

From Inner Convictions to Outer Actions: Investigating the Role of Spirituality and Ethics in Environmental sustainability among IT Professionals in Kolkata, India

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Abstract

This research investigates the relationship between spirituality, ethics, and environmental sustainability among 110 IT professionals working in various organizations in Newtown, Kolkata, India. The participants provided feedback on five essential statements related to their personal beliefs, spiritual practices, and the perceived influence of faith communities in fostering environmental stewardship. A statistical analysis, including Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance, was performed to assess the degree of consensus and variability in the responses. The results demonstrate a moderate overall correlation between spiritual or ethical values and environmental behaviour, with the strongest consensus found in the belief that individuals possess a moral or spiritual obligation to safeguard the Earth for future generations. Conversely, perceptions regarding the role of spiritual or faith communities exhibited the highest variability, indicating a range of opinions and expectations. The most uniform responses were associated with the impact of personal ethics on environmental care, although this was not strongly affirmed. In summary, the study highlights a complex and individualized perspective on sustainability, suggesting that personal moral beliefs play a more significant role than institutional religious guidance in fostering environmental responsibility, thereby underscoring the potential for ethical motivation in this domain.

Keywords

Environmental, Spiritual, Sustainability, Ethics, Communities

Introduction

The escalating global environmental crisis has prompted researchers and policymakers to investigate various factors that drive sustainable behaviour, with an increasing focus on the influence of spirituality and ethics. This study examines the perspectives of IT professionals situated in the urban corporate environment of Newtown, Kolkata, India, an area characterized by swift technological advancement and a rich tapestry of socio-cultural dynamics. The research aims to understand how these individuals connect their spiritual and ethical convictions to environmental stewardship, evaluating the degree to which these values shape their attitudes and actions regarding sustainability (Sarvestani, 2024). Participants were asked to respond to a set of statements intended to gauge their personal spiritual involvement and their perceptions of the role of faith communities in fostering environmental accountability. The statements addressed topics such as individual moral responsibility, the sanctity of nature, the impact of spiritual practices on sustainable living, and expectations from religious institution

(Moroni et al., 2024). Through a statistical analysis of the responses, a complex picture emerged. Participants generally recognized, albeit not overwhelmingly, that their spiritual or ethical beliefs affect their environmental interactions. This recognition indicates that while such beliefs exist within their moral framework, they do not consistently lead to proactive environmental actions. The concept of a moral or spiritual obligation to safeguard the Earth was particularly resonant, suggesting that notions of intergenerational stewardship and personal accountability are more significant motivators than other spiritual considerations. This sense of obligation appears to be a stronger driving force than specific religious practices or community initiatives (Mishra, 2024).

In contrast, perspectives on the involvement of spiritual or faith-based communities in sustainability initiatives were notably diverse, reflecting a range of views regarding the institutional role of religion in environmental discussions. While some individuals regard these communities as essential players in promoting sustainability, others express scepticism or detachment, potentially influenced by varying cultural backgrounds, levels of trust, or the perceived significance of organized religion in addressing contemporary environmental issues (Ali, 2023).

Interestingly, responses concerning the impact of personal spirituality on environmental stewardship were relatively uniform, suggesting a collective understanding or cultural narrative that connects moral values with ecological responsibility, albeit without strong conviction (Boustani, 2025). This uniformity may indicate a shared ethical framework that acknowledges the environment as a component of moral concern, even if it is not a primary focus in everyday choices.

