

## A BHARTIYA VISION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: INSIGHTS FROM THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

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**Abstract:** The ‘Indian Knowledge System’ (IKS) is a collection of intellectual, moral, political, and spiritual beliefs that have been passed down through the ages. These structures are not just old things; they are important frameworks that may help us understand and deal with the complexities of human interaction, including international relations. IKS offers a new way to look at statecraft, diplomacy, global government and world politics. Its values are closely linked to the goals of world peace, multilateralism, bilateral cooperation, co-existence and sustainable development, and they are in line with the problems that the international system is facing today. The paper expresses how the IKS gives India a distinct intellectual history that shapes its foreign policy and teaches us how to connect ancient knowledge with modern diplomatic techniques. This heritage includes Chanakya’s Arthashastra, which is about strategic realism, to ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’, which says that ‘the world is one family’. This combination helps nations better understand global dynamics and contributes to a more balanced and peaceful international order. The study engages with the Saptanga Theory, *Sukra Niti*, the Buddhist Circuit and India’s soft power perspective, Lord Krishna’s diplomatic views, Hinduism and cultural diplomacy, as well as *Dharma–Janana* approaches to international relations.

**Keywords:** Indian Knowledge System, international relations, diplomacy, statecraft, world peace, sustainable development, foreign policy

## INTRODUCTION

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is an extensive web of intellectual, moral, political, and spiritual traditions that have grown on the Indian peninsula over thousands of years. It is much more than just an old-fashioned inquisitive; it gives us a strong set of ideas that we may use to understand and deal with the complexities of modern global affairs and international relations. IKS expresses both realist and multicultural views on statecraft, diplomacy, and global governance. It does this by using well-known texts like Chanakya's Arthashastra and the Upaniṣadic notion of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. This immediately addresses the needs of peace, multilateral cooperation, bilateral engagement, co-existence, and sustainable development, which are the hallmarks of contemporary global discourse in the 21st century.

IKS posits an interconnected universe that is simultaneously changeable and organised at its core. In this world, the Saptanga Idea of State, which encompasses the head of state, officials, its borders, citizens, fiscal affairs, the military, and comrades, is an early example of how the balance-of-power works. The Sukra Niti tradition of moral political advice, which stresses how morality and practicality are linked, is a heritage that goes well with this kind of strategic realism. The concept of the Buddhi Circuit, which underscores the importance of judgment and wisdom in the diplomatic process, aligns with modern initiatives that highlight the relevance of soft power and conventional authority. The amalgamation of several ideologies culminates in the formulation of a comprehensive framework that transcends mere power dynamics, encompassing the ethical and spiritual dimensions of international relations.

During India's struggle for independence, the idea that IKS focuses on universality and ethical goals was given an entirely novel means to be shown. Gandhi's notion of Sarvodaya, which means 'welfare for all', and non-violent partnership were based on the old ideas of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. They showed a paradigm of global

solidarity that was considered normal. Nehru's support for non-alignment, which mixed Gandhian idealism with practical politics, helped India, which had just achieved its sovereignty, become an intermediary between rival groups during the Cold War. Subhash Chandra Bose, on the other hand, used the fighting spirit of Kshatra dharma. He called for strong action to achieve political freedom and gained a position of moral authority in the eyes of the global public. M.N. Roy, an early supporter of humanism and radical democracy, restored together Upanishadic universalism and Marxist globalisation. He did this to make a picture of an international republic based on personal freedom and the common good.

This diverse history inspires India's current discussions about foreign policy and its soft security stance. Cultural diplomacy, which is facilitated by Hindu philosophical outreach, is an effective instrument for building relationships between people and promoting an inclusive narrative of civilisational conversation. The courteous counsel provided by Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata, which promoted negotiation, coalition formation, and ethical argumentation, remains a significant influence on modern methods for fostering trust and international systems. In the meantime, Dharma-jnana, which means 'knowledge of duty', gives people who work in civil society, non-profit organisations, and as intellectuals in international politics a moral guide.

IKS provides a specific conceptual framework that can be employed to navigate the constantly evolving dynamics of global politics. This is done by combining cultural volunteering, tactical realism, and moral multiculturalism. It also suggests a 'middle path' that puts both national interest and worldwide prosperity first, which goes against the concept that Westphalian statehood and international idealism are two separate things. The ideas behind IKS, which are based on old knowledge but are being redefined in new ways by contemporary thinkers, are an important tool for building a fairer, peaceful, and long-lasting international order in a time when competition between great powers is rising, climate disasters are happening, and norms are being challenged. Here are the conceptual

ideas being discussed in the study to prove the Idea that the Bhartiya Vision shows the global politics to foster the international relations and foreign policies.

