

Silence as Communication: Indian Philosophical Perspectives

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Abstract

This study examines mauna (silence) as a foundational communicative and philosophical principle within Indian traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Contrary to Western linear models that equate communication with verbal transmission, Indian philosophy conceives silence as an active, conscious state that embodies realization, mindfulness, and moral restraint. Through a qualitative hermeneutic-comparative approach, this research interprets classical scriptures such as the Upaniṣads, Nikāyas, and Ācārāṅga Sūtra alongside modern intercultural communication theories. The findings reveal that silence operates as a triadic paradigm: realization (jñāna) in Hinduism, mindful awareness (prajñā) in Buddhism, and ethical restraint (ahimsa) in Jainism. These dimensions fit into what this study terms the Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm, a framework in which silence transcends verbal boundaries to become a medium of spiritual insight, moral discipline, and empathetic dialogue. The research concludes that silence, far from negating communication, manifests as its highest form, a state of conscious presence that unites thought, morality, and awareness, offering vital implications for contemporary communication ethics and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: Mauna, Silence, Indian Philosophy, Communication Ethics, Mindfulness, Intercultural Dialogue

1. Introduction

Silence within Indian philosophical thought is not merely the absence of speech but a conscious and intentional mode of awareness that embodies ethical, spiritual, and communicative depth. It operates as a living presence rather than a void, forming a bridge between human cognition and the ontological reality of existence. In this understanding, silence or mauna is not passive withdrawal but active communion, where consciousness itself becomes the medium of communication. Within Indian traditions, communication is not simply about the transmission of information but the realization of awareness, where words are transcended, and meaning is internalized. In contrast, Western communication theories, such as Shannon and Weaver's (1949) linear model, conceptualize communication as the transfer of information between

sender and receiver. Hall's (1976) theory of high- and low-context communication further emphasizes contextual meaning but still centers on linguistic and symbolic exchange. Indian philosophical perspectives diverge from this approach by viewing communication as communion, an inward process where meaning emerges from consciousness engaging with itself (Jain and Matukumalli, 2013). The Taittirīya Upaniṣad declares that "from which words return, together with the mind, not attaining it" (Radhakrishnan, 1953), affirming that ultimate knowledge lies beyond the reach of language. This statement reveals that silence is not a lack of speech but a state in which language is transcended and awareness becomes direct understanding. Silence thus represents epistemic realization, an encounter with truth that unfolds when thought dissolves into consciousness.

Earlier scholars such as Bhawuk (2003) and Jain and Matukumalli (2013) have examined silence as a behavioral phenomenon linked to humility, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity. However, these interpretations often limit silence to communication style or social behavior, leaving unexplored its philosophical, ethical, and epistemological foundations. In Indian thought, silence is an active moral and spiritual discipline that enables the listener to internalize meaning and respond with mindfulness. It cultivates humility and self-restraint, teaching that true understanding arises from stillness rather than speech. In the Hindu worldview, silence is closely tied to realization and the dissolution of thought into pure awareness. The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad identifies silence as the fourth state of consciousness (*turiya*), beyond waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, where the self merges with ultimate reality. The guru-śiṣya tradition exemplifies *mauna-upadeśa*, or instruction through silence, where wisdom is transmitted not through words but through shared presence (Rigopoulos, 2022). Mahatma Gandhi's practice of weekly silence (*maun-vrata*) further demonstrates this as a form of ethical communication grounded in *ahimsa*, the principle of non-violence and truth (Kool and Agrawal, 2022). Gandhi's silence reflected moral discipline and self-purification, showing that restraint in speech can deepen clarity, compassion, and self-awareness.

In Buddhism, silence functions both as a method and as wisdom. The Buddha's *Ariya tuṅhī-bhāva*, or Noble Silence, embodies a pedagogical principle of teaching through mindful presence (Wayman, 1974; Kovačević, 2021). Here, silence is neither avoidance nor indifference but a deliberate practice of awareness, allowing understanding to arise naturally. Miike (2017) describes this as "relational mindfulness," where silence becomes an ethical and intercultural expression of respect, empathy, and compassion. Through silence, communicative interaction transforms into mindful communion. Similarly, Jainism integrates silence into its ethical framework as *mauna-vrata*, a vow of verbal non-violence. In Jain philosophy, silence reflects moral restraint, truthfulness, and inner purity, aligning with the principle of *Ahimsa* (Dundas, 2002; Cort, 2001). As Chapple (2014) explains, the practice of silence mirrors restraint in consumption and desire, revealing that communication ethics in Jainism extend to ecological consciousness. Silence therefore embodies both spiritual and ecological responsibility, demonstrating that speech and restraint must harmonize with moral awareness.

