Conflict Management in Hinduism

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Abstract

The world is in dire need of conflict management especially in this era where everyone is fighting. There is need to minimize the conflict and disputes and work towards reducing the workload of our Indian Judiciary and make our country better. This research paper deals with lessons learnt through our ancient scriptures which has authority of Vedas but are forgotten in this fast moving era which deals with conflict management and resolution. It deals with lessons learnt and it significance in this world in managing conflict and conflict resolution. This has been done by examining the ancient verses, their meaning and relevance in the current scenario. In this research paper we can conclude that the teachings learnt through ancient verses are still relevant in the current spectrum of the world and will continue to do so.

INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

" India is the meeting place of the religions and among these Hinduism alone is by itself a vast and complex thing, not so much a religion as a great diversified and yet subtly unified mass of spiritual thought, realization and aspiration."

- Sir Aurobindo

India is known as a country of unity in diversity. This country is the home for many religions and their philosophy guiding us to live our life in peaceful ways. Hinduism is also one of the many religions known for its philosophies with advices pertaining to conflict management and conflict resolution at its core. Hinduism is known to be extensive, rich, pluralistic and complex. The term 'Hindu' itself is non-Vedic in its origin and its meaning has been problematic, it is considered as the name of the civilization, culture and religion as well as the philosophy rooted in the Vedas. Hinduism can be viewed as the consummation of different Vedic and post-Vedic schools of thought – from extreme spiritualism to extreme materialism and as

customs, rituals and traditions that have acted and reacted upon each other, giving rise to a sense of oneness.[1]

Hindu philosophy refers to a group of *arśanas* (philosophies, world views, teachings) that emerged in ancient India. The mainstream ancient Indian philosophy includes six systems (*ṣaḍdarśana*) − Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta.[2] These are also called the Astika (orthodox) philosophical traditions and are those that accept the Vedas as authoritative, important sources of knowledge.[3] Ancient and medieval India was also the source of philosophies that share philosophical concepts but rejected the Vedas, and these have been called *nāstika* (heterodox or non-orthodox) Indian philosophies. Nāstika Indian philosophies include Buddhism, Jainism, Cārvāka, Ājīvika, and others.[4]

In the Astika philosophical thoughts there is insistence that life of a human being has to be governed by the rules of Vedas. However, reverence for the Vedas does not mean that principles are translated into practise all the time. In practice, it recognises that different persons have different natures, and these differences and the consequent distinctions of natural aptitudes have been considered in religious and philosophical as well as social matters.

Hinduism has always envisioned humanity, fraternity and harmony right from its very foundation. Conflict and peace-making are not an unusual endeavour for Hindu Society. Hindu texts have recognised the possibility of conflict and sought its resolution. In fact, both conflict and peacemaking have always been crucial concerns for the Hindu Society. Conflict and peacemaking has occurred in various instances in the Hindu Texts.[5]

This project attempts to establish the relevance of Vedas and old school thoughts in this modern era where everyone has forgotten their teachings and their importance. In this project we will see some of the ancient scriptures teachings related to conflict management. Its main focus is on the astika philosophical traditions and their teachings on conflict management and resolution to lead a better life. It also focuses on their applicability in the current legal scenario and future.

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[1] The Ashgate Research Companion to Religion and conflict resolution, https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781317041832/chapters/10.4324%2F9781315613505-9 (last seen 2nd April,2018)
[2] Andrew Nicholson (2013), Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History, Columbia University Press, pages 2-5
[3] Klaus Klostermaier (2007), Hinduism: A Beginner's Guide, Chapter 2, page 26
[4] P Bilimoria (2000), Indian Philosophy (Editor: Roy Perrett), Routledge, page 88
[5] The Ashgate Research Companion to Religion and conflict resolution, https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781317041832/chapters/10.4324%2F9781315613505-9, pg- 68 (last seen 2nd April,2018)

HINDUISM PHILOSOPHY IN THE PRESENT SCENARIO

The Astika philosophical traditions include six systems (*ṣaḍdarśana*) – Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta. Each system is comprised of its own teachings in form of slokas for conflict management and resolution. In this segment, we are here to see the applicability of these slokas in the current scenario for conflict management and resolution.

