

ETHICS IN WARFARE:
INSIGHTS FROM DHANURVEDA

A Dissertation Submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh for the award of Degree of Master of Arts in Public Administration and Public Policy, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (2024-25)

Submitted by

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NEW DELHI**

SELF DECLARATION CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the dissertation titled 'Ethics In Warfare: Insights From Dhanurveda', submitted by me for award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Administration and Public Policy is original and this work or part thereof has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma either in this or any other University. All the sources I have accessed or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of references.

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I have pleasure to certify that Air Commodore Narsingh Sailani has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation titles 'Ethics In Warfare: Insights From Dhanurveda' under my guidance and supervision. This is being submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh, for the purpose of Master of Arts in Public Administration and Public Policy in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA) in Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.

I recommend that the dissertation of Air Commodore Narsingh Sailani is worthy of consideration for the award of Master of Arts of the Punjab University, Chandigarh.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

मूर्च्छितं नैव विकलं नाशस्त्रं नान्ययोधिनम् ।
पलायमानं शरणं गतं चैव न हिंसयेत् ॥

*One should not kill the enemy who is lying unconscious
or the one who is wounded, or who is devoid of weapons,
or who is fighting with another warrior, or who has withdrawn
or who has come for refuge.*

Dhanurveda, Verse 191

1.1 History of Dhanurveda

The history of warfare dates back thousands of years and remains a crucial aspect of human civilisation, shaping societies and influencing the global order. As a fundamental human activity, warfare has always been closely tied to ethical considerations. Across different eras, civilisations have established their own ethical codes and frameworks for conducting war, drawing from religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions. One such ancient tradition is found in **Dhanurveda**, a classical Indian treatise that provides detailed guidance on military strategy, weaponry, and ethical principles in battle (Ray, 2003).

The number of theories and writings that are available on war fighting are numerous and the subject has been approached by various thinkers throughout the human history. The evolution of warfare has been spectacular and has reached maturity to adapt to any change in the environment. Ethics, however, has been a subject that has remained at the centre of all tactics and even at strategic level. Human values form the most evolved concept in mankind history that overcomes and controls the basic instincts that all life was created with. As the human species evolved and became civilised, the need to have a code of conduct also evolved, which dictated a common accepted system and set of values. These model codes of conduct or ethos became the driving force for civilised societies. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the ethics which a society followed were a direct indicator of the maturity of civilisation.

The test of human supremacy over *animalia* lies in the ability of man to respect ethics and moral conduct during conflict. Therein lies the sum of evolution, when a man overcomes his animal instinct when engaged in conflict with another man and agrees to follow the ethics.

1.2 India's Contribution to Study of Warfare

India is the oldest civilisation in the world and has been the centre of knowledge for centuries. Ancient Indian texts as well as the knowledge passed down through word of mouth have enchanted the western world with its significant contribution. A systematic study of Vedas and other Hindu texts reveal the expertise India had in various fields,

including social organisation, economics, education, and military strategy. The development of warfare as a structured discipline indicates the emphasis laid on managing military might alongside political and philosophical thought. The Ramayana and Mahabharata, two of India's most revered epics, contain elaborate depiction of wars and extensive discussions on military tactics and strategies. Much later, in the better recorded historical era, Kautilya gave the gift of Arthashastra to the world. Written in the third century BCE, Kautilya's Arthashastra emerged as one of the most accurate rendition of the art of statecraft and warfare and is a widely studied text around the world.

1.3 Ethics in Dhanurveda

Even when the settlements around the world were struggling to survive and learn to form states, the Vedic scriptures already were written and formed the foundation of India's cultural identity. Among these, the Dhanurveda specifically focuses on the art of archery while also elaborating on the rules of engagement and ethical conduct in warfare. The Dhanurveda is centred on key ethical principles that form the core of Indian martial philosophy (Ray, 2003):

- **Dharma-yuddha (Righteous War):** Advocates for engaging in just wars that protect justice and innocent lives.
- **Ahimsa (Non-Violence):** Emphasises avoiding unnecessary violence and treating all living beings with respect and compassion.

- **Kshatriya Dharma (Warrior's Duty):** Highlights the moral responsibility of warriors to protect society, defend the weak and uphold honour and duty.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

While ancient Indian martial traditions, including those given in the **Dhanurveda**, contain a rich ethical framework, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these principles apply to modern discussions on warfare ethics. The ethical guidelines in the **Dhanurveda**, although rooted in historical and cultural traditions, have not been extensively compared with contemporary frameworks such as **Just War Theory** and **International Humanitarian Law**. This lack of comparative study prevents a meaningful integration of historical insights into modern military ethics. Thus, the central research question of this study is: “**Are the ethical principles of warfare outlined in the Dhanurveda still relevant in modern times?**”

1.5 Research Objectives

The Dissertation aims to explore the ancient text and discuss insights with the following objectives:-

- To elucidate the core ethical principles outlined in Dhanurveda and their implications for conduct in warfare.

- To explore the historical and cultural context in which Dhanurveda was developed, particularly in relation to Indian philosophy and ancient warfare.
- To compare the ethical teachings of Dhanurveda with modern ethical frameworks in warfare, including Just War Theory and International Humanitarian Law.
- To assess the relevance and applicability of Dhanurveda's ethical principles to contemporary warfare scenarios.
- To provide insights into whether ancient warfare ethics can inform modern ethical debates surrounding military conduct and conflict.
- To propose how traditional insights from Dhanurveda could be integrated into contemporary military ethics and policy-making.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction to Dhanurveda

The Dhanurveda Samhita, as presented in Purnima Ray Vasista's work (2003), is one of the oldest known treatises on warfare in ancient India. Rooted in the broader Vedic tradition, it is traditionally considered an Upaveda of the Yajurveda and focuses on the art and ethics of warfare, making it a significant text for understanding ancient Indian military philosophy. The Dhanurveda outlines the rules of engagement, including ethical codes for warriors, placing a strong emphasis on righteousness and dharma in battle, which was a reflection of broader Vedic values (Ray, 2003).

According to P.C. Chakravarti in *The Art of War in Ancient India* (1941), the Dhanurveda's ethical teachings are closely aligned with the principles of dharma or righteous conduct. The text highlights that war is only justified when conducted for the protection of righteousness, defence of the weak, and restoration of peace. This establishes the foundation for exploring the ethical considerations within the Dhanurveda, and its broader application in ancient Indian warfare (Chakravarti, 1941).

2.2 Ethical Considerations in Ancient Indian Warfare

The ethical dimensions of warfare in the Dhanurveda are not unique to this text alone but reflect a wider moral framework found in other ancient Indian texts. Ramachandra Dikshitar's work on *War in Ancient India* (1944) suggests that ethical codes in warfare, such as the protection of non-combatants, mercy towards the defeated, and prohibitions against deceit, were central to military practices in ancient India. These principles ensured that warfare, while necessary, remained bound by ethical considerations that sought to limit unnecessary violence and destruction (Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1944).

Further expanding on these ethical principles, Kaushik Roy, in *Hinduism and the Ethics of Warfare in South Asia: From Antiquity to the Present* (2012), explores how ancient texts like the Dhanurveda shaped not only military strategies but also the ethical conduct of war. Roy points out that the rules of warfare in the Dhanurveda aimed to balance ahimsa (non-violence) with the warrior's duty to fight in defence of dharma. This tension between violence and righteousness is a recurring theme in the ethical discourse of warfare in ancient Indian philosophy (Roy).

2.3 Comparative Ethical Frameworks in Indian Military Texts

The Dhanurveda shares many ethical principles with other key texts of ancient Indian literature, particularly the Mahabharata. According to Ajay Singh's works, *India's Battlefields: From Kurukshetra to Balakot* (2020) and *The Battles That Shaped Indian*

History (2011), the Mahabharata further delves into the ethics of war, specifically focusing on the concept of dharma yuddha (righteous war). Singh's analysis demonstrates how the ethics of war outlined in these texts influenced military conduct and the broader cultural attitudes toward war in ancient India (Singh Ajay, 2011) (Singh A. , 2020).

Sarva Daman Singh's *Ancient Indian Warfare with Special Reference to the Vedic Period* (1989) also provides important context for understanding the Dhanurveda within the Vedic period's broader tradition. He explores how the warrior's code, influenced by religious and moral obligations, was central to the justification and conduct of warfare. These codes emphasised fair conduct, proportionality in battle, and the protection of non-combatants, principles that were also later codified in the Dhanurveda (Singh S. D., 1989).

The ethical dimensions of warfare in ancient India were not only theoretical but also had practical applications in governance and military strategies. In his book *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times* (1943), Radha Kumud Mookerji's provides an example of how the ethical guidelines from the ancient teachings like the Dhanurveda deeply influenced statecraft and military policies during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and the subsequent Magadha Empires. The Mauryan empire flourished as a great power dynasty owing to its military prowess and great strategic thought, however, unlike other kingships, the Mauryas also laid emphasis on justice, warrior values incorporated ethical boundaries during war fighting. The Mauryan Empire's adherence to ethical principles in warfare ensured that war was fought for just causes and remained within ethical bounds.

This gave them legitimacy and was instrumental in maintaining the empire and fostering a sense of moral leadership (Mookerji, 1943). The Arthashastra, written by Kautilya (also known as Chanakya), complements the Dhanurveda in discussing the ethics of warfare, further highlighting the Indian philosophical emphasis on righteousness in both war and governance.

2.4 Application of Dhanurveda's Ethics in Contemporary Discourse

Contemporary scholars have sought to reinterpret the ethical principles found in the Dhanurveda in light of modern warfare. The notion of limiting violence and protecting non-combatants resonates with current international norms, such as the Geneva Conventions and Just War Theory, which advocate for proportionality, discrimination, and the protection of civilians during armed conflict. While the Dhanurveda reflects a historical and cultural context, its ethical framework offers valuable insights for today's discussions on military ethics. The principles of righteous war (dharma yuddha) and the moral duties of warriors echo contemporary concerns about the justification and conduct of war, making the Dhanurveda's teachings relevant for modern philosophical debates on warfare ethics.

2.5 Gaps in Existing Literature

Indian texts are rich sources of knowledge on warfare and wisdom on statecraft and have inspired scholars around the world to glean value lessons from these. Interestingly, the

existing literature also provides a rich understanding of the ethical principles of warfare which is not so deeply rooted in other cultures. However, despite a large number of studies on warfare tactics and strategies, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that exclusively focus on the text's ethical framework. Much of the scholarship tends to explore the military strategies and historical contexts of ancient Indian warfare, with less emphasis on a detailed analysis of ethical principles. This gap presents an opportunity for the dissertation to contribute new insights by specifically focusing on the ethical dimensions of warfare in the Dhanurveda. A comparative analysis with other ancient texts and modern military ethics could also provide a broader understanding of how these principles have evolved and remained relevant.

For someone interested, understanding the complex relationship between dharma and violence in ancient Indian thought, the literature on the ethics of warfare in the Dhanurveda provides a sound foundation. Through the works of scholars like Purnima Ray Vasistha, Kaushik Roy, Sarva Daman Singh and others, we can see how the Dhanurveda's principles influenced both military strategy and moral conduct. Building on this existing scholarship, this research aims at making a meaningful contribution to the study of ethics in ancient Indian warfare and its contemporary relevance.

2.6 Research Questions and Hypotheses

2.6.1 Research Questions

During the course of the research, certain questions that would be attempted to find answers to are given below.

- What are the core ethical principles of Dhanurveda, and how do they define just conduct in warfare?
- How do the ethical guidelines in Dhanurveda compare to contemporary frameworks such as Just War Theory and International Humanitarian Law?
- What are the potential contributions of Dhanurveda to current discussions on warfare ethics?
- How can the ethical principles of Dhanurveda be applied or adapted to address modern ethical challenges in warfare?

2.6.2 Hypothesis

The core hypothesis of this dissertation is that the ethical principles embedded in the Dhanurveda reflect a structured and morally conscious approach to warfare, which shares commonalities with modern frameworks of warfare ethics but also presents distinct spiritual and cultural dimensions that offer unique insights into contemporary ethical dilemmas in warfare.

2.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of the dissertation would be restricted to the aspect of ethics in warfare and the laws of war discussed in Dhanurveda. The modern day warfare has a wide spectrum, but

the scope of studying contemporary wars would be limited to the aspects governing or governed by the ethical aspect of warfare.

2.8 Limitations of the Study

- **Textual Interpretation.** One limitation is the reliance on translations and interpretations of ancient texts, which may lead to variations in understanding. The original Sanskrit texts and multiple translations will be consulted to mitigate this issue.
- **Historical Context.** Since the Dhanurveda is an ancient text, there is limited historical data on its precise period and its practical applications in ancient Indian warfare. This study will attempt to contextualise its teachings as best as possible within available historical records.

2.9 Research Methodology

This dissertation explores the ethical principles of Dhanurveda and their relevance in modern warfare. By drawing comparisons with contemporary frameworks like Just War Theory, it seeks to highlight the potential role of ancient wisdom in shaping ethical military conduct today.

2.10 Sources of Data Collection

2.10.1 Primary Sources

- **The Dhanurveda.** Various translations and commentaries of the Dhanurveda to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the text.
- **Other Ancient Indian Texts.** Include sources such as the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Arthashastra, and the Vedas to contextualise and compare the ethical teachings.

2.10.2 Secondary Sources

- **Academic Journals.** Articles in journals related to Indian philosophy, ethics, philosophy and religious studies that discuss the Dhanurveda or ethics in ancient Indian warfare.
- **Books.** Include scholarly books on ancient Indian texts, ethics in warfare, and the historical context of the Dhanurveda.
- **Dissertations and Theses:** Review previous academic work on similar or related topics for additional insights and methodological inspiration.