Overall, the research uncovers a nuanced yet evident link between spirituality, ethics, and ecological awareness, characterized more by individual moral reasoning than by collective religious influence. The findings underscore that while spiritual and ethical beliefs contribute to shaping environmental attitudes, their impact may be tempered by various social, cultural, or professional influences within an urban corporate context. Personal moral responsibility emerges as a more compelling motivator than institutional spiritual authority, suggesting a form of eco-consciousness that is driven by internalized values (Maslova, 2025). This implies that future environmental advocacy could be more effective if it engages with personal ethical narratives and highlights the moral imperatives of sustainability, rather than relying exclusively on the authority of organized religious institutions (Saha, 2024). Simultaneously, the varied perspectives regarding the function of faith communities highlight the necessity for more inclusive and dialogic approaches if religious organizations aim to participate meaningfully in sustainability initiatives (Lakshmi Priya, 2025). These insights pave the way for incorporating ethical and spiritual aspects into environmental communication and policy development, particularly in professional settings where conventional religious paradigms may exert minimal influence. By examining the intricate relationship between belief systems and ecological perspectives, this research enhances the overall comprehension of how sustainability can be advanced through more individualized and morally impactful strategies.

Literature Review

The growing environmental crisis has led to a reassessment of the elements that drive sustainable behaviours. While advancements in technology and policy measures are crucial, the influence of spirituality and ethics on promoting environmental responsibility has received increasing scrutiny. This literature review investigates the existing body of research at the intersection of spirituality, ethics, and environmental sustainability, with a particular focus on Information Technology (IT) professionals. By examining how individual beliefs and ethical principles shape environmental attitudes and actions, this

review seeks to contextualize the findings from a study conducted among IT professionals in Newtown, Kolkata, India.

Spirituality and Environmental Sustainability

Spirituality, which involves a sense of connection to a larger existence beyond oneself, has been recognized as a key driver of pro-environmental behaviours. Dhiman & Sharman (2016) argues that a life rooted in moral and spiritual consciousness, in alignment with nature, is vital for the preservation of the planet. This viewpoint resonates with the idea of Eco spirituality, which merges ecological issues with spiritual beliefs, promoting lifestyles that enhance environmental health (Lester & Böhm, 2020). Within Eco spirituality, practices such as vegetarianism, simplicity, and a deep connection with nature are highlighted as effective ways to minimize ecological footprints.

For IT professionals, the incorporation of spirituality into their everyday practices may impact their environmental behaviours. Nevertheless, the degree to which spiritual beliefs are translated into sustainable practices within the technology sector remains insufficiently explored, indicating a need for further research.

Ethics and Environmental Behaviour

Ethical frameworks serve as essential guidelines for individuals to discern right from wrong, thereby shaping their choices and behaviours. The decline of ethical values has been associated with various environmental and sustainability issues (Qadir, 2024). Research by Vitell et al., (2015) indicates that individuals with heightened spiritual awareness tend to exhibit stronger ethical inclinations, which include pro-environmental actions. This finding implies that ethical considerations, shaped by spiritual beliefs, can foster more sustainable practices. In the realm of information technology, ethical decision-making is particularly vital due to the sector's considerable environmental footprint, characterized by energy usage and electronic waste. Gaining insight into how personal ethics affect environmental behaviours in this field can aid in developing strategies to enhance sustainability within the industry.

The Role of Faith Communities in Environmental Sustainability

Faith communities have traditionally been instrumental in fostering ethical conduct and promoting the welfare of their communities. Their potential to impact environmental sustainability is acknowledged across various religious traditions. For example, the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* introduces the idea of "Integral Ecology," which calls for a harmonious integration of ecological ethics with principles concerning a just economy, individual dignity, social solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good (Pope Francis, 2015). Likewise, the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change underscores the collective responsibility of Hindus towards environmental stewardship, stressing the importance of caring for the Earth (Leaders, 2009).

The impact of faith communities on environmental sustainability is not uniform. Research conducted by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL) revealed that British Hindus participate in more environmentally conscious behaviours than members of other significant religious groups. This finding indicates that a doctrinal focus on the interconnectedness of life and the reverence for nature may shape their environmental ethics (Jalil et al., 2025). Conversely, opinions about the involvement of spiritual or faith communities in sustainability initiatives can vary widely. Some individuals regard these communities as essential players, while others perceive them as less significant, potentially influenced by differing cultural backgrounds or varying degrees of trust.

