

# SPIRITUALITY AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE TO BETTERMENT OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Today's corporate world is competitive, complex and demanding. To sustain in this testing corporate world, factors like peaceful mind, adaptability, creativity, emotional quotient etc., plays very important role. Spirituality is one such thing that helps develop or enhances these qualities in an individual. Spirituality actually helps in strengthening an individual's inner capabilities.*

*This paper aims to explore the importance of spirituality in the corporate world. It finds out whether spirituality helps individual in becoming better professional. This paper explores the possibilities of including spirituality as a subject to be taught in management education*

**Key words: Spirituality, Management Education, Corporate World, Sustainability, Students.**

## INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is a very important aspect of human life. Many philosophers and thinkers of past and present have defined spirituality in various ways. A great philosopher Dollard (1983), in his book "**Toward Spirituality: The Inner Journey**" stated that spirituality is "concerned with our ability, through our attitudes and actions, to relate to others, to ourselves, and to God, as we understand Him". The National Institute of Healthcare Research in the United States (2013) defined spirituality as "the feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred". The term 'search' refers to attempts to identify, articulate, maintain or transform. The term 'sacred' refers to a Divine Existence or Vital Truth as individual perceived himself" (Larson et al., 1998). Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary also refers Spirituality as "the quality of being concerned with religion or the human spirit".

Spirituality has been the prime driving force

of the Indian culture since the Vedic era. The core of spirituality is to help us return to our true self. It also aims to equip us with the power of knowledge, not in academic terms but one that makes us realize the very purpose of our existence on this planet.

Revered philosopher Sri Aurobindo has stated, "Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinitive is native to it". Spiritual practices are those actions that lead to spirituality. It is possible to identify universal values, principles and practices by examining those that are common to most of the world's cultures, traditions and religions, though some disagreements will remain (Brown, 2004; Kinnier, *et. al.*, 2000). Traditions and religions have played an important role in human history and have been influential in shaping present day cultures (Wilber, 1995). Spirituality is generally confused with religion but the fact is that both are two diverse streams with only one objective - making an individual realize the real essence of life. Religion is a cluster of specific rules and practices which help in giving the correct direction to our life. Religion is that path which helps us to reach spirituality. While

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Spirituality helps to understand and experience that the Almighty and we are not different. We are, in fact, an integral part of the Almighty. While spiritualism is aimed at uplifting us from within, it also provides multiple benefits on the physical level. It brings clarity to the mind and thus plays a great role in improving the thought process, work efficiency and decision-making skills of an individual. It also enhances the ability to understand other people's perceptions, which helps in working with them harmoniously or leading them in a better way. Spiritualism, thus paves the way for an all-round success.

Though humanity has achieved ever greater material well being, they are more empty and unhappy (Seligman, 2002). Spirituality, in effect, is the art of managing life. The art, which can manage our day-to-day life, can also be very effective in managing organizations in the corporate world. In this era, when ethics and values are degrading at a rapid rate, resulting in unhealthy competitions, huge amount of stress, burn-outs, negativity and acrimony, the business world needs a whole new generation of leaders seeped in spirituality, to show the way to prosperity and lasting peace.

If we want to implement spiritual thoughts and spiritual management in the business places, the very first step is to introduce it in our education programs. The need of the hour is to equip students with spiritual strength before they step into the corporate world.

The main aim of this paper is to explore the feasibility of spiritual programs in our education. Is it possible to make spirituality a part of our syllabus? Will it be helpful for students in making a smooth entry in the corporate world? Will it help them in sustaining and succeeding in their respective field? In the long run, what impact will it

have on their overall well-being? This research paper endeavors to find answers to these questions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Dr. B.S.K. Naidu (2011), "Survival when taken to depths leads us to spirituality. It is about connect and the uppermost aspirations of the human spirit. Spirituality is also experienced as a driving force for motivation. Spirit considered as pure self which is beyond the body is the origin of spirituality. It is one's consciousness, conscience, thinking & feeling part of existence, motivation sensitivity, and divinity. Spirituality embraces humanistic qualities such as love, patience, tolerance, compassion, forgiveness, sacrifice, responsibility, harmony, contentment, and a concern for others, beliefs, self-esteem, values, consciousness and energy into itself."

