

# Fundamental Duties and the Indian Knowledge System: A Civilizational Approach to Citizenship (Explores Cultural, Moral, and Social Duties from IKS Shaping Article 51A)

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**Abstract:** *This explains how India's Fundamental Duties under Article 51A can be better understood through the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which reflects India's civilizational values rather than only modern legal ideas. It highlights that Indian traditions emphasize duties (dharma) as the foundation of social harmony, ethical conduct, and responsible citizenship. Drawing from texts, philosophies, and cultural practices, IKS promotes values such as respect for nature, social cohesion, self-discipline, tolerance, and collective well-being, all of which resonate with the Fundamental Duties. The abstract suggests that these duties are not merely constitutional obligations but moral and cultural responsibilities rooted in India's historical consciousness. By linking citizenship to civilizational ethics, the approach encourages citizens to act responsibly, preserve cultural heritage, protect the environment, and promote unity. Overall, it presents citizenship as a lived moral practice shaped by India's knowledge traditions rather than just compliance with law. [1] Indian Knowledge Systems (2-volume set) — Kapil Kapoor & Avadhesh Kumar Singh (2005), Author(s): Kapil Kapoor & Avadhesh Kumar Singh, Title: Indian Knowledge Systems, Publisher/Year: Indian Institute of Advanced Study & D.K. Printworld; 2005 (2 vols.)]*

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## 1. Introduction

### Reframing Citizenship through Civilization

The introduction to this research should frame Article 51A of the Indian Constitution as a distinctive and underexplored constitutional innovation that challenges dominant rights-centric models of citizenship by foregrounding duties as foundational to civic life. Unlike most modern constitutions that primarily emphasize enforceable rights and state obligations, Article 51A articulates Fundamental Duties, positioning citizens not merely as claimants of entitlements but as moral agents responsible for sustaining the constitutional and social order. The introduction should argue that this emphasis on duties is neither accidental nor a late constitutional afterthought, but rather reflects a deep continuity with the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which has historically conceived social life through the lens of dharma—a holistic principle encompassing moral obligation, social responsibility, harmony with nature, and ethical self-regulation. Drawing from ancient philosophical traditions such as the Vedas, Upanishads, DHARMASHASTRAS, Buddhist ethics, and Jain principles, the introduction should show that Indian civilizational thought has long prioritized KARTAVYA (duty) over ADHIKARA (rights), viewing individual freedom as inseparable from collective well-being. In this context, Article 51A can be presented not simply as a constitutional provision, but as the modern legal articulation of an ancient civilizational ethic that understands citizenship as participatory, ethical, and relational rather than purely contractual or individualistic. The introduction should clearly articulate the core thesis of the research: that Indian citizenship, as envisioned through Article 51A, reflects a civilizational model grounded in dharma, social harmony,

environmental stewardship, scientific temper, respect for diversity, and moral conduct, distinguishing it from Western liberal models that prioritize rights enforcement and state neutrality. This reframing allows citizenship to be understood as a lived ethical practice embedded in culture, ecology, and community, rather than a narrow legal status defined solely by constitutional guarantees. To establish the research gap, the introduction should critically note that mainstream constitutional scholarship in India has overwhelmingly focused on Fundamental Rights, judicial activism, and rights-based jurisprudence, often treating Fundamental Duties as symbolic, non-justiciable, or secondary. Furthermore, it should highlight the lack of sustained interdisciplinary engagement between constitutional law and Indian philosophy, ethics, environmental thought, and cultural studies, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the normative foundations of Article 51A. While isolated studies may reference moral obligations or civic duties, there remains limited systematic research that situates Fundamental Duties within the broader continuum of Indian civilizational values and knowledge traditions. By identifying this gap, the introduction should justify the need for an interdisciplinary approach that bridges constitutional law with IKS, political philosophy, and ethics, positioning the study as a contribution to rethinking Indian citizenship beyond legal formalism and toward a civilizational rooted constitutional ethic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1. *Dharma and Ethics: The Indian Ideal of Human Perfection* (1996), **Author:** edited by Surendranath Dasgupta / or anthology of essays on dharma ethics

2. *Indian Ethics: Classical Traditions and Contemporary Challenges* (2007), **Authors:** Purusottama Bilimoria, Joseph Prabhu & Renuka Sharma

