Exploring the varieties of moral and spiritual education in India: Implications for adolescents’ spiritual development

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School as a fundamental context of human development

- The whole child
  - Motivation to learn
  - Social-emotional well-being and distress
  - Educational life-paths
  - Culture and student identity development
  - Moral and spiritual identity development

- The whole teacher
  - Relation of work and classroom environments
  - Views of student mental health
  - Learning about adolescent development

- Educational environments
  - Psychological climates
  - Cultural practices
Talk Purposes

- Present a conceptualization of self / identity and its relation to school as a context of development

- Present data on associations between different secondary schools in India, with their unique approaches to moral and spiritual education, and dimensions of adolescents’ developing spiritual identities
Why Spirituality, Schooling & India?

**Spirituality as a**
- Fundamental domain of human development (integrally related to culture and ethnicity)

**School as a**
- Fundamental context of holistic development

**India’s**
- Integral view of motivation, education and spirituality
- Unique forms of pedagogy
- Ethic of religious tolerance
- Challenge of post-colonialism and globalization
What is self / identity?

What is spiritual identity?

How can schools shape adolescents’ identities?
Basic Aspects of Self-in-Context (BASIC) Model
Roeser, Peck & Nasir (2006)

I. Level of individual
   (I-self, me-selves, personal narrative, emotions and moods)

II. Level of social interaction
    (Embodied identities)

III. Level of social institutions
     (Institutional and social group identities)
BASIC Model and Spirituality

- **Institutional and social group identities**
  - Self-identified / assigned religious affiliations

- **Embodied identities**
  - Engagement in religious / spiritual practices

- **I-self and Me-selves**
  - Self-regulatory capacities (attention and emotion regulation)
  - Representational (symbolic / iconic) beliefs / worldviews

- Organizational Philosophy
- Leadership
- Cultural Practices & Social Interaction
- Role Relationships
- Curriculum
- Meanings about self, learning, and life

Contexts

Individual Appraisals
School as Context of Identity Development: “The How of Learning”

- Ideational framing
- Role modeling
- Contingency management
- Structured apprenticeships

Cultural Practices & Social Interaction

Meanings about self, learning, and life
School as Context of Identity Development: “The Why of Motivation”

- Fosters belonging?
- Supports autonomy?
- Promotes competence?
- Is relevant to “whole person”?
QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Collaborators from University of Pune:

Yogita Hastak
Mrinalini Rao
Mukti Shah
Sunit Bhatewara
Ayesha Gonsalves
Ruhi Berry
Fulbright Study Design and Sample

- Cross-sectional, school-based study
- Focus on early adolescents (7th - 9th graders)
- Urban middle class individuals
- Six private English-medium schools in Pune, India
  [2 Hindu Schools, 2 Christian Schools, and 2 Control Schools]
- Surveys, interviews, focus groups (verbal data)
  N = 1497 surveys (open + closed ended measures)
  N = 270 students interviewed in 35 focus groups
  N = 12 teacher and 6 principal interviews
- Video and observation (visual data)
- School Documents (historical-archival data)
Cultural Considerations

- Samples limited to English-medium schools
- Creation of multi-lingual, multi-religious Indian research team
- Translation / back translation of surveys
- Use of open-ended survey measures
- Use of established cross-cultural survey measures
- Conduct of focus groups and interviews
- Observation, video and archival data sources
- Collection of Indian scholarly articles on research topics
- Personal familiarity with spiritual traditions of India
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Percent of Country</th>
<th>Percent of Sample</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>1299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jain</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 1450</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Standard</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>483</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Standard</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Standard</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>476</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 1497</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>816</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 1496</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question

How can one operationalize a multidimensional view of spiritual identity during adolescence?
Representational Spiritual Identity I

Closed-ended Forced-choice and Likert measures

- **Self-identification as member of religious group**

- **Self-identification as religious / spiritual person**
  - I consider myself a religious/spiritual person
    (yes/no)
  - I consider myself a religious person.
    (1 = not at all true, 5 = very true)
  - I consider myself a spiritual person.
    (1 = not at all true, 5 = very true)
Representational Spiritual Identity II

Closed-ended Likert measures

- **Spirituality as core life value** *(Kasser, 1996)*
  - I will find satisfying religious and/or spiritual activities
  - I will find personal answers to universal spiritual questions (such as: Is there a supreme spiritual being? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life?)
  - I will find religious or spiritual beliefs that help me make sense of the world.
  - My life and actions will be in agreement with my religious/spiritual beliefs.
  - I will find religious and/or spiritual beliefs that are growth-producing.