Together, these traditions reveal a triadic model of silence: realization in Hinduism, mindfulness in Buddhism, and ethical restraint in Jainism. This synthesis transforms silence from a passive state into an integrative communicative philosophy linking ontology,

epistemology, and ethics. It dissolves the boundary between being and knowing, suggesting that silence is not the negation of communication but its highest form. In this model, silence speaks through awareness, presence, and empathy, establishing communication as communion with existence itself. Scholars such as Ramabrahmam (2016) and Kumar (2022) identify this as the Indian communicative paradigm, where awareness replaces argument, and listening becomes a form of dialogue. This paradigm situates communication within the realm of consciousness rather than linguistic exchange, redefining the very act of understanding. Building upon the insights of Miike (2017) and Subba (2025), this study reinterprets mauna as an intercultural communicative model that bridges classical Indian thought and contemporary communication ethics. It examines how silence operates simultaneously as epistemological realization, moral discipline, and mindful dialogue across Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. By doing so, the study contributes to global communication theory by positioning silence as mindful presence rather than absence, transforming speaking into listening, thinking into awareness, and communication itself into a spiritual act of realization.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze silence (mauna) as realization and self-knowledge in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions.
2. To examine silence as a moral restraint and mindfulness in ethical communication.
3. To develop a unified Indian paradigm of mindful and ethical communication.

3. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it redefines silence (mauna) as a meaningful and intentional form of communication that transcends speech and linguistic expression. It situates silence not as emptiness but as a conscious state of awareness that communicates through presence, reflection, and empathy. By exploring Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain perspectives, the study deepens our understanding of communication as an act of awareness, mindfulness, and ethical restraint rather than mere verbal exchange. It demonstrates how silence operates as a moral, cognitive, and spiritual discipline that nurtures self-control and compassion. The research bridges traditional Indian philosophy with modern communication ethics, offering an alternative to speech-centered Western paradigms and emphasizing the transformative potential of mindful silence. In an era of digital noise, overexpression, and constant connectivity, this study highlights the relevance of silence as a tool for reflection and responsible dialogue. It argues that silence allows space for understanding, empathy, and the ethical consideration of others. Furthermore, it provides a philosophical foundation for applying silence in mindful leadership, education, and intercultural dialogue. By integrating classical insight with contemporary communication theory, the study positions silence as both a moral and practical dimension of human connection and social harmony.

4. Methodology of the study

This study adopts a qualitative and hermeneutic approach to understand silence (mauna) as realization, moral discipline, and mindful communication within Indian philosophy. The qualitative design emphasizes the exploration of meanings, experiences, and interpretations rather than the measurement of variables. It allows for an in-depth engagement with philosophical and scriptural texts to reveal how silence functions as both awareness and ethical communication in human life. The hermeneutic method, grounded in interpretation, seeks to uncover the symbolic and experiential dimensions of silence, how it operates as a bridge between knowing, being, and relating. Through reflective reading, this approach interprets silence not merely as the absence of speech but as a living expression of consciousness and moral awareness. The primary sources for this research include the Upaniṣads, Nikāyas, and Ācārāṅga Sūtra, each representing the philosophical foundations of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain thought. These texts are studied using respected translations and commentaries by Radhakrishnan (1953), Nāṇamoli and Bodhi (1995), Dundas (2002), Cort (2001), and Miike (2017). Classical interpretations are carefully read alongside modern works in intercultural communication and Indian philosophy to connect ancient insights with contemporary understandings of mindful and ethical dialogue. Secondary literature supports this interpretive process by situating silence within global communication ethics and moral philosophy, ensuring that the study remains both historically grounded and philosophically relevant. The research unfolds through four interconnected phases, forming what is described as The Integrative Indian Philosophy of Communication: Silence as the Unity of Realization, Restraint, and Awareness.

1. The first phase, the Philosophical Phase: It examines silence as realization and self-knowledge. Drawing primarily from the Upaniṣads and Nikāyas, it interprets silence as the state in which knowledge transcends language and the individual experiences unity with truth, the merging of the knower and the known. Here, silence becomes an active form of awareness, representing Brahma-jñāna in Hinduism, prajñā in Buddhism, and Kevala-jñāna in Jainism.

2. The second phase, the Ethical Phase: It explores silence as moral restraint and compassion. Based on texts like the Bhagavad Gītā, Manusmṛti, and Ācārāṅga Sūtra, it views silence as a discipline of truthfulness, empathy, and non-violence. In this dimension, silence becomes an act of Ahimsa (non-harming) and Satya (truth), guiding both speech and intention toward ethical awareness.

