



# **EXPLORING THE ROOTS OF THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN INDIAN ETHOS**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper explores Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and its connection with ancient Indian texts with a view to establish how these texts can foster GCED that thrives on responsibility, care and interdependence of the world. GCED is designed to incite global awareness and practice towards sustainable living through the acknowledgement of the intertwined economic, social and cultural foundations of a common human experience. Principles such as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), Atithi Devo Bhava (the sacred hospitality) and Lokah Samastah Sukhinu Bhavantu (universal well-being) of the Indian scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads have GCED values, embedded as inclusivity, empathy and oneness. Content analysis method is used in this qualitative research to demonstrate how this texts construct a spiritual and cultural basis for global citizenship education which promotes harmonious and coexistence and respect for diversity. Such ideals also focus on the global ethic that recognizes people from the different parts of the world to embrace the highest standards of activeness through being kind citizens of the world. India is one of the richest sources of thoughts on unity and interconnectedness, and the findings reveal that Indian philosophical traditions can provide a timeless blueprint for a globally conscious and culturally sensitive society. The integration of these ancient teachings opens up possibility to bring a holistic, ethic-based framework that promotes the values of global citizenship in nurturing a peaceful and sustainable world.*

**Keywords:** Globalization, Ancient Scriptures, Ancient Teachings, Global Citizenship Education, Indian Knowledge System

## **INTRODUCTION**

The need for education for Global citizenship and sustainable living is very important and relevant in our modern world of increasing interdependence and complex behaviour (Trask, 2010). Global citizenship is the idea that connect the individual identity with the interrelated and interdependent nature of the contemporary world (OECD, 2018), in order to go beyond the limitations that geographical regions can place on what our identity could be. Global citizenship is about the social, environmental and economic actions that people and communities undertake to recognise that all people are citizens of the world (Oxfam, 2015). The United Nations identifies global citizenship as a phenomenon of major importance and influence. Global citizenship education is about belonging to a sense of global community and common humanity characterised by economic, social and cultural interdependencies between local, national and global communities (UNESCO, 2015). It is also characterised as 'a way of life' in some cases, in which a system of guiding principles has been developed for continuous living in a sustainable manner. Globalisation has given rise to global events to be interrelated (Demir et al., 2021) and the consequences from the action in one geographical area can manifest across far off geographical areas (Nepram and Schuchert, 2023). As a result of this, the human community has come to realize the impracticality of staying apart inside of designed distinctions. The ability to create a future characterised by peace, prosperity and stability for all is dependent on establishing a connection of our broader self and gaining access to a shared human experience since we're a collective human unit in the end (Carroll, 2019). India's ancient books like the Upanishads, Mahabharata, and Vedas testify India's affluent cultural tradition of hospitality and universal brotherhood. Indian culture is characterised with an ample amount of concerns and respect for all the living beings (Awasthy & Gupta, 2021). It encourages an undertaking that is based on individuality but enforces the idea to call upon the divine to guide the world and it's well-being, prosperity and tranquilly. To the basic concepts and values that are consistent with the idea of Global Citizenship Education, the Indian ancient scriptures have played a noteworthy role (University Grants Commission, 2021). The ancient scriptures speak of inclusiveness and



interconnectedness; compassion and ethical responsibility(UGC, 2021). They are all basic tenets of global citizenship. Indian texts contain rich ethical and philosophical teachings that constitute a diverse and holistic bundle of ideas that correspond well with the values of Global Citizenship Education (Babbar & Johannsdottir, 2024). Ideals in the scriptures provide a cultural and spiritual foundation for individual inculcation of a global awareness. The scriptures are a storehouse of wisdom which can really go a long way to propel each individual holistically; from intellectual knowing to ethical living, and a global consciousness.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the concept of global citizenship education.
2. To explore the ancient Indian scriptures possessing the idea of global citizenship education.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is Global Citizenship Education?
2. What are the ancient Indian scriptures possessing the idea of global citizenship education?

## METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was carried out by using content analysis technique. The research delves into a detailed analysis of how these scriptures provide a spiritual and cultural foundation for people to develop a global outlook and recognize their responsibilities as caring and compassionate citizens of the world.

### Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in Indian Ethos

#### Yatra Visvam Bhavatyeknidam

*“Venastatpashyan vishvava bhuvanaani vidvaan yatra vishvam bhavatyekanidam Yasminnidam sam cha vi chaikam sa otah protashcha vibhuh prajaasu”*. (Shvetashvatara Upanishad, Chapter 4).