#### ARTHSHASTRA'S STATE CRAFT VIA THE SAPTANG THEORY

Kotilya's Arthashastra, which focuses on statecraft, economic policy, and military strategy, offers a complete framework for comprehending the components that comprise a stable state. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of national power and security, the 'Saptang Theory' (which consists of seven limbs of the state: Swami, Amatya, Janapada, Durga, Kosha, Danda, and Mitra) is introduced. This theory is renowned for its realistic approach to power and statecraft, which places an emphasis on pragmatic considerations of self-interest, security, and survival in an international setting that is competitive (Prasain 2024, 143). In the context of current international relations, it emphasises the interdependence of a state's internal strength with its external interactions. It places particular emphasis on variables such as strong leadership, effective administration, powerful economy, and strategic alliances. In their pursuit of national interest and regional stability, contemporary foreign policy frequently reflects these principles, whether they do so officially or tacitly. For example, the capacity of a nation to project power and influence on the international stage (for instance, through formidable military capabilities or economic sanctions) is intimately tied to the nation's internal cohesion, economic development, and good governance. This is a reflection of the all-encompassing nature of the Saptang theory.

Kautilya's Arthashastra and Machiavelli's 'The Prince' both look at government in a practical way, focusing on power, coalitions, and statecraft in their own ways. Kautilya, conversely, integrates moral concepts like Dharma and promotes the collective good, while Machiavelli prioritises the survival of politics and often neglects

morality. Kautilya's ideals, which come from many cultures, are centred on helping people rather than Machiavelli's thoughts (Parsain 2024, 142).

### SUKRA NITI ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Sukra Niti is yet another ancient Indian work that provides a comprehensive overview of the fundamental concepts of ethical behaviour, public administration, and good governance. The focus that it places on justice, welfare, and responsible leadership is in line with the conversations that are taking place in international organisations around the world today regarding good governance. The king's style Satvika, Rajsika and Takmsika and his doctrine of Karma and Pardhna must lead the nation towards good governance or in complete illumination (Krishana 2016, 33).

Shukraniti has material to guide managers and leaders in several positions; the king as the current leader, the successor as a king in making, the key management personnel and support staff such as ministers and other employees, and interestingly, it also has lessons that are common to the king and the subjects alike. (Parikh 2020, 415)

Shukraniti offers everlasting leadership ideas that are important for good governance. It fosters ethical leadership while also stressing the need to keep an intricate equilibrium between goals, financial success, and moral obligations. The paper also talks about the good things that can happen when retribution is used, as well as how important it is to prepare administrators effectively, do their jobs effectively, and set up recurrence. The goal of these perspectives is to encourage strong governance and great leadership actions.

### LORD KRISHNA'S DIPLOMACY IN THE MAHABHARATA

The epic narratives of the Mahabharata and Ramayana provide profound insights into the ethics of warfare, as well as the resolution

of conflicts and the conduct of disputes. The role that Lord Krishna plays in the Mahabharata as a diplomat, arguing for peace before resorting to battle, exemplifies the significance of discourse, negotiation, and strategic communication in the context of international politics. Sama, which means ‘conciliation’, Dana, which means ‘concession’, Bheda, which means ‘division’, and Danda, which means ‘coercion’, are all examples of intricate statecraft that Lord Krishna used in the Mahabharata to show how to be a good diplomat (Mishra 2019, 60).

Contemporary diplomacy navigates complicated international relations by utilising a spectrum of engagement tactics to create alliances, manage rivalries, and ultimately prevent violence, much like Krishna’s pursuit of peace through strategic negotiation. In a similar vein, the concept of ‘Dharma Yuddha’ (righteous war) in ancient epics, which outlines ethical behaviour during times of conflict, has parallels with contemporary international humanitarian law and the norms that govern the just use of force. These narratives highlight the deeply ingrained Indian tradition of seeking peaceful resolutions while simultaneously acknowledging the necessity of ethical engagement in conflict situations. This sentiment is exemplified by India’s ‘No First Use’ nuclear policy and its historical reluctance to initiate conflict (Verma 2024, 1398).

## VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM CONCEPT AND BROTHERHOOD POLICY

‘The world is one family’ is an old Sanskrit saying that is a key part of Indian philosophy and guides India’s foreign policy. This saying encourages universal brotherhood and a sense of shared responsibility for global issues. Indian leaders employ the expression “vasudhaiva kutumkumbam” a lot on both national and international stages to promote an awareness of global togetherness and belonging. This shows that the word has been around for a long time. This expression has changed over time since it was originally

used to talk about changing political and international situations. Throughout history, politicians have used this word to make people think of harmony and peace around the world. But the literal meaning of the word has changed over time. Initially, used to stress the importance of universal ideals and a feeling of being part of a community of people that transcends the globe (Dash & Sharma 2024, 3527). The United Nations (UN) is based on this idea and promotes international cooperation, peace, and security. Regional organisations like the Asian Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union, and others are working towards collective action and mutual understanding among nations, which is similar to the idea of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’.

The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita are two texts that talk about universal wisdom, compassion, and the well-being of all people. These texts are the basis for the philosophy known as ‘Vishav Guru’, which comes from India’s ancient spiritual and intellectual traditions. People think that India should help the world grow intellectually, spiritually, and morally because it has so much knowledge. This idea is becoming more relevant today because India is becoming a leader in the battle against global problems, including climate change, economic inequality, and environmental degradation. Vishav Guru’s ideology is based on India’s major systems of knowledge and stresses nonviolence, wisdom, and working together to make world relations better. The Prime Minister is inspired by the country’s prosperous cultural and historical heritage, which he thinks would help him build a nation that is very beautiful and will make India one of the most prosperous nations. He sees the whole universe as one big family and calls it Vasudeva kutumbakam. He also sees India as the “vishwaguru”, which means “the teacher of the world”. Because of his hard work, June 21st is now World Yoga Day throughout the world. This shows how good he is at dealing with cultures. In closing, Modi said that yoga is a religious practice that started in India and that it is a very useful gift that India has given to the rest of humanity (Lakshman 2014, *The Hindu*).

## INDIA'S BUDDHIST CIRCUIT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS IN ASIA

Illustrious monks such as Fa-Haien, Xuanzang, and Yi Jing undertook arduous journeys to India's sacred Buddhist sites, most notably Nalanda University. Because of their shared Buddhist ancestry, countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, and Japan have a deep historical and cultural connection to India. The establishment of Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India and the cultural exchanges that are made possible by this shared heritage are both important for India's soft power. These activities help build goodwill and strengthen diplomatic ties based on mutual respect and shared ideals. The principles of Buddhism are quite deep. Buddhism is a philosophy with a large set of beliefs and supporters all around the world. It stresses the necessity of finding ease in practices and keeping faith in a spiritual force that may give even the smallest difficulties meaning, which can bring consolation and objective. Buddha was a staunch supporter of freedom, equality, and brotherhood throughout history. These are basic ideas for harmonious living and a free society. Buddhism started in India, but it expanded all over the world, mostly through trade routes and the support of important leaders like Emperor Ashoka, who ruled the Mauryan Empire in India from 268 to 232 BCE. People aggressively disseminated the religion's lessons throughout Ashoka's kingdom and even further to regions like Sri Lanka, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. Ashoka sent missionaries out to propagate beliefs on purpose (Oza 2022). Through cultural diplomacy, we can see how old spiritual connections can lead to modern geopolitical advantages.

## HINDUISM'S CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

Hinduism has had a long-lasting impact on Southeast Asian countries, as seen in the stunning architecture of Angkorwat

temple in Cambodia and the Prambanan temple complex in Indonesia. This shared heritage helps to build strong cultural ties and bilateralism, which in turn helps to build strong diplomatic relations. India's cultural outreach and historical ties with these countries, which are based on similar religious and philosophical traditions, are strengthening strategic ties within the ASEAN region and beyond. Hinduism originated in India and South Asia but has since disseminated extensively, establishing a significant presence globally, including on every continent. Because this complex spiritual heritage is both territorialised in its historical nations of origin and deterritorialised via diaspora communities, a global perspective is essential for its comprehension. The notion that Hindu India represents a wellspring of global religion emerged partly as a response to colonialism and Christian missionary efforts, aiming for international acknowledgement. Over time, this grew to include the economic and educational triumphs of Hindu Diasporas, especially in the United States, which had an even bigger effect on the faith's growth around the globe (Jacobsen 2025, 72).