**Conceptual Framework: Indian Knowledge System (IKS):**

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) may be conceptualized as a comprehensive civilizational body of knowledge that has evolved organically over several millennia, encompassing philosophical, ethical, spiritual, social, political, and ecological dimensions of human life, and reflecting India's continuous intellectual traditions rather than isolated textual canons. Rooted in the Vedas and Upanishads, which articulate foundational metaphysical inquiries into reality (Brahman), self (Atman), and knowledge (Jnana), IKS represents an integrated worldview where knowledge is inseparable from ethical conduct and social responsibility. The DHARMASHASTRAS systematize this worldview into normative frameworks governing individual and collective life, defining Dharma not merely as law or duty but as a dynamic principle that sustains moral order, social harmony, and justice across varying contexts of time, place, and social role. The Itihasa-Purana (Old History) traditions, particularly the Ramayana and Mahabharata, further operationalize these ethical ideals through narrative, illustrating moral dilemmas, leadership ethics, kinship responsibilities, and the consequences of action (Karma), thereby making philosophical concepts accessible to society at large. Texts such as the ARTHASHASTRA demonstrate the pragmatic dimension of IKS, revealing a sophisticated understanding of statecraft, economic management, diplomacy, and public welfare, where political power is ethically constrained by Dharma and the ruler's obligation to ensure LOKASANGRAHA, or the welfare of all. Complementing these traditions, Buddhist and Jain ethical systems emphasize compassion, mindfulness, restraint, and ethical intentionality, with Ahimsa (non-violence) emerging as a central civilizational value that extends beyond physical non-harm to include mental, verbal, and structural forms of violence. The Bhakti and Sufi movements further democratize IKS by foregrounding devotion, love, equality, and inner transformation over ritual hierarchy, fostering social cohesion, pluralism, and interfaith harmony. At the philosophical core of IKS lies the concept of Rta, the cosmic order that governs both natural and moral realms, affirming that human actions must align with universal principles of balance, truth, and harmony, thereby embedding ecological consciousness and ethical accountability into civilizational thought. Dharma functions within this cosmic framework as the guiding principle of ethical citizenship, linking individual conduct to collective well-being and emphasizing responsibility over entitlement. Seva, or selfless service, operationalizes Dharma at the social level by framing citizenship as active participation in the upliftment of society, rather than passive compliance with authority.

3. *The Bhagavad Gita* (ancient, translated many editions), **Author:** Traditionally attributed to Vyasa (Classical Indian text)

4. *Foundations of Indian Culture* (1972; ed. Sri Aurobindo), **Author:** Sri Aurobindo

5. *Modern Indian Political Thought: Text and Context* (2011), **Authors:** Bidyut Chakrabarty & Rajendra Kumar Pandey

6. *Sources of Indian Traditions* (3rd ed., Columbia University Press), **Editors:** A. Appadurai et al.

7. *The Argumentative Indian* (2005), **Author:** Amartya Sen

8. *Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power* (2025), **Author:** Gautam Bhatia

LOKASANGRAHA reinforces this orientation by prioritizing inclusive welfare, social justice, and the common good, ensuring that governance, economics, and education serve collective flourishing rather than narrow interests. VASUDHAIVA-KUTUMBAKAM, the vision of the world as one family, expands the ethical horizon of IKS beyond territorial and cultural boundaries, advocating global solidarity, mutual respect, and shared responsibility in an interconnected world. Together, these concepts form an indigenous ethical framework of citizenship that integrates rights with duties, freedom with responsibility, and individual aspiration with social obligation. For contemporary research, IKS offers a rich conceptual lens to reinterpret citizenship, governance, sustainability, education, and development from a civilizational perspective that challenges reductionist, utilitarian, and purely legalistic models of social organization. By emphasizing moral agency, collective welfare, ecological balance, and spiritual humanism, IKS provides a normative foundation for ethical citizenship that is culturally rooted yet universally resonant, making it a critical resource for reimagining public ethics, democratic participation, and global cooperation in the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup>

**Fundamental Duties (Article 51A): An Overview:**

Fundamental Duties under Article 51A of the Indian Constitution represent a distinctive constitutional innovation aimed at balancing rights with responsibilities, and their origin, philosophical influences, and normative purpose reveal an evolving vision of citizenship suited to India's socio-political context; these duties were formally incorporated through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976 during the Emergency period, following the recommendations of the Swaran Singh Committee, which emphasized that the Constitution, while guaranteeing extensive Fundamental Rights, lacked an explicit articulation of citizens' obligations toward the nation, society, and constitutional values, and this amendment initially introduced ten duties, later expanded to eleven by