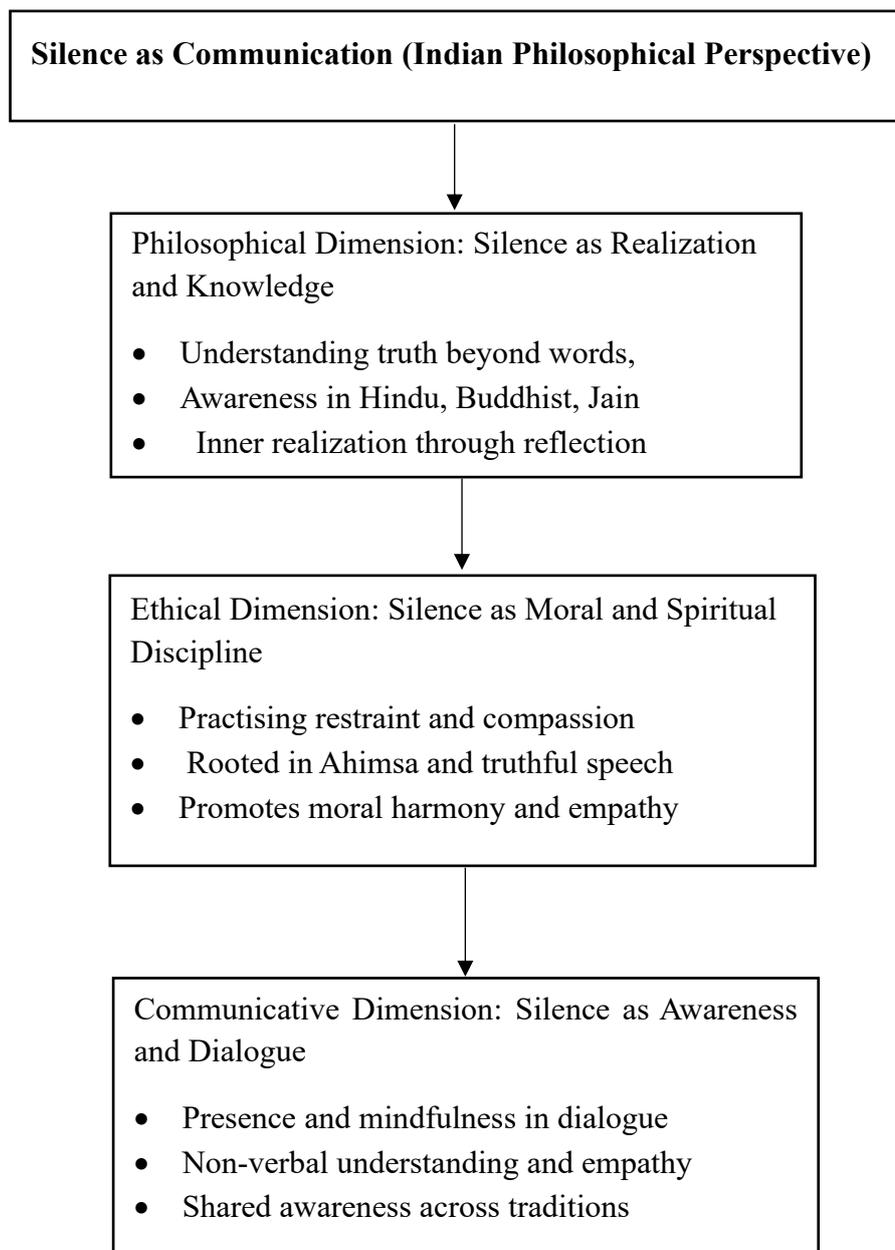
3. The third phase, the Communicative Phase: It studies silence as mindful dialogue and relational presence. It investigates the guru-śiṣya (teacher-disciple) tradition, the Buddha's practice of Noble Silence (Ariya tuṅhī-bhāva), and the Jain vow of Mauna-vrata to show how communication can arise from stillness, listening, and shared consciousness rather than words.

4. Finally, the fourth phase, the Integrative Phase: It brings together the philosophical, ethical, and communicative insights to present silence as a unified mode of consciousness and

communication. In this phase, silence is understood as the harmony of realization, restraint, and awareness, an integrative moral and spiritual framework that reflects the essence of Indian communicative thought.

Throughout these stages, the hermeneutic process emphasizes reflection, dialogue, and inner understanding over empirical comparison. Following Gadamer's (1975) idea of the "fusion of horizons," the study bridges the wisdom of classical Indian philosophy with modern communication ethics, revealing silence as a timeless and transformative mode of human connection.

Fig.1. Conceptual Framework of Silence as Communication



5. Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of silence (*mauna*) in this study is structured into four interpretive phases that reflect its multidimensional nature within Indian philosophy. Each phase reveals a distinct aspect of silence as realization, moral discipline, and mindful awareness. The philosophical phase explores silence as self-knowledge and realization beyond speech; the ethical phase interprets it as moral restraint rooted in *ahimsa*; the communicative phase examines silence as awareness and dialogue; and the integrative phase unites these dimensions into a single paradigm of conscious communication. Together, these phases demonstrate that silence functions as both a spiritual and ethical mode of expression, forming the foundation of the Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm.

