

Dharma, Nyāya and Migration: A Bharatiya Perspective

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Abstract

A critical analysis of India's migration governance system evaluates policy changes through Nyāya (contextual justice) and Dharma (moral duty) frameworks of ancient Indian philosophy. The analysis merges historical documents Arthashastra and Manusmriti with current legal examinations and policy frameworks to demonstrate how modern Indian exclusion policies contradict traditional hospitality concepts (Atithi Devo Bhava). The research aims at four essential goals by following principles of migration governance in history and using Nyāya's equity standard to examine CAA 2019 and the Foreigners Act 1946 in addition to creating Dharma-influenced policies for refugee protection and worker rights and performing examinations of Gulf migration and climate-based movements and migrant work effects during COVID. Research indicates that religious favoritism in the CAA leads to Dharma's abandonment of fairness principles yet Gulf kafeel labor contractor roles show violations of Nyāya's justice system. The study evaluates India's failure to establish national refugee legislation and refusal to sign the UN Migrant Workers Convention which stands in contrast to Kerala's welfare programs that implement Raj Dharma principles through migrant welfare boards and medical service provisions. A proposed policy should allow Panchayats to lead governance decentralization while implementing a framework for climate refugees and renegotiating Gulf labor agreements for Gulf worker protections. The research demonstrates the need to unite traditional Indian wisdom Vasudhava Kutumbakam with universal human rights systems for establishing a migration framework that connects Indian civilization values with present-day challenges. This approach will both resolve existing disparities while making India a leader in plural ethical principles that transform migration governance from administrative challenge to solid proof of just and compassionate practices.

Keywords: Nyāya, Dharma, Migration Governance, Ethical Pluralism, India, Refugee Rights.

1. Introduction

1.1 Migration as a Historical and Global Phenomenon

Migration has been a defining characteristic of human culture, and of societies, economies and cultural exchange for thousands of years. In days of yore, mobility was commenced with trade, pilgrimage, or the dissemination of ideas as historians tell us of the learned who travelled upon the Silk Road or Ashoka's missionary appealing the Buddhist message over Asia. India, as a birthplace of ancient civilizations observed nomadic movements, seasonal migration, diverse settlements of communities, like Parsis seeking refuge from Persia to Sufi saints dispense of syncretic traditions. But it was the colonial era that marked a tectonic shift, as the British Empire institutionalized labour migration, sending millions of indentured workers to plantations in Mauritius, Fiji, and the Caribbean, creating the basis for modern diasporas.

In the present era, India is a land of double identity in its migration story: on one hand, we are a country sending migrants 'to the West for skilled professional migrants and labourers to the Gulf'; and on the other hand we are a country absorbing displaced populations from all over the world, such as the Tibetan

refugees, the Rohingya and the Sri Lankan Tamils. The Gulf migration explosion fostered by the 1970s oil crisis demonstrates economic mobility comprising of more than 8m Indian workers in GCC nations sending \$87bn in remittances (2021). Alternatively, India's permeable borders and democratic identity have resulted in South Asian neighbours seeking refuge in the country, hosting ~200,000 officially recognized refugees and millions of undocumented migrants. Still, this duality holds within its contradictions. Even in ancient texts like the *Arthashastra*, citizenship was linked with a cosmopolitan state responsibility toward foreign travellers (*atithi devo bhava*—“the guest is god”), nowadays, modern policies are more inclined toward security over openness as evident in the exclusionist Citizenship Amendment Act.

Globalization and technology have in addition, altered migration forms. The growth of circular as well as step migration – that is, when workers relocate from villages to cities, then to global cities – demonstrate ambivalence of opportunity and uncertainty. But it was during the COVID-19 pandemic, when 10 million interstate migrants went to sleep with empty stomachs and awoke with nothing but out-door chalking of survival in the lockdowns, unfolds the distance between multiplicity of India's constitutional guarantee in Article 19: freedom of movement, and realities of reality.

