

Reimagining Positive Peace through Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) (A Comparative Study of Galtung and Classical Sanskrit and IKS thought)

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Abstract

The concept of positive peace has transformed Peace and Conflict Studies by shifting analytical attention from the absence of war towards the social, political and cultural conditions necessary for human flourishing. Johan Galtung's distinction between negative and positive peace, together with his conceptualisation of direct, structural and cultural violence, remains foundational to this transformation. Yet contemporary scholarship increasingly identifies the need to deepen positive peace through attention to identity, agency, relationality, ecological sustainability, cultural meaning and the lived experience of Peace. This article argues that selected concepts from Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), particularly classical Sanskrit thought, can contribute to this theoretical development when subjected to critical rather than celebratory interpretation. Through comparative conceptual analysis and critical hermeneutics, the article examines Ahimsā, Śānti, Dharma, Loka-Saṃgraha, Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam, Sarvabhūta-Hita and Epistemic Openness in relation to Galtung's theory. The article explicitly examines claims of historical equivalence between Indian Knowledge Systems and modern Peace Studies. Instead, it proposes a methodology of critical conceptual translation, through which historically situated Indic concepts are brought into contemporary theoretical dialogue. The study further examines contemporary Indian peace-oriented scholarship and practice associated with UNESCO chair Dr. Vishwanath D. Karad, UNESCO chair Dr. Priyanka Upadhyaya, Mata Amritanandamayi, the Chinmaya tradition and Pandurangshastri Athavale. On this basis, the article proposes an original framework termed Integrative Positive Peace (IPP), conceptualised through six mutually reinforcing dimensions: direct, structural, cultural, relational, inner and ecological peace. The article argues that IKS can enrich global Peace Studies not by replacing Galtung or asserting civilizational superiority, but by contributing alternative ethical vocabularies, theories of relationality and models of human flourishing. The paper concludes by proposing an empirical research agenda, including the development of an IKS Positive Peace Index, through which the theoretical propositions advanced here may be operationalised and tested.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems; Positive Peace; Johan Galtung; Sanskrit Thought; Ahimsā; Śānti; Dharma; Loka-saṃgraha; Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam; Cultural Violence; Peacebuilding; Peace Education; Ecological Peace; Intercultural Peace.

Introduction

Peace is simultaneously an empirical condition, an ethical aspiration and a contested political concept. The most immediate understanding of peace is the absence of organised violence or warfare. Such an understanding remains indispensable, since communities subjected to armed conflict cannot reasonably be described as peaceful. Nevertheless, the cessation of fighting does not necessarily eliminate injustice, exclusion, humiliation, inequality, structural deprivation or antagonistic identities. A ceasefire can silence weapons without transforming the social conditions that made violence

possible.

The conceptual development of Peace and Conflict Studies during the second half of the twentieth century was significantly influenced by Johan Galtung's attempt to overcome this limitation. In his seminal 1969 article, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,' Galtung distinguished direct violence from forms of violence embedded within social structures and thereby challenged the assumption that violence must always have a visible perpetrator.

Galtung subsequently expanded this framework through the concept of cultural violence, referring to cultural aspects that can legitimise or normalise direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1990).

The theoretical consequence was profound. Peace could no longer be adequately understood as merely the absence of war. Positive Peace came to signify a social condition in which human beings have greater opportunities to realise their potential, participate in social life and experience justice and dignity.

Recent scholarship confirms the continuing relevance of this conceptual tradition. English and Rubenstein (2025), for example, describe Positive Peace as an antidote to structural violence and emphasise just and equitable social systems as central to its meaning. Recent work has nevertheless questioned whether existing formulations adequately capture identity, agency and deeper relational processes. Turan's 2026 formulation of 'deep positive peace,' for instance, explicitly seeks to supplement Galtung through attention to exclusionary social identities, agency and horizontal equality.

