

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Ahimsa: Sociocultural concepts of India for peace

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Abstract- This paper highlights ancient Indian teachings that promote world peace, focusing on Ahimsa(nonviolence) and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The Whole World is One Family) from Vedic literature, Bhagavad Gita, Chanakya, and Swami Vivekananda, encouraging inner purity and ethical behavior for harmony. The United Nations declared International Yoga Day in 2014 and World Meditation Day in 2024, emphasizing the importance of calmness, peace, and human well-being during conflicts. Ahimsa is a philosophy that encourages peace and harmony emphasizes the control of one's thoughts, words, and actions with non-violence. This paper emphasizes the importance of ahimsa promoting a society based on non-violence and harmony.

Keywords: Ahimsa, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Cultural diplomacy, Peacebuilding, Compassion, well-being, Forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a universal concept that plays a crucial role in peace building and conflict resolution. Cultural diplomacy involves sharing ideas, information, art, and language between countries to promote mutual understanding and cooperation. UNESCO promotes cultural diplomacy through free exchange of ideas and information. Cultural leadership includes many civil society actors, such as artists, curators, journalists, teachers, educators, and students, as well as the state governance system. Museums foster cultural exchange and collaboration between different cultures. Digital technologies are transforming cultural leadership, promoting "cyber cultural diplomacy" and mutually beneficial partnerships.

RICH HISTORY OF INDIAN ANCIENT SCRIPTS

Key elements of peacebuilding in Indian ancient Scripts include Ahimsa (non-violence in all forms),

Dharma (righteous living), Inner Peace through Meditation and Yoga, Compassion, Forgiveness, and Universal Unity (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam). The United Nations declared 21st June as the International Day of Yoga in 2014, and in 2024, it declared 21st December as World Meditation Day, emphasizing the significance of promoting calmness, peace, and human well-being during conflicts and sufferings. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, a Sanskrit phrase meaning "The World is One Family," is a key principle in Indian civilization, promoting shared future and collective well-being. India's sustainable living vision aligns with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, a principle reflected in the G20 Presidency's focus on people and planet. The G20 Leaders in September 2024 in New Delhi pledged to live in harmony with their ecosystem and take action to address global challenges. The agenda emphasizes culture as a transformative driver for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, calling for its full recognition and protection, and encouraging the international community to protect living cultural heritage.

The Indian texts the concept of "Ahimsa Paramo Dharma, Dharma Himsa Tathaiva Cha" a mantra in Sanatana Dharma, an ancient and spiritually rich tradition explores essence of non-violence and the complex interplay of dharma or duty. The text also provides an overview of spiritual and ethical dimensions. The principle of Ahimsa, a call for peace and non-violence, is a crucial tool in a world of conflict and social unrest. It encourages peaceful resolutions and promotes a culture of compassion. Global movements like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. have utilized this principle to advocate for social justice and human rights. "Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah" in Sanskrit means "Dharma protects those who protect Dharma," emphasizing the importance of upholding moral principles and ethical conduct. "Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavantu" "Lokah Samastah

Sukhino Bhavantu” are Sanskrit chanting that translates to “May all people be happy,” “may everyone in the whole world be happy” promoting selflessness and compassion in the yogic tradition, emphasizing the importance of promoting happiness for all individuals and global well-being, aiming to ensure freedom and happiness for all beings.

Ahimsa is a philosophy that emphasizes the importance of controlling one's thoughts, words, and actions. The Rig Veda (1500 to 1000 BCE), an ancient scripture, emphasizes life's sanctity and compassion through hymns like ““May all beings look at me with a friendly eye, may I do likewise, and may we look at each other with the eyes of a friend” (Rig Veda 10.191.4).” promoting a sense of friendliness and non-violence. The Yajur Veda highlights the significance of ahimsa. It states, “Let there be no ill will, let there be no hate. Let us live in peace and harmony” (Yajur Veda 36.18). This prayer for peace shows the Vedic vision of a society based on non-violence and harmony. The Upanishads (800 to 500 BCE) explore philosophical ideas and highlight the importance of ahimsa. The Chandogya Upanishad mentions, “One should meditate upon the Self as ahimsa,” linking self-realization with non-violence. The Bhagavad Gita (400 to 300 BCE) emphasizes the importance of Ahimsa, with Lord Krishna stating that a true yogi is one who neither causes nor seeks harm.

Chanakya (322-185 BCE), an ancient Indian philosopher and statesman, advocated for ethical governance and the welfare of subjects. He advised against unnecessary violence and advocated for peaceful conflict resolution through conciliation, gifts, and dissension. Despite acknowledging the necessity of warfare, Chanakya emphasized diplomacy, negotiation, and alliances to achieve political goals without violence. He emphasized the importance of ahimsa in statecraft, aiming for stability and prosperity through non-violent means. Buddha's (563-483 BCE) teachings emphasize the importance of cultivating inner peace through practices like compassion, non-violence, mindfulness, and understanding the interconnectedness of all beings. These teachings emphasize the need to address internal turmoil and address the root causes of anger, greed, and hatred. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902 AD) viewed ahimsa as a universal principle that transcends religious and cultural boundaries. He believed that non-violence is crucial for spiritual evolution and societal harmony.

Vivekananda emphasized the importance of courage and inner fortitude in practicing ahimsa, stating that it is the greatest force mankind has at its disposal, even more powerful than the most destructive weapon devised by human ingenuity.

IMPORTANCE OF VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, derived from the Maha Upanishad, is a concept that emphasizes the importance of considering everyone as one's own and building a sense of belonging and love for everyone, and contributing towards a better world. This concept has been a subject of debate in various contexts, such as politics, international relations and often used to emphasize the soft power of our cultural heritage need to focus on living well-being. It is not just about peace and harmony among societies, but also the truth that the whole world must live like a family. We are all part of a fragile ecosystem, and we are all dependent on and responsible for it. A sense of belonging should come from an eco-point of view, not an ego perspective. Human beings are not the masters of this Earth, and even among humans, we should not consider someone as powerful who can exploit others.

To understand this concept with a sustainability perspective, we should live like a family. By embracing this concept and practicing it in our lives, we can contribute to a better world and contribute to a more sustainable future. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam emphasizes the importance of interdependence between human beings, societies, and living forms. It encourages us to recognize this interconnectedness and promote sustainable practices, ensuring that future generations receive the resources they deserve. Embracing compassion and empathy is crucial for building a sustainable society. By thinking about the entire world, we can contribute towards a better future.

CONCLUSION

Ancient Indian wisdom, rooted in principles like Ahimsa (non-violence) and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family), provides guidance for addressing global challenges. These teachings, derived from the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Chanakya, Buddha, and Swami Vivekananda, promote harmony, ethical conduct, and compassion. They

transcend religious and cultural boundaries, promoting harmony, ethical conduct, and compassion. Ahimsa is more than the absence of violence which is an active discipline of controlling thoughts, words, and actions to prevent violence. It fosters inner peace, builds trust, and promotes dialogue over aggression. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam calls for universal unity, interdependence, empathy, and sustainable living, crucial to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and addressing climate change. The global recognition of yoga and meditation reflects the growing acceptance of these ancient practices as tools for mental well-being, resilience, and peacebuilding. India's vision, as reflected in its G20 Presidency, aligns with these principles, advocating for harmony between people and the planet. By embracing these principles in policy, education, diplomacy, and everyday life, societies can move towards a world that values dignity, equality, and ecological balance.

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