

Systematic Review on Major Religions and Their Ethical Values

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ABSTRACT

Religion is crucial for human values, moral conduct, and social institutions across civilizations. Ethical principles derived from religious traditions continue to influence individual behavior, community relationships, and global perspectives on justice, peace, and human dignity. The present systematic review examines the ethical values embedded within major world religions. This study critically analyzes the ethical values found in major world religions through an extensive examination of scholarly literature, religious texts and contemporary interpretations. The study synthesizes existing scholarly literature to identify common ethical themes and distinctive moral frameworks across these traditions. The review further demonstrates that religious ethics contribute significantly to contemporary discussions on human rights, environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and peacebuilding. In this article; systematic review on major religions and their ethical values was discussed.

Keywords: Religions, Ethical, Values.

INTRODUCTION

Religion has played a significant role in shaping human civilization by providing moral guidance, social norms, and ethical principles across cultures and historical periods. Ethical values derived from religious traditions have influenced individual behavior, community relationships, governance, education, and the development of societies throughout the world. Despite differences in beliefs, rituals, and theological foundations, most major religions emphasize universal values such as compassion, honesty, justice, kindness, self-discipline, tolerance, and respect for human dignity. These ethical teachings continue to remain relevant in addressing contemporary challenges, including social inequality, environmental degradation, violence, and moral dilemmas arising from technological advancements. A systematic review of major religions and their ethical values provide an opportunity to examine the similarities and differences among diverse religious traditions and their contributions to moral philosophy and human welfare. Major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Confucianism have developed comprehensive ethical frameworks that guide adherents in their personal and social lives. Hinduism advocates Dharma (righteous duty), Ahimsa (non-violence), and Satya (truthfulness); Buddhism emphasizes the Noble Eightfold Path and compassion; Christianity promotes love, forgiveness, and service to humanity; Islam stresses justice, charity, and accountability; Judaism highlights covenantal ethics and social responsibility; Sikhism encourages equality, selfless service, and devotion; Jainism

places supreme importance on non-violence and non-possessiveness; and Confucianism advocates harmony, filial piety, and moral cultivation. In an increasingly interconnected world characterized by cultural diversity and globalization, understanding religious ethical values has become essential for promoting interfaith dialogue, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. Ethical values embedded within religious traditions provide important insights into human conduct and contribute to the development of inclusive and harmonious societies. Moreover, comparative studies of religious ethics help identify common moral foundations that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. By synthesizing existing knowledge, the study aims to explore the historical evolution, philosophical underpinnings, and practical implications of religious ethics. It also intends to identify emerging themes and research gaps in the field of comparative religious studies. Furthermore, this review recognizes that religious ethics are not static; they evolve in response to changing social, political, and cultural contexts. The ethical teachings of major religions continue to influence debates on human rights, environmental sustainability, gender equality, bioethics, and social justice. Therefore, a systematic exploration of these traditions is both academically significant and socially relevant. The study of major religions and their ethical values offer a comprehensive understanding of humanity's shared moral heritage. By examining the ethical dimensions of diverse religious traditions, this systematic review contributes to the broader discourse on ethics, philosophy, and global citizenship while fostering appreciation for the enduring role of religion in shaping moral consciousness and societal development. The objective of the study is to explore the systematic review on major religions and their ethical values.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dash, B., Priyanka, J. & Narasimham, G.L. (2024). Since its establishment in 1975, The Journal of Dharma has served as a pioneering platform for academic research in religious and philosophical studies. This paper conducts a thorough bibliometric analysis of the Journal of Dharma in the twenty-first century, including its legacy in Religion and Dharma, with the objective of clarifying current trends and developing themes. This research utilises a dual methodological framework: performative analysis and scientific mapping. Performative analysis reveals the journal's impact and influence, whereas science mapping illustrates the interrelations among various research issues and disciplines. This research decodes trends, revealing the journal's multidisciplinary nature and its significance in addressing urgent global and contemporary concerns through religious and philosophical enquiry.