<sup>2</sup> 1. The Principal Upanishads, Author/Editor/Translator: S. Radhakrishnan (ed. & trans.), Publisher/Year: George Allen & Unwin, 1953 (many later reprints)

2. Manusmriti: The Laws of Manu, Author/Compiler: Traditionally ascribed to Manu; Translator/Editor: G. Buhler (trans.), Publisher/Year: Oxford, 1886 (classic English translation)

3. The Ramayana, Author: Vālmīki, Translator/Editor: Robert P. Goldman et al. (The Critical Edition), 2007, onward (Vols. I–VIII)

4. The Mahabharata, Author: Traditionally ascribed to Vyāsa, Translator/Editor: J. A. B. van Buitenen & others (Chicago Univ. Press, 1973–77)

5. Arthashastra, Author: Kautilya (also known as Chanakya), Translator/Editor: R. P. Kangle or L. N. Rangarajan, Publisher/Year: (Kangle: 1960–67 vols.; Rangarajan: Penguin, 1992)

6. The Dhammapadam, Attributed to: The Buddha; Translator/Editor: Eknath Easwaran (many editions), Publisher/Year: Nilgiri Press, 1985 (popular edition)

7. Songs of Kabir, Collected by: Various; Translator/Editor: Rabindranath Tagore & others, or Linda, Hess/Robert Bly, Year: Tagore edition (1915); Hess/Bly edition (1992)

8. Sufi Poems of Rumi, Author: Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Translator/Editor: Coleman Barks (selected works), Publisher/Year: HarperCollins, 1995 (popular selections)

the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, thereby embedding the idea that citizenship is not merely a legal status conferring entitlements but also a moral and civic role demanding active participation in nation-building; the philosophical foundations of Fundamental Duties are deeply rooted in Gandhian philosophy, socialist ideals, and communitarian thought, each contributing a distinct layer of meaning, as Gandhian philosophy emphasized ethical self-regulation, social harmony, respect for collective life, and duties such as non-violence, tolerance, dignity of labour, and service to the community, which resonate strongly with duties like promoting harmony, safeguarding public property, developing scientific temper, and cherishing India's composite culture, reflecting Gandhi's belief that true freedom is inseparable from self-discipline and moral responsibility rather than mere legal enforcement; simultaneously, socialist thought influenced the conception of duties by stressing collective welfare, social justice, equality, and the subordination of individual self-interest to the common good, evident in duties that call upon citizens to protect public assets, uphold unity and integrity, and strive toward excellence in all spheres of collective life, reinforcing the idea that social progress depends not only on state action but also on citizens' cooperative engagement; communitarian philosophy further enriches this framework by prioritizing the community over radical individualism, asserting that individuals derive their identity, rights, and freedoms from their membership in social groups, and therefore owe reciprocal obligations to preserve social cohesion, cultural diversity, and democratic institutions, a perspective that contrasts sharply with Western liberal constitutional traditions, particularly those of the United States and Europe, where citizenship is predominantly rights-based and emphasizes individual autonomy, personal liberty, and protection against state interference, with duties often implicit, minimal, or confined to legal obligations such as taxation or jury service; in contrast, the Indian Constitution consciously advances a duty-based conception of citizenship alongside rights, reflecting India's civilizational ethos, plural social structure, post-colonial developmental needs, and the belief that excessive emphasis on rights without corresponding duties can lead to social fragmentation, entitlement-driven politics, and erosion of civic ethics; this distinction does not imply the negation of rights but rather their contextual balancing, as Indian constitutionalism recognizes that rights flourish meaningfully only when citizens voluntarily uphold constitutional values, respect diversity, and act with social responsibility; crucially, Fundamental Duties are non-justiciable, meaning they cannot be directly enforced by courts or invoked as grounds for legal punishment, a deliberate design choice intended to preserve individual freedom and prevent authoritarian misuse, yet they are morally binding and constitutionally significant, as courts have repeatedly used them as interpretive tools to uphold the constitutionality of laws, shape public policy, and reinforce civic obligations in areas such as environmental protection, national integrity, and educational reform; their non-justiciable nature underscores that duties are meant to be internalized rather than imposed, functioning as ethical guideposts rather than coercive commands, thereby aiming to cultivate responsible, conscientious, and participatory citizens rather than merely law-abiding individuals who

comply out of fear of punishment; the broader objective of Fundamental Duties is thus transformative, seeking to foster civic virtue, constitutional morality, and a sense of collective ownership over democratic institutions, encouraging citizens to move beyond passive obedience toward active engagement in protecting constitutional values, nurturing social harmony, and contributing to national development, especially in a diverse society where legal enforcement alone cannot sustain unity or justice; in contemporary times, as India confronts challenges such as environmental degradation, social polarization, erosion of public trust, and declining civic engagement, Fundamental Duties assume renewed relevance as normative instruments that remind citizens that democracy is not sustained solely by courts, laws, or governments, but by everyday ethical choices, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, reinforcing the constitutional vision that freedom without responsibility is incomplete, and that the true strength of Indian democracy lies not merely in its guarantees of rights but in the moral commitment of its citizens to uphold the spirit of the Constitution.<sup>3</sup>