- *SANKHYA*

The word 'Sankhya' means 'number'. The system gives an enumeration of the principles of the universe, twenty-five in number. Hence the name is quite appropriate. The term 'Sankhya' is used in the sense of 'Vichara' or 'philosophical reflection' also.

In the Sankhya system, there is no analytical enquiry into the universe as actually existing, arranged under topics and categories. There is a synthetical system, starting from an original primordial Tattva or Principle, called Prakriti, that which evolves or produces or brings forth (Prakaroti) everything else. Perception (Pratyaksha), inference (Anumana) and right affirmation (Apta Vakya) are the three Pramanas or proofs in the Sankhya system. The word Apta means fit or right. It is applied to the Vedas or inspired teachers. The Naiyayikas have four kinds of proofs, viz., perception, inference, comparison and verbal authority.

The Sankhya adopts the theory of evolution and involution. The cause and effect are the undeveloped and developed states of one and the same substance. There is no such thing as total destruction. In destruction, the effect is involved into its cause. That is all.

Drstamanumanamaptavacanam ca sarvapramanasiddhatvat|

Trividham pramanamistan prameyasiddhih pramanaddhi||4||

*MEANING-*Perception, inference, and valid testimony are the source for establishing all correct knowledge. These three are the desired means to correct knowledge.

ANALYSIS- This Verse holds value in conflict management and resolution. It indicates that person in question should always perceive and infer the situation along with the valid testimony to obtain correct knowledge and thus preventing themselves from arriving to wrong conclusions which in turn prevents conflict as they will not act on their impulse.

- *NYAYA*

The word *Nyaya* signifies *going into a subject*, i.e., investigating it analytically. In this sense of analysis, the word Nyaya is exactly opposed to Sankhya, synthesis. The Nyaya is sometimes called Tarka-Vidya or the Science of Debate, Vada-Vidya or the Science of Discussion. Tarka is the special feature of the Nyaya. The purpose of the

Nyaya is a critical examination of the objects of knowledge by means of the canons of logical proof. The Nyaya system deals critically with metaphysical problems. It contains discussions on psychology, logic, metaphysics and theology.[6]

Pramatherth parikshan nyayah

MEANING- Reality of the situation should be tested with the help of various evidences.

ANALYSIS- As stated above in nyaya philosophy, it signifies critical examination of the objects of knowledge by means of logical proof. In the above verse, it specifically states that everyone should rely on various evidences to test the truthfulness of the situation to obtain correct knowledge. In difficult situations if we look for evidences or logical proof we can always prevent the conflict or manage the conflict in a positive manner. Even the third party can work towards conflict resolution if he weighs the evidences and can act in the impartial way. In the legal sense, the evidence act of India is based upon this very principle of Nyaya philosophy.

- *MIMAMSA*

Mimamsa is not a branch of any philosophical system. It is rather a system of Vedic interpretation. It interprets the Vedas in the literal sense. The central problem of Purva Mimamsa is ritual. The rules of Mimamsa are very important for the interpretation of the Hindu Law. There are twelve chapters.

Chodnalshtyorth dharm

MEANING- The duty is an object distinguished or qualified by a command.

ANALYSIS- Vedas have always been the source of knowledge gained from experience. This verse states that dharma (duty) of the people has binding character as commanded by the Vedas. This verse depicts conflict management and resolution as it insists that people follow their dharma. By doing this there will be decrease in conflicts as people would not act upon on their impulses but follow their duty. It resembles one the Fundamental Duties provided in our Indian Constitution which urges us "*to abide by the constitution and respect its ideal and institutions*". Both of the above-mentioned lines urge the people to follow the command mentioned in Vedas and to abide by the Constitution ideals respectively. We can see here how there is similarity in both the situation and we can safely say that our Indian Constitution is inspired from our Ancient Vedas and its teachings mentioned in this School of thought of Hinduism.