5.1 Philosophical Phase — Silence as Realization and Knowledge

Silence (*mauna*) in Indian philosophy expresses a state in which knowledge and being merge into direct awareness. In the Upaniṣads, silence becomes the very form of realization: the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad states that Brahman is “that from which words return, together with the mind, not attaining it,” while the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad defines the fourth consciousness state, *Tuṛīya*, as pure, measureless stillness (Radhakrishnan 1953; Feuerstein 2003). Such texts reveal silence as an active epistemic condition in which verbal thought is surpassed and the knower experiences the unity of self and ultimate reality. As illustrated in Fig. 1, silence functions as a philosophical continuum that moves from verbal limitation to wordless realization, Brahman in the Upaniṣads, *Nirvāṇa* in the Nikāyas, and *Kevala-jñāna* in the Sūtras, all signifying the same unity of consciousness and truth. All depict silence as the bridge between knowledge and being. This conception resonates throughout Buddhist and Jain thought. In the *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN 72, *Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta*) and the *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN 9, *Potthapāda Sutta*), the Buddha’s Noble Silence (*Ariya tuṅhī-bhāva*) functions as a teaching beyond discourse: truth cannot be conveyed through speculation but only realized through mindfulness and meditative awareness (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 1995; Wayman 1974). Likewise, the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* and *Tattvārtha Sūtra* (7.11) describe *mauna-vrata* as a vow through which the aspirant conquers the senses and perceives the self’s purity, leading toward *Kevala-jñāna* (Dundas 2002; Cort 2001). In each system, silence becomes the philosophical instrument of realization: the Hindu seer, the Buddhist sage, and the Jain monk all encounter truth not through words but through interior stillness. Ultimately, silence in these traditions is a single movement of consciousness, from expression to reflection, from thought to awareness, from multiplicity to unity. It is through this silent realization that the limits of speech dissolve, allowing truth to manifest as lived experience rather than verbal proposition. Thus, silence functions as the very mode of knowing in Indian philosophy: *Brahma-jñāna*, *prajñā*, and *Kevala-jñāna* converge in a shared realization that knowledge is fulfilled only when words fall silent. Moreover, this convergence reveals that silence is not the negation of language but its highest refinement, where meaning becomes direct experience. It transforms the act of knowing into being itself, suggesting that realization is not achieved through expression but through presence. Hence,

silence stands as the timeless dialogue between self and reality, between inner awareness and the essence of truth.

5.2. Ethical Dimension — Silence as Moral and Spiritual Discipline

In the ethical dimension of Indian philosophy, silence (mauna) transcends its surface meaning of non-speaking to become a conscious expression of moral restraint and spiritual awareness. It represents the discipline through which individuals align speech with truth, awareness, and compassion, transforming silence from passive quietude into an ethical act of being. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa instructs the yogin to “dwell in solitude, self-controlled, with mind and speech restrained,” revealing that silence functions as moral self-governance that refines both thought and conduct (Radhakrishnan, 1953). This aligns with *Manusmṛti*, which emphasizes that words must be truthful, gentle, and beneficial, reminding us that silence often carries the highest ethical value when speech risks harm or falsehood. Silence, therefore, becomes the lived practice of *Satya* (truth), where one speaks only when necessary and from a state of self-mastery. Fig. 2. Ethical Dimension of Silence as Moral and Spiritual Discipline. This figure illustrates silence as a dynamic ethical process moving through three progressive states: (1) Discipline of Speech, the Hindu practice of *Satya* and self-restraint, where silence governs expression to maintain moral harmony; (2) Compassionate Mindfulness, the Buddhist ideal of Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*), where silence becomes an act of empathy and mindful awareness, fostering harmony in dialogue; and (3) Non-violent Communication, the Jain vow of *Mauna-vrata*, where silence transforms into a spiritual discipline of *Ahimsa* (non-harming) that prevents harm through thought, word, or intention. Together, these stages represent silence as an ethical continuum, linking self-control, compassion, and non-violence into a unified moral practice that integrates inner virtue with outer communication. In Buddhism, silence assumes ethical significance as both mindfulness and compassion in communication. The *Dhammapada* teaches, “Speak not harshly to anyone; those spoken to will answer thee in kind,” while the *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN 58, *Abhaya Rāja-Kumāra Sutta*) recounts how the Buddha remained silent when speech could incite conflict or misunderstanding (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995). This Noble Silence (*Ariya tuṅhī-bhāva*) is not avoidance but ethical awareness, communication governed by compassion and wisdom rather than impulse. As Miike (2017) notes, Buddhist silence represents “ethical mindfulness,” where silence conveys respect, empathy, and non-attachment, transforming communication into a moral presence. In Jainism, silence reaches its purest ethical form as a vow of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) and self-discipline (*Samyama*). The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* advises, “Guard your speech as you guard your life,” emphasizing that silence is the surest path to prevent harm. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* elaborates that *Mauna-vrata* purifies thought, word, and intention, leading the aspirant toward *Kevala-jñāna* (perfect knowledge) through moral restraint (Dundas, 2002; Cort, 2001). For Jain ascetics, silence is not the negation of communication but its sanctification, a speech purified by compassion and guided by moral awareness. Across all three traditions, silence serves as the ethical bridge between inner virtue and external expression. It transforms communication into a conscious moral act that embodies truth, compassion, and non-violence. In Hinduism, it disciplines speech through *Satya*; in Buddhism, it refines empathy through Right Speech; and in Jainism, it perfects non-violence through *Mauna-vrata*. Silence thus becomes the invisible thread that binds morality