Similarly, recent research on climate adaptation argues that Positive Peace remains useful for analysing distributive, procedural and recognitional justice in environmental contexts, while simultaneously observing that the environmental dimension of positive peace remains theoretically underdeveloped.

These developments raise an important question:

Can the theory of Positive Peace be further enriched through dialogue with intellectual traditions outside the conventional genealogy of modern Western peace theory?

This question is particularly relevant in the context of Indian Knowledge Systems. Indian Knowledge Systems are increasingly receiving institutional recognition in contemporary Indian higher education. The IKS Division of the Ministry of Education, implemented through AICTE, explicitly promotes interdisciplinary research on IKS and their preservation, dissemination and societal application.

Yet institutional recognition alone does not establish theoretical validity. The challenge for scholarship is to determine whether concepts originating in classical Indian intellectual traditions can withstand critical conceptual analysis and contribute to contemporary disciplines without being romanticised or anachronistically reconstructed.

The present article addresses this problem through a comparative examination of Galtung's Positive Peace framework and selected concepts from classical Sanskrit thought.

The central research question is: How can selected concepts from classical Sanskrit thought

contribute to the theoretical reconstruction of Positive Peace when critically compared with Johan Galtung's framework?

Three propositions guide the study.

1. First, Galtung's analysis remains indispensable for diagnosing direct, structural and cultural mechanisms through which violence is reproduced.
2. Second, selected Sanskrit concepts offer complementary resources concerning ethical agency, relationality, inner transformation, universal moral belonging and ecological interconnectedness.
3. Third, neither intellectual tradition is sufficient by itself. A theoretically productive approach requires critical complementarity rather than substitution.

The article therefore develops a new conceptual framework termed Integrative Positive Peace (IPP).

Literature Review

1 Galtung and the Conceptual Expansion of Peace

Galtung's 1969 formulation remains foundational because it challenged the reduction of violence to

visible physical aggression. Direct violence constitutes the most immediately observable form. Structural violence, however, operates through social arrangements that produce unequal life chances, while cultural violence concerns symbolic and ideological mechanisms that legitimise such arrangements.

The resulting framework is often represented through the violence triangle:

Direct Violence – Structural Violence – Cultural Violence

The significance of this framework is that it shifts the analytical question from:

‘Who is committing violence?’ to: ‘What systems, relationships and cultural narratives make violence possible or legitimate?’

Galtung subsequently conceptualised peace through a complementary distinction between negative and positive peace. Negative peace concerns the absence or reduction of direct violence, whereas Positive Peace concerns the transformation of the conditions that generate violence.

Galtung's later work expanded peace into a more comprehensive conception involving development, justice, dialogue and human fulfilment (Galtung, 1996).

Importantly, Galtung himself was not restricted to a narrow Western conceptualisation of peace. His 1981 article ‘Social Cosmology and the Concept of Peace’ explicitly compared concepts such as *Shalom*, *Salaam*, *Pax*, *Eirene*, Indian *Śānti* and *Ahimsā*, Chinese concepts and Japanese conceptions of peace.

This provides an important methodological precedent for the present study. The comparative study of civilizational concepts of peace is therefore not external to Galtung's intellectual project. Rather, it extends an element already present within it.

2 Contemporary Developments in Positive Peace

Positive Peace has increasingly moved beyond a binary opposition between ‘war’ and ‘Peace.’ The Institute for Economics & Peace operationalises Positive Peace through attitudes, institutions and structures associated with peaceful societies. Its framework connects peace with social resilience, institutional performance, wellbeing and ecological conditions.

Recent scholarship has further widened this discussion.

Dellios (2025), for example, brings Galtung into dialogue with Buddhist concepts such as *dukkha*, *sukha*, dependent origination and the mandala, arguing for an integrated vision of peace incorporating developmental, environmental, political and cultural perspectives.

This recent work is especially relevant to the present article because it demonstrates that Indic philosophical traditions can contribute to contemporary theoretical reflection on Positive Peace without simply being treated as historical curiosities.

