

INTEGRATING SPIRITUAL AND MORAL LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Usha Rao*

Associate Professor & Head of Department of Management
C.B. Bhandari Jain College
Bangalore, Karnataka

Swapna S*

Assistant Professor
C.B. Bhandari Jain College
Bangalore, Karnataka

***Corresponding author | Received: 01/06/2025 | Accepted: 15/07/2025 | Published: 03/08/2025**

Abstract

The irony of contemporary times was aptly described by Martin Luther King Jr. who famously said in 1963, "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men." Hence, developing responsible world citizens who are active promoters of peaceful and secure societies is going to be vital for the 21st century. This is possible only when moral and spiritual values are incorporated in the education system. Human values-based education can play a vital role in enabling students to embrace and practice constitutional, ethical, and moral values in life. This paper attempts to understand the need for incorporation of such values in the education system. The benefits accrued to the students and the country as a whole by inculcating moral and spiritual values in the students

Keywords: Moral and spiritual values, education system, holistic development of students

Introduction

A UNESCO report, which stated that in the next 30 years, more students will pass through the doors of higher education than ever before in recorded history. India, in particular, will contribute the highest number of students, with 20 universities enrolling 1.75 lakh students and counting" in the next 25 years, an estimated 100 crore students from India will pass through higher education in some form or another. Out of over 55 thousand higher education institutions, there were 1,113 universities in 2021 listed on AISHE portal that are empowered to award degrees. Colleges are either affiliated or recognized with universities, while stand-alone institutions provide diploma certification rather than degrees. The statistics speaks very high about the education system, but why is there a rise in crime rate among youth students and youth who should have been in a lucrative career are landing up in jails, the youth, especially the teens, are facing severe mental health issues

Statement of the problem

Despite the proliferation of educational institutions and an increase in the number of educated youth, India is grappling with significant challenges related to fraud and illegal practices perpetrated by members of this educated demographic. This phenomenon raises serious concerns about the efficacy of the education system and the moral integrity of the youth, thereby posing a multifaceted problem that demands immediate attention. In light of these challenges, it is imperative to conduct comprehensive research to identify the root causes of unethical practices and lack of moral values among educated youth.

Review of Literature

The role of teachers in inculcating moral values Citation for published version: Pantic, N & Wubbels, T 2012, 'The role of teachers in inculcating moral values: operationalization of concepts', Journal of Beliefs & Values, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 55-69. The study reported in this paper explores different conceptions of teachers' moral roles aiming to develop an instrument for assessing teacher beliefs about those roles that could be used in teacher development. Implications for teacher development and future research are discussed.

Importance Of Spiritual, Moral And Ethical Values For The Students Of 21st Century: Dr Madhumita Baidya, Ananya Baidya Assistant Professor, Research Scholar Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal, India .The present paper aims to explore the concept of spiritual, moral, and ethical values, their importance for the students of 21st century, causes of value degradation and necessary suggestive measures for effective value inculcation among students. .

Spirituality and effective factors in education: A qualitative study: Zahra Nasrollahi, Narges Eskandari, Mohsen Rezaei Adaryani, and Mohammad Hasan Haji Rahimian Tasuji. The aim of this study is explanation of the factors affecting the spirituality transfer in education process.

Higher Education System in India: Emerging Issues and Prospects Izazul Hoque M.A. in Education (Gauhati University), B.Ed (Tezpur University), NE-SLET. The paper focuses on how to attain and sustain international quality. There must be careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programs for academic development, including learning methodology or teaching.

Higher Education System in India: A Critical Analysis Dilip Kumar Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University) Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India .The paper focuses to improve the quality of higher education in India by deregulating education in India.

The focus of the above literatures can be summarized as follows:

- Role of teachers in inculcating moral values
- The necessity of values, morals and spirituality for 21st century students
- Empowering the faculty members to build positive and constructive relationship with the students with spirituality as inseparable teaching element
- To Improve the Status of Higher Education System by inviting private investors and to have a education system with global specialized skills

The present paper studies the need for internalisation of spiritual and moral learning in the education system, the rise of unethical practises among the educated demographic. It takes inputs from ancient education system and how it can be incorporated in the present education system

The main objectives of this study are

- To study the salient features of ancient education system and its relevance today
- To understand the awareness among the concerned sections of society regarding the significance of spiritual and moral leaning in higher education.
- To study the need for internalisation of spiritual and moral learning in higher education.
- To suggest a new dimension to present education system with inference from ancient education system.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀) Respondents are not aware of Importance of spiritual and moral learning in Higher Education.