### Mapping Article 51A to Indian Knowledge Traditions:

**1) Dharma and Moral Conduct:** Article 51A(a) of the Indian Constitution, which enjoins citizens to respect the Constitution, its ideals, institutions, and the unity and integrity of the nation, can be meaningfully mapped onto the Indian Knowledge Tradition (IKT) through the concept of *Dharma*, particularly *Raja Dharma* and personal-social dharma articulated in the BHAGAVAD GITA and the DHARMASHASTRAS. In IKT, *Raja Dharma* refers to the ethical duty of rulers to govern in accordance with justice (*nyaya*), moral restraint, and the welfare of all subjects, placing the stability and unity of the polity above personal interest; this aligns closely with constitutional values of sovereignty and integrity. Simultaneously, the *Gita* emphasizes *svadharma*, the performance of one's duty with discipline, selflessness, and commitment to social order, suggesting that societal harmony emerges when individuals act responsibly within their roles. The DHARMASHASTRAS extend this idea by codifying moral and civic duties that sustain collective life, such as loyalty to the social order and respect for shared norms. From a research perspective,

<sup>3</sup> 1. **M. P. Jain**, *Indian Constitutional Law - 8th Edition* (2018)

2. **Durga Das Basu**, *Introduction to the Constitution of India - 24th Edition* (2019)

3. **Mahendra Pal Singh, V.N. Shukla's Constitution of India - 14th/15th Edition (recent, ~2017–2020)**

4. **Sujit Choudhry (Ed.)**, *The Oxford Handbook of the Indian Constitution - Oxford University Press* (2016)

5. **Granville Austin**, *Working a Democratic Constitution: The Indian Experience - OUP* (1999)

6. **Bidyut Chakrabarty**, *Constitutionalizing India: An Ideational Project - OUP* (2018)

7. **Deependra Nath & Radha Ranjan**, *An Introduction to the Indian Constitutional Law - Integrity Education Publishing* (2025)

8. **The Constitution in Practice: Rights and Duties - Edited by Kiran Dennis Gardner, Naresh Prajapati & Sagar Sarda** (2025)

9. **M. V. Pylee**, *An Introduction to the Constitution of India - (earlier editions, e.g., 2003)*

10. **S. Ranganathan**, *Constitution of India: Five Decades (1950-1999) - Bharat Law House* (1999)



Article 51A (a) can thus be seen as a modern constitutional articulation of an ancient ethical framework, where moral conduct, civic responsibility, and national unity are not externally imposed obligations but intrinsic duties rooted in dharma. This continuity highlights how constitutional morality in India draws legitimacy from longstanding civilizational values rather than standing in opposition to them.<sup>4</sup>

**2) Social Harmony and National Unity:** Mapping Article 51A(e) of the Indian Constitution, which enjoins citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of brotherhood transcending religious, linguistic, regional, and sectional diversities, to Indian Knowledge Traditions (IKS) offers a fertile and original direction for new research. The constitutional ideal of social harmony is deeply rooted in the civilizational ethos of VASUDHAIVA-KUTUMBAKAM, articulated in the Upanishads, which views the entire world as one family and provides a philosophical foundation for inclusive nationalism beyond narrow identities. Buddhist teachings on Karuna (compassion) further enrich this framework by emphasizing empathy, non-violence, and moral responsibility toward all beings, shaping social ethics that counter exclusion and conflict. Similarly, the Bhakti movement's emphasis on personal devotion over ritual hierarchy challenged caste and social barriers, fostering egalitarianism and emotional unity across communities through shared spiritual expression. Together, these traditions demonstrate that social harmony in India is not merely a modern constitutional aspiration but a historically cultivated value embedded in lived practices, literature, and collective memory. New research can critically examine how these IKS principles inform contemporary interpretations of Article 51A(e), offering indigenous normative frameworks for addressing polarization, identity-based conflicts, and civic responsibility, thereby strengthening national unity through culturally resonant ethical foundations rather than solely legal mandates.<sup>5</sup>

