



TWO-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

**ON YOUTH,
RELIGION, & SPIRITUALITY**

**EXPLORING IDENTITY, BELIEF, AND BELONGING
IN A DIGITAL AGE**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 15 & 16, 2025

WWW.NBCLCINDIA.ORG

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

In a world increasingly shaped by digital technologies, shifting cultural values, and evolving modes of self-expression, the concepts of religion and spirituality are undergoing a profound transformation, especially among the youth. Defined by the Ministry of Youth Affairs (Government of India) and aligned with UN standards, today's youth belong to the age group of 15 to 29 years, broadly categorised as Generation Z, also known as the Digital Generation or Digital Natives. This generation has grown up in a landscape dominated by smartphones, social media, and instantaneous communication, profoundly influencing their worldviews, practices, and identities. On the other hand, the religion inherited from family is no longer the only way for young people to build their spirituality.

In the Indian context, this demographic constitutes approximately 56% of the population. This section of our population is also described as our demographic dividend, and it holds the potential for growth for the nation. Whole-person development is of great significance for the youth as it encompasses nurturing all aspects of their being, going beyond the development of their academic and professional skills to encompass their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual well-being. This is especially relevant given the demographic preponderance of this section of the population in India and the potential and the promise that it holds. It makes them a central focus for examining contemporary religious and spiritual dynamics. The focus of this seminar will be on spiritual engagement and well-being and the intersections between youth, religion, and spirituality.

While a significant number of young people across the world today identify as spiritual, fewer express affiliation with organised religion. This pattern appears to be different in India, as only 2% of the youth in the age group of 18-34 reveal that they do not believe in God, according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center on Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation, in 2021. Some may be drawn to radical religious, cultural, or ideological movements, which may include extremist views or addictive behaviours that raise social and ethical concerns.

In the waves of secularism, religion should play a significant role in preventing the disconnection of young people from their spirituality.

This role must involve fostering dialogue among the various social spheres that young people navigate - family, school, workplace, social media, friendships, etc. The spirituality of young people is no longer simply a process of traditional inheritance from their families; this presents a significant challenge for religious institutions that have strict core values to be open to dialogue and acceptance. In this evolving landscape, striking a balance between retaining young people and preserving religious traditions is a complex process when we talk about youth and religion.

This seminar aims to bridge academic inquiry with lived realities, offering an inclusive space where critical questions and diverse perspectives on youth, religion, and spirituality can be meaningfully explored. It will also bring into focus how the digital natives engage with religion and spirituality and how these digital platforms may shape this engagement. This paradox of a generation, where some across the world are both disenchanted with institutional religion yet searching for spiritual meaning, poses important questions:

- ✓ Are young people today positively engaging with faith and spiritual traditions?
- ✓ What does "being spiritual" mean in a digital, post-traditional era?
- ✓ How do religious institutions, educators, and social actors respond to the needs and complexities of this youth population?

The seminar seeks to create a dialogic and interdisciplinary space to reflect on these emerging patterns and to explore how youth, in diverse settings, interpret, resist, reinvent, or renew their relationships with religion and spirituality.

This seminar aims to bring together scholars, practitioners, educators, activists, religious and youth leaders to interrogate and understand how young people across diverse contexts are reinterpreting religion and spirituality, and how these engagements influence broader social, cultural, and political processes locally, nationally and internationally.



SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

To explore how digital culture, media, and global influences are reshaping youth experiences of and with religion and spirituality.

To examine the psychological, sociological, and ethical dimensions of religious and spiritual engagement among young people.

To facilitate dialogue among educators, youth practitioners, faith leaders, researchers, and students

To offer insights for both academic understanding and pastoral responses to the spiritual development of youth as part of their whole-person development in India

THEMES

1. **Youth and Spiritual Traditions**
(Engagement with classical and emerging spiritual movements.)
2. **The Psychology of Religion and Youth**
– The focus can be on identity formation, belief systems, trauma, and meaning-making.
3. **Sociology of Youth and Religion** (with an emphasis on the intersections of class, caste, ethnic background, gender, and culture in youth religiosity.)

4. **Youth and Social Media** (Focus on the engagement with online religious expression, spiritual influencers, & digital rituals.)

