



## ***Vaisudhaiva Kutumbakam, Humanism and Social Harmony (A Study of the Philosophy of Humanism in Hinduism as a Compendium for Constructing a Conformist Social Order)***

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**A B S T R A K** Konteks kehidupan individu dan ekspresi hidup bersama dalam masyarakat menghadapi tantangan yang melekat. Tantangan yang melekat adalah kompleksitas latar belakang setiap anggota masyarakat. Kompleksitas ini mencakup perbedaan latar belakang etnis, agama, ras, dan antar kelompok. Semakin beragam suatu masyarakat, semakin besar potensi konflik horizontal. Terjadinya konflik sosial (horizontal) tidak dapat dipisahkan dari sifat individu sebagai homo conflictus. Dibutuhkan formula yang dapat digunakan sebagai "katup" berdasarkan agama Hindu untuk menjaga keharmonisan sosial. Tesis yang dapat digunakan sebagai cakrawala untuk melihat realitas sosial, terutama menginternalisasi aspek humanisme dalam setiap individu untuk menjaga sistem sosial guna menghindari dampak konflik, adalah konsep vaisudhaiva kutumbakam. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bahwa terdapat konstruksi pemikiran filosofis tentang kemanusiaan dalam agama Hindu yang dapat diinternalisasi dalam menjaga struktur dan sistem sosial agar tetap harmonis. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif-eksploratif. Tahapan dalam penelitian ini dimulai dengan proses pengumpulan data, interpretasi data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Vaisudhaiva kutumbakam sebagai filosofi pengajaran kemanusiaan, memberikan cakrawala dan stimulasi dalam membangun masyarakat yang stabil, mantap, konformis, serta mengajarkan tanggung jawab etis dalam membangun keseimbangan sosial. Hinduisme sebagai agama kemanusiaan dan agama universal, ingin memberikan solusi terhadap masalah keberagaman yang dijadikan dasar untuk membangun narasi konflik. Melalui konsep ini, Hinduisme juga ingin menyatakan bahwa perbedaan adalah suatu keharusan, yang harus ditegaskan.

**A B S T R A C T.** The context of individual life and the expression of living together in the community is faced with an inherent challenge. The inherent challenge is the complexity of the background of each member of society. This complexity includes differences in ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group backgrounds. The more diverse a society, the greater potential for horizontal conflict. The occurrence of social conflict (horizontal), cannot be separated from the nature of the individual as homo conflictus. It needs a formula that can be used as a "valve" based on Hinduism to maintain social harmony. The thesis that can be used as a horizon to see social reality, especially internalizing aspects of humanism in each individual in maintaining the social system in order to avoid the impact of conflict is the vaisudhaiva kutumbakam conception. The purpose of this study is to explain that there is a construction of philosophical thinking about humanity in Hinduism that can be internalized in maintaining social structures and systems in order to remain harmonious. The method used in this research is qualitative-exploratory. The stages in this research begin with the process of collecting data, interpreting data and drawing conclusions. Vaisudhaiva kutumbakam as a teaching philosophy of humanity, provides a horizon and stimulation in building a stable, steady, conformist society, and teaches ethical responsibility in building social equilibrium. Hinduism as a religion of humanity and a universal religion, wants to provide a solution to the problem of diversity which is used as the basis for building conflict narratives. Through this concept, Hinduism also wants to state that differences are a necessity, which must be affirmed.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans, from a philosophical perspective, are viewed as existential entities. Philosophically, the argument regarding human existence is explained within the context of an entity that constantly maintains its autonomy and independence. The preservation of this space of independence signifies humans as *homo individuum*, or beings who are self-reliant and authentic. However, from a socio-philosophical perspective, humans are dubbed monopluralistic beings. This means that in their authentic bodies, every individual not only possesses their essence as an independent being, but also has various essences or different types of characters. One of the essences of human beings is that they are *homo socius*, or social creatures. The essence of humans as social beings stimulates them to consistently maintain relationships. This consistency in building social relationships is driven by the desire to live together, which in sociological studies is known as gregariousness. It is this desire that, in the linearity of time, shapes society. The paradigm developed by Spencer places more emphasis on individual power in shaping society. Individuals are not just members of society, but they are the builders of society. Without individuals, society does not form into its structures (Wisarja & Suastini, 2021). The existence of society is just like Martin Buber's thesis on human relationships, which states that I become me because of you, and vice versa. Awareness of this will lead to societal inclusiveness, and is a key condition for realizing the values of humanism in practical life. Community-based societies need to develop awareness of this human sociality thru various social activities such as education, training, and so on (Yunus, 2021).

