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## Spiritual well-being among adolescents

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### Abstract

Spirituality and faith provide an opportunity to detach from circumstances and observe life with clarity and integrity. This study is conducted to assess the level of spiritual well-being among adolescents. Descriptive research has been adopted for this project. The study was conducted among 11<sup>th</sup> std students of both urban and rural backgrounds. The researcher selected two schools from both urban and rural areas respectively in Tiruchirappalli. There were 224 students in both the schools formed the universe. Among the students of the above schools, 100 respondents were selected by using stratified disproportionate random sampling technique. 50 students from each school were selected to form the sample. The researcher used standard questionnaire on Spiritual well-being by Hall, T.W & Edwards, K.J. (1996) along with a self-prepared questionnaire covering socio demographic profile of the sample. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents perceived low level of self-efficacy and a little more than half of the respondents have low life scheme and (63.0%) of the respondents perceived low level spiritual well-being.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, spiritual well-being, mental health and school students

### Introduction

Spiritual well-being plays an important role in mental, emotional and physical health. Spiritual well-being is associated with a specific religion but does not have to be. This practice is merely one's own journey to discover things of important in life. It can be practiced in numerous ways, with its main purpose being to find purpose and meaning in life with peace.

Spirituality and faith provide an opportunity to detach from circumstances and observe life with clarity and integrity. Spirituality can either be positive or negative. Spiritual well-being is a state in which the positive aspects of spirituality differs from one person to the other. Through proper spiritual well-being, people are empowered and realize their issues, stressors, and challenges, and they are not defined by these circumstances. This realization paves a pathway to greater peace, freedom of self-expression, increased manageability over the healing process and higher self-esteem. Such a realization can make an impact in the life of a person.

Each person's spirituality is greatly impacted by the community where they are from and their relationship they practice in it. Spiritual well-being is not a practice of isolation but rather of affecting and involving the people in their own community of life. Spiritual well-being groups and sessions provide an open and safe environment to explore, learn, practice, support and heal.

Spiritual well-being programs include group exploration and experiential practices on the topics of meditation, prayer, forgiveness, personal values, purpose in life, the role of self-esteem in spiritual connection, healthy relationships, and developing an authentic relationship with a Higher Power, God, or Spiritual Dimension.

### Benefits of Spiritual Well-Being

- Feeling content with the life's situation
- Making time to spend alone and explore inner peace
- Taking time to reflect and resolve problems
- Finding satisfaction in life and work
- Taking part in an active lifestyle Maintaining balance and control of life
- Building rapport

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- Sensing purpose and meaning in life
- Accepting and growing from the challenges of life

Esa Jafari *et al.* (2010) [22] investigated the relationship between spiritual well-being and mental health in university students. It was found out from their study that there is a significant relationship between spiritual well-being and mental health. Nevertheless, there was no significant relationship between spiritual well-being and somatic symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction and depression. The results of the regression analysis showed that religious and existential well-being significantly anticipated mental health. As well, another finding was that spiritual and existential well-being in females was significantly higher than in males. There was no sex-related difference in mental health scores. Katarina Dutkova. *et al.*, (2017) conducted study to explore the association between spiritual well-being and bullying among Slovak adolescents. They found that adolescents with a higher level of spiritual well-being were at lower risk of bullying behaviour. Spiritual well-being was found to be negatively associated with bullying.

As spirituality is such a wide concept, there is not yet one exact definition for it. When concerning research in the field of spirituality, we can find it under the terms of spiritual health or spiritual well-being (Michaelson *et al.* 2016) [13]. Fisher (2010) [8] says that spiritual well-being has a strong impact on quality of relationships in up to four areas, namely with the self (personal), others (communal), nature (environment) and God (or transcendental other). Fisher *et al.* (2000) [9] point out that the above mentioned four dimensions are interrelated. He also suggested that these four spiritual well-being domains together will determine a person's overall or global spiritual well-being (Fisher 2010) [8].

According to previous evidence (Smith *et al.* 2013; Hyde 2008) [18, 10], spiritual well-being plays an important role in positive mental health of adolescence, resilience and health behaviour. Also, Cotton's found out that spiritual well-being has a positive effect on mental health outcomes in adolescents and is associated with diminished risk attitude and behavior (Cotton *et al.* 2009) [3]. Spiritual well-being was found to be connected with lower levels of anger, anxiety and frustration (Davis *et al.* 2003; Koenig 2012) [5, 11] and with fewer symptoms of depression and greater self-esteem (Porche *et al.* 2015; Dew *et al.* 2008; Rew and Wong 2006; Cotton *et al.* 2005; Maton 1989) [5, 6, 16, 4, 12]. Family and peer relationships may have a positive influence on spiritual well-being, as these play key roles during adolescence. These relationships can also develop spiritual well-being through motivating them in involvement in prosocial activities (Mirghafourvand *et al.* 2016; Fisher 2007; Anye *et al.* 2013) [14, 7, 1]. and bullying. Findings (Carter *et al.* 2013) suggest that peer victimization have negative correlation with certain aspects of spirituality (i.e. spiritual forgiveness, religious attendance, daily spiritual experiences), and according to Sansone's data (Sansone *et al.* 2013) [17], bullying in childhood is associated with poor religious/spiritual well-being in adulthood (however, the study did not examine a causal relationship).

### Objectives

- To study the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.
- To assess the level of spiritual well-being among adolescents.

### Research design

Descriptive research has been adopted for this project; descriptive research is concerned with describing the socio demographic characteristics of the respondents along with the spiritual well-being of the respondents.

### Universe and sampling

The study was conducted among 11<sup>th</sup> std students of both urban and rural backgrounds. The researcher selected two schools from both urban and rural areas respectively in Tiruchirappalli. There were 224 students in both the schools formed the universe. Among the students of the above schools, 100 respondents were selected by using stratified disproportionate random sampling technique. 50 students from each school were selected to form the sample.

