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Communicative cues and peaceful practices: Synthesizing historical and contemporary approaches to interfaith relations in India

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Abstract - Interfaith conflict resolution is a field of study concerned with practices that create harmony between different religious groups during tense atmospheres. This paper focuses on communication cues of such practices that have facilitated interfaith relations in India. It uses historical case analysis to relook at peacebuilding efforts through the edicts of Emperor Ashoka, customs of the Middle Ages like the Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb, contemporary mohalla (neighbourhood) committees and youth interfaith initiatives. Findings show that the communication practices used in peacebuilding interventions, such as, creating safe spaces for the discussion of theological dialogue through debates, among others, become important reminders of how respect for other religious communities is created through dialogic exchange between those of different faiths. Across the case studies, communicative sentiments such as extending a hand of friendship, establishing direct and open communication, and entering sacred spaces as respectful guests emerge as important cues that create trust and mutual respect. Such exchanges show how dialogue is also seen in gestures and recurrent practices, which make space for grassroots initiatives and pluralism that become larger communicative responses to religious violence. The discussion shows that a system that ties together common moral values, shared cultural customs, inclusive education and channels of communication that debunk rumours is combative to religious animosity and hate speech. Based on such observations, the paper provides a novel approach combining interfaith discussions, collaborative community service initiatives and local peace committees with technology, hence synthesizing lessons from historical and contemporary approaches. The recommendations made in this paper are pertinent for legislators, educators and social studies scholars looking to work towards interfaith harmony.

Keywords: Communication cues, social cohesion, pluralism, India, peacebuilding.

1. Introduction

India's legacy of diverse culture is closely linked to the protection of communication between different religious groups and facilitating an established and cherished dialogue between various faiths such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism. If interaction and dialogue are lost, so will language and culture. The periodic tensions in the past led the leaders to enshrine secularism and equality in the Constitution, and now, more



importantly, these values not only have to be upheld but integrated in society, in communication and practices through active effort. Indian secularism is uniquely performed through equality and inclusive communication rather than strict separation (Chishti, 2004).

India has faced countless major religious conflicts; the Partition of 1947, the anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984, the Babri Masjid demolition and riots in 1992, and the Gujarat riots of 2002, which showed that society can become severely ruptured without continuous effort towards social cohesion. Ground-level studies highlight how rural interfaith interactions form a foundation for broader communicative harmony (Gumperz, 1964). There needs to be active attempts to establish safe and productive communication between groups. Such conflicts, that are also connected to polity, result in loss of lives, displacement of communities, and deepening of mistrust. Religious communities that take active efforts to show they are welcoming to people from other faith contribute to overall peacebuilding. Communities need to make space for others and shouldn't always be closed off. Indian tradition is replete with such sentiments, take for example, the concept of *sarva dharma sambhava* which means equal respect for all, then *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* which stands for the world as one family. These are communicative sentiments of peace; however, they have to be put into visible practice.

Given the communal polarisation in recent years, this research was undertaken to gather insights from India's own history and grassroots activism in order to create and propose a new strategy for interfaith conflict resolution. By examining historical instances of religious harmony and contemporary examples of collaborative and communicative practices, the study aimed to identify the factors that contributed to success in bridging interfaith divides. It also seeks to discuss a proposed strategy that is relevant to India's socio-political context, from its villages to its cities, and from its past experience to present challenges.

This paper aims to draw on communicative cues that have existed between different religious groups that have proven to enable peaceful interaction. The significance of this research is in the suggestions made for policy and community action. Effective conflict resolution clubbed with collaborative practices helps ascertain national integration and fraternity. The previous explorations of conflict resolution in different eras show that India can put forth better interventions that curb violence and build a stable foundation for the cohabitation of communities in diverse spaces. The following research question is thus framed: How do communication cues in historical and contemporary peacebuilding practices facilitate interfaith harmony in India? And how can India develop a new, effective strategy for interfaith conflict resolution that builds on modern grassroots activism and historical examples of harmony? The following sections detail the methods used to explore this question, present the research findings, analyse the patterns observed, and finally propose recommendations grounded in these insights.

