

# Kutumb Prabodhan: A Study on Culture and Value Transmission with a focus on Social Cohesion in Contemporary Indian Family Systems

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## Abstract

Kutumb Prabodhan or family enlightenment captures the Indian family as the primary source of value transmission, cultural preservation, and moral education. Traditionally, families have served not merely as private households but as the foundation of social cohesion, ensuring intergenerational bonds and collective responsibility. Yet, 2011 Census of India data reveals a structural transition: nearly 70 - 80% of households in metropolitan cities are now nuclear, with joint families constituting less than 20%, and live-in or single-person households slowly increasing. This transformation, while reflective of modernization and urban lifestyles, raises concerns about diminishing intergenerational contact, weakening of cultural anchors, and rising individualistic aspirations. To bridge these gaps, the study revisits the role of Kutumb Prabodhan as a framework that enables families to adapt to changing structures while preserving their cultural essence. This research will facilitate policymakers to enrich family-centered policy design but also provide strategic insights that yield broad societal benefits, including the strengthening of intergenerational bonds, the promotion of cultural continuity, and the fostering of social harmony.

**Keywords:** *Kutumb Prabodhan, Social Cohesion, Value Transmission, Indian Family Systems*

## Introduction

Kutumb Prabodhan, a Sanskrit expression meaning family enlightenment emerges as a powerful conceptual framework. Rooted in Indian cultural traditions, it emphasizes the family's responsibility (men, women, children) of the house to instil values that transcend individual success and contribute to social harmony.

The family, historically India's primary institution of value transmission, is under strain from rapid social transformations. Urbanization, migration for education and employment, and the steady nuclearization of households have fragmented intergenerational living arrangements, reducing opportunities for everyday mentoring and cultural reinforcement. Children now grow up with limited exposure to grandparents, joint decision-making, and shared responsibilities; features once central to building empathy, discipline, and civic-mindedness.

This creates a pressing problem: Indian families are widely acknowledged as important, but their capacity to act as centres of Kutumb Prabodhan, family enlightenment, is increasingly uncertain. Without deliberate efforts, there is a risk of losing continuity in cultural values, intergenerational respect, and civic responsibility.

## Theoretical Framework

### Indigenous and Scriptural Perspectives

Indian scriptures and philosophical texts emphasize the family as a sacred site of moral and cultural transmission:

- The Upanishads describe the family as the first school of *dharma* (duty), *sanskara* (values), and *sanskara* (cultural refinement)
- The Manusmriti underlines the responsibility of parents in shaping children's character through discipline and moral guidance

- Texts on *Suputra* (virtuous children) stress that enlightened families (*Kutumb Prabodhan*) are central to creating responsible, ethical citizens. (See: *The Role of Hindu Family in Shaping the Character of Suputra Children*)

The proposed study on *Kutumb Prabodhan* draws upon an interdisciplinary theoretical foundation integrating classical sociological thought, Indian philosophical traditions, and contemporary empirical insights.

At its core, *Kutumb Prabodhan* is anchored in the view of the family as a moral institution, supported by the works of Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, and further resonating with the Indian scriptural conception of 'Kutumb' (family) as a sacred social unit. This moral dimension positions the family as a crucible for nurturing ethical values, civic responsibility, and emotional balance in a rapidly modernizing society.

The notion of cultural continuity draws upon Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and Clifford Geertz's symbolic anthropology, emphasizing how traditions, rituals, and everyday practices act as vehicles for transmitting cultural and moral capital across generations.

Moral Education within families is interpreted through Kohlberg's stages of moral development, Bandura's social learning theory, and the Gurukul tradition of India, which collectively underscore how moral sensibilities are not innate but cultivated through observation, reinforcement, and dialogic learning within intimate social spaces.

The construct of Intergenerational Agency builds upon Parsons' role theory, Giddens' structuration theory, and Patricia Uberoi's relational sociology. It suggests that family members, especially youth and elders, exercise agency within reciprocal relationships, renegotiating roles and expectations while sustaining social equilibrium.

The dimension of Modernization integrates insights from Ronald Inglehart's value shift theory, Sherry Turkle's work on digital socialization, and recent NFHS (National Family Health Survey) data, indicating how families navigate changing aspirations, gender roles, and digital interactions while striving to retain moral coherence.

