

Hindu Perspectives on Parenting: Cultivating Discipline and Perseverance in Children

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Abstract: This study examines Hindu perspectives on parenting as a holistic educational framework for cultivating discipline and perseverance in children. Amid growing concerns over declining moral values, reduced self-discipline, and limited resilience among younger generations, the study explores how Hindu educational philosophy conceptualizes parenting as a lifelong process of character formation. Employing a qualitative library research approach, the study analyzes primary Hindu scriptures, including the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Upaniṣads*, *Manusmṛti*, *Mahābhārata*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and *Hitopadeśa*, complemented by contemporary literature on character education and developmental psychology. The findings reveal that Hindu parenting emphasizes parents as children's first educators who cultivate discipline through self-regulation, moral habituation, exemplary conduct, and consistent guidance, while perseverance is developed through continuous practice, resilience, and commitment to dharma. These principles are integrated within everyday family life rather than taught as isolated moral concepts. The study concludes that Hindu parenting offers a comprehensive and value-based framework that complements contemporary theories of character education by integrating ethical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of child development, thereby contributing to holistic educational practices in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Hindu parenting; character education; discipline; perseverance; Hindu educational philosophy; child upbringing.

Introduction

Parenting has long been recognized as one of the most influential determinants of children's physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and moral development. As the primary educational environment, the family provides children's earliest experiences in learning values, norms, discipline, responsibility, and social interaction. Parents are therefore regarded as children's first educators whose attitudes, behaviors, and educational practices significantly shape children's character and future life trajectories (Baumrind, 1967; Bornstein, 2019; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The influence of parenting extends beyond childhood because values acquired within the family frequently become enduring behavioral dispositions that guide individuals throughout adulthood (Lickona, 1991).

The importance of parenting has become increasingly evident in the twenty-first century as families confront unprecedented social, technological, and cultural transformations. Rapid technological advancement, digital media, online entertainment, and unrestricted access to information have significantly altered children's lifestyles, learning behaviors, and social interactions. Although these developments create valuable educational opportunities, they simultaneously expose children to excessive screen time, instant gratification, reduced attention spans, and declining persistence when confronted with difficult tasks (Twenge & Campbell, 2018; OECD, 2021). Consequently, educators increasingly argue that cognitive achievement alone is insufficient unless accompanied by strong character qualities such as discipline, perseverance, responsibility, resilience, and self-regulation (UNESCO, 2021).

Among these character qualities, discipline and perseverance have emerged as essential competencies for children's long-term success. Discipline is no longer understood merely as obedience to external authority but rather as children's capacity to regulate their own behavior, manage emotions, fulfill responsibilities, and make ethical decisions independently (Zimmerman, 2000; Bandura, 1986). Likewise, perseverance reflects sustained effort toward long-term goals despite difficulties, setbacks, or delayed rewards. Duckworth et al. (2007) introduced the concept of *grit* to describe perseverance and passion for long-term goals, demonstrating that persistence frequently predicts achievement beyond intellectual ability. Subsequent meta-analyses further confirmed that perseverance contributes positively to academic performance, career success, and psychological well-being (Credé et al., 2017).

The development of discipline and perseverance does not occur automatically as children mature. Rather, these qualities are gradually cultivated through continuous interaction with parents, family members, schools, and the wider social environment. Numerous studies have consistently shown that parenting style significantly influences children's emotional regulation, behavioral adjustment, academic motivation, and moral development (Baumrind, 1967, 1978; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In particular, authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and consistent behavioral expectations, has repeatedly been associated with higher levels of self-control, independence, social competence, and persistence among children (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Bornstein, 2019).

Parenting also plays a crucial role in character education because children primarily learn values through observation, imitation, habituation, and interaction within the family. According to Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, children acquire behavioral patterns by observing significant adults, particularly parents. Consequently, parental consistency, emotional warmth, constructive discipline, and moral example become essential mechanisms through which children internalize ethical values. Lickona (1991, 2004) similarly argues that effective character education begins within the family because parents provide children's earliest experiences of honesty, responsibility, respect, perseverance, and self-discipline before formal schooling begins.

Recent educational scholarship further recognizes that parenting cannot be separated from its cultural, philosophical, and religious context. Parenting practices are shaped by cultural beliefs regarding childhood, family relationships, moral responsibility, and educational goals (Bornstein, 2012). Consequently, parenting models developed within Western societies should not automatically be regarded as universally applicable because educational values are deeply embedded within local cultural traditions. Cross-cultural parenting research increasingly emphasizes the importance of indigenous educational philosophies that integrate universal developmental principles with culturally specific moral values (Bornstein, 2012; Super & Harkness, 2002).