2. Method

This paper is a qualitative study that reviews important secondary sources that have discussed conflict resolution and peaceful initiatives. The data is then read through the perspective of a communication cue to extract dialogic practices and values that have proven to be helpful in social cohesion. In spaces where intergroup dialogue takes place, communication cues emerge as verbal and nonverbal signals exchanged between people who convey relational intent, which encode meanings of trust or hostility. Research shows that such cues function as interactional adaptations: individuals adjust behaviours through reciprocity by mirroring positive signal, or compensation by countering negative signals, which strongly influences perceptions of harmony or tension (Burgoon, Dillman, and Stem, 1993). When people of different faiths come together, the dialogue between them is crucial for ascertaining social order. The paper uses this understanding of communicative cues to propose an approach to create affirmative conditions of pluralism, lessen chances of misunderstanding and enable social cohesion. The paper is thus a combination of a literature review with case study analysis of historical and contemporary



interfaith relations in India. Drawing from important research and discussions, the paper examines episodes from Ashoka's edicts to post-independence grassroots activism. The study culminates in a strategy integrating diverse, proven approaches for establishing interfaith harmony in present-day India.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Historical Instances of Interfaith Harmony in India

One of the earliest recorded advocates of interfaith respect was Emperor Ashoka (3rd century BCE), who after converting to Buddhism, issued edicts urging respect for all sects and discouraging denigration of other religions (Nikam & McKeon, 1959). In his 12th rock edict, Ashoka cautioned that excessive devotion to one's own religion, when it leads to belittling others, reduces the stance of that faith and damages interreligious harmony. This kind of communication, through edicts, were a material imposition of a communication cue which is symbolic because interfaith relations is put forth as more serious and grounded.

Similar to Ashoka's intervention, during the medieval period, the Mughal Emperor Jalal al-Din Muhammad Akbar (1556–1605) provided a striking example of successful state-led interfaith engagement (Kinra, 2020). Akbar established the Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri in 1575 as a space for theological dialogue. To this end, he asked scholars from many beliefs to come. Hindu pandits, Muslim theologians, Jesuit priests, Jain monks along with Zoroastrians joined the discussions; they spoke on religious ideas with him in attendance. These discussions showed that all religions contained elements of truth and culminated in his promotion of the principle of *sulh-i-kul* (peace to all) across his empire, which also had politically and philosophically benefits (Kinra, 2020). Creating a narrative that works for different faiths, needs to be rethought in a democracy like India. Akbar drew people of many faiths into positions of power. He also fostered a culture that held wide religious acceptance. His court, for example, took on Hindu generals and ministers who held high rank. He celebrated Hindu festivals and dis away with discriminatory taxes on non-Muslims. Pluralism became a state ideal, helping to maintain relative communal amity at the time.

Apart from social cohesion driven by authoritative figures, there were grassroots movements in ancient India. In the Hindu and Sufi tradition that flourished in the 12th to 18th centuries, a love of God that transcended formal religious identities was found. The Bhakti movement is an important example. Poet-saints like Kabir (15th century) openly rejected divisions between Hindus and Muslims, preaching a devotion to a universal divine and criticising empty ritual in both faiths. Kabir's followers, the Kabir Panth, included Hindus and Muslims. Here, the groups of followers also bear a communicative meaning of social cohesion aided with a shared ideology. Similarly, the songs of Baul mystics in Bengal and the teachings of saints like Shirdi Sai Baba, the 19th–20th century figure revered by both Hindus and Muslims, created a shared spiritual heritage that bridged communities (Karim 2024).

A notable historical case study is the town of Malerkotla in Punjab. Malerkotla was a small Muslim-ruled princely state that gained renown for its communal harmony. In 1705, its Nawab, Sher Mohammed Khan, protested the execution of two young sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, by a Mughal governor, an act of compassion and justice that, according to Sikh lore, earned the Nawab and his town the Guru's blessings for all time. Nearly 250 years later during the Partition of 1947, when Punjab was engulfed in Hindu-Muslim-Sikh violence, Malerkotla remained relatively peaceful (Kumar 2024). The last Nawab of Malerkotla worked with community leaders to maintain peace, and many Hindu and Sikh refugees found shelter there. Residents of Malerkotla have long attributed this peace to their heritage of mutual respect dating back to the Nawab's gesture centuries ago. 'Harmonious interreligious relations' (Bigelow 2009) are now characteristic of Malerkotla. This case shoes that acts of kindness and support become important parts of cultural memory, which are important in times of conflict.