1.2 Philosophical Framework: Nyāya and Dharma

At the core of Indian intellectual legacy is Nyāya (justice through reasonable ethics) as well as Dharma (righteous duty), guides for migrants governance. Nyāya, which appropriate from the division of logic, promotes equity and balance, amating laws in alignment to benefit universally (*yukti*). Dharma, as cosmic and social law, commands individuals and rulers to obedience. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* elaborated these ideas in 15 AD operationalizing these principles by ordering kings to safeguard travellers, control labour markets, and prevent exploitation—a primitive human rights regime. The *Manusmriti*, reproached for casteism, recognized the right of the *mlecchas* (foreigners) to settle but only if they followed local customs.[1]

These principles aligns with contemporary human rights dispensations. Nyāya corresponds to the non-discrimination clauses of the 1951 Refugee Convention and Dharma to the UN's 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine. For example, Kerala's caring policies—health care for Gulf returnees, welfare boards for migrant labourers— in the tradition of Raj Dharma (king's duty) place compassion over governance. However, CAA 2019, which shows urgency on citizenship to non-Muslim minorities who immigrate from neighbour countries, violate Nyāya by promoting religious prejudice, which is goes against the tradition of India that admitted the refugees of imperial civilizations such as Persia's Zoroastrians, and even of Tibet's Buddhists.[2]

The contradiction in terms of morality is loud in India's treatment of migrant workers. Despite constitutional entitlements, seasonal workers are excluded from subsidised food (53%) and healthcare (80%).[3] The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), which is intended to prevent exploitation remains largely unenforced, with only one-tenth contractors paying the price to pay the dues of workers' wages, This erosion of Dharma—in both its public, as well as social sense, because Raj Dharma (state duty) and Samaj Dharma (social obligation) are often understood simultaneously—is responsible for us living in chronic poverty, being marginalized.[4]

1.3 Research Objectives

This paper aims to contrast India's thousands of years of philosophical heritages with contemporary migration policies; it examines that Nyāya and Dharma offer a deep and visionary ethical condemn for reform. Key objectives include:

1. Historical-Philosophical Synthesis:

- ❖ Evaluate ancient texts (Arthashastra, Manusmriti, Mahabharata) to identify governance principles applicable to contemporary migration, i.e. state accountability, labour rights and non-discrimination.
 - ❖ Trace out these ideals against colonial and postcolonial policies, identifying breaks (e.g., indentured labour systems) and evasions (e.g., Kerala public welfare models).
2. Critical Legal Evaluation:
- ❖ Scrutinize India's migration laws through the lens of Nyāya. For example, the Foreigners Act (1946) that criminalizes undocumented movement seems to run counter to Nyāya's emphasis on proportionality and justice.
 - ❖ Evaluate CAA 2019's discrimination against Muslim refugees relative to Dharma's principle of neutrality (samatva) expressed in the Mahabharata: "A monarch should be impartial to all subjects as a father to his children"
3. Policy Recommendations:
- ❖ Negotiate towards a Dharma-informed refugee law to ensure safeguard whether akin religion or not along the lines of 1951 Convention.
 - ❖ Showcase portable social security (one nation one ration card, panchayat-led migrant demo registry) and decentralization of governance as per Kautilyan state craft.
 - ❖ Press for ratification of the UN Migrant Workers Convention (1990) to bring India's diaspora foreign policies in-line with worldwide Nyāya.
4. Case Studies:
- Gulf Migration: Criticize the kafeel system's (sponsor) exploitation using Nyāya for working towards outlawing it and for establishing bilateral labour agreements.
 - Climate Displacement – Position Sundarbans' eco-refugees as Dharma need compelling climate justice, rehabilitation.

Through rearticulating Nyāya and Dharma, this research strives to rethink migration governance—not as a burden, but as a moral devotional, echoing *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world as a family) values. In doing so, it exhorts India to re-forging its status as a stalwart of ethical pluralism in the times of border walls and xenophobia.

2. Dharma and the Ethical Foundations of Mobility

The idea of dharma as a core element of Indic philosophy goes beyond just duty, to comprehend ethical, social and cosmological order. From the perspective of mobility—voluntary migration or displacement by force—dharma supplies a means of evaluating the moral duties of person, of people and of state. This essay considers how ancient understanding of dharma engages yesterday's problems and shows the conflicts between past and present, tradition and modernity.

