



INCLUSIVENESS OF SPIRITUAL AND MORAL LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO MEET INTERNATIONALIZATION THROUGH THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

In the Indian setting, education can be divided into two categories: ancient and contemporary. Before the current educational system, pupils were taught highly moral and sacred principles, which elevate and maximise their potential based on their aptitude. There were two renowned universities in the past called Nalanda and Takshashila. These universities made significant contributions to the advancement of education and cultural exchanges, dispersing knowledge throughout South Asia, i.e., from numerous scholars and students from China, Korea, Japan, and other countries. These two universities provided a wide range of courses in subjects like economics, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, and military literature. It is the only duty of each HEI to restore traditional, spiritual, and moral values as the cornerstone of the modern student body; if not, the loss of the influential youth will be the price the HEIs must pay. The student body must adopt moral principles that are thought-provoking and spiritual for society to avoid the many negative aspects of the current state of affairs. We have encountered these circumstances, for instance, in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. HEIs are dealing with the issue of "Nasha," or high, as a result of foreign cultural influence. To recover from this, cultural enrichment must be improved. Indian higher education may provide students with a wider global perspective, promoting tolerance, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding, as well as ethical leadership, personal development, and the promotion of peace and harmony in society, by integrating spiritual and moral studies. Integrating spiritual and moral learning does not detract from academic rigor but enhances it. Students who develop a strong moral compass and spiritual grounding are often



Dravidian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies

ISSN: 3107-6378 (Online)
Volume No:01/2025
Issue No: 02

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April-June 2025

more resilient, creative, and innovative in their academic and professional pursuits.

Key Words: HEIs, Cultural, Moral and Spiritual, Peace and Harmony

Introduction

India, a land steeped in rich spiritual and moral traditions, boasts a vibrant higher education system poised for further internationalization. This endeavor, however, presents a unique challenge: integrating the nation's profound cultural heritage with the demands of a globalized world. One crucial aspect often overlooked in this process is the role of spiritual and moral learning in shaping well-rounded graduates prepared to thrive in an interconnected future.

This work delves into the critical yet under-explored area of including spiritual and moral learning within the Indian higher education system to effectively meet internationalization goals. It argues that fostering these dimensions alongside academic rigor is essential for nurturing responsible global citizens who can navigate the complexities of the 21st century.

In ancient times there were two famous Universities Nalanda and Takshashila for learning sources apart from the Gurukulas, they made major contributions to the advancement of education and spread information throughout South Asia i.e, from so many scholars, students from China, Korea, Japan, etc. Nalanda University is located in present-day Bihar, India. It was established during the Gupta dynasty around the 5th Century and offered a wide range of subjects including Buddhist studies, philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and literature. The other Takshashila was located in present-day Pakistan, and was one of the oldest centers of learning in ancient India, it flourished from the 5th Century



Dravidian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies

ISSN: 3107-6378 (Online)
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BCE to the 5th Century CE and offered a diverse range of subjects including philosophy, ethics, politics, economics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and warfare. Students had the opportunity to study under renowned scholars and experts in their respective fields and served as a hub of intellectual and cultural exchange in the Indian subcontinent.

Those days it was mandated students should learn Gadhegalu in Kannada, Sukthulu in Telugu, Tirukkural in Tamil, etc even today we remember those, herewith I remember one sloka which were enthusiastic at school times;

“Swagrahu Pujyate Murkhaha; Swagraame Pujyate Prabhuhu
Swadeshi Pujyate Raja; Vidvaansarvatra Pujyate.”

A fool is worshipped in his home. A chief is worshipped in his village. A king is worshipped in his kingdom, but a Guru and Knowledgeable person is worshipped everywhere.

Integrating spiritual and moral learning does not detract from academic rigor but enhances it. Students who develop a strong moral compass and spiritual grounding are often more resilient, creative, and innovative in their academic and professional pursuits.

