



SPIRITUALITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract

Spirituality, the core or existence of one's life, is adopting a framework or a creative positive attitude towards Divine/ God, Self, Others, Nature and Life buffering to meet out the challenges and stresses of life. In this light, the present study explores the role of spirituality on life satisfaction of young adults. The sample comprised of 300 young adults (150 males and 150 females) of 19- 25 years. Spirituality was assessed by a scale developed by the researcher having three broad dimensions, i.e, Spiritual beliefs, Spiritual experiences and spiritual practices. Life satisfaction was assessed by SWLS (Diener et al, 1985).

Results reveal that females, higher in spiritual practices were more satisfied with their lives as compared to those lower in spiritual practices. All the eight groups derived in terms of high/low spiritual beliefs, experiences and practice groups differed significantly in terms of life satisfaction. Multiple Comparison Test results revealed that respondents high in spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices were most satisfied with their lives. Males with low level of spiritual beliefs and experiences and high level of spiritual practices were least satisfied, whereas females with low level of all the three dimensions were least satisfied. It shows the different role of spiritual practices for males and females.

The study implies that spiritual practices alone cannot make young adults satisfied in lives rather there should be a congruence among three dimensions of spirituality. Spirituality helps the young adults to understand and process the realities of life of human condition. By sensitive understanding of spiritual beliefs, motivating to practice those beliefs and experience connectedness with Divine may enhance the life satisfaction of young adults.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there is a growing interest in spirituality in many parts of the world. Millions of people have taken to the practice of meditation, yoga, zen, *vipassana* meditation and other spiritual practices. Spirituality seems to be a simple and spontaneous solution to present day personal as well as social problems. Nature applies the spiritual laws of the universe to create everything in material existence. If we understand our true nature and apply these spiritual laws in our lives, a sense of well-being, good health, fulfilling relationships, energy and enthusiasm for life and material abundance spring forth easily and effortlessly to our lives (Chopra, 2000)

The interest of people in spirituality appears to be the result of the natural psychosocial evolution of human consciousness which marks the attainment of maturity and autonomy of the human mind in determining its own course of development and belongs to the mainstream thinking and social life. The followers of present spiritual movement are normal successful individuals from various fields like executives, lawyers, engineers, therapists and managers (Swami Bhajnananda 2011).

Paranjpe (1988a) states: "It is useful to refer to a distinction commonly made in India between "Spiritual" as opposed to "Religious" pursuits. The word "Spiritual" refers to a deep personal concern about psychological and moral well-being – regardless of the theological dogmatic, ritualistic, liturgical, magical or mystical aspects often associated with religious life.

The exploration of spirituality, one holistic purpose of world religions (Smith, 1994) shares some characteristics common with religious perspectives such as search for what is sacred or holy in life, coupled with some kind of transcendent (beyond the self) relationship with Divine or God or universal energy (Thoresen, 1998). But spirituality is a broader concept than religion (Astrow, Puchalski and Sulmasy, 2001). Although spirituality is



about the search for transcendent meaning, most people express their spirituality in religious practices. Others express it exclusively in their relationships with nature, music, arts, or a set of philosophical beliefs or relationships with friends and family.

The definition of spirituality as provided by the tenth edition of Oxford English Dictionary equates the condition of being spiritual with attachment to or regard for the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests. The term spirituality comes from the Latin word “*spiritus*” which means ‘breath of life’. Although Spirituality is a proper subject for scientific study (Allport,1961 , James,1958) , it is a difficult term to define .The term has been used to denote a deep vibrant and mature religious faith (Benson,1993) ; “Certain positive qualities and perception” while avoiding application of narrow dogmatic beliefs and obligatory religious observances (Wulff,1996); It encompasses a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, for the highest of human potential (Pargament, 1997).It also refers to transcendent, meta empirical dimension of reality (Kelly , 1995; Pargament and Park , 1995; Worthington , et.al., 1996) , and a deep vibrant and mature religious faith (Benson 1993);“the feelings ,thoughts and behaviours that arise from a search for the sacred” (Hill,2000) ; and people can take a virtually limitless number of pathways in their attempt to discover and conserve the sacred...” (Pargament and Mahoney,2002). Recently Peterson and Seligman (2004), contend that “Spirituality is universal strength of transcendence and although the specific content of spiritual beliefs varies, all cultures have a concept of an ultimate, transcendent, sacred and divine force”.

Two largest spiritual \religious traditions in Asia are Buddhism and Hinduism; of these two Buddhism have made a larger impact on western psychology .Today the Buddhist influence is seen in empirical research on both mind-body medicine and psychotherapy. Many therapists are exploring theistic framework for psychotherapy like Meissner (2000), Karasu (1999), Richards and Bergin (1997) and Sperry (2001).