Religion constitutes one of the most influential cultural systems informing parenting beliefs and practices. Religious traditions provide parents with ethical principles concerning family relationships, children's moral development, discipline, compassion, responsibility, and social obligations. Empirical studies indicate that religious involvement positively contributes to parental engagement, family cohesion, moral education, prosocial behavior, and children's psychological well-being (Mahoney, 2010; King & Boyatzis, 2015). Consequently, religious parenting represents not merely theological instruction but a comprehensive educational process that integrates moral values into children's everyday experiences.

Within this broader context, Hinduism offers one of the oldest and most comprehensive educational traditions concerning child development and character formation. Hindu educational philosophy regards education not merely as intellectual achievement but as a lifelong process of cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, self-control, responsibility, and spiritual maturity (Radhakrishnan, 1996). Accordingly, the family functions as the primary institution responsible for transmitting *dharma*, moral virtues, and disciplined living to younger generations. Parents are therefore expected not only to nurture children's physical growth but also to cultivate virtues that enable children to become morally responsible and socially beneficial individuals.

Despite the richness of Hindu educational philosophy, contemporary parenting scholarship remains predominantly dominated by Western psychological frameworks. Existing parenting studies primarily discuss parenting styles, attachment, emotional responsiveness, behavioral control, and child development from psychological perspectives, while comparatively limited attention has been devoted to philosophical and religious conceptions of parenting, particularly within Hindu educational traditions (Bornstein, 2019). Studies concerning Hinduism frequently emphasize rituals, religious practices, or spirituality without systematically examining parenting as a coherent educational framework for character development. Consequently, Hindu perspectives on parenting remain underrepresented within international educational research despite their rich philosophical foundations.

The increasing concern regarding declining discipline, responsibility, and perseverance among contemporary children makes the exploration of alternative educational perspectives particularly timely. Modern societies require individuals who possess not only academic competence but also resilience, ethical judgment, self-control, adaptability, and lifelong commitment to learning (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). These competencies cannot be developed solely through formal education but require sustained support from families, communities, and cultural traditions. Therefore, parenting deserves renewed scholarly attention as an essential foundation for character formation in the twenty-first century.

Although numerous studies have investigated parenting styles, character education, and children's socio-emotional development, relatively few have explored how Hindu educational philosophy conceptualizes parenting as a systematic approach for cultivating discipline and perseverance in children. This gap is significant because Hindu philosophy provides a holistic understanding of human development that integrates ethical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions into a unified educational framework. Examining Hindu perspectives on parenting therefore contributes not only to comparative educational research but also enriches contemporary discussions regarding culturally grounded approaches to character education. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine Hindu perspectives on parenting and to analyze how Hindu educational values contribute to cultivating discipline and perseverance among children within contemporary society.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library research approach to explore Hindu perspectives on parenting in cultivating discipline and perseverance in children. Library research was selected because the study sought to examine philosophical concepts, educational values, and parenting principles embedded in Hindu scriptures and relevant academic literature rather than collecting empirical field data. The primary data sources consisted of authoritative Hindu texts, including the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Manava Dharmaśāstra* (*Manusmṛiti*), *Chanakya Nīti*, and selected Upaniṣads, which provide normative teachings concerning

parenting, moral education, self-discipline, and character formation. Secondary data were obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and international publications on parenting, child development, character education, moral education, and educational philosophy. The selection of literature emphasized credibility, scholarly relevance, and contemporary contributions to parenting and educational research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snyder, 2019).

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, which enabled the systematic identification, categorization, and interpretation of themes related to parenting, discipline, perseverance, and character education within Hindu educational philosophy. Following the procedures proposed by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), the analysis involved three stages: data organization, thematic coding, and interpretative synthesis. To enhance analytical rigor, the findings from Hindu scriptures were continuously compared with contemporary theories of parenting and character education through an interpretive and comparative approach. This process facilitated the identification of convergences and distinctive contributions of Hindu educational thought to contemporary parenting discourse. The trustworthiness of the study was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing multiple classical Hindu texts with recent scholarly literature, thereby ensuring consistency, credibility, and interpretive validity of the findings (Bowen, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Discussion

Parenting Conceptualized within Hindu Educational

Parenting occupies a central position in Hindu educational philosophy because the family is regarded as the earliest and most influential institution in shaping children's intellectual, moral, emotional, social, and spiritual development. Unlike many contemporary parenting models that primarily emphasize psychological well-being or behavioral management, Hindu educational philosophy understands parenting as a sacred duty (*dharma*) through which parents guide children toward becoming morally responsible, self-disciplined, and spiritually conscious human beings. Consequently, parenting is not merely concerned with meeting children's physical needs but with nurturing virtues that enable them to fulfill their responsibilities toward themselves, their families, society, nature, and ultimately God (Radhakrishnan, 2008; Bilimoria, 2007).