Spirituality, Ethics, and Environmental Sustainability in the IT Sector

The information technology sector, marked by swift technological advancements and a variety of socio-cultural factors, offers a distinctive framework for exploring the convergence of spirituality, ethics, and environmental sustainability. A study involving 110 IT professionals in Newtown, Kolkata, India, sheds light on the relationship between personal spiritual and ethical beliefs and environmental stewardship. The results reveal a moderate overall correlation between spirituality or ethical values and environmental actions, with the most significant consensus found in the belief that individuals possess a moral or spiritual obligation to safeguard the planet for future generations. This finding is consistent with existing research that indicates personal moral responsibility, grounded in spiritual or ethical beliefs, acts as a strong motivator for environmental stewardship. Nevertheless, the study also reveals considerable variability in perceptions regarding the role of spiritual or faith-based communities in fostering environmental sustainability, highlighting the necessity for more inclusive and dialogical approaches if religious organizations aim to effectively participate in sustainability initiatives.

The literature emphasizes the crucial influence of spirituality and ethics on shaping environmental attitudes and behaviours. While individual spiritual and ethical convictions can inspire people to engage in sustainable practices, the impact of faith communities tends to be more inconsistent and context-specific. In the IT sector, where professional duties and environmental consequences are closely linked, incorporating spiritual and ethical dimensions into sustainability efforts may improve their effectiveness. Future research should delve deeper into the interplay of spirituality, ethics, and environmental sustainability within professional environments to formulate comprehensive strategies that encourage sustainable behaviours across various contexts.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach for data collection, engaging 110 IT professionals located in Newtown, Kolkata. Of these participants, around 75 completed an online survey, while the remaining 35 contributed their insights through face-to-face interviews. Both data collection methods employed a standardized questionnaire that included five key statements aimed at evaluating the impact of spirituality and ethics on environmental attitudes. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The aggregated data were subsequently analysed using statistical techniques, including Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance, to uncover patterns, levels of agreement, and variations in beliefs concerning environmental stewardship within a technologically advanced urban professional setting.

Data Collection & Analysis

This research examines the perspectives of 110 IT professionals employed across various organizations in Newtown, Kolkata, India, with the aim of investigating the interplay between spirituality, ethics, and environmental sustainability. The study utilized five pivotal statements to assess individual and collective beliefs about the spiritual importance of nature and sustainable practices 1 — “My spiritual or ethical beliefs influence the way I care for the environment”. 2 — “I consider nature to be spiritually significant or sacred.” 3 — “My spiritual practice motivates me to live more sustainably.” 4 — “I feel a moral or spiritual duty to protect the Earth for future generations” 5—“Spiritual or faith communities should play a greater role in promoting environmental sustainability”. To evaluate the levels of agreement and variability in the responses, statistical methods such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance were employed. The findings aim to elucidate how personal spiritual or ethical values, along

with views on the roles of faith institutions, affect environmental attitudes in a corporate urban environment characterized by a burgeoning technology sector.

Table 1

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Range (Min–Max)	Interpretation
1	2.71	0.83	0.69	1 – 5	Moderate agreement; lower variability.
2	2.85	0.85	0.72	1 – 5	Slightly higher agreement with moderate spread.
3	2.9	0.96	0.92	1 – 5	Close to moderate agreement; more diverse responses.
4	2.95	0.93	0.87	1 – 5	Highest agreement; moral/spiritual duty is a strong theme.
5	2.77	1.02	1.04	1 – 5	Mixed views; greatest variability in opinion.

The data offers a valuable perspective on how people view the connection between their spiritual or ethical beliefs and environmental sustainability. The statistical results allow for several significant interpretations concerning the level of consensus, diversity of opinions, and recurring themes within the responses.