Review of Literature on Internationalization

Glauco De Vita & Peter Case (2003)¹ This article critiques the internationalization of higher education (HE) in the UK, arguing that it is inappropriate to treat curricula as commodities reducible solely to exchange value. It exposes the inadequacies of a piecemeal 'infusion approach' to curriculum internationalization, questioning the cross-cultural validity of purchaser/provider models and the

¹ Glauco De Vita & Peter Case (2003) Rethinking the internationalisation agenda in UK higher education, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 27:4, 383-398, DOI: [10.1080/0309877032000128082](https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877032000128082)



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ISSN: 3107-6378 (Online)
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student-as-customer metaphor. The article calls for a reclamation of the internationalization agenda by practitioners interested in creating culturally inclusive, fair, and genuinely educational forms of multicultural HE teaching and assessment.

(Patel, 2017)² The author deconstructs internationalization as a Western hegemonic perspective and advocates for glocalization in international higher education. Glocalization focuses on enhancing learning quality for local and global learners through mutual understanding and shared values. The paper presents the glocalization engagement framework (GEF) as an equitable, inclusive, and diversity-focused framework. It calls for further research and recommendations to embed GEF within mainstream curriculum transformation agendas.

Stein, Sharon (2016)³ Globalization in higher education raises ethical questions as it weakens state authority and promotes redistributive policies. Marginson argues that education produces public goods like knowledge and social opportunity, contributing to a more equitable system. Decolonial theories challenge the West's epistemic supremacy and market-driven approaches influence internationalization, with humanist approaches emphasizing cultural competency and social responsibility.

Sumida Huaman (2019)⁴ The article explores the role of Indigenous knowledges in higher education at U.S. Tribal Colleges and Universities, highlighting the importance of decoloniality and sustainable self-determination. It explores internationalization efforts, highlighting Indigenous perspectives on place-based

² Patel, Fay Ph.D. (2017) "Deconstructing Internationalization: Advocating Glocalization in International Higher Education," *Journal of International and Global Studies*: Vol. 8: No. 2, Article 4.

³ Stein, Sharon(2016) Rethinking the Ethics of Internationalization: Five Challenges for Higher Education

⁴ Sumida Huaman, E. A., Chiu, B., & Billy, C. (2019). Indigenous internationalization: Indigenous worldviews, higher education, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27, 101. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.4366>



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higher education, and the critical role of Indigenous worldviews in addressing historical limitations of education for Indigenous peoples.

Tisdell (2003)⁵The study explores the role of spirituality in fostering a positive cultural identity among 31 adult educators, suggesting a spiritually grounded approach to pedagogy. It highlights the importance of authenticity, allowing exploration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual domains, and acknowledging the limitations of adult learning environments and the ongoing process of transformation.

Emma Tomalin (2007)⁶ This paper presents the results of a survey among higher education staff, focusing on the impact of cultural and religious diversity on their working practices. It suggests that HEIs should provide adequate training and institutional support to ensure effective working practices and prevent discrimination based on cultural or religious grounds.

George Dei(2014)⁷ This paper challenges the dominant approach to global education, focusing on the potential of Indigenous anti-colonial perspectives. It aims to destabilize power relations and colonial hierarchies, re-centering equity, power, and social justice in education. The paper argues that the neo-liberal corporate agenda in education intensifies private interests, focusing on economically viable disciplines and streamlining students for a blue-collar workforce. Indigenous democratic principles are introduced for effective educational delivery, emphasizing the importance of body, mind, and spirit/soul

⁵ Tisdell, E. J., & Tolliver, D. E. (2003). Claiming a Sacred Face: The Role of Spirituality and Cultural Identity in Transformative Adult Higher Education. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1(4), 368-392. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344603257678>

⁶ Emma Tomalin (2007) Supporting cultural and religious diversity in higher education: pedagogy and beyond, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12:5-6, 621-634, DOI: [10.1080/13562510701595283](https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510701595283)

⁷ **George Dei(2014)** University of Toronto, Global Education from an 'Indigenist' Anti-colonial Perspective <https://doi.org/10.20355/C53G6B>



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engagement in critical dialogues about oneself and their communities. The paper concludes that a rethinking of schooling and education should consider the roots of knowledge production, dissemination, and use, examining its connections to family life, community, and social relevance.