Similarly, contemporary scholarship has increasingly emphasised relational dimensions of peace. Tschudin (2025) argues that sustainable Positive Peace requires attention to cultural and structural dimensions as well as relational ethics and restorative action.

These developments strengthen the case for reconsidering Sanskrit concepts in a contemporary peace-theoretical framework.

Research Gap

Three gaps can be identified.

- First: the epistemic gap Mainstream Peace and Conflict Studies has historically developed through predominantly European and North American theoretical genealogies. Although comparative and decolonial approaches have expanded the field, Indic philosophical resources remain comparatively underrepresented in mainstream Positive Peace theorisation.
- Second: the conceptual gap Galtung provides a powerful account of violence but does not provide an equally elaborated account of the transformation of inner dispositions, relational consciousness and ecological embeddedness. Recent scholarship itself is beginning to address these gaps through concepts of deep Positive Peace, relational peace and environmental justice.
- Third: the methodological gap There remains a tendency in some IKS scholarship either to treat classical concepts as timeless universal truths or to reject them as historically bounded and therefore

irrelevant to contemporary social science.

Both positions are theoretically limiting.

The present article proposes a middle position: historically rigorous interpretation followed by critical contemporary translation.

Methodology

The study employs comparative conceptual analysis combined with critical hermeneutics.

Four analytical operations are undertaken.

1. Textual identification Relevant Sanskrit concepts are identified from primary sources.
2. Historical contextualisation The concepts are interpreted within their respective textual and philosophical contexts.
3. Comparative translation The concepts are then placed into dialogue with Galtungian categories.
4. Critical evaluation The comparison is evaluated against the problems of essentialism, romanticisation, anachronism and selective textuality.

The methodology can therefore be represented as The study explicitly states the proposition that ancient Sanskrit thinkers discovered and proposed Positive Peace before Galtung. The intellectual task is instead one of critical conceptual translation.

Classical Sanskrit Resources for Positive Peace 1 Śānti

The Sanskrit concept of *śānti* provides perhaps the broadest conceptual point of entry. Vedic *śānti* invocations frequently address multiple dimensions of existence, including natural forces, social life and human wellbeing.

The *śānti* tradition therefore permits peace to be conceptualised as a condition of harmony across interconnected levels rather than solely as an interstate condition. This is theoretically relevant to contemporary systemic approaches to peace. Nevertheless, *śānti* cannot simply be equated with contemporary systems theory. The relationship is comparative rather than genealogical.

2 Ahimsā

Patañjali places *ahimsā* first among the *yamas*:

अहिंसासत्यातेय-चया/प१२३हा यमाः । (Yoga-sūtra 2.30) He subsequently states:

अहिंसा८ति९ायां तसिःनधौ वैरयागः ॥ (Yoga-sūtra 2.35)

The second formulation is particularly relevant. The establishment of *ahimsā* is associated with the abandonment of hostility. This introduces an important distinction between **ending violence** and **transforming the disposition towards violence**. A ceasefire can produce negative peace. A transformation in the propensity to harm another moves towards positive peace. The equivalence is not exact, but the comparison is analytically fruitful.

Dharma and Human Flourishing

The *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* defines *dharma* as:

यतोऽप्युदयेनःऽयसिसिद्धिः स धर्मः ।

The concept connects *dharma* with *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa*. Moise (2019) demonstrates that the relationship between these two goals within Vaiśeṣika thought is more sophisticated than a simple opposition between worldly and spiritual objectives.

The formulation can therefore be interpreted as providing a normative criterion for human flourishing. This has relevance for Positive Peace. A political order may be stable without being just. An institution may be efficient without promoting dignity. An economy may grow without ensuring equitable human development. A *dharma*-based normative inquiry, properly contextualised, asks a broader question: *Does the social order contribute to human flourishing?* This is comparable to, but not identical with, Galtung's concern for the realisation of human potential.

