ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 12| December 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

INNER AWAKING FOR OUTER SUSTAINABILITY: THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN GREENING HIGHER EDUCATION

Sovan Mondal[1], Dr. Megha Das[2]
[1]*Research Scholar, Department of Education, Doctor Harising Gour University, Sagar (M.P.)*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Doctor Harising Gour University, Sagar (M.P.)*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra25256
DOI No: 10.36713/epra25256

ABSTRACT

Innovations in technology, infrastructure, and policy often come up in conversations about making higher education more sustainable as universities worldwide respond to the urgent need for sustainability. A deeper change requires awakening inner values, consciousness, and wisdom, even though these aspects are essential. This study looks at the role of spiritual intelligence as an important but overlooked factor in creating greener higher education.

With spiritual intelligence, which is the ability to act with vision, compassion, and ecological awareness, learners and educators can move beyond practical thinking and build a connection with the natural world. Spiritual intelligence can promote environmentally conscious actions on college campus and beyond by fostering self-awareness, empathy, and purpose-driven choices. Universities can become centers for fostering environmentally aware minds and nurturing hearts by adopting eco-spiritual pedagogy, focusing on values, and strengthening community ties.

This study explores three ways that integrating spiritual intelligence into higher education supports sustainable practices: ***(a) Curricula;*** *that weave eco-spiritual values into teaching and learning,* ***(b) Institutional practices;*** *that establish green policies and campus cultures embodying ethical responsibility and mindfulness, and* ***(c) Societal impacts;*** *that prepare graduates to be eco-leaders who connect professional skills with sustainable living.*

KEYWORDS: *Spiritual Intelligence, Sustainable Higher Education, Eco-Spiritual Pedagogy, Sustainability Practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has emerged as a major issue in higher education through the world in recent decades. University places a strong emphasis on academic programs focused on environmental sciences and engineering, infrastructure improvements, legislative changes (such as those pertaining to waste management, water conservation, and energy efficiency), and technology advancements. Even though these external actions are required, many academics contend that they are insufficient to address the underlying ecological issue (Dhara & Singh, 2021). What is required is a shift in awareness that encompasses education, learning, institutional culture, and society purpose an inner awaking of values, meaning, and ethical orientation toward nature.

A crucial but little-studied factor in greening higher education is spiritual intelligence (SI), which is defined as the capacity to grasp deeper values, transcendence, purpose, compassion, ecological awareness, and a vision that transcends utilitarian self-interest. Through value-based curriculum, eco-spiritual pedagogy, institutional culture, and the development of eco-leaders among graduates, we explore in this study how SI might support greener educational practices in higher education.

This article is organised into six sections. We start by defining spiritual intelligence and reviewing relevant material both Indian and other countries. Second, we go over the theoretical foundations that connects sustainability and SI in higher education. Finally, we look at three areas the curricular, institutional, and social domains where SI might help promote greener higher education. Fourth, we offer actual data and case studies that serve as examples and favourable circumstances. Lastly, we conclude and make recommendations.

Defining Spiritual Intelligence and Literature Review:

What is Spiritual Intelligence?

According to (King and DeCicco as cited in Varadwaj & Varadwaj, 2024) spiritual intelligence encompasses the following aspects of human consciousness: critical existential thought (question about meaning, purpose of life), transcendental awareness (awareness of self beyond ego, connectedness), personal meaning production (constructing meaning, values), compassion, ethical behaviour, and frequently an ecological awareness. It incorporates spiritual awareness and ethical purpose in addition to emotional and cognitive intelligence.

Literature: Indian Context

- According to a comprehensive study on spiritual intelligence in India **(Rastogi, Gupta, Deepak & Singh, 2025)**, SI is positively correlated with higher levels of pleasure, moral judgement, and autonomous behaviour as well as lower levels of anxiety and depression.
- In their 2024 study, **Shivani Raheja, Renu Gupta, and Gayatri Yadav** investigated academic accomplishment, happiness, and spiritual intelligence among University of

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 12| December 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

Delhi students. They discovered a high positive association between academic achievement and happiness.

- In the study of Ranchi school children, **Thakur, Hassan, and Kashyap (2024)** discovered that educational attainment had an effect on SI, despite the fact that they did not find any gender differences.
- In order to restore society ethics, **Wadhwani (2016)** investigated instructors in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, and found that spiritual and emotional intelligence were predictors of values.

Literature: International Context

- A thorough literature study of "Green Spirituality/Eco-Spirituality" through a mental revolution lens in education was carried out by **Ramila, Rahman, Muspawi, Sobri, Mustofa, Hasani, & Sari (2024)**. The result demonstrate how character and environmental values are developed in formal education when spiritual knowledge and environmental stewardship are combined.
- Integrating eco-theology (principles like **khilafah, amanah, and mizan**) into school curricula has been found to have a good impact on promoting ecological awareness and tangible behaviour in Islamic educational situations.
- Additionally, there are models such as "Spiritual Eco-literacy" that integrate religious teachings, participatory eco-pedagogy, and environmental ethics for youth Islamic education.

