

# Democratic Values, Buddhism, and NEP-2020: A Literature Review of Philosophical Convergences and Educational Implications

Ashish Kumar<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Rajendra Kumar Ram<sup>2</sup>, Divya Prakash<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Political Studies, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya ji,  
(ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0333-828X>)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Satish Chandra College, Jananayak  
Chandrashekhar University, Ballia, Uttar Pradesh  
(ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1304-3577>)

<sup>3</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya  
ji,824236, (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0271-1985>)

## Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 restructures the operational mechanisms of the Indian schools by advocating student-centered, values-based, democratic, and holistic education. These values are very much in line with the main principles of democracy and Buddhism, which are equal, ethical conduct, critical thinking, empathy, and involvement in the decision-making process. Despite their conceptual parallelism, the academic literature of the relationship between democracy and Buddhist philosophy and NEP-2020 remains disjointed and uncoordinated. The current research is based on a systematic review of the literature to critically evaluate how democratic principles and Buddhist principles reflect on the vision, goals, and strategies of NEP 2020. Peer-reviewed journal articles, policy documents, and philosophical texts, as well as educational research conducted between 2000 and 2025, were analyzed using a systematic review methodology. The scholar has used Scopus databases for the words “democracy”, “Buddhism”, “education”, “values”, and “NEP-2020”. The identified studies were screened and analyzed thematically to identify conceptual links, shared educational goals, and implications of pedagogical meaning. The review indicates that democracy, Buddhism, and NEP-2020 have a certain powerful philosophical basis in terms of enhancing inclusivity, learner autonomy, ethical responsibility, dialogue, and holistic human development. The Buddhist values of mindfulness, compassion, non-violence, and rational inquiry are similar to the democratic values of freedom, equality, and participation. These shared values are implemented in NEP-2020 and emphasize experiential learning, critical thinking, multidisciplinary education, social-emotional learning, and citizenship education. The literature, however, also highlights that it is difficult to implement these philosophies in the classroom due to systemic issues, teachers being unprepared, and school cultures that are target-oriented. The research comes to the conclusion that the integration of Buddhist and

\*Corresponding Author Email: [ashishkumar@cusb.ac.in](mailto:ashishkumar@cusb.ac.in)

Published: 16 April 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70558/IJSSR.2026.v3.i2.301008>

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

democratic values in NEP-2020 creates a strong ethical and philosophical foundation of the reform of Indian education. It implies that more integration of the curriculum, teacher training, and grading of students should be carried out to implement these values.

**Keywords:** Democracy; Buddhism, NEP-2020, Value-based Education, Holistic Development, Ethical Education, Learner-Centered Pedagogy, Systematic Literature Review, Indian Education System

## **Introduction**

The present condition of education in India as well as the world at large is evolving rapidly due to the alteration in the society and economy, new technology and more sophisticated cultures. The need to develop value-based education has become particularly acute as the traditional educational models have been subjected to widespread criticism because of their focus on memorization and passing the test and learning the material at the expense of the ethical, emotional, and social development. This is a significant problem in India since the country is characterized by a diverse and pluralistic social structure. Education should not merely be a means of impartation of knowledge, but also a means of fostering social unity, civic responsibility and moral accountability. This issue is evident in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020) that emphasizes the necessity to produce people who are ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring and will make society more just and welcoming to all. This shift indicates that there is an increasing number of people who are becoming aware of the fact that education should be able to assist students in becoming better in every aspect, whether it is their mind, emotion, and even morals. Comparative research on moral education, such as studies of Japanese elementary schooling, demonstrates that value-based education systems can achieve the social virtues of benevolence, responsibility and harmony, although often at the cost of enhancing critical autonomy and creativity.

The readers of religious education also criticize that the simple approaches that presumes all traditions to be similar are not sufficient. Rather, they demand pedagogies that address the issues of difference, conflict and plurality as significant aspects of democratic life. All these points underscore the need to have an educational system that balances the transmission of values with critical thinking particularly in a society like India that has diversity as its key characteristic and an ongoing challenge. To address these concerns, NEP 2020 is a significant shift in policy towards more student-centered, comprehensive and democratic education. The policy goes beyond previous frameworks by supporting experiential learning, critical thinking, multidisciplinary integration, and lessening the burden of the curriculum. This makes it possible to understand more and participate more thoughtfully. It emphasizes the need to educate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, constitutional and moral values such as justice, equality, pluralism and empathy. It views education as one of the most important means of nation building and engaging people in democracy. Notably, NEP 2020 also desires the Indian knowledge systems to be returned to education. These systems incorporate philosophical traditions, which emphasize self-awareness, ethical action, and interconnections between everything. The overlap between democratic values and Buddhist philosophy offers a most compelling way of reconsidering the value-based education.