Loka-saṃgraha and Ethical Agency

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* states:

लोकसं३हमेवापि सकपालयःकतुम ह्वसि ।

The concept of *loka-samgraha* connects personal action with social order. This is important because Positive Peace is frequently discussed at the level of institutions. Yet institutions are sustained through human behaviour. If individuals reproduce prejudice, exclusion and aggression, institutional reform alone may be insufficient. Conversely, ethical agency can contribute to institutional transformation.

The concept therefore introduces an important **micro–macro linkage**: This provides an important complement to structural approaches to Positive Peace.

Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam and Cultural Peace

The *Mahopaniṣad* states:

अयं बः धुर्यं नेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् । उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

The verse challenges narrow distinctions between ‘ours’ and ‘theirs.’ Its contemporary relevance is especially evident in the work of Priyanka Upadhyaya. Upadhyaya's scholarship includes a specific chapter entitled ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: A Transformative Vision of Intercultural Peace,’ published in 2020.

His broader work addresses sustaining peace, peace through education and culture, human rights, and interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The theoretical significance is substantial.

Galtung demonstrates how culture can legitimise exclusion. *Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* offers a contrasting cultural narrative of expanded belonging. Thus: can potentially be countered through: This does not mean that merely repeating the maxim creates peace. Its importance lies in its potential as a normative cultural resource.

Sarvabhūta-hita and the Expansion of the Moral Community

The concept of *Sarvabhūta-Hita* expands concern towards the welfare of all beings. This is relevant to Positive Peace because it challenges narrowly group-based conceptions of justice. It also has implications for environmental ethics. If the moral community is not restricted exclusively to human economic interests, ecological wellbeing can become part of the ethical conception of peace.

This creates a bridge between:

Human Peace → Social Peace → Ecological Peace.

Contemporary environmental peace research increasingly supports such an integrated approach. Recent work on climate adaptation demonstrates that justice, inclusion and institutional conditions are central to sustainable responses to ecological challenges.

Epistemic Openness

The Rgvedic aspiration:

आनो भवताः वतवो यतु विवृतः ।

can be interpreted as an epistemic orientation towards beneficial knowledge from diverse directions. This is particularly important for the present research methodology. If IKS scholarship refuses dialogue with modern social science, it becomes intellectually isolated. If modern social science refuses engagement with non-Western knowledge traditions, it reproduces epistemic closure.

A genuinely global Peace Studies therefore requires epistemic openness. In this sense, the Vedic formulation can function not merely as an object of study but as a methodological principle.

Comparative Matrix

Galtungian Concept	IKS/Sanskrit Concept	Analytical Contribution
Negative Peace	--	--

Positive Peace	<i>Śānti, Dharma</i>	Multilevel wellbeing
Structural Violence	--	--
Cultural Violence	--	--
Human Agency	<i>Loka-saṃgraha</i>	Social responsibility
Universal Welfare	<i>Sarvabhūta-hita</i>	Expanded moral community
Inner Transformation	Yoga	Self-regulation
Ecological Peace	<i>Śānti, sarvabhūta-hita</i>	n–environment reciprocity
Epistemic Peace	<i>Ā no bhadraḥ...</i>	Intellectual openness

The table establishes **correspondence without equivalence**. This distinction is central to the paper.

Contemporary Indian Peace Discourse 1 Vishwanath D. Karad

The institutional work associated with Vishwanath D. Karad provides a contemporary example of Peace-oriented education. Current institutional documentation identifies Karad as UNESCO Chair Holder for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace. The World Peace Centre associated with his work explicitly connects science, spirituality, human rights, democratic values, interfaith dialogue, sustainability and human welfare. This is relevant to IPP because it treats peace as an educational and civilizational project rather than merely an interstate-security objective. The educational pathway can be represented as: The significance is pedagogical rather than merely institutional.

