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CIVILIZATIONAL ANXIETY AND THE CRISIS OF KNOWLEDGE CONTINUITY: A 2K–3C–IBP ANALYSIS

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Keywords	Abstract
<i>Civilizational Theory, Knowledge Continuity, Discourse Analysis, Epistemic Legitimacy, Postcolonial Cognition, 2K-3C-IBP Framework</i>	This paper examines a composite body of contemporary civilizational discourse expressing anxiety about identity, justice, institutional legitimacy, and historical memory in postcolonial India. Rather than adjudicating the factual truth of claims within the discourse, the study treats the material as a discursive formation and analyzes its structural features using Singh's 2K–3C Framework of Knowledge Continuity and the Ideology versus Basket of Perspectives (IBP) approach. The analysis identifies a perceived rupture across all five stages of the epistemic cycle: archival distrust, adaptation anxiety, communicative fragmentation, stakeholder alienation, and feedback breakdown. IBP triangulation reveals that the discourse simultaneously contains structural grievances, emotional amplification, and rhetorical excess typical of societies undergoing rapid modernization. The central tension revealed is a struggle over narrative authorship and moral legitimacy. The paper argues that civilizational stability depends on restoring epistemic feedback mechanisms without erasing inherited archives. The study contributes to civilizational theory by reframing ideological conflict as a crisis of knowledge continuity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every civilization carries within it an ongoing conversation about who it is, how it remembers itself, and how it adapts to change. These conversations are rarely calm. They become audible



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during moments when inherited archives feel unstable and institutional authority appears detached from lived experience.

The discourse examined in this paper emerges from precisely such a moment. Across contemporary public commentary in India, recurring expressions of unease are visible: distrust toward official narratives, suspicion of asymmetrical justice, anxiety about cultural continuity, and a persistent feeling that institutions no longer mirror civilizational memory. These concerns do not form a unified ideological program. Rather, they constitute a patterned emotional and cognitive landscape.

This study does not attempt to verify the truth or falsity of claims embedded in that landscape. Its central question is more foundational:

What does this discourse reveal about the condition of knowledge continuity in a postcolonial civilization?

To address this question, the paper employs Singh's 2K–3C Framework as its primary analytical arc, using the Ideology versus Basket of Perspectives (IBP) approach as a triangulating instrument. Together, these frameworks allow the discourse to be analyzed not as partisan rhetoric but as diagnostic evidence of civilizational cognition under epistemic strain. Both the 2K–3C Framework and the IBP approach are unpublished analytical tools developed by Chandrakant P Singh (2014–2020) during postgraduate lectures and research workshops.

The argument advanced here is simple but consequential: the anxieties expressed in the discourse are best understood as symptoms of a stalled knowledge cycle. When civilizations lose confidence in how their archives, adaptations, institutions, communities, and feedback systems interact, ideological conflict intensifies. What appears political is often epistemic.

2. CORPUS AND ANALYTICAL SCOPE

The material analyzed in this study is drawn from a Composite Civilizational Discourse Corpus (CCDC) consisting of essays, long-form reflections, and extended public commentary circulating in the Indian intellectual and digital sphere between 2023 and 2026. The corpus is not treated as a unified ideological manifesto. Instead, it is understood as a converging field of statements sharing recurring motifs: civilizational identity, reinterpretation of history, institutional distrust, and perceived asymmetry in moral frameworks.

Following Foucault (1972), the corpus is analyzed as a discursive formation. The goal is not to adjudicate factual claims but to interpret structural patterns in meaning production. This aligns with critical discourse analysis traditions that view public language as a site where power, identity, and knowledge intersect (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2014).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

• The 2K–3C Model

The 2K–3C framework conceptualizes civilization as a recursive epistemic organism (Singh, 2014–2020). Knowledge circulates through five interdependent stages:



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K₁ — Knowledge Existing

K₂ — Knowledge Customized

C₁ — Communication

C₂ — Community

C₃ — Feedback

Civilizational stability requires reciprocity across all stages.

• The IBP Approach

The IBP approach resists binary ideological interpretation. Discourse is read as a basket of overlapping perspectives: grievance, fear, aspiration, modernization anxiety, and identity defense. Emotional intensity is treated as diagnostic data.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive methodology grounded in discourse analysis. The corpus is analyzed as a discursive formation in the Foucauldian sense—a patterned field of statements shaped by recurring anxieties and rhetorical structures (Foucault, 1972).