Hindu spiritual philosophy is theistic and transpersonal which means that psycho spiritual growth perceives a prepersonal and then personal stages of identity formation to finally transpersonal ones.The transcendent self (*atman*) as described by Hinduism is psychological equivalent to a Western view of enlightenment (Buddhism).

In our country we have several schools and philosophers who have presented their views regarding Spirituality .We have Vedic literature, Charvaka school of philosophy, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christians and Islamic literature on spirituality/Religiosity, but the milestones of spirituality reveals that Vedas are world’s oldest books of knowledge.The Hindu faiths, practices and philosophies have evolved from the *vedic* tradition which has a deserved reputation of being highly tolerant of other religions. Therefore the spiritual thoughts as mentioned in “*Vedas*” should be considered as basic tenets of Indian Spirituality .As expressed in **Vedas** and **Upanishads** .

“*Ekam sat viprah bahuda vadanti*” (Truth is one ,but sages call it many names) *Rig Veda* 1:164:46.

Spirituality to the Hindu is to strive for the eternal search for the divine , the Supreme Immanent and Transcendent truth or the Cosmic spirit.This is *Dharma*, or individual ethics ,duties and obligations. Liberation from material bondage and cycle of birth and death and developing a relationship with the “Universal Spirit” is known as *Moksha* which is the ultimate goal of all Hindus. Virtuous actions take the soul closer to the Supreme Divine, and lead to a birth with higher consciousness .Evil actions hinder this recognition of the supreme divine and the soul takes lower forms of worldly life. *Guru* ,(the teacher) can guide the *Shishya* (the disciple) to the virtuous path of life .Thus it can be said that Indian views on spirituality focuses on being and becoming , oneness of spirit (soul) and matter (body) : one giving meaning to other and considers everything in the universe as God .

Aurbindo (1872-1950) while accepting the experiential insights of both Hindu Yoga (spiritual practice) and Buddhist phenomenology ,went beyond these classical wisdoms to propose a new world view in which spirit and matter are seen as interacting in an evolutionary fashion .Aurbindo interprets biological evolution as being the



result, rather than the cause of the evolution of consciousness. For Aurbindo, consciousness is a continuum in which absolute transcendent spirit is one extreme and physical matter the other. This evolution of consciousness has been revealed across time and space with progressive increase in the level of awareness (Intelligence). The evolution of life is seen from inanimate matter through unicellular organisms, plants, lower animals, mammals and finally human beings. Aurbindo calls the true soul the “Psychic being” and defines it as an individual portion or delegate of the Supreme Being / reality that is immortal but that also evolves through the process of reincarnation as it grows in its capacity to manifest the divine consciousness in the world.

According to Narayanasamy,(1999) the spiritual dimension evokes feelings which demonstrate the existence of love, faith, hope, trust, awe, inspiration; therein providing meaning and a reason for existence. It comes into focus particularly when an individual faces emotional stress, physical illness or death.

Mohan (2003) considers that spirituality takes a cosmic rather than a personal view of God .It is holistic and emphasizes on oneness of body and soul; matter and spirit. The whole universe is seen interwoven. Life’s contradictions are not seen mutually cancelling each other but as two poles of one reality, one giving meaning to the other. In terms of practice of spirituality, the focus is on contemplation, silence, intuitive prayer, bodily postures in prayer and guru or spiritual teacher. The emphasis is more on striving for perfection, asceticism, abnegation and self-control.

According to Hussain, (2005), the term spirituality refers to the “individual’s experience of a dimension of power and meaning transcendent to the ordinary sensory reality”. Spirituality refers to an inner belief system which concerns the essence of being in relationship with self, others, God and the universe; helps people in reaching and exploring challenges, seeking personal truth; developing the sense of unity of life and developing a personal philosophy; develops a sense of higher consciousness that connects the creator and the created. It helps in integrating body, mind and spirit; nurturing values (such as maturity, piety, balance, compassion, wisdom, humility and serenity); searching the existence of God. Spirituality is unique to each individual, influenced by culture, development, experiences and ideas, meaning, transcendent, hope, love, quality, relationship and existence. Spirituality is the source of self-confidence, without which nothing is accomplished.

The hindi translation of the term spirituality is ‘*adhyatm*’ which means “*atmanah sambadham gyanam*” which means “the knowledge related to the nature of the soul”; or “knowledge related to mind or *mana*”. Spiritual matters are thus those matters regarding ultimate nature and purpose of human beings, not only as material and biological organisms but as being with a unique relationship with something which is beyond time and material world.