However, the context of individual life and the expression of living together in society are faced with an inherent challenge. This inherent challenge is the complexity of each member of society's background. This complexity includes differences in ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup backgrounds. In other words, in social life, every individual is confronted with the phenomenon of necessity, namely multiculturalism. The concept of difference as an inevitability, within the sociological paradigm, is seen as having social implications. A potential social implication of diversity is social conflict. Sociological theory explains that the more diverse a society, the greater the potential for horizontal conflict. The occurrence of social conflict (horizontal) cannot be separated from the nature of other individuals, namely individuals as *homo conflictus* – in the process of their lives, individuals cannot be separated from the nuances of conflict, because conflict is inherent in every current of social life. This context can be explained within the paradigm developed by Rousseau. In this context, society is a collection of individuals who collectively bind themselves together in a social contract. Society would not be formed without the involvement of individuals as the primary components of society. For Rousseau, society is a structure. In other words, society is the gathering of 'atomic' components called individuals. The separation of these components will result in the breakdown of the social contract (Wisarja & Suastini, 2021).

Conflict in social life cannot be eliminated, but its implications can be minimized. To minimize the potential for conflict and its resulting impact, a thesis on the concept of humanity is needed, which can be elaborated from a philosophical or theological perspective. A concept that can be used as a horizon to view social reality, particularly in internalizing the aspect of humanism in every individual to maintain the social system and avoid the impact of conflict, is the concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* is a concept in the teachings of Hinduism, found in the Vedas, and explained more holistically in the Maha Upanisad. This teaching substantively provides persuasion that collectivity is something very essential. The collectivity intended in this teaching is all of humanity and the world as a cosmic unity, sheltered under one roof of kinship. Sub-explanations of this grand narrative are connected to the teaching of *Tattvam Asi* – found in the *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy introduced by Sankaracarya. The concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* is a thesis or one of the solutions that can be used as a way to manage conflict. The escalation of conflict can decrease because this humanitarian teaching emphasizes universal values, regardless of ethnic background or other differences. In other words, the factors causing conflict due to heterogeneity or diversity can be overcome by objectifying and internalizing this teaching. *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* can be achieved thru communication and creating an egalitarian space, where all humans have equal standing. Thru communication, social stigma or suspicion between people can be discussed, and differences are not a threat. The aspects for creating this space for communication or discourse align with the explanation of human philosophy. Human philosophy is currently undergoing a shift and is more interested in the effort to formulate humans as animal loquens (speaking beings). Human superiority is very evident in terms of language. Humans must learn to speak. Thus, communication is highly emphasized in human interaction. Human existence in the world begins when humans are able to speak or communicate (Kirom, 2020). Creating an egalitarian space for discourse to minimize conflict is the responsibility of every human being. Emmanuel Levinas provides a moral stance when humans concretely encounter others, namely the attitude of responsibility. It was that sense of responsibility for others that truly made him exist as a human being (Sobon, 2018).

