Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter comprises three sections. The first section is a conclusion based on findings. The second section focussed on the implications of the study. The third section addresses suggestions for future research.

5.1 Conclusions: The significant findings of the current study have led to certain conclusions.

- Spiritual beliefs were found to be significantly positively correlated with all the dimensions of spiritual practices (positive transformation, self-purification & expanding awareness) as well as with overall spiritual practices among Hindu religious devotees. Spiritual beliefs were also found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Hindu religious devotees.

- All the dimensions of spiritual practices (positive transformation, self-purification & expanding awareness) as well as overall spiritual practices were found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Hindu religious devotees.

- All the dimensions of spiritual practices (positive transformation, self-purification & expanding awareness) as well as overall spiritual practices were found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Hindu male religious devotees.

- Spiritual beliefs were found to be significantly positively correlated with all the dimensions of spiritual practices (positive transformation, self-purification & expanding awareness) as well as with overall spiritual practices among Hindu female religious devotees. Spiritual beliefs were also found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Hindu female religious devotees.

- All the dimensions of spiritual practices (positive transformation, self-purification & expanding awareness) as well as overall spiritual practices were found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Hindu female religious devotees.

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Spiritual beliefs were found to be significantly positively correlated with collective practices and sacred practices dimensions of spiritual practices as well as with overall spiritual practices among Muslim religious devotees. Spiritual beliefs were also found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Muslim religious devotees.

The dimensions of spiritual practices (individual practices, collective practices & sacred practices) as well as overall spiritual practices were found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Muslim religious devotees.

Spiritual beliefs were found to be significantly positively correlated with collective practices and sacred practices dimensions of spiritual practices as well as with overall spiritual practices among Muslim female religious devotees. Spiritual beliefs were also found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Muslim female religious devotees.

The dimensions of spiritual practices (individual practices, collective practices & sacred practices) as well as overall spiritual practices were found to be significantly positively correlated with spiritual experiences among Muslim female religious devotees.

Spiritual beliefs and spiritual practices emerged as the significant predictors of spiritual experiences among Hindu and Muslim religious devotees.

In case of Hindu males, only spiritual practices emerged as the significant predictor of spiritual experiences. In case of Hindu females, spiritual beliefs and spiritual practices emerged as the significant predictors of spiritual experiences.

In case of Muslim males and females, spiritual beliefs and spiritual practices emerged as the significant predictors of spiritual experiences.

Educational qualification of the respondents’ was found to have moderating effect on the relationship of spiritual practices (1st dimension- Positive Transformation and overall spiritual practices) with spiritual experiences among Hindus.

Age of the respondents’ was found to have moderating effect on the relationship of spiritual practices (2nd Dimension – Collective Practices) with spiritual experiences among Muslims.
5.2 Implications

The findings of this study have three significant implications, namely implication for theory, implication for methodology, implications for prevention/intervention and well-being.

Implications for Theory

The findings of the present study have important theoretical implications for understanding the relationship between spiritual beliefs and spiritual practices, spiritual beliefs and spiritual experiences, spiritual practices and spiritual experiences among Hindu and Muslim religious devotees as well as gender-wise in these communities. Spiritual beliefs and spiritual practices are connected to an organized group. Some people express their spirituality through religion. For other people, spirituality is not about practicing specific beliefs, but about exploring and deepening their relationship with a higher power.

When we perform appropriate spiritual practices on the basis of religious/spiritual beliefs, we make spiritual progress and get some spiritual experiences. Spiritual practices bridge the gap between intellectual knowledge obtained from sacred books and experience it spiritually.

Intellectual or theoretical knowledge only assists those who are eager in gaining some belief. In the stages of spiritual development it is a necessary step, whenever one gets spiritual experiences, develops faith in the theoretical or intellectual knowledge. The reason behind this is that spiritual experiences are discussed during spiritual meetings (satsang, izardma). Seekers, who attend spiritual meetings realise that in terms of spiritual knowledge what is taught there is not mere information but that it can be actually experience.

Implication for Methodology

This study provides standardized instruments i.e. reliable and valid used in the present study among Hindu and Muslim religious devotees. The current study is a preliminary study to provide information about psychometric characteristics of the scales among Indian people using Principal Component Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The findings do lend support to the application of the tools used.

Implications for Prevention and Intervention

Clarifying the relationships between spiritual practices and daily spiritual experiences among Hindu and Muslim religious devotees can provide guidelines for prevention and intervention
programmes for spiritual counsellors and therapists to improve health and well-being of clients.

In order to cope with the behavioural problems associated with illnesses, it is necessary to involve in spiritual practices to get the speedy recovery. Spiritual support may be a significant factor to incorporate into any intervention programme. Training of spiritual exercises or practices can alter the adverse effects of illnesses and consequently promote well-being.

Spiritual experiences suggest to an individual to adopt an appropriate spiritual practice and attain higher spiritual experiences progressively because one is making spiritual progress. Suppose an individual want to discontinue his spiritual practice/s; he may not continue to get spiritual experiences. In this case one’s spiritual belief should be more stronger before he adopts any spiritual practice.

The findings of the present study could benefit individuals of varying age groups, gender, and education levels. The findings could serve as prevention programmes for students in colleges/universities. Health psychologists could use the findings in alleviating behavioural problems.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

- Future research is needed in other religious groups (e.g. Christians, Sikhs, etc.) and people of other geographical areas (i.e. Urban, Rural) to validate and extend the present findings.
- Quantitative survey was utilized in this study. Further study can use a multi-method approach including quantitative and qualitative methods to that provide incremental validity to data. Hence, the spiritual experiences of people may be explored through interviews. In the early stages of spiritual journey, if we want to hear from seekers narrating their spiritual experiences, the variety and depth of spiritual experiences can be quite complex.
- It is suggested that future studies need to explore the role of certain potential moderators such as type of family and marital status to examine the relationship of spiritual beliefs with spiritual experiences, and spiritual practices with spiritual experiences.
Future studies could consider other variables such as attachment to God, spiritual well-being and meaning in life. God who gives each one of us unique spiritual experiences to generate faith. Enhancing well-being is a primary requirement for one’s spiritual growth.

In the present time, people gradually become detached from their religion/spirituality as well as its elements (spiritual/religious beliefs, practices & experiences) because of their busy life schedule and stressful life. In the present time, life become very challenging from the very initial stage to the last, like in the childhood a five or six years old child faces the challenge to get the admission in a standard school and, after schooling in a university and, after that to get a good job and own house, after getting these things challenges are not stop but also, so many family and social life challenges become start, means there is no time for cultivating spirituality and because of this life become more and more stressful and peace less and without peaceful life everything become waist. In the Eastern culture, religion/spirituality is deeply rooted. The elements of religion/spirituality are used as a therapy from the very old time for gaining mental peace, psychological and physical fitness as well as reducing the level of stress. So, family especially parents should encourage their children to engage in religious/spiritual practices like yoga, meditation, fasting, charity, reading scriptures etc…. because these practices make them not only physically and psychologically fit, mentally peaceful but also they learn from scriptures that how to control over the senses and as a result become merciful as well as side-by-side reduce the level of aggression which is increasing in the becoming generation.