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GOVERNING INTERCULTURAL CONFLICTS IN INDIA: TOWARDS A LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ERA



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Abstract

Lately, India, which is a mosaic of different communities, has been witnessing various intercultural conflicts in physical as well as digital space. The emerging discussions on interculturalism have positioned it as a policy framework sharing one foundational idea that cross-cultural dialogue matters. This paper views intercultural communication with the lens of social constructivism and considers intercultural sensitivity as the basis for exercising proficient intercultural communication. Intercultural communication fosters relations among diverse groups that support interaction among people from different cultures in recognition and respect of cultural differences. It seeks the goal of biculturalism rather than the simple assimilation of different cultural groups to avoid social fissures in alignment with majoritarian norms. Hence, this paper will try to outline first the historical, socio-political, and economic reason for intercultural conflicts in India. Second, it will review various statutes and legal provisions that govern intercultural communication and conflicts. Third, it will compare India's intercultural policy framework with those of Canada and Australia as Canada and Australia are globally celebrated for their multi-cultural policy. Fourthly, this paper will discuss how artificial intelligence can foster intercultural communication and collaboration in the digital age. This paper advocates for a comprehensive intercultural policy in India, incorporating policy considerations that align with the fundamental objectives of the Indian Constitution, which encompass justice, equality, and liberty for all citizens, as well as the promotion of fraternity among them. This paper is based on secondary literature. A review of academic writings, newspapers, and various policy documents will be undertaken.

Keywords – Intercultural Conflict, Intercultural Communication, Inclusion and Artificial Intelligence.

I. INTRODUCTION

After multiculturalism, the policy paradigm in cultural studies has shifted to an emerging area of interculturalism. It is viewed to deal with the dynamics of diversity and inclusion.¹ Interculturalism is a set of policies based on the foundational idea of interaction among people from diverse backgrounds. The contemporary literature on interculturalism has identified three normative drivers

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¹ R'boul, H., & Dervin, F. (2023). *Intercultural communication education and research: Reenvisioning fundamental notions*. Routledge.

or dimensions of this policy approach: *political, social and cultural drivers*.² Ideally, the policy approach in intercultural studies is aimed to achieve a balanced and comprehensive framework where these three normative drivers can co-exist and strengthen each other. Interculturalism concerns itself with managing the diversity dynamics by intervening politically and proposing an approach based on exchange and interpersonal relations.³ The political driver is at the basis of a contractual theory of interculturalism⁴, which posits that it is fundamental to reach a dynamic equilibrium between the goal of ensuring the survival of the national identity and, on the other hand, that of respecting the rights of ethnic minorities. The social driver emphasises the cohesion theory, which regards intercultural policy as a means to overcome social conflict and segregation perpetuated by the lack of communication between different expressions of diversity in the society.⁵ The cultural driver is at the basis of a ‘constructivist’ (Zapata-Barrero, 2016) or cultural approach that interprets interculturalism as an instrument to promote the cultural capabilities of individuals and positive interaction among people with different cultural backgrounds, which should lead to the emergence of a new, creativity-based, diverse society. Culture is a set of shared values, norms, and beliefs held by the members of a group, such as a nation or organization.⁶ Recognizing and understanding differences in cultural patterns provides individuals with a framework for interpreting the goals and behaviors of others.⁷ In today’s global landscape, it is very important to develop and promote strategies to bring people together from different cultures.⁸ In the era of globalization and shifting labour markets, there has been a significant rise in inequality and migration (international and domestic), which has made societies more diverse. With exposure to different cultures, linguistics, cuisines, and religions, the movement of people has initiated the integration of different cultures, which is shaping contemporary global democracies. The idea of interculturalism has challenged the traditional notion of mono-cultural identity in favour of ever-evolving multiple identities. The politics of identity and culture is essential for transforming homogeneous populations to diverse and heterogenous ones that favour inclusion and multiplicity.⁹ In the contemporary era, multiple identities co-exist simultaneously at regional, national, and global levels, and they do not necessarily intervene in the preservation of national identity. But these debates question the pluri-cultural nature of contemporary democracies and how these countries can implement policies to deal with inclusion and devise “just” societies and ensure equal opportunity in diversity? In the digital culture, intercultural conflicts takes place in virtually where people face harassment, hate speech or bullying based on their religion, race, ethnicity, sexuality or gender. These conflicts occur in the context of culture and power which questions the fluidity and dynamics of such online space. The

² Zapata-Barrero, R. (2016). Exploring the foundations of the intercultural policy paradigm: a comprehensive approach. *Identities*, 23(2), 155-173.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2015.1006523>

³ Meer, N. (Ed.). (2016). *Multiculturalism and interculturalism: Debating the dividing lines*. Edinburgh University Press.

⁴ Bouchard, G. (2015). *Interculturalism: A view from Quebec*. University of Toronto Press.

⁵ Cantle, T. (2008). *Community cohesion a new framework for race and diversity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁶ Raeff, C., Fasoli, A. D., Reddy, V., & Mascolo, M. F. (2020). The concept of culture: Introduction to spotlight series on conceptualizing culture. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24(4), 295–298.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2020.1789344>.

⁷ Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations : software of the mind : intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

⁸ Lin, C. (2020). Understanding cultural diversity and diverse identities. In *Encyclopedia of the UN sustainable development goals* (pp. 929–938). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95870-5_37.