Alternate Hypothesis (H₁) Respondents are aware of Importance of spiritual and moral learning in Higher Education.

Methodology

Scope of the study: The study is limited to Indian education system.

Source of Data: Primary data in the form of questionnaire was collected from employers, academicians and entrepreneurs. Secondary data also has been referred for the purpose of study.

Research tool: Questionnaire has been framed on the basis of five point Likert Scale where on the scale of 5, 5 considered as strongly agree and 1 as strongly disagree. The awareness of Respondents on four determinants of Importance of spiritual and moral learning in Higher Education is tested by applying single sample t test. The sample size was taken as 100.

Data Analysis

The awareness of Respondents on four determinants of Importance of spiritual and moral learning in Higher Education is tested by applying single sample t test. **Table 1** indicates the information about the results of descriptive statistics, whereas **Table 2** presents the results of independent sample t test.

Table 1: Group Statistics on Components of Importance of spiritual and moral learning

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Spiritual and moral elements into the curriculum enhance students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. | 100 | 4.06 | 0.74 | 0.07 |
| Spiritual and moral learning in education system can reduce crime rate | 100 | 4.07 | 0.74 | 0.07 |
| Spiritual & moral learning in education system can reduce unethical practices among the educated demographic. | 100 | 3.87 | 0.34 | 0.03 |
| Spiritual and moral learning can reduce emotional instability among the youth. | 100 | 3.84 | 0.58 | 0.06 |

The average value of four determinants of Importance of spiritual and moral learning are 4.06, 4.07, 3.87 and 3.84 respectively. These mean value are compared with the numerical value of 3, which is neutral, to test whether the respondents are aware about the Importance of spiritual and moral learning. The output of the test is represented in Table 2.

Table 2: One-Sample t-Test

| Test Value = 3 | | | | |
|---|-------|----|------|------|
| | t | df | Sig. | MD |
| Spiritual and moral elements into the curriculum enhances students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. | 14.40 | 99 | 0.00 | 1.06 |
| Spiritual and moral learning in education system can reduce crime rate | 14.40 | 99 | 0.00 | 1.06 |
| Spiritual & moral learning in education system can reduce unethical practices among the educated demographic. | 25.74 | 99 | 0.00 | 0.87 |
| Spiritual and moral learning can reduce emotional instability among the youth. | 14.45 | 99 | 0.00 | 0.84 |

As compared to the test value of 3, the mean value of all four determinants of Importance of spiritual and moral learning significantly differs and higher than 3. The t values with 99 degrees of freedom for four determinants are 14.4, 14.4, 25.74 and 14.45 and these t-values are statistically significant since the p-value is 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Respondents are aware of Importance of spiritual and moral learning in Higher Education.

Need for internalisation of spiritual and moral learning

The problem at hand revolves around the paradoxical situation where increased access to education does not necessarily correlate with improved ethical conduct among the educated populace. Instead, there exists a disconcerting trend wherein educated individuals engage in fraudulent activities, such as financial scams, academic dishonesty, corruption, and various forms of white-collar crime. Such practices not only undermine societal trust and confidence but also impede socioeconomic development and progress.

There have unfortunately been numerous instances where educated individuals, including professionals and leaders in various fields, have been involved in fraudulent activities. Here are a few notable examples of fraud committed by educated individuals in India.

The Adani Group scandal

- It is a significant event that unfolded in January 2023. Research findings were made public, indicating that certain entities had short positions in India's Adani Group, which is known to have close ties with the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. These findings raised concerns about the group's debt levels and accounting practices.
- Around the same time, Hindenburg Research, a notable investigative firm, released a report alleging that the Adani Group had been involved in a long-standing scheme of stock manipulation and accounting fraud spanning several decades.

ICICI, Chanda Kochhar case

- In the channels of banking scandals, Chanda Kochhar fraud case stands as a testament to the vulnerability of even the most educated and highly professional individuals. ICICI Bank, long revered for its stability and reliability, found itself embroiled in a controversy that shook its foundations.

The ICICI-Videocon credit trick is almost a criminal trick by Chanda Kochhar as Overseeing Chief of ICICI Bank who manhandled her position by authorizing a ₹3,250 crore (US\$696.34 million) credit to Venugopal Dhoot's Videocon International Electronics Limited (VIEL) between June 2009 and October 2011 to deceive the bank in

lieu of illicit satisfaction and undue advantage gotten in NuPower Renewables Private Limited(NRPL), a company possessed by Kocchar's spouse, Deepak Kochhar.