The context of this research contains an element of novelty from the perspective of a multidimensional, paradigmatic explanation, namely by fusing religious, philosophical, and sociological explanations. That the humanitarian context, fraught with nuances of conflict, can be anticipated by utilizing the approach of Hindu religious concepts, and explaining the implications of this within a broader social structure. This research is urgently needed to explain that the highly diverse context of society (particularly Indonesia) makes it very susceptible to social conflict leading to disintegration. Diversity also has the potential to legitimize the existence of "majority-dominant" groups to oppress the existence of "minority-recessive" groups. Therefore, philosophical and sociological studies on theses that can be used to manage the reality of social conflict need to be conducted. The purpose of this study is to explain the social structure of society, which is constantly in turmoil due to differences in perspectives and social suspicion as a consequence of those

differences. Therefore, in order to maintain the established social structure, it is necessary to safeguard it by utilizing the functions of Hindu religious institutions and their philosophical concept of *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* – which teaches humanistic aspects and respect for the essence of humanity.

## 2. METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative-exploratory. The material object of this research is humans, society, and social structure. Meanwhile, the formal object used is "vaisudhaiva kutumbakam" as a teaching of Hindu religious humanism philosophy, and as a paradigm in sociology. The stages in this research begin with the data collection process, data interpretation, and drawing conclusions. Using multiple paradigms helps provide deeper explanations and conclusions.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The context of individual life and the expression of living together in societal space face an inherent challenge. This inherent challenge is the complexity of each member of society's background. This complexity includes differences in ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup backgrounds. In other words, in social life, every individual is confronted with the phenomenon of necessity, namely multiculturalism. The concept of difference as an inevitability, within the sociological paradigm, is seen as having social implications. A potential social implication of diversity is social conflict. Sociological theory explains that the more diverse a society, the greater the potential for horizontal conflict. The occurrence of social conflict (horizontal) cannot be separated from the nature of other individuals, namely individuals as homo conflictus – in the process of their lives, individuals cannot be separated from the nuances of conflict, because conflict is inherent in every flow of social life. This context can be explained within the paradigm developed by Rousseau. In this context, society is a collection of individuals who collectively bind themselves together in a social contract. Society would not be formed without the involvement of individuals as the primary components of society. For Rousseau, society is a structure. In other words, society is the gathering of 'atomic' components called individuals. The separation of these components would result in the breakdown of the social contract.

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### Discussion

#### *Vaisudhaiva Kutumbakam and the Construction of the Discourse of Human Philosophy*

Hinduism is a religion that essentially teaches humanistic ethics or humanism. As a universal teaching, Hinduism emphasizes the concept of the Supreme God (*Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*) residing within every being. Therefore, the

internalization and implementation of social empathy is the main path to creating a space of equality. The teachings of humanity, institutionalized in human philosophy, are explained integrally in the concept of *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam*. The concept of "the world is one family" is contained in the Maha Upanishad. However, the grand narrative about this concept is explained in more detail in the Hitopadesha literature. The Hitopadesha itself is a collection of short stories written in Sanskrit, compiled by Narayan Pandit thousands of years ago. If viewed etymologically, "*vaisudhaiva kutumbakam*" consists of several word combinations that form a unified meaning. *Vasudhaiva* means the world, *eva* means to emphasize or something essential and meaningful, and *kutumbakam* means family. Therefore, terminologically, "*vaisudhaiva kutumbakam*" can be interpreted as the understanding that human existence is under one roof together, which is called "family." The construction of discourse based on the level of collective life – based on the concept of "family" – indicates that the conception of "*vaisudhaiva kutumbakam*" is an ideology for forming a civilized human order. Literally, ideology means the science of ideas, or the teaching of fundamental concepts. In everyday usage, the word "idea" is equated with "ideal." The ideal referred to is a fixed ideal that must be achieved, so this fixed ideal is simultaneously a foundation, perspective, or understanding. In essence, the foundation and the ideal are one and the same (Wikandaru & Cathrin, 2021). *Vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* as an ideal, it must be carried into the empirical aspects or levels for immediate implementation. The implementation of these humanitarian ideals is a form of applying human philosophy within the context of space and time. Space and time are forms of sensory intuition, which simultaneously demonstrate the existence of structuring mental activity. Humans can experience a world of objects because they are located in space, and it can always change because space and time are subjective forms of perception (Muthmainnah, 2018).