Democracy as both a political regime and normative ideal is built on the principles of participation, dialogue, inclusiveness, and diversity respect. Buddhism emphasizes compassion, non-violence, mindfulness, and that all beings are interrelated as well. This is an excellent foundation of moral self-perfection and social responsibility. The recent studies concerning Buddhist education stress the importance of interbeing and ego-centric self-metamorphosis as the key factors in reducing social suffering and enhancing the well-being of the collective. Although these philosophical concepts are close to each other, the ideas of Buddhist teaching are not popular in the contemporary education policy. NEP 2020 incorporates elements such as mindfulness, moral thinking, and whole-person development, yet, it does not have a clear explanation of how this may be more profoundly intertwined with philosophy to make it more effective.

This gap suggests that a comparative and interdisciplinary study, which incorporates the democratic theory, Buddhist philosophy, and educational policy, is required to create a more unified system of value-based education. In the investigation of the democracy, Buddhism and the contemporary educational changes, the existing academic literature shows much discontinuity particularly in the context of India. Studies on NEP 2020 usually look at its structural and administrative parts, and they don't pay enough attention to its philosophical foundations and teaching implications. Conversely, Buddhist education research is about issues such as inner change, mindfulness and moral awareness, but not usually connects this matter to policy frames or being a good citizen in a democracy. Similarly, studies of democratic education emphasize the role of dialogue, participation and pluralism, but they are largely based on Western theoretical paradigms, with little engagement with other non-Western philosophies.

This disjointed literature is not sufficiently exploring the possible synergies between inner ethical development and social-democratic values, thus resulting in a lack of connection between theory and practice. Again, despite the gradual recognition of the importance of an identity formation, transmission of values, and social interaction in the discourse of education, there is poor incorporation of these aspects in a unified framework. This research intends to address this gap by examining the philosophical overlaps between democracy, Buddhism, and NEP 2020 and assessing how such common values as inclusivity, autonomy, dialogue, and compassion are reflected in policy plans and pedagogical activities. It further examines the implications of these convergences on teaching and learning and also issues that arise when attempting to apply them in schools of various kinds. The research aims to contribute to the elaboration of a more integrated and situationally relevant model of value-based education through the incorporation of the experiences of other fields and contexts, thus finding a balance between personal change and democratic citizenship.

## **Methodology**

The given research uses a systematic literature review (SLR) to examine the conceptual links between democracy, the philosophy of Buddhism, and the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020). The SLR methodology allows systematic and interdisciplinary synthesis of the current research on the topic of value-based education, ethical development, and democratic citizenship. We resorted to such databases as Scopus and Google Scholar to locate the topical

literature by using such terms as democracy, Buddhism, education, values, and NEP 2020. The citation tracking was employed to ensure that significant works in such domains as moral education and contemplative pedagogy were represented to the full extent. The inclusion criteria included policy papers, peer-reviewed journal articles, and philosophical writings published post-2000, and mostly related to India and sensible to that context. We excluded those studies which were not concerned with ideas or teaching. Screening was done by reviewing titles, abstracts and entire texts after which duplicates were eliminated. We have studied and analyzed a number of sources systematically to determine some of the important themes, theoretical frameworks, and findings, especially in the area of how education, values, and social outcomes are interrelated. When we read policy documents, such as NEP 2020, we can tell how effectively they demonstrated moral and democratic concepts. We used an inductive method in which we performed a thematic analysis and established common trends in the literature. Four themes emerged: the conceptual relationship between democracy and Buddhism, common educational aim, the implications on teaching, and the issues related to the implementation of the ideas. This method offers a clear outline of how the concept of value-based education can be applied to combine philosophical traditions with the modern educational policy in India.