and communication, an ethical dialogue of restraint, presence, and peace. Furthermore, silence nurtures ethical listening, a quality often neglected in speech-driven cultures. It teaches individuals to hear with empathy, perceive with mindfulness, and respond with wisdom. In intercultural ethics, silence becomes the foundation of respectful dialogue, allowing understanding to emerge without domination or haste. Gandhi's practice of weekly silence exemplifies this integration of morality and awareness, where restraint of speech purifies thought and deepens compassion (Kool & Agrawal, 2022). Thus, silence represents not withdrawal from the world but engagement through peace. It harmonizes self-discipline with empathy, turning every act of quietude into an expression of universal ethics. As the Dhammapada proclaims, "Better than a thousand useless words is one word of peace." Silence is that word unspoken, yet profoundly heard.

5.3. Communicative Dimension – Silence as Awareness and Dialogue

Silence, in the communicative dimension of Indian philosophy, transcends the binary of speech and muteness to emerge as a conscious form of dialogue grounded in mindfulness, empathy, and presence. It signifies communication that is inwardly reflective yet outwardly receptive, a mode of engagement where awareness becomes the medium of understanding. In the Hindu tradition, the guru-śiṣya (teacher-disciple) relationship embodies this communicative silence. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad recounts how the sage Uddālaka teaches Śvetaketu through pauses and contemplation, demonstrating that true knowledge arises not through words but through shared awareness (Radhakrishnan, 1953). Silence here becomes mauna-upadeśa, the "teaching through silence," where presence itself conveys meaning (Rigopoulos, 2022). Fig. 1. Conceptual illustration of silence as mindful communication, integrating Hindu mauna-upadeśa, Buddhist compassionate listening, and Jain non-verbal awareness into a shared dialogic ethics. The same communicative quality of silence resonates through Buddhist philosophy, where mindfulness transforms silence into an ethical and relational act. The Dhammapada instructs, "Speak not harshly to anyone; those spoken to will answer thee in kind," implying that silence, when used with awareness, becomes the highest form of empathy and restraint. The Buddha's silent interactions, recorded in the Majjhima Nikāya (MN 58, Abhaya Rāja-Kumāra Sutta), reveal silence as a compassionate response, a means to listen deeply and communicate wisdom without confrontation (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995). In this context, silence is sati (mindfulness) in communication, a space of understanding where both self and other are mutually recognized in awareness (Miike, 2017). Similarly, in Jain philosophy, silence represents communicative non-violence. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra prescribes that one should "speak after reflection, if at all, so that no harm is caused by words." Silence thus becomes an act of Ahimsa (non-harming), preserving harmony and preventing karmic disturbance through speech (Dundas, 2002; Cort, 2001). For Jain ascetics, silence is not withdrawal from dialogue but its purification, communication that arises from moral awareness rather than egoic assertion. Across these traditions, silence therefore functions as mindful communication, a living dialogue between self, truth, and the world. In Hinduism, it manifests as presence; in Buddhism, as mindful listening; and in Jainism, as non-violent expression. Together, they present silence as the ultimate communicative act, one that transcends speech by transforming it into awareness. Silence dissolves the illusion that communication requires

constant verbal exchange; instead, it invites mutual awareness where understanding arises naturally from stillness. It also reflects relational humility, the recognition that listening with awareness can reveal more truth than words ever could. The guru-śiṣya encounter in Indian thought exemplifies this, as the teacher's silence becomes a mirror for the student's awakening. Moreover, silence nurtures the ethics of listening, teaching restraint and receptivity as forms of respect. In interpersonal and intercultural contexts, this communicative silence promotes empathy, allowing meaning to emerge organically between participants. Modern communication, dominated by noise and immediacy, can rediscover its ethical depth through this ancient practice of quiet presence. The stillness that Indian philosophy celebrates is not emptiness but fullness, a state where consciousness communicates without mediation. It bridges the listener and the speaker in shared awareness, transforming communication into communion. Contemporary scholars such as Kumar (2022) and Miike (2017) affirm that silence cultivates "relational mindfulness," creating space for dialogue rooted in respect, reflection, and authenticity. This approach challenges the Western linear model of communication, suggesting that true understanding arises not from exchange but from shared stillness. Silence thus becomes not the absence of communication but its highest realization, a dialogue of awareness that unites self and other in mutual recognition. In a world overwhelmed by expression and opinion, Indian philosophy reminds us that the deepest understanding often speaks through silence itself. As Miike (2017) observes, this "dialogic silence" represents an ethical and spiritual communication rooted in mutual respect, stillness, and understanding, a practice more relevant today than ever in an age of noise and distraction.