Kumar, P. & Patel, K.K. (2024). This research paper examines the correlation between religious doctrines and corporate ethics via a comparative analysis of prominent global faiths. This study seeks to clarify the intricate relationship between faith and ethical business practices by examining the historical context, fundamental theories, and the tangible impact of religious teachings on organisational policies, leadership, employee behaviour, and corporate social responsibility. The study examines challenges and objections related to the incorporation of religious values in business, including conflicts with secular ethics, ethical relativism, and issues faced by global firms. The findings highlight the substantial influence of religious principles on business ethics while recognising the necessity for additional research and open discourse to address the issues arising from the intersection of religion and business in a globalised context.

Kumar, P. (2024). Religion significantly influences the social, cultural, and political framework of Indian society. This research article performs a comparative analysis of Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism, three predominant religions with considerable impact in India. This study seeks to clarify the complex functions of religion in Indian society by examining its historical trajectories, fundamental beliefs, rituals, social dynamics, and modern expressions. This article examines the parallels, differences, and interfaith contacts to provide insights into the difficulties of religious coexistence, identity formation, and socio-political dynamics in contemporary India. This research enhances comprehension of the complex interplay between religion and society within the Indian context.

Sangma, D.D. & Bharani, M. (2024). Buddhism and Christianity are two significant world religions that profoundly impact the lives and beliefs of millions. Buddhism, which began over 2,500 years ago with Siddhartha Gautama, "the Buddha", and Christianity, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, provides profound spiritual principles focused on compassion, love, morality, mindfulness, and forgiveness. The study reveals the importance and impact of these principles in shaping the lives of devotees through a comprehensive analysis. Compassion, considered fundamental in both Buddhism and Christianity, motivates the reduction of suffering and promotes ethical conduct. In Christianity, love and charity are of utmost importance, but Buddhism prioritises generosity. Moral conduct is essential in both, with Buddhism significantly emphasising the Noble Eightfold Path. Mindfulness is a collective practice that fosters self-awareness and tranquillity. Forgiveness, essential in Christianity, underscores reconciliation and restoration. These virtues, despite varying interpretations rooted in their theological origins, illustrate a universal concept of empathy and interconnectivity. This study emphasises the significance of these common ideals in today's world, promoting communication between Buddhists and Christians to nurture a more compassionate and understanding community. It explores the practical ramifications of these values for personal development and ethical decision-making, revealing their capacity to reconcile differences and foster empathy. This study emphasises common spiritual principles, promoting virtuous living in the varied contexts of Buddhism and Christianity, thus facilitating enhanced interfaith dialogue.

Neetu (2024). The Indian mind has been shaped by a multitude of philosophical systems, civilisations, cultures, and customs. It is profoundly ingrained in numerous faiths and traditions. These concepts and practices serve as instruments for cultivating one's mindset. When experiencing psychological distress, an individual may be drawn to a specific cultural milieu that strongly corresponds with their identity. This process leads these individuals to confront issues and conflicts within their societal system, rendering their conventional worldview inadequate. Thus, the study concentrates on two principal aims. The second half examines the understanding of entrenched cultural paradoxes that generate sociological, moral, and ethical dilemmas, while the first section investigates the diverse beliefs and ideas that influence the Indian psyche. We additionally present three case studies to exemplify these complex scenarios.

Mastan, D & Oman, Z.U. (2023). The philosophical examination of ethics and morality in Islam is a complex and extensive field, steeped in a rich history and tradition of learning. Islam includes all facets of human existence, including ethics and morals, hence needing a thorough examination. This

study focuses on Islam and Islamic morality. Islam is a distinct monotheistic faith and the second most widely practised religion globally. This article analyses the historical context, significance, and impact on religious texts, ideologies, and the five pillars of Islam. The principal objective of this study is to enhance public comprehension of Islam and the sacrifices undertaken by the Nabi to disseminate the faith globally.

