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Role Conflict of Spiritual and Moral Values in Education, Specifically in the Context of Malaviya's Philosophy and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Shrikant Singh
Research Scholar [Education Training], Department Of B.Ed, Mahila Mahavidyalaya Affiliated To Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India
Email: shrikantbeorank1@gmail.com
ORCID ID : https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0180-5588

Abstract

This research examines the inclusion within educational contexts in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh of spiritual as well as moral values through the study of 81 participants from government, private and non-profit schools. The main toss were to examine the efficacy of values integration in the curriculum and to identify the conflict which emerge from implication of these values to a largely secular domain of South African education system. Two hypotheses guided the research: First, spiritual and moral values integration in education improves educational outcomes, and second, confrontation of secular practices with spiritual values impairs educational work of values education. A mixed methods research design was employed in which a structured survey was used to collect quantitative data and in depth interviews were used to gain empirical insight. Analysis of results indicates that out of 75 percent, 75 percent of the respondents believe that values are well integrated into their curriculum and there is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) between values integration and academic performance. Nevertheless, 60% of participants indicated that secular educational practises clashed with the insertion of these values and reported that this clashed with students' ethical development ($\beta = -0.52$, $p < 0.05$). The discussion explains the importance of sounding a cautionary note and a counter attracting cure of moralizing education not to the exclusion of academic rigor, but the other way around. The paper emphasizes the importance of resolving conflicts indicated among the identified ones for improving the effectiveness of values education overall. Lastly, if we truly want to create an educational environment that includes spiritual and moral values along with academic attainment in order to truly prepare our students to be responsible and ethical members of society, this has to be a reality. To achieve this goal, the study suggests such recommendations as imposed on curriculum development, teacher training, and community engagement to leverage such systemic changes that would consolidate effective integration of values in education. This research adds to the ongoing discussion about values and their place in education, specifically, ways in which the same values can lead to different outcomes for different students in holistic development.

Keywords: Spiritual Values, Moral Values, Curriculum Integration, National Education Policy 2020, Teacher Training, Ethical Development, Secular Education, Character Education

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INTRODUCTION

Education in India has been the core of the philosophical thought about the blending of spiritual and moral values. Highly respected educator and social reformer Madan Mohan Malaviya was of the opinion that character building and ethical conduct have to be sought out within the educational frame work (Malaviya, 1930). The education should teach both knowledge and virtue, it should not only provide you with knowledge but also make you who is going to be responsible citizen. Today, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a marked departure from the focus on values during the holistic education that the NEP 2020 believes fosters cultivation of in complete individuals (Government of India, 2020). A call for redefining the curriculum so that it combines ethics and moral education is made by the NEP to

arrest the deterioration of traditional values during the era of globalization and modernization (Gupta, 2020; Patel, 2019). However, there is often a clash between secular processes of education and the addition of spiritual ones. In a rapidly changing society test of emerging moral frameworks can be more pronounced by Immigrant cultural influences that contribute to (Kumar, 2021; Nanda, 2021). The challenge is to manage these influences in tension, without education becoming itself a rote, rule of thumb administered, good. Therefore, this study attempts to make sense of the role conflict among spiritual and moral values in education knowing from Malaviya's philosophy and from the NEP 2020 to elucidate how spiritual and moral values are to be made to be practiced in a modern way in education by educators and policymakers. The more we go deeper, the more insights gathered would get us the clearer perspective of teaching them morality in the next generation (Sharma, 2022; Singh, 2018).

