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Need of Spiritual Awareness among Prospective Teachers: A Conceptual Study

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1. Introduction

Education isn't just about being smarter in the 21st century. It's also about creating people that are responsible, caring, aware of themselves. This is a transformative process and teachers are key in that process. As the demands of Teachers become more complex, the traditional focus on cognitive skills and subject matter can no longer be enough. The urgent need for the holistic development of prospective teachers, in their moral, ethical, emotional and spiritual dimensions, is highlighted. Spiritual awareness is an inclusive, secular concept which emphasises emotional balance, mindfulness, empathy and the idea of having a purposeful life. It develops the ethical responsibility and human connexion necessary to the teaching profession. Spiritual learners are particularly important for prospective teachers to foster as it shapes their identity, their values and the way in which they approach education. A spiritually grounded teacher is trained to overcome classroom challenges, connect with different students and create an inclusive and respectful learning environment based on sympathy.

Yet spiritual development is largely neglected in mainstream teacher education programmes. Technical proficiency, content knowledge and measurable competencies are most emphasised in most curricula. The integration of spiritual awareness into teacher education is justified in this paper as essential to developing holistic, morally responsible and flexible teachers. The meaning of spiritual awareness and its influence on teacher development is explored through the conceptual analysis. Related literature and educational policy are also reviewed to show how spirituality fits with the broader goals of holistic education.

This paper attempts to contribute to a topic that has become increasingly discussed in favour of the integration of personal development and emotional intelligence in teacher preparation. And it underscores the importance of understanding spiritual development as a foundation pillar of the professional competence of educators.

2. Conceptualizing Spiritual Awareness

Spiritual awareness is a complicated but important element of human growth and is especially important in the context of education. This also means a deeper connection to oneself, others, and the wider human experience. Sometimes, it is misunderstood or construed in a narrow sense with religious boundaries. Spiritual awareness as it applies to teacher education is the ability to reflect on one's, to practise mindfulness, to act empathically, and to live a purposeful, honest life.

Self-discovery is the first step on the path to spiritual consciousness for aspiring educators. It entails posing important queries, such as: Who am I? What sort of educator do I want to



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become? Intentional professional practice is founded on this self-examination. Authenticity, resilience, and moral clarity are more likely to be displayed in the work of educators who are in tune with their inner selves.

Empathy is a vital talent in diverse classrooms, nourished by spiritual awareness, as the teacher is constantly trying to understand the emotional states of the students, so they are able to connect with the inner world of the students. In this safe setting, all students will feel noticed, appreciated, and respected. Moreover, spiritual awareness allows aspiring educators to deal with disagreement with empathy, promote collaboration rather than rivalry, and act as a moral role model in daily interactions.

Mindfulness, or paying painful attention to the present moment, with composure, acceptance, and an open, non-judgmental mindset, is another key element of spiritual awareness. Teachers who practise mindfulness will be better able to manage stress, maintain composure, and regulate their emotions. Mindfulness also assists kids to be more patient and focused, two skills that are important when they are dealing with the ever-changing classroom. This gives educators the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences, to learn from them, and to use difficult times to advance their careers.

Teachers who are spiritually conscious have a conviction that teaching is a meaningful profession where they help others, care for others and make a good difference are more inspired, motivated and committed. Without this feeling they disengage and teach in a boring way. Practice can help to grow spiritually. It's not innate. Simple activities such as telling a story, creating art or working in nature can help future educators better understand themselves. These activities help individuals find purpose in their own lives and they also promote deep thinking and effectiveness as teachers.

A nation like India is home to people from a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. Spirituality is unaware that it is not associated with any one religion. Respect for one another and peaceful coexistence are facilitated by this open and values-based spirituality. Teaching becomes more compassionate, equitable, and emotionally resilient when teachers are spiritual. Building a peaceful society is made possible by these teachers' ability to connect with kids from diverse backgrounds.