Dimensions of spirituality are a topic of debate and scientific study. Glock and Stark (1965) described four elements or domains within the context of religion: the experiential, the ritualistic, the intellectual and the consequential .Capps et.al. (1976) offered six spiritual dimensions within religion: the mythological, the ritual, the experiential, the dispositional, the social and the directional. Elkins et.al (1988) identified nine core dimensions of spirituality: transcendence, meaning and purpose in life, mission in life, sacredness of life, material values, altruism, idealism, awareness of the tragic and fruits of spirituality .Benson et al (1993) highlights eight dimensions of spirituality. Miller and Thoresen (2000) proposed three broad measurement domains i.e. spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices. These three domains are meant to characterize spirituality within and outside the context of religion.

The dimension of **spiritual beliefs** is large in horizon and its content varies with culture (Smith, 1994). Measures of spiritual beliefs tend to be specific to a particular religions or a form of spiritual thought. The concept of God is an interesting dimension which is included in spiritual beliefs and is conceived as loving, indifferent or punitive



towards humankind .In general, spiritual beliefs would incorporate the emotional acceptance of God and his reflections in the form of nature (air, water, plants, sun etc), fellow human beings and self.

The second dimension, **spiritual experiences** offers the greatest challenge for valid measurement .Such experiences might be roughly divided into routine everyday encounters of the transcendence or sacred, versus exceptional spiritual and mystical experiences. Many people experience frequent interaction with the transcendence as a fundamental part of life, and not merely in moments of stress. It includes ordinary experiences of spirituality such as awe, joy, forgiveness and sense of deep inner peace. Mystical experiences, as widely addressed, are felt as profound, difficult to communicate and having a transcendent dimension (Hussain, 2002).

Spiritual practices can be assessed easily because they focus on overt behaviors (Connors, Tonigan and Miller, 1996).People can be described by the extent to which they engage in spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, use of imagery or visualization and contemplation. The participation in specific religious activities such as worship, reading religious scriptures, confession and public prayer are also included under this dimension.

Pervez (2002) identified different dimensions of spirituality in Hinds and Muslims. While Daftaur (2002) identified 15 dimensions of spiritual quotient.

Considering all the above mentioned views, spirituality can be understood as adopting a framework or a creative positive attitude towards supreme higher power or God, self, others, nature and life ensuring well-being of self and society as a whole. In other words, spirituality is that which gives meanings to one's life and draws one to transcend one's material self .There are two paths to ultimate truth .One is the extrovert western path of pursuing physical and biological sciences that comprises intense analytical study of the nature around us .This path creates material comforts as by products but also generates internal and external turmoil in society and the environment. The other is the introvert and spiritual Indian path of intense self analysis, meditation and yoga that lays little emphasis on comforts but generates internal and external peace and harmony as by products.

Young adulthood is of particular importance for the study of spirituality since it is the time which opens exciting possibility for spiritual growth .This period is marked by redefining self, relationships and values, the development of self identify as well as rationality and logical thinking .It can be time for them to clarify and embrace spiritual values or a time of rejecting and rebelling against such values. In the contemporary world, if the young adults are reared to disbelieve in their own creative capacities and their power to choose the direction and nature of their lives , they develop a negative self image, are fearful and uncertain and are apologetic, hesitant and pessimistic.

Review of previous researches reveal that spirituality helps people to maintain health and well-being, cope with illness, traumas, losses and life transitions through integration of body, mind and spirit. But these studies have not analyzed the pattern of Indian conditions nor incorporated all three dimensions of spirituality, i.e. belief, experience and practice simultaneously .These three dimensions are interrelated and their congruence and integration has a long-term effect on the well-being of the individuals. Therefore, it is desirable that all these three dimensions may be studied simultaneously and their impact on level of life satisfaction of young adult's life should be explored.

Findings of a Spirituality survey on 100 educated young adults revealed that only 18% female and 12% male respondents were found to equate spirituality with rituals and religiosity, while 62% female and 56% male respondents related spirituality with a way to reach God or Divine or Supreme power, to achieve positivity, respect of elders, truth, good karma and self knowledge (Pradhan,2012).Majority of respondents agree that Spirituality should have a functional value to their lives. 66% females and 56% males reported that Spirituality is essential for making life simple and easy; 24% females and 24% males reported that Spirituality is useful for life only to some extent; while 10% females and 20% males reported that they do not know about it.



On answering the question “How do you express your Spirituality?” 50% females and 30% males said that they express it through religious practices; 6% females and 12% males meditate; 10% females and 8% males only have faith in God; 12% females and 18% males express their spirituality by having good thoughts, using good words while speaking; showing respect for elders; and doing all work happily while 22% females and 32% males do nothing specific for the expression of their spirituality. Although spirituality of 40% females and 44% males was found to be similar to their parents; 32% females and 34% males reported that their spirituality is only somewhat similar to their parents; 24% females and 20% males reported that their spirituality is dissimilar to their parents while 4% females and 2% males said it to be very much dissimilar. It appears that some young adults are not agreeable to their parents on certain issues.