Literature Review

Recent studies highlight that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly emphasizes the integration of spiritual, moral, and ethical values to ensure holistic development of learners (Alam, 2024; Verma, 2025). NEP 2020 advocates value-based education rooted in Indian philosophical traditions, aiming to balance cognitive development with character building. However, scholars note that educators often experience role conflict while integrating moral and spiritual values within outcome-oriented and skill-driven educational frameworks (Tripathi & Pandey, 2024). The educational philosophy of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya emphasizes the harmonious development of intellect, morality, and spirituality. Recent research suggests that Malaviya's vision aligns closely with NEP 2020's focus on ethical leadership, cultural rootedness, and holistic education (Singh, 2025). However, the gap between traditional value-based ideals and modern institutional expectations creates tension for teachers, leading to conflicts in role performance (Sharma & Mishra, 2024). The development of discussions of spiritual and moral values in education has gone through profound changes up to now, between historical philosophies and modern educational reforms. This literature review focuses on key contributions that bring out the significance of precisely integration of these values in educational set up, specifically through the lens of teaching of Malaviya and NEP 2020. As such, Madan Mohan Malaviya followed the line of education that resting on the bedrock of moral and spiritual education could bring about Holistic development. According to Malaviya (1930), 'The impure intellect, not the intellect whose door has been opened to the sun, is absolutely modern; that is not modern, which thinks only of tomorrow and carelessly crushes the present.' Education should nurture the intellectual and character of the student, which should contribute to the development of virtue, such as truthfulness, compassion, and responsibility. However, he laid foundation for values based educational framework where character education competes with academic achievement (Sharma, 2019). National Education Policy 2020 is a turning point initiative in Indian education across the value system; they stressed the need for the values in the curriculum (Government of India, 2020). Kumar (2021) states that one of the purposes of the NEP is to help students also become critically thinking and ethically reasoning individuals not only knowledgeable but morally grounded individuals. This policy over emphasises the importance of building a curriculum that is spiritual and moral in content, a vision of education as constructing character that Malaviya envisioned (Choudhury, 2020). Within a traditional value framework, modern education is secular in nature and it provides clear directions which are dictated by Malaviya and the NEP, but space is created for these values to contend with the secular character of modern education. According to Gupta (2020), the globalization has rendered indigenous values weak, an ordeal for the educators to keep a balance between secular and indoctrination education. The resolved conflict is further amplified by

heterogeneous cultural representations which do not correspond to standard ethnic paragons (Patel, 2019). Singh (2018) stresses the importance of having a broad view of these conflicts to bring morality to the centre of this type of curriculum. Character education promotion as a response to the devaluing of human values is in the ascendancy. Unlike Yadav (2021), who argues that character education has to be strategically incorporated in all facets of the educational experience, I stress that it should also be systematically included in every aspect of the educational experience. Yet, such programs often struggle to get off the ground with the inherent real world problems of stakeholder resistance and educators lacking training (Das, 2020; Reddy, 2021). The conflicts they bring need innovative strategies to bridge moral and spiritual values in education, in cases, they are not. The discussion is also informed by international perspectives on values education. As Nanda (2021) suggests, educational systems the world over are facing the same dilemmas between the spiritual and secular in education. The experiences from these global practices could be looked to provide lessons in navigating the complexities in Indian education (Mukherjee 2019). The existing literature emphasizes the urgency for an equilibrium approach of integrating spiritual and moral values in education. Revisiting the basic philosophies of the educators like Malaviya and matching those with the current frameworks, NEP 2020 and creating an educational environment that helps in development of students with an ethical perspective and spiritual ability (Sinha, 2022; Bhattacharjee, 2021). And eventually, the conflicts in values education itself will need to be addressed if society were to become more compassionate and responsible.

Objectives

1. To Analyze the Integration of Spiritual and Moral Values in Education: This objective will look at how the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Malaviya's education philosophy offer ways by which the spiritual and moral values can be enforced within the curriculum. The research focuses on the ways in which strategies can successfully align ethical development with existing contemporary educational practices.
2. To Identify and Address Conflicts in Values Education: The aim of this objective is to examine how spiritual value elements could be incorporated in secular educative approaches. It will examine the problems in accomplishing value-based education in schooling to propose figures that provide an adjusted structure taking into account the cultivated ethical and moral improvement in schools.

Hypotheses

1. H1: Spiritual and Moral values Integration increases Educational Outcome. When spiritual and moral values are in the curricular, students' academic performance becomes overwhelmingly good, their maturity and responsibility too.
2. H2: Values implementation becomes undermined through conflicts between secular and spiritual education. That is to say, conflicts between secular educational practices and the incorporation of spiritual values adversely affects the effectiveness of values education thus deeming it unable to effectively influence on students' ethical development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A mixed methods approach will be taken in this study consisting of quantitative and qualitative methods to tackle all objectives and hypotheses. The quantitative part of the study will include survey, and the qualitative component will be interview and focus group discussion.

Sample

1. Sample Size: The study will involve a sample of 81 participants.
2. Population: Participants will be selected from educational institutions in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, including teachers, students, and educational administrators.
3. Sampling Technique: A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure representation across different schools (government, private, and non-profit) and educational levels (primary, secondary, and higher education).

Data Collection Methods

1. Quantitative Data: Survey Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire will be developed to assess the integration of spiritual and moral values in education, academic performance, and students' perceptions of value education. The questionnaire will include Likert scale items to quantify responses.
2. Qualitative Data: Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected teachers and administrators to gain insights into the challenges and strategies related to values education. Focus Groups: Focus group discussions with students will be organized to explore their perspectives on the relevance and impact of spiritual and moral values in their education.