As a result, developing spiritual awareness in teacher education involves more than just studying concepts. It also involves key learning exercises that assist aspiring educators in reflecting on their own values, morality, and emotional control. If spiritual awareness is thoughtfully incorporated, it can help teachers develop personally and become more effective mentors or educators.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study's assumption is that real education should be used to develop a person's inner self, thoughts, feelings, and social skills. Grades and knowledge are often the top concerns in classrooms these days. They fail to support pupils' personal growth. The main arguments in support of including spiritual awareness in teacher preparation are discussed in this section. These ideas come from constructivism in humanistic education and emotional intelligence.



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3.1 Humanistic Education

Thinkers such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow influenced humanistic education. It states that education ought to support an individual's overall development. Teachers support children by boosting their self-esteem, assisting them in making decisions, and helping them discover their life's meaning and purpose.

Spirituality is significant in this context because it enables students to examine themselves and live their own lives. According to Maslow, becoming the best version of oneself involves having exceptional times when you feel connected to people and have a sense of purpose, both of which are spiritual emotions. For aspiring educators, the ministerial method demonstrates that spiritual growth ought to be a component of teacher education by supporting the importance of understanding oneself, being kind and generous, and developing personally.

3.2 Constructivist Philosophy

Jean piaget and Lev Vygotsky were a few of the thinkers who developed constructivism. It is a way to understand how people learn. Based on the idea that people learn through doing, talking to others, and reflecting on their own experience rather than absorbing facts. Activities like journaling, sharing stories and class discussions help students learn more and feel more aware of their own ideas and feelings.

Constructivism believes that aspiring teachers are active learners who may generate their own understanding by drawing on their own personal experiences and feelings as well as lectures and memorising of information. This type of learning aligns well with spirituality, but goes beyond the discovery of life's meanings. When future educators examine their values, feelings, and moral dilemmas, they will become sincere, compassionate, and perceptive professionals.

3.3 Theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence (EI) enables people to understand how they deal with their own emotions, as well as those of others. Five key components of EI are discussed by him: 1) Self-awareness, the ability to recognise and understand your own feelings. 2) Self-regulation, the ability to control your emotions. 3) Motivation, the ability to stay on track and be positive. 4) Empathy, the ability to understand how others feel. and 5) Social skills, the ability to get along with others is called social skills. Spiritual awareness supports these skills; the spiritually aware educator might manage the classroom well, resolve conflicts well, and care more about their pupils. A teacher's character and job are the moral and emotional cornerstone of their spirituality.

3.4 Integrated Application

Constructivism, humanism, and emotional intelligence in combination give us a powerful and complete framework for understanding the importance of spirituality in teacher education. Humanism allows us to see people for what they are and who they are and for their personal development. Experiential learning is offered to us by the teaching methodology of constructivism, and emotional intelligence transforms spiritual values into practical social and emotional competencies. In short, this integrated theory makes the case that spiritual awareness



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is not only a quality but also a necessary component of being a good, compassionate teacher. India's national education strategy 2020 also reinforces these views.

4. Why Spiritual Awareness Matters in Teacher Education

Teaching is not just about sharing the knowledge from a book. Teachers shape students' lives. They give pupils guidance on how they should think and how they should relate to each other. This is why spiritual awareness is so important in teacher preparation. In its turn, it helps future educators become better professionals and good people. They also assist them in creating a classroom that is safe, fair, and compassionate for all of the students.

4.1 Promoting Internal Consistency

Emotional resilience is the main benefit of spiritual consciousness. In addition to the demands of their coursework, incoming teachers also have to deal with the social and emotional strain of student interactions and the hardship of fieldwork. With meditation, self-control, and inner peace, a spiritually vibrant teacher would be more equipped to manage such challenges. Emotionally balanced to allow for clear classroom/individual management, patience, and logical judgment.

4.2 Guiding Ethical Conduct

Teaching is a moral enterprise by its very nature. On a daily basis, teachers are called upon to make decisions that involve fairness, honesty, care, and respect. Spiritual knowledge will expand one's moral direction by constantly stimulating reflection on values, behaviours, and motives. Spiritually centered teachers are more apt to be role models in terms of being truthful, humble, and accountable. They care about the values that underpin public service and do their best to practice what they preach.