Education without spirituality is like "a flower without fragrance". **Swami Vivekananda** said, "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library". **Mr. Anna Hazare** had five commandments viz. Pure Thoughts, Pure Conduct, Unblemished Life, Sacrifice and Capacity to withstand humiliation; which he has assimilated, practiced and demonstrated himself throughout his life. Psychology says human brain have two compartments: left and right. The left brain deals with Computer understanding language, mathematics, analysis, logic, sequence, linear details bits and pieces and numbers while the right brain works more as Artist comprehending space, rhythm, color,

imagination, music, patterns, holistic pictures, concepts and shapes.

Modern Education completely supported cultivation of science and technology ignoring the fact that these dimensions caused damage to society, nation and the world itself. Hence there is a necessity of fusion between science and spirituality which will broaden intellectual perspectives, and will bring harmony to the society. (9<sup>th</sup> All India Students' Conference on Science and Spiritual Quest (AISSQ-2015)).

Spirituality is one of the key aspects of the *Framework for Personal and Social Education*, which has formed a compulsory part of the school curriculum in Wales (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales [ACCAC], 2000) from September 2003. Here, 'Spirituality' is one of the ten aspects of a person in society.

Twelve principles of spiritual intelligence identified by Zohar and Marshall (2001) are as follows: self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision and value led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, humility, tendency to ask why, ability to reframe, positive use of adversity and sense of vocation. Further Emmons (2000) identified the capacity for transcendence, heightened consciousness, and sanctification, spiritual problem-solving and virtuous behaviour as aspects of spiritual intelligence. K. Kalyanasundaram and P. Balasubramanian in his paper "Effect of Spirituality on Human Performance- A Myth or Reality, (2014)", performed an experiment with students and found that Spiritual Quotient does not have an impact on the human performance irrespective of the gender. This experiment also concluded that the spirituality connects well with the mind.

As a part of the pedagogical strategies the inter-disciplinary approach to curriculum

design, experiential learning and cross-curricular activities imbued an aim to cultivate spiritual and moral development underlined (Marrakech, 2012). Arts, music and other creative activities are identified as important components to religious education curriculum, as well as silence, solitude and quiet contemplation. The use of internet and modern media also highlighted as a key platform for building curriculum resources, engaging young people in a more interactive and open dialogue, and allowing diverse perspectives to be shared and critically examined at the same time.

In secular schools of those countries where teaching about religions in classrooms is possible, teachers should try to develop a classroom climate that fosters autonomy and is encouraging, progressive and sympathetic, where students can feel safe to ask questions, to reflect and experiment. In this kind of holistic learning where 'heart, mind and soul' are involved spirituality develops. Indeed, a nurturing environment is important in the whole school not just in the religious education classroom. In this environment individual feel more worthy and build trust and relationship easily. Here teachers are empathetic resulting in students who are more open and responsible (Learning about religion program, New Zealand).

The focus of teachings, whether it is educational or spiritual is to make an individual survive in worldly life. Sustainability itself can be understood as a disposition towards human rights, peace, active citizenship, participatory democracy, conservation, and ecological, social, and economic justice (Sterling, 2001). From an adult developmental perspective, such a disposition pertains to more advanced stages of consciousness (Mustakova-Possardt, 2003; Wade, 1996). For example, Sterling (2007) argues for a "connective cultural

consciousness" informed by a relational worldview, as both are motives and a prerequisite for educational and cultural change. He identifies key personal qualities or virtues associated with such a consciousness, essential to a "widening and deepening of the boundaries of concern" necessary for change towards sustainability – flexibility, resilience, creativity, participative skills, competence, material restraint, sense of responsibility, and transpersonal ethics (Sterling, 2001, p. 52). The individual and collective change he describes involves self-awareness and self-critique as an agent of "cultural evolution" (Gardner, 2001, cited in Sterling, 2007, pp. 63-78). These capabilities and dispositions have been shown by psychological developmental research to pertain to mature critical moral consciousness (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998, 2004, and 2003).