Social Cohesion, as articulated by Durkheim, Coleman, and Putnam, provides the sociological glue that binds the study, framing the family as a microcosm of social solidarity and social capital generation, essential for maintaining trust, reciprocity, and collective well-being within communities.

Finally, Family Structure draws from the demographic analyses of Desai, Shah, and Mondal, reflecting the evolving typologies of Indian families from joint to nuclear to hybrid arrangements—and how these shifts influence caregiving patterns, intergenerational dependence, and value transmission.

Together, these constructs form a composite theoretical synthesis, positioning *Kutumb Prabodhan* as an inquiry into how Indian families, situated between tradition and transformation, continue to serve as moral, cultural, and social anchors in an era of rapid

Scholarship on the Indian family has been rich and multidisciplinary, covering demography, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Much of the foundational literature recognizes the Indian family as the central institution for value transmission, identity formation, and social regulation. Classical works in sociology emphasized the joint family system as the archetype of Indian social organization, where intergenerational living created opportunities for shared responsibilities, collective decision-making, and cultural continuity. Over time, however, demographic research has documented steady transformations.

Census and National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data show a decline in joint households and a rise in nuclear families, particularly in urban areas, reflecting the impact of urbanization, migration, and economic mobility. These studies are crucial in highlighting the structural shifts in family organization.

At the same time, contemporary analyses underscore that despite structural changes, the normative and cultural role of families persists. Research by Chakravorty, Goli, and James (2024) demonstrates that families continue to be central to shaping children's moral frameworks and social behaviours, even when household structures evolve. They argue that while modernization creates new pressures, the family remains the primary locus for discipline, empathy, and responsibility. Similarly, studies on family demography note that the weakening of joint systems has not eliminated the family's role but has reconfigured it in new ways, particularly through parenting practices, educational investments, and reliance on digital means of maintaining kinship ties.

In addition, scholarship in cultural anthropology highlights how rituals, festivals, and neighbourhood networks reinforce values within families. These works suggest that Indian families, even when nuclearized, remain embedded in broader community networks that provide continuity of cultural practices. However, evidence also suggests that urban lifestyles, time constraints, and digital distractions often reduce the depth of these practices. Scholars such as Ni Wayan Sumertini, in her work on the role of Hindu family traditions, argue that children's moral development is deeply shaped by early family experiences, and the weakening of intergenerational mentoring can have long-term consequences for civic and social responsibility.

Global perspectives further enrich this discourse. Studies from East Asian contexts emphasize the centrality of Confucian traditions in shaping intergenerational respect, offering useful comparative insights for Indian debates on family values. Similarly, Western sociological theories on family socialization stress that early childhood experiences within the family profoundly shape adult personality and social engagement. These perspectives reinforce the universal importance of families as sites of value transmission, even as specific cultural articulations differ.

In recent years, Indian scholarship has also connected family changes to broader developmental outcomes. Researchers have examined how family structures influence educational attainment, gender roles, and social mobility. Evidence suggests that nuclearization often increases individual autonomy but may also contribute to isolation, stress, and the weakening of caregiving networks for the elderly. Studies on migration add another dimension: children growing up in migrant families often face dislocation from grandparents and traditional kin, which impacts their exposure to cultural traditions and moral guidance.

Policy-oriented literature provides yet another perspective. While the Indian state invests heavily in education, health, and livelihood, relatively little policy work has explicitly recognized the family as a site of cultural preservation and moral development. Documents such as the National Education Policy (2020) acknowledge the importance of values and ethics but stop short of integrating families into this vision.

Civil society organizations, particularly those aligned with cultural renewal movements, have attempted to fill this gap. The ethos of Kutumb Prabodhan, encouraged by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), explicitly situates the family as the foundation of societal harmony, advocating for intergenerational mentoring, respect for elders, and cultivation of civic virtues within households. While some academic work has analyzed these cultural interventions, systematic research on their implications for family and social policy remains sparse.