### **Philosophical Convergences: Democracy, Buddhism, and NEP-2020's Core Vision**

#### ***Inclusivity and Equality***

Democracy is based on the principle of equal participation and non-discrimination that ensures that everyone has access to political and social rights (Miller, 2022). The Buddhist philosophy has also been historically against hierarchical structures such as caste by encouraging the realization of the Dhamma by all people and emphasizing spiritual equality of all creatures (Scott R. Stroud, 2018). This ethical universality demonstrates that individuals cannot possess identities that isolate others and inclusion is an ethical responsibility. NEP 2020 follows these principles through prioritizing access, equity, and inclusive education, particularly of marginalized and underrepresented groups. Therefore, there is a concurrence between all three frameworks in their recognition of equality as a structural goal and also as a core ethical principle that shapes the society and education.

#### ***Learner Autonomy and Freedom***

Democracies put emphasis on individual freedom, self-determination, and the security of rights, and they give individuals the freedom to think, make decisions, and take actions (Martelli, 2020). The Buddhist concept of ehipassiko (come and see) can make people think independently and check what they think, this way they can liberate their minds and avoid believing without thinking of what they believe (Bai et al., 2022). Such concept of freedom is not only the freedom of not being an object of external influence; it is also the freedom of not wanting and knowing, which reflects internal independence. This convergence is reflected in NEP 2020 with an emphasis on student-centered learning, flexibility, and choice-based curricula that allow students to have control over their learning. All these perspectives put autonomy in the context of cognitive and ethical development of humans.

#### ***Ethical Responsibility and Moral Conduct***

Democracy relies on principled citizenship, characterized by individuals meeting their obligations, respecting the rule of law, and enhancing the common good (Teguh Wijaya Mulya & Saskia Schäfer, 2023). Buddhist philosophy also emphasizes *sīla* (ethical behavior) and the concept of *kamma* as intentional action, underscoring individual responsibility in assessing moral outcomes (Niyom & Monboonliang, 2022). This alignment emphasizes the importance of self-regulation and ethical awareness in preserving societal harmony. NEP 2020 incorporates these principles by prioritizing character development, ethical reasoning, and value-centered education as essential components of learning. So, ethical responsibility is what connects people's actions to the good of society in all three paradigms.

### ***Dialogue and Participatory Decision-Making***

Democratic practice requires deliberation and public discourse, which allow group decision-making via dialogue and discussion (Zhixiang, 2019). The traditions of Buddhism especially the Sangha concern consensus-forming and open dialogue, which is a participatory and dialogical approach to knowledge and governance. The *vada* tradition demonstrates that rational discourse is of great importance in search of truth (Edwards, 2024). The NEP 2020 demonstrates the following ideals through the development of collaborative learning spaces, the improvement of peer interaction, and the introduction of participative classroom practices that promote the involvement of students. This gathering demonstrates that conversation is a valuable tool of teaching and socializing that is required to make democracy effective and schools to transform.

### ***Holistic Human Development***

Democracy requires that people must be well-educated and well-informed such that they will be able to collaborate to make decisions and assist society to progress (Edwards, 2024). Buddhist philosophy explains the point by emphasizing the fact that mind and body can be united through mindfulness, compassion (*karuṇā*), and self-awareness, and that the goal is to reduce suffering and ensure thorough well-being (Tsujimura, 2015). The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) demands the wholesome and multidisciplinary approach to education comprising mental, emotional, moral, and physical development. This objective is not limited to good grades but also emphasized is the need to have all-round socially responsible individuals. Consequently, the holistic development becomes a popular objective, which incorporates the principles of democracy, Buddhist ethics, and contemporary educational policy.

## **Reflection of Shared Values in NEP-2020's Goals and Strategies**

### ***Experiential Learning***

Experiential learning is well suited with the Buddhist concept of *paccattam veditabbo*, or the need to learn through one's own experience and not through authority (Premasiri, 2008). This suits quite well with the theory of democratic education, particularly the concept of learning by doing used by John Dewey, which mentions that individuals have a way of learning by doing things in the real life (Scott R. Stroud, 2018). The two parties do not agree with passive and rote learning but encourage consideration and active engagement. This convergence is

achieved through the NEP 2020 that promotes hands-on, discovery-based, and inquiry-based teaching at every level of education. Consequently, experiential knowing is a familiar method of knowing that bridges Buddhist wisdom, democratic education, and contemporary educational change.