These findings can be supplemented with another study by Streib (2002) which suggests that religiosity among German adolescents can be termed as “invisible religion” and their quest can be termed as “spiritual quest” instead of “religious quest”. Moreover scholars are of the view that beliefs, narratives and commitments of world religious traditions are not adequately taking root in young people lives (Lindner 2004). Adolescents have been found to depart from their parental religious ways, (Streib 2002).

Therefore, there seems a genuine need to develop that spiritual perspective in young minds which is based on scientific understanding and also ensures a functional value of spiritual beliefs, practices and experiences.

According to Swami Bhajananda (2011) the prominent feature of spirituality of young minds is their shifting of attention from God to man. They are not interested in theological questions about God, rather in their own inner problems, especially existential problems like meaninglessness, powerlessness, unfulfillment love etc. Now spirituality has become a question of personal quest for achieving lasting security, happiness and peace instead of conforming to customs, religious tradition and practices.

Therefore, the present study focuses to investigate the three dimensions of spirituality among young adults and to see its impact on their life satisfaction level. The research questions which have been attempted to answer are: (i) What are the dimensions of spirituality? (ii) Is there gender difference in spirituality? (iii) What is the difference in the level of life satisfaction between the groups of high and low spirituality? (iii) How the congruence among the dimensions of spirituality may affect life satisfaction of young adults?

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the gender difference in three dimensions of spirituality (beliefs, experiences and practices) of young adults.
2. To explore the gender difference in life satisfaction level of young adults.
3. To study the impact of congruence in three dimensions of spirituality on life satisfaction of male and female respondents.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be gender difference in (i) spiritual beliefs, (ii) spiritual experiences (iii) spiritual practices and (iv) spirituality total (comprising of beliefs, experiences and practices).
2. There will be gender difference in the level of life satisfaction.
- 3.1 High spiritual beliefs groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low .
- 3.2 High spiritual experiences groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spiritual experiences groups.
- 3.3 High spiritual practices groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spiritual practices groups.
- 3.4 High spirituality (total) groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spirituality groups.
4. Young adults with high spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices will be most satisfied while respondents with low spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices will be least satisfied.



METHODOLOGY

- **Design:** 2x2x2 factorial design
- **Variables:**

Independent Variables: 1-Gender- Male and Female, 2-Spirituality which comprises of three dimensions i.e. spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices each having two levels, i.e. high and low

Dependent Variables: Life satisfaction

- **Measures:**

1-Spirituality

Spirituality Scales- This scale was developed by the researcher which comprised of total 81 items out of which 25 items belonged to spiritual beliefs, 16 items were related to spiritual experiences and 40 items were related to spiritual practices. To ascertain the validity of the scale, factor analysis was done. For males nine factors were found valid with 46.15% variance. For females seven factors were found valid with 40.6% variance. The factorial validity of the total scale with nine factors was found to be 44.29.

The description of the three subscales of spirituality is given as under:

(i) Spiritual Beliefs – To measure the spiritual beliefs of respondents, 19 items were taken from Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs scale (SIBS) by Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus and Hellmich (1998) and six items were added with the help of experts. The test retest reliability of SIBS is .92 and Cronbach alpha is .92. All of the 19 items of spiritual beliefs scale were translated in Hindi by back translation method. The equivalence of items between Hindi and English version was tested on 40 respondents by using t test. The obtained t was .51 which was not significant. The validity of new items was ascertained by taking SIBS as an external criterion and range was found to be .66 to .71. Therefore, spiritual beliefs scale comprises of 25 items. The respondents had to give their responses on a five point scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Eleven items were negatively worded and were reverse scored. The split half reliability of Hindi version of 25 items Spiritual Beliefs Scale was found to be .87. This scale was also validated against Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES) by Underwood and Teresi (2002) and was found to be .71.

(ii) Spiritual Experiences-The 16 item DSES (Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale) by Underwood and Teresi (2002) was adapted in Hindi to assess Spiritual Experiences of respondents. The reliability and exploratory factor analysis from the different samples support the use of the instrument to measure daily spiritual experiences. The scale is highly internally consistent with alphas ranging from .91 to .95 across samples. Preliminary construct validity was established by examination of the mean scale scores across socio-demographic subgroups and preliminary exploratory factor analysis support a one-dimensional set. The response categories, except for one item, relate to frequency and make use of the 5 point scale: Many times a day (5), everyday (4), most days (3), some days (2), Once in a while (1), never or almost never (0). Item no.16 assesses the feelings of closeness to God on a 4 point scale: Not at all close (0), somewhat close (1), very close (2) and as close as possible (3). The split half reliability of 16 item Hindi version of DSES was found to be .95. For checking the equivalence of Hindi and English version of DSES, paired t-test was calculated which was found to be .52 and non-significant.