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[6] Sri Swani Sivanand, All about Hinduism, http://www.dlshq.org/download/hinduismbk.pdf

- *YOGA*

The word Yoga comes from the root *Yuj* which means to *join*. Yoga is restraint of the activities of the mind, and is the union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.[7]

shabdajnaananupati vastushoonyo vikalpah

MEANING- Verbal delusion follows from words having no (corresponding) reality.

ANALYSIS- There is another class of Vrttis called Vikalpa. A word is uttered, and we do not wait to consider its meaning; we jump to a conclusion immediately. It is a sign of weakness of the Chitta. Now you can understand the theory of restraint. The weaker the man the less restraint he has. When you are going to be angry or miserable, reason it out, how it is that some news that has come to you is throwing your mind into Vrttis.[8]

It basically means that whenever we hear something which is not in our favour, we should restraint ourselves and reason things out rather acting on instinct which may lead to conflict between the persons. When we reason and think things through we will act reasonably and then there will be less chance of conflict happening.

- *VEDANTA*

The Vedanta philosophy of Vyasa or Badarayana is placed as the last of the six orthodox systems, but, really, it ought to stand first. The Uttara Mimamsa conforms closely to the doctrines propounded in the Upanishads. The term *Vedanta* means literally *the end or essence of the Veda*. It contains the doctrines set forth in the closing chapters of the Vedas. The closing chapters of the Vedas are the Upanishads. The Upanishads really form the essence of the Vedas.[9]

Yastu sarvani bhutani aatmanyebanupashyati

Sarvabhuteshu chatmanam tatona vijugupsate

MEANING- One who perceives all the beings in his own self and own self in all the beings does not hate anyone anymore.

ANALYSIS- This verse of Vedantic Philosophy works on the road of conflict management with a thought- if the person doesn't hate anyone in life and perceives all the beings in his own self they won't have conflict with others but will live life in harmony and work towards welfare of society. The consequence of Advaitic philosophy is that if you harm another being, man, woman, animal, or insect you are

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[7] Sri Swani Sivanand, All about Hinduism, http://www.dlshq.org/download/hinduismbk.pdf
[8] Swami Vivekanand, Patanjali Yoga Sutra,
https://archive.org/stream/PatanjaliYogaSutraBySwamiVivekananda/Patanjali%20Yoga%20Sutra%20by%20Swami%20Vivekananda#page/n53/mode/2up
[9] Supra note 7

harming yourself. The concept of ahimsa or non-violence has its roots in this monistic theory that every life is a spark of the divine and our recognition of the divine must be so universal as to identify ourselves with this divinity and the divinity in everything. This philosophy works to bring universal solidarity and peace and resolve and manage conflicts between people. For an instance Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code is the underlying provision for the hate speech which provides punishment to who promote enmity between different groups of people. This Vedantic philosophy forms the basis of the hate speech provision that whoever tries to ignite hate or enmity between different groups of people will be severely punished.

CONCLUSION

Hinduism philosophy describes the fundamental realities of life. It gives ways to handle the difficult situation in life with utmost patience and also provides the philosophy for the conflict management and to work towards the conflict resolution. In this project we have seen various schools in Hinduism that contains verses which give us advice for handling the conflict.

This research project deals with the ways to manage and resolve conflict in the complex religion of Hinduism. In this project we have seen various verses which can be used for managing and resolving conflict between people.

At the end we can say that Hinduism philosophy have provided us with immense knowledge of life and handed it to us to learn and apply in our daily life's to make it better. It has been providing us with immense knowledge regarding the ways to handle conflicts in various forms with the end motive of promoting welfare and harmony in society.