

# **CIRCUMSTANTIAL CONSIDERATIONS: YOUNG HINDUS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE DEATH PENALTY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study delves into the viewpoints of young Hindus regarding the suitability of the death penalty in different circumstances of crime. Through in-depth interviews and surveys, we explore their attitudes, beliefs, and ethical considerations when it comes to capital punishment. Our findings provide valuable insights into how cultural and religious factors influence their stance on the death penalty, shedding light on a critical aspect of the ongoing discourse around criminal justice.

## **KEYWORDS**

Death penalty; Capital punishment; Young Hindus; Crime circumstances; Cultural influences; Ethical considerations; Religious perspectives

## **INTRODUCTION**

The death penalty, a subject of enduring moral, ethical, and legal debate, continues to evoke profound discussions on its appropriateness in various societies around the world. It stands at the crossroads of justice, retribution, and the fundamental rights of individuals. Cultural and religious backgrounds often play a pivotal role in shaping perspectives on this contentious issue, influencing one's stance on the sanctity of life and the consequences that transgressors of the law should face.

This study is a unique exploration of the perspectives of young Hindus concerning the appropriateness of the death penalty, with a specific focus on how they perceive it in the context of the circumstances of the crime. Young adults are at a juncture in their lives where they are actively shaping their beliefs and values, and thus, their perspectives offer a valuable insight into the evolving discourse on capital punishment.

Hinduism, one of the world's oldest religions, is deeply rooted in a rich tapestry of traditions and philosophies. These traditions often emphasize values such as ahimsa (non-violence) and the pursuit of dharma (righteousness). These values can significantly influence an individual's stance on the death penalty, particularly in the context of the crime's circumstances.

Our research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how young Hindus, shaped by both their faith and the contemporary world, navigate this complex terrain. We aim to answer critical questions: How do cultural and religious factors inform their ethical considerations? To what extent do they weigh retribution against rehabilitation? How do they perceive the role of the state in administering justice?

To address these questions, we employ a mixed-method approach, combining in-depth interviews and surveys, to capture a holistic view of their perspectives. Through this study, we aspire to contribute to the broader discourse on the death penalty by providing insights into how culture, faith, and youth intersect to influence the perceptions of a critical segment of society. Our findings offer a nuanced perspective on the appropriateness of the death penalty within the context of crime circumstances, enhancing the dialogue on the evolving contours of criminal justice and the value society accords to human life.

## **METHOD**

To explore the perspectives of young Hindus on the appropriateness of the death penalty in relation to the circumstances of the crime, we employed a mixed-method approach, which combined in-depth interviews and surveys to collect and analyze data. The following paragraphs provide a detailed overview of the research methodology.

Sampling and Recruitment:

We initiated the research by strategically selecting a diverse sample of young Hindus, aged 18 to 30, from various geographic locations and socio-economic backgrounds. The recruitment process involved collaboration with Hindu community organizations, religious institutions, and educational institutions. This ensured a broad representation of views and perspectives.

#### In-Depth Interviews:

In-depth interviews formed the qualitative component of our study. We conducted semi-structured interviews with a select group of participants to delve deeply into their beliefs, values, and personal experiences related to the death penalty. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video conferencing, allowing for open and candid discussions. Questions were tailored to explore the moral, cultural, and religious factors that influenced their opinions on capital punishment and its appropriateness under various circumstances.

#### Surveys:

The quantitative aspect of our research involved the distribution of surveys to a larger, more representative sample of young Hindus. The survey instrument was designed to capture a wide range of opinions and attitudes towards the death penalty, taking into account varying crime scenarios. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements and scenarios related to capital punishment. We utilized Likert scales and open-ended questions to gather structured data.

#### Data Analysis:

Qualitative data from the in-depth interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. We identified common themes, patterns, and variations in participants' responses, providing a rich, contextual understanding of their perspectives. For quantitative data from surveys, we employed statistical analysis techniques to derive insights into the prevalence of certain attitudes and opinions within the larger sample.

#### Ethical Considerations:

Throughout the research process, we adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the informed consent of all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained in both interviews and survey responses. The study also obtained the necessary ethical approvals from relevant institutional review boards.

#### Data Triangulation:

To enhance the robustness of our findings, we employed data triangulation by comparing and contrasting qualitative and quantitative results. This approach allowed us to validate our findings and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The combination of in-depth interviews and surveys facilitated a comprehensive exploration of young Hindus' perspectives on the death penalty's appropriateness based on the circumstances of the crime. It offered both qualitative depth and quantitative breadth, enabling us to uncover the nuances and commonalities in their views, contributing to a more complete picture of this complex and sensitive issue.

## RESULTS

Our study uncovered a range of perspectives among young Hindus regarding the appropriateness of the death penalty, particularly in relation to the circumstances of the crime. Qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews revealed several recurring themes. Many participants expressed a deep moral and ethical dilemma when contemplating the death penalty. The influence of Hindu principles, such as ahimsa (non-violence), was evident in many respondents' reluctance to support capital punishment. However, the degree to which these principles influenced their views varied significantly among participants. Moreover, the severity of the crime, the potential for rehabilitation, and the role of the state in administering justice were all factors that weighed heavily in their opinions.

Quantitative data from surveys indicated a broad spectrum of viewpoints. While a majority of respondents expressed reservations about the death penalty, a substantial portion considered it justifiable in cases of heinous crimes such as terrorism or mass murder. The survey results highlighted the complexity of the issue, with some participants viewing the death penalty as a necessary deterrent to crime, while others emphasized the importance of restorative justice and rehabilitation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The diverse range of perspectives within the young Hindu community underscores the complexity of the issue and the nuanced interplay between religious and cultural values, ethical considerations, and individual beliefs. The study's findings suggest that Hindu principles, particularly those related to non-violence, do play a role in shaping attitudes towards capital punishment, but these principles are interpreted and applied differently by various individuals.

The study also points to the importance of crime circumstances as a significant factor in determining the appropriateness of the death penalty. The severity of the crime and the perceived potential for rehabilitation or redemption of the offender often played a central role in influencing participants' opinions. This suggests that the appropriateness of the death penalty for young Hindus is not solely based on religious or cultural factors but is also influenced by the pragmatic considerations of justice and social consequences.

The results also highlight the need for a balanced and nuanced approach to criminal justice, taking into account the diverse values and beliefs held within the Hindu community. The findings of this study provide insights that can inform policy discussions and public discourse on the death penalty, emphasizing the importance of taking a multifaceted approach that respects cultural and religious diversity.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, our research on the perspectives of young Hindus regarding the appropriateness of the death penalty in relation to crime circumstances has unveiled a complex landscape of beliefs and values. While Hindu principles of non-violence and dharma influence the views of many participants, these principles are subject to interpretation and are often weighed against other factors, including the nature of the crime and the potential for rehabilitation.

The study contributes to the broader conversation on the death penalty by shedding light on the dynamic interplay of cultural, religious, and individual factors that shape attitudes within the Hindu community. It

underscores the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of opinions and values held by young Hindus on this critical issue.

Ultimately, the findings underscore the importance of informed and respectful dialogue on the death penalty within the Hindu community and within society at large. Acknowledging and respecting these diverse perspectives is essential for developing a criminal justice system that reflects the values and beliefs of the communities it serves while ensuring fairness and justice for all.

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