Within the course of its preliminary investigation, the Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI) found that between June 2009 and October 2011, ICICI Bank supposedly broke its own policies by approving six advances totalling ₹1,875 crore to be given to companies associated with the Videocon Group. . According to the investigation agency, the loans were declared to be non-performing assets in 2012, which resulted in a loss of ₹1,730 crore for the bank.

- The CBI filed a charge sheet in April 2023 against Kochhar, her spouse Deepak, Dhoot, and six other people. On June 26, 2023, the investigative office displayed their contentions to a extraordinary court, looking for affirmation and acknowledgment of the charge sheet.

Nirav Modi and Punjab National Bank Fraud (2018):

- Nirav Modi, a jeweller and businessman, was accused of perpetrating a massive fraud against Punjab National Bank (PNB), one of India's largest state-owned banks.
- Modi and his associates allegedly colluded with bank officials to obtain fraudulent letters of undertaking worth billions of dollars, which were used to obtain loans from other banks. The scam led to significant losses for PNB and triggered a broader crackdown on banking fraud in India.

Saradha Group Financial Scam (2013):

- Sudipta Sen, the chairman of the Saradha Group, a conglomerate operating various businesses including real estate, media, and finance, was involved in a massive financial scam.
- Sen and his associates operated a Ponzi scheme, promising high returns to investors but using new deposits to pay returns to earlier investors. The scam collapsed, causing losses for thousands of investors, particularly in West Bengal and neighbouring states.

Vijay Mallya and Kingfisher Airlines Debacle (2012):

- Vijay Mallya, a prominent businessman and former Member of Parliament, was involved in financial irregularities related to his now-defunct airline, Kingfisher Airlines.
- Mallya and his associates allegedly misappropriated funds, defaulted on loans worth thousands of crores, and engaged in other fraudulent activities. He fled to the UK to evade legal action and is facing extradition proceedings.

Adarsh Housing Society Scam (2010):

- The Adarsh Housing Society, a cooperative housing society in Mumbai, was embroiled in a scam involving the illegal allotment of apartments meant for war veterans and widows to politicians, bureaucrats, and military officers.
- Several high-ranking officials, including politicians and bureaucrats, were accused of colluding to secure apartments in the society through fraudulent means, bypassing regulations and misusing their positions for personal gain.

Satyam Computer Services Scandal (2009):

- Ramalinga Raju, the founder and chairman of Satyam Computer Services, one of India's largest IT companies, admitted to inflating the company's financial statements by about \$1 billion.
- Raju and his accomplices manipulated financial records to show fictitious assets, non-existent cash reserves, and inflated revenues. The scandal led to a significant loss of investor confidence, and Satyam was eventually acquired by Tech Mahindra.

It's unfortunate that in field of medicine, there are instances where ethical standards are compromised, leading to harm rather than healing. While the medical profession is indeed considered noble and virtuous, it's not exception when it comes to frauds, and unethical practices. There is lack of empathy among the professionals who prioritize profits over patient care. Here is one case when Medical Institutions are run as solely profit oriented institutions without any human touch or ethics.

Ayushman Bharat Scheme

Bogus bills and fake admissions, Uttar Pradesh private hospitals inject fraud.

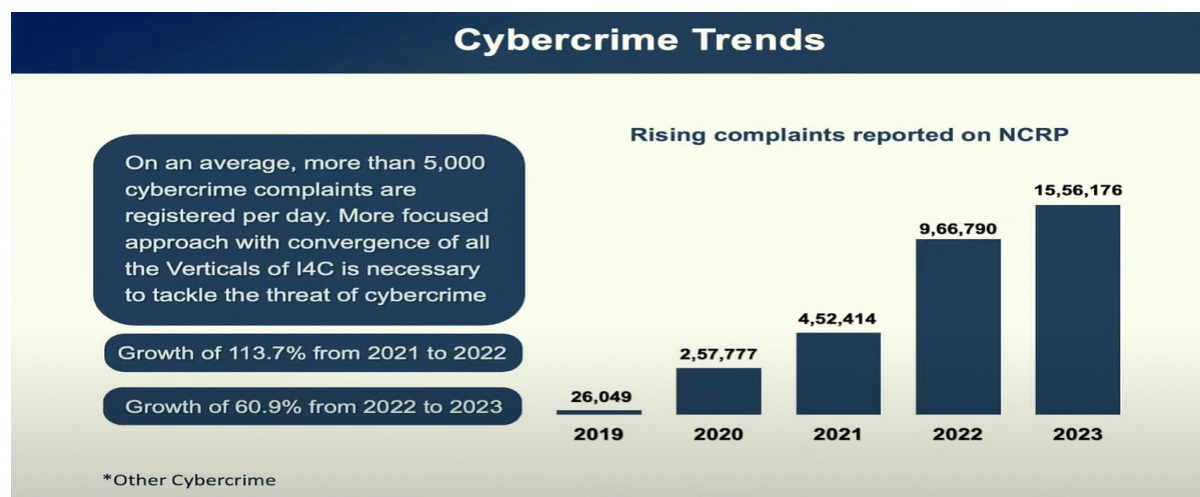
- Some private hospitals in Uttar Pradesh are raising bogus inflated bills under the Ayushman Bharat scheme to make easy money, according to reports. In one instance, a diarrhoea patient admitted to a general ward was shifted to intensive care, his photo was taken, and he was then moved back to the general ward. The hospital could earn more money through the scheme by raising ICU bills instead of general ward bills. So far, 369 private hospitals have been de-empanelled from the scheme due to fraudulent acts. The government is implementing new methods to catch fraudsters.

