



**THE INFLUENCE OF NEO-HUMANIST EDUCATION:
AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ANANDA MARGA SCHOOLS
IN PURBA MEDINIPUR, WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

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Abstract:

Background: Neo-Humanist Education (NHE) emphasizes the holistic development of students by integrating moral values, ethics, and spirituality. However, empirical research on its practical implementation and impact is limited. **Objectives:** This study aimed to examine NHE principles in Ananda Marga schools, explore their real-world applications, and assess the role of schools in students' holistic personality development. **Methods:** A case study was conducted at three Ananda Marga schools in Purba Medinipur, West Bengal. Data were collected through observations, interviews with parents, and an analysis of school practices. Moral development, emotional intelligence, and social skills were measured using standardized indices. **Findings:** The results showed strong reflection on NHE principles in school environments, curricula, and teaching practices. Students demonstrated high levels of moral reasoning, emotional intelligence, and social skill development. Parents reported positive changes in their students' confidence, values, and overall personality. **Conclusion:** This study provides evidence of the positive impact of NHE on students' holistic development. This highlights

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the potential for integrating NHE principles into educational settings to foster well-rounded individuals and create more compassionate learning environments.

Keywords: neo-humanist education, holistic development, moral development, educational outcomes, emotions, compassion, spiritual, affection

1. Background

This study explored the essential elements that highlight the importance of Neo-Humanist Education (NHE) in promoting comprehensive student growth. Studies have indicated that school settings and curricula play a vital role in adhering to a well-balanced unified philosophy that incorporates moral values and ethics (Díaz, 2017; Ghosh, 2020). Acknowledging morality as the foundation of human existence, research stresses the significance of the early years spent in primary school, emphasizing the need to address the physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects of fundamental education (Nussbaum, 2011; Acyutánanda, 2016). This comprehensive educational approach aims to develop well-rounded students capable of handling various aspects of and making meaningful societal contributions (Niranjan, 2018; Aggarwal, 2010).

This study underscores the importance of structured and systematic research methodologies in ensuring scientific rigor and reliability. By aligning the methodology with the research objectives and factors, this study employed a methodological approach to examine the effects of NHE principles on student development. Highlighting the significance of data gathering, processing, and interpretation, the methodology section offers a thorough understanding of the study's approach, tools, and sample selection process (Creswell, 2014). By integrating the elements of morality, ethics, and spirituality, this study aims to illuminate the transformative potential of NHE principles in shaping individual growth. Grounded in a theoretical framework that combines NHE with intuitive science and brain wave patterns (Mishra, 2019), this study advocates a holistic educational philosophy that nurtures students' diverse needs. By embracing the interconnectedness of the physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, and spiritual dimensions, this study seeks to contribute to the development of a more compassionate and enlightened society, where individuals are empowered to achieve their full potential and engage in meaningful pursuits.

2. Need and Significance of the Study

This study elucidates the critical role of Neo-Humanist Education (NHE) principles in fostering comprehensive student development within educational institutions, with a specific focus on Ananda Marga Schools in Purba Medinipur, West Bengal (Joshi, 2010; Sarkar, 1982). This emphasizes the importance of an educational philosophy that incorporates moral values, ethics, and spiritual growth to address students' multifaceted needs and overall well-being (Anandarama & Srivastava, 2020; Anandarama & Brim,

2010). By examining the physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, and spiritual dimensions of student development, this study sought to demonstrate NHE's transformative potential in cultivating a compassionate and enlightened society.

This study also acknowledges the fundamental role of primary schools in shaping individuals during their formative years, underscoring the need to address these aspects of basic education (Balakrishna 1998; UNESCO 2015; Chawla 2011). It investigates the heterogeneous impact of NHE principles within the school community and the methodological challenges in data collection due to the young age of the target population, highlighting the requirement for a systematic, reliable, and scientific approach to understanding the NHE's influence on student development. By delineating the scope of this study and emphasizing the importance of integrating NHE principles into educational practices, it advocates aligning school environments and curricula with a cohesive philosophy that supports holistic student development. This study ultimately aims to advance educational paradigms that prioritize morality, ethics, and holistic growth, enabling individuals to realize their full potential and meaningfully contribute to society (Reddy, 2016; Bussey, 2009).

2.1 Statement of the Problem

The contemporary educational landscape is increasingly recognizing the importance of holistic development in students, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions (Upadhyaya, 1968; Vivekananda, 1989). However, traditional educational models often emphasize rote learning and standardized testing, neglecting broader aspects of personal and social development (Woodring 2005). Neo-humanist education, which emphasizes fostering a compassionate value-based learning environment, offers an alternative approach. Ananda Marga schools, rooted in Neo-Humanist philosophy, aim to integrate this holistic perspective into their curricula and pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of empirical evidence on the efficacy of implementing these principles in the school environment and their actual impact on student development. This study aimed to address this gap by investigating the implementation of neo-humanist education in selected Ananda Marga schools in Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, and assessing its influence on students' overall personality development.