**3) Environmental Responsibility:** A promising avenue for new research lies in exploring the convergence of Article 51A(g) of the Indian Constitution, which mandates citizens to protect and improve the natural environment, with Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) rooted in ecological ethics. Traditional frameworks like **Prakriti worship** emphasize the intrinsic sacredness of nature, promoting respect and reverence for all living and non-living entities. The **Panchabhuta theory**, which conceptualizes the universe as comprising five fundamental elements earth, water, fire, air, and space provides a philosophical basis for understanding

ecological interdependence and sustainability. Practices such as maintaining sacred groves, rivers, and reverence for specific animals reflect localized, community-driven conservation strategies that have endured for centuries, offering insights into biodiversity preservation, water management, and habitat protection. Research can focus on how these indigenous ecological principles align with the constitutional directive of environmental responsibility, highlighting their relevance in contemporary policy, education, and grassroots conservation initiatives. By systematically documenting, analysing, and integrating these traditional practices, scholars can propose culturally rooted models of sustainable development, bridging constitutional obligations with India's rich ecological heritage and fostering environmentally conscious citizenship.<sup>6</sup>

**4) Scientific Temper and Knowledge:** Article 51A (h) of the Indian Constitution emphasizes the cultivation of a scientific temper, curiosity, and rational thinking. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) inherently embody these principles, offering rich avenues for research that align with modern scientific inquiry. Classical schools like **Nyaya** and **Vaisheshika** encourage systematic reasoning, logical analysis, and observation-based knowledge, reflecting an early commitment to empirical investigation and critical questioning. Nyaya's emphasis on pramanas (valid means of knowledge) mirrors the scientific method by validating truth through perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony, while Vaisheshika's atomic theory and categorization of substances demonstrate rigorous classification akin to modern scientific taxonomy. Importantly, IKS integrates science with ethics, advocating knowledge that benefits society and discourages blind faith, superstition, or dogmatism. The moral and practical dimensions of knowledge in Ayurveda, architecture (Vastu), and environmental management exemplify this ethical integration. For new research, focusing on IKS allows exploration of how traditional epistemologies foster inquiry, evidence-based reasoning, and ethical applications, offering frameworks for contemporary science education, sustainability, and innovation. Studying IKS through this lens not only strengthens scientific temper but also bridges cultural knowledge with global research practices.<sup>7</sup>

**5) Cultural Heritage and Education:** A compelling research focus on mapping Article 51A of the Indian Constitution to Indian Knowledge Traditions (IKS) could explore how the directive duties of citizens to preserve heritage (Article 51A(f)) and strive for excellence (Article

<sup>4</sup>1. *The Bhagavad Gita* — **foundational text on Dharma and Svadharma** Easwaran, Eknath (Translator & Commentator).

2. *The Bhagavad Gita*. Nilgiri Press / Shambhala Publications, **1993 (2nd Edition)**.

3. **5.Scholarly article connecting Dharma and Indian constitutional framework**, Kaundinya, Nivedita. "Harmonizing

4. *Dharma and Democracy: Exploring the Principles of the Bhagavad Gita in the Framework of Indian Constitution.* Prayagraj Law Review, Vol. 2, No. 1, **2024**.

<sup>5</sup> 1) *Vasudhaiva-Kutumbakam: Relevance of India's Ancient Thinking to Contemporary Strategic Reality* (2020) – Edited by Arvind Gupta & Arpita Mitra

2) *What the Buddha Taught* (1959) – Walpola Rahula

<sup>6</sup> 1. *Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions* — Meera Baidur (2016)

2. *Environmental and Ecological Sustainability Through Indigenous Traditions* (Edited Volume) — Binay Kumar Pattnaik (2024)

<sup>7</sup> 1. "A History of Indian Philosophy" by Surendranath Dasgupta, **Author:** Surendranath Dasgupta (Indian philosopher and scholar), **Publication:** First published **1922–1955** (5-volume set)

2. *The Nyāya-Sūtra* (translated edition by Matthew Dasti & Stephen Phillips), **Original Text:** *Nyāya-Sūtra* by **Akṣapāda Gautama** (date traditionally around early centuries BCE/CE) — foundational text for the Nyāya school. **Translator/Editors:** Matthew Dasti & Stephen Phillips, **Publication Year:** **2017** (Hackett Publishing)