General Agreement is Moderate

An initial observation of considerable significance is that the average scores for all five statements are below 3.0 on a 5-point Likert scale. This finding suggests a prevailing trend of mild to moderate agreement among respondents. Statistically, a mean score of 3.0 is indicative of a neutral position, whereas scores exceeding 3.0 signify increasing levels of agreement. Consequently, mean scores ranging from approximately 2.7 to 2.95 imply that participants acknowledge a link between their spiritual or ethical beliefs and their environmental behaviours, albeit with a lack of strong conviction. This may illustrate a nuanced reality in which individuals recognize the environmental significance within their moral considerations but may not consistently apply this awareness in their everyday actions or decision-making.

Strongest Belief

Among the various statements, Statement 4 — “I feel a moral or spiritual duty to protect the Earth for future generations” — received the highest average score of 2.95. This indicates that respondents are most inclined to endorse the concept of long-term stewardship based on ethical or spiritual principles. The score, which is close to 3.0, suggests that while there is not a strong consensus, this belief resonates more profoundly than the others. Notably, this finding highlights the significant impact of moral responsibility, potentially surpassing the influence of specific religious or spiritual practices. It underscores an emerging dialogue that integrates spirituality with environmental awareness, framing the care for the planet as not merely a practical concern but as a moral obligation.

Most Divided Opinion

Statement 5 — “Spiritual or faith communities should play a greater role in promoting environmental sustainability” — exhibits the highest standard deviation (1.02), indicating considerable variability in respondents' perspectives on this matter. Some individuals may fervently endorse the involvement of

faith communities in environmental initiatives, while others may express scepticism or apathy. This divergence may arise from varying experiences with religious institutions, cultural contexts, or differing views on the intersection of religious responsibilities and public advocacy. The pronounced variability suggests that, although there is a notable interest in the possibility of collective action, it is not uniformly accepted.

Least Variable Response

In contrast, Statement 1 — “My spiritual or ethical beliefs influence the way I care for the environment” — exhibits the lowest variance (0.69). This indicates a relatively uniform set of responses, despite the mean (2.71) falling below the midpoint of the scale. This may suggest that respondents generally interpret this statement in a similar manner, likely recognizing a modest impact of their beliefs on their environmental actions without demonstrating strong agreement. Such consistency may reflect a common cultural narrative or a general consensus regarding the influence of spirituality on ethical behaviour, even if it does not consistently translate into tangible actions.

In summary, the data illustrates a complex interplay between spirituality, ethics, and environmental stewardship. While a sense of moral obligation seems to serve as a more cohesive and motivating factor, perspectives vary concerning the roles of institutions, indicating opportunities for further discussion and engagement.

Conclusion

The findings reveal a moderate association between spirituality or ethical beliefs and environmental stewardship, indicating that while individuals acknowledge a relationship, it may not be the primary factor influencing their environmental actions. This moderate correlation suggests an evolving, yet not fully established, connection between personal belief systems and sustainable practices. It highlights a domain where spiritual and ethical values shape environmental attitudes, but may also contend with various social, cultural, or economic influences that affect actual behaviour.

Among the findings, the sense of personal moral or spiritual obligation emerges as a more significant motivator than the influence of institutional or communal religious practices. The highest level of agreement was observed with the assertion of a moral or spiritual responsibility to safeguard the Earth for future generations. This indicates that individuals are more likely to act based on their ethical beliefs rather than depend on formal religious institutions for direction. The internalized sense of stewardship—whether derived from spirituality or personal ethics—may act as a compelling impetus for environmental responsibility, reflecting a more personalized approach to eco-consciousness.

Conversely, opinions become more polarized when discussing organized faith communities. The most significant variation in responses was noted regarding the role of spiritual or religious institutions in fostering environmental sustainability. This variability suggests differing expectations, trust levels, or experiences with these organizations. For some, faith communities are perceived as potential leaders in sustainability initiatives; for others, their impact may be regarded as limited, inconsistent, or even irrelevant in the context of environmental discussions. These disparities underscore the complexities involved in merging institutional religion with environmental advocacy and indicate the necessity for more inclusive and dialogical strategies if faith-based organizations aim to effectively engage their communities in sustainability efforts.