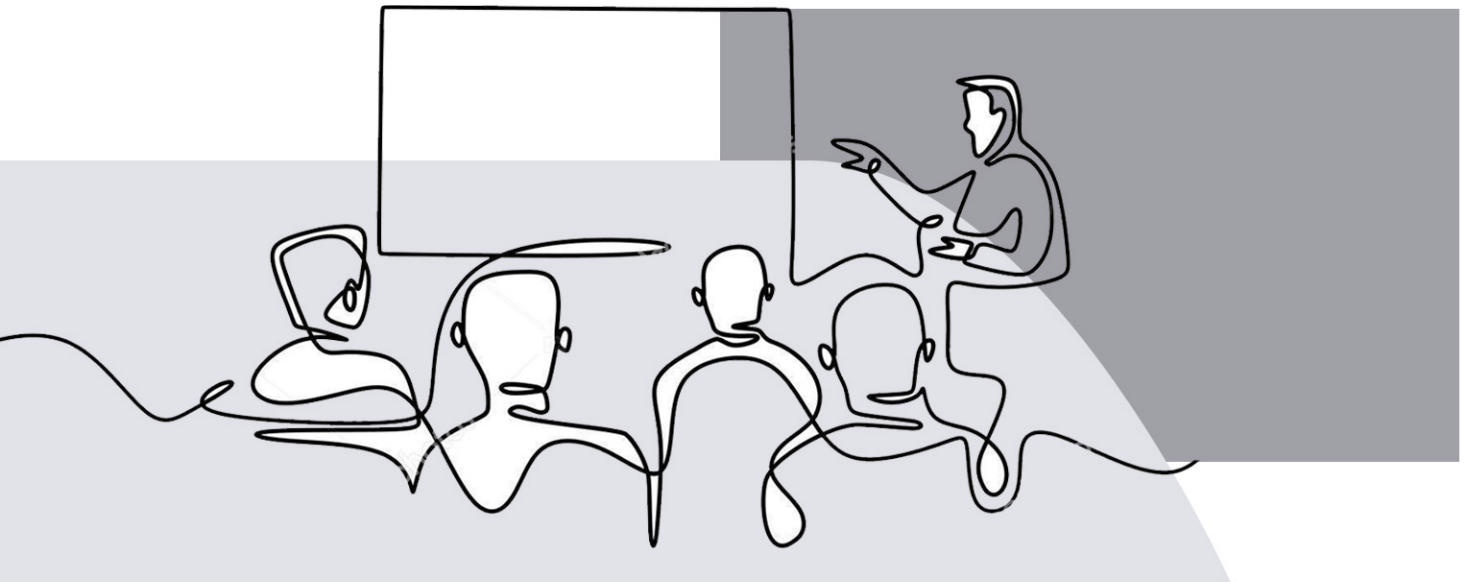
5. **Technology and Advanced Digital Media** (Emergence of AI, virtual reality, and the transformation of sacred spaces.)

6. **Youth and Migration** (Migration is a burning issue among youngsters looking for better opportunities in studies, jobs, and careers. Religion and spirituality are significant can play an important role in this process once they reach the country/region of destination.)

7. **Youth and Volunteering** (Many young people are involved in social projects both nationally and internationally. This is an important aspect to consider in the socialisation process and political engagement of young people towards social action.)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- ✓ Critical engagement with the shifting dynamics of youth religiosity and spirituality.
- ✓ An elaboration of a platform of mutual forces task for young movements.
- ✓ An interdisciplinary network of scholars and practitioners.
- ✓ Recommendations for education, policy, and pastoral strategies.
- ✓ Publication of selected papers in a peer-reviewed edited volume or seminar proceedings.



TARGET AUDIENCE

- ✓ Academicians and Researchers from the Humanities and Social Sciences
- ✓ Youth Workers and Faith-Based Leaders
- ✓ Students and Young Scholars
- ✓ NGOs and Practitioners working on youth, mental health, or interfaith issues

CALL FOR PAPERS

Academicians, researchers, scholars, and practitioners are invited to submit their abstracts on any of the themes mentioned above for presentation during the national seminar. The abstract should not exceed 250 words, and it should include 4-5 keywords along with the details of the author/s and their affiliation/s.

It should be submitted via email to nbclcresearch@gmail.com

Shortlisted authors will be required to submit the full paper before the seminar. The guidelines for the submission of the paper are as follows:

- ✓ The word limit for the paper is 5000-7000 words.
- ✓ The authors should follow the APA (American Psychological Association) 7th edition guidelines for references and citations.
- ✓ The title page should include the names and affiliations of the authors, along with the email address of the corresponding author.
- ✓ The paper be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, and the pages should be numbered consecutively.
- ✓ The paper should follow Times New Roman 12-point font and should be submitted in a Word document or PDF.
- ✓ All submissions must be the author's original and unpublished work.

Selected papers will be peer reviewed and considered for publication.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

*The two-day National Seminar on **Youth, Religion, and Spirituality: Exploring Identity, Belief, and Belonging in a Digital Age** is being organised by a group of institutions*

This annual collaborative seminar is being hosted by the Department of Sociology at the Bangalore Central Campus of CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore in 2025.



Important dates:

Submission of abstracts: July 31st, 2025

Submission of selected papers: September 6, 2025

Seminar: September 15 and 16, 2025

Registration fees:

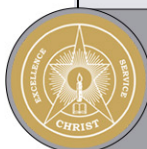
Paper Presenters: Rs 1500

Participant: Rs 800

Registration fee includes access to conference material, lunch and refreshments on the days of the seminars.



NBCLC, Bengaluru



Christ (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru



St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru



St. Joseph's College of Commerce, Bengaluru



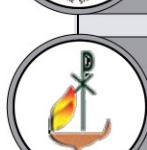
United Theological College, Bengaluru



Indian Social Institute (ISI), Bengaluru



Christian Institute for Study of Religion & Society (CISRS)



Kristu Jyoti College, Bengaluru



Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bengaluru



St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bengaluru



South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies



Sampurna, Montfort College Bengaluru