According to these worldwide publications, there is precedence for incorporating environmental ethics and spiritual values into institutional policies and curriculum.

Theoretical Foundations: Why Spiritual Intelligence Supports Sustainability

Several theoretical stances are vital to comprehended how SI may help green higher education:

1. **Transformative Learning Theory:** according to Mezirow's (1991) learning that questions underlying frames of reference (beliefs, values, and assumptions). Questioning instrumental logic and adopting more holistic, value-laden viewpoints are common steps in the process of awakening spiritual intelligence.
2. **Deep Ecology and Eco-Psychology:** it highlights the interconnection of the human and non-human world. A sense of interconnectedness and the inherent worth of nature are fostered by spiritual intelligence.
3. **Theory of Value-Based Education:** education not only about information and skills, but also about character, values, and Dharma, according to Indian educational philosophy (e.g., Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi, and Indian knowledge systems). SI is consistent with these values traditions in this regard.
4. **Education for Sustainable Development:** knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviour are all emphasized in UNESCO's framework for sustainability education. SI specifically contributes to values, attitudes, behaviour dimensions that are often less addressed.

By influencing not only what is taught but also how, why, and by whom, we may conclude that SI has the potential to enhance and strengthen sustainability in higher education.

Domains of Practice: How Spiritual Intelligence Can Green Higher Education

In three interconnected areas, we suggest that SI may support sustainable practices in higher education:

Domain	Main Focus	How SI Manifests / Practices
Curricular	Teaching, learning, content design	Courses including ecological principles, cross-disciplinary modules covering ethics, meaning, natural connection, reflective practices, mindfulness, and place-based learning are examples of eco-spiritual pedagogy.
Institutional	Policies, campus culture, infrastructure, governance	Green policies (energy, waste, water), ethical procurement practice, mission statements with a spiritual bent, rituals and symbols, areas for introspection (meditation gardens, etc.), and environmental ethics training for teachers and staff.
Societal	Student character, leadership, community impact	Graduates who are socially and environmentally conscious, they are the eco-leaders. Project that includes the community include environmental restoration, sustainable practices in neighbouring communities, adopting sustainable lifestyles, advocation for policies, and integrating spiritual principles into civic and professional life.

Empirical Evidence and Case Studies

Although the direct connection between SI and greening higher education is still developing, the following examples serve as examples:

1. **University of Delhi Study:** students who score higher on the SI scale are happier and have somewhat better academic performance. Although sustainability behaviour was not specifically evaluated in this study, pro-environmental sentiments are correlated with pleasure and purposefulness.
2. **Eco-Spiritual Based Gren Spirituality Review (Indonesia):** Ramila and associates (2024) demonstrate how eco-spiritual ideals may be include into formal education, particularly higher education, leading to somewhat significant behavioural, attitudinal, and mental revolution improvements in students.
3. **Integrating Eco-Theology in Islamic Schools (Indonesia):** Research conducted in Islamic primary schools by Taufikin (2024) demonstrate that students' knowledge and behavioural practices (such as waste

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 12| December 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

management and energy conservation) increase when religiously framed environmental teaching (eco-theology) are implemented. The techniques might be modified for colleges and school level.

4. **Eco-Spiritual Education in Islamic Green School Cinere (Indonesia):** including eco-spiritual education into early childhood education demonstrates how regular activities that incorporate environmental awareness, curriculum integration, and teacher and parent participation may foster environmental sensitivity.

Although there aren't many instances from higher education, these examples demonstrates that SI-based techniques have empirical support.

Challenges and Enabling Conditions

Challenges

- **Conceptual clarity and measurement:** There are several definitions of spiritual intelligence, and cultural circumstances are important. Some warn against restricting SI to measurable characteristics.
- **Curricular Constraints:** Overwhelming curricula demands for certification, and departmental silos that thwart integration are examples of curriculum constraints.
- **Institutional Resistance:** Faculty and governance structures may not place a high priority on non-material values, and universities frequently emphasize economic, technical, and market-oriented aims.
- **Resource Limitations:** Lack of infrastructure, resources, and training for teachers to promote eco-spiritual pedagogy (such as gardens, meditation areas, and experimental learning locations).
- **Cultural and Religious Pluralism:** Including spiritual content in various civilizations can be delicate; there is a chance of favoring one tradition over another or coming out as evangelistic.