2.11 Structure of the Dissertation

- **Chapter 1: Introduction.** Overview of warfare ethics, significance of the Dhanurveda and Statement of Problem.
- **Chapter 2: Review of Literature and Research Methodology.** Statement of the Research Objectives, Review of the literature and Research Methodology.
- **Chapter 3: Historical and Cultural Context of Dhanurveda.** Explores the origins, evolution, and ethical philosophy of the text. This includes Key Concepts, Principles of Ethics in Warfare, Core Philosophical and Ethical Concepts in Dhanurveda.
- **Chapter 4: Ethical Principles in Dhanurveda.** Examines key ethical concepts such as Dharma, Neeti and Ahimsa. Discusses Philosophical Foundations of Dhanurveda and its Role in Ancient Warfare.
- **Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis with Modern Ethical Frameworks.** Comparing Dhanurveda with Western concepts like the Just War Theory.

- **Chapter 6: Case Studies and Practical Applications.** Analysis of historical and modern warfare scenarios where Dhanurveda's ethics could be applied.
- **Chapter 7: Relevance of Dhanurveda in Contemporary Warfare: A Discussion.** Evaluation of the research findings and their implications for modern military ethics. This chapter studies various global conflicts and Indian conflicts to evaluate the ethics and their applicability in warfare. Also delves into the efficacy of just wars in creating peace.
- **Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations.** Summary of the study, contributions to the field and recommendations for present and future wars.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF DHANURVEDA

Indeed, in philology the Hindoos have perhaps excelled both the ancients (meaning, no doubt, the Greeks and Romans) and the moderns....

"The Hindoo sages" did not permit even the military art to remain unexamined..... it is very certain that the Hindoo Kings led their own armies to the combat, and that they were prepared for this important employment by a military education;

nor is less certain that many of these monarchs were distinguished for the highest valour and military skill."

– Rev. William Ward

(The theosophical journal, Mar 1881, p 124)

3.1 Introduction to Dhanurveda

In the world of ancient Indian literature, Dhanurveda is a testament to the martial richness of the nation. This treatise on warfare, weapons, and military arts is the foundation of

Indian military culture, providing insights into the strategic and philosophical philosophy of combat. Believed to be the creation of the Hindu deity Vishnu, Dhanurveda is a treatise that has influenced Indian history, philosophy, and culture and left its mark forever on the nation's heritage. (Dunbar, 2011)

3.2 Origins and Evolution of Dhanurveda

Dhanurveda is a sub-veda of Yajurveda. The subjects are that of archery, war art or military science. In olden days, this traditional information was spread & propagated with good reverence all over India. Dhanurveda had many ancient books, but over time, nearly all of the scriptures about Dhanurveda are on the verge of becoming outdated nowadays. The textual description of the texts of Dhanurveda can be seen in some texts. It has been portrayed in Agnipurana as one of the 18 sciences (Prakash, 2014). It also occurs in Mahabharata and a text by name Dhanurveda Samhita is also present. But in the majority of the other scriptures, some essence of this very scripture can be found.

The origins of Dhanurveda go back to the Vedic age (1500 BCE - 500 BCE) (The Vedic Age (1500BC–600BC)), a period when ancient Indian society was struggling with the nuances of war and statecraft. This work was written by ancient Indian scholars and warriors and represents their collective wisdom and experience. Dhanurveda underwent changes through the developments of different Hindu scholars and warriors through the passage of time, based on the dynamic nature of Indian martial traditions.

3.3 Text and Literature on Dhanurveda

Presently original texts of Dhanurveda are not available. Although Dhanurveda texts written by numerous seers i.e. Vishwamitra, Jaamadajna, Shiva, Vasistha etc., in the form of small booklet or reference are present, however cannot be considered to be the complete original texts.

Swami Dayanand has referred to Dhanurveda composed by Maharishi Angira. Acharya Dwijendranath Shastri has explained the book titled 'Dhanushpradeep' composed by Dronacharya, which consisted of seven thousand verses. Likewise, a book titled 'Dhanushchandrodaya' consisting of sixty thousand verses in honour of Parashuram also existed (Dwijendranath, 1939). In Maharishi Vaishampayana's Niti Prakashika, Brahma is stated to be the first pravakta of Dhanurveda, who taught Dhanurveda in one lakh chapters to Maharaj Prithu, who was the son of Veni.

In short, Rudra expounded Dhanurveda reportedly containing fifty thousand chapters, Indra expounded it with twelve chapters, Prachetas with six chapters and Brihaspati expounded it with three thousand chapters. Shukracharya additionally summarised it and composed Nitishastra (Shukraneeti) with a thousand chapters.

Bhardwaja rishi wrote a work consisting of seven hundred chapters, Gaurashira wrote five hundred, Maharishi Veda Vyas summarised them and formed a Niti Shastra with

three hundred chapters. Maharishi Vaishampayan condensed it even more consisting of eight chapters.

3.4 Scope of Dhanurveda

Dhanurveda includes subjects like the character of military officers, laws and regulations of different kinds of wars, recruitment strategies, details of wounded soldiers, spy network recruits, specifications for weapons and food for war soldiers, animals etc., medical department, role or involvement of women in war, types of war, military testing and military training etc. But according to Dhanurveda as mentioned in Agnipurana, the method of weapon-making and their employment etc. have been mentioned in detail. The Agnipurankar (Veda Vyaas ji) has given elaborate explanations in Agnipuraana, regarding the bow and arrow (Shashank, 2021).

A significant conclusion that can be drawn from the study of Dhanurveda is that there is mention of the science of war in most scriptures. No warrior can be a full-fledged warrior unless he learns and acquires knowledge in the different scriptures such as Metallurgy, Astrology, Patanjalyoga-Ayurveda, Yudhajayarnava-Karma Kaanda, Science of voice modulation (Svara Shastra)-Grammar (Vyakarana Shastra), Smriti-Ethics (Neeti Shastra), Chants (Mantra Shastra) etc (Prakash, 2014).

3.5 Key Concepts in Dhanurveda

Dhanurveda is centred around a number of core ideas that constitute the bedrock of Indian martial philosophy. Dharma-yuddha, or simply war, is a core principle, highlighting the necessity of fighting for righteous causes, following ethical guidelines, and saving innocent lives. Ahimsa, or non-violence, is another foundational concept, supporting the avoidance of unnecessary violence, respect for all living creatures, and compassion. Neeti (Code of Conduct), warrior's obligation or Kshatriya dharma emphasises the values of safeguarding society, fighting on behalf of the weak, and maintaining duty and honour.

i . Weapons and Warfare

Dhanurveda deals with different Indian ancient weapons, such as bow and arrow, sword and buckler, spears and javelins, and chariot and elephant. The book describes tactics of war, including warfare of siege, guerrilla war, ambush, and battle arrangement, demonstrating the tactical prowess of ancient Indian fighters.

ii. Martial Arts and Training

Dhanurveda also talks about ancient Indian martial arts such as wrestling (mall-yuddha), boxing (mushti-yuddha), sword fighting (khadga-yuddha), and archery (dhanur-yuddha).

The work stresses the need for physical training, weapon practice, sparring, and mental training in martial arts education, pointing to the holistic nature of warrior development.

iii. Ethics and Conduct

Dhanurveda emphasises the virtue of ethical practice in war, such as handling enemies and prisoners, safeguarding civilians, minimisation of violent attacks, and regard for dead bodies. Dhanurveda identifies the virtues of ahimsa and dharma-yuddha in warfare and emphasises compassionate causes and humanitarian approaches in conflict.

iv. Influence and Legacy

The influence of Dhanurveda reaches far beyond ancient India, shaping Indian martial traditions, informing Indian philosophy and mythology, and adding to Indian art and literature. Certain famous martial arts in Southeast Asian, Chinese and other Asian regions are believed to be inspired by the Dhanurveda, attesting to the text's ongoing popularity and relevance.

3.6 Archery in Dhanurveda: A Comprehensive Guide

The question of why archery is important as the primary theme in a text dealing with warfare can probably be answered by relating to the fact that archery was the most advanced technique employed in combat during ancient times. Consequently, primacy of

Dhanurveda, the ancient Indian warfare science, lays significant stress on archery as an integral part of martial arts and warfare (Prakash, 2014). The text refers to archery as a sacred art, which demands dedication, discipline, and mastery. This article discusses the nuances of archery in Dhanurveda, its history, techniques, and importance.

3.6.1 Archery Techniques

Dhanurveda discusses the art of archery in detailed lessons with great emphasis on the following archery techniques:

- Stance (Asana). A firm, comfortable stance is necessary for precise shooting.
- Bow selection (Dhanur-vikalpa). Selection of the appropriate bow, based on material, size, and strength.
- Arrow selection (Shara-vikalpa). Selection of arrows appropriate to the bow and target.
- Drawing the string (Akarsana). Technique of drawing the string, using fingers and thumb.
- Aiming (Sthana). Target focus, alignment of the arrow, and release of the string.
- Releasing the arrow (Mokshana). Smooth release of the arrow, employing the fingers and thumb.

3.6.2 Types of Archery

Dhanurveda mentions different types of archery:

- Standing archery (Uttana-vedha). Shooting standing.
- Sitting archery (Asana-vedha). Sitting and shooting.
- Kneeling archery (Vajra-vedha). Kneeling and shooting.
- Horseback archery (Asva-vedha). Shooting from horseback.
- Importance of Archery in Dhanurveda

3.6.3 Significance of Archery in Dhanurveda

Archery was very important in Dhanurveda, with various purposes being served.

- Warfare. Archery was an important skill in ancient Indian warfare, offering a ranged attack option.
- Hunting. Archery played a crucial role in hunting and gathering food.
- Self-defence. Archery was also imparted as a way of self-protection, empowering one to fight back.
- Spiritual growth. Archery was viewed as a meditative activity, building concentration, obedience, and willpower.

3.7 Ethics in Warfare: A Dhanurvedic Perspective

Although the Dhanurveda is, in effect, a work on archery, it addresses other wider topics related to war, including the character of a warrior and the principles that are to be adhered to while conducting a righteous war. Warfare has long been a rich and multi-dimensional part of human society, evoking fundamental issues regarding the ethics and morality of war. Dhanurveda, ancient Indian warfare science, presents a distinctive approach to ethics in warfare, with the focus on dharma (righteousness), ahimsa (non-violence), and Kshatriya dharma (warrior's duty).

3.7.1 Principles of Ethics in Warfare

Dhanurveda outlines several key principles for ethical conduct in warfare.

- Dharma-yuddha (Righteous War). War must be fought only for righteous reasons, e.g., defending one's kingdom, people, or dharma.
- Ahimsa (Non-Violence). Refrain from unnecessary violence and destruction of non-combatants, civilians, and the environment.
- Neeti or Kshatriya Dharma (Warrior's Duty). Warriors owe a responsibility to defend their kingdom, citizens, and dharma, while maintaining honour and duty.
- Sadharana Dharma (Common Duty). All members of society, irrespective of their position in society, owe a responsibility to maintain righteousness and morality.

- Shatru-samhara (Enemy Destruction). Destruction of the enemy is only allowed in cases of self-defence or defence of one's kingdom.

3.7.2 Ethical Conduct in the Battlefield

Dhanurveda places great importance on ethical conduct on the battlefield.

- Treatment of Enemies. Treat defeated enemies with respect, dignity, and compassion.
- Protection of Non-Combatants. Safeguard civilians, women, children, and the elderly from injury.
- Avoidance of Unnecessary Violence. Avoid unnecessary destruction, pillage, and violence.
- Honourable Surrender. Permit vanquished foes to surrender honourably, with impunity from persecution.

3.8 Core Philosophical and Ethical Concepts in Dhanurveda

3.8.1 Dharma Yuddha (Righteous Warfare)

Dhanurveda is based on the concept of Dharma Yuddha, or righteous war, which states that war should be conducted according to moral standards. As Dunbar (2011) in *Classical Hindu Views of Righteous Warfare* explains, ancient Indian military ethics were

based on the belief that wars were only to be waged for justice, the protection of the innocent, and defence of the kingdom (Dunbar, 2011).

3.8.2 Neeti (Code of Conduct) in Warfare

i. Ethical Norms: Known as the Code of Conduct or 'Neeti', Dhanurveda sets down ethical norms for fighters to strictly adhere to on the battlefield. This code requires ensuring that no harm is done to non-combatants, not targeting unresisting or fleeing warriors, sparing the unarmed and the non-fighters and displaying mercy upon the defeated foes who have given up fighting. Neeti is intended to ensure that in spite of being engaged in warfare, Ahimsa as a concept and concern for life is respected to the fullest. Dhanurveda recognises the need for violence in some contexts but stresses that it must always be underpinned by moral principles and an abiding respect for life. The ultimate objective is to restore peace and ensure justice while reducing harm to all living things

ii. Kshatriya Dharma (Warrior's Duty): Dhanurveda has very close connotations with Kshatriya Dharma, meaning the religious and moral obligation of the warrior class. Dhanurveda details and expounds upon this very notion. Dhanurveda stresses the role of dharma (moral obligation) in war. Soldiers should adhere to certain code of conduct, for instance, not targeting unarmed or fleeing foes, upholding the laws of war, and safeguarding non-fighters. This is in keeping with the overall Hindu philosophy of righteous warfare.

Dhanurveda, therefore, sets up a strict code of conduct and cohesive set of practices covering the conduct during war, responsibilities during the war and duties of a Kshatriya on the battlefield in consonance with the ethical values, strategic goals and spirituality.

3.8.3 Ahimsa and Necessary Violence

This is one of the most intriguing aspects of the ethical discussion. How Ahimsa or non-violence integrates as a value while waging a war is an erudite example of the philosophical thoughts in ancient Indian knowledge system. Despite the fact that the Dhanurveda is a text on combat techniques, the concept of Ahimsa (non-violence) remains integral to the discussion. The concept provides for considering the options of absolute non violence before resorting to war; and choosing the least violent option when engaged in war. Use of excessive force on the enemy or causing injuries to non-combatants, even in times of war, was strongly discouraged. Justification for violence over the option of choosing Ahimha has been discussed in the Dhanurveda, with thorough consideration to the need for violence in particular situations.

i. Ahimsa (Non-Violence): Non-violence is a cardinal principle in most Indian philosophical schools and has been promoted vociferously by Buddhism and Jainism. It asserts the need for non-violence and compassion towards all living things. It is not only about avoiding physical violence but also about having the attitude of peace and respect

for life. This principle is strongly based on the faith that every living creature possesses a divine soul and that harming others will ultimately hurt oneself.

ii. Necessary Violence: Dhanurveda acknowledges that while ahimsa is a basic tenet, Kshatriyas (warriors) may be required to resort to violence as a necessary tool at times, particularly when defending their kingdom and protecting justice. This is referred to as 'Dharma Yuddha' or righteous warfare when the ordinary forms of conflict resolution have been unsuccessful. In such situations, violence as a matter of last resort becomes the duty of the warrior to discharge his duties and responsibilities as a Kshatriya. The essential concept is that the violence needs to be proportionate, legitimate and directed towards re-establishing peace and order.