Limitation

This study provides important insights into the relationship between spirituality, ethics, and environmental attitudes among IT professionals in Newtown, Kolkata; however, it is essential to recognize several limitations when interpreting its results. Firstly, although the sample size of 110 participants is adequate for initial analysis, it may not adequately represent the diverse perspectives within the larger IT community or consider variations across different organizational cultures, religious beliefs, or socio-economic statuses. Secondly, the dependence on self-reported data derived from a limited set of five statements restricts the depth and complexity of the responses, which may lead to an oversimplification of intricate belief systems and behaviours. Furthermore, the application of a Likert scale could introduce response bias, as participants might choose neutral or socially acceptable answers, thereby weakening the authenticity of their true beliefs. The lack of qualitative data, such as interviews or open-ended questions, further constrains the exploration of underlying motivations, contradictions, or cultural subtleties that could enhance understanding. Additionally, the study does not consider external influences—such as corporate environmental policies, peer pressure, or access to sustainability initiatives—that could significantly impact environmental behaviours independently of spiritual or ethical considerations. There is also a limitation regarding generalizability, as the findings are specific to an urban, technology-focused context in India and may not accurately reflect attitudes in rural areas, other professions, or different cultural settings. Finally, while the analytical distinction between personal ethics and institutional spirituality is useful, it may not accurately represent how individuals experience or integrate these influences in their daily lives. These constraints highlight the necessity for future studies that utilize larger and more varied samples, employ mixed methods, and engage in more thorough contextual investigations. Such research is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between spirituality, ethics, and environmental responsibility within professional environments.

Future Implication

This study provides significant insights into how spirituality and ethics influence environmental attitudes among IT professionals, particularly within the urban setting of Newtown, Kolkata. Nevertheless, the findings and limitations of this research suggest several potential directions for future inquiry. Firstly, increasing the sample size and diversity would enhance the applicability of the results. The current investigation concentrated on IT professionals, which, while yielding valuable information pertinent to the technology sector, may not reflect the dynamics present in other industries or rural areas. Future research could examine environmental attitudes among professionals from various sectors, cultural backgrounds, and geographical regions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between spirituality, ethics, and sustainability in different contexts.

Secondly, this research revealed a range of responses concerning the influence of faith communities on environmental sustainability. This indicates a need for future studies to investigate the connection between institutional religious practices and environmental stewardship. Analysing how various religious traditions and faith-based organizations affect environmental behaviours could provide more specific recommendations for faith communities aiming to incorporate sustainability into their teachings and initiatives. Additionally, qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or ethnographic studies, could yield richer insights into how individuals interpret and apply their spiritual and ethical beliefs in environmental matters, offering a deeper understanding beyond what is typically captured through Likert scale assessments.

Furthermore, there exists an opportunity to investigate the relationship between corporate policies and individual ethics and spirituality in the context of fostering environmental sustainability. A growing number of IT companies are implementing sustainability frameworks, and examining the alignment or discord between these corporate strategies and employees' personal values could facilitate a connection between individual convictions and organizational practices. Analysing the impact of corporate responsibility on the promotion of sustainable practices may also illuminate ways in which businesses can strengthen their employees' dedication to sustainability through leadership grounded in values.

Another significant avenue for future inquiry is the examination of how personal ethics and spiritual beliefs manifest in concrete pro-environmental actions. Although this study revealed a moderate correlation, it did not evaluate actual behaviours, such as engagement in sustainability initiatives or environmentally friendly practices. Subsequent research could employ longitudinal or observational methodologies to monitor behavioural changes over time and evaluate the enduring effects of ethical and spiritual beliefs on environmental actions.

Finally, incorporating a broader array of statements or indicators in research tools would enable a more nuanced investigation of the intricate relationships among spirituality, ethics, and environmental sustainability. By tackling challenges such as the conflict between personal convictions and corporate objectives, as well as the impact of wider societal trends, future research can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how ethical and spiritual values influence environmental attitudes and behaviours within urban corporate settings.

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