⁹ West, C. (1990). The New Cultural Politics of Difference. *October*, 53, 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.2307/778917>.

multi-faceted relationship between online platforms, identity, and culture has transformed the traditional nature and origin of intercultural conflicts, requiring an alternative approach for managing these issues. As societies become more pluralistic, nations are tasked with developing intercultural policies that promote harmony while safeguarding cultural identities. These policies encompass areas such as education, immigration, urban planning, and public communication, aiming to create an environment where cultural groups can coexist and thrive.¹⁰ This paper attempts to provide a comparative analysis of intercultural policies in Canada and Australia in managing diversities and preserving identities from the lens of culture, religion and ethnicity. The investigation will be focused on underlying philosophies, implementation strategies, and outcomes of these policies and if they can be adopted by the pluralistic society of India.

India is situated uniquely in the history of the human race in the context of its socio-cultural, geo-political, and demographic factors. With the myriads of diversities ranging from linguistics, cultural practices, religion, food habits, to ethnicity, India yields many opportunities for intercultural studies and communication.¹¹ Since the pre-modern and colonial period, cross-cultural exchanges had been taking place in India by way of trade and diplomacy. Off-late, India has been experiencing many intercultural conflicts stemming from colonial rule, which has significantly shaped the electoral politics and cultural identities of people, especially the minority communities, resulting in stereotyping and demand for autonomy.¹² India's society is defined by a multitude of ethnic groups, languages, and religions. The caste system presents a complex social structure that affects access to education and resources. Inequities based on social and economic conditions still haunt the nation, to the disadvantage of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.¹³ Many of these inequalities affect health and education, which in turn dictate the development and opportunities for children.¹⁴ Intercultural understanding and the promotion of inclusivity are urgently needed to counter these persistent challenges. Policy framing should aim toward the promotion of positive images and contributions of all groups to counter misinformation and stereotypes.¹⁵ In contemporary India, there is no consolidated intercultural policy framework to address such diverse issues. Scholarly attention and engagement from various domains of intercultural policy and communication are needed. This paper advocates for a multifaceted intercultural policy framework for India that will foster cross-cultural dialogue and inclusion in diverse settings.

¹⁰ Kim, M. S., & Ebesu Hubbard, A. S. (2007). Intercultural Communication in the Global Village: How to Understand "The Other." *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 36(3), 223–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475750701737165>.

¹¹ Dutta, U. (2015). Questioning dominant development practices. *The Journal of International Communication*, 21(2), 169–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2015.1052534>.

¹² Wijeyeratne, R. de S. (2007). Review Article Colonialism, Caste and Custom in Indian History: Revisiting Governmentality. *South Asia Research*, 27(3), 355–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026272800702700306>.

¹³ Natrajan, B. (2011). *The culturalization of caste in India: Identity and inequality in a multicultural age*. Routledge.

¹⁴ Sharma, K. L. (2012). Is there Today Caste System or there is only Caste in India? *Polish sociological review*, 178(2), 245–264.

¹⁵ Berry, J. W. (2011). Integration and Multiculturalism: Ways towards social Solidarity. *Papers on Social Representations*, 20(1), 1–20. <https://psr.iscte-iul.pt/index.php/PSR/article/download/414/362>.

II. POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE: A BREEDING GROUND FOR CONFLICT

Throughout human history, societies advanced with technological development and genesis as well as the mitigation of conflicts of various dimensions. Social groups are formed along ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural lines. As their size grew, the costs and complexities of daily interactions increased, and more sophisticated ways of managing conflict emerged.¹⁶ Differences in social construction of race, caste, religion, gender, and class distinguish one from the another and constructs an othering based on their culture, history, and experiences resulting in conflicts reinforcing majority dynamics. This can be viewed in coherence with the term ‘différance’, coined by Jacques Derrida (1973), and can be applied in the context of the ethnicity, culture, caste, and religious identities where deviance from a norm or dominant group abstains them from expressing their culture and provides a ground for conflicts and issues driven by various factors namely; *ethnic, regional historical, economic and socio-political*. Intercultural conflict erupts out of the nationality, identity crisis among a group or community, and psychological fear from other class or community of being overpowered in terms of population or representation in various socio-economic and political activities.¹⁷ Even with modernization, ethnic identity continues to play an important role. First-generation modernization and development theories posited that urbanization, and industrialization would gradually reduce the prominence of ethnic identities. With industrialisation, and urbanisation and the spread of education, ethnic consciousness will decline, and universalism would replace particularism.¹⁸ However, in India, these changes only re-activate ethnic and religious identities. Communities are seen to preserve their traditions while participating in the new economies.¹⁹

Regional and Ethnocentrism

The common driver of intercultural conflict derives from something known as ‘ethnocentrism’.²⁰ There are lots of different levels of ethnocentrism, but an extreme ethnocentric will view the world quite simply as their experience of it.²¹ Ethnic violence when used in the Indian context is used interchangeably with ‘communal violence’.²² Ethnic conflicts, especially in northeastern India, are prevalent and often tied to linguistic and tribal identities. In Assam, tensions between native Assamese and Bengali-speaking immigrants, particularly from Bangladesh, are driven by land scarcity, population influx, and job competition.²³

¹⁶ Campos, N. F., & Kuzeyev, V. S. (2007). On the Dynamics of Ethnic Fractionalization. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.996401>.

¹⁷ McDuire-RA, D. (2008). Between National Security and Ethno-nationalism. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 3(2), 185–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097317410800300201>.

¹⁸ Gellner, E. (2015). Nations and nationalism. In *Conflict after the Cold War* (pp. 378-389). Routledge.

¹⁹ Avasthi, A., Grover, S., & Kate, N. (2013). Indianization of psychiatry utilizing Indian mental concepts. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(6), 136. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105508>.