Monia, N.G. (2023). This essay examines the role of religions in promoting an atmosphere of respect for variety and nurturing the principles of constructive disagreement. This study emphasises the importance of overcoming conflict and fostering harmony through a moral framework based on religious beliefs, acknowledging that diversity is an intrinsic aspect of human existence. The study examines the principles and practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam via significant religious texts and examples, illustrating their roles in peacebuilding and intercultural understanding. Hinduism and Buddhism prioritise self-realisation, meditation, and universal love, promoting the capacity to surpass particular distinctions. Judaism promotes ethical concepts, including fairness and integrity, while differentiating between religious doctrines and political ideologies. Christianity, especially through its principles of compassion and forgiveness, provides a framework for reconciling with one's opponents. The core concepts of Islam, such as equality, tolerance, and respect for freedom of belief, establish a legal and moral framework for coexistence and discussion, exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad's ethical treatment of other groups. This study examines the obstacles posed by ideological extremism, historical grudges, and structural disparities that impede peaceful coexistence through religious paradigms. It suggests pragmatic approaches for integrating the ethics of dissent within educational, legal, and societal frameworks. The findings emphasise the necessity of interfaith cooperation and the use of common values to address global problems of conflict and division, promoting a collective moral obligation that surpasses cultural and theological limits. This discussion underscores the lasting significance of faiths in fostering a harmonious global community.

Kaur, K. (2022). This study elucidates the practice of ethics in India by comparing and contrasting it with numerous disciplines, including religion, philosophy, and morality. Furthermore, it aims to differentiate between Western concepts of ethics and morals while advocating for Indian ethics, or Niti. Despite its antiquity, Nitishastra is significant today, as it elucidates justice by reconciling Dharma, the cosmic order that upholds the universe, with Karma. Nitishastra favours intuitive ethics over legally prescribed morals. Moreover, Indian ethics closely align with inherent, natural, and universal principles, embodying a spiritual connection attainable solely through self-examination. Self-awareness, which fortifies individuals against emotional sensitivity and impulsive reactions, further reinforces the tenets of Indian ethics. The employment of Indian folktales to highlight the uniqueness of Indian ethics is what imparts value to the study.

Zepa, N. (2022). Globally, religion has historically been perceived as a conservative element within society. By glorifying poverty and suffering as virtues, religious beliefs obstruct societal transformation and validate the existing, inequitable social hierarchy. Moreover, religion instructs individuals that endeavouring to transform society by revolution is ineffectual. The ruling class employed religion as a fundamental ideological instrument to validate its authority and obscure the

realities faced by the exploited by advocating the notion that the existing social hierarchy was not merely a consequence of the ruthless exercise of power and profit for the benefit of a specific social group, but rather a divinely sanctioned order. Religious concepts, beliefs, and practices differed among societies, with modifications and developments occurring in various religious forms over time. An inherent societal dynamic energy propelled India's religion, guaranteeing it never became stagnant. While the core principles of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism have persisted, a novel aspect of social transformation has arisen in Indian culture over the past decade due to the influence of globalisation on political, socio-cultural, and economic spheres. Consequently, its processes have experienced incremental alterations. Indian spirituality is fundamentally rooted in the nation's enduring religious and intellectual traditions.

Frazier, J. (2021). Classical Sanskrit texts do not expressly reference a definitive feature of "goodness". Instead, a prevalent ethical approach was clarifying the ontological essence of the self or the world, thus allowing ethical implications to arise organically from shifts in comprehension. This article synthesises sources that examine ethics, encompassing agents, dispositions, causal systems of effect, and values, as emergent phenomena grounded in complex, dynamic, and porous configurations. This resulted in the conclusion that the notion of "goodness" varies depending on context and the degree of our concern. Initially, we examine how the Bhagavad Gita formulates a utilitarianism that aims solely to preserve the world as a prerequisite for choice, without presupposing any universally applicable or intrinsically desirable goal or good. Secondly, we analyse narratives of mutable personhood in the Caraka Samhita and Book 12 of the Mahabharata, recognising that this imposes the responsibility of defining the good upon the individual. The aesthetic theory of the Natya Sastra indicates that the evaluation of emotions is intricate, subject to modification, and encompasses factors beyond mere self-interest. It also indicates that our self-worth is influenced by our circumstances. Collectively, these sources illustrate aspects of an ethical perspective wherein each instance functions as a focal point within a comprehensive ethical framework. Every effort aims to divert us from our deepest concerns, enabling us to transcend our egos and engage in actions that serve the broader community to which we belong.

