



Constitutional Dimensions of Human Needs: a Comparative Analysis of Maslow’s Hierarchy and the Panchakosha Model

Aditi Pote*

Bachelor of Technology, Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune, India

*Corresponding Author: Aditi Pote, Bachelor of Technology, Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune, India

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<div><div>Received: 09 Feb 2025 Accepted: 19 Feb 2025 Published: 24 Feb 2025</div></div> <div><p>Cite this article as:</p><p>Pote, A. (2025). Constitutional Dimensions of Human Needs: a Comparative Analysis of Maslow’s Hierarchy and the Panchakosha Model. International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies, 12(1), 13-15.</p><p>DOI: https://doi.org/10.62557/2394-6296.120103</p><p>Copyright: © 2025 The author(s). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.</p><div></div></div>	<p>This paper offers an interdisciplinary analysis that bridges modern psychological theory and ancient Indian philosophy by mapping Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and the Panchakosha model onto India’s constitutional framework. Maslow’s model describes human motivation as a progression from basic physiological needs to self-actualization, while the Panchakosha model articulates existence through five layers—from the physical (Annamaya) to the sublime (Anandamaya). By systematically correlating these paradigms with an expanded array of constitutional provisions—including Fundamental Rights (Articles 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32), Directive Principles (Articles 39, 41, 47), and Fundamental Duties (Articles 51A)—this study demonstrates that the Indian Constitution is not merely a legal instrument but a dynamic blueprint that fosters holistic human development. The detailed mapping reveals how constitutional guarantees address both material and transcendent dimensions of human existence. These insights not only enrich our understanding of constitutional intent but also provide a fertile ground for future empirical and interdisciplinary research in law, psychology, and Indian philosophy.</p> <p>Keywords: Maslow’s Hierarchy, Panchakosha Model, Indian Constitution, Human Development, Interdisciplinary Analysis</p>

INTRODUCTION

Human development is a multifaceted phenomenon examined across various disciplines. In psychology, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) posits that individuals must satisfy basic needs—ranging from physiological to self-actualization—before realizing their fullest potential. In parallel, the ancient Indian Panchakosha model, rooted in the Taittiriya Upanishad, envisions human existence as comprised of five concentric layers: Annamaya (physical), Pranamaya (vital energy), Manomaya (mental), Vijnanamaya (intellectual), and Anandamaya (bliss).

This study explores the research question: How do the constitutional provisions of India reflect and facilitate the spectrum of human needs as conceptualized by these two paradigms? The objectives are threefold: (1) to systematically map and interpret the corresponding levels of Maslow’s hierarchy and the Panchakosha model to specific constitutional articles; (2) to elucidate the underlying constitutional intent aimed at promoting holistic development; and (3) to propose avenues for future interdisciplinary research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employs a qualitative, conceptual analysis through systematic comparative mapping:

Literature Review

- Primary texts were examined, including Maslow’s seminal work (1943) and classical commentaries on the Taittiriya Upanishad.
- The complete text of the Indian Constitution, along with pertinent amendments and judicial interpretations, was scrutinized.
- Supplementary literature on constitutional law, human rights, and developmental psychology was reviewed to enrich the analysis.

Comparative Mapping

- Each level of Maslow’s Hierarchy was aligned with the corresponding kosha from the Panchakosha model.
- An expanded set of constitutional articles was identified to capture the spectrum of human

development. For example, while Article 21 secures the right to life (physical survival), Articles 14, 15, and 17 ensure social equality, and Articles 51A(h) and (j) encourage intellectual and moral excellence.

Content Analysis

- Detailed textual analysis was conducted on the selected constitutional provisions, focusing on the interplay between Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, and Fundamental Duties.
- A comparative table (Table 1) was developed to visually encapsulate the mapping process, enhancing clarity and reproducibility.

Synthesis

- The findings were synthesized to reveal overarching themes that underscore the Constitution's commitment to balanced and holistic human development.