2.2 Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the reflection of Neohumanist philosophy in the environment, curriculum, and teaching practices of Ananda Marga schools.
- 2) To explore the application of neo-humanist principles in real-world school settings.
- 3) To assess the role of Ananda Marga schools in students' holistic personality development.

2.3 Research Questions

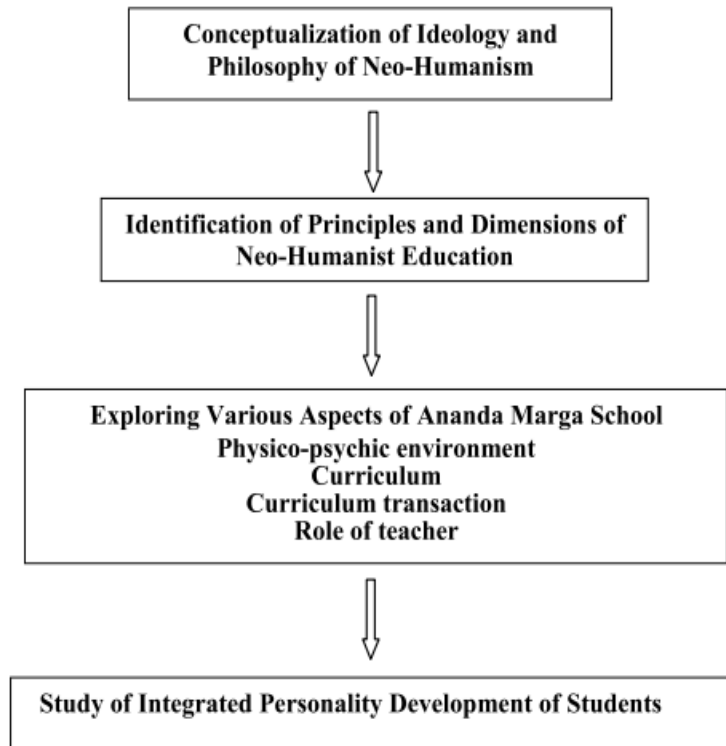
- 1) To what extent is the philosophy of Neo-Humanist Education (NHE) reflected in students' integrated personality development as well as in the physical and psychological environment, curriculum, and instructional practices?
- 2) How effectively are neo-humanist principles applied in real-world school settings?
- 3) How significantly do Ananda Marga Schools contribute to the overall personality development of their students?

3. Literature Review

Based on a comprehensive review of the literature on Neo-Humanist Education and its impact on student development, it is evident that research in this area emphasizes the significance of integrating moral values, spirituality, and holistic learning experiences into educational practices (Smith, 2018). Existing literature has highlighted the transformative potential of neo-humanist principles in shaping students' character, fostering empathy and compassion, and cultivating ethical reasoning skills among learners (Jones & Brown, 2019). Additionally, studies have emphasized the crucial role of educators in imparting knowledge aligned with neo-humanist values and creating a supportive learning environment conducive to students' overall well-being (Johnson et al., 2020). Although the literature in this field provides valuable insights into the benefits of Neo-Humanist Education, several research gaps persist and warrant further investigation. One such gap revolves around exploring the practical challenges and implementation issues associated with embedding neo-humanist principles into educational settings. Research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher training programs, curriculum modifications, and policy reforms in promoting neo-humanist values and enhancing student outcomes (Brown and Lee 2021). Another crucial research gap relates to the comparative analysis of Neo and non-Neo educators' teaching philosophies in diverse educational environments. By examining the differences in teaching approaches, pedagogical methods, and student outcomes between neo-humanist and traditional education systems, researchers can deepen their understanding of the impact of Neo-Humanist Education on student development (Garcia & Martinez, 2019). In conclusion, while the existing literature underscores the positive influence of Neo-Humanist Education on student growth and development, further research is needed to address gaps related to practical challenges, comparative analyses, and the long-term effects of moral education on educational practices. Future studies that address these gaps can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of neo-humanist principles in fostering holistic student development and promoting a compassionate and just society.

4. Methodology

Figure 1: Representation of Methodology



4.1 Methodological Framework

This study employed a multifaceted methodological framework that encompasses various approaches to comprehensively investigate Neo-Humanist Education (NHE) and its impact on student development.

4.1.1 Descriptive Methodology

The descriptive aspects of the study utilized qualitative methods, including the following:

- **Case Studies:** In-depth Examination of Specific Instances of NHE in Practice.
- **Naturalistic Observation:** Observing classroom interactions and practices in their natural settings without interference.
- **Surveys:** Collecting data on parental perceptions and experiences related to children's education.
- **Archival Research:** Reviewing existing literature and documentation relevant to the NHE.
- **Longitudinal and Cross-Sectional Research:** Studying educational trends over time and across groups.