The idea of 'Dharma', which includes doing what is right according to moral principles and keeping order in the universe, goes beyond personal morality to guide how countries act towards each other in international relations. India's attitude on nuclear disarmament is an example of how committed the country is to the values of nonviolence and world peace. India's efforts in the UN to protect the rights of third-world countries and its resistance to military intrusions into sovereign nations are examples of the Dharma-driven diplomacy that India practices. India's foreign policy is founded on Dharma, which means that it puts ethical cooperation ahead of opportunistic partnerships on the world stage. India's ancient Knowledge System places a strong focus on nonviolence, wisdom, and a dedication to a world order that is fair and peaceful (Shani & Behra 2021, 18).

## A CONNECTION BETWEEN INDIA'S SOFT POWER AND THE IKS

India's soft power, which refers to its capacity to attract and influence by cultural and ethical appeal rather than through coercion, is inextricably tied to its extensive Indian Knowledge System. In addition to Yoga, Ayurveda, Classical Music and Dance Styles, Cinema, Sports (kabbaddi and Malkhamba), these practices have a global resonance. This cultural diplomacy, which is shown by the widespread popularity of Yoga Day around the world, enables India to portray a favourable image and develop bridges with a variety of nations, so encouraging goodwill and strengthening diplomatic ties (Viswanathan 2019, 131-132).

While China's Belt and Road Initiative is a current undertaking, the historical 'Silk Road' was a testament to ancient knowledge sharing and cultural interchange across Asia, including India. India served as a vital node in this network, making significant contributions to the advancement of numerous civilisations in the fields of science, philosophy, and the arts alike. This historical precedent demonstrates the significance of intellectual and cultural interchange in the process of establishing interstate ties and mutual prosperity. This is a premise that continues to be relevant in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected. For instance, China and India's cultural ties are firmly based on Buddhism and the Silk Road, two important avenues for cross-cultural communication (Tripathi & Ranjan 2017, 25).

On the other hand, many ancient Indian texts contain ecological wisdom that stresses how all life is connected and how people need to live in harmony with nature. These texts often talk about ecological ethics and sustainable development. IKS strongly believes in the idea of "Prakriti" (nature) as a sacred entity and the idea of living in a sustainable way. By supporting responsible consumption and sustainable development, India is joining global efforts to solve environmental problems. This is how India sees climate change and environmental protection in international forums (Khairnar 2025, 460).

## GEOPOLITICS OF JNANA (KNOWLEDGE)

The idea says that knowledge is an important factor in how much a country affects the geopolitical environment. India has a lot of traditional knowledge, and it can use this intellectual capital to emphasise its role on the world stage. India contributes to the world's intellectual discourse by promoting its unique views, such as Swami Vivekananda's Synthesis of Vedanta and Universalism, which still guides contemporary international harmony and Ethical Global Order (Darlong 2024, 88). Bhagat Singh's revolutionary ideas of equality in society, secular solidarity, and brave rebellion against the unfairness of imperialism speak strongly to the younger generations who are battling against tyranny and deep-seated inequality (Kumar, 2018, 280). During Sudan's youth-led revolution<sup>1</sup> from 2018 to 2019, a wide range of people, including students, professionals, and workers, organised nonviolent sit-ins and mass civil disobedience to bring down an authority that had been ruling for 30 years.

His call for direct action and willingness to make sacrifices for the greater cause resonates in this change. His focus on scientific temper and critical inquiry is also the basis for modern movements for internet freedom and environmental justice, each of which wants policies that are founded on facts. His focus on scientific temper and critical inquiry is also the basis for modern movements for internet freedom and environmental justice, each of which wants policies that are founded on facts. Bhagat Singh's blend of strong opposition and ethical conviction is an age-old reminder of how to bring about revolutionary change in a time when populist movements are on the rise and socioeconomic gaps are growing.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Vision assertion that every individual, irrespective of social class, religion, or ethnic background, holds inherent value underpins the ongoing endeavour to attain global unity for all. His vision of a single, moral truth and knowledge as a fundamental human right helps people work together and live in peace with one another (Yadav 2023, 793). Raja

Ram Mohan Roy's Synthesis of Tradition and Modernity, as well as his tireless campaign to eradicate Sati and fight caste-based discrimination, laid the groundwork for today's international campaigns for gender equality and human rights. In the connected world of today, his revolutionary focus on freedom of the press and a secular, modern schooling system keeps going to form the basis for democratic government and to promote conversation between cultures (Sarkar & Awal 2024, 29). Mahatma Gandhi's ideas of Satyagraha (truth-force) and Ahimsa (non-violence), which came from ancient Indian moral ideas, had an effect on nonviolent movements all over the world. His teachings gave people a strong framework for making social and political change through peaceful means. This framework was used by people like Martin Luther King Jr. in the US and Nelson Mandela in South Africa (Dar 2024, 295-296). This shows that ideas from IKS can have a big effect on political thought and action around the world, which in turn can affect international movements for justice and human rights.