Orr (2002) introduces the concept of "spiritual acumen" which he describes as "seeing" differently. Orr points out that because problems of sustainability are formed out of "tensions between competing perspectives" (Schumacher, 1977, cited in Orr, 2002, p. 1459) they cannot be solved by rational means alone, but require a "spiritual awareness" that honors mystery, science, life, death, and enables the transcendence of differences through wisdom, love, compassion, forgiveness, and mercy (Orr, 2002, p. 1459). Taylor (2000) identifies one of the essentials for individuals and societies to move towards mutual understanding as the disposition of selflessness. Lack of active ethics and abilities to critically re-examine the values, moral codes and ways of living lead towards un-sustainability (Jickling *et. al.*, 2006). It also helps educators to consider how to achieve such outcomes that Sterling's (2001, p. 52) envisions for sustainable education, namely, "heightening an awareness of worldviews" developing

"broader and higher order capabilities" knowledge that enables systemic and critical understanding of patterns, and virtues and capabilities for wise action. For example, since sense of identity is fundamental to what people think of themselves, persons educational approach cultivate a primary sense of identity as the world human family. Corporate today understand that in order to engage employees monetary benefits alone won't work, spiritual value is a primary requirement. When employees are concerned about their 'highest' selves and their purpose of life and doing work is spiritual and materialistic both, automatically capacity of organization considerably improved. (N.R. Aravamudhan and R. Krishnaveni, 2014)

M. Subrmanim and N. Panchanatham in their paper 'Spirituality and Management' (2013) said that Spiritual Organizations are concerned with helping employees develop and reach their potentials. According to Robbins and Judge (2007), the characteristics of Spiritual Organizations are: (i) Strong sense of purpose (ii) Focus on individual development (iii) Trust and openness (iv) Employee empowerment (v) Toleration of employee expression.

Bringing ethics and spiritual values into the workplace can lead to increased productivity and profitability as well as employee retention, customer loyalty, and brand reputation (Corinne (2005). Research has shown that there are numerous benefits like higher profits, less absenteeism, higher morale, less stress and the likes associated with integrating spirituality in management. The key outcomes that everyone can benefit from include (i) Boosts morale (ii) Influences satisfaction (iii) Increases productivity (iv) Improves Profit.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Mainly, the paper aims to know the viewpoints of practitioners on spirituality in education and to find out the holistic perspectives of spirituality and its role in betterment of management education.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Considering possible dimensions of spirituality and objectives undertaken, exploratory design of research has been deployed. It was decided to gather autonomous responses from the persons of academics and profession having MBA. Data from a sample size 100 was collected through using convenient random sampling design.

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between the perception of youth and adults about spirituality.**

From table 1, it is clear that there is a significant difference between the perception of individuals having age less than 30 and individuals having age more than 30, when it comes to spirituality. It conforms the common feeling that perception changes to age. This difference can be easily recognized from the mean values calculated in table 1 and also from the p-value ( $=0.002 < 0.05$ ) for H<sub>01</sub> and it is helpful in concluding that spirituality in a person increases with an

**Table 1: Independent Samples Test**

	t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	d. f.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	4.065	98	.000	4.533	1.115
Equal variances not assumed	4.129	85.264	.000	4.533	1.098

A structured questionnaire followed 5 point likert's scale to collect data. Statistical analysis was done with correlation analysis, regression analysis and t-test.

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

increase in age.

Thus, the hypothesis H<sub>01</sub>, 'there is no significant difference between the perception of youth and adults about spirituality' is rejected and the study confirms that the perception of youth and adults towards spirituality has a significant difference.

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis**

S. No.	Hypothesis and factors undertaken	Calculated Correlation	Result	Remarks
1	H <sub>02</sub> : There is no significant relationship between spirituality and corporate behaviour of an individual.	$r = 0.747$	High Correlation	There is positively significant relationship between spirituality and corporate behaviour
2	H <sub>03</sub> : Individuals who believe spirituality as their reason of happiness do not believe that spirituality affects their corporate behaviour.	$r = 0.605$	More than Mediate Correlation	There is a high positive correlation between the belief that spirituality is a reason of happiness and it also affects the corporate behaviour.