### ***Critical Thinking and Rational Inquiry***

The Buddhist philosophy, especially the one expressed in the Kala-ma Sutta, teaches people to doubt the authority, not to believe blindly, but to follow the reasoning of the mind and self-affirmation. This focus on rational investigation fits with democratic principles in which informed, analytical, and reflective participants can take part in the discourse of society (Kovito & Panyavachiro, 2024). Both traditions emphasize the necessity to be able to think independently and evaluate knowledge claims critically. The NEP 2020 is one such instance that recognizes critical thinking and analytical reasoning as a key competency of the 21st-century education. As a result, critical inquiry is viewed as intellectual ability and a democratic requirement, which has its foundations in philosophical traditions that advanced evidence-based knowledge.

### ***Multidisciplinary Education***

The Buddhist idea of Paṭiccasamuppāda, or dependent origination, shows how everything is connected and that knowledge can't be understood in isolation. This all-encompassing view fits with the democratic idea of having an educated population with knowledge from many fields so that they can take part in making decisions about society (Barua, 2019). Both perspectives critique the fragmented methods of information management and advocate for a comprehensive approach. NEP 2020 formalizes this idea by stressing a flexible, interdisciplinary curriculum that breaks down the strict lines between fields. Interdisciplinary education shows that people are interested in using the knowledge they have learned as the basis for their own growth and civic engagement.

### ***Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)***

Buddhist doctrines focus on mindfulness, emotional control and development of compassion. They underline the importance of emotional intelligence in order to live a morally good life (Leggett, 2021). These ideas are in keeping with the demands of democracy: compassion and the willingness to listen to different points of view within societies, in which social solidarity is premised on the possibility to find common ground and discuss divergent opinions. Social-emotional skills are needed to the well-being of the individual and the health of the group at large (Hyde & LaPrad, 2015). NEP 2020 includes social-emotional learning, mental health, and student well-being as the key elements of education. This intersection is a demonstration of the importance of emotional intelligence as a linkage between individual growth and social involvement in a democratic society.

### ***Citizenship Education***

The Buddhist philosophy promotes the significance of altruistic behaviour and responsibility towards others and states that moral behaviour is absolutely necessary to the greater good. This is in line with principles of democracy of an active and responsible citizenry where people are

ready to give back to the community by participating, being responsible and respectful toward shared values (Miller, 2022). The two models emphasize the significance of moral agency in maintaining order and justice in society. These concepts are reflected in the NEP 2020 through encouraging civic engagement, constitutional values and moral responsibility in the educational system. Consequently, it is in the area of citizenship education that the Buddhist ethics and democratic values converge to produce morally sound and productive members of the society.

## **Pedagogical Implications of the Philosophical Convergences**

### ***Classroom Practices***

In order to integrate ideas of democracy and Buddhism, we should change the educational techniques towards more interactive and dialogical, in which students are not only expected to memorize, but think as well (Edwards, 2024). Dialogue based education uses Socratic inquiry and Buddhist debate traditions to enable students to acquire logic, contemplation, and respect towards others. These techniques enable students to discuss their issues with individuals having alternative viewpoints, and this aspect makes them more democratic. Emotional regulation, concentration, and moral consciousness are better with mindfulness techniques integrated into everyday activities, according to contemplative pedagogies. Case studies that are highly context-rich in examining moral issues and democratic concepts can be found by using the storytelling tools such as Jataka stories. This renders ethical reasoning experiential and culturally-based.

### ***Teacher's Role***

The philosophical convergence transforms the educator's role from an authoritative purveyor of knowledge to a facilitator of dialogue, introspection, and ethical inquiry. In democratic pedagogy, educators should cultivate inclusive classrooms that promote critical thinking and student engagement, rather than dictating their thoughts (Edwards, 2024). Buddhist educational systems emphasize teaching by example, wherein the instructor exemplifies virtues such as compassion, mindfulness, and ethical conduct. This dual expectation requires educators to demonstrate both democratic and ethical conduct in their interactions with pupils. NEP 2020 indirectly supports this transformation by emphasizing learner-centered approaches and teacher autonomy, albeit lacking comprehensive solutions for teacher training. Training educators is crucial for implementing philosophical concepts in the classroom.

### ***Curriculum Design***

Curriculum design has to do more than just add to the content. It needs to include value-based classes that combine Buddhist morals with democratic ideas (Bai et al., 2022). Instead of treating these ideas as separate moral lessons, they should be included in the subject areas. The Buddhist idea of interconnection (Paṭiccasamuppāda) is a great starting point for developing interdisciplinary issues, especially in the areas of social responsibility and environmental ethics. Democratic education stresses how important it is to have knowledge from many fields in order to make informed choices about civic engagement. NEP 2020's focus on flexible and

varied courses makes it easier for this to happen. The problem is turning these ideas into a structured curriculum that is both useful and good for teaching.