MAURICE HARARI (1992)⁸ The internationalization of undergraduate education should not be separated from the overall reform of higher education. Critics argue that the curriculum lacks global emphasis and imbalances between Western-oriented courses and those dealing with Third World cultures. Teaching faculty members also lack the realization that limiting the teaching-learning process to single disciplines is insufficient for understanding interdisciplinary issues. The international dimension can significantly contribute to the integration of the undergraduate curriculum, addressing fundamental criticisms. However, without serious commitment and implementation of an international content and ethos, a quality curriculum cannot be achieved. The internationalization of undergraduate education should be a multi-faceted package, involving study abroad programs, international students, faculty training, international scholars, and community activities. Recognizing this conceptualization can lead to more effective organizational and programmatic implementation of goals and programs.

Ji-Yeung Jang (2009)⁹ This study investigates the relationship between internationalization and higher education quality. It uses data from various sources and uses correlation and regression analysis. The research variables include international students, U.S. study abroad, internationalized faculty, scholars, research activities, curriculum, and organizational support. The results show a

⁸ MAURICE HARARI (1992) Chapter 4 The Internationalization of the Curriculum - BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED362112.pdf#page=63>

⁹ Ji-Yeung Jang (2009) Analysis of the Relationship between Internationalization and the Quality of Higher Education



positive relationship between internationalization and higher education quality. Internationalized students have a significant effect on all quality variables, while internationalized faculty and scholars enhance advanced training competitiveness and financial stability.

Singh (2012)¹⁰ Higher education has become a crucial part of the globalized economy, but it faces immense challenges. Rapid cross-national flows of people, goods, capital, and information may dissolve the nation-state and push institutions into a common mold. Globalization offers both benefits and threats to stable higher education systems. Advanced economies have an advantage due to their preparation, while others are caught in the trap without proper preparation.

Palmer (2012)¹¹ The study explores Korean universities' internationalization policies, focusing on power dynamics and the need for Westernization. It examines Korean values and traditions, contrasting them with Western theories, and aims to understand the competitive globalized twenty-first century.

Objectives of the study as follows:

- To achieve cultural enrichment,
- To attain a Global Perspective and Cross-cultural Understanding,
- Ethical leadership and Personal development,
- Professional Excellence, and
- Peace and Harmony in the Universe.

Cultural Enrichment: Incorporating spiritual and moral learning helps students connect with the rich cultural heritage of India. It provides them with insights into

¹⁰ Singh, Mithilesh Kumar. "Challenges of globalization on Indian higher education." *Apeejay-Stya Education Research Foundation, New Delhi*. Accessed on 29 (2012).

¹¹ Palmer, J.D., Cho, Y.H. South Korean higher education internationalization policies: perceptions and experiences. *Asia Pacific Educ. Rev.* **13**, 387–401 (2012).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-012-9204-2>



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ancient wisdom traditions and philosophical perspectives that have shaped Indian society and civilization.

Unveiling the Foundations- Introduce students to foundational texts like Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, or religious epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. Analyzing the ethical and spiritual themes in these works provides a window into India's philosophical and religious traditions.

Moral Codes- Explore Dharmic principles like Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), and Karma (action-reaction). Discussing their application in real-life scenarios fosters a deeper understanding of Indian societal values.

Engaging with Traditions- Analyze classical art forms, dance, music, and literature through the lens of spirituality and morality. This helps students appreciate the cultural significance of these art forms and their connection to religious beliefs.