S. No.	Hypothesis and factors undertaken	Calculated Correlation	Result	Remarks
3	H <sub>04</sub> : Individuals who found spirituality as a helping factor in managing inner thoughts do not believe spirituality as a helping factor for sustaining in the corporate world.	$r = 0.336$	Low correlation	There is a very low but positive correlation between the belief of individuals who found spirituality as a helping factor in managing inner thoughts and sustainability in corporate world.
4	H <sub>05</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the effect of spirituality on productivity and effect of spirituality on profitability.	$r = 0.671$	More than Mediate Correlation	There is a positive and more than moderated level of correlation between effect of spirituality on productivity and profitability of business.
5	H <sub>06</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the effect of spirituality on happiness and effect of spirituality on productivity.	$r = 0.613$	More than Mediate Correlation	There is a positive and more than mediate level of correlation between the happiness aspect of spirituality and productivity of individual.
6	H <sub>07</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the effect of spirituality on happiness and effect of spirituality on the profitability of business.	$r = 0.597$	Moderated Correlation	There is a moderated correlation between the effect of spirituality on happiness and profitability of business.
7.	H <sub>08</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the effect of spirituality on emotional stability and effect of spirituality in trusting and having confidence in others.	$r = 0.416$	Low Correlation	There is a low but positive correlation between effect of spirituality on emotional stability and effect of spirituality in trusting and having confidence on others.

1. From the table 2, there is a positive and high correlation ( $r = 0.747$ ) between spirituality and corporate behaviour that means if the level of spirituality increases then the corporate behaviour also positively improves in the same fraction. While

measuring this relationship, it is identified that the increase of spirituality in an individual will also increase his/her positive belief to include it in the corporate for individual wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of the organization.

2. Table 2, shows that there is a high positive correlation( $r = 0.605$ ) between the belief that spirituality is a reason of happiness. Happier person will contribute more positively to the growth of the organization.
3. The relationship between the belief that spirituality helps in managing inner thoughts which is good for sustainability in corporate world is 0.336 which looks low at first sight, but when we interpret the meaning and the relations, it is clear that the management of inner thoughts will help a person in organizing his life and his sustainability in the corporate world will improve.
4. The correlation between the productivity and the spirituality is 0.671 (Table 2) which shows that spirituality increases the productivity of a person that in turn increases the profitability of business. Hence more spiritual persons in the organization should ideally help organizations to perform better.
5. Spirituality increases the happiness aspect, which is also helpful in improving the organization's environment, culture and progress. This is the reason why organizations try to make their employees happy. The correlation is 0.613 which is high and indicates that more the person is spiritual, more he/she will be happy.
6. Spirituality increases the happiness quotient which is helpful in increasing the overall performance of an individual and the organization performance also, which automatically results into the increase in profitability of business. The value of correlation obtained is 0.597
7. The value of correlation obtained between emotional stability and confidence of a person is 0.416, though it is not very high but still the analysis shows that spirituality increases the emotional stability which ultimately contributes to increase in emotional intelligence of a person that results in increase in trust and confidence in others up to a particular level since emotional stability gives ability to view things holistically.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis**

Sr. No.	Hypothesis and factors undertaken	Calculated Correlation	Result	Remark
1	H <sub>09</sub> : There is no significant effect of a person's faith in spirituality on the behaviour of a person in the corporate world.	$r = 0.747, B = 0.524$	High Correlation	There is a significant effect of an individual's faith in spirituality and his behaviour in the corporate world.  It is found that every unit increase in individual spirituality will increase the effect of spirituality in the corporate behaviour by 5.24%

Sr. No.	Hypothesis and factors undertaken	Calculated Correlation	Result	Remark
2	H <sub>010</sub> : There is no significant effect of a person's belief in spirituality on the implementation of spirituality in education	$r = 0.765, B = 0.296$	High Correlation	There is a significant relationship between individual's belief in spirituality and the implementation of spirituality in education. Every unit increase in an individual's belief in spirituality will increase value of "spirituality as a subject" by .296 that is 2.96%.
3	H <sub>011</sub> : There is no significant effect of spirituality in corporate behaviour on the implementation of spirituality in education sectors	$r = 0.621, B = 0.343$	More than Mediate Correlation	There is a significant relationship between spirituality in corporate behaviour and the implementation of spirituality in education. Every unit increase of spirituality in corporate behaviour will increase the value of "spirituality as a subject" by .343 that is 3.43%.