Hussain, A. (2021). Identify the principal religious faiths that have coexisted in India for an extended period, outlining the religious groups along with their succinct histories, core teachings, sacred texts, and festivals. Describe the population size, geographical distribution, and socio-cultural and economic conditions of various religious groups. Explain the notion of religious pluralism within the Indian context and relate the contributions of diverse religions to the evolution and enrichment of India's composite art, culture, and society.

Sanmee, W. (2020). This essay aimed to examine Hindu ethics as they are expressed in the Vedas and Smriti texts. This dialogue encompasses the Hindu lifestyle from both traditional and modern viewpoints. Indian philosophical and religious texts do not regard morality as a separate discipline. The fundamental framework of religion and philosophy profoundly incorporates morality. Consequently, it is imperative to delineate the ethical elements from their overarching theological and philosophical frameworks to investigate morality. Irrespective of individual beliefs, all systems within Hinduism address some fundamental moral principles. The Vedic teachings of the Sruti

scriptures predominantly shape the theological and metaphysical viewpoints that underlie the fundamental moral framework of Hinduism. Various Smriti writings, including the Rāmāyana, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the six philosophical systems, continue to elucidate moral principles and virtues recognized in Hinduism. Hinduism posits that every ethical value facilitates salvation, which is Brahman.

Khan, T.R. & Tantray, M.A. (2019). Ethics is a crucial and indispensable element of religious education. The objective of religious instruction is the advancement and cultivation of human morality. Although not all ethical assertions are religious, every religious doctrine embodies ethical principles. Ethics pertains to values—moral, intellectual, artistic, social, or epistemic—whereas values in religious education are grounded in theological principles or religious authority. This study fosters an ethical mentality (both objective and subjective) to elucidate the role of ethical declarations, duties, obligations, permits, and prohibitions in the context of religious teaching. The principal objective of this analytical methodology is to tackle the study subject. Do religious beliefs and ethics coexist in harmony? What is the relationship between the sanctity of religious education and the freedom of will? This research examines the utilisation of ethical discourse to address problems arising from religious diversity. This study delineates the argumentation framework for elucidating the link between religion and ethics. Nevertheless, the article asserts that religious authority supersedes morality. This essay posits that moral standards originate from religious beliefs. This analytical study further elucidates and evaluates the relativity of religious values among many religious views. This analytical study also incorporates the perspectives of other moral philosophers to elucidate and examine the ambiguities within religious theology.

Sreedevi, T. (2019). The objective of the study is to examine and understand the importance of corporate ethics within the context of Indian philosophy. The research primarily focuses on the contributions of Hindu philosophy, albeit referencing other philosophical concepts such as Buddhism, Jainism, and Arthashastra. The subject is split into four subsections. The initial portion seeks to comprehend the overarching characteristics of Indian ethics and philosophy. The second section offers a summary of management ethics within Indian philosophy. The third segment seeks to ascertain the significance of philosophical ethics in modern corporate governance. The concluding portion addresses personal ethics in Indian philosophy. The discourse centers on the relationship and relevance between modern business ethics and the ethical principles derived from Indian philosophy.

Subhash (2019). Since ancient times, religious ideals have influenced India's economic development, fostering a profound interrelationship among the diverse castes and working groups within Indian society. Values and economic endeavours. Several social classes have consistently influenced India's religious traditions through their economic interests. lifestyles. Our economy consistently expanded because of our pursuit of spiritual values and the principles of our work culture.