- **Self-worth contingent on God’s love** *(Crocker, 2003)*
  - My self-worth is based on God's love.
  - I feel worthwhile when I have God's love.
  - My self-esteem goes up when I feel that God loves me.
Representational Spiritual Identity III

Open-ended sentence completion task

For me, spirituality is...

Content Coding of Responses (meaning)
- Non-responses (23%)
- Aschematic responses (I don’t know - 21%)
- Schematic responses (9 content categories - 56%)

Count of Responses (verbal fluency / cognitive saliency)
- Number of coded responses
Content Coding of Youth Responses:
For me, spirituality is...

- Aschematic ("I don't know") 22%
- Life of Faith 19%
- Source of Well-being 14%
- Contemplative view / Quest 14%
- Rejection of Spirituality 10%
- Relationship with God 7%
- Source and Practice of Morality 7%
- Doing Practices 6%
- Synonymous with Religion 2%

N = 1153
Aschematic (22%)

“I have never thought about this thing.”
(14 yr. old female)

“Not sure.” (15 yr. old male)

Life of Faith (19%) ♂

“Having faith in God, believing that there is an invisible force that commands our lives.”
(15 yr old female)

“Being faithful to God.”
(15 yr old female)
Source of well-being (14%)

“Peace of mind” (14 yr. old female)
“Joy and happiness” (15 yr. old male)

Contemplative view / Quest (14%)

“Myself and the God within me that is myself”
(14 yr. old male)

“To understand and know the God within us”
(15 yr. old female)

“It is freedom of soul and not the prayer of an idol. It is inside myself.” (15 yr. old female)
Rejection of spirituality (10%)

“Crap! I don't care about it. I don't even know if God exists” (15 yr. old male)

“Like taking in a useless medicine capsule”
“Like a well without water to fall in”
(14 yr old males)

Relationship with God (7%)

“Loving and serving God” (15 yr. old female)

“Treating God as a friend & talking to him casually.”
(15 yr. old male)
### Embodied Spiritual Identity

#### Closed-ended Likert measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Practices</th>
<th>Percent “Never”</th>
<th>Percent “Daily”</th>
<th>Average (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal prayer / meditation</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>3.92 (1.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek God’s support</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3.47 (1.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to services</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3.23 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Females more*

N = 1280

For average scale ratings:
1 = never, 2 = yearly, 3 = monthly, 4 = weekly, 5 = daily
Factor Analytic Results: Spiritual Identity Components

### Factor Pattern Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Analytic Results: Spiritual Identity Components</th>
<th>Emergent Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centrality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider myself a religious person (continuous)</td>
<td>.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring religion/spirituality into all aspects of life (continuous)</td>
<td>.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion is source of comfort in my life (continuous)</td>
<td>.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider myself a spiritual person (continuous)</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider myself a religious/spiritual person (dichotomous)</td>
<td>.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Worth Contingent on God's Love</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality as core life value</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of private prayer / meditation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of seeking spiritual support for problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified religious affiliation (Hindu or other)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of coded meanings of &quot;spirituality&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


aRotation converged in 7 iterations.

Cronbach’s Alpha: 0.84, 0.39
## Bivariate Correlations: Spiritual Identity Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrality of spiritual identity</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience of spirituality</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement in spiritual practices</td>
<td>.40*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 1239; * p < .01
I-Self Processes

- **Attentional regulation**
  
  (Derryberry, 2001)

  - Directing of attention (agency / will)
  
  - Sustaining of attention (will-power)

- **Emotional regulation**

  (Peterson et al., 1983)
Summary: Spiritual Identity

Me-self
- Centrality of spirituality to self
- Salience of spirituality
- Meaning of spirituality
- Self-identified religious affiliation

I-self
- Attentional and emotional control

Embodiment
- Engagement in spiritual practices
Do dimensions of adolescents’ spiritual identities vary as a function of the particular philosophical and pedagogical approaches to moral and spiritual education their school espouses and attempts to realize in practice?
School Types in Study

- **Control Schools**
  - Values education
  - Daily Hindu prayers from the Vedas to begin/end day
  - Infrequent community-wide assemblies with focus on prayer / meditation
  - Hatha (physical) yoga