The philosophical foundation of Hindu parenting originates from the understanding that education is fundamentally a process of character formation. Hindu education does not separate intellectual development from ethical cultivation because knowledge (*vidyā*) is considered meaningful only when accompanied by virtuous conduct (*ācāra*). Therefore, parents function as the first teachers (*ādi guru*) who introduce children to moral values through daily interaction, exemplary behavior, discipline, affection, and religious practice. This holistic conception is reflected throughout Hindu scriptures, which consistently portray the household (*grhastha āśrama*) as the primary environment for transmitting ethical values across generations (Sharma, 2003).

One of the earliest scriptural foundations concerning parental responsibility appears in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, which emphasizes that education begins with reverence toward one's parents before extending to teachers and society. The text states: *Mātr devo bhava, pitṛ devo bhava, ācārya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava*: "Regard your mother as God; regard your father as God; regard your teacher as God; regard your guest as God." (Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Śikṣāvallī 1.11.2)

This famous instruction illustrates that parents occupy an exalted educational position within Hindu philosophy. They are not simply biological caregivers but moral exemplars whose conduct becomes the foundation of children's ethical development. The injunction also demonstrates that parenting is inseparable from education because children first learn respect, responsibility, humility, and gratitude through their relationship with parents before entering formal educational institutions (Radhakrishnan, 1953).

The Upaniṣadic perspective reflects a relational understanding of education in which knowledge is transmitted not only through verbal instruction but also through lived experience and exemplary conduct. Hindu educational philosophy therefore recognizes modeling as one of the most effective pedagogical methods. Children naturally imitate parental behavior; consequently, parents are expected to embody virtues such as honesty (*satya*), self-control (*dama*), compassion (*dayā*), patience (*kṣamā*), and discipline (*niyama*). This educational principle remarkably corresponds with Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, which argues that children primarily acquire attitudes and behaviors through observation and imitation of significant adults. Although developed in different historical and cultural contexts, both perspectives acknowledge that parental example constitutes one of the strongest influences on children's character formation.

The importance of parental responsibility is further elaborated in the Manava Dharmaśāstra (Manusmṛti), one of the principal Hindu legal and ethical texts concerning family life and education. Manusmṛti emphasizes that children require continuous guidance to develop virtuous character rather than relying solely on natural maturation. A well-known passage states: *Ācāraḥ paramo dharmah*: "Right conduct is the highest dharma." (Manusmṛti 1.108)

Although concise, this verse establishes an essential educational principle: ethical conduct constitutes the highest expression of religious life. Within the context of parenting, this teaching implies that parents should prioritize cultivating righteous behavior rather

than merely transmitting knowledge or material success. Character becomes the primary educational objective because good conduct enables individuals to fulfill their social, moral, and spiritual responsibilities. Accordingly, Hindu parenting emphasizes habituation, repetition, and moral discipline as essential pedagogical strategies through which children internalize virtuous behavior.

This emphasis on habituation reflects one of the distinguishing characteristics of Hindu educational philosophy. Virtues are not regarded as innate qualities but as dispositions gradually formed through repeated practice (*abhyāsa*), disciplined living, and continuous moral guidance. Parents therefore serve as facilitators who create family environments encouraging truthfulness, responsibility, self-control, respect, compassion, and perseverance. Daily religious practices such as prayer, scriptural recitation, temple worship, service to others (*seva*), and participation in religious ceremonies function as educational experiences through which children internalize ethical values. These practices illustrate that Hindu parenting extends beyond verbal instruction by integrating moral education into everyday family life (Sharma, 2003).

Another important characteristic of Hindu parenting is its holistic understanding of child development. Hindu philosophy recognizes that education should simultaneously cultivate intellectual competence, emotional maturity, ethical integrity, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Consequently, successful parenting cannot be measured solely by children's academic achievement but rather by their ability to demonstrate self-discipline, compassion, honesty, humility, perseverance, and commitment to *dharma*. Such an educational orientation differs from contemporary educational systems that frequently prioritize academic performance while assigning comparatively less attention to character formation. In this respect, Hindu educational philosophy offers an integrated vision in which knowledge and morality remain inseparable dimensions of human development (Radhakrishnan, 2008).