1. From the above table, the value of B obtained is 0.524 that indicates there exists a linear relationship between "spirituality and individual" and "spirituality and corporate behaviour". The null hypothesis is rejected which indicates there is a significant effect of an individual's faith in spirituality and his behaviour in the corporate world.
2. There is a significant relationship between an individual's belief in spirituality and the implementation of spirituality in education. The value of correlation obtained is 0.765 which is very high. Also the table of regression analysis shows that the value of B is 0.296. The increase in spirituality will have a positive effect on "spirituality as a subject".
3. There is a significant relationship between spirituality in corporate behaviour and the implementation of spirituality in education. The value of

correlation obtained is 0.621 which is more than the moderated level. Also the table of regression analysis shows that F-value is highly significant. Increase of spirituality in corporate behaviour will increase the value of "spirituality as a subject" i.e. the working professionals who are spiritual are more in favour of including "spirituality as a subject in management education".

## FINDING

1. It is found that there is an increase in inclination towards spirituality with age, also found difference between the opinion of youngsters and adults above 30.
2. With an increased belief in spirituality individual also develop his / her belief to include spirituality in corporate for the betterment of individuals.
3. Individuals believe that spirituality provides better reasons for happiness,



and gradually contributes to the growth of organization.

4. It is found that spirituality helps in managing inner thoughts which as a result help an individual in organizing his life and his sustainability in the corporate world will improve.
5. Researcher's analysis proves that productivity of persons increases with the help of spirituality that also increases the profitability of business as a resultant.
6. Spirituality is helpful in improving the organization's environment, culture and progress.
7. Spirituality is helpful in increasing the overall performance of an individual as well as the organization performance.
8. Spirituality increases the emotional stability of individuals.
9. Faith in spirituality affects the individual's behaviour in the corporate world.
10. From the study it is clear that with the increase of faith in spirituality, the belief of implementing it into education also increases.
11. A strong relationship between individual's beliefs for the effect of spirituality in corporate behaviour which further justifies the implementation in education sector as a subject.

## CONCLUSION

With this paper researcher tried to understand what professionals think about spirituality and is it helpful in sustaining in the corporate world, and it found that spirituality has a positive effect on life and it should be taught as a subject of the MBA curriculum. In other words, this paper found the connection between spirituality and

sustainability in the corporate world and further, spirituality and education.

Analysis of data gives the result that age affects the spirituality of a person. This result was further justified by the fact that spirituality increases with experience. As a person becomes mature, he develops an innate need to connect with one's inner self and the outer world in a better manner, and spirituality helps in establishing this connection.

The paper helped us to understand how spirituality is helpful in living a better and balanced personal life, which invariably forms the basis of a successful professional life. The paper concludes the views of individuals about spirituality on factors like inner energy management, defining goals of life, increasing creativity, increasing sense of identity, developing motivation, providing confidence, making self-aware, increasing productivity, making one disciplined, developing emotional stability, achieving inner peace, better stress management etc., and after analysing the data, the results point to the positive role of spirituality towards all these factors. Spirituality increases these factors in an individual, although in case of some factors the effect is less, but still it is on the positive side, which implies if we work on them it will give better results. In case of factors like confidence, happiness, self identity, the calculated values are very high, which makes a strong case to make spirituality to be systematically taught to MBA students.

On the other hand for the impact of spirituality on professional development, the analysis of data gives results that spirituality helps to improve relationship with colleagues which develops the ability to work as a team, it gives a sense of responsibility, it increases the democratic way of leadership in organization because it

helps in developing the ability to be open to other person's point of view, it increases ethical behaviour which increases positivity within the organization, decreases jealousy, hatred among colleagues and increases trust and confidence in each other which ultimately results in the development of the organization.

People who believe that spirituality helps in sustaining in the corporate world also believe that there should be a connection between education and spirituality. This connection can be established by introducing spirituality as a subject in the MBA syllabus instead of offering it through various seminars. This would sow the seeds of spirituality in students quite early which will be helpful in their personal development, professional development and ultimately there sustenance in the corporate world.

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