The concept of the world is one family doesn't stop at religious teachings; rather, this principle aims to curb human ego, particularly the human ego that impulsively desires to oppress others. Human egoism arises from various causes, one of which is considering oneself an intelligent being. There is no doubt that humans, as *Homo sapiens*, are the most powerful species in the world. *Homo sapiens* also like to think that they have a superior moral status (Harari, 2019). The natural human character caused by the impulse to dominate others can be prevented by internalizing and implementing *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. In other words, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* becomes the antithesis of human desire for superiority. In order for the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* to become an inherent aspect of human life, this teaching must be continuously studied within a philosophical framework. The presence of this humanistic principle of Hinduism in the form of philosophy will have various implications for the formation of humanistic discourse. Because philosophy is personal-social, it can teach humans to think logically, realistically, and systematically about a problem they are facing, thus making them wise in decision-making. Additionally, philosophy can teach humans to appreciate the diversity of human thought, as one person's thinking differs from another's, leading to tolerance. Philosophy also teaches humans to learn comprehensively and integrally, not partially or superficially, so that the results of learning activities can fully achieve goals in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Furthermore, philosophy teaches humans to learn the values of life, not just external values, but more importantly, about ethics and esthetics (Hidayat et al., 2021).

The discourse on the concept of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" should not stop at the ideological and philosophical level. However, to solidify the construction of human philosophy in this teaching, it must be followed up by utilizing a pedagogical basis. A humanistic pedagogical basis will provide an integral understanding that the humanistic paradigm must be understood at the cognitive level and implemented in behavioral order. Because, ontologically from the perspective of human philosophy, educational psychology views humans as educational subjects who have good potential for self-growth and are capable of self-actualization. This potential for self-development needs to be actualized in the educational process. This means that ontologically, educational humanistic psychology explains that education is the process of humanizing students as individuals who possess inherent potential for self-actualization. Humanistic educational psychology holds the view that the educational process should be value-laden. It can be seen that in the educational process, the values believed by students in child-centered education, as in humanistic education, serve as the main foundation for the educational process. Humanistic educational philosophy is an educational philosophy that views education as a process of humanizing students (Hikmawan, 2017). The link between the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* as a religious tenet, studied in a philosophical format, and institutionalized in pedagogical aspects is the link between science and religion. Science and religion are the ways humans have to recognize the mysteries of truth and reality within a broader structure of knowledge (Hidayatullah, 2018). The format of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which is diffused and correlated across theological, philosophical, and pedagogical levels, is a way to construct a narrative of Hindu human philosophy that teaches compassion and equality among humans under one roof called family.

### ***Vaisudhaiva Kutumbakam, Morality, Ethics of Responsibility, and Social Harmony***

The teachings of human philosophy contained in the concept of *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* are a universal compendium possessed by Hinduism. Hinduism is not an exclusive religion, but this *Sanathana Dharma* religion has teachings of compassion regarding the essence of humanity that can be applied in various spaces and times, including in the context of pluralistic societies. The existence of "*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*," when examined deeply and holistically, provides an understanding of the importance of applying morality to maintain harmony among people. Regarding the teachings of morality in Hinduism, which have universal value, we can refer to similar thoughts on morality from Axl Honneth. According to Honneth, morality is linked to the understanding of recognition in three dimensions: affective, legal, and social. Understanding in the affective dimension relates to intersubjective relationships based on emotions and can determine self-confidence. Understanding in the legal dimension is related to the principle of self-respect as a starting

point that enables respect for others. Next, understanding in the dimension of solidarity as a complement that perfects the other two dimensions of understanding. To be able to act morally, understanding that encompasses those three dimensions determines whether a person can act as a moral agent. Injustice occurs as the deliberate destruction of the dimensions of understanding mentioned above. Honneth advocates for a formal concept of the morally good life as the foundation for building and maintaining a pluralistic society (Ramin, 2017). The discourse on morality presented by Honneth serves to preserve human values within the heterogeneous space of a society. Moreover, spaces of humanity within the public arena appear in the teachings of Hinduism. In other words, morality teaches about the egalitarian and truthful aspects, particularly in upholding the values of humanity. Recognized truths have equal value; there is no superior or inferior judgment of one over the other (Abzar Duraesa & Ahyar, 2019).