5.4 The Integrative Indian Philosophy of Communication: Silence as the Unity of Realization, Restraint, and Awareness

The Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm envisions silence (mauna) as the living essence of communication in Indian philosophy, a unifying field of consciousness that harmonizes realization, restraint, and awareness into one continuum of being. Far from being a void or the absence of dialogue, silence in this paradigm becomes dialogue itself: an act of communion where truth is not merely expressed but directly experienced. It embodies the idea that communication reaches its highest form not in words, but in awareness, when the mind, speech, and heart move in perfect alignment. This synthesis of thought is rooted in the shared metaphysical and ethical vision of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, each offering a distinct yet interdependent dimension to the same spiritual language of silence.

Fig. 2. The Integrative Indian Philosophy of Communication — Circle of Sacred Silence



As illustrated in Figure 2: The Integrative Indian Philosophy of Communication, Circle of Sacred Silence, this paradigm unfolds cyclically across three interrelated planes. In Hindu philosophy, silence manifests as realization (jñāna), the merging of knowledge and being. In Buddhism, it unfolds as awareness (prajñā), mindfulness that listens with compassion and clarity. In Jainism, it becomes restraint (ahimsa), the moral discipline that governs expression through non-violence and truthfulness. These three modes, awareness, and restraint, form an inseparable triad, like concentric ripples in the same ocean of consciousness. Together, they express silence as a holistic communicative phenomenon, where knowledge becomes ethical, ethics become mindful, and mindfulness returns to realization. In Hinduism, silence represents the culmination of knowledge, where verbal thought dissolves into direct awareness. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* describes Brahman as “that from which words return, together with the mind, not attaining it,” affirming that ultimate reality lies beyond linguistic grasp (Radhakrishnan, 1953). Likewise, the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* defines Turīya, the fourth state of consciousness, as the still, undivided awareness that transcends duality (Feuerstein, 2003). Here, mauna becomes epistemic silence, a communicative realization in which the knower, the known, and knowledge are one. As Ramabrahmam (2016) observes, Indian philosophy locates communication not between individuals but within consciousness itself, an “inner dialogue of

awareness” that bridges thought and being. This realization transforms speech into presence and cognition into communion, suggesting that silence is not a negation of expression but its perfection. In Buddhist philosophy, silence embodies mindful awareness and compassionate communication. The *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN 72, Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta) and *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN 9, Potthapāda Sutta) record the Buddha’s Ariya tuṅhī-bhāva (Noble Silence) as a method of teaching that transcends intellectual argument and awakens experiential insight (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995; Wayman, 1974). Silence here is relational, communication through presence rather than persuasion. It invites the listener into shared mindfulness, an awareness purified of ego and attachment. Miike (2017) interprets this as “relational mindfulness,” an ethical practice where silence nurtures empathy and mutual understanding rather than domination or debate. In this way, Buddhist silence becomes the ethical heart of dialogue, a speechless transmission of compassion that bridges self and other. In Jainism, silence (*mauna*) attains its ethical and ascetic depth as restraint, communication purified by non-violence (*ahimsa*). The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* instructs, “Guard your speech as you guard your life,” highlighting that every utterance carries moral weight (Cort, 2001). The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* defines *mauna-vrata* as a vow that aligns thought, word, and action with spiritual purity, preventing harm through discipline of speech (Dundas, 2002). Silence thus becomes a practice of inner ecology, conserving the moral energy of language. Chapple (2014) extends this idea, suggesting that Jain silence mirrors environmental balance, an ethical restraint that sustains harmony within the moral ecosystem of communication. Jain *mauna*, therefore, represents the moral purification of language, where restraint becomes the expression of compassion and awareness. When integrated, these three perspectives, Hindu realization, Buddhist awareness, and Jain restraint, reveal silence as a triadic harmony of being, knowing, and doing. Hinduism offers metaphysical realization (*jñāna*), Buddhism contributes mindful awareness (*prajñā*), and Jainism provides moral restraint (*ahimsa*). Together they form the Integrated Communicative Consciousness, a model where speech, thought, and silence operate as dimensions of the same awareness. This synthesis aligns with the cosmological principle of *ṛta* (cosmic order), where balance in communication mirrors the order of existence itself. Silence thus becomes both ethical and ontological, a medium through which truth, compassion, and discipline converge into one integrated way of being. In contemporary terms, the Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm redefines communication as communion, a conscious and ethical process rather than a transactional exchange of information. It transcends the boundaries of language by transforming expression into awareness and listening into realization. As Kumar (2022) and Rigopoulos (2022) affirm, silence in Indian philosophy is not emptiness but presence, the most authentic form of dialogue in which consciousness itself communicates. In this sense, *mauna* stands as both the source and fulfilment of all communication: a sacred stillness where words dissolve into wisdom, ethics merge with empathy, and awareness becomes the universal language of truth.