3.8.4 Military Training Techniques

The scripture describes different training techniques for soldiers in physical well-being, mind control, and fighting skills. Individual training is combined with collective exercises. Acquaintance with different combative stances, hand combat skills, and tactics of warfare with weapons are important aspects of Dhanurveda.

i. Military Strategy and Tactics: The principles of military strategy, formation of armies, tactics on the battlefield and handling of troops are all addressed in Dhanurveda. It also explains the logistics of war, as in the movements of troops, supply lines and the organisation of camps.

ii. Spiritual and Ritualistic Elements: Like other Vedic sciences, Dhanurveda is infused with spiritual and ritualistic traditions. Warriors used to be tasked with performing particular rituals and mantras to acquire divine blessings before engaging in a battle. Martial arts and spiritual discipline are again and again compared in Dhanurveda.

iii. Psychological Warfare: Knowing the psychology of one's own soldiers and that of the enemy is deemed crucial for achieving success in war. The work also deals with elements of psychological warfare, such as the application of deception, espionage, and propaganda to undermine the morale and strength of the enemy.

iv. Chariots, Elephants, and Cavalry: Aside from close combat, Dhanurveda covers the art of using chariots, elephants, and cavalry in combat. It dictates principles of care and training for horses and elephants as well as principles of utilisation during combat.

v. Spiritual Discipline: The work also highlights the need for spiritual discipline among warriors. Through the practice of inner peace and self-control, warriors can make sure that their actions are driven by righteousness and not by hatred or anger. Spiritual discipline enables them to reconcile the necessity of violence with the greater principle of Ahimsa.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICAL INSIGHTS AND WARFARE PRINCIPLES IN DHANURVEDA

सुप्तं प्रसुप्तमुन्मत्तं ह्यकच्छं शस्त्रवर्जितम् ।

बालं स्त्रियं दीनवाक्यं धावन्तं नैवद्यातयेत् ॥

*The person who is asleep, who is
unconscious, who is insane, who is devoid of clothes or
weapons, the children, ladies, the helpless praying for mercy,
the one who has deserted the battlefield should not be killed.*

- *Dhanurveda, Verse 245*

4.1 Dhanurveda as the Science of warfare

Dhanurveda, usually seen as the science of ancient Indian warfare and archery and martial arts, is not only a text of physical capability but also an intense ethical manual of war behaviour. The doctrine laid out within this tradition is not mere tactic but relates heavily to the ethics of society. At the heart of Dhanurveda are a number of central ethical principles—dharma (righteousness), svadharma (duty), and nyaya (justice)—that guide the practitioner towards a higher moral plane. This chapter explores these central

ethical principles, explains the rules of behaviour in war, and analyses case studies from Dhanurveda texts, shedding light on the moral challenges confronting practitioners and the solutions provided through ethical thinking.

4.2 Philosophical Foundations of Dhanurveda and Role in Warfare

The "Veda of Archery" or the ancient Indian warfare science is deeply rooted in the cultural and philosophical life of ancient India. In addition to technical martial science, Dhanurveda incorporates deep ethical and moral principles that governed warriors in their behaviour during and after warfare. This chapter examines the fundamental philosophical principles of Dhanurveda and discusses its practical applications in ancient warfare tactics.

Among its vast store of teachings, the Hindu religion contains a substantial corpus of doctrines regarding proper martial behaviour, politics, and morals in warfare. Although its warfare traditions are obscure in the West, Hindu civilisation has an immense body of counsel regarding wars. Even the famous ancient conqueror, Alexander the Great, recognised Hindu military prowess when he was forced to retreat after fighting India's formidable armies (Singh A. , 2020). Despite Alexander's extensive wartime victories, he could not decisively vanquish India's military juggernaut—a term incidentally derived from Hindu religious origin (Jagannath) (Dictionary, 2010).

While there are popular Western conceptions of India as a place of religious tolerance, mysticism, and inner-peace, one must not be so naive as to believe that Hindu participation in warfare was an exceptional historical phenomenon. Instead, warfare between competing kingdoms was a fairly regular and frequent occurrence in India's extensive history. Religiously legitimised warfare was actually a deeply rooted part of both Vedic and Tamil societies whose military conflicts were frequently extensive and recurring.

4.3 Role of Dhanurveda in Shaping the Warrior

The texts in Dhanurveda are comprehensive sets of guidelines that not only talk about the act of employing weapons in war, but also discuss at length the qualities that a warrior must possess. The scriptures lay emphasis on the aspect of physical, mental and moral well being of a soldier through rigorous training as well as ancient techniques to train the mind.

i. Philosophical Integration with Yoga and Meditation: The synthesis of war with the spiritual exercises of Yoga and Meditation is an important theme that has been addressed in Dhanurveda. These features are interrelated in numerous aspects. The ancient Indian philosophy propounds life as a divine function incorporating the physical and the metaphysical. On similar lines, Dhanurveda offers a comprehensive philosophy that combines the physical, intellectual and religious dimensions of war, largely based on the discipline

of Yoga and Meditation. This integrated thought ensures that soldiers are not just combat proficient in battle but are also well-balanced human beings with a high moral character.

ii. Mental Discipline and Concentration: Dhanurveda also focuses on the necessity of mental discipline and concentration, which are important aspects of Yoga and Meditation. Soldiers are conditioned to keep a cool head and remain concentrated with a focussed mind under combat situations. This mental discipline is obtained as a result of practice of meditation and yogic exercises on a daily basis.

iii. Physical Fitness and Well-being: The physical postures (asanas) and exercises of Yoga are made a part of the training regimen of warriors so that they improve their physical fitness, flexibility, and strength. This integrated process makes warriors physically capable as well as mentally and spiritually balanced.

iv. Spiritual Discipline: Dhanurveda incorporates spiritual exercises into warrior training. These consist of rituals, prayers and meditation techniques that enable warriors to connect with themselves and God. This spiritual discipline is supposed to improve their fighting skills and ensure that they are guided by virtue.

v. Ethical Behaviour: The values of Yoga, including Ahimsa (non-violence) and Satya (truthfulness) are incorporated into the ethical code of conduct for warriors. Warriors are even supposed to follow these ethical values during war, making their actions righteous and just.

vi. Strategic Thinking: The strategic and tactical dimensions of war in Dhanurveda are supplemented by the mental lucidity and awareness developed through meditation. This assists warriors in making more informed choices and responding to shifting situations in the field of battle.

4.4 Key Ethical Concepts

The ethical principles of Dhanurveda emphasise that war is not about conquest but about protecting righteousness and justice. A true warrior adheres to Dharma, honour, self-restraint and fairness, ensuring that warfare does not lead to chaos but maintains order and justice in society. No harm is permitted to be done those who are not a threat to attainment of the warrior's objectives.

4.4.1 Dharma (Righteousness and Duty)

Dharma is the single most important virtue in the Indian culture and the Hindu way of life for ages. It is the guiding light that dictates the behaviour and action of each and every individual in his/her capacity and position in society. Dharma is the foundation of all ethical principles ever written or discussed in the history of India, including in Dhanurveda. Warriors (Kshatriyas) are expected to follow the Kshatriya Dharma (righteousness and duty in warfare), which emphasises just warfare, protection of the weak and upholding justice. Unjust violence or aggression for personal gain is

condemned. War is permissible only when it is righteous and the only means available to uphold justice, hence called the Dharma Yuddha (righteous war). Lord Krishna during his epic discourse to Arjuna before the commencement of war explains this concept and upholds the need for Dharma Yuddha, even if it entails taking up arms against own brethren. The primacy of upholding Dharma remains the core concept of Indian culture for ages.

4.4.2 Neeti (Code of Conduct in War)

Neeti forms an important aspect of the ethical framework and remains bedrock for actual conduct when engaged in fighting. This precept captures the element of reverence for life by stipulating that every attempt must be made to desist from senseless shedding of blood and to protect human dignity. Often referred to as the rules of engagement, herein are given the restrictions and rules to engage with combatants. Warriors are required to strictly follow the warrior's code of conduct even to the peril of their lives and they must follow these specific ethical rules in battle at all times. Key Principles of Neeti in Warfare or the Rules of Engagement in Code of Conduct include the following:

- The warriors should only fight with opponents who present a similar danger. Attacking an unarmed or disabled opponent is disapproved since it violates the principle of equality followed by dharma. In addition, resorting to deceit or perfidy while fighting is also rejected, as it states that bodily strength must not be preceded by immoral tactics. Warriors should declare war openly and not attack

without warning (no surprise attacks without provocation). Combatants should only engage with an equally armed and prepared opponent. Attacking unarmed, wounded, surrendered, or retreating enemies is unethical. It is forbidden to strike from behind or use treachery in combat.

- **Protection of Non-Combatants.** Dhanurveda puts a strong focus on safeguarding non-combatants in war. Bystanders and civilians must not be harmed, and tactical manoeuvres must take their safety into consideration. The ethical warrior avoids causing unnecessary collateral damage, understanding that innocent lives should not be exposed to the brutality of war. This is in line with the greater principles of dharma and justice, ensuring that the struggle against injustice does not taint the righteousness of the cause. Civilians, women, children, the elderly, and non-fighting monks or sages should never be harmed.
- Places of worship and learning (e.g., temples, ashrams, universities) should not be attacked or destroyed. Priests, monks, sages should not be harmed. In addition to this, recommendations state that when cities or towns are under siege, there should be arrangements for the civilians to be evacuated so as to reduce their exposure to the war. War should never provide a justification to engage in indiscriminate attacks; instead, it should aim to respect the sanctity of life.
- **Honourable Treatment of Prisoners of War.** Warriors are urged to see prisoners not just as adversaries but as people who have been placed on either side

of a war. The potential for negotiation and seeking peace must always be an option, and attempts to rehabilitate and restore them into society must be at the forefront. Captured warriors should not be tortured or humiliated. If an enemy surrenders, they must be given a chance for rehabilitation rather than being executed. Prisoners should be treated with dignity, following principles of forgiveness (Kshama) and compassion (Daya).

- **Prohibition of Certain Weapons and Tactics.** The use of forbidden weapons (such as those causing mass destruction or unnecessary suffering) should be avoided. In the Mahabharata, divine weapons like the Brahmastra were restricted and only to be used as a last resort. Poisoned weapons, hidden traps, and fire-based destruction (burning cities) were generally condemned.
- **Duels and Individual Combat Ethics.** If a warrior challenges another to a duel (single combat), it must be accepted and fought fairly. A warrior should never attack an opponent who is:
 - Without a weapon
 - Fleeing from battle
 - Engaged in combat with another warrior
 - Distracted or unaware of the attack
- **Respect for Fallen Warriors.** Even in death, fallen warriors should be given respect. Their bodies should not be desecrated or humiliated. In many

ancient battles, both sides allowed the proper cremation of the dead as a mark of respect.

4.4.3 Ahimsa (Non-Violence and Compassion)

Although violence (himsa), even as the last resort, is the main component of warfare, concept of Ahimsa plays a vital role and aims at minimising the harm during conflict. It is indeed the beauty of this culture that human life is given due respect even in war by denouncing excessive violence. The ideal warrior must exercise restraint and should be able to contain his actions as needed to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.

The purpose of the righteous war should never be forgotten and actions should be used towards establishment of peace, not destruction.

- **Satya (Truthfulness and Honour).** Warriors must uphold Satya (truthfulness) in both war and diplomacy. Deceptive tactics, false promises, and dishonourable actions are considered unethical.
- **Kshama (Forgiveness and Restraint).** A true warrior does not seek revenge out of personal hatred but fights for justice. Forgiving enemies when they surrender or accept defeat is encouraged. This principle highlights the difference between valour and cruelty.

- **Tyaga (Selflessness and Sacrifice).** A warrior's duty is to protect the dharma of the land, even at the cost of personal sacrifice. The concept of Rajadharma (duty of the ruler) emphasises that kings and warriors should not seek personal glory but serve the people.
- **Vinaya (Humility and Discipline).** Mastery in Dhanurveda requires self-discipline, humility, and respect for teachers (Guru) and elders. Arrogance and misuse of martial skills are considered unethical.
- **Shastra Maryada (Ethical Use of Weapons).** Weapons should only be used for protection and justice, not for oppression. Advanced weapons (such as divine Astras) should be used responsibly and not for personal vendettas. The Mahabharata highlights how weapons like the Brahmastra were to be used only as a last resort.

The dynamics between dharma, neeti and ahimsa provide an integral model which governs action in the case of warfare. The warrior led by such codes acts with extreme sense of accountability and morality. They continually check their actions from the perspective of moral accountability as well as its potential implications upon society. This ethical triad promotes discipline, compassion, and adherence to justice, so that the art of war, although violent by nature, takes on a noble face in accordance with the greater good.

4.5 Application of Dhanurvedic Principles in Mahabharata

To demonstrate the practical application of these ethical values in Dhanurveda, it is considered necessary to analyse a case study for correlation of concepts that depict moral challenges confronted by warriors. By using examples from primary texts, the challenges confronted by warriors highlight the nuances of ethical decision-making in the context of war. Dhanurveda maintains that the warrior's way is not just one of physical skill, but intimately connected with moral uprightness. The timelessness of these precepts is a constant reminder of the necessity for ethics during war, so that even the most horrific of endeavours can still be undertaken with honour, dignity, and righteousness.