The philosophical foundation of Hindu parenting is further strengthened by the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which consistently emphasize self-mastery, disciplined action, and continuous practice as the basis of human excellence. Unlike parenting approaches that rely primarily on external control or punishment, Hindu philosophy encourages parents to cultivate children's internal capacity for self-regulation. The ultimate goal is not merely obedience but the development of individuals who voluntarily choose righteous actions because they have internalized moral values. Such an educational orientation reflects what contemporary educational psychology describes as intrinsic motivation and autonomous self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). One of the most significant teachings concerning character formation appears in the *Bhagavad Gītā* 6.5:

*uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ*
(Bhagavad Gītā, 6.5)

Translation:

"One should elevate oneself by one's own mind and never degrade oneself. The self alone is one's friend, and the self alone is one's enemy." (Radhakrishnan, 2008).

This verse illustrates one of the central objectives of Hindu parenting: enabling children to become capable of governing themselves rather than depending upon constant external supervision. Parents are therefore expected to guide children toward developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and personal responsibility from an early age. Discipline is understood not as fear of punishment but as the ability to regulate one's own thoughts, emotions, and actions according to *dharma*. This understanding closely parallels contemporary theories of self-regulated learning, which argue that successful learners actively monitor, evaluate, and direct their own behavior rather than relying solely on external control (Zimmerman, 2000).

Closely related to self-discipline is the concept of perseverance. Hindu educational philosophy consistently teaches that meaningful achievement requires continuous effort despite obstacles or delayed results. This principle is expressed in one of the most frequently cited verses of the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi.*
(Bhagavad Gītā, 2.47)

Translation:

"You have the right to perform your prescribed duty, but never to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself the cause of the results, and never become attached to inaction." (Radhakrishnan, 2008).

Within the context of parenting, this teaching encourages parents to cultivate perseverance by emphasizing effort rather than immediate success. Children should be taught that genuine achievement emerges through dedication, patience, and continuous

practice instead of instant results. Such an educational philosophy resonates strongly with Duckworth et al.'s (2007) concept of *grit*, which identifies sustained commitment and perseverance toward long-term goals as important predictors of success. Rather than praising children exclusively for achievement, Hindu parenting encourages appreciation of sincere effort, disciplined practice, and moral commitment.

Another important educational principle within Hindu parenting concerns the gradual formation of virtues through repeated practice (*abhyāsa*). Character is not viewed as an inherited trait but as a disposition developed through continuous habituation. This principle corresponds closely with Aristotle's concept of virtue ethics as well as contemporary theories of habit formation. Parents therefore assume responsibility for creating family routines that consistently reinforce desirable behaviors through prayer, study, service, discipline, and participation in religious life. These repeated experiences gradually transform external guidance into internal moral awareness. The developmental nature of parenting is particularly evident in *Chanakya Nīti*, one of the most influential classical works on ethics and governance. Chanakya proposes that parenting strategies should change according to children's developmental stages:

*lālayet pañca varṣāṇi daśa varṣāṇi tāḍayet
prāpte tu ṣoḍaśe varṣe putraṁ mitravad ācaret.*
(Chanakya Nīti, Chapter 3)

Translation:

"Cherish a child during the first five years, discipline the child during the next ten years, and when the child reaches sixteen years of age, treat him as a friend." (Chanakya, 2009).

Although composed more than two thousand years ago, this teaching remarkably anticipates modern developmental psychology. The verse recognizes that children's cognitive, emotional, and social capacities change over time; therefore, parenting methods must also evolve. Early childhood requires affection and emotional security, middle childhood demands consistent guidance and discipline, while adolescence calls for dialogue, mutual respect, and increasing autonomy. Contemporary parenting research similarly concludes that authoritative parenting—combining warmth with appropriate behavioral expectations—produces optimal developmental outcomes because it balances emotional support with gradually increasing independence (Baumrind, 1967; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Hindu parenting conceptualizes parents as moral exemplars rather than merely authority figures. Children acquire ethical values primarily through observing parental behavior in daily life. Consequently, virtues such as honesty (*satya*), compassion (*dayā*), self-restraint (*dama*), generosity (*dāna*), humility (*vinaya*), and perseverance become educational practices demonstrated through lived experience rather than abstract instruction. This pedagogical principle strongly corresponds with Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, which maintains that observational learning constitutes one of the most powerful mechanisms through which children acquire attitudes and behaviors.

