

Spiritual Response to COVID'19 Crises - Indian Vedic Perspectives

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Abstract

The present research is aimed at focusing on the impediments that have caused the present pandemic COVID'19 and the possible measures to overcome those impediments from the perspective of spirituality – Indian Vedic Perspectives. It is a mixed method study based on primary and secondary source of information using observation, discussion, and survey methods. A random sample opinion was raised using structured questionnaire on a five point scale in validating the findings as measures to coping with COVID crises. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation measures were used. Majority of respondents (70% and above) have shown their agreement with a mean response of 4.14 on a five point scale about all the scriptural injunctions as measures to cope with COVID'19 crises. A moderate degree of positive association was found between spirituality as best means of recouping back from COVID crises and COVID'19 crises management based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions. Findings state that the path of perfection gives the strength of life to conquer any kind of material problem whether it is an economic or non-economic in nature. Spirituality can help us to overcome COVID crises as it is the most auspicious thing on this planet of earth. It can be presumed that the spirituality is one of the best ways of managing the COVID crises.

Keywords: COVID crises, spirituality, qualitative study, path of perfection, and Correlation.

Introduction

COVID'19 Crises

Pandemic COVID-19 has created a very high level of uncertainty in 35 years. This situation is very toxic for the recovery of our economies. Now, the objective must be to crush the uncertainty as soon as possible. To gain confidence and economic recovery it is necessary to subside the uncertainty as it is observed in earlier crises (Smit and Martin Hirt et al, 2020). Deflation might be one of the crucial post-COVID crises that the central banks and governments of different nations are trying to address as there is great demand destruction led by several factors such as loss of incomes, jobs, and salaries in particular. It becomes the biggest problem for the sustainability of businesses and employees as well (Vivek Kaul, 2020). The pandemic will be impacting chronic hunger by 130 million more people by the end of 2020 than was the estimated 690 million people in 2019 as per

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reports of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world (WHO, 2020). And it has also collected huge fee from the mankind, and its economic and social impacts are also resonant globally (World Bank Group, 2020).

It is needless to remind that the whole world is confronting a disease with matchless consequences both physically and mentally due to the pandemic COVID-19 (Lima CKT et al, 2020). As it evolves, we make sure that the most vulnerable people including elderly people in our communities aren't left behind (Ketchell, M. 2020). It is now time to reconsider and re-evaluate our way of life, for the

well-being of the collective, which has been advocated by the Indigenous Peoples for decades to recoup back the balance in the world (Cultural Survival, 2020). It is necessary to respect the resiliency that people have demonstrated during times of crisis as there is a huge concern for way of life of values, based on indigenous knowledge, leading by aboriginal nations and communities. There should be concern for one another without any racial discrimination, hatred, and fear (Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), 2020). The indigenous people have set an example of how to live in harmony and maintain the integrity of the ecosystem. The very need of indigenous people is sustainability without which their livelihood is at stake (Rundle, H. 2019).

Spiritual well-being is the need of the hour

Empirical studies show that a person's well-being is directly influenced by the spirituality (Chirico, 2016; Fides A. Del Castillo, 2021). In times of crisis, we all of a sudden do everything in an emergency mode, fear, concern, and panic. It will cause an epidemic of soul sickness. Simple tips to improve the state of soul: having a sense of meaning and purpose; loving and being loved; self-esteem, a sense of your worth; tapping into inner peace and joy, and being of service to others (Deepak Chopra, 2020). Ability to connect with ourselves, with others, and with whatever or whoever spiritually is very important for the well being of the common as it can scale this alarming societal hurdle COVID-19. It is necessary to paying attention towards spiritual health and also legitimately helping patients, colleagues, families, and the world to sustain (Elizabeth J. Berger, 2020).

It is difficult, even in normal situations, to lead a life of joy without knowing the meaning and purpose of life. Then what to speak of it in abnormal situations like pandemic. That is where spirituality has a significant role to play. Spirituality is “a facet of existence that makes life meaningful through a

search for knowing purpose of life and relationship with the absolute” (Roger and Hatala, 2017). The fourth industrial revolution requires the people to reconstruct the concept of who we are and the very reason we exist as human beings. The decision making must be at the centre of integrative spirituality which is regarded as the quality of an entity of knowing the connectedness of its existence over and above the perceived existence (Nandram, S.S. 2019). Five principles of practicing social entrepreneurship as an integrative model are: i) respect for integral unity which stands for the existence of one truth, ii) embodied knowing, which stands for practical knowledge of actions in disregard of fruits, iii) holistic attainment of life goals which stands for holistically realizing life goals, iv) all connectedness which refers that we are all connected, and v) doing without ownership which means that we are not the owners of our actions which are caused by various natures. (Nandaram S.S. et al, 2019).