4.5.1 Mahabharata as an Epic Case

Mahabharata is a classic case where the ethics and dilemmas have been intertwined in the entire epic. The great war that lasted eighteen days and wiped out a huge proportion of male population of the time, offers numerous case studies highlighting the ethical behaviour dilemmas not only during these days when the war was actually fought, but also much before the war happened – in the preceding incidents that led to the dispute between Kauravs and Pandavas. The ideals of dharma presented in Dhanurveda are indeed present in the Mahabharata, especially in those of righteous warfare and the role of a warrior. But the Mahabharata also displays a more detailed and realistic perception of dharma, revealing how in actual contexts, these ideals are constantly countered by pragmatic reality and ethical complexity.

The epic in itself is an interesting and indulging topic for studies; however, some brief instances are discussed here.

4.5.2 The Justification for War

The Kurukshetra War is depicted as a dharma-yuddha (righteous war), waged to create dharma and uphold justice after the Kauravas, under the leadership of Duryodhana, denied the Pandavas their rightful throne unjustly (Rajagopalachari, 1951). Bhagavad Gita, which forms part of the Mahabharata and is the world renowned text contains Krishna's advice to Arjuna regarding his warrior duty and the justification for waging the righteous war. Krishna inspires Arjuna to fight the battle with his relatives not with desire or anger, but for the sake of protecting dharma and for discharging his duty.

4.5.3 Ethical Problem of War

i. Duryodhana's Dilemma: Duryodhana's willingness to wage war against the Pandavas symbolises a great dharma dilemma. Duryodhana, who is otherwise a great warrior, becomes representative of adharma when he fights a war of ego and revenge, not of justice. His inability to yield to the Pandavas' rights—a svadharma-based viewpoint—illustrates how individual complaints can drive one away from a virtuous path. The war is no longer a challenge of warriors' prowess, but a test of dharma, svadharma, and nyaya as Duryodhana ends up betraying the very principles that ought to rule a virtuous warrior.

ii. Bhishma and Drona: Bhishma and Drona, fighting on behalf of the Kauravas symbolise dharma's convoluted nature in the Mahabharata. They are saddled with personal obligation and loyalty despite knowing that the cause of the Kauravas is not righteous. Their involvement in the war demonstrates the challenge of following dharma in intricate circumstances. Bhishma also refused to fight Shikhandi (who was born female) because it was against warrior ethics. Drona and Ashwatthama's use of deceptive tactics (e.g., killing soldiers in their sleep) was considered a breach of Neeti (Rajagopalachari, 1951).

iii. Arjuna's Hesitation: Arjuna's initial reluctance to fight at the beginning of the battle in the Mahabharata is another insightful case study. Faced with the possibility of combat against his own family, Arjuna wrestles with the ethical implications of war, seeing the possible loss of life and the sorrow that it would bring. This crisis of doubt is not a simple personal dilemma; it represents the conflict of reconciling svadharma with the summons of war. Finally, Krishna directs Arjuna, calling upon the laws of dharma and svadharma to explain the warrior's duty. He stresses that righteousness and duty should compel Arjuna to be a defender of dharma, heightening the significance of righteous action even in the midst of personal conflict. Arjuna also hesitated to attack Karna when his chariot was stuck and he was at a disadvantage but Krishna reminded him that Karna had previously broken the same rule against Abhimanyu (Rajagopalachari, 1951).

These instances underscore that though the philosophy of Dhanurveda is well-intentioned, the application and strict adherence to these tenets are rife with problems. The lesson is larger in the sense that war can never become removed from the context of justice and righteousness, lest personal animosities distort one's moral responsibilities. These representations bring out that moments of moral ambiguity are a part of the martial way. The acknowledgment of the ethical dilemmas permits warriors to face war not simply as a corporeal encounter but as a very serious moral endeavour.

4.5.4 The Ethics of Retreat

Another interesting account is the notion of retreat against hope. Dhanurveda recognises there are times when the moral way would be to retreat from a battle when defeat seems inevitable as opposed to setting a course towards definite annihilation. This ties into the responsibilities of a soldier to save lives and maintain honour and recognises that to wage a battle that one cannot hope to win is not an example of valour but an abandoning of the doctrines of self-survival and responsibility.

This view contradicts the glorification of warrior culture that tends to idealise death in combat. Rather, it offers the warrior's wisdom and moral responsibility as essential aspects of their identity, affirming the importance of moral judgment in making decisions. Briefly, the moral ideals established in Dhanurveda—dharma, neeti, and ahimsa—deeply influence the actions of warriors on the battlefield, infusing an element of rightness, duty, and justice into the marrow of martial discipline.

The epic does not offer easy solutions but instead grapples intensely with the moral issues of maintaining dharma in the presence of competing obligations and hard decisions. Thus, the Mahabharata enriches our knowledge about dharma, showing its deep and sometimes contradictory nature in the context of human existence and war.

CHAPTER V

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS

5.1 Introduction

Warfare is as old as the civilisation itself, perhaps even older. Conflicts with nature, other creatures and with other human beings at survival slowly developed into conflicts for power and domination wars. The western world has seen its share of wars between warring kings, between empires and also between the Abrahamic faiths. Ethics in warfare as a social value certainly requires a study and a comparison with the ancient Indian ethics.

5.2 Ethics in Warfare: Western Perspective

In the 1970s, cross-cultural comparison of Just War doctrine emerged as an expanding field of academic study among scholars across various disciplines including Political Science, Religious Studies, and International Law. Among them, Michael Walzer, Professor Emeritus of the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton University, emerged as the leading defender of Just War theory in the 20th century. Walzer's 1977 work, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* is now regarded as a classic in the field of Just War thought. Nearly all modern writing on Just War refers to Walzer's theory, and Walzer himself has recently built upon his work in a new book titled

Arguing About War (2004c), thus remaining a central figure in the contemporary scene of Just War theory.

5.3 The Just War Theory

The Just War Theory is an ethical theory that attempts to establish under what circumstances it is morally acceptable to wage war and how war is to be waged ethically. The Just War Theory can trace its origins to St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, and it continues to shape current debates on ethics of warfare, such as international conventions like the Geneva Conventions. Briefly, the Just war Theory discusses three dimensions of war and the necessity of practicing Justness in them (Walzer, 1977).

5.3.1 Jus ad Bellum (Justice of War)

This deals with the conditions under which it is permissible to engage in war and defines the concepts that would come into consideration for waging a war.

- **Just Cause:** War is justified only if it is a reaction to a wrong, e.g., self-defence or defending others from harm.
- **Legitimate Authority:** Only properly acknowledged authorities (such as a government) can make war.
- **Right Intention:** The reason for going to war must be to attain a just result, not for motives such as revenge or conquest.

- **Probability of Success:** War should only be undertaken if there is a fair prospect of success in order to prevent unnecessary loss of life.
- **Last Resort:** War must be the last resort after all peaceful options have been tried.
- **Proportionality:** The benefits of war must be greater than the harm.

5.3.2 Jus in Bello (Justice in War)

This deals with how a war is to be conducted once the forces come into contact and discusses the ethical aspects to be followed once fighting has commenced.

- **Distinction:** Combatants have to differentiate between military targets and civilians. Civilians should never be targeted intentionally.
- **Proportionality:** The force employed has to be proportional to the military goal, not using more violence than necessary.
- **Military Necessity:** Measures taken in war must be necessary for the accomplishment of legitimate military goals.
- **Fair Treatment of Prisoners:** Prisoners of war should be treated with respect for their humanity.
- **No Means Mala in Se:** There are some acts, like genocide or the employment of weapons of mass destruction, which are always wrong and ought never to be employed.

5.3.3 Jus post Bellum (Justice after War)

This principle addresses the moral responsibility after war and the ethical values that must be followed with the goal of a just peace.

- **Proportional Sanctions:** The winners should not give disproportionate or excessive sanctions.
- **Rights of the Losers:** Fundamental human rights should be adhered to, even for losers.
- **Restoration of Order:** Attempt should be made to establish peace and order, usually in the form of reconstruction and reconciliation.

What is striking about the medieval codes of chivalry that governed duels in medieval Europe is how closely they resemble the rules of Indian military combat. In fact, both the sets of regulations were aimed at promoting fair combat in war based on the idea of chivalrous honour. Such regulations insisted on proportionality in equal combat (i.e., a foot soldier was supposed to fight another foot soldier and not a war elephant). Furthermore, no fraud or deceit was allowed like hidden weapons. And, one had to have used up all options before turning to violence. Violence was to be resorted to only when all other means of dialogue had been exhausted, which in Western Just War tradition is referred to as the criterion of "Last Resort".

5.4 Comparative Study between Dhanurveda and Just War Theory

Dhanurveda has ethical principles that, in several respects, coincide with contemporary ideas such as the Just War Theory. A study of the similarities between the two can serve to emphasise how ethical issues in war are a universal and ancient issue. While the Indian texts are ages old and were formed during times of when the western world does not have a recorded history, the ethics and values find resonance in the western theories just as well. This is indicative of the universality of human values and concern. Some concepts that compare between the two theories are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

5.4.1 Dharma Yuddha and Jus ad Bellum (Righteous war and Justice of War)

- **Just Cause:** Both the works are very particular about the cause for which a war is waged. Like the Dhanurveda which advocates war only if it is righteous, in the Just War theory as well, only war for legitimate reasons is prescribed, like in defence of the kingdom or protecting righteousness (Dharma). It does not allow unprovoked attack or territorial conquest for egotistical motivations.
- **Legitimate Authority:** The theories also highlight the necessity of legitimate authority. The kings and monarchs alone possessed the authority to make war declarations, which goes along with the concept that only valid authorities have the right to make war.

- **Right Intention:** The Dhanurveda also puts high priority on Dharma, meaning that the intent for waging war has to be righteous. Wars waged in ego, greed, or retaliation would not qualify as just wars.
- **Last Resort:** The last resort notion of war is already intimated in Vedic writing, such as in the Dhanurveda, where compromise and diplomatic solutions (such as Sama, Dana, Bheda, Danda—measures of reconciliations) were proposed before battle was pursued. Similar discussions exist in the Just war theory as well

5.4.2 Neeti and Jus in Bello (Code of Conduct and Justice in War)

- **Distinction (Non-combatant Immunity):** Both the theories speak of protecting non-combatants, like women, children, and the elderly, echoing the focus on value of human life and non violence against the weak.
- **Proportionality:** In both the traditions, force is supposed to be proportionate to the threat. The Dhanurveda advocates restraint in war, employing the right weapons and strategy according to the situation, similar to the principle of Just War theory that one should use no more force than required.
- **Humane Treatment of Captives:** There are mentions in Indian epics such as the Mahabharata that captives during war should be treated humanely and with respect. The Manusmriti (another ancient treatise) also lays down humane treatment of the captured, akin to contemporary Just War theory.

5.4.3 Nyay and Jus post Bellum (Justice after War)

- **Re-establishing Justice and Order:** In the post-war scenario, Jus post Bellum is consistent with Dhanurveda by stressing that there is a necessity to re-establish peace and order in the kingdom. The victor should not seek to embarrass the vanquished or impose excessive punishment, but must preserve Dharma.
- **Rebuilding and Reconciliation:** Ancient Indian philosophy advocated reconciliation and forgiveness, urging rulers to rebuild and integrate societies following wars. This is similar to Just War principles, which demand justice, reconstruction, and respect for human rights after war.

5.5 Ethical Codes and Dharma

One of the core tenets of the two traditions is the idea of conduct according to righteousness. In Just War Theory, the aim is to make the war just, in both initiation and conduct. In the Dhanurveda, the goal is to maintain Dharma (moral order). Both systems eventually seek a just peace, not victory, where moral good triumphs over power or revenge.

5.5.1 Just Cause (Dharma Yuddha vs. Adharma Yuddha)

Wars undertaken for upholding Dharma (righteousness) in the Dhanurveda are regarded as Dharma Yuddha (righteous war). This is similar to the principle of Just Cause in the Just War Theory. Wars that emerge due to greed, expansion, or ego are regarded as Adharma Yuddha (unrighteous war), and are ethically abhorred.

i. Legitimate Authority (King's Duty vs. International Law): The Dhanurveda emphasises the king or ruler's role in declaring war, that it must be done through proper channels, similar to how contemporary Just War Theory insists that only authorised authorities (governments or international organisations) can declare war.

ii. Right Intention (Dharma-Driven Intentions vs. Ulterior Motives): Both traditions place a strong emphasis on the moral integrity of the intentions behind war. In the Dhanurveda, wars have to be waged for Dharma (righteous duty) and not for personal gain, just like the Right Intention criterion in the Just War Theory, which excludes wars waged out of revenge or greed.

iii. Proportionality in Warfare (Measuring Force): Both the Just War Theory and Dhanurveda emphasise proportionality—the deployment of force in accordance with the danger presented. Violence was de-emphasised in ancient Indian war, and warriors were commanded to exercise restraint and not to cause unnecessary destruction, especially against non-combatants.

5.5.2 Treatment of Prisoners and Non-combatants (Ethical Conduct in War)

Both the Just War Theory and the Dhanurveda highlight the humane handling of prisoners and the safety of civilians. There are examples in the Mahabharata of non-combatants being spared and prisoners of war being respected, similar to the Geneva Conventions describing humane treatment of captives today. In the Dhanurveda, the Kshatriya Dharma (warriors' code of ethics) is elaborated and establishes standards for just conduct in war. Warriors were constrained by honor and obligation to follow certain codes of conduct, similar to contemporary codes of military ethics, intended to safeguard human dignity during war.

5.5.3 Jus post Bellum: Reconciliation and Reconstruction

There is considerable emphasis on reconciliation and re-establishing order after war in ancient Indian texts. Successful kings are to be forgiving and ensure justice is done in the period after the war. This is in keeping with Jus post Bellum principles, which insist on peace, rebuilding, and equitable treatment of the vanquished.

In Indian philosophy, the three gunas (natural qualities) – Sattva (goodness, purity), Rajas (activity, passion), and Tamas (destruction, darkness) – impact human conduct and form the Ethical Psychology of War. The ideal fighter, according to the Dhanurveda, would

conduct himself with Sattva, acting in righteousness and compassion, and wars motivated by Tamas (hatred, anger) would be immoral.