4.3 Fostering Empathy and Compassion

Empathy is one of the fundamentals of good teaching. It gives teachers a way to relate to students' individual experiences and difficulties. Character development supports this construct by fostering sensitivity to others' feelings and viewpoints. "Compassionate, understanding teachers provide a safe, caring classroom in which all children are valued and heard, creating an environment that promotes emotional and cognitive growth.

4.4 Building Important Relationships

The key ingredients in building strong teacher student and peer relationships are openness, trust and respect that encourages by spiritual awareness. These relationships helps to co-operate, reduce behavioural issues, and improve learning outcomes. Teacher should communicate with sincerity and listen actively to the students .Then they can effectively understand student needs and can support to their holistic development.

4.5 Encouraging Reflective Growth

Reflection is in the heart of the spiritual practice and professional improvement. Teacher who are spiritually aware evaluate their own beliefs, biases and behaviours continuously.



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This introspective process promotes humility, lifelong learning, and supports adaptive teaching, allowing teachers to adjust strategies based on students' feedback, effective classroom, and evolving educational demands.

4.6 Promoting the Holistic Education

Spiritually aware teachers focus on the full development of the child beyond grades and assessments. Holistic education recognizes the social, emotional, and moral dimensions of learners. Offering a more enriching and meaningful educational experience, Spiritually aware teachers value creativity, critical thinking, and emotional expression.

4.7 Improve Professional Identity

Spiritual awareness plays a major role in helping prospective teachers form a strong and clear professional identity. It clarifies their vision for education and motivation for teaching. This sense of direction promotes job satisfaction, commitment, and professional integrity.

4.8 Contributing to Social Harmony

Teachers must model respect and inclusivity in diverse and pluralistic societies. Spiritual awareness promote open minded approach that values diversity. That type of teachers are instrumental in cultivating environments contribute to a more empathetic and peaceful society.

5. Obstacles to Integration in Teacher Training Programs

Spiritual awareness is a vital component of teacher preparation. But it's Integration into teacher education programs are limited .There are many practical, cultural and international barriers hinder it's adoption. Because of theses challenges, spiritual awareness is often left out or not given much importance. To truly include spiritual awareness in teacher training, we need to understand these problems and find good ways to overcome them.

5.1 Confusion Between Spiritual and Religion

One of the most important obstacles is people confuse spirituality with religion. Many institutions often worry if they include spiritual ideas, it might seem like they are supporting one religion over others. This misunderstanding could go against rules about keeping education secular. In this study, spirituality means something open and welcoming to everyone, not linked to any one religion.

5.2 Lack of Structured Curriculum

Another major obstacle is that there are no properly designed and research-based topics in teacher training programs that focus on spiritual development. Most teacher education programs emphasize pedagogical content and assessment methods for students. They rarely talk about inner growth or value-based education. Because there is no clear set of rules, integrating spirituality into the course is often an afterthought or only done by a few teachers on their own.

5.3 Inadequately Trained Teachers



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Many teachers have not been trained to facilitate spiritual learning. They may not be prepared, purposeful, or unsure about driving discussions on self-direction, empathy, and ethical dilemmas. As a result, these courses are often neglected or not taken seriously, limiting their impact on pre-service teachers.

5.4 Overemphasis on Measurable Results

Modern Education Systems often give priority to measurable skills and competencies, such as standardized test results, technical content, and capacity. This result is a "performance-centric" culture that side lines important human qualities like mindfulness, moral thinking, and emotional strength. Since spiritual awareness is hard to measure, people often think it does not matter or is not important.

5.5. Time Constraints in Teacher Training

Teacher training programs are usually filled with practical content, leaving little room for reflective or introspective practices. Modules are often overloaded, and the schedules are tight, making it difficult to include activities like journaling, group talks, or helping in the community -all of which support spiritual growth.

5.6 Limited Awareness Among Trainees

Many pre-service teachers, especially those from highly competitive academic environments, may not see the importance of spiritual awareness for their spiritual roles. They often focus more on technical teaching skills and consider spiritual as abstract, idealistic, or not useful. This lack of awareness limits their engagement to personal growth activities, unless these practices are clearly shown to help them in their real classroom situations.