Furthermore, the teaching of *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* as part of the human philosophy of Hinduism, essentially teaches the importance of maintaining plurality, instilling the principle of egalitarianism or equality between individuals, and affirming that there is no polarization that causes the individual to be split into two ambivalent aspects: a superior entity and an inferior entity. The teaching of *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* as a philosophical doctrine teaches that the fundamental aspect of human nature is freedom. Freedom signifies human beings' self-identity as existential creatures, even though they exist within diverse societal contexts. The presence of freedom signifies that an equal human space has been created. Freedom in contemporary times is becoming increasingly urgent, as freedom is not only recognized as part of oneself but also as a hope and desire to shape a more meaningful life. Freedom has become synonymous with the highest human ideal. Freedom ultimately means nothing other than "the highest stage of humanity," also known as *humanum* (Hans Kung). Contemporary humans are not only aware of freedom as an integral part of themselves that changes their view of the world, but they also place freedom at the core of their desires and hopes (Tutupary, 2016). Free will, which characterizes human existence, when placed within the context of the Hindu teaching of *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam*, provides us with an explanation that humanistic teachings within a religion are capable of shaping relationships between individuals. When these relationships are formed, the humanistic aspects between the individuals involved will become stronger. According to David Ray Griffin (Tutupary, 2016), Free will is not only related to the relationship between humans and God, but also to the relationship between humans and their fellow humans and their environment. This view is based on Griffin's belief that religion is not only individual but also has a communal worldview. This worldview shows that humans are religious beings who are always striving to find meaning (even unconsciously), and that this is done by trying to be in harmony with the most fundamental form of reality in the world, as far as understanding goes. Thus, religion is not merely faith and belief, but also practical action that benefits fellow human beings and the environment. Based on this line of thinking, free will doesn't just remain a matter of humans with themselves, evil, or humans with God, but also a matter of human freedom in creativity to build a better world in the future.

Human existence as beings with the will to be free must be balanced with the drive to be responsible. This is because the reading of humanity taught in *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* cannot be achieved if there is an unequal correlation between freedom and responsibility. As we know, freedom is closely linked to the self, so this aspect of the self must be balanced with the stimulus that there is not only "me," but also "them." Recognition of "them" can only be created thru the concept of responsibility. *Vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* states that all living beings in this world are a collective entity bound by ethical status, that the process of implementing affection is not only done solely on oneself, but that the application of affection must also be extended to "the Other." Therefore, consciousness is no longer bound by ego, but rather spreads into the context of the whole world family – thus creating a diversity of identities in forming a human system within kinship and family systems. To build kinship and family without regard to different backgrounds, the binding net that can be used is the implementation of the ethics of responsibility Levinas (Sobon, 2018) has established an ethics of responsibility that he fundamentally understands as responsibility thru and for others. Responsibility occurs when the face appears and its nature is absolute. In essence, responsibility for the Other does not stem from my initiative, but rather precedes my freedom. Without being instructed by anyone else, I am and must be responsible for the face that appears. In other words, being responsible to others is not a command. Responsibility was already attributed to me before or prior to my initiative. This means that responsibility is not an altruistic drive or attitude. Responsibility is the first data that underlies all attitudes taken. Responsibility is the most fundamental data and the starting point for all attitudes and actions, namely, I exist for others. The teaching of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* is achieved thru the principle of ethical responsibility. The ethics of responsibility becomes a value that underpins humanitarian action. As stated by Kluckhon (-, 2020) Values are often associated with morals, ethics, or esthetics, all of which serve as a reference for humans in their daily attitudes and behavior. Something is considered to have value when it is valuable or useful for human life. Because values are a conception of what is desired, which influences choices regarding the means, intermediate goals, and ultimate goals of an action.