²⁰ Hinner, M. (2017). INTERCULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 21(4), 885–909. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9182-2017-21-4-885-909>.

²¹ Hales, D., & Edmonds, B. (2018). Intragenerational cultural evolution and ethnocentrism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(5), 1283–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718780481>.

²² Gupte, J. (2012) *What's Civil About Intergroup Violence? Five Inadequacies Of Communal and Ethnic Constructs of Urban Riots*, MICROCON Research Working Paper 62, Brighton: MICROCON.

²³ MURSHID, NAVINE. “Assam and the Foreigner Within: Illegal Bangladeshis or Bengali Muslims?” *Asian Survey* 56, no. 3 (2016): 581–604. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26364374>.

Historical Reasons

Colonialism left its deep scar, causing ethnic tensions and communal violence that still affects India's social and political life. Caplan, 2002 explains how old differences among ethnic groups stay strong due to several factors, with some groups gaining recognition while others face suppression. Bădescu & Sum²⁴ emphasize that historical conflicts and colonial rule complicate building democracy, especially in a nation with many ethnic groups. The partition worsened ethnic divisions and created distrust and hostility among communities which is similar to the Ossetian-Ingush conflict, where past grievances continue to cause problems.²⁵ Current ethnic movements are linked to historical narratives that created systemic inequalities. For example, the Naga insurgency highlights how identity struggles and historical grievances complicate peace efforts in post-colonial India.²⁶

Socio-Political Reasons

The rise of identity politics, a phenomenon driven by electoral exigencies and resource competition, has cast ethnic and religious affiliations into the crucible of political manipulation. This amalgamation of communal rhetoric and strategic narratives has forged fault lines that challenge the very essence of national unity. By dissecting the anatomy of these socio-political complexities, we unravel the mechanisms that amplify conflict and obstruct the path towards a harmonious coexistence.²⁷ Tribal conflicts in states like Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh involve demands for autonomy or recognition, often escalating into violence.²⁸ Autonomy in northeast India has been looked from an ethnic framework, where groups are extended demands for self-rule to foster their indigenous and individual liberty.²⁹

Economic Reasons

The intersection of unequal economic access, educational opportunities, and healthcare resources with ethnic and religious identities can create a volatile mix.³⁰ The result is a deepening sense of marginalization, propelled by the perception of systemic injustice. Scrutinizing these economic fault lines reveals the integral role that equitable development plays in forging a society where harmony can flourish.³¹ Conflict that arises due to business rivalries, incompatible economic interest such as

²⁴ Bădescu, G. and Sum, P. (2005). Historical legacies, social capital and civil society: comparing romania on a regional level. *Europe Asia Studies*, 57(1), 117-133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966813052000314138>.

²⁵ Rezvani, B. (2010). The Ossetian-Ingush Confrontation: Explaining a horizontal conflict. *Iran and the Caucasus*, 14(2), 419-429. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157338410x12743419190502>.

²⁶ Singha, K. (2017). Understanding ethnicity-based autonomy movements in India's northeastern region. *Nationalities Papers*, 45(4), 687-706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1300879>

²⁷ Baxter Arlen. (2023). Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in India: A Comprehensive Analysis. *International Journal of Science and Society (Online)*, 5(3), 228-237. <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijssoc.v5i3.741>.

²⁸ Hausing, K. K. S. (2021). Autonomy and the territorial management of ethnic conflicts in Northeast India. *Territory Politics Governance*, 10(1), 120-143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1884591>.

²⁹ Hausing, K. K. S. (2021). Autonomy and the territorial management of ethnic conflicts in Northeast India. *Territory Politics Governance*, 10(1), 120-143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1884591>.

³⁰ Kumar Rabha, Bipul, Economic Analysis of Ethnic Conflicts (November 30, 2019). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3495955> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3495955>.

³¹ Crawford, B., & Lipschutz, R. D. (1998). *The myth of "ethnic conflict" : politics, economics, and "cultural" violence*. International And Area Studies, University Of California At Berkeley.

creation of labour market of conflicting interest between various ethnic groups can lead to violence.³² Another dimension to these conflicts is the Hindu-Sikh conflict in the state of Punjab, driven by disparities caused by the Green Revolution, irrigational issues, and the political struggle for power.³³

Conflicts on Digital Platforms

Digitalization has transformed the way people communicate and interact with each other, especially in a cross-cultural context. Technology is a catalyst for cultural exchange where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds share their experiences and identities by connecting online.³⁴ However, these interactions and collaborations also pose challenges for intercultural communication, and online platforms become the battleground for such tensions. One such issue is cultural appropriation, where people adopt a part of the culture of another person and use it without respecting its origin and significance or caricaturing certain cultures. Online intercultural conflicts originate from cultural insensitivity and stereotyping other cultures. For example, the use of Native American headdresses by non-natives in music concerts and Dolce & Gabbana showing in its advertisement a Chinese woman struggling to eat Italian food with chopsticks. The most recent example of depicting Indian traditional scraves (dupatta) as Scandinavian scarf and cultural appropriation of Indian Kolhapuris by the luxury brand Prada. These incidents received global criticism for being culturally insensitive.

III. LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING INTERCULTURAL CONFLICTS IN INDIA

In India, a legal and policy framework aims to navigate cultural differences and promote communication among various groups. This framework, which derives its authority from the Constitution, encompasses a multitude of laws, court judgments, and policies that openly express cultural harmony, protect minority rights, and initiate inter-cultural dialogue.