Overall, the critical review of literature suggests three key strands. First, demographic and sociological research documents the structural transformations of Indian families under modernization. Second,

cultural and psychological studies emphasize the enduring role of families in value transmission, even amid nuclearization. Third, policy analyses reveal a gap in explicitly supporting families as institutions of enlightenment and moral development. Together, these strands provide the foundation for this proposed study, which seeks to systematically examine how the concept of *Kutumb Prabodhan* can be mobilized to strengthen families as agents of cultural continuity and social harmony in contemporary India.

## Research Gaps

The following research gaps have been identified through a rigorous review of the literature:

1. Existing scholarship on Indian families is largely structural, focusing on the shift from joint to nuclear households, but there is limited research on how these structural changes affect the cultural and moral role of families.
2. There is insufficient understanding of the mechanisms through which values are transmitted across generations in diverse family contexts, particularly within urban and migrant households.
3. The connection between family institutions and national developmental frameworks remains underexplored, with little systematic attention to families as agents of social cohesion.
4. There is a lack of structured analysis on how government initiatives, community programs, and cultural interventions can strengthen families as moral and cultural anchors.
5. While extensive research exists on family dynamics and socio-cultural continuity, there is a paucity of studies examining how traditional family ethics, such as those rooted in *Kutumb Prabodhan*, translate into economic behaviour, governance practices, and sustainability within family-managed businesses. The intersection between familial value systems and economic resilience, particularly their contribution to *Sampanna Bharat-Samriddh Bharat* through ethical entrepreneurship and intergenerational stewardship; remains largely underexplored.

The proposed study addresses these gaps in three ways. *First*, it shifts the lens from structural analysis to cultural analysis, foregrounding families as institutions of enlightenment. *Second*, it examines the mechanisms of value transmission in diverse contexts, including urban and migrant families, using a mixed-methods approach to capture both statistical trends and lived experiences. *Third*, it explicitly connects the role of families to broader policy frameworks, arguing for a systematic recognition of family institutions in India's developmental agenda. By situating the study within the ethos of *Kutumb Prabodhan*, it offers a culturally grounded yet academically rigorous framework to understand and strengthen the family's role in shaping responsible citizens and a harmonious society.

This study is distinctive in its focus on *Kutumb Prabodhan*: family enlightenment, as both a conceptual framework and an analytical lens for understanding contemporary Indian families. While existing scholarship has extensively documented demographic changes, family structures, and caregiving practices, few studies have systematically explored the cultural, moral, and intergenerational dimensions of family life within a distinctly Indian philosophical and socio-cultural context. By foregrounding the roles of men, women and children; the study captures the role of family in social cohesion.

Another unique aspect is the integration of indigenous frameworks with contemporary social science methodologies. The project does not merely apply Western theories of family socialization or value transmission but situates them alongside Indian philosophical and cultural principles, including insights promoted by organizations such as the RSS, which emphasize family as a foundational unit of societal stability and moral development. This dual approach allows for both culturally sensitive interpretation and academically rigorous analysis.

The originality of the study is further enhanced by its mixed-methods design, combining textual and historical analysis with fieldwork across urban and migrant households. By including multiple generational

perspectives: men, women and children, the research captures the relational dynamics of value transmission and sheds light on the negotiation between tradition and modernity.

Finally, the study contributes to policy discourse by linking family-centred cultural practices with contemporary social welfare and education policies, offering actionable insights for strengthening families as agents of moral and civic development. In sum, the research is a novel contribution that bridges indigenous knowledge, sociological inquiry, and policy relevance, advancing both theory and practice in Indian family studies.

### **The specific objectives are:**

- ✓ To examine Kutumb Prabodhan as a framework for cultural continuity, moral education, and social cohesion within contemporary Indian families
- ✓ To assess how intergenerational family systems sustain family values amid modernization, urbanization, and technological change
- ✓ To explore how Kutumb Prabodhan principles contribute to sustainable socio-economic development and governance

### **Research Questions:**

**RQ1:** How does Kutumb Prabodhan contribute to preserving cultural and moral continuity within diverse family structures in India?

**RQ1:** In what ways do intergenerational relationships adapt to modernization and digital influences while maintaining social cohesion and value transmission?

**RQ3:** How do the principles of Kutumb Prabodhan influence socio-economic sustainability and participatory governance?

### **Hypotheses:**

**H1:** Families that consciously practice elements of Kutumb Prabodhan demonstrate stronger cultural continuity and moral continuity.