The 20th century too has instances of interfaith collaborative practice. At a time of communal disharmony between Hindus and Muslims, Gandhi was wise to initiate his prayer meetings with a specific reading of the Gita, Quran and Bible together. Scialpi (2021) says that a deeper examination of his preaching shows its historical roots in India's spiritual traditions, from the R̥gveda and Upaniṣads to the Bhagavad Gītā, and its connection to Ashoka's edicts on dharma. Interfaith dialogue is historic and culturally rooted and an essential prerequisite to social cohesion. The riots in 1947 also led Gandhi to convene all-faith prayer meetings and walk through areas without any traces of peaceful co-existence. In the first week of September 1947, famously, Gandhi undertook a fast-unto-death in Calcutta to compel all communities to cease the bloodshed (Gupta & Pratap, 2001). After 73 hours of fasting, leaders of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities pledged together to cease violence. Astonishingly, the riots came to an end. This is an example of grassroots peace activism.

The Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb in Indo-Islamic culture symbolic of two rivers flowing together (Sahoo, 2020); in northern India, in Awadh, the Ganges-Yamuna doab, and parts of the Deccan, was characterised by a blending of Hindu and Muslim cultural elements, shared language of Hindustani/Urdu, cuisine, poetry and music, and mutual participation in social events. This lived culture meant that for generations, many Indians carried a dual heritage (Haseeb, 2024). For instance, the language Urdu itself was born out of the mixing of Persian-Arabic with Indian dialects. These cultural ties often leavened conflict: even if political frictions arose, those who had lived through singing songs and telling stories and celebrating festivals saw peace as making things better and improving the quality of life. Communication is an essential means of existing peacefully in society and also preserving heritage.

3.2 Contemporary grassroots activism and initiatives

Modern efforts show a series of activism at the grassroot level to prevent communal conflict and nurture harmony. These efforts ranged from organised programs by NGOs to spontaneous acts of solidarity by local communities. Several key patterns and examples emerge. In many regions, especially urban centres, citizen committees formed to bridge communities at the neighbourhood level provide an understanding towards a type of social cohesion effort that works.

After the devastating Hindu-Muslim riots in Mumbai in 1992-93, police officers and civil society groups established *mohalla* (neighbourhood) peace committees as a reformative effort in communally sensitive areas of the city (Thakkar 2004). By the late 1990s, about 45 such committees were active. Each committee included respected local residents from different religions and often a liaison officer from the local police station. Their mandate was to defuse tensions proactively and also create opportunities of everyday interaction between communities. Mumbai's network of 45 mohalla committees and numerous volunteers became a trusted mechanism that could be trusted whenever trouble loomed.

The committees organised regular meetings, dialogues and even cultural/sports events to build relationships. For example, the committees held friendly "Cricket for Peace" matches where teams included both police officers and young members of Hindu and Muslim communities (Natu, 2005). In a way, these become communicative cues to show acceptance. This creative approach helped humanise the police to the public and vice versa, and built camaraderie among youth across religious lines. Moreover, as hate speech began to spread via new channels like social media, the mohalla committees adapted; members were instructed not to forward provocative videos or rumours on WhatsApp, and instead to use those same networks to swiftly counter misinformation to calm people.

Prompt communication prevented the creation of falsehood and hate speech from inflaming passions. The impact of the Mumbai mohalla committees was evident in later years, whenever communal tensions rose, these local networks often stepped in to mediate, sometimes even before the police. Even civil societies proved to aid in this matter. A suitable example is the revival of Khudai Khidmatgar as a peace initiative in India (Orakzai, 2020). Originally a 1930s non-violent movement in the Northwest Frontier Province led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan



(Frontier Gandhi) and rooted in Islamic ethics aligned with Gandhi's principles, it was revived in the 2010s by Gandhian activist Faisal Khan, drawing volunteers from across faiths.

Faisal Khan's team carried the movement's principle of unity and justice from village to village, tackling contemporary challenges through a hands-on, grassroots approach. Instead of relying on seminars or manifestos, they reached out directly to specific communities and local faith leaders. Volunteers went to Hindu ashrams, Sikh gurdwaras, and Muslim shrines, often leaving their comfort zone, to offer friendship and engage in dialogue. There were instances of meetings with Hindu ascetic Sant Rudra Giri, and a Sikh guru for open dialogue and shared prayer that displayed respect for all faiths and aligned with the intention of the movement that human connection could mitigate hatred and the divides between them. Khudai Khidmatgar worked directly in communities, settling local quarrels and managing small relief efforts that united the community. While the leader of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement had been arrested for unfounded charges for some time, that did not stop its work. These actions demonstrated that regular, localised interfaith action could help ease mistrust, and slowly build and establish togetherness in solidarity, one step at a time across geographical differences (Dogra, 2020).