Another distinctive contribution of Hindu educational philosophy lies in its holistic understanding of educational success. Modern educational systems frequently prioritize academic performance and cognitive achievement, whereas Hindu parenting places equal emphasis on moral integrity, emotional maturity, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. Success is therefore measured not merely by intellectual accomplishment but by one's capacity to practice *dharma*, contribute to society, and exercise self-control throughout life. This holistic orientation closely aligns with UNESCO's (2021) vision of education, which advocates integrating cognitive, ethical, social, and emotional dimensions into lifelong learning.

Hindu educational philosophy conceptualizes parenting as a sacred educational process through which parents cultivate disciplined, perseverant, compassionate, and morally responsible individuals. Parenting is understood as an expression of *dharma* requiring continuous guidance, exemplary conduct, habituation, and spiritual nurturing. Classical Hindu texts consistently portray parents as children's first teachers whose responsibility extends beyond physical care to the comprehensive formation of character. Consequently, Hindu parenting contributes a distinctive educational framework that integrates moral philosophy, spiritual wisdom, and developmental principles in ways that remain highly relevant to contemporary discussions on character education and child development. By emphasizing self-discipline, perseverance, moral habituation, and parental role modeling, Hindu educational philosophy offers enduring insights for strengthening family-based character education in the twenty-first century.

Discipline as the Foundation of Character Formation in Hindu Parenting

Discipline is regarded as one of the fundamental virtues in Hindu educational philosophy because it enables individuals to regulate their thoughts, emotions, speech, and behavior according to *dharma*. Rather than defining discipline merely as obedience to authority, Hindu scriptures emphasize the cultivation of inner self-control (*dama*) and ethical awareness. Within this perspective, parents are

entrusted with the responsibility of guiding children toward developing self-discipline through continuous practice, moral habituation, and exemplary conduct. Consequently, discipline is understood not as an external form of coercion but as an internal quality that allows individuals to make righteous decisions independently throughout their lives (Sharma, 2003; Radhakrishnan, 2008). One of the most profound illustrations of self-discipline appears in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad, where the relationship between the body, mind, senses, and intellect is explained through the famous chariot allegory:

*ātmānaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śarīraṁ ratham eva tu
buddhiṁ tu sārathiṁ viddhi manaḥ pragraham eva ca
(Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.3)*

Translation:

"Know the Self as the lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind as the reins." (Radhakrishnan, 1953)

The metaphor portrays human life as a journey requiring careful regulation of the mind and senses. Just as a charioteer must skillfully control the reins to guide the horses toward their destination, parents are expected to assist children in developing the capacity to regulate impulses, desires, and emotions. Without disciplined guidance, the senses may dominate the individual, leading to impulsive behavior and moral confusion. Therefore, Hindu parenting seeks to strengthen children's intellect (*buddhi*) so that reason and ethical judgment consistently govern emotional impulses. This educational philosophy demonstrates that discipline originates from the harmonious integration of cognition, emotion, and moral awareness rather than from external punishment. The importance of continuously training the mind is further emphasized in the Bhagavad Gītā. Acknowledging that the human mind is naturally restless, Lord Kṛṣṇa advises that self-control is achieved through persistent practice and detachment:

*yato yato niścarati manaś cañcalam asthiram
tatas tato niyamyaitad ātmany eva vaśaṁ nayet.
Bhagavad Gītā 6.26)*

Translation:

"Whenever the restless and unsteady mind wanders away, one should bring it back under the control of the Self." (Radhakrishnan, 2008)

This verse provides a significant educational principle for parenting. Children naturally experience distraction, emotional fluctuation, and inconsistent behavior as part of their developmental process. Hindu educational philosophy does not interpret these tendencies as personal failures but as opportunities for continuous guidance. Parents therefore play an essential role in patiently redirecting children's attention toward constructive behavior rather than responding primarily through punishment. Discipline becomes an ongoing educational process in which mistakes are corrected through encouragement, consistency, and repeated practice. The *Bhagavad Gītā* further explains the means through which discipline can ultimately be achieved:

*asaṁsayāṁ mahābāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam
abhyāsa tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate
(Bhagavad Gītā 6.35)*

Translation:

"Undoubtedly, the mind is restless and difficult to control; yet it can be controlled through constant practice and detachment." (Radhakrishnan, 2008)

The concept of *abhyāsa* (continuous practice) represents one of the most important contributions of Hindu educational philosophy to parenting. Character is not regarded as an innate attribute but as a disposition gradually developed through repeated moral action. Parents therefore cultivate discipline by establishing consistent family routines, encouraging responsibility, involving children in religious observances, promoting regular study habits, and reinforcing ethical behavior through everyday experience. Contemporary educational psychology similarly recognizes that self-regulation develops progressively through repeated opportunities for practice supported by caring adults (Zimmerman, 2000).