51A(j)) are inherently reflected in traditional educational and philosophical practices. The Gurukul system, central to IKS, emphasized holistic learning where knowledge was not merely academic but deeply moral, ethical, and experiential, fostering a sense of duty toward cultural preservation. Education in this context was a lifelong pursuit, aligned with the concept of Sadhana, encouraging continuous self-improvement and personal discipline. Linking this to Article 51A, research can investigate how embedding such traditional values in contemporary education can enhance civic responsibility and cultural consciousness, ensuring that students not only excel academically but also uphold and contribute to India's rich heritage. Further, exploring the integration of moral and spiritual dimensions of learning with modern curricula could highlight pathways for cultivating ethical citizens committed to societal development. Such a study would bridge constitutional ideals with living knowledge traditions, providing insights into how India's educational policies can draw from indigenous pedagogies to foster both excellence and cultural stewardship in the modern era.<sup>8</sup>

### Civilizational Citizenship vs. Liberal Citizenship:

In comparing the liberal model of citizenship with the civilizational model grounded in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), it becomes evident that Indian citizenship is deeply ethical, relational, and ecological, emphasizing duties over rights to sustain social cohesion and the continuity of civilization. Unlike the liberal model, which prioritizes individual autonomy, legal rights, and state-centric governance, the civilizational approach situates the individual within a network of relationships that extend beyond human society to include the environment, cosmic order, and collective heritage. In this framework, citizenship is not merely a legal status but a moral identity, shaped by dharma, social responsibilities, and ecological awareness, highlighting that ethical living and societal welfare are inseparable from personal well-being. Rights, while acknowledged, are secondary to the fulfilment of duties, as the flourishing of the community and the environment creates the conditions for the realization of individual entitlements. For instance, participation in civic duties, adherence to ethical norms and engagement in practices that sustain ecological balance are considered intrinsic to being a citizen, reflecting the Indian philosophical notion that the self is interdependent with society and the cosmos. This relational conception contrasts sharply with the liberal focus on contractual obligations to the state, individual legal entitlements, and adversarial rights-based frameworks, which can inadvertently encourage atomization and moral detachment. In the IKS-informed model, social harmony is prioritized over personal preference, and ethical duties, including truthfulness, non-violence, charity, and environmental stewardship, are fundamental to civic life. Furthermore, this approach aligns with the ancient Indian

principle of LOKA-SAMGRAHA, or collective welfare, positioning duties as the precondition for rights: only by fulfilling one's responsibilities toward family, community, and nature can one legitimately claim entitlements, thereby embedding citizenship in an ethical and ecological continuum. This perspective also extends to governance, where the state is not the sole guarantor of rights but a facilitator of moral and social responsibilities, working in concert with local communities, traditions, and ecological practices. Contemporary research can build on this paradigm by exploring how civic education, policy frameworks, and social institutions can integrate relational ethics, ecological mindfulness, and duty-oriented civic practices, thereby addressing global challenges such as environmental degradation, social fragmentation, and moral disengagement that often stem from purely rights-based liberal frameworks. Investigating case studies of traditional Indian governance models, community-based environmental stewardship, and ethical civic engagement can provide empirical grounding for the claim that citizenship is most sustainable when duties precede rights, as moral responsibility forms the foundation of societal resilience and ecological balance. In essence, Indian civilizational citizenship offers a holistic lens for rethinking civic identity, suggesting that ethical, relational, and ecological responsibilities are not peripheral but central to sustaining civilization, and that the prioritization of duties over rights ensures that the freedoms individuals enjoy are inseparable from their commitment to social harmony, moral accountability, and ecological stewardship, offering a normative and practical alternative to the liberal, rights centred model that dominates contemporary political discourse.<sup>9</sup>

### Contemporary Relevance of IKS-Based Duties:

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer a framework for understanding duties and responsibilities that remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges, providing a rich foundation for new research. Rooted in principles of interconnectedness, communal responsibility, and respect for nature, IKS-informed duties can guide responses to the environmental crisis by emphasizing sustainable resource use, ecological stewardship, and long-term thinking, which contrasts with short-term exploitative practices that drive climate change and biodiversity loss. In the context of social polarization, IKS traditions, which often prioritize community cohesion, dialogue, and mutual respect, can inform approaches that foster social harmony and collective problem-solving, countering the divisive tendencies of modern societies. Similarly, the decline of civic responsibility in many urban and digital contexts can be addressed through IKS-based principles of collective duty, participation, and moral accountability, encouraging