Constitutional and Legislative Framework

The Constitution of India is the locus of all guarantees of equal treatment to all communities and cultures. Part III, which grants Fundamental Rights, contains Article 14, which prohibits discrimination against any person on grounds such as religion, race, caste, sex, or birthplace; thus, it promotes equality among groups defined by cultural attributes.³⁵ Article 15 safeguards equality in other respects, thereby contributing to the goal of equality among the cultural groups (Article 15, Constitution of India). Article 19 ensures freedom of speech and expression, which is the lifeline of communication among cultures and languages, providing the foundation for an inclusive society.³⁶

³² Hussein, A. F. F., & Al-Mamary, Y. H. S. (2019). Conflicts: their types, and their negative and positive effects on organizations. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 8(8), 10–13. <https://www.ijstr.org/paper-references.php?ref=IJSTR-0619-20465>.

³³ Ranjan, A. (2024). Sikh identity, the 1984 pogrom, and political economy of water in Punjab. *Sikh Formations*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2024.2384856>

³⁴ Alsaleh A. (2024). The impact of technological advancement on culture and society. *Scientific reports*, 14(1), 32140. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-83995-z>.

³⁵ Bhatia, U. (2019). Between regulation and minority educational rights: secularism and the indian supreme court. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 24(3), 241–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2019.1631539>.

³⁶ Parry, A. (2022). Managing diversity in the multicultural framework of india. *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(3), 269–278. <https://doi.org/10.55927/eajmr.v1i3.107>.

Articles 25 to 28 deal with the freedom of religion and prescribe norms for secure coexistence of diverse faiths, which, if not timely included, may cause conflict in the sphere of religious practices. Articles 29 and 30 govern cultural and educational rights of minorities so as to support the right of minorities to maintain their culture and language, which is crucial for the preservation of their identity in a plural society. Article 44 advocates for a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens of the country to secure uniformity on matters of marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance and property rights, without infringing upon each other's rights as per their different cultural and religious identities. Moreover, Articles 51A(e) and (f) direct the citizens of India to promote harmony and value the rich heritage of the diversity of the culture of India, thus advocating dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

Additionally, India has a wide array of legislations meant to reduce cultural conflicts, ethnic tensions and discrimination. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 (Act No. 22 of 1955), deals with the issue of discrimination based on untouchability and, in this context, provides protection for marginalized communities. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (Act No. 33 of 1989), specifically protects against violence and discrimination directed toward the specific communities. As a nation rich in linguistic diversity, India does not have a national language, and for that purpose Official languages Act, 1963 (Act 19 of 1963) ensures communication in Hindi and English for official work and states can adopt their regional language for official purposes.

Governance of Conflicts in Digital Space

In the era of fake news and hate speech by digital platforms for spreading propaganda, The Information and Technology Act, 2000 (Act 21 of 2000) governs digital communication & conflicts and restricts the dissemination of such news. The governance of digital conflicts in India involves legal, technical, and institutional mechanisms. The framework aims to prevent and mitigate the conflicts stemming from religious, cultural, linguistic, or ethnic diversity. In legal context, The Information and Technology Act, 2000 (Act 21 of 2000) authorizes the government to block access to information by the public in the interest of public order, state sovereignty, national security and morality. The institutional mechanism involves the intervention by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology which implements cyber laws and online platforms work in coherence with these rules for content moderation and cyber cells operate for dealing with matters of digital hate speech and propaganda dissemination. Technological interventions include the detection and moderation of online content by AI algorithms for misinformation and culturally insensitive content.

Policy Initiatives

India has drafted policies for cross-cultural dialogue and integration into its programs. The main institution is the National Integration Council (NIC), which encourages the resolution of community tensions and the promotion of cultural dialogue at all levels. The National Commission for Minorities takes as its mandate the safety and protection of rights of religious and linguistic minorities as well as provides the platforms for advocacy and action. In the area of education, national policies as guided by NCERT and UGC, recognize cultural sensitivity in early learning as

an imperative for understanding and tolerance. Such education would essentially prepare the ground for the kind of society that is celebrated in its diversity and is peaceful in its multiculturalism.³⁷

Language Policies in India

Being a melting pot of various cultures, there is no particular language that could be classified as an all-dominant language across all states in the country.³⁸ Thus, India does not have a national language. However, the languages that are spoken in different parts of the country have an important place in the life of people-socially and economically.³⁹

Languages in India are generally formed keeping in mind, that:

- intertwine with the traditions and cultures of the people;
- lead them to avail benefits and act as barriers in terms of education, employment and socially due to language disparity;
- and can be used to bring people together or pit them against each other.

Language policies also face challenges with demands to include some lesser-known languages like Tulu or Bodo into the Eighth Schedule, thereby highlighting communication gaps.⁴⁰ The implementation of such laws across the states is not the same due to the complexity introduced by federalism.

IV. UNIFORM CIVIL CODE IN INDIA

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is an important concept in India where uniform laws are established for all without consideration for religion on matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. The principal object of the UCC is to evoke equality and equity for all and to lessen the injustice that is prejudicial to various religious practices.⁴¹ UCC presents some complexity in its implementation, as India is a nation diverse in religions and cultures but also poses questions that the implementation of UCC may infringe on religious rights and cultural identities.⁴² India has uniform civil code in two of its states namely, Goa and Uttarakhand. Goa has had a UCC for a considerable time and recently, Uttarakhand, a state in India, has also passed legislation on a Uniform Civil Code. The contemporary debates on UCC are relevant as they highlight India's struggle to strike a balance between appropriate laws and respect for cultural diversity.

³⁷ Gupta, R. (2021). The Role of Pedagogy in Developing Life Skills. *Margin*, 15(1), 50-72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973801020974786> (Original work published 2021).