The idea of it represents the assumption that the whole world is living in one common home for all its inhabitants, which the god creates for them and which serves as a sort of connecting between all the creations by the god. In this statement lies a great idea of unity; uniqueness, and total dependency among all living entities. It is an expression taken from the Shvetashvatara Upanishad, chapter 4. To understand what the phrase means you must break it up. ‘Yatra Visvam Bhavatyekanidam’ stands for a state or a location for having a global community as a single family. In line with larger Indian intellectual approach, which presentations of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, meaning ‘the world is one family’, and what usually illustrates in the principle of the interdependence of everything that lives. The concept advocates a global perspective grounded on the notion of global solidarity, harmony and connectivity that the ultimate goal is about acknowledging the globe as one whole and unified body.

#### Atithi Devo Bhava

*“Deva pithrukaryabhyam na pramadithavyayam; Mathru devo bhavah; Pithru devo bhavah; Acharya devo bhavah; Athithi devo bhavah”* (Taittiriya Upanishad).

This ancient Indian phrase reflects the stimulating and substantive hospitality ethos, the core of which relates to the need and value of utmost respect and care for the guests. However, the use of this the term emphasises the idea that visitors should be given the same amount of this that one would give to a deity. The point that Atithi Devo Bhava, or the ‘guest is god’, is not a social practise but a sacred duty. The idea of visitors as God is a very deep-rooted culture in India and is there in many ancient witting and traditions.

‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ is an inclusive principle supporting the concept according to which people should expand their hospitality towards stranger people and guests from different backgrounds. Such inclusivity is commensurate with the essence of a global citizenry as well as a broader idea of community inclusion. The idea contends that if we practise viewing visitors as divine beings, people will tend to make productive, happy connections.

#### Krinvanto Vishvam Aryan

*“Indhram vardhanto apturah krinvanto vishvam aryam Apaghnanto aravnah”* \_\_Rig Veda

This means you should invest all of your energy into striving to make the world a better place, and digging up the evil inside of you. The very verse is a universal call to rid the world of its wickedness and bring it to the betterment for all people. Humans have to dismantle evil boundaries between nations and conflicts fought for material gain. They require us to be planning, our best chance of building a globally more peaceful, more tolerant family. Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati and the Motto was given “Krinvanto Vishvam Aryam” that means “to make the world noble”. This is statement captures a high ethical and moral ideal expressed in Vedic literature to build a virtuous and righteous world. It is a phrase, which encourages noble and virtuous behaviour in the world. The statement here encourages people to take an active role as the one who can bring honour, virtue and righteousness to the world It looks at a higher goal to pursue for the world’s well-being as a benefit, the moral principles and the ethical behaviours.



### **Tasya Bhasa Sarvamidham Vibhati**

*“Na tatra suryo bhaati na chandratarakam nema vidyuto bhaanti kutoyamagnihi*

*Tameva bhaantamanubhaati sarva tasya bhasa sarvamidham vibhati” \_\_Katha Upanishad.*

This phrase is taken from Katha Upanishad. The phrase literally means all things in this world are their showing off his brilliant radiant power'. All the world is made by one powerful light, and all become the children of the same father - in other words that all of the world together is a single family of the earth. It is all about inclusiveness, interconnectedness, uniformity and shared responsibility of individuals.

### **Aa No Bhadrah Krutavo Yantu Viswato**

*“Aa no bhadrah krutavo yantu vishwato dabdhaso aparitasa udbhidaha*

*Deva no yatha Sadam id vardhe asann aprayavo rakkshitaro dive dive.”*

May the virtuous ideas arising at all places and from all directions never deceive us ; may our triumphs never be hindered ; may the divine beings always be in our favour, serving as protectors to us; toiling for our good in every day. This is a distinctive quality of someone who considers himself a global citizen. A global citizen has a desire to develop his or her outlook to understand and appreciate the many ethnic thoughts, cultural activities of other people on the world. The verse is a gentle reminder to live in an open mind, accepting and integrating others' great ideas and practises. Such a more harmonious world where peaceful coexistence is fostered will be enabled by doing so.

### **Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu**

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu can be read also as an expression of wishing global population happiness to all. The text may be recited, vocalized, or contemplated, again as a kind of prayer, or shloka, that has a universal appeal. More widely accepted translation is “may all sentient beings, wherever they are, come to liberation and enjoy profound joy.” It is to be mentioned that this particular mantra is not explicitly documented in the Vedas which is a comprehensive document but in other well recognized documents. Often a portion of a Shanti mantra which is a mantra for peace, the phrase ‘lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu’ is often used. It's a way to offer, a way to participate and in some ways a way to create community. When this phrase appears in current culture, you will invariably see it used in regards to kirtan sessions, or communal chanting activities. This slogan is frequently a public expression of goodwill for global well-being.