<sup>8</sup> 1. *Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS): A Legacy of Wisdom and Innovation*, Author:, Dr. Dheeraj Mehrotra, Publisher & Year: Notion Press, 2025 (Paperback/Hardcover)  
2. *Fundamental Duties – Importance and Interpretation* (on Article 51A), Author: (Various legal scholars/authors; Format & Year: Legal academic book (often found under titles such as *Fundamental Duties – Importance of Fundamental Duties under Indian Constitution*), recent edition 2023–2025

<sup>9</sup> 1. Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class*.  
2. Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*.  
3. Dworkin, R. (1977). *Taking Rights Seriously*.  
4. Sandel, M. J. (1982). *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.  
5. Gandhi, M. K. (1909). *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*.  
6. Sastri, V. S. S. (1927). *The Rights and Duties of the Indian Citizen*.  
7. Das, G. (2010). *The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma*.  
8. Madhusudhan, H., & Mantri, R. (2020). *A New Idea of India: Individual Rights in a Civilisational State*.

citizens to actively contribute to the welfare of their communities while respecting the rights of others. Ethical challenges in technology, including data privacy, artificial intelligence biases, and misinformation, can also benefit from IKS-informed duties, which promote mindfulness, ethical reflection, and the equitable use of knowledge for the common good. By applying these principles, research can explore how embedding IKS values strengthens democracy through participatory governance and inclusive decision-making, promotes sustainable development by integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern environmental strategies, and encourages responsible digital and civic behaviour by cultivating moral awareness and social accountability. This approach not only bridges the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary societal needs but also provides a holistic model for addressing interconnected crises, highlighting the urgent need for interdisciplinary research that situates IKS at the centre of ethical, social, and environmental innovation. Such research could yield actionable strategies for policy, education, and community engagement, demonstrating the enduring relevance of IKS-informed duties in shaping resilient, equitable, and sustainable societies.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Critiques and Challenges

In addressing critiques and challenges surrounding the integration of Fundamental Duties within the framework of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), it is crucial to recognize that IKS is inherently plural, inclusive, and dynamic rather than rigid or monolithic. Critics often argue that Fundamental Duties are symbolic, risk cultural homogenization, or may be difficult to apply in a pluralistic society. While these concerns merit attention, they underestimate the flexibility and ethical orientation of both IKS and the concept of duties. Far from being mere symbolic gestures, Fundamental Duties serve as guiding principles that encourage ethical citizenship, civic responsibility, and environmental stewardship, aligning naturally with many Indigenous practices that emphasize

community well-being, reciprocity, and sustainability. Rather than imposing a uniform cultural standard, duties act as ethical touchstones that respect diversity while promoting shared values such as honesty, non-violence, and care for the environment. IKS, by its nature, evolves through intergenerational knowledge transmission and adapts to local contexts, meaning that integrating duties does not dilute cultural diversity but reinforces a framework for responsible and participatory citizenship. Moreover, in pluralistic societies, duties provide a common ethical vocabulary that can bridge differences, fostering dialogue between communities without enforcing conformity. New research in this area could focus on mapping the intersections between Fundamental Duties and IKS practices across regions, examining how duties are interpreted and enacted in different cultural contexts, and exploring the ways in which such duties reinforce social cohesion, environmental ethics, and participatory governance. Comparative studies could analyse how pluralistic societies globally balance civic responsibilities with cultural autonomy, while field-based ethnographic work could document lived experiences of duty enactment within diverse Indigenous communities. Additionally, research could investigate pedagogical approaches to teaching duties in ways that respect local epistemologies, ensuring that duties are not perceived as top-down impositions but as evolving ethical commitments that complement existing knowledge systems. Such investigations would contribute to a nuanced understanding of how ethical citizenship can be fostered without compromising cultural plurality, highlighting the potential of duties as instruments for inclusive societal development rather than tools of homogenization. Overall, the best content for new research should critically examine the symbiotic relationship between IKS and Fundamental Duties, emphasizing adaptability, ethical grounding, and pluralistic applicability, while generating evidence-based strategies for fostering responsible citizenship in culturally diverse contexts.<sup>11</sup>

## 3. Conclusion: Toward a Duty-Based Constitutional Culture

A promising direction for future research on duty-based constitutional culture lies in examining how constitutional duties, as enshrined in Article 51A, can be more effectively integrated into education, law, and public discourse. In education policy, studies could explore curriculum reforms that embed the values of civic responsibility, ethical citizenship, and the principles of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) across all levels of schooling, assessing how experiential learning, community engagement, and digital