Guest Lectures: Invite scholars of religion, philosophy, and history to discuss the evolution of spiritual and moral thought in India. This exposure provides a broader context for understanding the cultural heritage.

Meditation and Yoga - Offer courses or workshops on meditation and yoga. These practices promote self-awareness, inner peace, and ethical conduct, all central aspects of Indian spiritual traditions.

Service Learning- Incorporate service-learning projects that connect students with social issues and encourage them to apply moral principles to real-world problems. This fosters a sense of social responsibility, a core value in Indian culture.

Critical Analysis- Encourage students to critically analyze historical events and social structures through the lens of morality and ethics. This approach fosters a nuanced understanding of India's past and its connection to the present.



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Debates and Discussions- Host debates and discussions on contemporary social issues in light of traditional moral values. This equips students to navigate the complexities of modern life while drawing upon their cultural heritage.

Global Perspective: In an increasingly interconnected world, understanding diverse cultural and moral perspectives is crucial. By integrating spiritual and moral learning, Indian higher education can offer students a broader global perspective, fostering tolerance, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding.

Unique Cultural Lens- Indian traditions and philosophies offer a rich tapestry of spiritual and moral thought. Integrating these into the curriculum allows students to analyze global issues through a unique lens, fostering a deeper understanding of different approaches.

Appreciating Diversity- Exposure to diverse ethical and spiritual perspectives can foster tolerance and empathy. By studying and discussing these differences, students can appreciate the richness of human experience and navigate a world of varied cultures with greater understanding.

Contextualizing Knowledge- Many global issues have moral and spiritual dimensions. By including these aspects in the curriculum, Indian higher education can equip students to grapple with complex challenges holistically, considering not just practicalities but also ethical implications.

Inter-culturally Competent- They can effectively communicate and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds.

Ethical Leadership: Spiritual and moral education instills values such as integrity, compassion, and social responsibility. These qualities are essential for nurturing ethical leaders who can contribute positively to society and address complex global challenges with integrity and empathy.



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Building a Strong Moral Understanding Core Values- Spiritual and moral education explores various ethical frameworks, helping students identify core values like honesty, fairness, and respect. This introspection allows them to develop their moral compass, a crucial foundation for ethical leadership.

Fostering Self-Awareness- Reflection and Self-Critique- Spiritual traditions often emphasize practices like meditation and introspection. These practices can help future leaders become more self-aware, understand their biases, and make decisions that align with their values.

Cultivating Empathy and Understanding- Spiritual and moral teachings often focus on developing compassion for others. By studying different perspectives and understanding the interconnectedness of humanity, leaders can develop empathy and make decisions that consider the well-being of all stakeholders.

Serving a Higher Cause- Many spiritual traditions emphasize a sense of purpose that transcends the individual. This perspective can inspire future leaders to see their role as serving the greater good, fostering social responsibility, and a commitment to the betterment of society.

Role Models and Moral Behavior- Spiritual teachers and ethical leaders serve as powerful role models. Exposure to such figures emphasizes the importance of ethical behavior and the positive impact leaders can have when they live by their values.

Personal Development: Higher education should not only focus on academic knowledge but also holistic personal development. Spiritual and moral learning provides students with tools for self-reflection, inner growth, and emotional well-being, helping them lead fulfilling and purposeful lives.

Greater Self-Awareness and Understanding Values- Through introspection and exploration of different ethical frameworks, students gain a clearer understanding



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of their values and beliefs. This self-awareness allows them to make choices that align with their inner compass, leading to a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Emotional Intelligence- Moral learning often emphasizes empathy and understanding others' perspectives. This fosters emotional intelligence, enabling students to navigate their own emotions and build healthier relationships.

Improved Decision-Making- By developing a strong moral foundation, students are better equipped to make complex decisions. They can weigh options ethically, considering the impact on themselves and others.