2.1. Dharma in Ancient Governance

2.1.1. Raj Dharma and State Responsibility

The Arthashastra, a foundational text of political science by Kautilya (circa 3rd century BCE) recites the ruler's duty to safeguard the travellers and refugees. It decreed on safe roads, tarmac rest houses and shutting down for lodging damage to guests all as a state responsibility turning inn-like hospitality into a state duty. This is starkly different from the practices of modern India as seen in the exclusionary Foreigners Act 1946 which allows the state to hold and deport non-citizens without due process. While on old governance relied on the welfare of vulnerable people, modern laws usually focus on state territory over humanitarian morality.[5]

2.1.2. Atithi Devo Bhava (Guest as God)

It is inherent in Indian cultural ethos that Atithi devo bhava (Guest is God). However, this ideal is not a legal but a moral duty. The case of Tibetan refugees who were given asylum in India in 1959 but denied citizenship rights for decades, isn't considered an award-winning response. Though India's cultural tolerance gave refuge, they lack this institutionalized shelters for refugees, which leaves these refugees in precarious limbo.[6]

2.2. Socio-Economic Dimensions of Dharma

2.2.1. Varnashrama Dharma and Mobility

The caste system (varnashrama dharma) has traditionally comprised a rigid mobility impasse through occupational and social classes. Whereas classical migration boundaries, which characterised the flow of people from rural to smaller town therefore seriously limit the understanding of the challenge of modern economic migration, in which the most marginalized move towns to earn a living. Yet, household duties (grihastha dharma) still shape migration choices since people who balance obligations based on family with those based on a job or business. This dichotomy is a microcosm of a tension between anaemic caste barriers and the changing needs of a globalised economy.[7]

2.2.2. Gender and Dharma

Marriage is the largest cause of female migration in India, at 56% of internal migrants. Patrilocal residency as traditional *stridharma* (women's duty) may compromise women's independence. Though migration for the purpose of marriage is normalized, it perpetuates a gendered power differential and hinders the access to education and economic autonomy. This compares with the agency: which is being sought incidentally by urban, educated women, indicating a clash between religious norms and individual ambitions.[8]

2.3. Dharma in Crisis: Environmental and Political Displacement

2.3.1. Climate Refugees and Raj Dharma

Climate induced migration like Bangladeshi migrants to India, because of the rising sea levels, challenges the concept of raj dharma. India's refusal to formally acknowledge climate refugees, and along with it border fencing, deportation campaigns, are all a failure to uphold an old duty for the state

- that of protecting the displaced. This brings up ethical issues: Can contemporary governance reconcile sovereignty with ecological interconnectedness?

2.3.2. Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA 2019): A Dharma Dilemma

The CAA, which fast-tracks citizenship for non-Muslim minorities from neighbours, has raised questions about ethical consistency. While supporters say it fits *atithi devo bhava* by hosting fugitive minorities, detractors call it exclusion of Muslims as a breach with dharma's global moral code. The law's religious criteria sharply differ from the provision of protection to all foreigners in the Arthashastra, without distinction of faith.[9]

Dharma's ethical frameworks provide a framework to question contemporary mobility schemes. Ancient India incorporated hospitality into statecraft or raj dharma, and householder duties or grihastha dharma which helped envision a comprehensive approach to migration, checking rights and duties. Today, exclusionary laws, caste and gender caste system, politicized citizenship represent a move away from these principles. Re-examining dharma may lead to enact effective inclusive policies – such as robust refugee protections, gender-sensitive migration frameworks and climate justice – in consonance with India's civilizational priorities that would take into account current issues. In that manner, the conflict between tradition and modernity may be resolved in a dharma reinvented essentially for a globalized human society.

3. Nyāya: Justice in Migration Law and Practice

The concept of nyāya—rooted in ancient Indian philosophy—emphasizes justice as a dynamic, context-sensitive pursuit of equity rather than rigid rule-following. In migration management, nyāya wants legal regimes that deal with structural inequities and respect human dignity. This essay looks at Indian migration policies over nyāya, juxtaposing ancient ethical rules and modern paradox and global human rights norms.[10]

3.1. Legal Frameworks and Equity

3.1.1. Ancient Legal Codes

Ancient scriptural text Manusmriti (mentioned in circa 2nd century BCE) and Arthashastra mentions stark chiasmus regarding the approach of India towards migrants. In Manusmriti, foreigners were socially degraded as mlecchas, but the Arthashastra codified the protection of migratory labourers in the fairly relative, in stark contrast to the currently exploitive Gulf migration systems. Thousands of Indian workers in Gulf countries are victims of bonded labour, withheld passports and unpaid wages, which shows the demise of old labour protections in the era of neoliberal economics. Modern citizenship laws, like India's Citizenship Act of 1955, seems to contain Manusmriti's exclusionary logic, by giving precedence to the principle of bloodline (*jus sanguinis*) over right of birth (*jus soli*) and effectively excluding generations of stateless people.[11]