- H1(a): Cultural Continuity → Kutumb Prabodhan → Social Cohesion & Civic Responsibility
- H1(b): Moral Education & Value Transmission → Kutumb Prabodhan → Social Cohesion & Civic Responsibility
- H1(c): Intergenerational & Gendered Agency → Kutumb Prabodhan → Social Cohesion & Civic Responsibility

**H2:** Modernization and digital socialization influence the mode but not the essence of value transmission within Indian families, with intergenerational agency acting as a moderating factor.

**H3:** Kutumb Prabodhan driven families and communities exhibit stronger socio-economic sustainability and participatory governance.

### **Research Methodology**

The proposed study adopts a mixed-methods empirical approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to explore Kutumb Prabodhan as a conceptual and operational framework for fostering cultural continuity, moral education, and social cohesion within Indian families. The rationale for this approach stems from the need to capture both measurable behavioural patterns and contextual lived experiences of intergenerational relationships, caregiving practices, and value transmission within diverse family settings.

The quantitative component enables a systematic measurement and hypothesis testing of relationships among constructs such as cultural continuity, moral education, and social cohesion. It will employ structured surveys using closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to assess the strength of family bonds, respect for elders, empathy, and civic responsibility. This data facilitates construct validation and model testing using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the mediating and moderating relationships among key variables.

The qualitative component complements this by delving into the deeper social meanings and evolving cultural dynamics through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and narrative accounts. It aims to understand how families interpret modernization, how intergenerational relationships are negotiated, and how traditional practices adapt to digital lifestyles. Expert consultations with educators, employers, and policymakers will further link familial moral education to broader socio-economic outcomes. This combination ensures methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing both validity and interpretive depth.

Data collection was conducted through both online (Google Forms) and in-person field surveys to ensure geographical reach. Qualitative data will be gathered using recorded interviews and transcripts coded for thematic analysis. Secondary data sources such as census reports, policy papers, and academic literature will supplement primary findings and provide a comparative framework for interpreting results within India's evolving socio-cultural context.

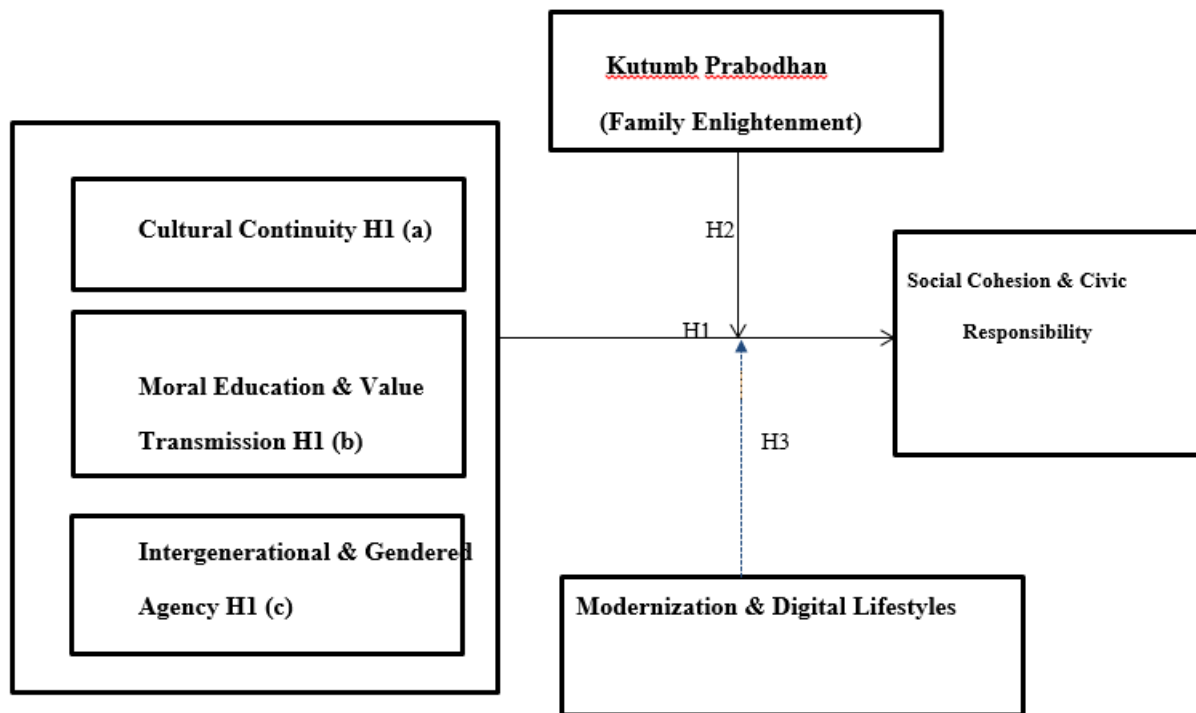
The expected outcome of this mixed-methods design is a culturally grounded and policy-relevant framework that can inform future initiatives aimed at reinforcing family-based moral education and civic responsibility.