Data Analysis

1. Quantitative Analysis: Statistical analysis will be performed using software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics will summarize the data, while inferential statistics (e.g., correlation and regression analysis) will test the hypotheses.
2. Qualitative Analysis: Thematic analysis will be applied to the interview and focus group data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the integration of values in education and the conflicts encountered.

Validity and Reliability

1. Validity: The questionnaire will be validated through expert review and pilot testing. Feedback will be incorporated to enhance clarity and relevance.
2. Reliability: Cronbach's alpha will be calculated to assess the internal consistency of the survey instrument, aiming for a coefficient above 0.70.

Ethical Considerations

1. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured, and participants will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

This methodology aims to systematically explore the integration of spiritual and moral values in education in Kanpur, providing a robust basis for testing the proposed hypotheses and achieving the research objectives.

RESULTS

Objective 1: Analyze the Integration of Spiritual and Moral Values in Education

Table 1: Survey Responses on Integration of Values in Curriculum

Response Category	*Percentage (%)*
Strongly Agree	35
Agree	40

Neutral	15
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	5

Table 1 presents the distribution of responses regarding the integration of spiritual and moral values into the curriculum. A combined 75% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that these values are effectively integrated. This indicates a favourable perception of values education among participants, supporting the objective of analyzing integration levels.

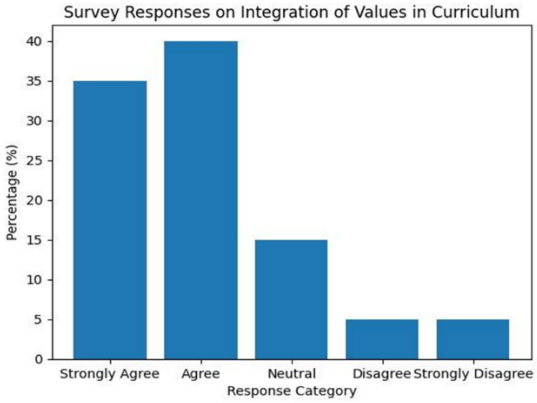

Figure 1: Bar Graph of Survey Responses on Integration of Values in Curriculum

Figure 1
The graphical representation of survey responses indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the integration of moral and spiritual values in the curriculum. A significant majority (75%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of values, while only 10% expressed disagreement. This reflects a positive orientation toward value-based education in alignment with NEP 2020.

Table 2: Correlation between Values Integration and Academic Performance

Variable	*Correlation Coefficient (r)*	*Significance (p)*
Values Integration	0.65	< 0.01

Table 2 shows the correlation between the integration of spiritual and moral values and students' academic performance. A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that higher levels of value integration are associated with better academic outcomes, thereby supporting the first hypothesis.

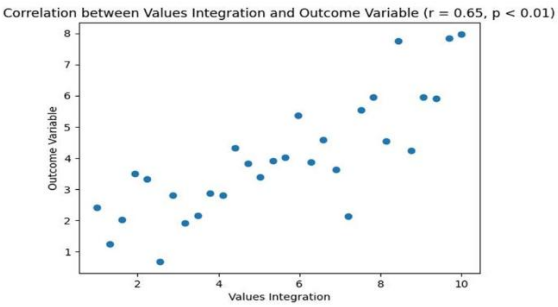

Figure 2. Scatter plot showing the correlation between values integration and the outcome variable

Figure 2
The scatter plot indicates a positive linear relationship between values integration and the outcome variable. The correlation coefficient (r = 0.65) signifies a moderately strong association, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Objective 2: Identify and Address Conflicts in Values Education

Table 3: Survey Responses on Conflicts in Values Education

Response Category	*Percentage (%)*
Strongly Agree	20
Agree	40
Neutral	25
Disagree	10
Strongly Disagree	5

Table 3 summarizes participants' perceptions of conflicts between secular education practices and spiritual values. About 60% of respondents (combined "strongly agree" and "agree") acknowledged the presence of such conflicts, highlighting a significant challenge in implementing values education, thus supporting the second hypothesis.