### ***Assessment Reforms***

Combining different philosophical traditions means that we need to rethink how we evaluate things. Instead of just memorizing, we need to think about and judge things in an ethical way. Conventional assessment techniques that emphasize factual recall are insufficient for appraising attributes such as critical thinking, empathy, and moral reasoning. To get deep learning results, assessment methods must include reflective writing, ethical problem-solving, and dialogical evaluation. Portfolio-based examinations and self-assessment methodologies closely parallel Buddhist principles of self-awareness and mindfulness. They make students think about how they've changed and what they've done. The NEP 2020 supports competency-based evaluation, but it is still not being used consistently or well. Changing how students are tested is important to make sure that evaluation systems are in line with the bigger goals of value-based and holistic education.

### **Implementation Challenges**

The implementation of value-based, holistic, and philosophically unified education, as suggested by the convergence of democracy, Buddhism, and the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), faces several structural, pedagogical, and conceptual challenges (Govinda, 2020). At the systemic level, existing educational frameworks are mostly rigid, hierarchical, and standardized, making them inherently unsuitable for the adaptation required for dialogic, experiential, and reflective learning. The entrenched examination-oriented culture fosters rote memorization and performance-driven outcomes, so undermining the cultivation of ethical thinking, mindfulness, and the comprehensive development promoted by NEP 2020. The problem of teacher unpreparedness is intricately linked to these institutional constraints. Most educators lack enough training in value-based pedagogy, dialogical teaching approaches, and mindfulness practices, which are essential to both democratic and Buddhist educational systems.

Moreover, educators struggle to adapt from traditional authoritative roles to facilitative and interactive teaching techniques, reflecting institutional inertia and inadequate professional support. Furthermore, prevailing educational cultures primarily concentrate on objectives, prioritizing grades, rankings, and measurable outcomes above the processes of learning and ethical development. This creates a fundamental conflict between the transformative objectives of NEP 2020 and the accountability frameworks that primarily evaluate success via quantifiable performance indicators. Consequently, concepts such as empathy, diversity, and critical thinking are often neglected in practice, despite their importance in policy discourse. Moreover, significant conceptual disagreements impede implementation (Govinda, 2020). Buddhist philosophy, particularly in its traditional manifestation, emphasizes renunciation, detachment, and liberation from worldly desires, which may appear inconsistent with the active civic engagement and participation required in a democratic society. This tension raises questions about the integration of Buddhist principles into contemporary educational environments while maintaining their ethical integrity. Further, there is a risk of

instrumentalizing Buddhism within policy frameworks, where its concepts—such as mindfulness—are reduced to simply utilitarian tools for stress management or behavioral control, rather than being recognized as whole ethical and philosophical systems. This reductionism may undermine the transformative potential of Buddhist teachings and limit their influence for substantial educational reform. The convergence of democracy, Buddhism, and NEP 2020 offers a compelling framework for value-based education; however, its implementation requires addressing complex challenges through systemic reform, improvement of teacher competencies, alignment of assessment methods, and careful philosophical integration.

## Discussion

The synthesis of philosophical intersections among democracy, Buddhism, and the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) reveals a potent yet complex alignment that can be thoroughly understood through the policy's three fundamental pillars—Access, Equity, and Quality. Democratic theory and Buddhist philosophy concur on the principle of inclusion, positing that engagement in social and intellectual spheres must be universally attainable and free from bias. Democracy promotes equal opportunity as a civic right, while Buddhism has historically opposed hierarchical exclusions by advocating for universal access to the Dhamma, thus fostering spiritual equality (Tandon, 2025). NEP 2020 shows this shared commitment by focusing on building infrastructure, integrating digital technology, and working closely with disadvantaged groups to make education available to everyone. Access should not only be defined as physical entry into educational institutions but also as substantive engagement, facilitating active and equitable participation of learners in educational processes. The principle of fairness strengthens this convergence by integrating democratic concepts of justice with Buddhist tenets of compassion (*karuṇā*) and the alleviation of suffering. Democracy seeks to address systemic injustices through institutional mechanisms, whereas Buddhism emphasizes ethical responsibility to all sentient beings, advocating the mitigation of suffering through compassionate actions.