The presence of "*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*" as a teaching of humanity plays a very central role in preventing various actions that can disrupt social order. One action that disrupts social order is radicalism. Radicalism, regardless of the pretext, is an act that disturbs society. But radical ideas and actions tend to continue to increase thru various means. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemenkominfo RI) states that there are at least 814,594 websites spreading radicalism, which were blocked from 2010 to 2015 (Saifuddin, 2017). Globalization has opened the floodgates of information, allowing anything from foreign sources to easily enter and influence people's lives, including ideology (Wikandaru & Cahyo, 2016). With the advent of globalization, information comes in a constant stream,

changing rapidly in human life. It spread thru newspapers, magazines, and television; and when the internet developed so rapidly, information also spread very massively thru the internet. Online news portals; social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; and instant messaging services like WhatsApp and Line are home to information about anything and from anyone. This is the chaos (Wikandaru, 2018). With the diversity of social media portals, modern humans, who used positivism as a tool to master nature, will shift toward an effort to dominate their fellow human beings. (Tasnur & Sudrajat, 2020). In the book "Science and the Problems of Divinity" written by Greg Soetomo (Hidayatullah, 2017), It is explained that the development of science, which is able to provide empirical and mathematical evidence to narrow or even eliminate religiosity, is often accompanied by philosophical claims that are not actually within the purview of science.

Given the above realities, the position of Hinduism, with its humanistic philosophical basis as expressed in the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, is very important to present. This is because this philosophy of humanism teaches how to apply religious concepts in building social harmony. Or, in other words, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* is the basis of the theology of social harmony. It is called theology because this teaching of humanity originates from the teachings of Hinduism, and it is called social harmony because it promotes the concept of balance in human life within society. Linguistically, social harmony means the alignment of society based on the interests of the community. This concept is also inseparable from human and cultural values, and from the status of humans as servants of God. This means that social harmony theology is a narrative of societal life's harmony built from within their belief in God. Loving humanity in the concept of humanism is the foundation of every human being's life on this earth, regardless of their religion. The manifestation of love in these different human lives, including in this case religion, is harmony. This conception leads to the ethical dimension, which is human enlightenment thru spiritual, mental, and intellectual awareness. This framework also works and grows in the real form of everyday human life. Religion comes to teach life, to teach how to face reality, to teach harmony, love, and peace (Faiz, 2019). The teachings of social harmony in Hinduism, conceptualized in the philosophy of humanism known as *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, emphasize that human relationships are humanistic and egalitarian, requiring accountability between interacting subjects. Levinas (Sobon, 2018) showing that humans in all their experiences and attitudes are driven by an ethical impulse, namely responsibility toward others. The most fundamental reality is the encounter with someone. The face's appearance invites me to take responsibility. Thru this principle, responsibility is always directed toward others, thru the Other (*par Autrui*). The ethical relationship Levinas refers to is an asymmetrical ethical relationship. A sense of responsibility for others without expecting reciprocity from them. Other people are my soul. By doing and giving something to others, I present myself as being human spirit. Thus, responsibility becomes an attitude of caring filled with attention. And this relationship is only possible thru service to others.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The humanistic philosophy of Hinduism, as expressed in the concept of *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam*, is a philosophical teaching that emphasizes humanistic ethics constructed thru egalitarianism, morality, and responsibility. The fusion of these three essential aspects leads us to the reality that human relationships do not stop at different backgrounds, whether they are ethnic, religious, racial, or inter-group backgrounds. However, *vaisudhaiva kutumbakam* teaches how to create responsible relationships without differentiating between different individuals. The essence of humanism in this teaching of humanistic philosophy plays a very important role in creating a conforming social order that leads to social harmony.

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