Resilience and Integrity- Spiritual traditions often provide tools for coping with challenges and navigating difficult situations. This integration of spiritual and moral learning does not detract from academic rigor but enhances it. Students who develop a strong moral compass and spiritual grounding are often more resilient, creative, and innovative in their academic and professional pursuits.

Enhanced Relationships, Compassion, and Respect- Moral education emphasizes compassion, respect, and understanding. This translates into stronger interpersonal relationships, as students learn to communicate effectively, be more considerate, and build trust with others.

Positive Conflict Resolution- Through exposure to different perspectives, students develop conflict resolution skills. They can approach disagreements with empathy and respect, fostering a more harmonious environment in their personal lives.

Overall Well-being with Reduced Stress and Anxiety- Ethical decision-making and living by one's values can reduce internal conflicts and lead to a greater sense of peace. Spiritual practices like meditation can also contribute to managing stress and promoting mental well-being.



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Meaning and Purpose- Understanding the bigger picture and one's place in the world can be a source of comfort and motivation. Spiritual and moral learning can help students find meaning and purpose in their lives, leading to greater personal fulfillment.

Individual Paths- The impact of spiritual and moral learning will vary depending on individual beliefs and practices. Education should provide a framework for exploration, not impose a specific belief system.

Lifelong Journey- Spiritual and moral development is an ongoing process. The foundation laid during student years can guide individuals throughout their lives as they continue to learn and grow.

Stimulating Peace and Harmony: In a world marked by social and political tensions, education plays a critical role in promoting peace and harmony. Spiritual teachings emphasize principles of non-violence, tolerance, and harmony, which can contribute to building a more peaceful and inclusive society.

- **Cultivating Empathy and Understanding:** By exploring different ethical frameworks and spiritual traditions, students can see the world through another's eyes. This fosters empathy and understanding, reducing prejudice and promoting tolerance.

Appreciating Diversity- Exposure to diverse values and beliefs creates an appreciation for the richness of human experience. Students learn to celebrate differences and find common ground, fostering a more inclusive and peaceful environment.

Peaceful Negotiation- Through role-playing and discussions, students can develop skills for peaceful negotiation. They learn to approach disagreements calmly, identify underlying issues, and find win-win solutions.



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Promoting Cooperation and Social Responsibility for the Greater Good- Spiritual traditions often emphasize interconnectedness and the importance of contributing to a better world. This fosters a sense of social responsibility, encouraging students to work together towards common goals and build a more peaceful society.

Enhancement of Professional Excellence: Integrating spiritual and moral learning does not detract from academic rigor but enhances it. Students who develop a strong moral compass and spiritual grounding are often more resilient, creative, and innovative in their academic and professional pursuits.

Enhanced Decision-Making through a strong moral foundation helps professionals make sound decisions, considering not just profitability or efficiency but also the impact on people and the environment. This can lead to more sustainable business practices and responsible leadership.

Improved Leadership Qualities through Integrity and Trust- Spiritual and moral values like honesty and integrity inspire trust among colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. This fosters stronger relationships and creates a more positive work environment.

Effective Communication- Understanding oneself and others is key to effective communication. Moral education emphasizes empathy and respectful communication, which can lead to better collaboration and problem-solving in the workplace.

Enrichment of Work-Life Balance: Spiritual traditions often provide a sense of purpose that transcends one's career. This can help professionals find a healthy balance between work and personal lives, reducing stress and promoting overall well-being.



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Prioritization and Resilience - Moral education can help individuals prioritize what truly matters. This can lead to better time management, reduced stress, and a more resilient approach to challenges in the workplace.

Meeting Global Expectations: As the Indian education system undergoes internationalization, there is a growing recognition of the importance of holistic education that goes beyond academic achievement. By incorporating spiritual and moral learning, Indian universities can align with global expectations for education that foster ethical leadership and social responsibility.

Uniqueness and Rich Heritage- Leverage India's rich tapestry of spiritual and moral traditions like Yoga, Vedanta, and Ahimsa (non-violence) in the curriculum. This offers a unique perspective on ethics and well-being, attracting international students and enhancing India's soft power.