5.6 Cultural Context of the Two Theories

While both frameworks advocate for ethical warfare, they arise from different cultural and historical contexts. The Just War Theory has been shaped by Christian and Western philosophical traditions, while the Dhanurveda is deeply rooted in Vedic and Dharmic traditions. The evolution of cultural values and the great human thought in Indian ancient knowledge system allows the Dhanurvedic principles to be inclusive of the spiritual and moral aspects in greater detail. The theories of the west have been formulated much later and have more practical aspects and probably do not delve as deeply into the philosophical aspects and spirituality as Indian texts. Despite these differences, they share common ground in the ethical regulation of warfare.

CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDIES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

6.1 Practical Applications in Wars

The previous chapters have covered the theories of just war and ethics in warfare. It would be wise to examine the practical applications thereof in warfare. Wars and battles fill Indian history and our country has a good legacy and tradition of being a powerful martial race. Even though it is regarded as a peaceful nation, the Indians have not only retained its cultural identity, fending off centuries of invasion efforts, but also remained resilient and maintain its identity as a great nation. A study of the wars fought brings out the continual challenges and dilemmas of following ethics Vis-a-vis attaining the objectives of war.

6.2 The Kurukshetra War (Mahabharata)

One of the earliest recorded wars is the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The central concept of this war is "dharma," representing one's duty, righteousness, and moral obligations. The Kurukshetra War is fundamentally a struggle between dharma and adharma (unrighteousness). This Great War took place in around October/November 3102 BC (Singh A. , 2020). One of the greatest wars which saw death of as many as 3 million people of the 4 million that participated in 18 day of war that took place at a place

called Kurukshetra. The Kurukshetra War is one of the most detailed accounts of Dhanurvedic principles in practice. The Mahabharata is a rich tapestry of ethical dilemmas, and its portrayal of warfare is particularly complex. Key instances of implementation of Dhanurveda principles and ethics in warfare are discussed below.

6.2.1 Ethical Challenges

While Dharma is at the core of all Ethical Concepts, the interpretation of dharma is often contested, leading to ethical ambiguities. The Mahabharata is not without its share of violations of Rules and ethical breaches.

i. Chakravyuha Formation: The complex spiral battle formation (vyuha) required strategic mastery to penetrate and escape. Abhimanyu's valour in breaking the Chakravyuha despite his youth is a testament to Dhanurvedic training (Sharma, 2012).

ii. Yuddha Dharma Violations: The killing of Abhimanyu, who was unarmed and outnumbered, was a significant breach of Yuddha Dharma, highlighting the consequences of unethical warfare. Killing of Karna unarmed, killing of Duryodhana by hitting below the waist are some examples of the violation of rules.

iii. Bhishma's Conduct: Despite being the commander of the Kaurava army, Bhishma refused to fight Shikhandi, adhering to his vow not to harm someone born female, showcasing the moral boundaries upheld even in war.

iv. Duty vs. Conscience: Characters in the epic frequently face conflicts between their duties and their consciences. Karna's loyalty to Duryodhana, even when he knows it's wrong, is a prime example. Bhishma's silence and non intervention in the unethical actions by Kauravas preceding the war indicate the perennial battle between duty and conscience.

These violations highlight the tension between ethical ideals and the pressures of war and also show that there are no clear cut demarcations between right and wrong - the line between good and evil is often blurred. The complexities of situational ethics are shown throughout the epic. When the Pandavas, considered righteous, engage in actions that raise ethical questions, their action is justified as a reaction to the unjust and unethical actions done by their cousins. Essentially, the discussions precipitate to the argument that the first perpetrator on injustice or a violation is always wrong, however, any act done in response in similar manner is justifiable. The theme resonates throughout the epic starting from the poisoning of Bheem as a child to the Lakshagrah inferno designed to kill Pandavas along with their mother Kunti. (Rajagopalachari, 1951)

6.2.2 Key Ethical Lessons

i. Consequences of Adharma: The Mahabharata demonstrates the destructive consequences of unrighteous actions, both for individuals and for society.

ii. Importance of Duty: The epic underscores the significance of fulfilling one's responsibilities, even when they are difficult.

iii. Ethical Complexity: The Mahabharata acknowledges the complexities of ethical decision-making, particularly in times of conflict.

iv. The Struggle between Good and Evil: The overall story arc of the Mahabharata, shows the constant struggle between good and evil, and how that struggle plays out in the lives of the characters.

6.3 Rajputs and Ethical Conduct in Battlefield

Coming down the historic wars to more recent battles that shaped India, discussion is necessitated on the turning point of history with the invasions by Islamic forces into the sub-continent. One of the major dynasties and set of people who repelled attacks for five centuries is that of the Rajputs on the western frontier. The Rajputs, known for their chivalry, valour and strict adherence to battlefield ethics, played a significant role in medieval Indian warfare. However, their rigid code of honour, influenced by Dharma and Kshatriya ideals, often placed them at a disadvantage against adversaries who employed pragmatic, flexible and sometimes deceptive military strategies. This ethical rigidity led to various defeats and setbacks, weakening Rajput resistance against external invasions, particularly from Turkic, Afghan and Mughal forces.

6.3.1 The Rajput Code of Honour

The Rajput warrior ethos, rooted in the ideals of Dharma Yuddha (righteous war), emphasised on the basic ethical framework being followed through ages.

i. Single Combat and Fair Play: Engaging in direct, honourable battle rather than surprise attacks or deceit.

ii. Not Attacking Unarmed or Retreating Enemies: Upholding strict battlefield ethics that prevented them from taking advantage of weakened opponents.

iii. Personal Valour over Strategic Warfare: Focusing on individual heroism rather than long-term military strategies.

iv. Refusal to Surrender: Choosing Saka (mass immolation of women and children) and Jauhar (mass self-sacrifice) over submission to the enemy.

While these ideals were noble, they often led to strategic disadvantages when facing opponents who did not adhere to the same ethical codes. Some key Rajput defeats due to Ethical Conduct are stated below.

6.3.3 Battles of Tarain – Prithviraj Chauhan vs. Muhammad Ghori

- **The First Battle of Tarain (1191):** Prithviraj Chauhan decisively defeated Muhammad Ghori, capturing him but later releasing him instead of executing or imprisoning him permanently. This act of forgiveness, rooted in Rajput honour, proved to be a grave mistake, as Ghori returned with a more formidable army in 1192. (Singh A. , 2020)
- **The Second Battle of Tarain (1192):** Ghori's forces used deception and superior cavalry tactics, ambushing the Rajputs in an organised night attack—a strategy considered dishonorable by Rajput standards. Prithviraj was defeated and later executed, marking the end of Hindu rule in Delhi and beginning of Muslim dominance in North India.

6.3.4 Siege of Chittorgarh – The Jauhar Tradition

The Sisodia Rajputs of Mewar, led by Rana Ratan Singh (1303), Rani Karnavati (1535), and Maharana Udai Singh (1568), adhered to the Jauhar-Saka tradition - Jauhar (mass self-immolation) of Rajput women to prevent capture, and Saka (last suicidal charge) of Rajput men against overwhelming enemy forces.

While symbolising Rajput pride, this tactical inflexibility led to repeated mass casualties and territorial losses to the Delhi Sultanate (1303) and Mughals (1535 & 1568). Instead

of adopting guerrilla warfare or surrendering to fight another day, the Rajputs chose self-destruction, weakening their long-term resistance.

6.3.5 Battle of Khanwa – Rana Sanga vs. Babur

Rana Sanga of Mewar was a great Rajput warrior who united multiple Rajput clans against the Mughal forces. He fought the decisive battle with Babur in Khanwa in 1527 which led to consolidation of the foreign rule in India. He fought a great war and followed the Kshatriya code of conduct which meant his tactics were largely devoid of deceit. Despite valour in the battlefield and fierce fighting, the Rajput army was annihilated, breaking their stronghold in North India. Rana Sanga was severely wounded and forced to withdraw.

Rajput ethical shortcomings were evident in their refusal to adopt firearms and artillery and they relied on traditional swords and cavalry while Babur's forces used gunpowder weapons (matchlocks and cannons). Rajputs did not use tactics that they thought were deceptive. Babur used Tulughma (pincer movement) and psychological warfare (declaring a Jihad), while Rajputs charged head-on in open battle. (Singh A. , 2020)

6.3.6 Battle of Haldighati – Maharana Pratap vs. Akbar

Maharana Pratap's determination, valour and defiance of Mughal rule make him one of India's greatest warrior-kings and his legacy continues to inspire patriotism and

resistance against oppression. He fought the epic battle of Haldi Ghati in 1576 against the forces of Akbar. The battle was symbol of Rajput resistance; where Maharana chose open battlefield combat rather than prolonged guerrilla warfare much against the prudent battle planned originally. While this decision was one of the reasons for the defeat of Rajput forces, the Maharana was also let down by some allies turning traitors and engaging in unethical tactics.

Ethical Constraints: Rajputs, despite being outnumbered were well positioned at a location of geographical advantage and could have turned the outcome of the battle. However, heeding to the Mughal challenge of an open field fight, The Rajput forces gave up their advantage for the sake of ethics. Further, when faced with imminent defeat, they refused to retreat and suffered massive losses. While Maharana Pratap escaped to fight another day, Mewar fell under Mughal control, demonstrating how strategic withdrawal could have prolonged resistance. (Singh A. , 2020)

The Rajputs' adherence to battlefield ethics—while honourable—often led to strategic disadvantages against pragmatically driven adversaries. Their commitment to chivalry, fair combat, and refusal to retreat made them vulnerable to deceptive tactics and modern warfare techniques. Had they adapted flexible strategies like the Marathas and Sikhs did later, they might have prolonged their dominance in medieval India.

However, the legacy of Rajput valour continues to inspire India's military ethos, symbolising courage, sacrifice, and resistance against oppression. The lessons from their

defeats due to ethical constraints remain relevant in modern strategic thought, highlighting the balance between honour and practicality in warfare.

6.4 Shivaji's Guerrilla Tactics and Ethics in Warfare

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of the Maratha Empire is renowned for his asymmetric warfare strategies which included hit-and-run tactics, deception, and manoeuvre-based combat. His approach 'Ganimi Kava' or guerrilla warfare stood in contrast to the traditional Dharmayuddha (righteous war) practiced by the Rajputs and other medieval Indian warriors. (Sarkar, 1920)

Many would question whether Shivaji's tactics violated ethics in warfare and the answer depends on how war ethics are defined—whether by classical Indian principles (Dharma) or by pragmatic military necessity. Maratha pragmatism and tactics gave them success and yet, did not violate the conduct on battlefield. Irrespective of the combat tactics, the Marathas never harmed the non-combatants.

6.4.1 Shivaji's Military Strategy (Ganimi Kava)

While the Maratha strategies were not in line with Rajput-style battlefield ethics, these strategies, known as Ganimi Kava aligned more with Kautilyan military principles from the Arthaśāstra, which emphasised pragmatism, deception and statecraft over rigid morality. These tactics included the following.

- Ambushes and Surprise Attacks: Attacking enemy forces when they were least prepared.
- Guerrilla Raids: Using terrain advantage (hills, forests) to harass larger enemy armies.
- Tactical Retreats: Avoiding unnecessary losses rather than engaging in suicidal last stands.
- Deception and Psychological Warfare: Using misinformation to mislead enemies.

6.4.2 Maratha Tactics Vs Ethics

A look at Shivaji's strategies and comparison with Dharmayuddha give us an insight into whether ethics were violated.

i. Avoiding Direct Confrontation vs. Facing the Enemy Honourably: Traditional Rajput warriors preferred head-on battles with equal strength, where as Shivaji avoided large-scale battles, attacking only when strategically favourable. This engaging in "honourable" direct combat does not make his tactics unethical because protecting one's people and kingdom is also a form of Dharma.

ii. Ambushes and Night Raids vs. Open-Field Battles: Shivaji frequently conducted night raids and ambushes, violating the "rules of righteous war" like in the Battle of

Pratapgad (1659) where Shivaji lured the Mughal general Afzal Khan into a meeting and then used a hidden weapon (wagh nakh) to kill him. Afzal Khan had himself planned to betray and kill Shivaji, making Shivaji's action a preemptive strike for self-defence rather than unethical deception. (Kincaid, 1937)

iii. Avoiding Large-Scale Destruction vs. Total War: Unlike invading forces like the Mughals, Shivaji avoided civilian massacres, destruction of prayer sites and unnecessary looting. After conquering Surat (1664) he looted wealth without harming civilians or temples, unlike earlier Muslim rulers who engaged in mass killings. It could be well argued that using guerrilla warfare was more ethical than full-scale destruction because Shivaji minimised collateral damage, ensuring Dharma was upheld despite unconventional tactics.

Shivaji's strategies were not dishonourable but practical, especially in the face of larger and better-equipped enemies like Aurangzeb. Unlike the Mughals, who engaged in scorched-earth tactics and mass civilian killings, Shivaji fought with restraint and purpose, minimising harm beyond the battlefield. Shivaji's approach followed this pragmatic Dharmic realism, which allowed flexibility in warfare while adhering to justice and restraint.

Ultimately, Shivaji's guerrilla warfare did not violate ethics, but rather redefined them to suit the needs of survival, sovereignty, and state-building. His success laid the foundation for the Maratha Empire, proving that ethics and pragmatism can coexist in warfare.

CHAPTER VII

RELEVANCE OF DHANURVEDA IN CONTEMPORARY WARFARE: A DISCUSSION

7.1 Evolution of Warfare

The war today has evolved through the ages, but has largely been a game of contact warfare till the time gunpowder came onto the scene. Contemporary warfare is a totally different subject with advanced firepower and evolving technologies as also the advent and primacy of air power. The challenges now are no longer in the physical field with the advent of more computing power and cyber-space with no boundaries. For the purpose of discussion, however, the physical field is taken to be the primary field of war. Taking this as a given, the application of Dhanurveda can be analysed in modern day warfare. Although Dhanurveda is an ancient text, its principles and concepts can be applied to modern war, but in different contexts.