### **Sampling Design**

The study adopts a stratified multi-stage sampling design to ensure comprehensive and representative data collection. The unit of analysis comprises families, including men, women, and children aged 12 years and above, with a specific focus on families engaged in family-managed businesses as well as residents of old-age homes. In total, the study includes 1,000 participants. Geographically, the data has been collected from urban and semi-urban areas across different zones of Northern India, ensuring diversity in socio-cultural contexts.

The research is grounded in a cross-sectional, explanatory, and correlational design aimed at empirically validating *Kutumb Prabodhan* as a mediating construct that links cultural and moral dimensions to outcomes such as social cohesion and civic responsibility. Furthermore, the study examines how this relationship is influenced by moderating factors such as modernization and digital exposure, thereby capturing both causal pathways and relational dynamics within contemporary family structures.

### Development of Theoretical Model:



This framework posits that families function as moral and cultural ecosystems. When cultural continuity, moral education, and inclusive intergenerational engagement are strong, they enhance *Kutumb Prabodhan*, the enlightened, cohesive family unit. This, in turn, promotes empathy, cooperation, and civic-mindedness in society. However, modernization and digital lifestyles act as moderating influences, potentially amplifying or diluting these traditional linkages depending on exposure and adaptability.

- Independent Variables (IVs): Cultural Continuity, Moral Education & Value Transmission, Intergenerational & Gendered Agency
- Mediator: Kutumb Prabodhan (Family Enlightenment)
- Dependent Variable (DV): Social Cohesion & Civic Responsibility
- Moderating Variable (MV): Modernization & Digital Lifestyles

### Results and Interpretation

This framework captures how family-based moral and cultural practices (mediated through Kutumb Prabodhan) contribute to stronger social cohesion, even under the influences of urbanization, technological change, and modernization. It provides a structured approach to investigate the interplay of traditional values and contemporary family dynamics in India.

The study has employed a rigorous mixed-method analytical framework to ensure both depth and statistical robustness. A pilot study involving approximately 80–100 respondents (about 8–10% of the total sample of 1,000 participants) has been conducted to refine the conceptual model and validate the reliability of the questionnaire, achieving acceptable internal consistency levels (Cronbach's alpha  $\geq 0.70$ ). Collaboration has been established with an NGO managing an old-age home, facilitating access to elderly respondents and enriching contextual understanding. For qualitative analysis, nearly 40–50 in-depth interviews along with 6–8 focus group discussions have been conducted and analyzed using NVIVO, enabling systematic thematic coding and identification of recurring patterns related to family values, modernization, and intergenerational dynamics.

On the quantitative front, the data has undergone Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using SPSS to identify latent constructs (with factor loadings  $\geq 0.50$ ), followed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to establish convergent and discriminant validity (AVE  $\geq 0.50$ , CR  $\geq 0.70$ ). Subsequently, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS has been employed to test hypothesized relationships, including mediation and moderation effects, supported by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to ensure statistical significance and model stability. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings through triangulation has further strengthened the validity, reliability, and overall explanatory power of the study.

Overall, this empirical, multi-layered design ensures that *Kutumb Prabodhan* is examined not merely as a theoretical construct but as a living socio-cultural phenomenon, capturing how Indian families balance tradition and modernity while remaining central to moral and civic development in contemporary society.