<sup>10</sup> 1. *Sacred Ecology: Learning from Indigenous Knowledge and Stewardship*, Author: Fikret Berkes, Edition: 5th Edition, Routledge (2026)

2. *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*, Author: Tyson Yunkaporta, Publication Year: 2019 (with relevance ongoing through related 2024-25 works)

3. *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Author: Gregory Cajete, Publication Year: 2001 (2nd ed. 2016)

4. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, Author: Robin Wall Kimmerer, Publication Year: 2013

5. *The Routledge Handbook of Indigenous Environmental Knowledge*, Editors: Thomas F. Thornton & Shonil Bhagwat, Publication Year: 2021

6. *Environmental and Ecological Sustainability Through Indigenous Traditions: Perspectives from the Global South*, Editor: Binay Kumar Pattnaik, Publication Year: 2024

7. *Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Governance: A Sub-Saharan African Perspective*, Editors: Eromose E. Ebhuoma & Llewellyn Leonard, Publication Year: 2022

8. *Indigenous Practice and Community-Led Climate Change Solutions: The Relevance of Traditional Cosmic Knowledge Systems*, Authors: Rani Muthukrishnan & Ranjan Datta, Publication Year: 2024

<sup>11</sup> 1. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Author: Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999),

2. *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability*, Authors: Melissa K. Nelson & Daniel Shilling (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

3. *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*, Author: Tyson Yunkaporta (2019)

4. *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Author: Gregory Cajete (2001; 2nd ed. 2016)

5. *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Research Methodologies*, Editor: (multiple authors; edited volume, year varies)

platforms can cultivate a sense of duty among students. In environmental law, research could investigate how Article 51A's emphasis on environmental protection can inform legislative and judicial approaches to climate change, conservation, and sustainable development, including the role of citizens in monitoring and enforcing environmental responsibilities. Comparative constitutionalism offers another rich area, inviting analysis of how other nations balance rights with duties, and what lessons India can draw to reinforce a culture where obligations complement freedoms, fostering social cohesion and participatory democracy. Interdisciplinary studies combining sociology, law, and political science could evaluate the impact of public campaigns, civic education programs, and media initiatives in shaping citizens' understanding and practice of constitutional duties. Moreover, empirical research on public attitudes toward duties versus rights could provide actionable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to bridge the gap between legal ideals and societal behaviour. By addressing these areas, future scholarship can contribute to a nuanced understanding of duty-based citizenship, deepen the practical relevance of Article 51A, and strengthen India's constitutional ethos, ensuring that the vision of responsible, informed, and engaged citizens becomes a lived reality across generations.<sup>12</sup>

manner, transforming duty-bearing individuals into responsible, value-driven members of society.

### Acknowledgment

Dr Sudhir Kumar Pal's acknowledgment of **Fundamental Duties and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)** as a civilizational approach to citizenship emphasizes how India's ancient cultural and ethical heritage deepens the modern constitutional ethos embodied in Article 51A's Fundamental Duties. While Article 51A outlines the moral and civic obligations of citizens such as respecting the Constitution and national symbols, protecting unity and cultural heritage, fostering brotherhood, safeguarding the environment, and nurturing scientific temper and excellence these duties gain a richer, value-based context when seen through the lens of IKS, which integrates philosophical wisdom, dharmic responsibility, and social harmony into everyday life. IKS, rooted in centuries-old traditions of dharma, karma and lokasangraha, does not merely prescribe passive observance of legal norms but cultivates an inner moral compass, inspiring citizens to internalize values like duty towards society, care for nature, respect for diversity, and selfless service. This civilizational approach bridges constitutional democracy with indigenous moral thought, suggesting that citizenship is not just legal status but a lived commitment to collective well-being, ethical conduct, and cultural continuity. In doing so, Dr Pal highlights how IKS can enrich citizens' understanding and practice of their constitutional duties in a deeply rooted, culturally resonant

<sup>12</sup> 1.Kashyap, S. C. (2025). *Citizens & Constitution of India*.

2.Bhatia, G. (2025). *The Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power*. HarperCollins India.

3.Pandey, J.N. (2025). *Constitutional Law of India* (62nd ed.). Central Law Agency.

4.Basu, D.D. (2024). *Introduction to the Constitution of India* (27th ed.). LexisNexis.

5.Khosla, M., & Jackson, V. C. (Eds.). (2025). *Redefining Comparative Constitutional Law: Essays for Mark Tushnet*. Oxford University Press.