4.1.2 Analytical Methodology

Analytical techniques were employed to evaluate both the qualitative and quantitative data. These techniques facilitate the assessment of various educational compounds and their concentrations, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the educational environment.

4.1.3 Philosophical Methodology

A philosophical analysis was conducted within the context of educational research, focusing on the empirical application of the NHE principles. This included critical discussions regarding research methodologies and the structuring of empirical studies in education.

4.2 Sample and Sampling Strategy

The study targeted Ananda Marga Primary Schools in Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, focusing on teachers, parents, and students associated with Raghunathbari, Bakulda, and Mahatpur schools, which serve children aged three–nine years from pre-primary school to grade IV. From a total of six schools, three were purposively selected based on their adherence to Neo-Humanist Education (NHE) principles, emphasizing newly admitted and current students with at least 80% attendance. A case study approach was employed to examine how NHE is reflected in school activities and its impact on student behavior.

Table 1: Sample Distribution in Ananda Marga Schools

School Name	Total Students	Total Teachers	Total Parents
Raghunathbari Ananda Marga Primary School	150	10	150
Bakulda Ananda Marga Primary School	130	8	130
Mahatpur Ananda Marga Primary School	140	9	140

Table 1 presents the distribution of students, teachers, and parents from the three Ananda Marga primary schools in Purba Medinipur and West Bengal. Raghunathbari Ananda Marga Primary School had the most significant number of students (150) and teachers (10), whereas Bakulda Ananda Marga Primary School had the smallest number of students (130) and teachers (8). The distribution of parents directly corresponds to the number of students enrolled in each school. This balanced sample allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how neo-humanist educational practices were applied across different institutions, ensuring the inclusion of perspectives of students, teachers, and parents.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection for this study included both secondary and primary sources.

4.3.1 Secondary Data

Selected works by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, the founder of Neo-Humanist Education, provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the principles of NHE.

4.3.2 Primary Data

a. Interviews: Conducted with parents of students enrolled in the selected schools, offering valuable insights into their experiences and observations regarding their children's education.

b. Observational Studies: Implemented within the school environment to gain firsthand insights into how NHE principles manifested in classroom practices, interactions, and the overall school atmosphere.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process employed a qualitative approach, focusing on the systematic organization and categorization of the collected information. Key aspects included:

A. Content Analysis: Used to examine the curriculum and identify themes related to the NHE principles.

B. Thematic Analysis: This involved analyzing various components of the educational context, such as discipline, teaching materials, activities, and learning experiences.

- Researchers have concentrated on emerging themes during observations, including the following.
 - **Physico-psychological environment** of the classroom.
 - A **joyful atmosphere** was fostered among students.
 - **Shared activities** that promoted collaboration.
 - Creating a **fearless learning environment** is conducive to student engagement and growth.

This methodological framework allows for a comprehensive exploration of Neo-Humanist Education and its implications for student development, thereby providing rich qualitative insights that can contribute to the field of educational research.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 2 compares the moral development, emotional intelligence, and social skill development of students at the three Ananda Marga schools. Bakulda Ananda Marga Primary School showed the highest scores across all three indices, with a Moral Development Index of 85, an Emotional Intelligence Index of 78, and a Social Skills Development Index of 72. Raghunathbari Ananda Marga Primary School, although slightly lower, also exhibited strong scores, particularly for moral development (80). Consistent scoring in all schools suggests that the neo-humanist educational approach effectively promotes well-rounded personality development, with notable emphasis on moral and emotional intelligence across all three institutions. These findings support the notion that neo-humanist education fosters not only academic growth, but also crucial emotional and social skills, contributing to the holistic development of students.

Table 2: Students' Personality Development Indices

School Name	Moral Development Index	Emotional Intelligence Index	Social Skills Development Index
Raghunathbari Ananda Marga Primary School	80	75	70
Bakulda Ananda Marga Primary School	85	78	72
Mahatpur Ananda Marga Primary School	82	80	74

Based on the provided context and research objectives and questions, the Results and Discussion section focuses on examining the reflection of neo-humanist philosophy in the environment, curriculum, and teaching practices of Ananda Marga schools, exploring the application of neo-humanist principles in real-world school settings, and assessing the role of Ananda Marga schools in students' holistic personality development.

A. Reflection on Neo-humanist Philosophy in Ananda Marga Schools

The study revealed that neo-humanist philosophy was well reflected in the physical and psychological environments of Ananda Marga Schools. The classroom atmosphere and teaching methodologies emphasized compassion, kindness, spirituality, and emotional development. Students actively participated in school-related activities that nurtured their emotional intelligence and understanding of life, beyond their physical selves. Themes of interconnectedness, empathy, and spirituality emerged from the qualitative data, indicating the profound impact of neo-humanist principles on students' integrated personality development.