Educated youth often have a strong understanding of technology and computer systems, which can make them more capable of carrying out sophisticated cybercrimes such as hacking or creating malware. Few of them, despite their knowledge are engaging in

cybercrimes out of greed, revenge, or other motivations. They are using their technical skills to hack into systems, create malware, phishing, Credit card frauds, bank robbery, illegal downloading, industrial espionage, child pornography and so on. Here is a case of phishing took place recently in Gujarat.

Phishing bait: Scammers hijack search engine's business listings:

According to a report by Bengaluru-based cyber security firm Cloud SEK, 1,500 fake customer care numbers were registered with telecom service providers in Gujarat. Most scammers manipulate business listings on search engines, bid on digital ads with fake numbers, and phish on websites like Quora and comment sections of company reviews, according to cyber experts in Gujarat and Rajasthan. They allegedly set up links to trick customers into calling a fake customer service number.



These examples highlight how educated individuals, including those in positions of authority and expertise, have been involved in various forms of fraud, exploiting their knowledge and influence for personal gain at the expense of others. Such cases underscore the importance of ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability in all professions and sectors. Persistence of this problem underscores systemic deficiencies within the education system.

There are numerous contributing aspects to this phenomenon

Lack of Moral Education: An organised framework for teaching moral and ethical ideals is absent from many contemporary educational courses. Even while academic disciplines are taught with rigour, character development, moral reasoning, and ethical decision-making are frequently not given enough attention. There is a widespread misperception that achieving academic success is the only way to lead a happy life and a successful career. However, ignoring the evolution of moral character and spiritual understanding compromises people's

ability to develop holistically. History demonstrates that people who possess not only intellectual prowess but also moral integrity and spiritual depth are frequently the ones who attain tremendous success in any field. These characteristics not only help people make moral decisions, but they also motivate them to pursue excellence for the benefit of their communities and the wider world, above and beyond their own interests.

Commercialisation of Education: The creators of educational institutions are driven solely by profit-making and no longer have the admirable goal of delivering education. Academic performance and professional success have become more important than moral and ethical growth as a result of the commercialisation of education. Under pressure to draw in students and money, educational institutions could put more emphasis on academic achievement than character development.

Pressure to Succeed: People are under tremendous pressure to succeed financially and professionally due to the competitive character of modern society. People may sacrifice their morals and integrity in these kinds of settings in an effort to succeed, which can result in unethical behaviour across a range of industries.

In the contemporary world, it is important to recognise the internalisation of moral and spiritual values in the education system as an indispensable tool for nurturing well-rounded individuals and for fostering a harmonious society.

Firstly, moral and spiritual values provide a foundational framework for ethical decision-making and behaviour. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and globalization, individuals encounter complex moral dilemmas and ethical challenges. Education imbued with moral and spiritual principles equips learners with the critical discernment necessary to navigate these complexities with integrity and compassion.

Secondly, the cultivation of moral and spiritual values fosters empathy, kindness, and social responsibility among students. Beyond academic achievements, the true measure of education lies in its capacity to nurture individuals who are empathetic and compassionate towards others. By integrating moral and spiritual teachings into the curriculum, educational institutions can contribute significantly to the development of socially conscious citizens who actively engage in addressing societal issues and promoting the common good.