Global Relevance- Emphasize universal values like compassion, respect, and environmental responsibility. This resonates with a global audience and positions India as a leader in holistic education.

Developing Intercultural Competence- Education that integrates diverse spiritual and moral perspectives fosters understanding and respect for different cultures. This equips students to navigate an interconnected world effectively.

Challenges and Considerations - Sensitivity and Inclusivity- It's crucial to present spiritual and moral education sensitively and inclusively, respecting diverse backgrounds and avoiding promoting a single belief system. Focus on core values that transcend specific religions.

Quality and Standards- Develop a well-structured curriculum with qualified teachers to ensure the quality and effectiveness of spiritual and moral education. This will gain international credibility and attract students seeking a holistic learning experience.

Strategies for Implementation: Teacher Training- Provide training programs for educators on effectively integrating spiritual and moral values into their teaching without religious bias.

Experiential Learning- Incorporate practices like meditation, mindfulness, and service learning projects to foster experiential learning and personal growth.

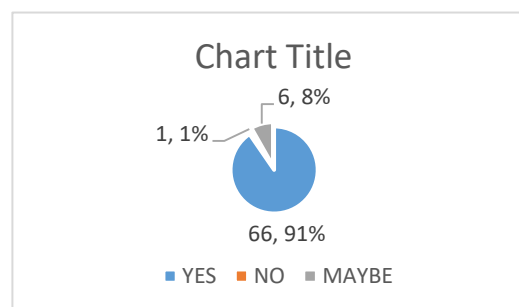
Global Partnerships and Collaborate with international educational institutions to develop exchange programs and joint curriculum initiatives that explore diverse ethical frameworks.

Methodology- Data collection through Google form

73 professors participated in the data collection process. They opined free and fair opinions on spiritual and moral learning in higher education to meet the internationalization of The Indian education system.

Moral and Spiritual Learning was more prioritized in the ancient education system of India.

YES	NO	MAYBE
66	1	6

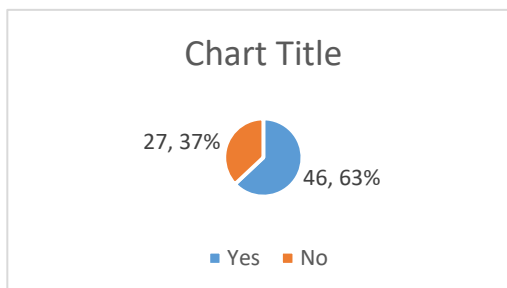


Out of 73, 91% of the professors accepted the ancient education giving much priority to spiritual and moral learning which shows the significance of spiritual and moral learning in higher education.

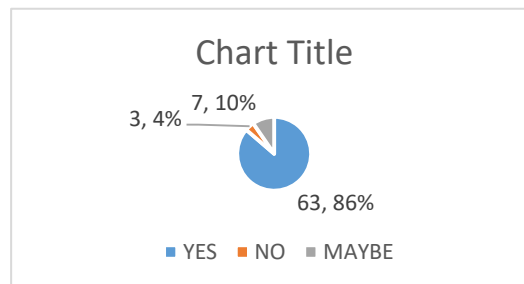
Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) play a vital role in bringing spiritual values into their curriculum

Do you feel HEIs should bring moral learning as a part of their curriculum

Yes	No
46	27



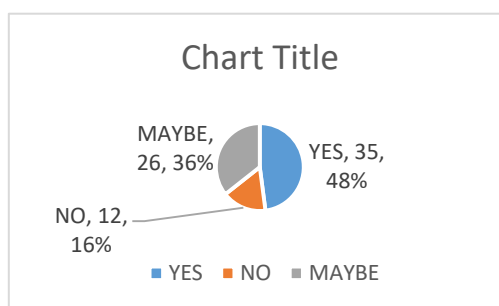
YES	NO	MAYBE
63	3	7



The HEI's role in matters of spiritual and moral learning is very vital, 86% of professors proposed to bring spiritual and moral learning into higher education.