Structured interfaith engagement can reduce entrenched bias. Programs like Facets of Faith (Global Peace Foundation India, 2019–2020) illustrated the advantage of ongoing conversations, reciprocal visits to sacred spaces, and identification of shared values. Religious studies have remained largely absent in Indian education (Sethi, 2018). In a matter of weeks, fifteen youth, Hindus, Muslim, Sikh, and Christians were in group discussions where they expressed their own experiences of culture and religion. Friendships were formed that crossed religious boundaries, with the young participants staying in touch via social media afterwards in an alumni network. This example demonstrated how structured interfaith exposure in a formative stage of life can break down prejudices. It aligned with academic findings that positive intergroup contact can reduce bias and build empathy.

Scaling up such efforts, for instance, integrating interfaith exchange modules in the school curriculum or university events, could have a long-term impact on communal harmony. NGOs in India like Sahyog or Seeds of Peace programs have similarly worked with students to promote peace education. These initiatives aim to arm the next generation with knowledge and critical thinking to counter sectarian arguments. They have visited numerous places of worship: a Hindu temple, a mosque, a church, a gurdwara, a synagogue, and a Buddhist temple, as a group, so that each person entered other sacred spaces as a respectful guest and learner. Such visits, as a group, play a significant role in developing respect and humility towards others' religions. Upon arrival at each site, the religious practitioners, community and members warmly received them as guests and shared their focal beliefs and practices while also highlighting common themes. At the Buddhist temple, the monk stressed non-violence and compassion which they all shared as a principle. The youth asked questions and noted similarities and differences. By the end of the program, participants reported feeling happy to learn more about other faiths and having broadened perspectives (Perea, 2020).

Shared festivals, joint relief efforts, and interfaith hospitality strengthen bonds beyond symbolic gestures. Instances such as interfaith iftars hosted in temples, cross-community festival assistance or mutual aid during crises have functioned both as immediate acts of solidarity and as public affirmations of unity. Muslims volunteering in Hindu festival arrangements and vice versa. In Varanasi in 2019, a group of Muslim men helped organise a Hindu girl's funeral rites when her family struggled, seeing it as their duty as neighbours (Mathur, 2019). Conversely, Hindu residents have guarded mosques and offered water to Muslim worshippers during large Eid gatherings. A trend in recent years has been for communities to host each other's sacred observances as a public statement of unity. In many towns, interfaith iftar parties during Ramadan have been organized by Hindu and Sikh organizations. For instance, in April 2022, the Shri Sita Ram temple in Ayodhya (a predominantly Hindu holy town) hosted an iftar attended by local Muslims (Gupta, 2019). Such public incidents, when they also are shown on media,



produce communicative cues with a larger impact. Likewise, in Kerala in 2023, two temples in the Malappuram district organised a mass iftar on their premises, where officials of the temples said that their goal was to strengthen the connection between the Hindus and the Muslims and to celebrate festivals together in a peaceful spirit (Prasad, 2023).

Community leaders often use such occasions to publicly affirm unity. In Malerkotla (Punjab), which has a mixed population, Sikh gurdwaras and a Hindu temple in 2024 took pride in hosting iftars for Muslim neighbours. They spread a message of communal harmony and humanity, suggesting that this should serve as a lesson for other parts of India where politics created rifts. When people eat together and celebrate each other's holy days, or come together to help the less fortunate, it also means that they accept and respect the space and way of life. It establishes a reservoir of goodwill, which is essential when conflict arises. The results have shown consistently that in places with a strong history of inter-communal collaboration, people tended to resolve conflict more easily, or avoid it altogether, because they already had established trust and communication.

This shows that interfaith conflict resolution need not always come from the state or authorities, it can also be set into motion by villagers and activists who find a common cause. Direct engagement through dialogue, visiting each other, working together along with leadership and initiative, either by respected figures or community members stepping up, and shared identity by invoking a sense of common humanity or national/locational identity that transcended religion. These patterns and lessons from the findings provide the foundation for the next section, where they are analysed to propose implementable strategy for interfaith conflict resolution and collaboration in India.