7.2 Applicability of Key Concepts

The relevance of Dhanurveda is that its proven principles and concepts can be reinterpreted and applied to the current scenario, though not exactly to its particular tactics and techniques. Some of the ways the concepts of Dhanurveda that continue to

impact modern warfare are discussed below.

- **Strategy and Tactics:** Knowing enemy dispositions, flexibility, and wise utilisation of resources are principles that do not age.
- **Utilisation of Intelligence:** Spying and reconnaissance on the part of the enemy, using scouts and spies, remains relevant in modern warfare.
- **Flexibility:** Dhanurveda's insistence on flexibility in responding to situations is just as applicable to war today.
- **Combined Arms:** The author's approach to combining different branches of war (infantry, cavalry and archers) has evolved into modern combined arms operations.
- **Psychological Warfare:** Mention of demoralizing the enemy and use of propaganda techniques in Dhanurveda is even applied in today's information warfare.
- **Leadership and Command:** Leadership, effective communication, and rapid decision-making are as important as ever.
- **Supply Chain and Logistics:** Dhanurveda's treatise on resource management and supply is still relevant to military logistics today. But we have to remember that contemporary warfare has undergone a sea change, with the advancement of technology, emerging weapons, and shifting geopolitical alignments.

7.3 Can a Just War Lead to Lasting Peace?

The question that arises out of the discussion on ethics is a quintessential one. Can use of ethics in a war lead to peace after the end of the war? Can a war, even if justified and fought ethically, guarantee lasting peace? While keeping ethics in war, for example, by following the Just War Theory or the Dhanurveda, can reduce the destruction and minimise the human suffering, there have to be some other ingredients present to have permanent peace after the war. There are certain principal reasons why a war fought on moral principles does not automatically result in lasting peace and some considerations are needed to ensure post-conflict stability.

7.3.1 The Nature of War's Conclusion: Victory versus Reconciliation

Just War Theory highlights the significance of Jus post Bellum (justice after war) that attempts to specify how peace is restored following war. This entails the just treatment of vanquished forces, the reconstruction of war-shattered societies, and the criminalisation of war crimes. Morally justified wars tend to seek justice, like resisting aggression, upholding human rights, or re-establishing peace. Yet, the manner in which a war is concluded—whether by a clear-cut victory, a negotiated peace, or a ceasefire—has a great bearing on post-war stability. Peace among former enemies is essential to enduring peace. This entails rectifying the injustices that caused war and that post-war justice must be fair and not retaliatory. Morally fought wars, in certain instances, do not end entrenched tensions that result in more war.

When a single side emerges with a total victory, it can be more difficult to attain long-term peace if the defeated side is humiliated or seeks vengeance. This is what happened after World War I when the punishing terms of the Treaty of Versailles sowed the seeds of war to come. In contrast, the post-World War II European reconstruction Marshall Plan is a case of post-war reconciliation and reconstruction yielding enduring peace (Eichengreen, 1991). By rebuilding defeated nations economically, Allied powers avoided post-war grievances resulting in a third world war.

7.3.2 Sustainable Peace

- **War Reconstruction:** Peace sustainability is a function of the level to which the victors or the international community invests in reconstruction and the establishment of a stable economic, social, and political order. Failure to invest in post-war reconstruction can result in societies that are disunited, and instability is fuelled. Failing to rebuild and reconcile Iraq successfully after the 2003 invasion, ostensibly for ethical reasons, led to long-term instability and the rise of such movements as ISIS. This shows that ethically justified war, in the absence of post-war planning, has disastrous consequences.
- **Resolution of Root Causes:** Peace will not be sustainable if the root causes of the war such as economic inequality, ethnic grievances, or political injustices are not

addressed. A war fought on moral high grounds but failing to resolve these root causes is likely to see new hostilities.

7.3.3 Psychological and Social Healing

Ethically involved wars still lead to trauma, displacement, and social cleavages. It is necessary to heal the psychological scars of the war to achieve lasting peace, and that is possible only through combined efforts of governments, societies, and international institutions. The establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions, like in post-apartheid South Africa or Rwanda after the genocide, can help heal society and set the foundation for peace. Without them, suspicion and anger can linger, leaving the potential for future conflict. In Rwanda, the Gacaca courts played a key role in reconciliation after the 1994 genocide. This grassroots system of justice delivered some degree of healing and closure to a severely traumatised population (Outreach programme on the Rwandan Genocide and the UN, 2012).

7.3.4 Political Will and Governance

In cases of conflicts involving ethnically or politically divided population, providing various groups with a stake in the government can avoid further violence. Ethically waged wars need to bring the conflict to a logical and mutually agreeable conclusion. A war that terminates without an acceptable political agreement clarifying transfer/sharing of power is bound to generate instability post war. Regardless of how equitable a war and

how equitable its conclusion, leaving behind weak institutions can restrain sustainable peace. Good governance, rule of law and empowered institutions are required in stable post-war societies. An example of such termination of war is seen in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton Accords brought an end to the war but the resulting system of governance was criticised for institutionalising ethnic cleavages instead of national unity (Waters, 1999). This hindered the consolidation of durable peace and exposed the nation to political deadlock which could be avoided.

7.3.5 External Influences and Geopolitics

External interventions can have the power to decide whether a post-war peace is durable. Ethically waged wars, when manipulated by external actors with varying agendas, can result in the imposition of a settlement that is not in the interests of the local population, resulting in ongoing conflict. Wars often tend to spill over into other countries and can destabilise other regions. There should be coordination and cooperation between regional actors to avoid a spill over effect to contain regional instability in order to achieve peace. The Syrian Civil War has added to the Middle East conundrum and has been prolonged by foreign powers backing opposing sides for their own interests and international politics. It has remained a long-standing conflict even when peace was sought. This demonstrates how foreign interests can negate the moral grounds for conflict resolution.

7.3.6 Economic Stability

For a nation that has undergone war, economic debacle is a given. A working economy is critical for peace to endure and to assist the war-torn economies to sustain over a long period in order to revive. Ethically fought wars must be succeeded by actions to reignite the economy, offer employment and reduce poverty, which are contributing factors to a stable society. Resource control (oil, water, minerals) is in most conflicts one of the war causes and in the absence of systems of fair resource-sharing, peace will not last long. Reconstruction after war has to deal with the management and mutually acceptable distribution of resources. Following the Sierra Leone civil war, the Kimberley Process was established to monitor the diamond trade so that "blood diamonds" could not be utilised to finance more conflict (Schiwal, 2024). This was an important step to peace and economic stability.

7.3.7 Global Cooperation and Peace Building

Cooperation at the international level is important in ensuring that wars that are fought on moral grounds result in enduring peace. International organisations such as the UN and NGOs can offer mediation, economic aid, and peacekeeping troops to assist in maintaining stability after a war. Establishing global war norms, i.e., following human rights norms, can establish an international culture of peace. Ethical wars that result in the establishment of democratic, rights-based governance will be more likely to result in enduring peace.

7.4 Permanent Peace Needs More than an Ethically Fought War

Ethical war can bring about a just peace, but without stopping the reasons for war and investing in long-term stability, peace will be fragile. An ethically fought war, limiting unnecessary devastation and abiding by laws of justice, is only the beginning of permanent peace. Moving towards peace demands a much greater effort involving reconciliation, post-war justice, economic recovery, strong governance, and international cooperation.

On this premise, we could argue that war ethics are needed but that alone is insufficient for permanent peace. Discussed below are certain case studies of how ethical warfare or compliance with Just War standards impacted post-war peace and how post-war efforts achieved or failed to achieve permanent peace around the world.

7.4.1 World War II and the Marshall Plan

Ethically Fought War: From the Allied perspective, World War II was largely framed as a struggle against fascism, aggression and genocide. The Allied powers aimed to restore peace and justice, especially in the wake of the Holocaust and Nazi aggression. Although atrocities were committed on all fronts, the Allies mostly abided by rules of Just Cause, Legitimate Authority and Right Intention.

Post-War Efforts: In the post-war period, the Marshall Plan (1948-1952) was a dominant factor in the achievement of lasting peace. Through the provision of large-scale economic assistance to reconstruct Western Europe, including former aggressors such as Germany and Italy, the Allies prevented the sort of punitive aftermath of World War I, which had created Nazism. This focus on reconstruction instead of retribution facilitated stable, prosperous democracies in Western Europe and paved the way for decades of peace and cooperation.

The Marshall Plan is seen as a monumental success, creating a foundation for European recovery and preventing the outbreak of conflict again in the region. It also strengthened international organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union, encouraging cooperation rather than competition (Eichengreen, 1991).

Ethical behaviour during and after the war and massive post-war reconstruction efforts were essential to the achievement of lasting peace. This emphasises the relevance of *Jus post Bellum* and economic stabilisation in post-war reconstruction.

7.4.2 The Iraq War (2003)

Ethically Controversial War: The Iraq War, initiated by the U.S. and its allies, was defended on the grounds of preventing Iraq from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and encouraging democracy. However, the Just Cause of the war was

controversially disputed with no WMDs discovered, and the war by many considered as being driven by ulterior motives, such as control of oil resources.

Post-War Initiatives: Post-war times saw a deficiency of planning for the reconstruction and post-war administration. Iraq plunged into chaos, and sectarian violence was on the increase, insurgencies were erupting, and eventually, ISIS appeared. The inability to form effective institutions and restart the economy and the exclusion of Sunni communities from the government contributed to a very unstable post-war situation.

As a result, the Iraq War did not lead to enduring peace. Instead, it created long-term instability not only in Iraq but in the Middle East. The post-war situation is a case study of how an ethically dubious war, with no sufficient post-war planning and reconciliation, can lead to disaster (Mansour, 2023).

Even if a war is ethically defined, like the Iraq War was under the paradigms of Just Cause (WMDs) and Right Intention (democracy), the absence of sufficient post-war arrangements such as participatory government, reconciliation, and economic reconstruction can lead to long-term conflict.

7.4.3 The Rwandan Genocide and Aftermath (1994)

Unethically fought Conflict: The Rwandan Genocide is the quintessential example of an unethical conflict in which systematic violence was unleashed against the Tutsi

community by extremist Hutus. The international community largely failed to intervene, breaching the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and allowing the genocide to continue for months, killing an estimated 800,000 individuals.

Post-War Efforts: After the genocide, Rwanda's government and the international community made concerted attempts at reconciliation. The establishment of Gacaca courts allowed local communities to practice a form of restorative justice in which perpetrators could admit their crimes, seek forgiveness and reintegrate into society. These were supplemented by international tribunals and attempts to rebuild the country's economy and institutions.

Consequently, Rwanda has seen deep healing and peace after the genocide with a lot of emphasis on national reconciliation and economic development (Demmer, 2017). Although the country still faces difficulties from the government's authoritarianism, it has been able to avoid a reoccurrence of mass violence.

Even in an ethically wrong war such as genocide, extensive post-war reconciliation and justice can bring about lasting peace. Rwanda's experience reiterates that norms such as restorative justice and collective healing are vital for post-conflict recovery.

7.4.4 The Kosovo War (1998-1999)

Ethically Fought War: NATO defended the Kosovo War on humanitarian intervention

grounds to stop ethnic cleansing and atrocities by the Serbian military on Kosovar Albanians. Even though the war was not sanctioned by the UN, it was widely seen as a case of Just Cause and Right Intention to stop human rights abuses.

Post-War Efforts: Following the war, Kosovo came under UN control and extensive work was undertaken in the reconstruction of infrastructure and the establishment of democratic institutions. Kosovo unilaterally declared independence in 2008, and although its status is disputed in some nations, the region as a whole has stabilised.

Although the war was largely justified and accepted as moral, the region remains problematic. The ethnic war between the Albanians and Serbs continues to date, and the independence of Kosovo is not recognised by Serbia and some other countries. However, the war did end the atrocities and led to a more peaceful and stable Kosovo than it was prior to the war.

Humanitarian interventions may be morally defensible and lead to peace, but post-conflict peace only succeeds if it is founded upon institution-building, reconciliation, and cooperation at the international level in the long run. Kosovo is a fragile but relatively stable post-war society.

7.4.5 South African Apartheid and Transition

Morally Unjust Conflict: The South African apartheid government was based on

discrimination and segregation on racial grounds, and against this there were numerous acts of armed resistance, civil disobedience and external pressure. The government was morally reprehensible as it violated human rights and standards of justice.

Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Situations: The South African post-apartheid transition was marked by the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), whose task was to provide a platform for victims and perpetrators of apartheid violence where they could recount their stories. Rather than seeking retribution justice, the TRC employed restorative justice and healing the country.

As a result, the transition of South Africa to democracy and focus on reconciliation has prevented a full-scale civil war, although certain issues like economic disparity and crime have been persistent. The moral emphasis on reconciliation over revenge has led to relative stability in the post-apartheid period.

Wherever conflict has been egregiously unjust, attempts to place a priority on reconciliation and restorative justice can lay the groundwork for lasting peace. South Africa's TRC is an example of how ethically navigating the aftermath of conflict can heal society.

7.4.6 The Vietnam War (1955-1975)

Ethically Controversial War: The Vietnam War was a highly ethical controversy,

specifically the American involvement. Although it was presented as being part of the overall Cold War struggle to prevent the advancement of communism (the Domino Theory), the war's rationales were highly controversial, especially as the war's human toll grew, such as civilian deaths, the use of Agent Orange, and the My Lai Massacre.

Post-War Efforts: After the U.S. withdrawal and fall of Saigon in 1975, Vietnam was reunified under communist rule. Post-war decades were characterised by mass persecution of former South Vietnamese allies, economic crisis, and international isolation of Vietnam. It was only in the 1990s that the country economically recovered thanks to Doi Moi reforms and international aid.

The Vietnam War cost immense human tragedy and long-term costs, including large-scale displacement and long-term trauma among war veterans. The war did not result in immediate lasting peace but took decades of economic and political reconstruction to stabilise.

The war's moral crisis, coupled with failure to properly reconcile and rebuild post-war, left Vietnam with long-term instability. This demonstrates how morally questionable wars, especially without proper post-war planning, can have a long-lasting detrimental impact on peace.

