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Algorithms and Altruism: How Sikh and Islamic Principles of Justice Redefine Social Resilience

***Charanjit Kaur*[1]**
charanjit@utar.edu.my[1]

***Nur Bakri Abd Hamid*[2]**
nurbakri@oum.edu.my[2]

[1]Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia
[2]Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Open University Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract
The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into socio-economic and organisational systems is transforming how communities' function and adapt. While AI offers significant benefits in efficiency and decision-making, it also risks reinforcing social inequalities, marginalising vulnerable populations and prioritising technological solutions over ethical and human considerations. Existing resilience frameworks largely emphasise technical adaptation with limited attention to justice, dignity and collective responsibility. This paper addresses this gap by examining how Sikh and Islamic ethical traditions can contribute to a more holistic understanding of community resilience in the AI era. Using a qualitative interpretive approach, the study analyses religious texts alongside contemporary literature on AI ethics and resilience. It focuses on key principles including accountability, *seva* (selfless service), *ta'awun* (collective responsibility) and communal stewardship, assessing their relevance in addressing algorithmic bias and digital inequality. The findings suggest that both traditions promote ethical accountability, social solidarity and equitable resource distribution, offering a counterbalance to purely technocratic models of resilience. By integrating faith-informed ethics with resilience theory, the study proposes a human-centred framework that supports responsible AI governance while strengthening social cohesion. The paper contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship by demonstrating how religious values can complement contemporary resilience thinking and provides practical insights for policymakers seeking to align AI innovation with social equity, ethical governance and the collective welfare of society.

Keywords:
Community Resilience, Algorithmic Divide, Faith-Based Ethics, AI Governance, Sikhism and Islam

Introduction

Technology has become deeply embedded in contemporary society, reshaping how communities communicate, organise and adapt. Among emerging technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed decision-making, public services and economic activities, offering significant benefits in healthcare, education, finance and supply chain management. However, AI has also intensified social inequalities by concentrating power, reinforcing existing biases and creating new forms of exclusion (Crawford & Calo, 2016; Zuboff, 2023). A growing concern is the algorithmic divide, where individuals and communities differ in their ability to understand, access and benefit from AI-driven systems (Gran, Booth & Bucher, 2021). While AI is frequently promoted as a tool for improving resilience through automation and efficiency, its ethical, social and governance implications remain underexplored.

Contemporary resilience scholarship primarily focuses on adaptive capacity, system robustness and technical preparedness (Folke, 2016; Manyena, 2006). Although these perspectives explain how societies respond to disruption, they often overlook the moral values, social relationships and power structures that shape resilience in practice. As AI increasingly influences decisions through credit scoring, predictive policing, recruitment and recommendation systems, concerns about transparency, accountability and algorithmic bias become more significant particularly for vulnerable populations (O'Neil, 2016; Eubanks, 2018; Longworth, 2021). This suggests that resilience should be understood not only as the capacity to adapt but also as the ability to promote justice, dignity and social inclusion.

To address this gap, this study adopts a faith-informed perspective by drawing on ethical principles from Sikhism and Islam. Concepts such as *seva* (selfless service), *Vand Chakko* (sharing), *ta'awun* (collective responsibility) and *zakat* (charitable giving) emphasise accountability, solidarity and the welfare of all. Integrating these principles with resilience theory offers a more human-centred framework for ethical AI governance and inclusive community resilience.

Literature Review

This study is situated at the intersection of critical resilience theory and faith-informed ethical frameworks. Traditionally, resilience has been defined as the capacity of individuals, organisations and communities to adapt, recover and transform in response to disruption (Holling, 1973; Gunderson & Holling, 2002). Although resilience research has expanded beyond ecological systems to include psychological and organisational perspectives, it continues to prioritise functional adaptation while giving limited attention to ethics, justice and power relations (Magis, 2010; Ungar, 2011). Scholars argue that resilience cannot be fully understood without recognising the social inequalities, value systems and institutional structures that shape how communities experience and respond to crises (Pike et al., 2010; Joseph, 2013). In the AI era, where algorithmic systems increasingly influence decisions affecting employment, finance, healthcare and public services, resilience should therefore be viewed not only as the ability to adapt but also as a moral commitment to fairness, inclusion, and human dignity.