5.5. Discussion

The present study, through its four interpretive phases, philosophical, ethical, communicative, and integrative, reveals silence (*mauna*) as a multidimensional phenomenon that functions as realization, restraint, and awareness across the spiritual traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Far from being the negation of speech, silence emerges as an active communicative

force that embodies self-knowledge, moral discipline, and compassionate awareness. The Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm thus constructed views silence as the living interface between being and expression, a continuum where inner consciousness transforms into ethical communication. Each phase of the analysis demonstrates how the practice of silence in classical Indian philosophy converges toward one unified communicative consciousness that harmonizes truth, morality, and empathy. In the Philosophical Phase, silence is revealed as the essence of realization (jnana). In the Hindu worldview, particularly in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, Brahman, the ultimate reality, is described as “that from which words return, together with the mind, not attaining it” (Radhakrishnan, 1953). This statement affirms that the highest truth transcends verbal comprehension and can only be realized through silence. Likewise, the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad describes the Turīya state as the silent consciousness beyond waking, dream, and deep sleep, symbolizing Brahman as the pure awareness in which speech and thought dissolve (Feuerstein, 2003). The Chāndogya Upaniṣad offers a pedagogical illustration of this realization: the sage Uddālaka communicates wisdom to his disciple Śvetaketu not through words but through contemplative silence (mauna-upadeśa), emphasizing the transcendence of verbal knowledge (Radhakrishnan, 1953; Rigopoulos, 2022). Silence, therefore, functions as epistemic realization, the dissolution of duality between the knower and the known. Radhakrishnan (1953) interprets this Upaniṣadic insight as realization by identity, where being and knowing coincide. Feuerstein (2003) further asserts that such silence represents “the culmination of yogic awareness”, the moment when knowledge is no longer conceptual but ontological. This phase thus demonstrates that in Hindu philosophy, silence (mauna) is not absence but fulfillment: the medium through which truth becomes self-evident. The Ethical Phase unfolds this realization into moral practice, showing that silence serves as the discipline that aligns communication with virtue. The Bhagavad Gītā instructs the yogin to “dwell in solitude, self-controlled, with mind and speech restrained,” presenting silence as the embodiment of Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-harming). Similarly, the Manusmṛti advocates gentle, truthful speech, implying that silence is ethically superior when words risk harm (Radhakrishnan, 1953). In Buddhism, silence assumes ethical significance through Right Speech (Sammā-vācā), one of the limbs of the Noble Eightfold Path. The Majjhima Nikāya (MN 58, Abhaya Rāja-Kumāra Sutta) describes the Buddha’s refusal to respond when speech might generate conflict, illustrating Ariya tuṅhī-bhāva (Noble Silence) as a compassionate moral choice (Ñānamoli & Bodhi, 1995). The Dhammapada similarly extols restraint in speech, teaching that “Better than a thousand useless words is one word of peace.” Wayman (1974) interprets this as the Madhyamika middle path between expression and negation, where silence becomes ethical awareness. In Jainism, silence is transformed into the explicit moral vow of mauna-vrata, rooted in Ahimsa. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra urges: “Guard your speech as you guard your life,” while the Tattvārtha Sūtra defines silence as the purifying discipline that leads to Kevala-jñāna (omniscience) (Dundas, 2002; Cort, 2001). Here, silence becomes the highest ethical restraint, speech that is governed by non-violence and compassion. Dundas (2002) explains that mauna is a conscious ethical practice that aligns thought, word, and deed, ensuring that communication itself is non-harming. Across all traditions, therefore, the ethical function of silence is moral purification: it transforms speech into a vehicle of peace. The Communicative Phase expands upon this ethical foundation by exploring silence as a form