7.4.7 The Korean War (1950-1953)

Ethically Justified War: The Korean War was presented primarily as a defence against North Korean aggression led by the Soviet Union and China. The war was intended to save South Korea from being a communist nation, with the UN backing the defence of the South on collective security grounds.

Post-War Efforts: The war ended with an armistice in 1953 but no peace treaty was ever signed. South Korea experienced economic recovery and growth due to U.S. aid and reforms, but North Korea remains isolated and authoritarian. The demilitarised zone (DMZ) remains one of the most militarised borders on the planet, and tensions between the two Koreas persist.

Post war, while the South has become a thriving democracy, North Korea remains a totalitarian state. The lack of a peace treaty and political division between North and South Korea precludes authentic peace, with periodic military tensions breaking out.

The ethically justified intervention to defend South Korea led to a fragile and incomplete peace, illustrating the way even ethically won wars can lead to unresolved tensions if no comprehensive political settlement is achieved. This illustrates the importance of comprehensive peace agreements in post-war efforts.

7.4.8 Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002)

Morally Unjust War: The Sierra Leone Civil War was the most violent war in recent history, with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) using child soldiers and committing mass atrocities, such as mass amputations. The war was driven by the availability of Sierra Leone's diamond resources, which the RUF used through the sale of blood diamonds to finance their rebellion.

Post-War Initiatives: The war was ended with international intervention in the form of British military assistance and a UN peacekeeping force. The Special Court for Sierra Leone introduced accountability for war crimes, and the Kimberley Process was established to monitor the diamond trade. Initiatives in disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) facilitated the return of former combatants to society.

Sierra Leone has remained stable since the war, and the country has come a long way in rebuilding its government and economy. Poverty and corruption remain problems, and the scars of the civil war still linger, particularly for those responsible for the atrocities.

The morally unfair character of the war was alleviated by efficient post-war justice and international assistance. Sierra Leone's rehabilitation demonstrates that even following profoundly immoral wars, a mix of justice, economic reform and international cooperation can build enduring peace.

7.5 Ethical Conduct and Post-War Peace Building

These case studies demonstrate the varying results of wars based on their moral dimensions and post-war activities. In some, like Sierra Leone and post-WWII Europe, moral dimensions combined with successful post-war activities have resulted in long-term peace. In others, like Vietnam and Lebanon, unsolved political and social problems have thwarted long-term stability. The major factors that determine post war results are Post-war justice (e.g., war crime trials, truth commissions) contribution to reconciliation, the significance of economic recovery and how it is responsible for durable peace. Additionally, global cooperation and peacekeeping efforts help to stabilise post-war societies and address the dangers of political disintegration and residual tensions.

7.6 Ethical War and Post-War Peace in the Indian Context

India possesses a rich and complex war and conflict history, both prior to and subsequent to independence, which are invaluable sources of data on the use of ethics during war and post-war pursuit of peace. It would be prudent to study whether the ethics of ancient India found applicability in Indian context. Some important case studies from the Indian history – medieval and present are discussed below.

7.6.1 The Kalinga War (261 BC)

Ethically Unjust War: Mauryan Emperor Ashoka fought the Kalinga War against the

state of Kalinga (roughly, modern day Odisha). The war is estimated to have killed over 100,000 people, while thousands were displaced or made slaves. Though Ashoka's campaign was to expand his empire, the sheer brutality of the war triggered a huge ethical reckoning.

Post-War Transformation: The result of the Kalinga War had serious moral implications for Ashoka. Pained by the destruction he wrought, Ashoka turned Buddhist (some historians believe he was already a Buddhist) and pursued a policy of Dhamma (righteousness). He gave up further conquests and emphasised non-violence, kindness, and welfare of his people. This resulted in a period of relative peace and prosperity in the empire, as attempts were made at social welfare, moral administration, and spread of Buddhist tenets (Khanna, 2020).

Ashoka's own conversion after the war was one of the first such instances of a leader giving up violence for moral rule in history. His focus on moral leadership and the well-being of his people set the stage for peace and stability of the Mauryan Empire.

The Kalinga War demonstrates that ethical issues of the consequences of war can lead to successful peace efforts. Ashoka's shift from expansion to ethical statecraft demonstrates that remorse over war and ethical leadership can lead to long-lasting peace.

7.6.2 The First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-1846)

Ethnically Contested War: The First Anglo-Sikh War was a conflict between the British East India Company and the Sikh Empire (Singh A. , 2020). British expansionist policy and internal unrest within the Sikh leadership after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death caused the war. While the Sikhs were trying to protect their independence, the British were interested in ruling the area.

Post-War Consequences: Following the war, the Treaty of Lahore (1846) was signed, which placed harsh territorial and financial penalties on the Sikhs. Even though the war had been won by the British, the terms of the treaty were so harsh that they generated bitterness among the Sikh masses. The political unrest and discontent ultimately resulted in the Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-1849), and Punjab was annexed into British India.

Failure to achieve post-war reconciliation and imposition of punitive terms by the British rendered lasting peace unattainable. Failure to address the grievances of the Sikh people resulted in more war, highlighting the necessity of post-war justice and equitable treatment of the vanquished.

The case study here reveals that if the wars are fought on grounds of expansionism, and the post-war situation is unjust and vengeful, then they would not be in a position to establish peace in the long run. The First Anglo-Sikh War emphasises the importance of fair post-war settlements to avoid future wars.

7.6.3 Indo-Pakistani Wars (1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999)

Ethically Complex Wars: India and Pakistan have fought several wars after independence in 1947 and all of them had complex ethical concerns. These were essentially the Kashmir problem, ideological differences and claims of sovereignty over territory. However, all these wars have resulted largely due to the Pakistani designs of causing harm to India and finds genesis in it being an Islamic state that wants to be a leader of the Islamic world. While Pakistan was the aggressor on all occasions and its actions as well as reasons do not justify war, the response by India is largely ethical and derives legitimacy from the unwarranted act by Pakistan.

Post-War Consequences:

- **1947 War:** The first war after independence created chaos in the valley and forced the Maharaja of Kashmir to accede to India. The conflict also caused loss of territory of Kashmir and created the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, dividing the state between India and Pakistan. No solution was discovered, and the problem remains unresolved to date.
- **1965 War:** The war was started by an audacious attempt by Pakistan to challenge India's might and force it to negotiate on the Kashmir issue after the latter's loss to China in 1962. However, the fierce response by Indian forces

foiled the Pakistani plans leading to continued hostilities between the two countries.

- **1971 War:** The most definitive war post the World War II resulted in the biggest defeat of a country (Pakistan) creation of Bangladesh (at the time, East Pakistan) after a devastating war and gross atrocities by its own govt. India intervened on humane grounds, under Just War doctrine of protecting civilian populations from genocide. The war resulted in an unambiguous victory for India and enduring peace with Bangladesh, with tensions with Pakistan continuing.
- **Kargil War (1999):** Kargil war was the result of Pakistan's clandestine plan of intrusion into Indian land. India responded with a limited war, keeping the principles of Just War in mind and aiming at only the recovery of its land and not widening the war further. The war ended with the retreat of Pakistani forces and an embarrassment for the country.

While the wars led to short-term peace deals and ceasefires, the lack of a long-term resolution to the Kashmir issue has placed the Indo-Pakistani relationship in a state of hostility. The 1971 war, however, led to lasting peace with Bangladesh, demonstrating that moral interventions (in this case, India's intervention on behalf of the independence movement of East Pakistan) can create a peaceful post-war situation when they are followed by political settlements.

The Indo-Pakistani wars demonstrate that unless the underlying causes of war (e.g., border disputes and political grievances) are resolved, wars—however waged with some moral rationale—are not likely to result in enduring peace. The success of the 1971 war against Bangladesh demonstrates how moral military interventions can lead to peace if followed by nation-building.

7.6.4 The Sino-Indian War (1962)

Ethically Controversial War: Sino-Indian War was a fierce but brief war that India fought over border regions after China attempted invasion of these territories, namely at Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian stand was ethical as it argued that its cause was just because India was defending itself against Chinese encroachment. The Chinese used its expansionist tactics and claimed that the territories were part of Chinese historical borders, making them the unethical raiders.

Post-War Outcome: The war ended with a unilateral Chinese withdrawal and ceasefire, with the disputed areas left undecided. India faced embarrassment and this led to an era of soul-searching and defence reforms. The border dispute is still unresolved despite ongoing diplomatic efforts, and relations between the two countries still flare sporadically, as seen in recent Ladakh clashes.

The war has not led to any ultimate settlement of the border disputes, and both nations have maintained a fragile peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). There has been

a desire to maintain peace diplomatically, but without any ultimate settlement, the problem persists.

The Sino-Indian War highlights the futility of war in settling border disputes. Even if a side feels its cause is just, the absence of a clear post-war settlement leaves open the possibility of underlying tensions to continue, negating long-term peace.

7.6.5 Operation Blue Star and the Punjab Insurgency (1984)

Ethically Contested Military Operation: Operation Blue Star was a military operation sanctioned by the Indian government on its own soil to evict militants led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale from the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a sacred Sikh complex. The operation entailed heavy civilian loss of life and destruction of parts of the temple, and this led to mass outrage among certain factions of the Sikhs.

Consequences: The action unleashed a cycle of chaos and violence, fuelled by the non state actors and led to the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. Situation further aggravated and the resultant anti-Sikh violence in Delhi and other Indian cities left scars on the hearts of both communities that remained unhealed for decades. This further was exploited to deepen the rift between the Sikh community and the Indian state, leading to a long insurgency in Punjab in the 1980s and early 1990s.

While the insurgency was eventually brought under control in the mid-1990s, the

memories of Operation Blue Star and the subsequent riots have left permanent bitterness among the Sikhs. The inability to administer justice to the perpetrators of the anti-Sikh riots continues to be a politically sensitive issue in India.

The case demonstrates the ethical nuances of military interventions into internal conflicts, especially where cultural and religious sensibilities are involved. Inadequate response to post-operation grievances, as well as inadequate administration of justice to victims, hindered durable peace and reconciliation.

7.7 The Real Wars of Today: Sub-Conventional Environment

Theories been discussed, it is now imperative that realism be brought into discussion. The present state of affairs has pushed the world into zone of Sub- Conventional warfare. Can the ethical principles of Dhanurveda be applied to modern-day proxy wars and sub-conventional wars (such as insurgencies, guerrilla warfare, and cyber conflicts)? Probably yes, but their application becomes more complex due to the evolving nature of these conflicts. How the traditional principles of Dharma Yuddha (righteous war), Neeti (conduct in war) and Ahimsa (non violence) as well as post war assistance can be adapted to contemporary warfare are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

7.7.1 Dharma Yuddha: Righteous War

i. Just Cause

In proxy wars, great powers fund non-state actors or insurgent forces in a foreign country to advance their own geopolitical interests. It is difficult to ascertain whether the actors have a just or legitimate reason for fighting. The moral issue is whether it is ethical to fund a rebel group or militia if it leads to long-term violence and instability in the target country?

Even while engaging in proxy wars, the right intention (e.g., for protecting civilians, the advancement of justice) must remain a guiding principle. If the state is intervening indirectly, it must ensure its intervention is meant to restore peace or stop mass human rights violations and not to advance its geopolitical or economic interests.

The proxy war that has been forced upon India by Pakistan through state sponsored terrorism and funding of anti India agencies has no legality, however for India, it is the nation's responsibility to protect its people and its sovereignty. Therefore, it is a just war or Dharma Yuddha for the Indian forces and has the ingredients to justify killing of those engaged in anti national and terrorist activities as part of the Kshatriya dharma.

ii. Legitimate Authority

In insurgencies or guerrilla warfare, it's typically most unclear who has legitimate authority to declare or wage a war. For example, in civil wars, many groups can claim to represent the people or the "right" side of the war, obscuring the question of legitimacy.

As history has shown, instances of the insurgent leaders turning hostile to their own masters further complicate the question of authority.

Even non-state actors, such as resistance movements or insurgency forces, can be legitimised if fighting against an unjust occupation or government. They must, however, be ethical, e.g., representative of the popular will and striving to minimise collateral damage on civilians. Supporting insurgent forces merely to destabilise an area, without a just cause, would be unethical.

The Afghan Mujahideen during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989) claimed to fight against foreign occupation. But the long-term effects of foreign support for the groups led to further instability, illustrating the subtlety of determining legitimate authority.

iii. Right Intention

Proxy wars include various actors who possess secret agendas and therefore, it is hard to ensure that the intervention is indeed intended to bring justice or peace. Great Powers use the cover to advance democratic or humanitarian causes but secretly pursue their own strategic interests. For proxy wars to satisfy the ethical criterion of right intention, supporting powers and the local actors need to put peace, justice, and the welfare of the population first. Proxy wars are unjust if they increase violence or prolong suffering for the sake of narrow political objectives.

In the Yemen Civil War (2014-present), several regional powers (Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE) are engaged in a proxy war, leading to a humanitarian crisis. A just war plan would be to act with real desire for peace, not stoking divisions to achieve strategic purposes.

7.7.2 Neeti: Code of Conduct during War

i. Discrimination and Non-Combatant Immunity

Guerrilla warfare and insurgencies tend to confuse the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and it is hard to follow the doctrine of discrimination. Military operations are usually conducted in populated areas, and non-state actors may target civilians deliberately in order to achieve political objectives. Even in sub-conventional war, the ethical principle of non-combatant immunity needs to be permitted to override. Combatants need to try to distinguish between legitimate military objectives and civilians, even if the nature of conflict makes it an easy distinction to confuse. Use of tactics with the aim of inflicting damage on civilians, for example, through terrorism or indiscriminate bombing, clearly contravenes the principles of Righteous war.

ii. Proportionality

The doctrine of proportionality—ensuring that the military action is proportionate to the threat—does not apply in proxy wars. External intervention can lead to more violence

than necessary to bring the conflict to an end, resulting in excessive destruction and suffering. Even during proxy wars, adversaries and their supporters must ensure that military responses are in proportion to the goals they wish to achieve. Disproportionate responses, such as mass bombing or chemical warfare, are immoral even though they may have strategic advantages.