Faith traditions provide valuable ethical foundations for this broader understanding of resilience. Sikhism emphasises *seva* (selfless service), *Sarbat da Bhala* (the welfare of all) and *Guru Ka Langar* (communal sharing) which promote social justice, equality and collective responsibility (Gill & Kaur, 2008; Singh, 2008; Kaur & Gill, 2018; Kaur & Kaur, 2022). Similarly, Islamic teachings advocate *adl* (justice), *raheem* (benevolence) and *ummah* (community

solidarity), reinforcing equitable resource distribution and the protection of vulnerable populations (Kamali, 2022). Together, these ethical principles extend resilience beyond merely 'bouncing back' from disruption towards a justice-oriented, community-centred approach capable of addressing algorithmic bias, digital inequality and the broader socio-technical challenges of the AI era (Warren & Gilmore, 2014).

Review Methodology

This study employs a qualitative interpretive approach, combining textual analysis with a critical synthesis of religious scriptures, ethical literature and contemporary scholarship on resilience and AI ethics. Rather than relying solely on empirical methods, it adopts hermeneutic and critical theory perspectives to explore how moral values can inform responses to AI-driven societal challenges (Gadamer, 1989; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). Primary religious texts are interpreted alongside established theological scholarship to ensure contextual accuracy and avoid decontextualised interpretations. The analysis is conducted in three stages. First, key ethical principles are extracted from Sikh and Islamic sources. The Sikh analysis focuses on the *Guru Granth Sahib*, examining concepts such as *seva* (selfless service), *vand chakko* (sharing with others) and *Sarbat da Bhala* (the welfare of all). The Islamic analysis draws on the *Al-Qur'an* and *Hadith*, highlighting *adl* (justice), *ta'awun* (collective responsibility) and the protection of vulnerable groups. Second, these principles are compared with contemporary literature on AI ethics and resilience to examine their relevance in addressing issues such as algorithmic bias, data opacity and social inequality (O'Neil, 2016; Longworth, 2021). Finally, the findings are synthesised into a Faith-Informed Resilience Framework that emphasises accountability, collective responsibility and communal stewardship as practical strategies for fostering ethical and socially inclusive AI governance.

Results

The review identifies four interlinked strategies derived from Sikh and Islamic ethical frameworks that together form a critical counter-narrative to the technocratic bias dominating contemporary AI governance. These are synthesized into a Faith-Informed Resilience Framework (see Figure 1), illustrating how justice, human dignity and shared prosperity can be operationalized through faith-based principles.

Justice-Centered Adaptation

Sikhism and Islam both position justice as foundational rather than secondary to efficiency. The *Guru Granth Sahib* situates truth and righteousness as the basis of justice, holding that the Lord's justice rests on truth rather than mere words (Kaur et al., 2023) while in Islam, *adl* is a divine principle commanding believers to stand firm as witnesses for justice even against their own interests (Al-Qur'an 5:8). Applied to the algorithmic divide, these principles critique predictive policing, risk assessment and other AI-driven decision-making systems that function as 'digital gatekeepers' disproportionately affecting marginalized religious and socio-economic groups, underscoring the need for transparency, accountability and proactive safeguards wherever algorithms mediate access to justice or opportunity.