(iii) Spiritual Practices- To assess the use of spiritual practices when stressful situations arise in the lives of respondents, 40 items scale was developed. Of which few of them were taken from Ways of Religious Coping Scale (WORCS) by Boudreaux et.al (1995), while others were added by the researcher with the help of experts. All of the items were adapted in Hindi so as to be suitable for present research purposes. The response categories from 0 (not used at all) to 4 (used always) was used. Four items were negatively worded and reverse scored. The scale has been found to be internally consistent, having Cronbach alpha as .95. To check the equivalence of Hindi and English version of scale paired t-test was done the t value was 1.33 which was non-significant. The Split half



reliability of Hindi version of scale was found to be .94. The Spiritual Practice Scale was validated with DSES and the correlation coefficient was found to be .68.

2- The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) - To assess the life satisfaction of respondents SWLS by Diener et.al. (1985) was used. It consists of five related items, each of which is rated on a 7 point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).The test retest correlation of SWLS at 2 months interval was found to be .82 (Diener et.al.1985). After statistically separating out the influence of situation specific factors, the imparted stability for life satisfaction was estimated and found to be very high around .90

The SWLS was translated in Hindi by back translation method. Paired t-test was used to assess the equivalence of Hindi and English version of SWLS .It was found to be .62 which was non- significant. The split half reliability of Hindi version of SWLS was found to be .80

Results

Section one: Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 Showing descriptive statistics of spirituality

S. No	Variables	No. of item	N	Scale Range	Scale Mean	Obtained Range	Obtained Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
i	Spiritual Beliefs	25	M-150 F-150	25-125	87.50	26-122 25-125	72.10 77.07 t=2.14#	23.73 22.81	.32 .105	.20 -.01
ii	Spiritual Experiences	16	M-150 F-150	16-94	55.00	16-94 16-94	65.87 67.19 t=.769	16.23 14.63	.001 -.161	2.11 1.42
iii	Spiritual Practices	40	M-150 F-150	0-160	80.00	49-114 44-116	85.21 86.06 t=.69	10.79 11.31	-.18 -.63	.16 1.63
iv	Total Spirituality	81	M-150 F-150	31-379	205.00	91-301 89-329	223.18 230.95 t=1.73##	40.00 37.47	-.779 -.933	.903 2.23
	Life satisfaction	5	M150F -150	5-35	20.00	8-34 10-34	20.18 20.79 t=.986	5.50 4.97	-.165 .248	-.581 -.516

#=p<.05, ## =p<.10

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for three dimensions of spirituality namely spiritual beliefs, spiritual experiences and spiritual practices. The obtained mean for spiritual beliefs for both males (72.10) and females (77.07) is much less than the scale mean (87.5); while the obtained means of spiritual practices for both males (85.21) and females (86.06) are much higher than the scale mean (80.00).Similarly, the obtained means of spiritual experiences for males (65.87) and females (67.19) as against the scale mean (55.00) as well as the obtained means of spirituality (total) for both males (223.18) and females (230.95) as against the scale mean (205.00) is much higher. Among the three dimensions the greatest variability in scores was found for spiritual beliefs (Male=23.73; Female= 22.81) followed by spiritual experiences (Male=16.23; Female= 14.63) and spiritual practices (Male=10.79 and female=11.31).For total spirituality scores, the greater variability was found in males (40.00) as compared to their female counterparts (37.47). It seems that in spite of below average level of spiritual beliefs, young adults were found to indulge in spiritual practices and have spiritual experiences above average level. It seems that among all the three dimensions, these two dimensions contribute more to their total spirituality level.



The comparison of obtained means of males and females regarding the three dimensions of spirituality reveals that although females scored higher in all the three dimensions as well as total spirituality scores, the only significant difference was found in spiritual beliefs ($t=2.14, p<.05$) and total spirituality ($t=1.73, p<.10$). Therefore we may partially accept hypothesis 1 stating “There will be gender difference in (i) spiritual beliefs, (ii) spiritual experiences and (iii) spiritual practices as well as (iv) spirituality total.”

The results reveal that females have stronger spiritual beliefs as compared to males, although they are equal to males with regard to their spiritual practices and experiences.

Table 1 also reveals that there is no significant gender difference in the means of life satisfaction of males (20.18) and females (20.79); therefore we may reject hypothesis 2 stating that “There will be gender difference in the level of life satisfaction.”