3.1.2. Modern Judicial Precedents

India's Supreme Court has on occasion applied *nyāya* principles, e.g. the 1996 Chakma refugees case where it prohibited forced repatriation to areas of persecution (non-refoulement). However, such rulings remain exceptions. The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), meant to safeguard domestic migrants, is weakened by its bad implementation: fewer than 10% of contractors are registered, leaving tens of millions in informal labour with no insurance and no avenue for grievance. Due to judicial reluctance to modify the Act is a systemic inability of law to square with *nyāya*. [12]

3.2. Global Human Rights and *Nyāya*

3.2.1. India's Non-Ratification of Key Conventions

India's failure to ratify the UN Migrant Workers Convention (1990) or pass a national refugee law is a gap in its commitment to human rights. For example Sri Lankan Tamil and Rohingya refugees are stateless, they are denied access to health care or employment. Look at this compared to Kerala's Karuthal program that provides Gulf returnees counselling and skill upgrading. Kerala's example, built on *nyāya*'s belief in dignity, shows though subnational policies can occupy federal vacancies. [13]

3.2.2. Health Equity as *Nyāya*

The COVID-19 lockdowns (2020) revealed the stark difference faced by India's 140 million internal migrants. Thousands were left without an income or a way to get home without abandoning their livelihoods before they were forced to walk hundreds of miles to be humiliated and excluded from schemes like Ayushman Bharat. Whereas polio victims in cities like Mumbai remain deprived of clean water, like for that matter, healthcare, so do circular migrants whose existence remains invisible from databases of health. This violates *nyāya*'s precondition to benefit the most marginalized.

3.3. Case Study: COVID-19 and Stranded Labourers

During the pandemic, the Supreme Court initially brushed off petitions to help migrants, saying "they were being taken care of. This disinterest, set against Kerala's use of public kitchens and trains for their returnees, shows the difference between procedural legality (*nitī*) and substantive justice (*nyāya*).

Nyāya's contextual requirements in justice uncovered cracks in India's migration earthly realm. Although, like the Arthashastra, ancient codes of law fused labour rights into statecraft; contemporary laws, security over equity. India's sporadic mercy and rejection by the world of conventions only enshrine exclusion. Yet, sub national models like Kerala's, show the way to *nyāya*: ratifying the Migrant Workers Convention, amending the Inter-State Migrant Act to include informal workers and decentralising health and welfare schemes. With policies modeled on *nyāya*'s values—equity, dignity and adaptability, India can turn migration from source of exploitation into one of justice.

4. Migration Trends and Challenges in India

India, as a country of a very large population along with socio-economic disparities, is a melting pot of complex migration dynamics. With more than 400 million internal migrants and a large diaspora

outside, migration influences livelihoods, urbanisation and development. But policy recalibration is now necessary for urgent systemic neglect, exploitation and timer impending environmental crises.

4.1. Internal Migration Dynamics

4.1.1. Scale and Patterns

400 million (nearly a third of India's population) internal migrants were recorded in the 2011 Census. Labour is largely driven by rural-urban migration, due to agrarian distress and urban construction, domestic and manufacturing employment. Seasonal or circular migration is rampant; Landless labourers from Odisha and Chhattisgarh are in Punjab's farms or Maharashtra's brick kilns for part of the year. Inter-state flows like Bihar-to-Delhi or Uttar-Pradesh-to- Mumbai corridors underscore regional disparities. Despite their numerousness migrants are statistically invisible, because census categories, outdated by this time, do not map out changing mobility patterns accurately.[14]

4.1.2. Urbanization and Exclusion

Urban migrants face systemic exclusion. During Mumbai and Delhi, 40-60% of people living in slums are internal refugees and left out of subsidized food (PDS) and also voting rights due to residency requirements. Language becomes an additional factor to marginalization, for Tamil migrants in Bengaluru or Bhojpuri speakers in Surat to be denied access to healthcare or legal assistance. But cities, which are dependent on migrant labour for their growth, almost never build affordable housing or public services accessible and accommodating to the migrant community, keeping the migrant in a cycle of poverty.[15]