Furthermore, moral and spiritual education plays a pivotal role in promoting mental and emotional well-being. In an age marked by rising levels of stress, anxiety, and mental health disorders among students, the incorporation of mindfulness practices, ethical teachings, and

spiritual contemplation can provide invaluable tools for coping with life's challenges and fostering inner peace and resilience.

The integration of moral and spiritual values into the education system is not merely desirable but imperative for nurturing individuals who are intellectually adept, morally upright, emotionally resilient, and socially responsible. By embracing a holistic approach to education that encompasses the development of the mind, body, and spirit, societies can aspire towards a future characterized by greater harmony, empathy, and flourishing for all.

Suggestions for a new dimension to the present education system with incorporation of spiritual and moral learning

- **Reforming Education:** Educational institutions should prioritize holistic development, including moral and ethical education, alongside academic excellence. Integrating ethics courses, fostering critical thinking skills, and promoting values-based learning can help cultivate a culture of integrity from an early age.
- **Cultivating a Culture of Integrity:** Efforts to promote ethical behaviour should extend beyond formal education and encompass broader societal initiatives. Encouraging ethical role models, fostering ethical dialogue, and promoting values such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility can help create a culture that values integrity and ethical conduct.
- **Integration of Traditional Knowledge:** Incorporate teachings from ancient Indian texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana into the curriculum. These texts offer valuable insights into various subjects including philosophy, science, mathematics, and ethics, providing a rich tapestry of knowledge for students to explore.
- **Focus on Character Development:** Integrate moral and ethical education into the curriculum to instil values such as compassion, empathy, integrity, and respect for all living beings. Emphasize the importance of self-discipline, self-awareness, and mindfulness practices to cultivate well-rounded individuals capable of making positive contributions to society.
- **Teachers as epitome of virtues:** Most importantly it should have teachers and professors who are an epitome of virtues Teachers should strive to embody the values they wish to instil in their students. Teachers should serve as effective role models of moral and spiritual values, thereby positively influencing the holistic development of their students.

Implications

Internalizing spiritual and moral education requires a collaborative effort among educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers to create an educational system that nurtures not just academic achievement but also moral and spiritual well-being.

Educators

- **Teaching Approach:** Educators may need to adopt a more holistic approach to education, focusing not only on academic learning but also on moral and spiritual development.
- **Role Modeling:** Educators serve as role models for students, so they must embody the values they seek to instill.
- **Professional Development:** Educators may require training and support to effectively integrate spiritual and moral education into their teaching practices.

Policy makers

- **Curriculum Development:** Policymakers can influence curriculum development to include components that promote spiritual and moral education. By integrating moral and spiritual learning into our curriculum and fostering opportunities for reflection and introspection, we equip our students with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of the world with wisdom and grace.
- **Policy Implementation:** Policymakers can implement policies that support colleges and universities in providing a conducive environment for moral and spiritual development.
- **Assessment:** Policymakers may need to consider new methods of assessing students' moral and spiritual growth, moving beyond traditional academic metrics.

Curriculum Developers

- **Curriculum Design:** Curriculum developers can design programs that incorporate spiritual and moral education into various subjects and activities.
- **Resource Development:** Developers can create resources, such as lesson plans and materials that help educators integrate spiritual and moral education into their teaching.
- **Research and Evaluation:** Curriculum developers can conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches to spiritual and moral education, informing future curriculum design.

Findings

- It is analyzed that the Respondents are aware of Importance of spiritual and moral learning in Higher Education.
- It is observed in the study that there is a rise in Higher educational Institutions
- The study observes that the educated professionals are involved in frauds and scams which are proved in above cases.
- The study also observes that cybercrimes are on a rise.

Conclusion

This research paper has explored the significance of incorporating spiritual and moral learning within modern education. The study highlights the timeless relevance of values-based education in nurturing holistic development and ethical awareness among learners. By integrating elements from traditional educational practices, such as a focus on character development, ethics, and community values, into contemporary education, we can cultivate a more balanced and harmonious society. This paper recommends a holistic approach to education that goes beyond academic achievement to foster moral, ethical, and spiritual growth, thus enriching the overall learning experience and preparing individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern world with wisdom and compassion.

Bibliography

- <https://digitallearning.eletsonline.com/2023/07/nep-aligning-indias-education-requirements-dr-shashank-shah-niti-aayog/>
- <https://www.jnujaipur.ac.in/blogs/role-of-spiritual-well-being-in-education/136>
- <https://www.thehighereducationreview.com/magazine/the-imperative-integration-of-moral-spiritual-education-in-today-s-society--LQYZ690030>
- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/660862/higher-education-institutions-bytype-india>