Section Two: Subgroup analysis

Table 2 showing significance of mean difference in life satisfaction between high and low spirituality groups

Spirituality		Male		Female	
		N	Mean	N	Mean
Spiritual beliefs	High	75	21.99	76	21.85
	Low	75	18.37	74	19.73
	T		4.47*		2.49**
Spiritual experiences	High	80	20.34	79	22.30
	Low	70	17.51	71	19.32
	T		2.34#		3.44*
Spiritual practices	High	75	20.63	79	21.94
	Low	75	19.73	71	19.63
	T		1.11		2.84*
Spirituality	High	72	21.97	73	22.26
	Low	78	18.57	77	19.34*
			4.08*		3.50*

**= $p<.001$, *= $p<.01$, #= $p<.05$

Table 2 shows the significance of difference in means of life satisfaction between high and low male/female spiritual beliefs, experiences, practices and spirituality (total) groups. There were 75 males and 76 females in high and 75 males and 74 females in low spiritual beliefs groups; 80 males 79 females in high and 70 males and 71 females in low spiritual experiences groups; 75 males and 79 females in high and 75 males and 71 females in low spiritual practices groups; 72 males and 73 females in high and 78 males and 77 females in low spirituality groups.

The level of life satisfaction of high spiritual beliefs group of males (Mean=21.99) is significantly greater than ($t=4.47, p<.01$) the low group (Mean=18.37). For females also there is a significant difference in life satisfaction ($t=2.49, p<.01$) of high (mean=21.85) and low (mean=19.73) groups. There is also a significant difference ($t=4.47, p<.01$) in the means of life satisfaction of high and low spiritual experiences groups of males ($t=2.34, p<.05$) and females ($t=3.44, p<.01$). The obtained means of high group of males (i.e.20.34) and females (i.e.22.30) is higher than the means of low group of males (17.51) and females (19.32). Similar trend has been observed for the life satisfaction of high /low spirituality groups. The obtained t value is significant for both males ($t=4.08, p<.01$) and females ($t=3.50, p<.01$). Therefore, we may accept hypothesis 3.1 stating that “Higher spiritual beliefs group will



experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spiritual beliefs group”;hypothesis no.3.2 stating High spiritual experiences groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spiritual experiences groups and hypothesis no. 3.4 stating “High spirituality total groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spirituality groups”are accepted. Whereas hypothesis no.3.3 stating that “High spiritual practices groups will experience greater life satisfaction as compared to low spiritual practices groups” is partially accepted. Although the means of life satisfaction of high groups of males (i.e.20.63) and females (i.e.21.94) are greater than the means of low group of males (i.e. 19.73) and females(19.63), the obtained t is significant only for females (t= 2.84,p<.01). The level of life satisfaction of both males and females with high spiritual beliefs and experiences is greater than the low groups, while the effect of spiritual practices is seen only for females. No significant difference in life satisfaction was found for high/ low male spiritual practices group, whereas the females of high practice group were found to be more satisfied with their lives as compared to those following lesser spiritual practices.

Section three: Between group effects of spirituality on life satisfaction
Table 3 showing descriptive statistics of SWLS of different groups

S.No	Groups B E P	Gender	N	Mean	SD
1	HHH	M	16	24.69	4.22
		F	32	22.66	4.94
2	HLH	M	17	19.41	6.17
		F	13	24.08	4.73
3	HLL	M	12	18.25	4.79
		F	14	19.86	4.67
4	LLL	M	38	18.16	5.43
		F	30	18.23	3.91
5	LHL	M	18	20.22	5.65
		F	18	20.11	4.36
6	HHL	M	20	23.95	3.66
		F	20	21.55	5.06
7	LLH	M	13	17.31	4.03
		F	13	18.62	4.5
8	LHH	M	16	20.31	4.99
		F	10	22.1	6.03

Table 3 shows the between group effects of spirituality on life satisfaction of young adults.

For studying the impact of congruence in three dimensions of spirituality on life satisfaction of males and females, eight groups were derived, namely HHH, HLH,HLL,LLL,LHL,HHL,LLH, LHH on the basis of median splitting.

Table 3 also depicts that highest satisfaction with life among males has been experienced by group-1, i.e. HHH (24.60) and lowest life satisfaction by group-4 i.e. LLL (17.31) . In addition, these two groups differ significantly (t=6.53, p<.001) as shown in table 4. For females also the highest life satisfaction has been experienced by group-1, i.e. HHH group (24.08) which is significantly different (t=4.42, p<.001, table 4) from the mean of LLL group (18.23). It follows, therefore that young adults high in spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices (HHH) have



greater level of life satisfaction as compared to those low in these three dimensions (LLL). Therefore we may accept hypothesis no. 4 stating Young adults with high spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices will be most satisfied while respondents with low spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices will be least satisfied.