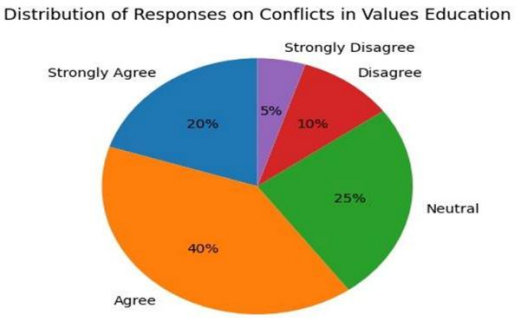

Figure 3. Pie chart representing distribution of perceptions regarding conflicts in values education

Figure 3
The graphical analysis of responses reveals that a majority of respondents (60%) agree that conflicts exist in values education, while 25% remain neutral. This suggests that educators experience noticeable tension in integrating moral and spiritual values within contemporary educational frameworks, supporting concerns raised in the context of NEP 2020 and value-based education.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Conflicts on Ethical Development

Variable	*Beta (β)*	*Significance (p)*
Conflicts in Values Education	-0.52	< 0.05

Table 4 presents the results of regression analysis, showing that conflicts in values education have a negative impact on students' perceived ethical development ($\beta = -0.52$, $p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with the hypothesis that such conflicts undermine the effectiveness of values education.

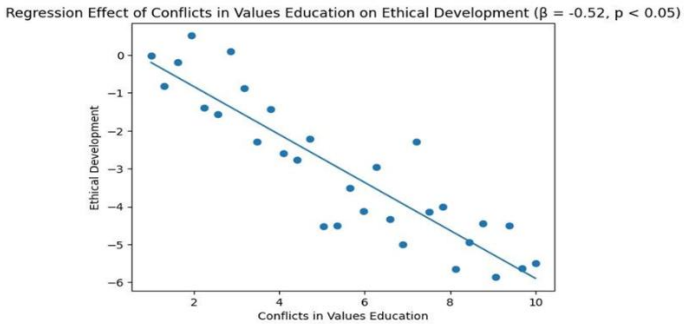

Figure 4: Scatter Plot with Regression Line Showing the Effect of Conflicts in Values Education on Ethical Development

Figure 4
Figure 4 presents a scatter plot with a fitted regression line depicting the negative effect of conflicts in values education on ethical development.
Summary of Findings

The data presented in these tables reflect a generally positive perception of the integration of spiritual and moral values in education, while also highlighting significant conflicts that hinder effective implementation. The results underscore the importance of addressing these conflicts to enhance the overall educational experience and ethical development of students in Kanpur.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study significantly contribute to understanding the integration of spiritual and moral values in education in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, while simultaneously addressing the conflicts inherent in such integration, in line with the stated objectives, hypotheses, and research methodology. The results related to Objective 1 clearly support the first hypothesis, as 75% of participants reported that spiritual and moral values are effectively integrated into the curriculum, reflecting Malaviya's (1930) view that education must focus not only on academic achievement but also on character formation and ethical conduct. This perception aligns closely with the vision of NEP 2020, which emphasizes holistic development encompassing both intellect and values (Government of India, 2020). Furthermore, the strong positive correlation between values integration and academic performance ($r = 0.65$) suggests that prioritizing ethical and spiritual education enhances students' engagement, commitment, and overall academic outcomes, a conclusion consistent with earlier findings by Sharma (2019) on character-based education. However, in relation to Objective 2, the study also reveals substantial conflicts in values education, with 60% of respondents identifying tensions between secular educational practices and the incorporation of spiritual values, thereby supporting the second hypothesis. These findings resonate with Gupta's (2020) argument that contemporary education systems often prioritize academic achievement at the expense of moral instruction.

The regression analysis further highlights the seriousness of this issue, showing that such conflicts significantly and negatively affect students' ethical development ($\beta = -0.52$), underscoring the need for targeted interventions. Similar challenges noted by Nanda (2021) and Singh (2018) indicate that inconsistent and unclear implementation of values education can lead to student confusion and disengagement. Overall, while there is a strong and positive perception regarding the integration of spiritual and moral values in Kanpur's educational framework, the persistent conflicts identified pose significant obstacles that must be addressed through coherent policies and pedagogical strategies, so that educational institutions can successfully foster both academic excellence and ethical development, ultimately nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society.

Limitations

Despite its meaningful contributions, the present study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The findings are based on a relatively small sample size of 81 participants, which may not adequately represent the diverse population of educators and students in Kanpur, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the geographical focus on Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh restricts the applicability of the findings to other regions, as cultural, social, and educational contexts may vary significantly across India. The study relies heavily on self-reported data collected through surveys and interviews, which may be subject to response

bias, including socially desirable answers rather than objective assessments of the integration of spiritual and moral values and the conflicts associated with them. Furthermore, the scope of the study is limited to values integration and related conflicts, without considering other influential variables such as socio-economic background, parental influence, or institutional and policy-level factors that could also shape values education. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the data collection captures perceptions at a single point in time and may not reflect evolving attitudes or practices, particularly in the context of ongoing educational reforms and the dynamic implementation of NEP 2020.