³⁸ Kulkarni-Joshi, S. (2019). Linguistic history and language diversity in India: Views and counterviews. *Journal of Biosciences*, 44(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12038-019-9879-1>.

³⁹ Debbarma, M. (2025). Many Languages, One Nation: Navigating Linguistic Diversity in India. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 13(1), 228–245. <https://doi.org/10.35629/9467-1301228245>.

⁴⁰ Girija, A. N. (2025). The Language Question: Politics, Policy and Possibility of Multilingualism in India. In *Challenges to Multiculturalism. Exploring Indian and Italian Experiences*,. <https://doi.org/10.54103/milanoup.196.c372>.

⁴¹ Singh, S. (2024). Unraveling the Uniform Civil Code (UCC): Evolution, implications, and challenges in contemporary India. *International Journal of Criminal Common and Statutory Law*, 4(1), 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.22271/27899497.2024.v4.i1a.67>.

⁴² Raza, S. T. (2023). Identity, Otherisation, Securitisation and the Religious Minority: The Case of Uniform Civil Code in India. *Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law & Practice*, 19(4).

Uniform Civil Code Goa

The introduction of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Goa since its liberation from Portuguese rule in 1961 stands as a watershed moment within the Indian legal system. The UCC in Goa is a great example of a common set of laws that can be dispensed within a land of varied cultures and traditions like India. Goa adheres to the Goa Succession, Special Notaries and Inventory Proceedings Act, 2012⁴³ (Goa Act 23 of 2016) which distinguishes it from laws adopted in the rest of India, such as the Hindu Succession Act, the Indian Succession Act, and Muslim personal laws. A prominent feature about the law in Goa is its adoption of gender-neutral terms such as "ascendants," "descendants," and "surviving spouse." Such terminologies are a step toward addressing the issue of discrimination against women, which is a common phenomenon in many legal systems.⁴⁴ One significant rule in Goa's law requires a public document to show how assets are shared out in cases of divorce or after a spouse's death. This ensures fairness between sons and daughters. Historically, The Portuguese Civil Code, 1867 emphasized family unity, viewing the family as the core of society. It included measures to prevent unfair treatment between spouses, fostering mutual respect. A requirement for marriage registration was also put in place to prevent child marriages and bigamous marriages, promoting social and family stability.⁴⁵

Uniform Civil Code Uttarakhand

Uniform Civil code of Uttarakhand, 2024 (Act 1 of 2024) governs the registration of marriages and live-in relationships and includes the rules about polygamy and some methods of divorce without the intervention of courts.⁴⁶ The UCC Act secures equal treatment under law for all children regardless of whether their parents are married or not. It does not discriminate between children born out of the marriage or if marriage is void or voidable, placing them on the same level as children born out of a valid marriage. It ensures financial help to women in live-in relationships, and they are entitled to maintenance when deserted by their partners and, thus, will get protection from all forms of social as well as other security. The law prohibits polygamy meaning marriage to more than one spouse at a time. It also provides for easy divorce process and marriage could end on behalf of cruelty, adultery, or desertion. Other than this, a wife can also file for divorce in case the husband has committed a crime in the fashion of rape or any other sexual offense, earlier than the date of the UCC.

Uniform or Uniformly Unequal Code: Lessons from India's UCC Debate

India's personal laws are rooted in the jurisprudence of colonialism. The aim of colonial courts was to codify the existing customs of various communities. The laws created by the British were a mix of judges' interpretations of religious customs and English civil laws. After independence, these colonial laws were retained by the constitutional framers. Laws of such nature vary for different religions and are governed by their personal laws. But UCC debates overlook the mandatory or voluntary nature of UCC. The question arises whether all persons will be governed by it or whether

⁴³ The Goa Succession, Special Notaries and Inventory Proceedings Act, 2012 (Goa Act 23 of 2016).

⁴⁴ Rai, M. (2022). Goa Civil Code: Is It Uniform?. *Part 1 Indian J. Integrated Rsch. L.*, 2, 1.

⁴⁵ Upadhyay, A. (2021). A Look into the Succession Rights of Goan. *Supremo Amicus*, 24, 399.

⁴⁶ Saini, V. S. V. (2024). Uniform Civil Code and the Right to Equality Constitutional Challenges and Opportunities in Uttarakhand. *Motherhood International Journal of Research & Innovation*, 1(02), 16-24.

they have a choice to follow their personal laws and religious customs. The UCC of Uttarakhand restricts women's autonomy by retaining the concept of 'Restitution of Conjugal Rights,' which allows legal action to be taken against a spouse who is living away from their spouse without a valid reason. Also, LGBTQIA+ community is excluded from this law on matters of legal recognition. To secure constitutional rights for women, UCC should recognise the right of autonomy in matters of marriage, divorce, and succession.

V. LESSONS FROM THE GLOBAL INTERCULTURAL POLICIES: A REVIEW OF INTERCULTURAL POLICIES OF CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

Intercultural policies in Australia and Canada were framed to fit into single-cultural white Anglo-Celtic or Anglo-Saxon social structures, which had long marginalized the minority groups. Many view diversity policies as instruments for ethnic or culture fractions only but in doing so, they are isolating themselves from being a part of this social change that was incumbent to form a "fusion of horizons".⁴⁷ Canada, Australia, and India have a shared history of British colonization and have diverse populations in terms of culture and religion. However, the diversity structure in India is more complex as compared to Australia and Canada due to casteism, demographic disparities, and rigid social structure. All these countries have their constitution and are democratic and secular. Colonies of Canada and Australia initially had laws to keep the country white, perpetuating racist notions and exclusions of certain immigrants and discriminated against Indian immigrants.