### **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**

The Sanskrit phrase ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ means in English ‘The world is one family.’ The word in originates from the ancient Indian scriptures called the ‘Maha Upanishad’ verse 71 that are encased as part of the Vedic literature. This is a statement on a fundamental idea rooted in the concept that the interconnection in all living beings is beyond national or ethnic or religious boundaries. The statement is a way to expand the meaning of family taking all the people of the world under it. This concept is the art of realizing that all human beings, regardless of the differences of nationality, ethnicity and religion, are mutually related to, and part of a wider, comprehensive universal brotherhood. It is an idea of inclusion and acceptance of diversity. If someone adopts a global perspective after looking at the world as a cohesive family, then they are more likely to develop an attitude of inclusivity, respect for a diversity. It promotes responsible behaviour and good treatment towards all living beings. ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ in brief symbolizes a substantial and comprehensive view of the world as one harmonious and sensual family. As a guiding principle, it encourages global understanding, cooperation and shared commitment to the well-being of all beings on this world.

### **Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu Ma Kaschid Dukhhabhag Bhavet**

The complete verse is “*Om sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu nira-maya-ah; sarve bhadrani pashyant ma kaschid dukhhabhagbhavet Om, shantih, shantih, shantih*”

The said Sanskrit verse ‘Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu, Ma Kaschid Dukhhabhag Bhavet’ (Let us see only Good, and No Evil; No Evil may Exist) is read in the light of the global citizenship education, the ideas the phrases produce with what to promote are propulsive on how to be a global individual carrying a sense of collective responsibility, compassion and being a contributing part of an existence. Taking a lens of global citizenship education, it is a verse that calls for the wellbeing of every individual from around the globe. The point is that the search for well living and happiness does not only concern one group or one part of the globe, but all the people of the global community. The verse is urging all of us to perceive goodness globally. Linkage between this and global citizenship education is through nurturing cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. This means an open-minded attitude to the benefits of the richness of different cultures, tradition and opinions. The compassionate ethos central to global citizenship is that you wish to spare anybody from suffering. It stimulates people to cultivate the sense of empathy and sensitivity for those people alive around us spatially as well as in socio-economic background but also for people over borders, cultures and backgrounds.



## DISCUSSION

Indian scriptural by imparting timeless wisdom, ethical principles and holistic designing that have left their mark in world's vision of global citizen education. These scriptures draw their root from a specific culture and religious tradition and yet some of their teachings have universal values which can foster better the understanding and practice of the globe citizenship. According to Indian philosophical views of interdependence and spiritual understanding, the basic idea communicated in this is Yatra visvam bhavatyekanidam, which means a world or a community. It encourages ethnical solidarity, harmony and peace between all the countries worldwide. Which means the phrase 'Atithi Devo Bhava' is a reminder that hospitality is a sacred duty. Such kindness, warmth and generosity when considered as a moral obligation or an ethical responsibility. "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam", urges the people to take part in a formation of a world of honour, virtue, and righteousness by means of moral principles and ethical behaviour. Inclusiveness, interconnectedness, uniformity, and shared responsibility of people is the highlight "Tasya Bhasa Sarvamidham Vibhats". The simple chant 'Aa No Bhadrah Krutavo Yantu Viswato' (translated to 'May the bad be rejected') reminds us to be open-minded, to accept and integrate from the wide range of other's great ideas and practises. Doing so fosters a more harmonious world, where peaceful component exists. It is said that 'Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu' has been considered to be used by us as an effort to wish joyfulness to everyone on this planet. "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is a universal and deep view of humanity as a people devoted to compassion towards each, and understanding the connection, through that compassion. "Sarveshu bhadrani pashyantam ma kaschid dukkhabhag bhavet", which more or less means that well-being and happiness being not confined to a particular nation or region but spread to the whole of humanity. Indian scriptures admit of and extol diversity, including verses which recognize the unity of diverse human experience. This view parallels the global citizenship education target of nurturing inclusivity and respect for religious and ethnic and cultural diversity. The Atharva Veda is full of teachings about the sanctity of nature, and that ecology has to be preserved. And this is the understanding that the global community has of planet welfare and future generations based on these principles.

## CONCLUSION

In Indian scriptures knowledge and wisdom is highlighted and one should look for a higher sense of life and existence. Indian philosophy is a fruit of centuries of coexistence of different religious and cultural traditions and it is tolerant, pluralist. This is an important approach to engender global citizens sensitive and appreciative of cultural diversity everywhere. Global citizenship education has two goals: that it instils critical thinking and a holistic understanding of global issues and a commitment to lifelong learning. Indian scriptures interweave these teachings for drawing in the basic premise of global citizenship education such as being able to think beyond national boundaries which gives rise to a mindset of doing ethical and compassionate acts and to feel a sense of belongingness.

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