3.3. Communicative Cues

To identify communication cues, this study views the main factors that helped resolve interfaith conflicts and create communal harmony in India in the above examples. Many successful interventions involved creating forums for honest dialogue between communities. Akbar's inter-religious debates and modern peace committee meetings emphasized face-to-face communication to clear out misconceptions. Dialogue allowed grievances to be aired and addressed before they escalated. It also humanized the other side, for example, youth visiting places of worship of different faiths learned that they had similar ethical teachings. Interpersonal contact under positive conditions can reduce prejudice, a principle supported by social psychology research.

A recurrent challenge in interfaith conflicts is the spread of rumours, false allegations or incendiary propaganda. The findings showed that successful conflict prevention required rapid response to misinformation. Mumbai's mohalla committees quickly debunked fake news on WhatsApp groups before it could spark violence. Interfaith coalitions publicly refuted hate narratives. They issued joint statements that condemn violence and clarified that no religion supports such acts. They dispelled fear and anger with such measures and used communication to create conditions of peace. This suggests that any strategy must include a strong communication component to monitor and counteract hate speech or rumours, especially in the digital age.

Communication through leadership is also an important aspect of interfaith conflict resolution. The discussion highlighted the role of respected leaders or institutions who could mediate and mobilise others. A local cleric or elder who commands respect from all parties or an institution like a committee or NGO that earns credibility through impartial service are important centralised figures to look up to during moments of chaos. Leaders show empathy and courage effectively through their actions. The Sikh and Hindu leaders in Malerkotla, who actively protected Muslims and Hindus, did so even when it was too risky to do so. Their actions set examples for the community. The presence of a neutral mediator figure or group often made dialogue possible where direct interaction was initially difficult.



Moments of harmony often unfolded when people came together in a shared task: rebuilding a shrine brick by brick, standing shoulder to shoulder on the same sports team, or pooling energy to organise a festival or lead a relief effort. Each act of cooperation created interdependence, which in time led to friendship, just like the Mumbai mohalla committees, which showed that Hindus and Muslims working side by side on local civic issues, gradually transformed their relationship from neighbours to teammates.

A shared identity or common values creates a sense of equal experience and is an important aspect of social cohesion. When people feel like the foundations of their principles are similar, they see that the religious divide as something completely manmade. Effective peacebuilding is replete with examples of communication of broader identities: reminding people that they were citizens of the same town or Indians under the same flag. Sharing experiences through cultural links like the Ganga-Jamuni heritage created a narrative where pluralism was seen as part of identity. Moral values are also a very major common ground that can be leveraged for conflict resolution. Communication that gives special importance to truth, non-violence and compassion, which religions in India commonly cherish, provides a normative basis for unity. When communities see each other as partners in a shared civilization rather than adversaries, conflicts are easier to resolve. Indians across religions value religious tolerance. A 2021 Pew survey found that an overwhelming majority of Indians of all major faiths said respecting other religions is very important to being truly Indian (Pew Research Centre, 2021). The same survey also noted that many also felt communities were very different from each other. This gap can be bridged by consciously inducing communicative cues that indicate a sense of shared identity.

3.4. A Novel Strategy for Interfaith Conflict Resolution

Using these insights, the analysis proposes novel strategy for interfaith conflict resolution and collaborative practice in India. Structuring the above communication cues into routinised practices will help societies maintain social cohesion which safeguards human life during interfaith conflict. The strategy operates at local, regional and national levels, but its core is grassroots empowerment.

When smaller groups and communities have open dialogue and regular interaction there is an atmosphere of transparency that is created. Local councils which are created by members from different communities in the locality, including temple committee members, mosque imams, church pastors, gurdwara granthis, educators, youth representatives, and women's representatives will ensure that different voices and opinions are heard to create an atmosphere of inclusivity and open-mindedness. The councils can meet periodically to discuss any emerging communal issues. Stationing a standing body in each area allows communication channels to remain accessible and open at all times to enable dialogue whenever required. These councils could be facilitated or supported by civil administration and police as partners. Council members should also be trained in communication and in measures to be taken during instances of conflict and violence. This component draws on the success of community peace committee models and seeks to replicate it widely.