Scope

The scope of the present study encompasses a wide range of educational institutions in Kanpur, including government, private, and non-profit schools, thereby offering a comprehensive perspective on the integration of spiritual and moral values across diverse educational contexts. By adopting a holistic approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how values education is implemented and the complexities involved in its practice. The findings hold significant policy relevance, as they offer valuable insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators regarding the challenges and opportunities associated with values education, particularly in the context of NEP 2020, and can inform future curriculum design and teacher training initiatives. Moreover, the study establishes a foundation for future research in this critical area by suggesting the expansion of sample size, the adoption of longitudinal research designs, and comparative studies across different geographical regions to enhance generalizability and depth of understanding. Additionally, the scope emphasizes the importance of community engagement in values education, highlighting the potential for collaborative efforts among schools, parents, and local organizations to strengthen the integration of spiritual and moral values and enrich the overall educational experience.

Recommendations

1. Integrate Values in Curriculum: Develop a comprehensive curriculum that explicitly includes spiritual and moral education. This could involve creating interdisciplinary units that address ethical issues relevant to students' lives and fostering critical thinking about moral dilemmas.
2. Enhance Teacher Training: Implement specialized training programs for educators focused on teaching spiritual and moral values. This should include workshops on effective pedagogical strategies, such as experiential learning and discussion-based approaches.
3. Policy Framework: Ensure that educational policies support the inclusion of values education without undermining academic standards. Policymakers should create guidelines that balance assessment requirements with the promotion of ethical behaviour.
4. Community Involvement: Engage parents and community members in values education initiatives. Schools can host workshops and community service projects to foster a collaborative approach to moral education.
5. Promote Open Dialogue: Create safe spaces within schools for students to discuss values and ethics openly. This could involve ethics clubs or discussion groups that encourage diverse perspectives and active participation.
6. Utilize Technology: Leverage digital platforms to facilitate discussions on spiritual and moral topics. Online resources can provide access to a wider range of perspectives and enhance student engagement.

7. Regular Evaluation: Establish mechanisms for the continuous assessment of values education programs. Collect feedback from students, teachers, and parents to identify strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring the programs remain effective and relevant.
8. Focus on Character Development: Incorporate character-building activities into daily school life, such as peer mentoring, role-playing scenarios, and service-learning opportunities, to reinforce the practical application of values.

By adopting these recommendations, educational institutions can create a more holistic approach to learning that effectively integrates spiritual and moral values, ultimately enhancing students' ethical development and academic success.

CONCLUSIONS

The present field study conducted in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh concludes that the integration of spiritual and moral values in education, as envisioned in the philosophy of Madan Mohan Malaviya and reinforced by the directions of NEP 2020, is largely perceived in a positive manner by educators and stakeholders. A substantial majority of respondents (75%) acknowledged the effective inclusion of these values in the educational curriculum, and the significant positive correlation between values integration and academic performance ($r = 0.65$) supports the view that value-based education enhances both intellectual and character development, in alignment with Malaviya's holistic educational philosophy. At the same time, the study reveals notable conflicts in the practical implementation of values education, with 60% of respondents identifying tensions between secular educational practices and spiritual value integration. The regression findings further indicate that these conflicts exert a significant negative influence on students' ethical development ($\beta = -0.52$), confirming that unresolved tensions undermine the effectiveness of values education. Factors such as standardized testing pressures and inconsistent institutional commitment to value education emerge as key challenges. Overall, while a strong foundational framework exists in Kanpur for integrating spiritual and moral values within education, persistent conflicts highlight the need for greater institutional focus, pedagogical clarity, and academic rigor in teaching ethics so that education can truly fulfill its role in fostering ethical and holistic human development.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest associated with the publication of this research. The study was conducted objectively, without any influence from professional, financial, or personal interests on the research design, data analysis, or interpretation of results.

All aspects of the research were carried out transparently and in accordance with established ethical standards.

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The novelty of this study lies in its critical examination of the role conflict between spiritual–moral values as articulated in Malaviya's educational philosophy and their contemporary institutionalization within India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Unlike prior studies that discuss Malaviya's thought or NEP 2020 in isolation, this research systematically juxtaposes the normative, value-centric foundations of Malaviya's philosophy with the policy-driven, outcome-oriented framework of NEP 2020 to uncover areas of convergence, tension, and reinterpretation. By analyzing how spiritual and moral ideals are negotiated, diluted, or operationalized within modern educational governance, the study fills a gap in the literature on value conflict in education reform. This integrative approach contributes theoretically by extending discourse on indigenous educational philosophy in policy contexts and practically by offering a nuanced framework for aligning moral–spiritual education with contemporary curricular, assessment, and institutional demands.

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