Comparing the life satisfaction level of both male and female respondents higher in two dimensions groups (i.e. HLH, HHL, and LHH) with those lower in two dimensions groups (i.e. HLL, LHL, and LLH), we find that the range of life satisfaction level is higher in HLH, HHL, and LHH groups as compared to HLL, LHL, and LLH groups. The obtained range for males is 19.41 to 23.95 for groups higher in two dimensions as compared to groups lower in two dimensions (i.e. 17.31 to 20.22). Similarly the obtained range for females is 21.55 to 24.08 for high group and 18.62 to 20.11 for low group.

The above mentioned results are substantiated by the results of Duncan's Multiple Comparison Test mentioned in table 4 which reveals that respondents of HHL (grp.6) (M=23.95) group in males have been found to experience significantly higher life satisfaction as compared to HLL (grp.3) (18.25) and LLH (grp.7) (17.31). The obtained t values being 5.70 $p < .05$ and 6.64 $p < .001$ respectively. Similarly respondents in HLH (grp.2) group in females also experience greater life satisfaction (M=24.08) as compared to LLH (grp.7) (M=18.62). The obtained t value is 5.46, $p < .10$. Respondents higher in two dimensions of spirituality were found to be more satisfied with their lives as compared to those lower in two dimensions.

Table 4 showing Duncan's Multiple Comparison Test to see between group effects of Spirituality on life satisfaction of males and females

Groups	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	M		5.27 ##	6.43#	6.53**	4.46	0.737	7.38**	4.37
	F	0	1.42	2.79	4.42**	2.54	1.10	4.04	0.556
2	M			1.16	1.25	0.81	4.53	2.1	0.901
	F		0	4.22	5.84**	3.96	2.52	5.46###	1.97
3	M				0.092	1.97	5.70#	0.942	2.06
	F			0	1.62	0.254	1.69	1.24	2.24
4	M					2.06	5.79**	0.85	2.15
	F				0	1.87	3.31	0.382	3.86
5	M						3.72	2.91	0.09
	F					0	1.43	1.49	1.98
6	M							6.64**	3.63
	F						0	2.93	0.55
7	M								
	F							0	3 3.48
8	M								
	F								0

**= $p < .001$, ##= $p < .10$, # = $p < .05$

In addition, table 4 also reveals that HHH (grp.1) group differs significantly with LLH (grp.7) ($t=7.38$, $p < .001$), HLH (grp.2) ($t=5.27$, $p < .10$) and HLL (grp.3) group ($t=6.43$, $p < .05$) whereas HHL (grp.6) (M=23.95) differs significantly ($t=6.66$, $p < .001$) from LLH (grp.7) (M=18.16) group among males. This follows that males having high spiritual beliefs and experiences but low spiritual practices judged their lives to be more satisfied as compared to those males who were low on spiritual beliefs and experiences and high on spiritual practices. This shows that among these groups, the least level of LS was experienced when their level of belief and experience was low but the level of spiritual practices was high (LLH group). Therefore, spiritual beliefs and experience both seem to play an important role in the level of life satisfaction among males. When we look at the findings of females, we find HLH (grp.2) group (M=22.66) to differ significantly from LLL (grp.4) group (M= 18.23) ($t=5.84$, $p < .001$) and



LLH (grp.7) (M= 18.62, t=5.46,p<.10) group. This shows that spiritual beliefs and practices play an important role in the experience of life satisfaction for females.

In the light of above findings, we may accept the hypothesis no. 4 stating that spirituality will have significant influence on the level of life satisfaction of young adults.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study that females are higher in spirituality, specifically in spiritual beliefs as compared to males are supported by the findings of Francis and Wilcox (1998) who found that as compared to males, females have stronger and more abstract beliefs about divine being. In Indian culture girls are taught to be more creative, empathic, obedient, nurturing, sensitive and caring than boys and these traits are associated with higher level of spirituality. Moreover, due to the long standing influence of patriarchal society, sometimes females lose their self-confidence, self-direction, wholeness and authenticity which they can regain by holding firmly spiritual beliefs, owning spiritual experience and following spiritual practices.

The World Value Survey (1999-2001) found that females are more likely to attach greater importance to their religion in their lives across most countries. Smith and Denton (2005) reported that adolescent girls are significantly more likely than boys to regard religious faith as important in shaping their daily lives, to have made a personal commitment to live life for God, to be involved in a religious youth group, to pray and to feel close to God.