Canada

Canada is often regarded as a paradigm of interculturalism, as it creates a framework of policies within which a cross-cultural coexistence with individual- or community-specific rights is introduced. Interculturalism, on the other hand, has a much purer sense when it apprises itself of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism.⁴⁸ Canada has gradually formalized the concept of multiculturalism over time.⁴⁹ It started off by enshrining multicultural values in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 and continued with the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988. These legal statutes officially bring out the commitment of Canadians to recognize and celebrate diverse cultural backgrounds.⁵⁰ They encourage inclusion, which makes it easier for everyone, especially minority communities, to feel they belong to Canada. Several main commitments are promises made by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. First, understand that all kinds of diversity make the Canadian identity, and individuals will keep and express, even while participating in the society at large. The Act provides instruction to the federal government concerning the removal of barriers to participation by which individuals' cultural backgrounds may limit access opportunities. This is related to historic injustices that have been done to individuals like Indigenous peoples as well as other minorities. Furthermore, the Act fosters conversations and

⁴⁷ Gadamer, H. 1989. Truth and method (2nd ed.). J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall Trans. New York: Crossroad.

⁴⁸ Ghosh, R. (2018). Multiculturalism in a comparative perspective: Australia, Canada and India. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 50(1), 15–36. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2018.0002>.

⁴⁹ Leung, H. H. (2011). Canadian multiculturalism in the 21st century: Emerging challenges and debates. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 43(3–1), 19–33. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2011.0037>.

⁵⁰ Boon, S. and Connolly, D. (2022). The knot itself: tangling with multiculturalism. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 19(2), 9–28. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1916-4467.40692>.

mutual respect among different cultural groups, thereby facilitating social harmony, to promote intercultural understanding.⁵¹ Open communication through the Multiculturalism Act has contributed greatly to shaping Canada's sense of belonging and has reduced cultural tensions. It mandated public agencies to include the principles of multiculturalism in their operations ranging from equal opportunity in employment policies and languages to anti-discrimination measures; thus, it makes budgetary provisions to fund festivals, museums, and heritage projects that help communities keep their cultures alive and share them within an already diverse Canadian society.⁵²

Australia

Before the acceptance of multiculturalism, historically, Australia had the White Australia policy that discriminated, in particular, against the non-white, especially Asian immigrants. The policy aimed to keep the Australia 'British' but it was during the 1960s that Australia began to abandon this policy and started to view cultural diversity as a national strength with conscious efforts to accommodate various communities into the Australian society. That benefited not just multicultural groups but all Australians through such values as equality and freedom. Australia's multicultural policy is to promote social unity and mutual respect above all else, beyond the recognition of cultures. Events such as Harmony Day must encourage intermingling and mutual celebration between different cultural groups.⁵³ Unlike Canada, but

Australia does not have a legal framework for multiculturalism, yet it focuses on improving the social and economic conditions of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds. Australia has never adopted a legal framework for multiculturalism. Instead, it has focused on improving social and economic outcomes for migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Various government programs focus on language education and programs aimed at fighting discrimination and promoting harmony within communities.⁵⁴ The policy framework for multiculturalism evolved with the introduction of diversity documents like Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity, 2003 and The People of Australia, 2011, which aimed to affirm the importance of a culturally diverse society and facilitate social cohesion and promoting inclusion. In 2017, these policy documents were replaced by 'Multicultural Australia – United, Strong, Successful.' In the absence of a legal framework, issues of cultural conflicts and diversity by the Australian states, territories and NGOs.⁵⁵ From the enactment of the White Australia policy, it implies Australia has achieved a lot in advancing and developing itself as a multicultural society.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Stacey, R. (2018). The dilemma of indigenous self-government in Canada: indigenous rights and Canadian federalism. *Federal Law Review*, 46(4), 669-688. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0067205x1804600411>.

⁵² Banting, K. (2022). Multiculturalism policy in Canada. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 183–205). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192897046.003.0010>.

⁵³ Keddie, A. (2014). Australian multicultural policy: Social cohesion through a political conception of autonomy. *Journal of Sociology*, 50(4), 408-421.

⁵⁴ Ho, C. (2013). From social justice to social cohesion: A history of Australian multicultural policy. *'For those who've come across the seas': Australian multicultural theory, policy and practice*.

⁵⁵ Koleth, E. (2010). Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas: Research Paper no. 6 2010–11. *Canberra: Parliament of Australia*.

⁵⁶ White, R., & Tadesse, B. (2007). IMMIGRATION POLICY, CULTURAL PLURALISM AND TRADE: EVIDENCE FROM THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY. *Pacific Economic Review*, 12(4), 489–509. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0106.2007.00368.x>.

Politics of Recognition: Lessons for India

A person's identity is their understanding of who they are or what their defining characteristics are as a human.⁵⁷ Daily experiences of minority groups based on race, caste, gender, religion, and ethnicity greatly shape their identity. The dynamics of identity and being recognized presents a complex problem in modern society. This can be co-related with the demands of recognition and autonomy by various factions in India especially the tribals. Despite the secular nature of the country, issues of diversity exist in the contemporary era. India has a long ancient tradition of knowledge which promotes the notion of Sarva Dharma Shambhava (Respect for all Religions) and unity in diversity, thereby representing interculturalism. At present, India needs a "democracy of cultures" rather than a "culture of democracy" enabling its citizens to freely express their culture.