Malla, M.A. (2018). This essay examines the viewpoints of two contrasting schools of thought—the positivists and the traditionalists, utilizing Pradeep Gokhale's typology—regarding the existence or nonexistence of ethics in Indian philosophy. To conceptualize an ethics of plurality, I propose a trajectory by analysing some intrinsic elements within the dialogue methodology of pre-modern

Indian philosophy. I argue that it is inconceivable to conceptualize such an ethic without invoking the notion of the "other", which has thus far been absent from Indian philosophical discourse. Due to the diversity of Indian communities, the assessment and evaluation of the prevailing moral dilemma in contemporary society necessitate the application of other-centric ethics.

Sanjeevankarpavithra & Sanjeevankarvittal (2017). The examination of moral challenges concerning individual and social relationships is referred to as ethics. Individuals sometimes employ the word in a more expansive context to address cultural goals, religious perspectives, and matters pertaining to the arts and sciences. Professionals in disciplines such as health, finance, commerce, law, and others frequently confront ethical difficulties. Ethics and values function as indications of the relative significance of different issues, aiding in the determination of the ideal path of action or the clarification of the importance of particular activities. The sole method to comprehend the fundamentals of existence is through language acquisition and the widely recognised literature of the world. Self-examination and self-reflection continually generate chances for enhancement across multiple domains, especially in the field of ethics. The evolution of language is the sole factor affecting the advancement of global civilisation. This study examines how ethical standards govern each phase of the formation of Indian culture, emphasising its roots and preservation. The epics such as the Ramayana, Bharatha, and Bhagavatam, together with other literary works like the Upanishads and Aaranyakas, have established the foundation for Indian philosophy, lifestyle, and the evolution of ethical values. Their language is splendid and abundant in literature, providing Indian culture with a continual renewal. This paper elucidates the systematic and conceptual exploration of ethics and values through introspection and retrospection in Indian literature and culture, highlighting the chronological influence of value enrichment.

Naranje, S. (2015). Ethics and religion are often perceived as interconnected, as one can assert to elucidate this topic. The enquiry pertains to the necessity of being ethical or religious, namely why individuals seek to identify themselves as virtuous and just or categorise themselves as ethical or religious. While the majority of moral philosophers may disagree, comprehending this concept can be quite beneficial. This indicates that individuals can uphold specific ethical viewpoints, ideas, and conduct without involving themselves in religious or spiritual beliefs, organisations, or rituals. Ethics, or moral philosophy, poses essential enquiries regarding human existence: what objectives and values should one pursue, what constitutes right and wrong, and what is virtuous vs wicked. Conversely, religion can be defined as a belief system that imparts significance to individuals' lives and affirms their existence, asserting the ultimate dominance of a supernatural force or divine world that surpasses the material realities of daily life. The domains of ethics and religious belief intersect yet remain distinct. Most, though not all, faiths offer their adherents methods for implementing directives that guide ethical behaviour. A considerable amount can be articulated; however, not all moral philosophy is derived from or linked to religious belief.

CONCLUSION

A systematic review of major religions and their ethical values reveal that, despite differences in theology, rituals, and cultural practices, most religious traditions uphold a common commitment to moral conduct, human dignity, compassion, justice, honesty, and social responsibility. Religions such

as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism, and others provide comprehensive ethical frameworks that guide individuals in their personal, social, and spiritual lives. Ethical principles including non-violence, truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, self-discipline, respect for others, and service to humanity emerge as recurring themes across these traditions. These shared values have significantly contributed to the development of civilizations, legal systems, educational practices, and social institutions throughout history.

The review further demonstrates that religious ethics remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges, including social inequality, environmental degradation, conflicts, corruption, and the ethical implications of technological advancements. While certain ethical interpretations may vary according to historical and cultural contexts, the fundamental objective of religion continues to be the promotion of harmony, peace, and human welfare. Interfaith dialogue and comparative studies of religious ethics offer valuable opportunities for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance, and global cooperation.

In conclusion, the ethical teachings of major religions serve as enduring sources of moral guidance and social cohesion. A comparative understanding of these ethical traditions highlights both their distinctive contributions and their shared aspirations for a just, compassionate, and sustainable world. Therefore, the study underscores the importance of integrating religious ethical values into contemporary discourse on education, public policy, and global citizenship to promote inclusive and peaceful societies in the twenty-first century.

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