2. Priyankar Upadhyaya

Upadhyaya represents perhaps the clearest contemporary scholarly bridge between Indian civilizational concepts and international Peace Studies. His publications explicitly address: *Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam*; *Intercultural Peace*; *Sustaining Peace*; *Peace Education*; *Culture*; *Human Rights*; and *Interreligious Dialogue*. His work is especially useful because it demonstrates that Indic concepts can be translated into contemporary international peace discourse without abandoning their cultural origins.

3. Mata Amritanandamayi

The contemporary institutional work associated with Mata Amritanandamayi provides a further example of compassion-oriented peace practice. The Civil 20 India 2023 policy framework associated with her institution placed compassion-driven approaches alongside social justice, sustainability and resilience. This is important because compassion can function as a bridge between:

Inner Disposition → Interpersonal Relationship → Community Action → Social Resilience.

The concept therefore supports the relational and inner dimensions of IPP.

4. Chinmaya Tradition

The Chinmaya educational tradition is relevant to the proposition that peace education should address the whole person. Physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development can be treated as complementary dimensions of human education. This is consistent with the IPP premise that peace cannot be sustained solely through intellectual understanding. A person may understand conflict academically yet lack the emotional regulation necessary to avoid destructive behaviour. Therefore: Peace education requires both.

5 Pandurangshastri Athavale

The Swadhyaya movement by Pandurangshastri Athavale is particularly relevant to the relationship between inner transformation, community participation and ecological responsibility. Research on Swadhyaya and ‘dharmic ecology’ identifies connections between ecological sustainability, environmental ethics and religious life. It also examines the social implications of Athavale’s approach.

The significance for IPP lies in the possibility that philosophical principles become embedded in

community practice. This produces the pathway: Such a pathway requires empirical testing, but it provides a valuable conceptual hypothesis.

The Author's Research Trajectory

The present article emerges from a broader research trajectory connecting Sanskrit studies with Peace Studies. The author's previous research with Suvarna Vadge examined Galtung's cultural violence framework in relation to Indian social practices, specifically addressing caste discrimination, gender inequality, religious intolerance and communal violence. The present article extends that inquiry. The earlier research essentially asks: How can cultural systems reproduce violence? The present research asks: How can cultural and philosophical resources contribute to transforming violence? This produces a coherent trajectory: The author's research work further confirms an interdisciplinary focus spanning Sanskrit, Peace Studies, IKS and Indic Studies.

This positioning is useful for the present paper because the article does not artificially combine two unrelated research fields; it represents a continuation of an established interdisciplinary research programme.

Integrative Positive Peace

The central theoretical contribution of this article is the proposition of **Integrative Positive Peace (IPP)**. IPP is defined as: **A dynamic and multidimensional condition in which direct violence is reduced, structural injustice is transformed, cultural narratives become inclusive, relationships are characterised by dignity and reciprocity, individuals cultivate ethical self-regulation, and human communities maintain sustainable relationships with the ecological world.**

The model contains six dimensions.

1. Direct Peace: Reduction of physical and psychological violence.
 2. 2 Structural Peace: Transformation of unjust institutions and unequal life chances.
 3. Cultural Peace: Transformation of narratives that legitimise exclusion and othering.
 4. Relational Peace: Development of trust, empathy, reciprocity and recognition.
 5. Inner Peace: Cultivation of ethical self-regulation and non-harming dispositions.
- Ecological Peace: Maintenance of sustainable relationships between human communities and the natural environment.

The framework may be represented as: Importantly, the dimensions are **not additive variables operating independently**. They are mutually reinforcing. Structural inequality can generate resentment. Resentment can reinforce cultural othering. Othering can facilitate direct violence.

Conversely: inner self-regulation can support relational trust; relational trust can support inclusive institutions; inclusive institutions can reduce structural violence. The model is therefore systemic rather than linear.

Theoretical Propositions

The IPP framework generates the following propositions.