Spirituality as a Means of Recouping Back from COVID Crises

It was witnessed that all past crises call for innovation. But, while tapping it, the traditional, social, cultural, spiritual, and religious values were neglected. It's now time to incorporate those values into the economic and social activities to protect the mankind at large and recoup back from the ill effects of the pandemic. Religious and spiritual coping strategies are one of the tools that can be used probably (Koenig H, et al 2012), provided that majority of people apply their religion, spirituality or faith to cope with stressful situations and adverse impacts of life problems and illnesses (Pargament KI et al, 1998). There were oral memories and transmissions of utterance of spirituality through singing religious songs and reciting verses from Bible as a strategy which has set African Americans a sense of their human existence (Raboteau AJ, 2001). The World Bank Group (2020), announced its response, through a combination of new

projects, existing projects with restructuring and emergency elements, and operation of financial tools meant for disaster, in four different ways: 1) Saving lives threatened by the pandemic, 2) Protecting the poor and vulnerable, 3) Helping save jobs and businesses, and 4) Working to build a more resilient recovery.

Indian Vedic Scriptures revealed that past deeds are the cause and effect of pleasure or pain. If actions are good the result is pleasure, and vice versa. It is also evident at the time of King Pruthu Maharaja who determined that the people were not at fault; rather, for some reason, the earth was withholding her bounty. He, therefore, threatened the earth, who explained that she had been withholding her bounty because of the sinful activities of some of the population. Then, because of King Pruthu's intervention, through a series of one hundred sacrifices, she began to supply every living entity with its proper food (Drutakarma Dasa, 2020). Personal beliefs describe the suffering conditions of life. For example, diseases are considered as "spiritual encounters", and as well as physical and emotional experiences. The search for a rationale of life and understanding the relationship with God and others seems to have a significant role in dealing with various ailments (Koenig, 2006). From this point of view, it can be presumed that the present suffering due to the pandemic is the effect of collective miss deeds in some way or other, knowingly or unknowingly.

Hence, the present research is aimed at focusing on the impediments that have caused the present pandemic scenario and the possible measures to overcome those impediments from the perspective of spirituality – Indian Vedic Perspectives.

Review of Literature

Although there are very few studies in the present context of COVID'19 from the perspectives of spirituality, a requisite number of studies which are

relevant to it in one way or other way are reviewed to lay better connectivity to the future. Spiritual beliefs and practices, in many cultures, have kept going for centuries and used by individuals as a way of dealing with life's difficulties and to overcome them (Lobsang Yeshi and Eugene Y. J. Tee 2018). Spirituality provides a lifesaving aid for the people in crisis without regard to their nationality, wealth, religion, or race. It can be expressed as a belief that humanity is one family (Walker et al, 2012). Spirituality refers to "institutions and systems which consist of organizational structures, codes of behaviour, and symbol systems that define beliefs and assumptions meant to create within the individual a very comprehensive, powerful, and long-lasting attitudes of world view", (Fritz K. Oser et al). In a Gallup poll conducted in sixty countries to spot the new millennium beginning, it was found that 87 percent of respondents opine that they consider themselves to be a part of some religion, and the remaining 13 percent opine that they belong to none of the religion. It is as high as 99 percent of respondents in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East obeying some religious affiliation (Gallup Poll).

The Gita's ethics is both formal and material: one must do one's duty according to one's 'nature'; but this duty is determined under the individual's place in the larger social whole, i.e., by dint of the class, he or she belongs to (Laura P Hartman and Abha Chatterjee, 2007). As the humanitarian enterprise grows, it is required to look further to codify behaviour and capability in terms of global standards and codes in recent years. For example, the NGO Code of Conduct, Sphere Standards, UNHCR's Operational Handbooks, World Food Program, etc. These standards are meant to deal with the attribute of survival in crisis (Walker and Maxwell, 2008). On the other hand the industrialization has been fostering disvalues, without a spiritual compass to guide, while the impact of Eastern religiosity and their emphasis on the inner self, on American thinking, has the late become very strong. However, it is doubted

whether businesses will change their way by themselves unless something more powerful forces it to do so (Maya McGinn Porter, 1999). Firms caring the interests of their stakeholders try to integrate the values and culture with the day-to-day decision making. Satisfying the stakeholders is not a big deal for businesses that adapt to the path of Dharma (P NVV Satyanarayana and N Udaya Bhaskar; 2020).