NEP 2020 makes this convergence happen by putting socio-economically disadvantaged people, gender inclusivity, and culturally responsive education first. This means that ethical considerations are now part of policy frameworks. To be fair, policies and teaching methods must both recognize and engage with differences in a meaningful way. The pillar of quality brings together the democratic focus on critical thinking, informed citizenship, and active participation with the Buddhist focus on inner change, mindfulness, and moral self-control. NEP 2020 aims to integrate these elements by promoting holistic and interdisciplinary education that fosters cognitive, emotional, and ethical development, thereby shifting the focus from narrow academic achievement to the cultivation of well-rounded individuals. Despite this agreement, a critical examination reveals that the relationship between democracy and Buddhism is characterized by tension. Democracy fundamentally emphasizes civic engagement, institutional participation, and the realization of rights and responsibilities within the public sphere, whereas Buddhism, particularly in its traditional expression, prioritizes detachment, renunciation, and liberation from material attachments. This difference makes us think about how well the self-reflective nature of Buddhist philosophy fits with the proactive,

action-oriented needs of a democratic society. The increasing incorporation of Buddhist principles, such as mindfulness, into educational policy raises apprehensions about their potential instrumentalization, whereby complex philosophical traditions are reduced to pragmatic tools for stress alleviation or behavioural control, thereby undermining their ethical and transformative value. These challenges should not be perceived as contradictions but as opportunities to develop a more sophisticated and inclusive educational framework that aligns personal ethical development with engaged social participation.

Nevertheless, the existing literature reveals significant shortcomings that hinder the realization of this unified vision. A notable limitation is the lack of empirical, classroom-based research examining the implementation and impacts of Buddhist-democratic pedagogies within the Indian context. There is a lot of talk about mindfulness, ethical education, and democratic participation in theory, but there isn't much real-world data on how they work in practice, which makes them less useful. The role of school leadership in promoting value integration is insufficiently theorized, despite its vital importance in shaping institutional culture, facilitating teacher development, and aligning practices with policy objectives. Without strong leadership, putting philosophical goals into practice in schools is still disjointed and inconsistent. Furthermore, there is insufficient attention to the perspectives and experiences of essential stakeholders, including teachers, students, and communities, whose participation is crucial for the successful implementation of value-based education. Comparative analyses from different settings clarify these challenges and prospects. In countries like Thailand and Sri Lanka, where the majority of people are Buddhist, schools often include Buddhist moral ideas in their lessons and rules. This shows that cultural traditions and educational policies are more in line with each other. Thai educational reforms emphasize moral development, sustainability, and global citizenship, employing Buddhist principles to guide pedagogical approaches.

In contrast, India's NEP 2020 adopts a pluralistic and secular framework that integrates various philosophical traditions without privileging any specific one, reflecting its multi-religious and legally secular context. This approach encourages inclusion but might result in a more subtle integration of ethical traditions, possibly limiting the depth of philosophical discourse. Taiwan's pluralistic approach to religion and education also emphasizes the importance of cultural tolerance and interfaith dialogue in fostering social cohesion, offering valuable lessons for India's diverse society. The comparative perspectives show that NEP 2020 is in line with global trends in holistic and value-based education. However, its implementation needs to be very careful to balance plurality, philosophical depth, and pedagogical accuracy. The discussion emphasizes that the convergence of democracy, Buddhism, and NEP 2020 presents a promising yet emerging framework for re-evaluating education in India. To realize this potential, we need to deal with structural problems, improve teachers' skills, encourage institutional leadership, and make evidence-based models of value-oriented education that combine personal growth with democratic participation.

## **Conclusion**

The current study makes a significant relationship between democracy, Buddhist philosophy, and the goal set forth in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). These frameworks stress the need of raising people who are socially responsible and have strong moral values in

areas like inclusivity, autonomy, ethical accountability, discourse, and overall growth. Buddhism is based on compassion, mindfulness, and interconnectedness, whereas democracy values equality, participation, and logical discourse. NEP 2020 stresses a learner-centered, holistic, and value-based approach to education, which shows that there is an effort to combine these ideas. This connection suggests that education might be an important place for personal growth and public duty to coexist.