of dialogue grounded in awareness. In Hinduism, the guru-śiṣya (teacher-disciple) relationship embodies communicative silence. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad again exemplifies this through mauna-upadeśa, instruction through presence and contemplation rather than discourse. Rigopoulos (2022) interprets this as a pedagogy of consciousness, where meaning is conveyed through shared stillness. In Buddhist thought, silence functions as mindful listening and compassionate presence. The Majjhima Nikāya (MN 72, Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta) depicts the Buddha's silence as a form of relational awareness that transforms debate into understanding (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995). Miike (2017) identifies this as “communicative mindfulness,” arguing that silence is central to Asian communication ethics because it harmonizes awareness and empathy. The Dhammapada reinforces this idea, asserting that gentle silence fosters peace and relational balance. In Jainism, silence (mauna) operates as communicative Ahimsa—a moral practice of speaking only when words are necessary and harmless. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra instructs that “the wise one speaks after reflection,” implying that silence is the natural foundation of ethical dialogue (Cort, 2001). Thus, in communicative terms, silence becomes dialogic awareness, a relational state in which understanding emerges through presence rather than persuasion. Kumar (2022) expands on this, describing silence as “ethical mindfulness in dialogue”, a communicative virtue that integrates empathy, attention, and restraint. The Integrative Phase, finally, unites these three dimensions, realization, restraint, and awareness, into the Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm. This paradigm, as represented in Figure 2, conceptualizes silence as the circle of consciousness linking knowledge (jnana), ethics (ahimsa), and mindfulness (prajñā). The Hindu vision of silence as metaphysical realization merges with the Buddhist understanding of mindful awareness and the Jain emphasis on moral restraint, forming a unified communicative ethic. Rigopoulos (2022) characterizes this unity as Sacred Silence (Mauna) a mode of being where consciousness itself communicates. Kumar (2022) identifies this synthesis as the foundation of mindful communication, where awareness and ethics are inseparable. Miike (2017) similarly locates silence at the heart of Asiatic communication ethics, describing it as “relational harmony in expression.” Together, these perspectives define silence as conscious presence, the living balance of thought, morality, and empathy. This integrated model also resonates with the cosmological principle of ṛta, the moral and natural order that sustains harmony in Indian thought. Just as ṛta governs balance in the universe, silence governs balance in communication, ensuring that speech remains truthful, compassionate, and non-violent. The Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm thus reframes communication not as a tool for persuasion but as an ethical act of awareness. In contrast to the Western logocentric model, which privileges expression and dominance, the Indian paradigm privileges stillness and reflection as the ground of understanding. Silence communicates not by withholding meaning but by deepening it, allowing presence to speak where words fall short. The unified outcome of this integration is Sacred Silence (Mauna) the harmony of knowledge (jnana), compassion (karuna), and ethics (ahimsa). It transforms communication from verbal exchange into mindful realization, where the self recognizes its interconnection with others. This synthesis aligns with Miike's (2017) view that communication should cultivate harmony without uniformity and with Kumar's (2022) emphasis on communication as moral awareness. For Radhakrishnan (1953), such silence reflects “the communication of spirit through consciousness,” while Wayman (1974) identifies

it as the Buddha's transcendence of speculative entanglement. Dundas (2002) and Cort (2001) confirm that Jain mauna-vrata achieves the same integration through moral restraint. Thus, silence across all traditions becomes the universal grammar of consciousness, the point where philosophy, ethics, and communication converge. The Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm, therefore, advances a holistic vision of dialogue as self-realization in motion. In an age characterized by noise, haste, and verbal aggression, the paradigm offers an ethical and spiritual corrective, redefining communication as an act of mindfulness and compassion. It teaches that the truest communication is not measured by eloquence but by awareness; not by argument but by empathy; not by speech but by silence. As Rigopoulos (2022) observes, silence in the Indian context is not emptiness but "the fullness of being expressed without words." The study thus concludes that silence (mauna), when understood through the integrated lens of Indian philosophy, is both the origin and the fulfilment of communication, the sacred balance of knowing, doing, and relating that transforms expression into enlightenment.

6. Conclusion

Silence stands as the purest and most profound form of communication within Indian philosophy. It is not the absence of words but the presence of awareness, where thought, emotion, and spirit converge into harmony. Through the philosophical, ethical, and communicative dimensions explored in this study, silence reveals itself as realization in Hinduism, awareness in Buddhism, and restraint in Jainism. Together, these perspectives form a unified vision of Sacred Silence, a mode of being that unites truth, compassion, and moral consciousness. The Integrated Indian Communicative Paradigm developed through this research shows that silence is not withdrawal but wisdom in expression, the bridge between knowledge and empathy, and the ethical heart of dialogue. It transforms communication into a conscious act of reflection and presence. In an era marked by noise, haste, and superficial exchange, silence offers a timeless reminder: understanding grows deepest where words end. True communication begins not with speaking, but with listening, within oneself, and to the stillness that connects all beings. Silence teaches humility in thought, patience in dialogue, and peace in understanding. It is the rhythm of consciousness that balances speech and stillness, action and awareness. As a communicative ideal, it transcends boundaries of religion and culture, offering humanity a universal language of harmony. In silence, the self meets the sacred, and communication becomes communion.

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