5.7 Sensitivity in Multicultural Classrooms

In culturally and religiously diverse classrooms, talking about Spirituality needs to be done very carefully and respectfully. Institutions often avoid these topics for fear of controversy or be misunderstood. Creating safe and open space can be hard where everyone feels respected, especially if the teachers are not trained to guide such discussion.

5.8 Institutional and Policy Level Gaps

Another big problem is that many schools and teacher training centres don't have clear rules or plans to support Spiritual education. While NEP 2020 talks about holistic education,

implementation at the ground level remains inconsistent. Many institutions don't have strong leaders, clear goals, or enough resources to integrate spiritual components into their

Understanding these problems is the first step toward overcoming them. Instead of dismissing spiritual development as impractical or not useful, teacher training program should explain its meaning, demonstrate its benefits, and carefully include it in their teaching in a way that is thoughtful, inclusive and easy to follow.

6. Strategies to Include Spiritual Awareness in Teacher Training



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To nurture well-rounded future teachers who grow into kind, honest, and emotionally strong, it is essential to purposefully embed spiritual awareness within teacher education programs. This requires more than occasional lectures and demands structured and thoughtful activities that match the needs of different learners. The following strategies offer actionable pathways to make spiritual awareness development a key part of teacher education.

6.1 Support Self-Reflection

The spiritual development is based on self-reflection. Teacher trainees are encouraged to use regular reflective practices such as journaling, asking themselves meaningful questions, or sitting quietly in thought to connect with their inner values, emotions, and motivations. This makes them aware of their own biases, their emotional triggers, and stay true to their professional values in the classroom. Inner learning can be supported in a teacher education programme with activities such as reflection journals, digital storytelling, or writing about real-life classroom experiences.

6.2 Integrate Value Education into the Curriculum

Teacher training should include ethics and character development courses as a regular component. Value education should not be limited to theory, it should have real-life situations, role play, and community. Value education makes the students imbibe the concepts of honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for diversity. In addition, they can examine stories or topics that merge education with philosophy and society topics to learn right and wrong in teaching.

6.3 Foster Community Involvement

Social work and learning through service involvement develop empathy, social responsibility, and emotional intelligence. Helping poor communities, volunteering at local NGOs, or guiding underprivileged children give kids real-life opportunities to show kindness, respect, and support; these experiences make them understand human struggles and create a caring and helpful teacher identity.

6.4 Promote Well-being and Mindfulness

There are ways to incorporate yoga, body scans, breathing techniques and visualisations into normal schedules of teacher preparation programmes. Other exercises trainees can use to remain calm, focused and peaceful are needed for stress management and a composed response in the classroom. Institutions can work with trained counsellors, offer optional wellness programmes or even meditation sessions, to promote mental and emotional well being.

6.5 Set an Example: Faculty Involvement and Mentoring

Teachers and professors have a important role in modelling spiritual values. The way Trainers act honestly, listen carefully, and stay humble powerfully models for aspiring teachers. Mentorship programmes, in which experienced teachers instruct new trainees on how to overcome personal and professional challenges, promote knowledge across generations, and promote personal and moral development.

6.6 Use Arts and Humanities



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From literature, music, visual arts, to history, love, justice, courage, identity, and purpose can be explored. By integrating creative activities into teacher training, students will think about life and emotions in a thoughtful way. Writing poems, thematic art projects, or philosophical discussions on selected texts may be included as activities.

6.7 Encourage Open Dialogue and Inclusive Discussion

Safe spaces for dialogue give students the space to explore their own values, to deal with moral questions and to understand other points of view. Group discussions, workshop on values or friendly talk sessions about ethics can create honest and on judgemental conversation, but everyone should feel respected, safe and heard.

6.8 Support from the Institutions

A teacher training college should not treat spiritual growth as an extra activity. They should make it a regular part of their system. This includes:

- Curriculum reform to include spiritual ideas across subjects.
- Creating ways to measure how students grow in reflection and ethics.
- Faculty training to guide spiritual learning
- Inclusive policies that respect all beliefs and do not force religion.