In this larger context, NEP 2020 provides a unique ethical basis for modern educational reform in India. By combining constitutional objectives with parts of Indian knowledge systems, the approach changes the definition of education. It now includes not just learning skills but also building character and becoming responsible in society. The policy gives a broad view, but it doesn't make it clear enough what teaching methods are needed to reach these goals. This gap shows how important it is to learn more about intellectual traditions like Buddhism and democratic philosophy in order to make value-based education work.

There are a number of important suggestions that come out of this research. All academic fields must systematically include Buddhist-democratic values like compassion, discussion, and moral reasoning. Improvements to teacher training, both before and after they start working, are just as important. These changes will help teachers create learning environments that encourage values, reflection, and discussion. We need to change how we test children so that it includes more than just tests. It should also include ways to test their critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and self-reflection. It is important to make these kinds of changes to make sure that institutional practices are in line with the main goals of NEP 2020.

Finally, the study points up important areas for future research, such as the need for real-world studies in Indian classrooms, comparisons with other educational systems, and critical looks at how Buddhist philosophy is used in policy settings. In short, combining democracy, Buddhism, and NEP 2020 makes it possible to create a "Buddhist-democratic humanism" that may change Indian education by combining moral self-improvement with civic involvement, making society more open and thoughtful.

### References:

- Bai, H., Voulgaris, M. A. V., & Williams, H. (2022). Waking up from Delusion: Mindfulness (Sati) and Right Mind-and-Heart (Bodhicitta) for Educating Activists. *Religions*, 13(4), 363. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040363>
- Barua, K. (2019). UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF THE "EDUCATED PERSON": A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE. *Buddhist Approach to Global Education in Ethics*, 99.
- Edwards, B. N. (2024). Beyond Red v. Blue: A Four-Part Model for Cultivating Moral Vision in Higher Education. *The Good Society*, 33(1), 52–72. <https://doi.org/10.5325/goodsociety.33.1.0052>
- Government of India. (2020). *National education policy 2020*. Ministry of Education. <https://www.education.gov.in>

- Govinda, R. (2020). NEP 2020: A Critical Examination. *Social Change*, 50(4), 603–607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085720958804>
- Hyde, A. M., & LaPrad, J. G. (2015). Mindfulness, democracy, and education. *Democracy & Education*, 23(2), 2.
- Kovito, P. A., & Panyavachiro, P. K. R. (2024). An Analytical Study of the Kalamasutta in Theravāda Buddhist Philosophy and Its Application in Contemporary Society. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Innovation*, 1(1), 12-24.
- Leggett, W. (2021). Can Mindfulness really change the world? The political character of meditative practices. *Critical Policy Studies*, 16(3), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2021.1932541>
- Martelli, J.-T. (2020). The Politics of Our Selves: Left self-fashioning and the production of representative claims in everyday Indian campus politics. *Modern Asian Studies*, 1–74. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x2000013x>
- Miller, A. (2022). The existential turn in philosophy of education: In defence of liberal autonomy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12636>
- Niyom, P., & Monboonliang, P. (2022). Reflecting of the two significant consciousnesses inherited in Thai society: The “Dhamma-democracy and sufficient economy” which enabled the praxis of spiritually active citizenship in 2 case studies of different settings, the K-12 school students and the village juveniles. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 115, 102016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102016>
- Premasiri, P. D. (2008). Varieties of cognition in early Buddhism. *Handbook of Indian psychology*, 85-104.
- Scott R. Stroud. (2018). Creative Democracy, Communication, and the Uncharted Sources of Bhimrao Ambedkar’s Deweyan Pragmatism. *Education and Culture*, 34(1), 61. <https://doi.org/10.5703/educationculture.34.1.0061>
- Teguh Wijaya Mulya, & Saskia Schäfer. (2023). Who belongs where? Geographies of (inter)religion and urban segregation in Surabaya, Indonesia. *Cities*, 141, 104476–104476. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104476>
- Tandon, A. (2025). From symbolic domination to symbolic democracy: An Ambedkarite rethinking of social justice in Indian education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2025.2593289>
- Tsujimura, M. (2015). The Politics of “Compassion” of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: Between “Religion” and “Secularism”. *Tibet Journal*, 40(1), 41-55
- Zhixiang, Y. J. (2019). New Confucian Liang Shuming’s Transformation of John Dewey’s Philosophy in Chinese Rural Education. *Beijing International Review of Education*, 1(4), 673–694. <https://doi.org/10.1163/25902539-00104007>