The immigration policies of Canada mirror the country's goals of diversity and inclusion. These policies are implemented through a federal level which supports high-skilled worker programs and provides preferential job opportunities to well-educated, language-proficient, and experienced workers. With minority participation, these policies create an onus on government authorities to promote diversity in their departments. The idea of multiculturalism in Australia also promotes the expression of cultural identity but often emphasizes its integration with a common national identity. India therefore should adopt a legal and policy framework which embodies in itself a deep reverence and respect for the cultures of India and encouraging intercultural communication and cooperation. With this policy approach people will feel a sense of belonging hence reducing the violence and conflicts over diversity issues.

Mapping International Regulations Governing Digital Intercultural Conflicts

In the contemporary era, there are no hard law international regulations that specifically govern intercultural conflicts in digital space. However, soft law frameworks and multilateral efforts are emerging in the form of treaties, conventions, regional legislation, and Global partnerships. 'Recommendations on Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, 2021' by UNESCO is a policy document that sets the global standards of AI ethics at the global level. It encourages the principles of cultural pluralism in AI datasets and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, inclusion & fairness by AI systems while condemning biases in AI systems that can impact marginalized communities. The European Union AI Act, 2024 is the first legislation on AI regulation, which is setting global standards for safe AI systems and principles due to its strong enforcement mechanism and strict prohibition on discrimination and effect on cultural pluralism. In the absence of specific mechanisms on intercultural conflicts in digital space, cultural sensitivity in algorithms, hate speech in cultural context, and technological colonialism remain gray areas that call for a global collaboration on techno-cultural perspectives.

⁵⁷ Taylor, C. 1994. The politics of recognition. In A. Gutman, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (pp. 25-73). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

VI. PERSPECTIVES ON LEGAL INTERCULTURAL POLICY IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Globalization has brought different cultures to cohabit in proximity of each other which increases the instances of viewing others as ‘them’ rather than ‘us.’ However, in a globalized world, the importance of cultural integration and interaction has been emphasized for long, which has brought acceptance and respect for each other. As we are stepping into the digital era, the question of how one understands and governs the inter-cultural communication and conflict arises. Presently, the way people interact across cultures is being re-shaped by advanced artificial intelligence technologies. The era of artificial intelligence provides significant opportunities for an intercultural dialogue. AI has been developing tools for communication, which are now increasingly used to bridge the cultural gaps and improve ways to communicate among people of varied backgrounds.⁵⁸ The 2005 UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity aims to protect and develop culture by giving it accessible formats in media and educational approaches. AI doesn't only provide a means of exchange but also retains and celebrates cultural scores. According to recent scholarship, AI is a tool to enhance cross-cultural communication. Such AI tools include speech correction or smart learning systems with which language skills can be improved together with cultural knowledge in educational settings.⁵⁹ These tools aid in adapting to the individual approach of learning and cultural background, thereby providing a personalized learning experience for improving cultural sensitivity.⁶⁰

India also stands to gain benefits in this regard by studying cross-cultural communications to develop artificial intelligence. It proposes that countries in similar circumstances regarding cultural heritage and adoption of technology would model solutions from integrating local cultural knowledge with AI. The prominent challenge lies in using AI for economic and social development without affecting the diversity of the cultural landscape.⁶¹ Artificial Intelligence is making significant advancements in various domains, including how countries with different cultures, such as India, manage intercultural matters. AI plays a role in communication, cultural representation, ethics, and technology access, offering both opportunities and challenges in setting cultural policies.

Artificial Intelligence and Intercultural Dialogue

Artificial intelligence has revolutionized communication for people who speak different languages. Advanced translation tools, such as Google Translate, offer instant and prompt translations in languages spoken by about 780 communities in India. AI driven chatbots can help interpret cultural meanings in business and diplomatic discussions, which are essential for such a diverse country like India (Voss, 2024). This ensures that all Indian languages and dialects are embedded in the AI

⁵⁸ Sarwari, A. Q., Javed, M. N., Adnan, H. M., & Wahab, M. N. A. (2024). Assessment of the impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) on intercultural communication among postgraduate students in a multicultural university environment. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-63276-5>.

⁵⁹ St Fountoulakis, M. (2024). Evaluating the impact of AI tools on language proficiency and intercultural communication in second language education. *International Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 3(1), 12–26. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ijsfle.v3i1.768>.

⁶⁰ Karakas, A. (2023). Breaking down barriers with artificial intelligence (AI): cross-cultural communication in foreign language education. In *Transforming the language teaching experience in the age of AI* (pp. 215-233). IGI Global.

⁶¹ Aleksandrova, O., Kolinko, M., Ішук, А., Kozlovets, M., Petryshyn, H., Hotsalyuk, A., ... & Taran, G. (2024). Understanding intercultural communication as a condition for sustainable development. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 13(2), 261. <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2024.v13n2p261>.

without bias and do not lead to technology discrimination based on language and cultural representation. AI is also influenced by the media content that people see on platforms, like Netflix and YouTube. Since artificial intelligence needs data sets to train itself, data filled with stereotypes and cultural biases can further perpetuate systemic inequalities and homogeneity of cultures. Unfortunately, at times, these systems can end up portraying stereotype-rich, and not the entire range of cultures, as displayed on India's canvas. Artificial intelligence should be trained in diverse data which in turn would capture the wide cultural and societal breadth that India has. This way would enable AI machinery to reasonably serve one's culture within India, as it ought to.⁶² Policies need to focus on development AI systems that portray all backgrounds fairly in terms of culture.