RESULTS

The mapping exercise yielded a multi-dimensional framework aligning constitutional provisions with both Maslow's Hierarchy and the Panchakosha model. Table 1 below summarizes the detailed comparative mapping:

Table 1. Expanded Comparative Mapping of Human Needs, Kosha Layers, and Constitutional Provisions

Human Development Level	Framework Model (Kosha)	Constitutional Articles	Interpretation
Physiological Needs	AnnamayaKosha	• Article 21: Right to Life (inclusive of food, shelter, and health) • Article 39(a): Adequate means of livelihood • Article 47: Duty to enhance public health and nutrition • Article 41: Right to work, education, and public assistance	Secures essential physical survival by ensuring access to basic resources, paralleling the sustenance of the body.
Safety Needs	PranamayaKosha	• Article 14: Equality before the law • Article 19 (various clauses): Freedom of speech, expression, assembly, and movement • Article 22: Protection against arbitrary arrest • Article 32: Right to constitutional remedies • Articles 39(e)&(f): Protection for workers and children	Creates a secure environment safeguarding individual freedoms and legal recourse, analogous to preserving vital energy.
Love and Belonging Needs	ManomayaKosha	• Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination • Article 17: Abolition of untouchability • Article 19(1)(c): Right to form associations • Articles 29 & 30: Cultural and educational rights of minorities	Fosters social inclusion and communal bonds, echoing the relational and emotional connectivity of the mental sheath.
Esteem Needs	VijnanamayaKosha	• Article 16: Equality of opportunity in public employment • Article 19(1)(a): Freedom of speech and expression • Article 32 (reiterated): Empowerment through legal recourse • Articles 38 & 46: Directive Principles promoting social justice	Encourages individual dignity and merit-based recognition, vital for nurturing intellectual growth and self-respect.
Self-Actualization	AnandamayaKosha	• Article 51A(h): Duty to develop scientific temper and humanism • Article 51A(j): Duty to strive toward excellence • Article 19(1)(g): Freedom to practice any profession • Expanded Interpretation of Article 21: Living with dignity and creative expression	Inspires personal excellence, intellectual creativity, and spiritual growth, mirroring the state of transcendent bliss.

This framework illustrates that the Indian Constitution is deliberately structured to support the full spectrum of human needs, from physical survival to the realization of higher potentials.

DISCUSSION

The in-depth comparative mapping underscores several critical insights:

A Holistic Constitutional Vision

The Indian Constitution is imbued with a vision that extends beyond mere legal formalities. Fundamental Rights such as Articles 21, 39(a), and 47 secure basic

survival, while protections under Articles 14, 19, 22, and 32 guarantee safety and equality. Simultaneously, social rights enshrined in Articles 15, 17, 29, and 30 cultivate a sense of belonging.

Interdependence of Rights and Duties

The integration of Fundamental Duties (Articles 51A(h) and 51A(j)) alongside rights indicates a symbiotic relationship where citizens are expected not only to benefit from state protections but also to contribute actively to societal progress. This dynamic mirrors the Panchakosha ideal of a balanced, self-realized individual.

Bridging Material and Transcendent Needs

The expanded interpretation of Article 21—as ensuring a life of dignity—demonstrates that the Constitution addresses not only material well-being but also the aspirational aspects of human existence. This holistic approach aligns with Maslow's concept of self-actualization and the Anandamaya Kosha.

Policy and Governance Implications

Recognizing the constitutional framework as a catalyst for comprehensive human development suggests potential policy reforms. By integrating legal safeguards with initiatives in mental health, social cohesion, and creative expression, policymakers can better operationalize the Constitution's human-centric vision.

Future Research Directions

While this study is conceptual, its findings pave the way for empirical investigations. Future research could involve qualitative case studies, surveys, or comparative policy analyses to assess the practical impact of constitutional provisions on everyday human development.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the Indian Constitution is a dynamic blueprint for human development, intricately designed to reflect both Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Panchakosha model. Through a detailed comparative mapping, it becomes evident that constitutional provisions secure not only the basic necessities of life but also foster the conditions necessary for intellectual, social, and spiritual growth. This integrated framework reaffirms the progressive intent behind India's constitutional design and underscores the potential for interdisciplinary research to further elucidate the relationship between legal mandates and holistic human development.

REFERENCES

- [1] Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.
- [2] Radhakrishnan, S., & Moore, C. A. (Eds.). (1957). *The Principal Upanishads*. HarperCollins.
- [3] Government of India. (1950). *The Constitution of India*. Ministry of Law and Justice.
- [4] Basu, D. D. (2005). *Commentary on the Constitution of India*. LexisNexis.