Enabling Conditions

- Mission statements with strong leadership dedicated to sustainability and values.
- Training in eco-spiritual pedagogy and spiritual and ecological literacy for faculty members.
- Institutional rules and rewards (e.g., acknowledging sustainability in promotions and performance).
- Collaborations with religious traditions, NGOs, the community, and environmental organisations.
- Curriculum that supports immersive, reflexive, and multidisciplinary learning.
- Campus safe place for introspection, awareness, and meditation; rituals and symbols that bind participants to nature and ideals.

Recommendations

We make the following suggestions for Indian and comparable higher education institutions that want to use SI to advance sustainability goals based on the debate that came before.

1. Curricular Integration

- Provide courses or modules on nature and meaning, environmental spirituality, ecological ethics, and sustainability from a spiritual standpoint.
- Incorporate experimental and reflective elements, such as service-learning in ecological restoration, outdoor walks, meditation, and reflective journaling.
- To contextualised SI, draw on indigenous wisdom, local knowledge system, and ecological philosophical and religious traditions.

2. Faculty and Staff Development

- Workshop on ecological awareness and spiritual intelligence.
- Promote SI and sustainability research and provide institutional support for this kind of work.
- Create communities of practice for educators who are interested in values education and sustainability.

3. Institutional Policy and Infrastructure

- Missions and vision statements should be updated to incorporate ecological and spiritual aspects.
- Green campus projects that are participatory, symbolic, and technological. (for instance, green landscaping, meditation centres, gardens, and holy groves).
- Policies that encourage sustainable activities include trash reduction, renewable energy, and green procurement.

5. **Graduate Outcomes and Community Engagement**

- Encourages students to become environmentally conscious leaders through clubs, advocacy, and sustainable business ventures.
- Integrate community service initiatives throughout the curriculum to connect campus to regional environmental concerns.
- Encourages spiritual activities (such as meditation and conservation) and emphasize introspection to continue doing moral and environmental work beyond graduation.
- **Assessment and Evaluation**
- Provide tools to gauge not just environmental behaviour but also spiritual values, purpose, and kinship with the natural world.
- To find out if SI treatments result in long-lasting institutional and behavioural change, conduct longitudinal research.

CONCLUSION

Infrastructure, regulations, technology, and curriculum are all important but insufficient as higher education attempts to adders the existential crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. Spiritual intelligence, an internal dimension, has the capacity to change. It can shift the focus of education away from practicality and toward responsibility, meaning, and community. Institutions may become hubs for consciousness transformation greening the brain and spiritualizing the heart when they include SI into their courses, institutional culture, and graduation outcomes.

Future studies should examine culturally relevant models, evaluate long-term results, provide validated assessment techniques, and more clearly investigate the connections between SI and ecological behaviours in the context of higher education in India and through the world. Ultimately,

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 12| December 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

sustainable futures depend as much on inner awaking as on outer changes.

REFERENCES

1. *Bensaouda B. (2024). An overview of Muslim spiritual eco-education. Journal of Dharma, 48(4).*
2. *Dhara, C., & Singh, V. (2021). The elephant in the room: Why transformative education must address the problem of endless exponential economic growth. arXiv.*
3. *Integrating eco-theology in Islamic education: A case study on fostering ecological awareness through religious pedagogy. (2024). el-Tarbawi, 18(1).*
4. *Kumari, K. (2025). Spiritual Intelligence through the Lens of the Bhagavad Gita: A Route to Mental Wellness. Ushus Journal of Business Management, 24(3), 23-48. https://doi.org/10.12725/ujbm.72.2*
5. *Ramli, S., Rahman, K. A., Muspawi, M., Sobri, M., Mustofa, A. M. Z., Hasani, S., & Sari, N. N. (2024). Eco-Spiritual Based Green Spirituality: A Systematic Literature Review of Environmentally Conscious Mental Revolution in Education. Jurnal Kependidikan, 10(4), 1732-1741. https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v10i4.13318*
6. *Rastogi, S., Gupta, S., Deepak, D., & Singh, V. (2025). Spiritual Intelligence: A Systematic Review. International Journal of Arts and Humanities, 3(1), 35-52.*
7. *Raheja, S., Gupta, R., & Yadav, G. (2024). Spiritual Intelligence, happiness and success of students in select higher education institutions of University of Delhi. ESP, 9(6).*
8. *SAPARUDDIN. (2025). Spiritual Eco-Literacy: Model Pendidikan Agama Islam untuk Generasi Muda di Era Krisis Iklim. Andragogia: Journal Education Science and Islamic Studies, 2(1), 86-101. https://doi.org/10.52496/andragogia.v2i1.752*
9. *Thakur, N. K., Hassan, M. P., & Kashyap, H. (2024). A study of spiritual intelligence among school going students. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 12(3).*
10. *Wadhwani, P. (2016). Emotional-Spiritual Intelligence: For Revival of Values in Samarth Bharat. Dev Sanskriti Interdisciplinary International Journal, 8.*