Analysis proceeds in three stages:

1. Mapping discourse onto the 2K–3C cycle
2. IBP triangulation of emotional dimensions
3. Civilizational contextual analysis

The aim is diagnostic rather than predictive

5. INDIAN EPISTEMIC GROUNDING

Indian philosophical traditions have long treated knowledge continuity as a civilizational problem. The distinction between śruti (revealed knowledge), smṛti (remembered tradition), and vyavahāra (lived practice) describes a recursive cycle strikingly similar to the 2K–3C model. Knowledge is never static; it is transmitted, interpreted, and embodied.

The concept of saṃskāra (inherited civilizational imprint or habitus) captures civilizational memory as imprint—accumulated learning sedimented across generations. Knowledge exists not merely as an archive but as psychological inheritance. Disruption of saṃskāra produces identity anxiety.

Similarly, pramāṇa (legitimate source of knowledge or epistemic authority) theory recognizes multiple sources of valid knowledge—perception, inference, testimony—reinforcing the idea that epistemic legitimacy is plural and negotiated rather than singular and imposed.

The guru–śiṣya (lineage-based mentor–disciple tradition) transmission model represents an early community-based feedback loop: learning occurs through embodied dialogue, not abstract decree. This aligns with C₂–C₃ dynamics of stakeholder participation and correction.

Thus, the crisis mapped through 2K–3C is not alien to Indian thought; it is a modern articulation of a long-standing civilizational concern.



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6. COMPARATIVE CIVILIZATIONAL RESPONSES TO KNOWLEDGE DISRUPTION

The crisis described in contemporary Indian discourse is not unique. Civilizations across history have faced moments when inherited epistemic structures collided with rapid transformation.

Early modern Europe experienced a dramatic break between ecclesiastical authority and emerging rationalist institutions. The Enlightenment destabilized K_1 archives by questioning theological legitimacy. While this rupture enabled scientific expansion, it also produced prolonged moral disorientation. The French Revolution illustrated the danger Burke feared: political enthusiasm detached from inherited moral frameworks risks replacing accumulated wisdom with abstract certainty.

European modernity eventually stabilized through institutional feedback mechanisms — constitutionalism, universities, and public debate — reconstituting C_3 . The cycle did not disappear; it reassembled under new forms.

China represents a contrasting civilizational strategy: adaptive continuity rather than rupture. Confucian traditions preserved strong archival continuity while allowing reinterpretation across dynasties. Even during twentieth-century upheavals, statecraft retained deep continuity with earlier epistemic structures. The Cultural Revolution temporarily fractured the archive, but subsequent restoration efforts demonstrate how civilizations attempt to repair broken loops.

Islamic intellectual debates over *ijtihād* (independent interpretive judgment) versus *taqlīd* (reliance on established authority) revolve around whether interpretive feedback should remain open. Periods perceived as intellectual stagnation are often described by Islamic thinkers as moments when C_3 weakened and reinterpretation froze. The contemporary Islamic world continues to wrestle with reopening interpretive feedback without dissolving archive authority.

The collapse of the Soviet Union provides a modern case of abrupt archive delegitimization. Institutions survived administratively, but narrative authorship shifted overnight. Societies emerging from Soviet governance experienced identity turbulence precisely because the epistemic cycle stalled: inherited ideology lost legitimacy faster than replacement frameworks could stabilize.

Across these examples, a pattern emerges: civilizations do not collapse merely because archives are questioned. They destabilize when feedback fails to reintegrate into renewed archives. The 2K–3C framework describes a universal structural vulnerability.

7. CIVILIZATIONAL PRUDENCE, BREAKDOWN, AND RENEWAL: A BURKE–TOYNBEE BRIDGE

Civilizations rarely collapse because of a single event. They weaken when their internal mechanisms of memory, adaptation, and correction lose balance. The anxieties present in the discourse analyzed in this paper echo a much older civilizational concern articulated by Edmund Burke and Arnold Toynbee.

Burke (1790/2001) described society as an intergenerational partnership binding the living, the dead, and those yet to be born. This formulation is not merely moral poetry; it is an epistemic



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claim. Civilizations survive because they accumulate adaptive intelligence across time. When reform severs itself from that accumulated intelligence, it risks replacing lived wisdom with abstract enthusiasm.

The Burkean insight resonates with the K_1 – K_2 transition. Knowledge existing is stored adaptive memory — *samskāra* in Indian vocabulary. Customization must operate as reinterpretation rather than erasure.

Toynbee (1934–1961) extends this insight through his theory of challenge and response. Civilizations decay not when they face pressure, but when creative minorities fail to translate inherited meaning into new responses. Institutions become performative shells detached from inner life.

Read through the 2K–3C lens, Toynbee’s breakdown resembles simultaneous weakening of communication, community, and feedback. Civilizations continue administratively while losing psychological cohesion — *śarīr chal raha hai, prāṇ kamzor ho rahe hain* (the structure survives, but the vitality is draining).