Artificial Intelligence in Cultural Heritage Preservation

There are promising avenues where artificial intelligence can help preserve the richness of cultures of India. New technologies like virtual reality can create awareness regarding the traditions followed in ancient Indian texts and indigenous knowledge could be archived safely with the help of AI, thus preserving that rich inheritance.⁶³ Artificial intelligence can process historical documents representing artifacts, paintings, monuments and landscapes. By digitizing this data, artificial intelligence can help in the dissemination of culture across society which facilitates intercultural interactions and communication. Policymakers should thus be there to encourage AI initiatives on the preservation of cultural identity in ways so that cultural practices and knowledge get preserved through technology for the future.

Artificial Intelligence and Global Leadership

India has been deeply involved in discussions on artificial intelligence at the global level. Within the framework of this involvement, India can add its views keeping in mind its heterogeneous culture and ethical concerns to shape international standards.⁶⁴ India's collaborative efforts with other nations, particularly within the South Asia, can further their claim as leader in AI. Thus, AI has been altering the management of intercultural policies in India with an impact on language, culture, ethics, heritage conservation, misinformation management, and international cooperation. A proper understanding of these areas will help policymakers position AI for fair representation and inclusivity in a multicultural country like India.

Hence, Cross-cultural communication studies should be incorporated into schools so that individuals can appreciate their cultural contexts while positively engaging with others from different cultures. It is also important to develop systems to define and assess cross-cultural competencies as they guide individuals in effective cross-cultural dialogue. However, AI systems may contain biases and result in unfair decisions. It is a point of concern because of the inclusion of artificial intelligence into critical sectors such as health care and education. It is important to align AI with India's values of

⁶² Voss, E. (2024). Artificial intelligence and linguistic landscape research. *Linguistic Landscape. An International Journal*, 10(4), 400-424. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.24011.vos>.

⁶³ Karyotaki, M., Athanasios Drigas, & Charalampos Skianis. (2024). Mobile/VR/Robotics/IoT-Based Chatbots and Intelligent Personal Assistants for Social Inclusion. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 18(08), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v18i08.46473>.

⁶⁴ Li, L. (2024). Impact of ai virtual anchors on traditional news anchors. *International Journal of Knowledge Management*, 21(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijkm.362624>.

fairness and social justice. Policies can, however, ensure fair treatment by mandating regular review of AI systems to gauge their fairness and non-discrimination to any cultural-ethnic group.

VII. CONCLUSION: FEW LESSONS FOR INTERCULTURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK IN PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SPACE

According to Hammer⁶⁵, building intercultural competence regarding conflicts involves increasing cultural self-awareness; deepening understanding of the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviors of people from diverse cultural communities; and expanding the capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior to bridge across cultural differences. For strategies that pave the way to a united and inclusive India, media, education, and civil society actors emerge against such a background with a beacon of hope. Initiatives for intercultural dialogue and stereotypes that speak against, and constructive understanding serve as a great platform for peacebuilding. Grassroot level solutions bridge divides and bring communities together to involve in development of life with the hope that they will become better in time would be a useful blueprint. Contemporary intercultural integration strategies should focus on enhancing political and institutional discourse to illuminate the benefits of cultural diversity and shared identity. Engaging in meaningful dialogue can not only contribute to social cohesion but also promote mutual respect among community members.

Multilevel Governance Approach in Policymaking: Looking Through an Intercultural Lens

While most policymaking processes recognise the relevance and importance of cultural diversity, they may fall short of adopting intercultural awareness during the stages of a policy's development. The intercultural paradigm has a particular "intervention logic" (Sanderson, 2000). It builds upon the best elements of the prior, counterposed paradigms for managing cultural diversity, those of assimilationism and multiculturalism. To formulate an intercultural integration strategy, multilevel governance should be applied throughout the process of policymaking ranging from needs assessment to the conception, implementation and evaluation of the policy. In countries with decentralized structure, national agencies can collaborate with their regional authorities to provide financial and technical support for local organizations. Furthermore, local organizations in liaison with local organizations can provide regional knowledge, which can eventually determine the achievability of the intercultural policies. A multilevel approach facilitates the identification of strategic needs within a policy paradigm, aligning the aspirations and goals of all levels of governance with intercultural integration. To create successful multilevel governance policies, the below-mentioned set of elements are needed.

Political dialogue and Negotiation: Ad-hoc instruments should be formulated to promote political dialogue, negotiation and commitment between different administrative levels. These instruments should extend beyond the systems of access by various regions and important cities to the national level, via parliamentary assemblies, local networks, or informal meetings. Regional governments should strive to facilitate similar mechanisms in their territories to facilitate liaison with local authorities.

⁶⁵ Hammer, M. R. (2011). Additional cross-cultural validity testing of the Intercultural Development Inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(4), 474–487. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.02.014>.

Policy co-ordination: In developing intercultural coherence strategies, permanent instruments should be given priority for facilitating inclusion, collaboration, and cooperation. These instruments, if designed, can guarantee that the intercultural approach that ensures equality, values diversity, and fosters active citizenship and meaningful interaction. It will further reduce the cross-cultural issues in all public policies.

Social participation: Designing social spaces where different cultural groups, entities, and civil society actors can foster communication and collaboration by identifying systemic challenges and issues that need to be addressed.

The development and implementation of intercultural integration strategies should be a mutual effort among the governmental hierarchy and should involve meaningful public participation. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of such strategies is very crucial in identifying gaps between the aspirations and achievements of the policy. Furthermore, greater reliance on AI technologies brings both opportunities and challenges in cultural exchanges. While AI can significantly enhance communication and learning, its use should be aligned with strategies that support cultural diversity, which is essential for harmonious global interactions. Implementing such systems can have profound implications for how countries like India manage cultural exchanges during rapid technological change.