4.2. International Migration

4.2.1. Gulf Migration: Exploitation vs. Remittances

India sends over 8.9 million workers to the Gulf states, accounting for about a third of India's \$100 billion annual remittances. But the kafeel (sponsorship) system in Saudi and UAE locks workers to their employers, allowing passport confiscation, wage theft, and unsafely poor working conditions.[16]

4.2.2. Brain Drain and Diaspora

India with around 2.7 billion IT professionals fuels a 'Brain Drain' in the USA. while diaspora adds to India's soft power and investment (e.g.; 1 out of 4 Bengaluru startups is funded by NRIs) but the loss of skilled workforce is bad for domestic innovation. Schemes like the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), seek to utilize diaspora but fail to complement inclusiveness towards underfunded R&D institutes.[17]

4.3. Emerging Challenges

4.3.1. Climate-Induced Displacement

Climate change is reshaping migration. In the Sundarbans, increasing salinity and cyclones migrate 4.5 million people annually and in that process displace many to urban slums. Assam's floods that submerged 40% of the state in 2022 caused displacement of 5 million to result in cross-border migration to Meghalaya and West Bengal. Despite this, India has no legal structure to classify climate refugees, meaning that disaster management laws are not currently applicable to them.[18]

4.3.2. Trafficking and Gender-Based Violence

Cross-border migration from Bangladesh and Nepal is fraught with risks of trafficking. Between 20,000 persons from Bangladesh are being trafficked annually to India enforce labour or sexual exploitation. Domestic workers from Jharkhand migrating to Kerala is where 80% of it are tribal women and 80% of tribal women migrating from Jharkhand to Kerala, report verbal or physical abuse. Weak enforcement of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, 2021, and gender-blind policing compound vulnerabilities.[19]

4.4. Case Study: COVID-19 and Migrant Crisis

The 2020 lockdown showed forth India's migrants precariousness. Of the over 100 million informal employed people unable to walk or themselves to work, thousands of miles that went home. These people faced starvation, police brutality and exclusion from state aid. The crisis revealed the lack of social security for the migrants and the urban economy's reliance on the unseen labour of migrants.[20]

India's migration profile is that of contradictions: it is the lifeline for millions while also being a conduit for exploitation. Internal migrants help drive urbanization but get left out; Gulf remittances boost Kerala but perpetuates labour exploitation; climate displacement rises alongside inertia policy. Conquering these issues necessitates rethinking governance – using PDS and voting rights unconditionally, signing the UN Migrant Workers Convention and writing climate refugees into laws. Decentralized systems such as Kerala's migrant welfare boards and Odisha's seasonal hostels provide models for equity. India can turn its mobility crisis into a story of resilience and justice by keeping migrant dignity as centre of policy.[21]

Balancing Tradition and Modernity: Policy-Recommendations

What India's migration challenges require is a convergence of civilizational dharma (the ethical duty) and nyāya (contemporary justice from within contexts) to global human rights formulations. By incorporating ancient traditional standards of governance into modern systems of governance, India may establish inclusive policies for migrants and refugees. The following is helpful advice in areas of law, social and global.[22]

5.1 Dharma-Informed Reforms

5.1.1 Decentralized Governance

The policy of *svadeshi* (self-reliance locally) in Panchayat Institute gives a model of migrant welfare. Panchayat-organised migrant enumerations can record seasonal workers so as to extend benefit of subsidised rations (PDS), provides healthcare and the honor to vote across state in India. For example, Odisha's Shramik Sahayata Kendras (labour aid centres) where temporary IDs are given to migrants is a model that could be scaled up to the entire country.

Vanaprastha dharma (the role of retirees to guide the society) can promote returnee integration plans. Gulf returnees in Kerala, versed in skills like carpentry or nursing could impart skills to rural youth through vocational hubs and achieve the goal of the Skill India Mission while fulfilling the of intergenerational knowledge transfer.[23]

5.1.2 Compassionate Citizenship

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA 2019) excludes, in a sure-footed manner, the persecuted Muslim minorities like Afghanistan's Hazaras or Myanmar's Rohingya, pitting thereby so larger-than-life a notion as guest is god (*Atithi devo bhava*), against the existing secular framework of the Constitution. Amending the CAA to include non-religious "Other Minorities" (e.g., atheists, LGBTQ+ refugees), and expanding *Ayushman Bharat* to undocumented migrants, would embody the universalism for dharma. Tamil Nadu's offer of free dialysis to Sri Lankan refugees is the same.