When institutions truly support spiritual awareness, it becomes a integral part of training teachers. These strategies based on respect and real -life learning, transform teacher education into a meaningful journey that shapes both the heart and the mind.

7. Literature Review

An exploration of existing literature reveals that adding spiritual awareness to education is becoming more important in different areas like- Philosophy, psychology, teacher training and education policies. Even though many formal programs still do not focus much on spiritual growth. Several scholars advocated its inclusion as fundamental components of meaningful education.

Palmer (1998): Parker J. Palmer, in his influential work The Courage to Teach, draws attention to what he calls the teacher's "inner landscape". According to Palmer, effective teaching is not just about knowing facts or using techniques, but about being true to yourself and teaching with honesty and care. He believes that teaching is a human activity that needs the teacher to be brave and reflect on their own values. He emphasizes that educators teach best when their personal values are in harmony with their professional practice. By encouraging reflective practice, Palmer shows how spiritual awareness can build trust in the classroom, increase student engagement, and enhance the teacher's own sense of purpose and well-being.

Tisdell (2003): Elizabeth Tisdell, through her book Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education, explains how spiritual awareness can make learning more inclusive and transformative. Her work suggests that when educators and learners bring their full selves, including their spiritual beliefs, into the classroom, it fosters empathy and mutual



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understanding. Especially in culturally diverse settings, Tisdell sees spiritual development as a pathway to deeper emotional intelligence and meaningful connection.

Miller (2000): Jack P. Miller talks about the importance of teaching the" whole person," not just the intellect, but also the body, heart, and spirit --in his book Education and the Soul. He criticizes the overemphasis on test scores and advocates for approaches that allow for introspection, mindfulness, and ethical reflection. According to him, a well-rounded teacher must grow as a complete human being, not just as a technician of instruction.

Bhargava (2010): From an Indian perspective, Meena Bhargava in her work Value Education: Need of the Hour, talks about the lack of moral values among today's youth.

She argues for a values-driven approach to education, where spiritual awareness is seen as a remedy for increasing materialism and moral confusion. Bhargava believes that teachers have a special role to play in shaping character and promoting inner awareness. Her ideas follow Indian philosophy, which sees education as a way to awaken the inner self.

Venkatesh (2012): Venkatesh focuses on the everyday role teachers play in modeling values. He suggests that a teacher who is spiritually aware does more than teach—they inspire, guide, and lead by example. His research indicates that students are more responsive and engaged when their teachers show qualities like compassion, honesty, and emotional self-awareness. In his view, the teacher's personal growth is inseparable from their professional influence.

Yadav & Yadav (2017): In their article Spiritual Education in Teacher Training Programmes, Yadav and Yadav explain that spiritual education helps future teachers develop important qualities like self-discipline, emotional control, and the ability to make good moral choices. They found that trainees who receive such programs developed stronger self-discipline, clearer moral thinking, and healthier emotional habits. Their research calls for a more structured and policy-backed approach to embedding spirituality into teacher preparation.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: India's National Education Policy of 2020 gives a strong support to teaching that includes values and overall well-being. It says that from early schooling to teacher education, students should learn about ethics, kindness and emotional health. The policy calls for educators who can embody and promote ethical behaviour, empathy, and inclusivity.

Collectively, these contributions make a convincing argument for situating spiritual awareness at the centre of teacher education. Instead, they say, this is a model of teaching that is about more than the delivery of knowledge, but the development of a type of personal presence and ethical clarity that can change lives, within and outside the classroom.

8. Conclusion and Implications

The world is fast changing, and this is full of challenges. The role of a teacher goes beyond just the transmission of academic knowledge. Today's teachers are supposed to be mentors, ethical leaders, emotional anchors, and social harmony agents. This spiritual awareness is not an extra but a necessary component of the personal and professional development of educators.



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This paper has demonstrated that the spiritual awareness explained here, as inner reflection, empathy, mindfulness, and having a clear purpose, makes teachers better at what they do. Those who have spiritual awareness are better at managing stress, building meaningful relationships, and creating positive learning environments. Especially for future teachers, who are still forming their professional identity and teaching style, these are very important.