However, the proportionality largely depends on the effect desired and the amount of damage to be created to shape the opponent's mind and hence it is more a function of the psychological influences than the visible amounts of force and infliction of injury.

7.7.3 Ahimsa

The doctrine of Ahimha translates to necessary violence in war that requires violence to be used only as a last means and violence should be necessary to achieve a just cause. However, in sub-conventional warfare, the insurgent forces or the external patrons may employ violence in the first instance and, in fact, avoid peaceful methods. Even in sub-conventional war, all parties must exhaust peaceful means of solution before turning to violence. Furthermore, when violence is used, it must be the minimum needed to achieve the objective, not to engage in extensive or escalatory violence for political ends.

In the Ukraine war (2014–present), separatist groups aided by external forces have prolonged the war, usually ignoring potential diplomatic resolution. A Just War stance would emphasise diplomacy and try to minimise violence wherever possible.

7.7.4 Restoration of Peace

In most proxy wars, the external powers involved pull out without contributing anything towards reconstruction or long-term peace of the affected country. This leaves a devastated area with weak governance, which paves the way for further conflict. To align with the principle of creating lasting peace, external powers and local powers must be dedicated to reconstructing the devastated area and building stable governance. Ethical post-war operations include reconstruction, humanitarian aid, and support for justice mechanisms to take war criminals to book.

The Afghanistan War (2001–2021) is a case where, despite military action, failure to rebuild properly and establish long-term governance left the country vulnerable to the return of the Taliban. Ethical post-war operations would have included sustained international commitment to peace building.

7.7.5 Accountability and Justice

In sub-conventional or asymmetric warfare, when non-state players can operate without definite responsibility, it can prove challenging to assure justice post-war. Such actors can go unpunished for atrocities, and international mechanisms of trying war crimes are weak by and large. Just War principles demand responsibility for what is done in war. War crimes or human rights violators should be prosecuted by international tribunals or

courts, state or non-state.

In such wars like the Rwandan Genocide or Yugoslav Wars, international tribunals were established to prosecute war criminals. The same is to be followed in contemporary proxy wars and insurgencies, with all parties to be held liable for breaches of Code of conduct.

7.8 Reframing Ethics for Modern Conflicts

In modern proxy wars and sub-conventional conflict, the ethical paradigm set forth by Indian writings and Just War theory remains applicable but needs to be carefully modified keeping in mind the subtleties of such conflict. The key points for such a modification must be based on Defining Just Cause. Even in indirect or insurgent warfare, the cause must be one of justice and the preservation of innocent lives. The aspect of Distinction and Proportionality needs clear defining and the combatants are still required to do their best to avoid harming civilians and restrict the use of force, even in the face of unconventional warfare.

It is not enough to win the war—ongoing peace requires post-war reconstruction, war crimes justice, and serious attempts at rebuilding devastated war societies. The application of such principles in proxy wars or sub-conventional warfare is typically based on the readiness of non-state and state actors to embrace international humanitarian law and moral responsibility, rather than short-term political or military gain.

7.9 Challenges in Applying Ethical Principles in Modern Warfare

While moral norms can and should govern modern warfare, there exist certain inherent challenges that have not presented themselves in the times when texts on ethics were written:

- **Asymmetric Warfare:** Contemporary warfare is characterised by the involvement of non-state actors, insurgencies, and terror groups. They are not bound by international law or morality, so it becomes challenging to apply Just War Theory or any similar framework.
- **Technology:** The advent of autonomous weapons, drones, and cyber warfare poses new ethical dilemmas. There are challenges to ensure that AI-based weapons adhere to the principle of proportionality and non-combatant immunity. The rampant modern day warfare tools like cyber attacks target essentially the civilian infrastructure which was largely considered immoral and thus becomes a major concern.
- **Global Power Dynamics:** Powerful nations sometimes selectively apply ethical norms to justify their own interventions, but not comparable actions by themselves or their allies. This can result in accusations of hypocrisy and undermine the ethical norms that are supposed to regulate warfare.

- **Civilian Combatants and Blurred Lines:** In most modern conflicts, the distinction between combatants and civilians is blurred, especially in guerrilla warfare or terrorism. This complicates the application of the ethical principle of non-combatant immunity, especially when dealing with cyber attacks where the identity and the nationality of the warrior is unknown.

The ethics of warfare, from ancient codes like the Dhanurveda to modern models like the Just War Theory, provide a necessary moral compass to navigate the complexities of modern conflicts. Despite the difficulties of new technologies, asymmetric warfare, and political dynamics, these norms remain essential to ensure that warfare is waged with as much humanity and justice as possible.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explore the ethical dimensions of warfare as outlined in the ancient Indian treatise, Dhanurveda, and compare them with contemporary western thoughts like the principles of just war theory. From the detailed study of the Indian texts as well as the western theories, it has been observed that the basic concepts of ethics remain universal and have been encouraged by the scholars for ages. What also emerges is that while there are challenges to following the ethical principles in actual war scenario, any conflict that meets the criteria of the laid down concepts of a Righteous war and is fought with an ethical code of conduct will definitely minimise violence and will most likely result in a peace that lasts.

This study of the ethical tenets of Dhanurveda reveals that ancient Indian military philosophy was deeply rooted in moral responsibility and justice. Understanding these principles can offer valuable insights for contemporary military ethics in encouraging the inclusion of humanitarian values even in technologically advanced warfare.

The Dhanurveda, as an ancient Indian treatise on warfare, presents one of the earliest known frameworks for ethical conduct in battle, emphasising principles of righteous war

(Dharmayuddha), Neeti (Code of Conduct), and Ahimsa. These ideals, though formulated in a vastly different historical and technological context, remain strikingly relevant in today's discussions on military ethics, humanitarian law, and the evolving nature of warfare.

Throughout history, the ethics of war have been shaped by shifting geopolitical realities, from the chivalric codes of medieval warriors to the Geneva Conventions and modern Just War Theory. The principles of restraint, fairness, and just cause, as outlined in the Dhanurveda, align closely with contemporary norms governing armed conflict. However, the growing complexities of modern warfare—such as drone strikes, cyber warfare, and artificial intelligence in combat—pose new challenges to these long-standing ethical considerations.

Despite these advancements, the fundamental moral dilemmas of war remain unchanged and form the basis for ethical conduct:

- When is war justified and who has the legitimacy of waging it?
- What limits should be placed on military actions to ensure minimum losses?
- How do we ensure the protection of innocent lives in an era of high-tech warfare and avoid unnecessary violence?

The Dhanurvedic approach to war reminds us that even in the pursuit of victory, morality and duty must guide military conduct. As international laws continue to evolve, ancient wisdom can offer valuable insights into maintaining ethical standards in armed conflicts.

In an era where warfare is often driven by political and economic interests rather than righteous causes, revisiting these ethical foundations can help reinforce the idea that war, though sometimes inevitable, must always be governed by principles of justice and humanity.

While technology changes the weapons of war, the moral dilemmas remain the same. The Dhanurveda's ethical teachings remind us that true victory lies not just in conquest, but in upholding righteousness and justice, even in battle.

Ethics in warfare remains a timeless debate, influenced by both ancient wisdom and modern pragmatism. The teachings of Dhanurveda remind us that war, though inevitable at times, must always be guided by principles of righteousness, honour, and the protection of humanity. In a world where technological warfare dominates, revisiting these ethical foundations can help ensure that morality is not lost in the pursuit of victory.

By learning from the ethics of warfare prescribed in the Dhanurveda, the world can work towards a future where military conflicts are governed by morality, human dignity, and the greater good. Balancing military necessity with ethical responsibility will remain a challenge, but it is a challenge worth pursuing to ensure a more just and humane world, even in times of war.

8.2 Recommendations for Integrating Ethics in Modern and Future Warfare

To uphold ethical standards in today's and future wars, a balanced approach is required: one that combines ancient ethical wisdom, contemporary military laws, and evolving technologies. The following recommendations are hereby made that can help integrate these principles in a modern war scenario.

8.2.1 Reinforcing Ethical Training in Military Institutions

- Just as the Dhanurveda emphasised discipline and righteous conduct, modern military training should integrate courses on ethics, humanitarian law, and moral decision-making in combat. These should include case studies on historical conflicts where ethical choices influenced outcomes.
- Ethical dilemmas should be incorporated into military simulations, ensuring that soldiers understand the importance of restraint and proportionality in warfare and the impact of their decisions on civilians and long-term stability.
- Scenario-based training on moral ambiguity should be introduced, helping military personnel develop the ability to make ethical decisions under pressure while balancing strategic objectives with humanitarian considerations.

- Psychological resilience training should accompany ethical education, ensuring that soldiers can withstand the moral and emotional stress of combat while upholding ethical principles.

8.2.2 Strengthening International Legal Frameworks

- The Geneva Conventions and United Nations War Crime Regulations should be continuously updated to account for new forms of warfare, such as cyber warfare, drone strikes, and AI-driven combat.
- Stricter enforcement of war crimes tribunals should be ensured to hold violators accountable, discouraging unethical warfare particularly in the case of non-state actors, private military companies and cyber warfare entities that currently operate in legally ambiguous zones.
- Stronger whistleblower protection mechanisms should be established to encourage soldiers and intelligence officers to report ethical violations without fear of retribution.

8.2.3 Implementing Ethical Constraints in Autonomous Warfare

- As AI and drone warfare become more prevalent, ethical guidelines must be programmed into military AI systems to prevent unnecessary civilian casualties,

ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and the principle of distinction between combatants and civilians.

- The principle of human oversight should be maintained—autonomous weapons should not be allowed to make life-and-death decisions without human intervention. Nations should adopt legal frameworks that ban or limit fully autonomous lethal weapons.
- The development of AI-powered combat systems should prioritize ethical constraints that prevent escalation, minimise unintended consequences and require multi-layered verification before engagement.
- Ethical considerations must also be extended to robotic and cybernetic enhancements in soldiers, ensuring that military bioengineering does not compromise fundamental human rights.

8.2.4 Prioritising Non-Combatant Protection

- Nations should commit to precision warfare strategies that minimize harm to civilians and infrastructure by using advanced targeting methods, real-time surveillance and non-lethal disabling technologies.

- The ancient Dhanurvedic principle of not harming civilians should be reinforced in modern military doctrines and Rules of Engagement (ROE) to ensure ethical combat strategies.
- Humanitarian corridors should be established and protected during conflicts to allow civilians safe passage and warzones should be demilitarized whenever possible.
- A global military code of ethics should be developed that requires all nations and non-state actors to adhere to strict civilian protection norms, irrespective of their political stance.

8.2.5 Encouraging Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution

- Preventing war should be the first priority—as emphasised in Indian Dharmic traditions, diplomacy should always be pursued before military action.
- Peace-building mechanisms such as negotiation, economic sanctions, and international mediation should be strengthened to prevent unnecessary conflicts.
- Third-party arbitration mechanisms (such as those under the UN or regional alliances) should be made more effective in conflict resolution by ensuring impartiality and enforcement power.

- Early warning systems and diplomatic pressure should be used to prevent human rights violations before they escalate into armed conflict.
- Economic and social incentives should be introduced for nations and groups that pursue peaceful negotiations over armed confrontations.

8.2.6 Applying Ethical Guidelines to Cyber and Information Warfare

- The Dhanurvedic principle of fair combat should be adapted to cyber warfare, ensuring that nations do not engage in unethical hacking, disinformation campaigns, or cyber-attacks on civilian infrastructure.
- New global regulations should be created to define ethical limits for cyber warfare and the use of AI-driven attacks including restrictions on cyber espionage, ransomware attacks and the hacking of essential civilian services.
- Governments and militaries should commit to not using cyber warfare for political manipulation or targeting of civilian democratic institutions, ensuring fair governance practices.
- Clear accountability measures should be put in place for state-sponsored cyber warfare, with penalties and international sanctions for ethical violations.

8.2.7 Promoting Cultural and Philosophical Awareness in Warfare

- Military leaders and policymakers should study historical war ethics, including Dhanurveda, Just War Theory, and Eastern and Western philosophies, to develop a well-rounded ethical perspective.
- The integration of ancient moral teachings into modern military education can help foster a global culture of ethical warfare ensuring that technological advancements do not override ethical considerations.
- Cross-cultural military ethics dialogues should be encouraged between nations, ensuring that diverse ethical perspectives are considered when forming military policies and strategies.
- Military personnel should be trained in understanding cultural sensitivities in conflict zones to avoid unnecessary escalations and violations of local ethical values.

8.2.8 Enhancing Psychological Support and Rehabilitation for Soldiers

- Just as ancient warriors were taught self-discipline and mental resilience, modern military institutions should provide comprehensive psychological support to help soldiers cope with the ethical burdens of war.

- Post-combat mental health care should be a priority, ensuring that soldiers receive adequate psychological rehabilitation and reintegration programs to prevent moral injury and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Ethical debriefing sessions should be held for returning soldiers, allowing them to reflect on their actions and ensuring that any ethical concerns are addressed.
- AI-driven psychological assessment tools can be employed to monitor the mental health of combat personnel, ensuring timely interventions and reducing the risk of ethical lapses due to combat stress.

8.2.9 Encouraging Technological Ethics in Military Research and Development

- Military technological advancements must follow strict ethical and humanitarian guidelines, ensuring that AI, biotechnology and cyber warfare tools are developed responsibly.
- Ethical review boards should be mandatory for all defense research projects, ensuring that innovations align with global security norms and human rights principles.

- Transparency in defense technology development should be promoted through international cooperation, preventing the unchecked rise of dangerous autonomous weapons.
- Military researchers and defense contractors should undergo ethical training to ensure that technological advancements do not bypass moral and legal constraints.

8.2.10 Strengthening Global Collaboration for Ethical Warfare

- International alliances should prioritize ethical warfare agreements, committing to strict adherence to humanitarian laws in all military engagements.
- Joint military training exercises should include ethical combat scenarios, reinforcing the importance of human rights protection across allied forces.
- UN peacekeeping missions should incorporate ethical frameworks in their operational guidelines, ensuring that conflict resolution strategies uphold moral principles.
- Ethical military coalitions should be established to counter nations or groups that engage in unethical warfare practices, enforcing accountability through collective action.

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