The significance of disciplined living is also emphasized in the Manava Dharmaśāstra, particularly in its discussion of self-restraint and personal conduct during the stage of disciplined learning. Rather than focusing solely on external rules, the text stresses the cultivation of moderation, restraint, and ethical behavior as indispensable foundations of personal development (Olivelle, 2005). This perspective indicates that discipline encompasses daily habits such as controlling speech, respecting elders, maintaining

cleanliness, practicing humility, and fulfilling one's responsibilities. Such values are primarily acquired within the family, where parents consistently model appropriate conduct and provide opportunities for children to internalize moral habits.

From a contemporary educational perspective, these scriptural teachings closely correspond with theories of self-regulated learning and character education. Zimmerman (2000) argues that effective learners monitor and regulate their own thoughts and behaviors through continuous reflection and practice, while Lickona (1991) emphasizes that character education requires habituation, moral modeling, and repeated opportunities to practice virtue. Hindu educational philosophy anticipated these educational principles by proposing that discipline is cultivated gradually through *abhyāsa*, parental example, and lifelong commitment to *dharma*. Thus, discipline is not viewed as an isolated behavioral objective but as the essential foundation upon which perseverance, responsibility, compassion, and wisdom can flourish.

Perseverance as a Core Character Value in Hindu Child Upbringing

Perseverance occupies a central position in Hindu educational philosophy because the attainment of knowledge, virtue, and spiritual maturity is understood as a gradual process requiring continuous effort rather than instantaneous achievement. Hindu scriptures consistently portray perseverance as a moral strength that enables individuals to remain steadfast in fulfilling their duties despite obstacles, failures, or delayed success. Consequently, perseverance is not interpreted merely as persistence toward personal achievement but as unwavering commitment to *dharma*, self-improvement, and lifelong learning. Within the context of parenting, parents are therefore expected to cultivate resilience, diligence, patience, and commitment in children through consistent guidance, moral encouragement, and habitual practice rather than through excessive pressure or immediate expectations (Radhakrishnan, 2008; Sharma, 2003).

The educational importance of perseverance is clearly illustrated in the Mahābhārata, particularly in the *Śānti Parva*, which emphasizes that noble character develops through continuous self-discipline and unwavering commitment to righteous conduct. Bhīṣma teaches Yudhiṣṭhira that perseverance in practicing virtue gradually transforms human character and ultimately determines one's destiny. One representative teaching states:

*dhṛtiḥ kṣamā damo'steyaṁ śaucam indriya-nigrahaḥ
dhīr vidyā satyam akrodho daśakam dharma-lakṣaṇam*
(Manusmṛti 6.92)

Translation:

"Steadfastness, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity, control of the senses, wisdom, knowledge, truthfulness, and freedom from anger are the ten characteristics of dharma." (Olivelle, 2005)

Although this verse is also found in the *Manusmṛti* (6.92), it is frequently cited in the broader Dharmaśāstra tradition because it summarizes the ethical qualities expected of an ideal individual (Olivelle, 2005). Among these virtues, **dhṛti** (steadfastness or perseverance) appears first, indicating its foundational role in sustaining all other virtues. From the perspective of parenting, children cannot develop honesty, self-control, or responsibility without first acquiring the capacity to persist when confronted with challenges. Parents therefore nurture perseverance by encouraging children to complete responsibilities, remain committed to learning, and overcome difficulties with patience rather than abandoning tasks prematurely.

The emphasis on perseverance is further reinforced in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which presents Prahlāda as an exemplary model of unwavering faith and moral courage despite severe adversity. Surrounded by intimidation and repeated attempts to abandon his values, Prahlāda remained steadfast in his devotion to Lord Viṣṇu and refused to compromise his principles. His story illustrates that perseverance is not merely physical endurance but moral resilience grounded in spiritual conviction (Bryant, 2007). For parents, Prahlāda's example demonstrates that children's perseverance should be cultivated through the development of strong moral identity and unwavering commitment to truth rather than solely through competitive achievement. When children possess clear ethical purpose, they become more capable of confronting failure, peer pressure, and social difficulties without sacrificing their principles. Another important educational source is the Hitopadeśa, a classical Sanskrit collection of moral narratives designed to educate young learners through stories and practical wisdom. One of its most frequently cited teachings declares:

*udyamena hi siddhyanti kāryāṇi na manorathaiḥ
na hi suptasya śiṃhasya praviśanti mukhe mrgāḥ*

Translation:

"Success is achieved through effort, not by mere wishes. Even a sleeping lion does not have deer enter its mouth." (Kale, (2021).