Organising collaborative events where people from different faiths come together to participate in an activity with shared outcomes can boost opportunities to communicate and relate to each other. Initiatives like Unity Clinics where doctors from different faith hold a free medical camp for all residents' places humanity and wellbeing over religious divide. Even environmental clean-up drives function in a similar way that can be organised by local churches, temples and mosques collectively with an invitation to all. Another way is through shared meals during interfaith community feasts during festival seasons. Serving food to people of other faith is a gesture of welcoming them to experience one's culture. Developing an appreciation for cultural aspects of a religion is also a means of peacebuilding. Shared identities become a communication cue that become tangible through collaborative events, forming pluralism that is visible and experiential. Schools and colleges could also be involved in these events to engage youth.



Hate speech and rumours remain a major threat to social cohesion. Hate speech can disrupt peaceful conditions if not tackled through a network of organisations that understand rumour control and also have an unbiased approach to the problem. As a district or state-level initiative that connects the local councils and authorities, such an initiative is crucial at the time of augmenting tensions. A WhatsApp and SMS alert system that notifies community learns to take action during communal tension ensures rapid response. When a false accusation is spread, the network of local council members and youth and adult volunteers can be alerted of a trusted central source like District Commissioner's office and would then relay it to the other members of their community to eliminate the rumour. Measures towards joint statements and peace rallies can also help, however police protection and safe conditions to rally should be considered. There should be a representative of communities in the interfaith council who show up at these important moments to create and lead safe communication. India's National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) has used "collaborative social action" in their mission statement. A modern, tech-aware communication strategy would make communities less vulnerable to the content that is comprised of hate speech which often precedes riots.

4.4. Education and narrative change

Education is an important means to cultivate respect for other faiths and knowledge of history through education becomes important to curb misinformation. The curriculum in schools need to be unbiased and provide proper historical accounts. Civics and history lessons can touch upon communal harmony and the practices discussed in this paper as moral education at a young age can help formative understanding of other religions. Examples like Malerkotla should be included in studies. A change in the broader narrative through smaller but continuous efforts is possible through interfaith workshops and educative activities. Inviting speakers to express their views on themes of peace and national history by including perspectives on each faith's teachings that support harmony could be beneficial. Making pluralism part of local and national identity will improve the impact of such efforts.

Institutional support backs the interests of local communities and also helps them be mindful of broader policies. The National Integration Council and the NFCH can support local institutions through funding and can also connect different communities together. The more people of different faiths join in support on a large scale and also garner support of institutional and other large bodies, the more impact they will be able to make. Law enforcement should be advised to first connect with community leaders and councils than relying on force and control. Conflict resolution training is an important aspect to regain social support and peaceful conditions. Development programs with mixed communities, schools, clinics, or sports facilities that serve all communities together, reduces competition for resources which sometimes, in the long run, leads to a build-up of communal tensions. Authorities that overlook the implementation of policies should also look at proactive ways of bringing different institutions together. India has seen that when authorities support peace initiatives, those efforts flourish, a case in point being how certain honest police officers supporting mohalla committees helped them make a big impact.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1. Conclusion

Communication is an ongoing process that historic, cultural and case-sensitive. There is a need for continuous efforts towards social cohesion at different levels of a civil society. This study looks at communication, an important part of language, through social, informational, and structural dimensions to address the problem of religious conflict and violence. By analysing real examples that have worked in India, it recommends communication cues essential for addressing the problem. It suggests a combined approach for conflict resolution through different types of cultural, collaborative and educational activities.



The findings suggested that open dialogue, shared community activities, trusted leadership, misinformation management, and shared identity were significant cues in pursuing interfaith conflict resolution. Relevant historical case studies, such as the edicts of Emperor Ashoka, Akbar's Ibadat Khana, the idea of Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb, and the legacy of Malerkotla showed that India had successfully established traditions of peace and respect in a pluralistic climate. Contemporary grassroot movements through mohalla committees, the Khudai Khidmatgar, and education initiatives demonstrated practices that supported similar principles. These examples highlighted the importance a community has in the management of peace.

4.2. Suggestions

The implications of this study reveal the need for policymakers, educators and community leaders to integrate interfaith engagement programs at local and national levels. Government and civil society organizations must invest in institutionalising interfaith councils and expansion of educational programs that advance tolerance and using technology to undermine harmful misinformation. Future research may also focus on the impact digital media has in advancing interfaith narratives and explore the long-term impacts created by grassroots peace initiatives. By building upon historical traditions of harmony, combined with adopting modern and proactive strategies, India can continue to establish a more inclusive space for people of different faiths.

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