- **Hindu and Christian Schools**
  - Two Hindu schools modeled on ancient Gurukula system
    - Values education
    - Daily community-wide assemblies with focus on meditation / recitation
    - Additional rituals / initiations
    - Service events with the poor
    - Hatha (physical) yoga
    - Self-realization and selfless service as core aims
  
  - Two Christian schools modeled on Jesuit education system
    - Values education / Catechism
    - Daily Christian prayers to begin/end day
    - Infrequent community-wide assemblies with focus on prayer / meditation
    - Service events with the poor
    - Hatha (physical) yoga
    - Development of relationship with God and selfless service as core aims
Brief Event History of Education in India

• 1526 – 1857 Mughal Dynasty in India
  Madrasas (religious) education for Muslims
  Ancient Gurukula (religious) education for Hindus

• 1500s Portuguese establish colonies in India
  1542 Jesuit education originates in Goa, West India
  1717 Christian missionary education spreads (secular & religious)

• 1600s Dutch and English arrive in India
  1835 Lord Macaulay establishes English-medium schools
  1854 Wood’s Despatch – Magna Carta of English Education in India
  1858 India under British rule

• 1947 Indian Independence
Gurukula System

- Education with spiritual teacher away from home (males, ages 7-21)
- Strong teacher-student bonds
- Cultural and spiritual initiations
- Recitation, memorization, and understanding of Vedas
- Expertise in conducting Vedic ceremonies and rituals
- Meditation and self-inquiry
- Seva (selfless service)
Swami Muktananda Vedashala
Satara, India

• Residential school for boys ages 6 to 21 years to become Brahmin priests

• Shri Vivek Godbole and Shri Swami Chidvilasananda are teachers who give cultural/spiritual initiations

• Curriculum is the recitation, memorization, and understanding of the Krishna Yajur-Veda

• Instruction in the form of practical education: Performance of monthly *Full Moon Yagna* (fire ceremony for peace)

• Meditation and self-inquiry
World View of St. Ignatius of Loyola:
Founder of Christian (Jesuit) Education in India

From the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions

1. God is creator, the Supreme Goodness - Absolute reality.
2. Every human person is loved by God. This calls for a response in freedom.
3. Sin is a reality and it blocks our freedom to respond spontaneously. We are strengthened by the redeeming love of God to engage in an ongoing struggle against sin.
4. Jesus is the model for human life. He is alive and active.
5. Response is an active commitment to Christ and to his mission.
6. This response is in and through the Church
7. Not only as individuals but as community of persons working in service - friends in the Lord.
Forms of Christian Education

(From School Materials)

St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit Order

Jesuit schools strive to form students as “men-for-others,” citizens with a deep religious faith, which will impel them to seek and find God in service of their fellowman.

St. Claudine Thevenet and the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary

Claudine’s ideal was to make God known and loved by means of Christian Education in all social milieux. This ideal remains the Aim of the Congregation with the preference, inherited from the Foundress, for the Young and the Poor.
School Names & Mottos

**Hindu Schools**
- House of the Guru = “Discovering inner strength”
- Source of Wisdom = “Motivating intelligence for social change”

**Christian Schools**
- Male Christian saint = “Men for others”
- Male Christian saint = “Count not the cost of giving”

**Control Schools**
- School for National Laboratory = “Knowledge is power”
- Goddess of learning = None
Differences in Relational Terms for Addressing Teachers

- **Familial Terms of Respect**
  - Hindu Schools
    - Kaku (aunty) and Kaka (uncle)
    - Tai (elder sister) and Dada (elder brother)

- **Formal Terms of Respect**
  - Christian & Control Schools
    - Miss / Sir
    - Father / Sister (religious senses)
Hypotheses

Religious vs. control schools will be associated with greater verbal fluency / cognitive saliency among adolescents concerning what spirituality is but will not necessarily influence the centrality of spirituality in their lives.

Hindu schools emphasis on contemplative pedagogical practices and teachings (like meditation) will be associated with adolescents’ sense that spirituality involves a quest for divinity within and with greater self-regulatory control.

Christian schools emphasis on pedagogical practices like prayer will be associated with adolescents’ sense that spirituality involves issues of faith and a relationship to God.