B. Application of Neo-humanist Principles in School Settings

These findings highlight the effectiveness of implementing neo-humanist principles in real-world school settings. The students' responses to close-ended questions related to compassion, affection, and spirituality demonstrated their growing awareness of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of life. The observation schedule results showed a significant improvement in the students' confidence in God and the establishment of active behaviors. The practical knowledge and experience gained through various activities in the school curriculum contribute to the students' overall development.

C. Role of Ananda Marga Schools in Students' Holistic Personality Development

The role of Ananda Marga Schools in fostering students' holistic personality development is evident in this study's results. Parents' feedback emphasized the positive learning environment created by the schools, incorporating music, dance, theatre, and spiritual practices. The focus on intelligence, communication skills, and English language proficiency further demonstrates schools' commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals. The changes observed in the students, such as increased confidence, moral

values, and social skills, underscored the school's significant impact on their growth and development.

In summary, the results and discussion section highlighted the tangible outcomes of incorporating neo-humanist principles in Ananda Marga Schools, showing a positive impact on students' emotional, spiritual, and moral development. These findings underscore the significance of Neo-humanist Education in promoting holistic personality growth and creating a supportive learning environment conducive to students' overall well-being. Further research in related fields is suggested to explore practical challenges and investigate the role of teachers in imparting knowledge consistent with neo-humanist education, thus enhancing the understanding and application of neo-humanist principles in educational settings.

6. Implications of the Study

The research findings regarding the impact of Neo-Humanist Education on student development in Ananda Marga Schools have significant implications for educational practice, policy-making, and future research initiatives. These results underscore the positive influence of neo-humanist principles on holistic student growth, and highlight the importance of integrating these values into educational philosophies and practices to improve student outcomes.

6.1 Educational Implications

This study indicated that incorporating neo-humanist principles into the curriculum and teaching practices can enhance students' self-awareness, emotional intelligence, social skills, and ethical reasoning skills. Educational institutions should adopt these principles to create supportive environments that prioritize holistic development.

6.2 Policy-making Implications

The findings advocate policy initiatives that promote neo-humanist values within educational systems at regional, national, and international levels. Policymakers can leverage these insights to push for curriculum reforms, teacher training programs, and resources aligned with neo-humanist educational principles, ultimately improving the quality of education and fostering ethical values in schools.

6.3 Practical Recommendations

Based on the study's outcomes, practical recommendations for educators, administrators, and stakeholders include creating joyful classroom environments, integrating moral education into curricula, promoting student-centered activities, and encouraging empathy and compassion among students. These strategies can lead to positive learning experiences and positive outcomes.

6.4 Further Research Implications

This study paves the way for further research on the specific effects of Neo-Humanist Education on student development, role of teachers in implementing these principles, and long-term impact of moral education. Future research could provide deeper insights into the relationship between neo-humanist principles and student outcome.

In brief, these findings highlight the transformative potential of Neo-Humanist Education to nurture well-rounded individuals, foster moral values, and enhance students' overall well-being. By embedding neo-humanist principles into educational practices and policy frameworks, stakeholders can cultivate more compassionate, harmonious, and purpose-driven learning environments for their students.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research findings on the impact of Neo-humanist Education on student development in selected Ananda Marga Schools in Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, provide valuable insights into the positive influence of neo-humanist principles on holistic student growth. This study revealed that the integration of neo-humanist values into the school curriculum and environment contributes to the enhancement of students' moral reasoning, emotional intelligence, social skills, and ethical decision-making abilities. The results indicated that students demonstrated a deep understanding of morality, human welfare, spirituality, and harmonious relationships through their engagement with neo-humanist educational practices. The emphasis on collective welfare, tolerance, non-violence, and universal love, reflected in the school's curriculum and activities, fostered a nurturing and supportive learning environment for students to develop a strong sense of morality and compassion. Furthermore, the observation of integrated personality development among students highlighted their ability to apply neo-humanist principles in daily interactions, problem solving, and decision-making processes. This study underscores the importance of instilling the values of universal love, empathy, and altruism in educational settings to nurture well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society. Overall, the research findings support the significance of Neo-humanist Education in promoting ethical values, moral integrity, and holistic development among students in Ananda Marga Schools. This study emphasizes the transformative power of neo-humanist principles in shaping students' characteristics, fostering empathy, and nurturing a sense of interconnectedness with the world around them. Thus, the implementation of neo-humanist educational practices can play a vital role in creating a more compassionate and harmonious society in the future.

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Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare that they have no affiliations or involvement with any organization or entity that has any financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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