But spiritual development is still not taught in many teacher training programmes. Barriers are many and include lack of time in the curriculum, teachers not being trained in this area and misunderstanding about spirituality. These challenges demand systemic change such as curriculum reform, faculty sensitization and leadership buy in at all levels to holistic education.

Simple and practical strategies have been shared here such as self reflection, value education, mindfulness practises, arts integration, community engagement and faculty mentorship which will be useful and easy to adapt into teacher training structures. Academic teaching is not replaced by these strategies, but rather, deepens and enrich it.

Strong support for this approach is found in the literature reviewed. Spiritually grounded teaching was explored by Palmer, Tisdell, (Miller), and Bhargava through their works, in which they emphasise that such teaching holds the potential to radically change the goals of higher education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, coming as it does in the backdrop of the Indian context, is a timely policy foundation for promoting ethical and holistic learning. Teacher education should be aligned around these principles in order to produce smart, kind, and emotionally strong educators.

The Implications of this approach are far-reaching:

For Students: In classrooms filled with respect, empathy, and trust, they will learn, but not only in ways that will help them succeed academically, but in ways that will help them grow as people.

For Teachers: They are less stressed, more connected to their purpose, experience greater job satisfaction, and are less prone to burnout and emotional fatigue.

For Society: Responsible citizens will be cultivated by spiritually aware teachers and a more peaceful and harmonious society will result.

For Policy Makers and Institutions: There is an opportunity to shift from robotic teaching methods and build human-centered, reflective education systems.

Ultimately, this study underscores that preparing future educators is not just about teaching them how to teach. It must also empower them to become whole, grounded individuals who can lead with empathy, integrity, and vision. As the demands on educators continue to grow, so too must our commitment to nurturing their inner lives. Moving forward, we need courage, creativity, and collaboration from everyone -educators, institutions, policy-makers, and students. With thoughtful integration of spiritual awareness, teacher education can rise to meet the challenges of the 21st century while staying true to values that never go out of date.

9. Recommendations



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To bring the benefits of spiritual awareness in teacher education, active steps must be taken at the institutional, curricular, and policy levels. The following recommendations provide a roadmap for including spiritual development in pre-service teacher training programs:

9.1 Integrate Spiritual Learning into the Curriculum

Design and implement modules that teach ethics, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and inner purpose. These modules should include activities from different subjects and encourage students to explore personal values in relation to teaching.

9.2 Organize Well-being Workshops

Organize regular workshops focused on stress management, mindfulness, yoga, and emotional self-care. These practices help future teachers stay calm, healthy, and strong while dealing with the challenges of the classroom.

9.3 Train the Trainers

Provide spiritual training to teacher educators so they can guide spiritual learning techniques. This includes how to use reflective pedagogy and value-based mentoring. Trainers must embody the qualities they want their students to learn.

9.4 Encourage Reflective Activities

Include activities such as journaling, storytelling, poetry writing, value clarification exercises, and role-play to stimulate inner inquiry and moral reasoning. Reflection should be done regularly and assessed as part of teacher education.

9.5 Create a Supportive Environment in Institutions

Encourage an atmosphere of openness where students will not be afraid of talking about their thoughts, beliefs, and life goals, while ensuring that policies should protect diversity of belief and maintain open and respectful conversation regarding meaning, purpose, and ethics.

9.6 Involve Students in Community Work

Trainees should be encouraged to participate in community service, helping local people and collaborative community projects. They grow empathy, kindness, and a sense of civic responsibility through these experiences.

9.7 Use Arts and Humanities for Spiritual Growth

Teaching education should incorporate music, literature, philosophy, and visual arts. The subjects trainees engage with and creatively raise such existential and ethical questions.

9.8 Follow NEP 2020 Guidelines

Use the National Education Policy as an instrument to promote value-based and holistic education. Following their practices, institutions can rely on NEP recommendations to obtain policy support and legitimacy. Put into systematic practice, these recommendations could make teacher education a deeply humanistic process of not only professional competence but of character, compassion, and conscience.

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