This verse conveys a powerful educational lesson concerning perseverance and personal responsibility. Achievement results from diligent effort rather than passive expectation or innate ability. Within Hindu parenting, this principle encourages parents to praise persistence, discipline, and continuous improvement instead of emphasizing talent alone. Children gradually learn that meaningful accomplishment requires sustained effort, patience, and commitment over time. This educational philosophy closely corresponds with contemporary research on grit, which identifies perseverance and sustained passion for long-term goals as stronger predictors of success than intelligence alone (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Modern educational psychology likewise recognizes perseverance as a fundamental component of resilience and lifelong learning. Duckworth et al. (2007) argue that individuals who consistently pursue long-term goals despite obstacles demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement, occupational success, and psychological well-being. Likewise, Dweck (2006) proposes that children who develop a growth mindset perceive challenges as opportunities for learning rather than indicators of failure. These contemporary perspectives resonate strongly with Hindu educational philosophy, which has long emphasized continuous practice, patience, and commitment to *dharma* as essential characteristics of human development. Rather than measuring success solely through immediate outcomes, both traditions value the enduring process of character formation through persistent effort.

From the perspective of Hindu parenting, perseverance is cultivated primarily through family life. Parents establish routines that require children to fulfill daily responsibilities, complete assigned tasks, participate in religious practices, and contribute to household welfare. Such repeated experiences gradually develop resilience, responsibility, and confidence because children learn that difficulties are natural components of personal growth rather than reasons for discouragement. Encouragement, constructive feedback, and moral example become essential pedagogical strategies through which parents help children maintain motivation during periods of challenge. Consequently, perseverance is not transmitted through verbal instruction alone but through lived educational experiences embedded within everyday family practices.

Hindu scriptures conceptualize perseverance as an indispensable character value that enables children to pursue righteous living with consistency, courage, and determination. The teachings of the *Mahābhārata*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and *Hitopadeśa* collectively demonstrate that perseverance is cultivated through disciplined practice, moral commitment, meaningful purpose, and parental guidance. These scriptural perspectives remain highly relevant to contemporary parenting because modern societies increasingly require children who possess resilience, adaptability, and ethical commitment in the face of rapid social change. Accordingly, Hindu educational philosophy contributes a holistic framework in which perseverance is understood not merely as persistence toward external success but as the continuous cultivation of moral excellence and lifelong dedication to *dharma*.

The Contribution of Hindu Parenting to Contemporary Character Education

Contemporary character education increasingly recognizes that academic excellence alone is insufficient to prepare children for the complex challenges of the twenty-first century. Global educational frameworks now emphasize the development of ethical values, resilience, responsibility, empathy, self-regulation, and lifelong learning as essential competencies for sustainable human development (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2021). However, many contemporary approaches to character education remain largely grounded in psychological and pedagogical theories, often paying limited attention to the philosophical and spiritual foundations that shape moral behavior. In this context, Hindu perspectives on parenting offer a holistic educational framework that integrates intellectual, moral, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of child development into a coherent system of character formation.

One of the most significant contributions of Hindu parenting lies in its understanding of parents as the first and most influential educators in children's lives. Hindu educational philosophy views the family not merely as a social institution but as the primary environment in which children internalize moral values through observation, habituation, and participation in everyday family life. This perspective aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that children's development is profoundly influenced by their immediate social environment, particularly the family. Likewise, Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory explains that children primarily acquire behaviors through observing significant role models. Hindu parenting extends these theoretical perspectives by emphasizing that parents must exemplify virtues such as honesty (*satya*), compassion (*dayā*), self-control (*dama*), humility (*vinaya*), and responsibility, thereby transforming moral education into a lived experience rather than a purely cognitive process.