### **Managerial Implications and Future Perspectives**

This research promises to be innovative in its integration of indigenous concepts of family enlightenment with contemporary social science methodologies, offering a framework that bridges traditional Indian thought with modern family studies. While much of the existing literature addresses structural changes in families- joint vs. nuclear, urbanization, and migration, few studies systematically examine the normative and moral dimensions of family life in transmitting values across generations. By foregrounding the notion of *Kutumb Prabodhan*, the study treats the family as an institution of moral, cultural, and social education rather than merely a demographic or economic unit.

The research also shows signs of being path-breaking in its empirical and conceptual scope. Methodologically, it combines textual analysis of classical Indian philosophical, religious, and reformist texts with field-based qualitative and quantitative data, creating a multi-layered understanding of family functions. This mixed-methods approach allows for the development of an indigenous theoretical framework for studying contemporary Indian families, which can be applied across diverse socio-cultural and regional contexts.

Another innovative dimension is that while existing research often overlooks relational dynamics within the household, this study captures the interplay between men, women and children, examining both support and resistance in sustaining family values. This relational perspective enables a nuanced understanding of how modern pressures - employment, education, migration, and digitalization interact with traditional expectations, leading to adaptive practices of family enlightenment.

The research also incorporates the RSS ethos into academic inquiry and hence also merging a policy-oriented perspective, offering actionable insights for interventions in family welfare.

The proposed research is expected to contribute substantially to both academic knowledge and applied social science discourse. Conceptually, it will introduce *Kutumb Prabodhan* as a theoretical framework for understanding family enlightenment, moral education, and intergenerational value transmission in India. This framework links roles of family members, cultural practices, and family structures within a coherent paradigm that integrates traditional norms with contemporary transformations, bridging a significant gap in Indian family studies.

Empirically, the study will generate rich, context-sensitive data on the lived experiences across urban and migrant households. By combining qualitative narratives with quantitative household surveys, the research will document how values are imparted, negotiated, and adapted, creating a repository of evidence that captures both continuity and change in Indian families. This data can inform further

research on gender roles, family cohesion, and policy interventions in education and societal development.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates innovation by integrating textual, historical, and field-based data within a unified analytical framework. This mixed-methods design can serve as a model for future studies of indigenous practices, moral socialization, and value transmission in other cultural contexts. The comparative analysis across family types, regions, and socio-economic backgrounds will add granularity and diversity to existing research, enabling a comprehensive understanding of contemporary family dynamics.

From a policy and practice perspective, the research will establish a knowledge base for family-centric interventions, including programs for value-based education, child moral development and practices for society cohesion. The findings will strengthen the evidence for treating families not only as demographic units but as institutions of moral and social education, aligning with broader national goals of societal cohesion and responsible citizenship.

The expected outputs of the study are both academic and applied, contributing to scholarship, policy, and public discourse. Academically, the research will produce:

1. Articles in high quality journals detailing the conceptual framework of Kutumb Prabodhan and intergenerational value transmission.
2. Book chapters examining comparative family structures, regional variations, and the impact of modernization on traditional roles.
3. Conference presentations at national and international aimed at disseminating findings to a wider academic audience and stimulating interdisciplinary dialogue.
4. Inform national initiatives such as Samridh Bharat and programs aligned with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) emphasis on family and societal harmony, by offering an evidence-based framework for strengthening families as moral and cultural institutions.
5. Provide actionable insights for ministries and agencies working on social empowerment, family welfare, and youth development, helping integrate Kutumb Prabodhan principles into policy discourse and community programs.
6. Contribute to curriculum design and capacity-building modules for educators, social workers, and local governance institutions to promote intergenerational understanding and cultural continuity.

This study has direct relevance for policy making in India, addressing contemporary challenges related to family cohesion.

By conceptualizing the family as a source of Kutumb Prabodhan, the research highlights the centrality of family in maintaining social stability, transmitting cultural values, and nurturing responsible citizenship. Recognizing these roles can inform national strategies that go beyond economic or demographic interventions to include cultural and moral dimensions of development.

The study also provides insights for child development and value-based education policies. By documenting practices of moral and cultural transmission within families, policymakers can develop programs that integrate family-led moral education with formal schooling, aligning with the National Education Policy 2020's emphasis on holistic learning and ethical development.

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