#### NON-ALIGNMENT MOVEMENT (NAM) AND PANCHSHEELA

During the Cold War, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was the driving force behind the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which advocated for a policy of autonomous foreign policy that was not linked with either of the superpower blocs. While this policy was strategic, it also chimed with the IKS value of 'Madhyamargaa', (The Middle Path) which is considered to be the middle path in Buddhist philosophy. This principle places an emphasis on maintaining balance and avoiding extremes (Sethuraman 2022, 5). Nehru's vision for a world free from bloc politics and committed to peaceful coexistence was a synthesis of modern geopolitical realities with historical Indian wisdom. He envisioned a society in which people lived together without conflict.

Jawaharlal Nehru came up with the Panchsheel policy in 1954. It set out five rules for countries to live together peacefully. These

values include acknowledging the territorial integrity of one another and sovereignty, not attacking each other, not interfering in each other's internal operations, equality and mutual advantage, and living peacefully together. This strategy, which came from the ancient Indian knowledge system and the idea called for a non-aligned position throughout the Cold War. This was like the old Indian philosophy that stressed peace, compassion, and admiration for different kinds of governments and cultures. The Panchsheel was a group that wanted to promote international harmony and collaboration by encouraging debate and understanding instead of conflict. It sent a strong message to the globe that living together peacefully, even when people had different ideas, was not only possible but also necessary for the progress and stability of the global society (Sethuraman 2022, 3).

#### MULTICULTURALISM AND PLURALISM

India's history as a diverse country where many religions, languages, and cultures have lived together for centuries has given its people a deep appreciation for multiculturalism and pluralism. The Indian government's foreign policy, which often promotes variety and respect for different civilisations in international interactions, reflects this internal reality, which is based on the ideals of tolerance and acceptance that are outlined in the IKS. This approach, which stands in contrast to ideologies that exclude some groups, provides a model for peaceful cohabitation in a society that is more globalised. BRICS, BIMSTEC, SAARC, SCO, and QUAD are some of India's entities with the mentioned approach (Khare & Kumar 2025, 233).

The South Asian region, which includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives, has a very similar cultural history that comes from historical interactions, shared ideologies, and linguistic similarities. Because of this cultural connection, which is often linked to the Indian Knowledge System

as a whole, there is a basis for regional cooperation and better understanding. Even though there are political disagreements, the underlying cultural values often make it easier to talk and work together. This helps to build the foundation for regional stability and collective progress, even though progress is often slow. After the SAARC standoff, India is looking forward to BIMSTEC to share the subcontinent culture alive (Hunjoo & Kim 2024, 46). India's large network of cultural centres, festivals, and academic exchanges around the world serves as a powerful tool of cultural diplomacy, directly exploiting the attractiveness of its Indian Knowledge System. This is an example of how cultural diplomacy can be used as a strategic asset. These programs create an environment that is conducive to good diplomatic ties and promote a fuller awareness of India's heritage, ideals, and present achievements. They also build bridges between different people and foster an environment that is conducive to peace. In order to increase India's influence on the international stage, this intentional and successful strategy involves projecting India's cultural treasures.

## CONCLUSION

The Indian philosophical tradition places a high value on discussion, debate, and intellectual deliberation (for example, in the Upanishads). This tradition also places a strong emphasis on the promotion of discourse and argumentation. India's preference for multilateralism and its active participation in international venues where diplomacy and negotiation are of the utmost importance are both reflections of this emphasis on reasoned discourse. India has a long tradition of philosophical research and the polite sharing of ideas, and it often pushes for the creation of agreement and the peaceful resolution of disputes through conversation. The Indian Knowledge System has a big effect on how India deals with other countries because it gives leaders a basic worldview that stresses interconnectivity, moral behaviour, and a long-term aim of world peace. India's strong

concentration on multilateralism, its commitment to peaceful coexistence, and its long history as a staunch supporter of non-alignment are all apparent signs of this impact. India's diplomatic efforts and quest for a fair international order are based on ideas from indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). There are several ideas about administration in Sukra Niti, strategic foresight in Arthashastra, and the idea of Dharma that are all important. India's foreign policy is based on ancient knowledge, which gives the country a unique perspective on complex international relations.

## NOTES

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