- P1: Sustainable Positive Peace requires simultaneous transformation across individual, relational, cultural, structural and ecological levels.
- P2: Ethical agency mediates the relationship between peace-supportive cultural values and peaceful social behaviour.
- P3: Structural justice and inner ethical transformation are mutually reinforcing but neither is sufficient independently for sustainable Positive Peace.
- P4: Inclusive cultural narratives can reduce mechanisms of othering and thereby contribute to relational peace.
- P5: Ecological sustainability constitutes an endogenous dimension of Positive Peace because ecological insecurity can reproduce structural inequality and conflict.

These propositions distinguish the article from a purely textual comparison. The objective is to create a conceptual model capable of generating empirical research.

Critical Problems and Safeguards

1. Essentialism: There is no single 'Indian philosophy.' Indian intellectual traditions are internally plural. Accordingly, this article refers to IKS with some selected Sanskrit resources, not 'the Indian theory of peace.'
2. Anachronism: Patañjali was not a Peace Studies scholar. The *Mahopaniṣad* was not a modern international-relations text. The *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* was not theorising structural violence. The present study therefore establishes conceptual dialogue rather than historical continuity.
3. Romanticisation: Indian traditions must be subjected to the same critical scrutiny applied to all knowledge traditions. The existence of *ahimsā* does not demonstrate that all historical Indian social practices were nonviolent. The presence of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* does not eliminate historical exclusion. The concept of *dharma* cannot automatically be equated with contemporary equality. This critical approach is especially important because the author's earlier work demonstrates precisely how cultural practices can reproduce violence.
4. Harmony versus Justice: One of the greatest risks in peace discourse is equating harmony with peace. A society may appear harmonious because dissent is suppressed. Therefore: unless accompanied by: justice; dignity; equality; participation; agency; and freedom from coercion. This is where Galtung remains indispensable. Indic concepts enrich the theory; they do not eliminate the necessity of structural critique.

Implications for Peace Education

An IKS-informed peace curriculum should not merely teach Sanskrit verses. It should use them as starting points for critical inquiry. For example: *Ahimsā* What constitutes violence in digital communication?; *Loka-saṃgraha* What responsibility does an individual have towards society?; *Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* How can universal belonging coexist with legitimate cultural identities?; *Sarvabhūta-hita* Should environmental wellbeing be considered part of social justice?; *Śānti* Can peace be conceptualised beyond interstate relations?

This approach transforms IKS from cultural content into a 'critical pedagogical resource.' Recent research on Peace Education continues to emphasise that peace education must engage inequality, human rights, justice and democratic resilience rather than merely teach reconciliation.

Implications for Higher Education

IKS-based peace research should be genuinely interdisciplinary. Relevant disciplines include: Sanskrit; Philosophy; Peace Studies; Sociology; Political Science; Psychology; Environmental Studies; Education; and International Relations. The research methodology should include:

philology + hermeneutics + comparative theory + field research + quantitative measurement.

This is essential if IKS is to develop as an internationally credible academic field.

The IKS Division itself emphasises interdisciplinary research and societal application.

Towards an IKS Positive Peace Index

The most important empirical extension of this article would be an **IKS Positive Peace Index (IKS-PPI)**. Possible indicators include:

Dimension	Illustrative Indicators
Direct	physical violence, bullying, conflict recurrence
Structural	equality, access, institutional inclusion
Cultural	prejudice, stereotyping, othering
Relational	trust, empathy, dialogue
Inner	self-regulation, resilience, nonviolent attitudes
Ecological	sustainability, ecological responsibility

The proposed index should not simply measure whether individuals agree with IKS/Sanskrit concepts. That would measure cultural familiarity, not peace. Instead, future studies should investigate whether engagement with specific ethical practices predicts measurable outcomes. For example: These are empirical hypotheses rather than assumptions.

IKS and Global Knowledge Diplomacy

The globalisation of IKS should not become an exercise in civilizational competition. The claim that Indian knowledge is ancient is historically relevant but scientifically insufficient.

International academic legitimacy must rest upon:

- textual accuracy;
- conceptual clarity;
- methodological transparency;
- comparative scholarship;
- empirical validation; and
- openness to criticism.