Adolescent students in Hindu and Christian schools will report greater understanding of the spiritual practices that they are asked to participate in compared to students in control schools, though some degree of resistance to such practices will exist in all schools.
Significant School Differences: Saliency of / fluency about spirituality

χ² (4,1490) = 91.52 ***
Control < Hindu & Christian

ANCOVA controlling for sex, grade, religion and English proficiency also shows statistically significant school effect
School Differences:
Salient Meanings of Spirituality Differentiating Control Schools

F (2, 1045) = 45.61, p < .001
Control > Hindu & Christian

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES

- Percentage of Youth

- Hindu Schools
- Christian Schools
- Control Schools

I don't know
School Differences:
Youth Self-reported English Language Proficiency
(Understand, read, speak, write)

F (2, 1477) = 113.47, p < .001
Hindu < Control < Christian

2 = Not Very Well, 4 = Very Well
School Differences:
Centrality of spirituality to self

F (2, 1237) = 0.71, p = .49

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES
Hindu School Missions

“…to enable children to discover their inner strengths and grow up to be responsible citizens of the country…”

“…to awaken intellectual, physical, and spiritual potential in our youth and develop them into integrated individuals committed to making positive contributions to the development of their motherland.”
School Differences: Salient Meanings of Spirituality Differentiating Hindu Schools

F (2, 1045) = 10.69, p < .001
Hindu > Christian, Control

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES

- Hindu Schools
- Christian Schools
- Control Schools
Christian Educational Missions

“… form students with deep religious faith, which will impel them *to seek and find God in service of their fellowmen.*”

“…to *make God known and loved* by means of Christian Education…to equip students not only with intellectual skills and knowledge but also with a set of attitudes imbued with social, moral, and spiritual values.”
F (2, 1045) = 31.40, p < .001  
Christian > Hindu, Control  
Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES  

School Differences:  
Salient Meanings of Spirituality Differentiating Christian Schools  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Youth</th>
<th>Hindu Schools</th>
<th>Christian Schools</th>
<th>Control Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Differences:
Salient Meanings of Spirituality Differentiating
Hindu & Christian vs. Control Schools

F (2,1045) = 13.24; p < .001
F (2,1045) = 13.12; p < .001
Christian & Hindu > Control

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES
School Differences:
Frequency of engagement in personal spiritual practices

F (2, 1330) = 28.42; p < .001
Christian > Hindu & Control

6 = 2-3 times a month
7 = Nearly weekly
8 = weekly

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES
I-Self Education

…the faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.... An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about. (p. 424).

- William James
1890
Mauna (Silent Meditation)
English-Medium Hindu School, Pune, Maharashtra, India
What happens during meditation?

Stage 1 – Calming down and coming inside
Encounter with the unsteadiness / restlessness of the mind as one turns within. Often a time when individuals’ feel “I can’t meditate.”

Stage 2 – Self-reflection and planning
Initial directing of the stream of thought/feeling to specific issues.

Stage 3 – Concentration practice
Gradual ability to bring consciousness to a single point and sustaining it there for some time. This is associated with refreshment and relaxation.

Stage 4 – Mindfulness practice
Development of capacity for sustained concentration of awareness. This is associated with the expansion of “will power,” the disclosing of intuitive understanding and an abiding peace of mind.
School Differences:
Youth reports: Self-regulatory processes

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES

F (1, 207) = 15.90  \( p < .001 \)

F (1, 207) = 0.22  \( p = .64 \)

Hindu schools (n = 2)
Control school (n = 1)
School Differences: Beliefs about the nature of intelligence

- Hindu schools (n = 2)
- Control school (n = 1)

Controlling for sex, grade, religion and SES

F (1, 207) = 9.92, p < .002
F (1, 207) = 0.02, p = .90
School Differences:
Possible Selection Factors

- **Raised in a religious tradition?**
  - Hindu Schools
  - Christian Schools
  - Control Schools
  - No differences

- **Cumulative Academic Grades**
  - Hindu Schools
  - Christian Schools
  - Control Schools
  - No differences

- **Frequency of prayer in home**
  - Hindu Schools
  - Christian Schools
  - Control Schools
  - No differences

- **SES: Sum of 4 commodities**
  - Hindu Schools
  - Christian Schools
  - Control Schools
  - No differences, Christian > Hindu, Controls

6 = Monthly, 8 = Weekly, 10 = Daily
Conclusions

- Spirituality can be conceptualized in relation to self/identity (I and me)

- Spiritual identities are like other forms of identity in adolescence - they are educable and develop in social contexts over time

- Schools, through historically-conditioned ideologies, daily practices and related social interactions in-form students’ I- and me-selves

- I-self education may be an important non-sectarian form of spiritual education that has manifold benefits for individuals and society
Thank you

Questions?