Buchko (2004), suggested that college women experience a strong spiritual relational component to their religious faith to a greater extent than college men. That is, they experience daily connection with God through prayer, seek direction from religious advisors or teaching when handling problems, feel assured that God is present and active in their lives, derive comfort and security from faith and express feelings of devotion to and respect for God.

Several other explanations have been extended for gender differences in spirituality/ religiosity. Miller and Hoffman (1995) and Miller and Stark (2002) offered two explanations for these differences. The first is, the widely accepted notion that differences in socialization between girls and boys are responsible because the girls are taught to be submissive, passive, obedient and nurturing than are boys. The second explanation has been offered in the terms that since women participate less in employment and have majority of the responsibility for family chores, they have less social power, more time for religious/spiritual activities and a greater need for a source of personal identity and commitment.

Another explanation of higher spirituality among females have been given with the idea that social relationships more strongly influence women mental health than men . Women might get more benefit from the social-relational aspect of religious /spiritual engagement- such as congregational social support (Mirola,1999).Levin (1994), has also suggested that women have been socialized to more strongly internalized traits and behaviors which are more congruent with religious values such as cooperation and nurturance which might make enhanced spirituality more important for their well-being. This is to be noted here, that in the present study we found significant gender differences in spiritual beliefs only but not in spiritual experience and practice. It is suggested that the general conclusion that women are more spiritual than men is culture specific and contingent on the measurement method used. For e.g. a study by Flirth (1997), concluded on the basis of observations of *Hindus* that on the whole women are more religiously active than are men; *puja (prayer)* is often carried out at shrines in the home by women and Hindu temples are set to be more frequented by women than by men. In the present study, we have not measured spiritual practices in terms of religious observances only but certain other practices like meditation, seeking guidance from guru, collaborating with God in coping with crisis and seeking meaning and purpose in life etc. This may be one of the probable reason of not finding gender differences in terms of spiritual practices and



experiences. Lippman and McIntosh (2010), also did not find gender difference in the degree of spiritual experiences in their study. Both males and females were found equivalent on this dimension of spirituality.

It can be implied that the major contributor of difference in spirituality level of males and females is the difference in their spiritual beliefs. It seems that although females are similar in spiritual practices and experiences to males, their personal convictions regarding God, self, others, life, nature, meaning and purpose in life are significantly different from males.

Moreover, the findings of Multiple Comparison Test reveals that greater the congruence among spiritual beliefs, experience and practice, the higher the level of life satisfaction. Congruence is conceptualized as a state of awareness, openness and connection in three human dimensions: the intrapsychic, interpersonal and universal-spiritual. Spiritual congruence occurs when ones actions are totally aligned with ones spiritual beliefs. In other words, congruence means that there is consistency between what a person feels and says and how he or she acts. Being incongruent means that one has not to present a mask before others. Spiritual growth is just a movement towards spiritual congruency.

The main reason for spiritual incongruency is that life is filled with distractions that reduce one's ability to devote 100% of oneself towards God or pure consciousness. A person can grow spiritually by identifying those obstacles from life. Congruence is the core construct underlying Satir's multidimensional model of change (Davis et. al.1996: Satir et.al. 1991). Our self knowledge, knowledge of others and of reality helps us form an authentic approach towards life. When our views/knowledge are inadequate or incorrect, life becomes burdened with misconceptions, fears and anxieties, our capacity to love and be loved is challenged resulting into incongruence, feeling of insecurity and finally hampering the level of satisfaction with life.

The findings of the present study that high spirituality group (comprising of beliefs, experiences and practices) (both males and females) have greater life satisfaction have important implications for ensuring the well-being of young adults. Life satisfaction is an important dimension of subjective well being (Diener,1984) which incorporates presence of positive affects, absence of negative affects and life satisfaction. In order to solve the problems stemming from negative emotions is to work on positive emotions. An important feature of positive emotions is that their effects do not end once suffering is prevented or alleviated. Positive emotions, when tapped effectively can lead to experience further positive emotions, can optimize health, subjective well-being and psychological resilience. They undo the effects of negative emotions as well as broaden the thought-action repertoire. Fredrickson (1998) has argued that the primary function of positive emotional experience is that it facilitates the availability of personal resources that afford innovation and creativity in thought and action (Isen,1987). Positive emotional states may offer people the opportunity to consider and plan for future outcomes, whereas negative emotional states orient people to respond to proximal and immediate events (Frijda,1986). The finding of the present study that congruence among spiritual beliefs, spiritual experience and spiritual practice leads to higher level of life satisfaction has important implications for counselors, trainers and policy makers. If they try to plan intervention program to bring congruence among these three dimensions of spirituality, the well-being of young adults can be secured to a great extent.

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