The objective should therefore not be: *Indian knowledge versus Western/Non Indian knowledge* but: *The Indian knowledge in critical dialogue with global knowledge*. This is particularly appropriate for Peace Studies, which is itself a field built upon interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue.

Discussion

The comparison undertaken in this article reveals an important asymmetry. Galtung provides a stronger analytical apparatus for identifying *how violence operates through structures and culture*. Classical Sanskrit concepts provide potentially richer vocabularies for discussing *how individuals and communities cultivate ethical dispositions and relational forms of life*. The two therefore operate at somewhat different analytical levels.

Galtung asks: *What conditions produce violence?* Indic concepts frequently ask: *What kind of person, relationship or social order should be cultivated?* Positive Peace requires both questions. A society cannot achieve *Sustainable Peace* merely by cultivating virtuous individuals while retaining deeply unjust institutions. Equally, institutional reform may remain fragile if individuals continue to reproduce hatred, prejudice and aggression. Thus: is more theoretically adequate than either dimension alone. This is the central logic of '*Integrative Positive Peace*'.

Conclusion

The theoretical history of Peace and Conflict Studies demonstrates a gradual expansion of the meaning of peace. From the absence of war, peace research moved towards the analysis of direct violence. From direct violence, it moved towards structural violence. From structural violence, it moved towards cultural violence. Contemporary scholarship is now increasingly concerned with identity, agency, relationships, ecological systems and human flourishing.

This article argues that Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) can contribute to this next stage of theoretical development. Classical Sanskrit thought does not provide a ready-made modern theory of Positive Peace.

Its value lies elsewhere.

Ahimsā provides an ethic of non-harming.

Śānti enables peace to be conceptualised across interconnected domains. *Dharma* introduces a normative concern for flourishing and the highest good. *Loka-saṃgraha* links personal action with collective welfare.

Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam expands moral belonging.

Sarvabhūta-hita broadens ethical concern towards all beings.

The Vedic aspiration for beneficial knowledge from all directions provides a methodological foundation for epistemic openness.

Contemporary Indian scholars and institutions demonstrate that these ideas continue to be translated into modern educational, social and intercultural contexts. Upadhyaya's work provides a particularly explicit bridge between *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* and intercultural peace. Karad's peace-oriented educational vision similarly connects science, spirituality, human rights, democratic values and social

welfare.

The present article's principal theoretical contribution is therefore *Integrative Positive Peace*. IPP proposes six mutually reinforcing dimensions: where direct, structural, cultural, relational, inner and ecological peace interact dynamically.

The framework does not replace Galtung. It *extends the analytical conversation*. Galtung helps Indic peace discourse confront power, inequality and structural violence. Indic

concepts can help Positive Peace scholarship deepen its attention to ethical agency, relationality, moral imagination and ecological embeddedness.

The objective is consequently neither civilizational substitution nor romantic revivalism. It is *critical epistemic pluralism*. The future of IKS in Peace Studies should therefore not be framed as an attempt to prove that ancient Indian thinkers anticipated contemporary Western theory. A more intellectually defensible and potentially more consequential project is to demonstrate that concepts developed within Indian knowledge traditions can be critically interpreted, translated, operationalised and empirically tested in contemporary peace research.

The ultimate question is not whether IKS/Sanskrit thought is 'better' than Galtung. The more productive question is: *What becomes theoretically visible when Galtung and IKS thought are placed in sustained critical dialogue?*

The answer proposed by this article is that Positive Peace becomes more comprehensive when the transformation of violence is examined alongside the cultivation of ethical agency, relationships, inclusive moral imagination and ecological reciprocity.

In that sense, reimagining Positive Peace through Indian Knowledge Systems is not a retreat into the past.

It is an attempt to expand the intellectual resources available for addressing one of humanity's most enduring challenges: **How to create societies in which 'Peace' is not merely the absence of violence, but a sustained condition of justice, dignity, flourishing, relationship and harmony with the wider living world.**

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