian tradition, however, places dialogue not only in the context of the procedural rationality but also in the moral and relational context. Dialogue is epistemic and ethical.

Therefore, dialogic interaction has worked as a consensus-forming and conflict-transforming mechanism since simile to panchayat to satyagraha. It incorporates rationality, ethics and civic engagement and provides an example of justice based not on unilateral claim, but in long-term, principled dialogue.

9. Discussion and Implications

The discussion on this research proves that Indian Knowledge Systems can provide a multidimensional approach to justice in plural societies. Combining ethical responsibility (Dharma), rational adjudication (Nyaya), and dialogic reconciliation, the suggested triadic model is not as limited as the purely procedural or institution-focused conflict resolution model is. This integrative viewpoint plays a role in the recent discussions in political theory, socio-legal research, and peacebuilding through the future-directed justice as a practice of relationship and realization.

Theoretically, the framework disrupts prevailing liberal legal paradigms, which understand justice in major ways as formal equality before law, and adjudication through adversary procedures. Although institutional legality is also necessary to ensure the rights and rule-based governance, the results imply that procedural correctness does not necessarily suffice to combat deeper social conflicts with the identities, historical marginalization, and cultural diversity. Dharmic focus on contextual morality and role responsibility provides an alternative set of normative terms which place justice in ethical relations, as opposed to abstract individualism. This view echoes the communitarian and deliberative traditions of political thought, but has its own unique civilisational roots.

This ethical orientation is reinforced in the Nyaya tradition that focuses on epistemic accountability in making decisions. The emphasis on the logic and rational analysis of evidence takes on a new significance in modern governance situations that are characterized by misinformation, polarization of ideologies, and the loss of trust in institutions. The rational justification and the moral justification of a position can be used in public policy discussions, judicial rationalization, and legislative discussions. In this respect, Nyaya offers an interpolation between the native intellectual traditions and current standards of due process and rule of law.

The operational dimension of the triadic model is dialogic traditions, which provides useful information to transform conflicts. Practices of community-based mediation which have long existed in local institutions of governance, like panchayats, can reveal possibilities in the practice of participatory deliberation in dispute resolution. Modern derivatives of these mechanisms-responding to relational harm and promoting social reconciliation- can supplement formal legal institutions when they are aligned to federal constitutional protection of them. This has great consequences on restorative justice programs, transitional justice programs, and peace building in multicultural societies.

The implications of policy that arise out of this analysis are specifically applicable to Global South contexts in which legal pluralism is a real-life challenge. First, the reforms of governance can utilize the institutionalization of the forums of mediation that incorporate dialogic principles in the framework of the current judicial systems. Second, interdisciplinary views of contextual ethics, restorative practices and deliberative democracy can be woven in legal education and judicial training programs. Third, the mechanisms of participatory governance (e.g., the community consultations and the dispute resolution platforms on the local level) have the potential to enhance the democratic legitimacy through the inclusion of a variety of social groups.

Simultaneously, the indigenous traditions should be critically engaged, once they are not romanticized without much thought. The hierarchical social systems were common with exclusion based on caste systems and gender inequality, and the historical use of Dharmic norms. Thus, the reinterpretations of the present day should be informed by constitutional morality, human rights commitments and egalitarian democratic values. The informal justice systems must not replace the institutional due process, but must be viewed as complementary.

The triadic model has a role to play in the current attempts to pluralize theoretical constructs and acknowledge non-Western intellectual resources as far as global justice is concerned. It questions the universalism of a single legal rationality and suggests, in place of it an encounter of dialogues of different epistemologies. Through foregrounding restoration, ethical accountability and participatory reasoning, Indian Knowledge Systems present conceptual aids in recruiting justice through culturally inscribed yet normatively flexible ways.

10. Conclusion

This paper has maintained that Indian Knowledge Systems provide normative and practical resources towards pluralism, justice and conflict resolution. Reviving the Dharma, Nyaya and dialogic traditions, it proves that pre-modern Indian thought has abundant insights into the question of moral accountability, rational judgment and reconciliation through participation. Quite on the contrary, these traditions define frameworks that can capture contemporary governance issues although they are immovable remnants of the past.

This paper has discussed the conceptual applicability of Indian Knowledge Systems in the contemporary justice, pluralism, and conflict resolution debates. Revisiting the interrelated concepts of Dharma, Nyaya, and dialogic engagement, the paper has revealed that classical Indian traditions present a sophisticated normative system, which unites the ethical responsibility, rational adjudication, and participatory reconciliation. These traditions do not only understand justice as a procedural or institutional matter of compliance with the law, but rather as a realization based practice, which is based on social relationships and moral responsibility.

The triadic model of justice suggested in the paper advances the political and socio-legal discourse by offering a different perspective in which justice should be viewed in culturally plural conditions. The relational ethic presented by Dharma is based on the significance of duties and contextual moral thinking; the significance of evidence-based judgment and epistemic discipline is advanced by Nyaya; dialogic traditions apply these ethical and rational commitments to the socially embedded consensus-building and restorative interaction mechanisms. Combined with the other dimensions, these broaden the conceptual range of justice beyond the opposition between rights and duties or procedure and morality.

It is also evident in the analysis that indigenous epistemologies are relevant in the contemporary world context in tackling the issues of governance in postcolonial and multicultural societies. With legal pluralism continuing to inform the daily practices of dispute resolution in the Global South, it can be beneficial to incorporate dialogic and restorative practices into institutional-level systems of justice in order to make them more legitimate and effective. Concurrently, any engagement in such a manner must be powerfully instructed by the constitutional values, especially equality, dignity as well as human rights. Hermeneutic balance of intellectual retrieval and normative transformation is thus necessitated by the reinterpretation of the classical traditions.

Future investigations could expand on this study by conducting empirical research on community mediation practice, comparative research on indigenous legal traditions with other indigenous legal traditions and interdisciplinary work with deliberative democratic theory and peace scholarship. These questions would also help shed light on how realization oriented justice models can help in transforming conflicts in various social environments sustainably.

Finally, sustainability of the Indian Knowledge Systems is based on the understanding that justice is not an institutional form of arrangement, but an ongoing negotiable practice of morality. This study offers a wide reconsideration of how societies think and seeks justice in an increasingly fragmented world; by introducing into a common analytical frame the ethical responsibility, rational reasoning, and dialogic participation.

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