### Tools for data collection

The researcher used standard questionnaire on Spiritual well-being by Hall, T.W & Edwards, K.J. (1996) along with a self-prepared questionnaire covering socio demographic profile of the sample.

### Operational definitions

**Adolescents** - Adolescents in their study refer to the young people of both gender studying 11<sup>th</sup> standard.

**Spiritual well-being** – It indicates the self-efficacy and life scheme of the respondents, and it is their well-being in the spiritual sphere of life.

### Findings and discussion

#### Findings related to socio – demographic variables

Nearly half of the respondents (47.0%) belonged to the age of 16 years. 50.0% of the respondents were male, and the remaining (50.0%) of the respondents were female. A little more than half (54.0%) of the respondents were Hindus. 50.0 % of the respondents were from rural area and the remaining 50.0% of the respondents were from urban area. More than half (64.0%) of the respondents were from nuclear family. 62.0% of the respondents have one sibling. A little more than half (51.0%) of the respondents fathers are doing business. 51.0% of the respondents' fathers' monthly income was Rs.9000. Majority (81.0%) of the respondents mothers were homemakers.

More than half (61.0%) of the respondents were average in their academics. More than half (64.0%) of the respondents felt that their mothers are their source of support and motivation.

#### Findings related to spiritual aspects

More than half (65.0%) of the respondents made visit to place of worship once in a week. More than 1/4 (37.0%) of the respondents like Allah, (8.0%) of them opined that Jesus Christ in their god of worship, and (27.0%) of the respondents prefer Ganapathy, (15.0%) like Murugan and (13.0%) like lord Shiva.

A little less than half (43.0%) of the respondents were often think about god. Majority of the respondents opined that there are highly interested moral education classes conducted in their schools. more than half of the respondents perceived their personality at low level and also its dimensions namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness.

**Findings on spiritual well-being**

**Table 1:** Distribution of the respondents according to their of spiritual wellbeing

S. No.	Dimensions of spiritual wellbeing	No. of respondents (n = 100)	Percentage
1.	Self-Efficacy		
	Low	86	86.0
	High	14	14.0
2.	Life Scheme		
	Low	53	53.0
	High	47	47.0
3.	Overall level of spiritual wellbeing		
	Low	63	63.0
	High	37	37.0

It is inferred from the above table that majority of the respondents perceived low level of self-efficacy and a little more than half of the respondents have low life scheme and

(63.0%) of the respondents perceived low level spiritual well-being.

**Table 2:** One way Analysis of Variance among religion of the respondents and perception towards various dimensions of spiritual wellbeing

S. No	Religion	Df	SS	MS	$\bar{X}$	Statistical Inference
1	Self-Efficacy				G1= 13.8333	F=0.243 P>0.05 Not Significant
	Between Groups	2	2.760	1.380	G2= 13.5000	
	Within Groups	97	551.000	5.680	G3= 13.5000	
2	Life Scheme				G1= 13.5556	F=2.567 P>0.05 Not Significant
	Between Groups	2	28.239	14.119	G2= 12.5789	
	Within Groups	97	533.471	5.500	G3= 14.1250	
3	Overall level of Spiritual wellbeing				G1= 27.3889	F=2.146 P>0.05 Not Significant
	Between Groups	2	42.719	21.359	G2= 26.0789	
	Within Groups	97	965.471	9.953	G3= 27.6250	

G1= Hindu, G2= Muslim, G3= Christian

It is revealed from the above table that there is no significant difference between the religion difference with regard to their spiritual well-being and its dimensions. Though there is no significant difference in religion with regard to their spiritual well-being, mean score analysis revealed that Christian respondents perceived better life scheme and overall spiritual well-being than the respondents from other religions. In the dimension of self-efficacy the respondents from Hinduism perceived higher mean score than the others. Findings related to test of difference:

It was found out from this study that there is no significant difference between gender, domicile of origin, type of family and parental conditions with regard to their spiritual well-being. Hence it is stated that there is no significant impact on spiritual well-being by differences in gender, type of family, domicile of origin and parental conditions.

**Suggestions**

- The appointment of Social workers as Counselors in school campuses to help them cope up with their adolescent problems especially in school life and also their personal problems. The counselors may also work as liaison between the adolescents and parents or school authorities.
- Policies on compulsory religious or spiritual instruction in school with a cafeteria approach to avoid any accusations of conversions. In the Social work Education, the curriculum and approaches may include components of spirituality so that the Social workers help the clients efficiently with the knowledge of the spiritual need of them.
- Social work practice has its origin in connection with charity. And there can be no charity without spiritual

component. Down the decades, as Social work gained more professional identity with concepts, theories and methods and skills, the spiritual component of social work has been sidelined to almost an ignored aspect. Psychological well-being is one the main objectives of any Social work Practitioner to work with individuals and groups, for alleviation of anxiety or depression or as developing positive well-being, self-esteem and attitudes, then Spiritual well- being is an effective means to achieve that objective. All the dimensions of spiritual well-being have roots in social work practice, techniques and applications of many areas of social work.

- The relationship with God can best deal with decreasing anxiety, Integration and wholeness which are essential for a Social work Practice as holistic approach is served by the spiritual inclusion. It ensures optimum productivity in the society through Social work intervention with spiritual touch. Meaningfulness in life is a vital concept in working with delinquents, hopeless and the dying and the depressed. Faith is the basic component of social work principles, also an effective ego defense mechanism. The spiritual concepts in love and oneness are the influencing practice in social work practice. Peace is the final product of Social work intervention when conflicts are resolved through empathetic approach. To conclude, it is the base to achieve healthy life with the support of spiritual well-being.

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