What makes the contemporary discourse significant is its insistence that the loop must restart. Speakers are not simply rejecting institutions; they are demanding re-entry into authorship. This reflects a civilizational instinct for renewal.

• Conceptual Diagram

$$K_1 \rightarrow K_2 \rightarrow C_1 \rightarrow C_2 \rightarrow C_3 \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$$

Figure 1. Recursive epistemic cycle of civilizational knowledge continuity.

8. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: THE FIVE-STAGE CRISIS

• K_1 Crisis: Delegitimized Archives

“We are told: this is our history, but it feels written for us, not by us.”

This reflects epistemic estrangement rather than proof of distortion. It reveals a perception that civilizational memory has been externally mediated. The archive appears alien rather than self-authored. This does not prove historical distortion; it signals epistemic estrangement.

IBP triangulation shows overlapping emotional layers: grievance about misrepresentation, fear of erasure, and defensive identity consolidation

• K_2 Crisis: Adaptation Anxiety

Modernization debates often produce ambivalence. A representative excerpt states:

“Every change is presented as progress, yet we are never asked what we lose.”

Here adaptation is not rejected outright; it is experienced as asymmetrical. Some traditions appear pressured to change while others seem insulated. The epistemic organism hesitates between preservation and renewal.

• C_1 Crisis: Communication Fragmentation

Institutional communication competes with decentralized digital narratives. Sometimes the official messaging is described as abstract or detached:



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“They speak in policy language. We speak in lived reality. There is no bridge.”

Castells (2012) describes this as network fragmentation: multiple narrative ecosystems operating without shared interpretive authority.

• C₂ Crisis: Stakeholder Alienation

Communities withdraw trust when institutions lose moral resonance. Civic disengagement, protest cultures, and symbolic politics illustrate a perception that representation is procedural rather than participatory. One excerpt captures this alienation:

“We vote, we protest, we write — but nothing enters the system.”

• C₃ Crisis: Feedback Breakdown

The most severe rupture lies in feedback. Speakers believe grievance does not re-enter correction mechanisms. This produces emotional accumulation:

“It feels like shouting into a sealed room.”

When feedback fails to return to the archive, the loop stalls. Identity narratives harden. Anxiety becomes self-reinforcing.

9. SYNTHESIS

Taken individually, each rupture in the 2K–3C cycle could be absorbed by civilizational elasticity. Archives have been questioned before; institutions have reformed before; communities have renegotiated authority before. What distinguishes the present moment, as expressed in the discourse corpus, is the perception that all five stages are strained simultaneously.

When K₁ archives lose legitimacy, adaptation becomes directionless. When K₂ reinterpretation hesitates, communication fragments. When communication fragments, communities withdraw recognition. When communities withdraw, feedback cannot circulate. The result is not immediate collapse but prolonged turbulence — a condition in which societies function administratively while experiencing deep psychological uncertainty.

This pattern aligns with Toynbee’s description of civilizations that continue to operate structurally while losing inner coherence. The discourse analyzed here repeatedly signals a fear of disconnection: between memory and policy, identity and institutions, participation and consequence. Political rhetoric becomes a substitute language for epistemic distress.

Crucially, the discourse is not nihilistic. It is saturated with appeals to restoration, recognition, and re-authorship. Speakers are demanding not destruction of the archive but reintegration into it. The civilizational anxiety expressed is therefore paradoxically a sign of attachment. Indifference would signal decay; agitation signals unresolved belonging.

Thus all five stages are perceived as strained simultaneously. Political rhetoric becomes a substitute language for epistemic distress. The discourse is saturated with appeals to reintegration, it is not nihilistic.



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10. INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL INTEGRATION

Indian civilizational philosophy offers an interpretive vocabulary for understanding this turbulence. The concept of dharma (the principle of sustaining moral and civilizational balance that aligns individual duty with cosmic order) is often misread as rigid law. In classical usage, dharma signifies equilibrium — the alignment of social order, moral obligation, and cosmic rhythm. It is neither static tradition nor radical novelty; it is calibrated continuity.

From this perspective, the 2K–3C crisis resembles a disturbance in dharmic equilibrium. Archives (K_1) represent accumulated orientation; customization (K_2) represents situational adjustment; community (C_2) embodies shared responsibility; feedback (C_3) functions as corrective realignment. When these processes fall out of rhythm, societies experience what Indian texts would describe as adharma — not moral evil, but misalignment.