5.2 Nyāya-Driven Legal Measures

5.2.1 Legislative Overhaul

India's makeshift refugee policy runs against the grain of protection given by *Arthashastra* system. A National Refugee Law, which includes climate-displaced and conflict refugees, should make non refoulement and right to work as proposed in the 2016 Asylum Bill. At the same time, changing the Emigration Act (1983) to criminalize salary theft and passport snatchups by Gulf states—echoing the *Arthashastra*'s prohibition on exploitation of labour, would prevent abusers.[24]

5.2.2 Judicial Accountability

Delayed justice denies *nyāya*. Fast-track courts for handling migrant disputes such as the one in force in Kerala under its Migrant Workers' Welfare Commission could process wage claims in 90 days. Setting up legal aid clinics especially at major emigration points (e.g., Delhi, Mumbai airports) would equip migrants with contract literacy, counter trafficking fraud.

5.3. Global Leadership

5.3.1. Vasudhava Kutumbakam in UN Policy

India's G20 presidency and UNSC tenure give an opportunity to elevate *vasudhava kutumbakam* concept (world as one family) in global migration governance. Pursuing a UN Climate Refugee Protocol—acknowledging displacement because of environmental collapse—converges with its eternal responsibility (*raj dharma*) to shield the dispossessed. Domestically ratified United Nations Convention for Migrant Workers (1990) will ensure rights of over 13 million Overseas Indians.[25]

5.3.2. Bilateral Protections in Gulf Migration

In spite of India and UAE Labour Agreement of 1974, exploitation continues because the clauses are not enforceable. Renegotiating binding bilateral treaties with Gulf states—committing to minimum

wages, grievance cells and healthcare—would carry-out some nyāya. Kerala’s Pravasi Legal Aid Cels in Dubai and Riyadh -Incubating, which aids those jailed workers, presents a replicable model.[26]

5.4. Case Study: Nepal-India Open Borders

The India - Nepal treaty of 1950 facilitates free movement, in lines of ancient sanskriti (cultural ties). However, Nepali migrants remain discriminated in Indian cities. A joint labour-mobility commission, jointly designed by local panchayats and Nepal’s municipalities might formalise seasonal work while maintaining open-border practices. Dharma’s philosophy of guest is god (atithi devo bhava) and nyāya’s call for fairness can convert migration into a chance. Decentralized registries, a refugee law respectful of arthashastra ethic, and global advocacy for climate justice would place India at the apex of moral leadership in a period of displacement. By inscribing age-old values into modern policy, India can pay homage to its traditions & build a future in which no migrant is invisible.[27]

Conclusion

The interlinkage of nyāya (contextual justice) and dharma (moral duty) provides a transformative perspective to evaluate India’s migration governance. Ancient texts such as Arthashastra and Manusmriti with all contradictions had mobility within a framework of state responsibility (raj dharma) and social sympathy (atithi devo bhava). These principles are starkly different from neoliberal policies that make economics of migrants single-minded, committing to abandoning for their dignity. So do exclusionary laws, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 that discriminates between religion and universal humanity, dilute the dharmic virtue of hospitality.

This synthesis in no way is purely philosophical, but rather pragmatic. Kerala’s migrant welfare boards modelled on nyāya’s equity show how rights-based decentralised options can reduced exploitation. By putting policy rooted in dharma, India could reprise moral leadership, pushing for international frameworks that address climate refugees and labour rights, as envisioned in the vasudhava kutumbakam (the world as one family) philosophy.

6.2 Future Directions

To secure this vision it is essential that we operate with interdisciplinary steps. Indic ethical regimes should be integrated in migration studies to rely policy models linking ancient wisdom (such as vanaprastha dharma on the repatriate return) with modern rights of human. At the same time, bottom-up movements need to recover dharma as universal justice. The Rajasthan migrant worker unions, which, for example, have, as civil society initiatives, demanded fair wages under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, illustrate how the so-called powerless may reimagine nyāya to sue the state for its failures to deliver what is morally due, or nyāya. Similarly Panchayat-initiated registration of seasonals—ensuring the food-subsidies and health entitlement for them—revive the swadeshi spirit, fighting urban exclusion.

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