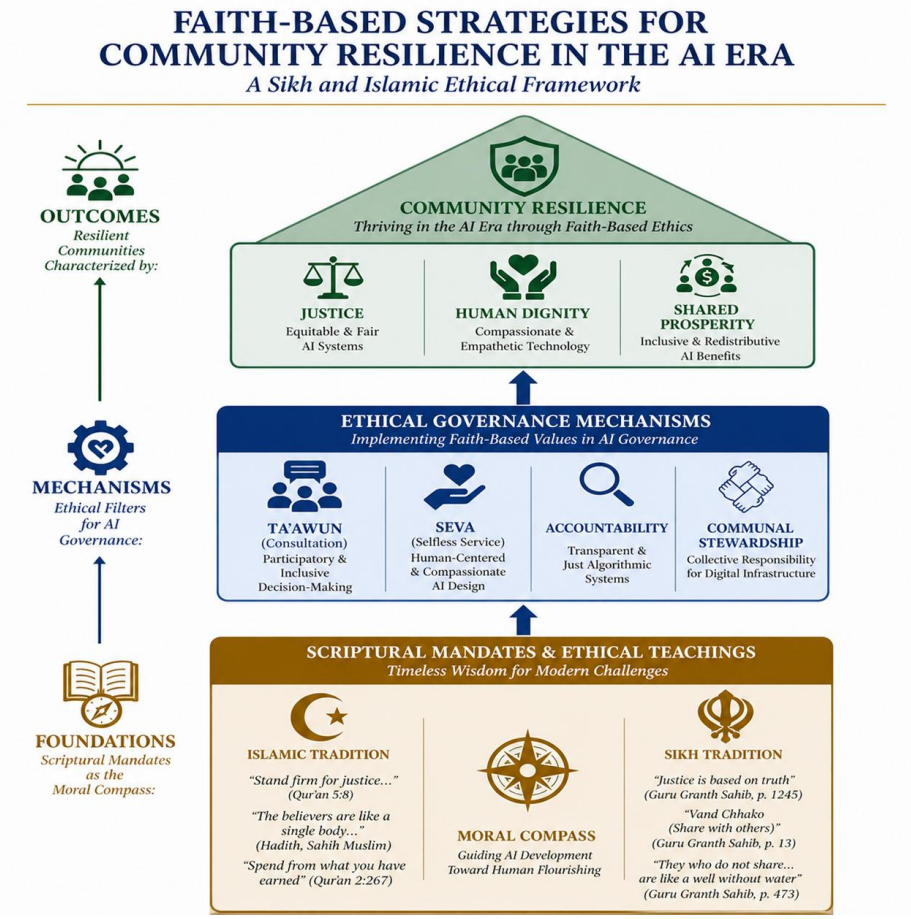


Figure 1: Faith-Informed Framework for Community Resilience in the AI Era

Communal Solidarity

Both traditions challenge the individualistic, user-centric paradigm of contemporary AI by emphasizing collective integrity. Sikh practices of *vand chakko* and *Guru Ka Langar* institutionalize sharing and mutual care, teaching that one who works and shares what they have 'knows the Path' (McLeod, 2009; Kaur et al., 2022; Kaur & Gill, 2022) while Islam stresses communal cohesion through the Ummah, likened in the Hadith to a single body in which one member's pain is felt throughout (Sahih Muslim). Applied to digital atomization, where unequal access to connectivity and AI literacy effectively marginalizes certain populations, these values call for shared digital stewardship rather than treating technology as a private or elite resource, critiquing techno-libertarian narratives that prioritize efficiency over inclusion.

Compassionate Engagement

Sikhism's *seva* (selfless service) and Islam's *raheem* (benevolence), paired with justice (Al-Qur'an 16:90), position care as relational and morally imperative rather than an output metric (Kaur & Kaur, 2015, 2020). Applied to AI-mediated healthcare and social services, these values insist that AI must assist, not replace, human care, embedding relational accountability into technological design.

Redistributive Ethics

Sikh *dasvandh* (tithing) and the principle of *Sarbat da Bhala* caution that hoarding resources undermines social and moral integrity (Bhatia, 1996; Kaur et al., 2025), while Islamic *zakat*

frames material resources as a communal trust (Al-Qur'an 2:267). Applied to AI-driven financial systems, these principles critique algorithmic credit scoring and automated lending that reinforce inequality, reframing resilience as the collective capacity to ensure AI's benefits are distributed inclusively.

Together, these strategies demonstrate that sustainable adaptation to AI is not merely technical but ethical, relational and socially grounded. They demand a fundamental rethinking of resilience as ethical pluralism and collective agency rather than technical adaptability alone. By showing that the *Guru Granth Sahib*, Al-Qur'an and Hadith offer sophisticated critiques of systemic bias and economic exclusion, these findings challenge the secularist assumption that religious thought is peripheral to technological discourse. In a society governed by ostensibly 'neutral' algorithms, faith-informed frameworks expose hidden biases and demand that AI governance meet standards of moral accountability that go beyond efficiency alone.

Conclusion

This paper advances resilience theory by articulating strategies grounded in Sikh and Islamic ethics: justice-centered adaptation, communal solidarity, compassionate engagement and redistributive equity. Integrating principles such as *seva*, *adl* and *Sarbat da Bhala* reframes AI as a tool for collective well-being rather than a mechanism of exclusion. For policymakers and practitioners, the mandate is clear: technological adaptation must align with human dignity and shared flourishing. Future research should bridge theological insights with empirical practice, examining how diverse communities enact these values to resist algorithmic harm. By embedding moral and social imperatives into AI governance, societies can ensure that the AI era advances resilience, equity and ethical accountability rather than perpetuating marginalization or social fragmentation.

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