Another important contribution concerns the integration of character education with daily practice. Contemporary educational programs often deliver moral education through classroom instruction or isolated character-building activities. In contrast, Hindu parenting emphasizes continuous moral habituation, whereby ethical values are cultivated through regular participation in prayer, family rituals, community service (*sevā*), respect for elders, and responsible fulfillment of daily duties. Such practices transform abstract ethical principles into habitual behaviors, allowing children to internalize virtues through repeated experience. This educational approach closely corresponds with Lickona's (1991) assertion that effective character education requires moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action to develop simultaneously. Hindu parenting reinforces these three dimensions by embedding ethical learning within everyday family interactions rather than treating morality as an isolated subject of instruction.

Hindu parenting contributes a distinctive conception of discipline and perseverance by emphasizing intrinsic moral motivation instead of external rewards or punishment. Contemporary psychological theories increasingly acknowledge the importance of autonomous motivation in promoting long-term behavioral consistency (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Similarly, Hindu educational philosophy encourages children to practice discipline because it reflects their commitment to *dharma*, not merely to satisfy parental expectations or avoid sanctions. This internal orientation nurtures moral autonomy, enabling children to regulate their own behavior even in the absence of external supervision. Consequently, Hindu parenting supports the development of self-regulated learners who possess the capacity for ethical decision-making, emotional regulation, and personal responsibility throughout life (Zimmerman, 2000).

The Hindu concept of perseverance also offers valuable insights for contemporary character education. Modern educational research identifies perseverance, resilience, and *grit* as critical predictors of academic achievement and long-term success (Duckworth et al., 2007). Hindu philosophy broadens this understanding by framing perseverance as steadfast commitment to righteous action and continuous self-improvement rather than mere persistence in achieving personal goals. Children are encouraged to embrace challenges as opportunities for moral growth while maintaining humility, patience, and compassion. This broader ethical orientation prevents perseverance from becoming solely achievement-oriented and instead situates it within the cultivation of virtuous character and social responsibility.

Hindu parenting presents an integrated educational vision that transcends the dichotomy between secular and spiritual education. Character development is viewed as inseparable from the cultivation of wisdom (*jñāna*), ethical conduct (*ācāra*), self-discipline (*dama*), and devotion (*bhakti*). Such a holistic framework complements current international discussions concerning education for sustainable development and global citizenship, both of which advocate nurturing morally responsible individuals capable of contributing positively to society (UNESCO, 2021). By integrating ethical values with everyday family practices, Hindu parenting demonstrates that character education is most effective when it becomes an enduring way of life rather than a temporary educational intervention.

Hindu perspectives on parenting make substantial contributions to contemporary theories and practices of character education by offering a holistic, value-centered, and family-based educational framework. Through parental role modeling, moral habituation, intrinsic motivation, and the integration of ethical and spiritual development, Hindu parenting provides enduring educational principles that remain highly relevant in addressing the moral challenges faced by children in the modern world. Rather than replacing contemporary educational theories, Hindu educational philosophy complements them by providing deeper philosophical foundations for cultivating disciplined, resilient, compassionate, and morally responsible future generations.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Hindu perspectives on parenting provide a comprehensive educational philosophy that extends beyond the conventional understanding of parenting as merely fulfilling children's physical and emotional needs. Within Hindu educational thought, parenting is regarded as a sacred responsibility (*dharma*) aimed at nurturing individuals who possess intellectual competence, moral integrity, emotional maturity, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Parents are therefore recognized as children's first educators, whose primary role is to cultivate virtuous character through exemplary conduct, consistent guidance, moral habituation, and participation in religious and cultural practices.

The analysis of Hindu scriptures reveals that discipline and perseverance are not viewed as isolated behavioral traits but as interconnected virtues that form the foundation of character development. Discipline is conceptualized as self-regulation rooted in wisdom, ethical awareness, and control of the mind and senses, while perseverance is understood as steadfast commitment to righteous action, continuous self-improvement, and unwavering dedication to *dharma*. These virtues are cultivated not through authoritarian control or external rewards but through continuous practice (*abhyāsa*), parental role modeling, and meaningful engagement in everyday family life. Such an approach enables children to internalize moral values as enduring personal dispositions rather than temporary behavioral compliance.

This study highlights the continuing relevance of Hindu parenting for contemporary character education. Many current educational systems emphasize cognitive achievement while giving comparatively less attention to moral and spiritual development. Hindu educational philosophy offers a holistic alternative by integrating ethical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions into a unified framework of child development. This perspective complements contemporary theories of character education, self-regulated learning, and social-emotional development by providing deeper philosophical foundations for cultivating intrinsic motivation, resilience, responsibility, and moral autonomy.

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