Are HEIs responsible for not including spiritual learning in their curriculum?

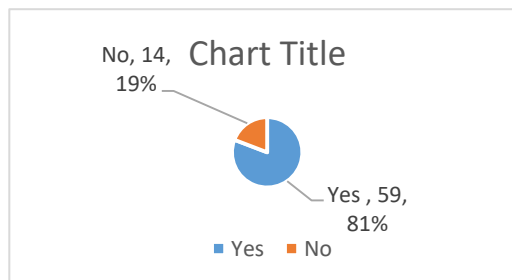
YES	NO	MAYBE
35	12	26



Are you aware of the Nalanda and Thakshashila Universities in India

Will moral and Spiritual learning in HEIs help in enhancing the student's ethical behavior

Yes	No
59	14

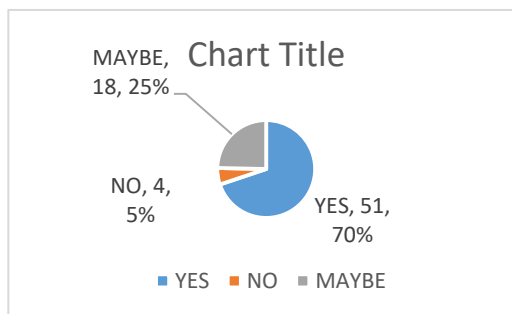


The oldest universities which were given priority in spiritual and moral learning in ancient days, it enhanced the quality of the learning community and spread the glory of India throughout the Universe.

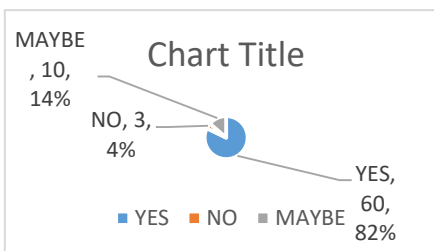
HEIs should frame their curriculum spiritually thought-provoking through Yoga sutras (Patanjali Yoga Sutras) to enhance the mental stability of the students

Your opinion on introducing Yoga Sutras for the duration of two hours in a week for all the courses across the country.

YES	NO	MAYBE
51	4	18



YES	NO	MAYBE
60	3	10

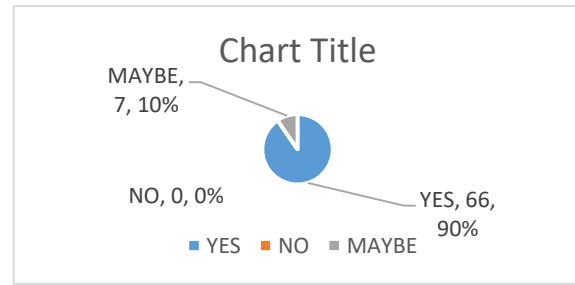


The role of Patanjali Yoga Sutras will enhance the student community to realize their potential for internal quality and make five-layer awareness Annamaya

(Physical body), Pranamaya (Pranic body), Manomaya(Mind Sheath), Vignanamaya(Intuition and Intellect) and Anandamaya koshas (Blissful state). These sheaths are addressed at various levels their parameters for each level have one technique.

Whether moral and spiritual learning lead students become a environmental friendly

YES	NO	MAYBE
66	0	7



The do's and don'ts of Patanjali Yoga Sutras (Yama and Niyamas) would bring awareness and enlightenment on how best we submerge with the Panchabhuthas i.e. Agni, Vayu, Jala, Pruthivi, and Akash.

In conclusion, integrating spiritual and moral learning into higher education is not only relevant but also essential for the internationalization of the Indian education system. It enriches students' educational experiences, equipping them with the values, perspectives, and skills needed to thrive in a diverse and interconnected world.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत्।
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