The Bhagavad Gītā's recurring theme of restoring balance without abandoning duty echoes the structural logic of the 2K–3C model. Arjuna's crisis is not ignorance of action but paralysis between archive and adaptation. Krishna's instruction is not rejection of tradition but reinterpretation within living context. The philosophical lesson is clear: civilizational continuity requires reinterpretation anchored in memory.

Thus, the discourse examined in this paper can be read as a collective Arjuna moment — a hesitation between inherited frameworks and emergent realities. The anxiety expressed is the psychological texture of dharmic recalibration.

Thus the concept of dharma signifies equilibrium. The 2K–3C crisis resembles disturbance in dharmic balance. The Bhagavad Gita presents reinterpretation anchored in memory rather than rejection of tradition.

11. CIVILIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Understanding ideological conflict as an epistemic crisis has practical implications.

First, attempts to suppress civilizational anxiety through administrative solutions alone are unlikely to succeed. Bureaucratic efficiency cannot substitute for narrative legitimacy. Civilizations require interpretive participation. People must recognize themselves in the stories institutions tell about them.

Second, archive restoration cannot mean archival absolutism. Burke's prudence is not nostalgia; it is disciplined continuity. Societies must reinterpret memory without dissolving it. Feedback must be permitted to re-enter K_1 without delegitimizing the archive itself.

Third, the health of a civilization can be measured by the permeability of its feedback loops. Systems that absorb critique without fragmentation exhibit resilience. Systems that silence feedback accumulate volatility.

Finally, the discourse suggests that identity conflicts often mask epistemic grievances. What appears as cultural polarization may reflect deeper uncertainty about authorship and belonging. Addressing such conflicts requires reopening interpretive space rather than imposing ideological closure.



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In short, civilizations require narrative legitimacy. Archive restoration cannot mean absolutism. Feedback permeability measures civilizational health.

12. TOWARD CIVILIZATIONAL REPAIR

If the 2K–3C model diagnoses a crisis, it also suggests a pathway toward repair. Civilizational repair does not mean restoration of a mythical past. It means restoring the recursive flow between archive, adaptation, communication, community, and feedback.

Repair requires: legitimizing plural archives without erasing shared memory, encouraging adaptive reinterpretation without moral panic, strengthening communicative bridges across institutional divides, re-embedding stakeholders into decision processes, and, protecting feedback channels from symbolic capture

In Indian philosophical terms, this is not revolution; it is punarsthāpana — re-establishment of balance.

The discourse analyzed here is therefore not merely a symptom of instability. It is evidence that civilizational self-reflection remains active. A civilization that argues about its memory is still alive.

13. CONCLUSION

The central claim of this paper is that ideological conflict in contemporary India cannot be understood purely as political disagreement. It is better interpreted as a civilizational anxiety about knowledge continuity. Through the 2K–3C–IBP framework, recurring themes of distrust, hesitation, fragmentation, alienation, and feedback failure reveal a stalled epistemic cycle.

Yet the discourse is not a narrative of decay. It is a narrative of contested authorship. Speakers are demanding participation in the production of civilizational meaning. They are not rejecting memory; they are asking to inhabit it.

Civilizations endure not because they avoid crisis but because they learn to metabolize it. Archives are rewritten, institutions reform, communities renegotiate identity — but the loop continues. Stability emerges not from silence but from recursive conversation.

The task facing any civilization in such a moment is neither suppression nor romantic restoration. It is a disciplined renewal: reopening feedback without dissolving the archive, encouraging reinterpretation without erasing continuity.

The anxieties expressed in the discourse corpus therefore signal not collapse but an unresolved negotiation about belonging. They are the sound of a civilization arguing with itself in order to remember who it is.

In sum, an ideological conflict reflects epistemic rupture. Civilizations endure by metabolizing crises through recursive conversation. Anxiety signals unresolved belonging, not collapse.

14. LIMITATIONS

This study is interpretive and diagnostic rather than empirical in the statistical sense. The Composite Civilizational Discourse Corpus represents thematic convergence rather than a formally



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sampled dataset. Its value lies in structural pattern recognition, not demographic representativeness. Alternative readings of the discourse are possible and expected; interpretive plurality is inherent to qualitative civilizational analysis.

The 2K–3C–IBP framework is likewise heuristic. It is designed to map epistemic dynamics, not predict political outcomes. Civilizations are not mechanical systems, and no single model can exhaust their complexity. The framework should therefore be read as an analytical lens rather than a universal law.

Finally, emotional intensity within the discourse may amplify perceptions of rupture. Societies often experience transitional periods as existential even when long-term continuity remains intact. The analysis takes these emotions seriously as data without assuming they constitute objective collapse.

15. ATTRIBUTION NOTE

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