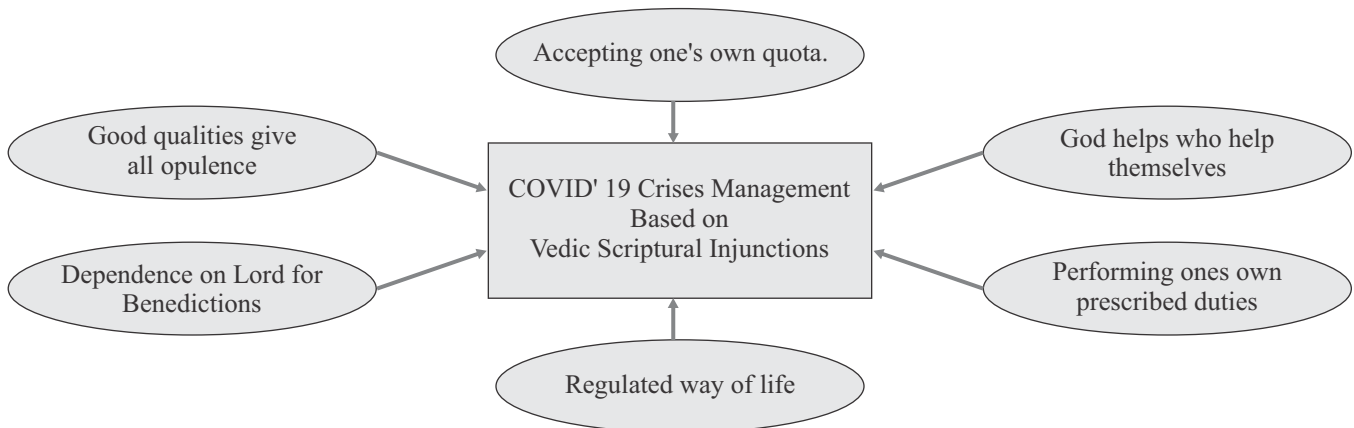
Materials and Methods

The present study uses mixed method considering qualitative, explanatory, quantitative and grounded theory research design. As part of qualitative desing, the study covers the philosophy of spirituality as a response to the COVID'19 crises from Indian Vedic perspectives. The main purpose of this study is to address the preliminary research question: What are the possible measures in terms of spirituality in coping with COVID crises? And to address the ancillary research questions: Is spirituality one of the ways of managing COVID'19 crises? How does spirituality save mankind from COVID crises? Any qualitative research comprises a variety of things like philosophies, research purposes, intended audiences, methods, and reporting styles, etc., (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Drisko, 1997; Greene, 1994) in (James W. Drisko, 2005a).

Both primary and secondary sources of information were used. Voluminous philosophical works such as Isopanisad, Bhagavad-gita, and Srimad Bhagavatam written by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada, a world-renowned Spiritual Reformer and Guru from India, were mainly used as secondary source to extract and sensitize the different concepts which are applicable to the present context. The Virtues of Vidhura written by Sri Rama Ramanuja Achari were also part of the source of information. Several research articles were also studied in this regard. Transferability represents the applicability of things from one context to another context (Leininger, 1994). It begins with noticing and causing something that *may* be fit into other conditions, although it is not certain to establish the same (James W. Drisko, 2005b). Opinion of target respondents was further used as primary source.

Out of different concepts extracted from the above mentioned scriptures, the authors identified 11 concepts that are appropriate to the present context as coping measures. Out of these concepts, 6 concepts were considered as the most appropriate ones' as coping measures. Based on these most appropriate concepts, a research model was developed to address the research questions (Figure 1):

Figure 1 Spiritual Response to COVID'19 Crises: Indian Vedic Perspectives



Source: Authors contribution for this article

As depicted in Figure 1, the six scriptural injunctions such as Accepting one's own quota (F1), God helps those who help themselves (F2), Performing one's own prescribed duties-the Varnasrama System (F3), Regulated way of life (F4), Dependence on Lord for Benedictions (F5), and Good qualities give all opulence (F6) are presumed to be as measures to cope with COVID Crises. These are further classified into three main dependent variables as Satisfying with what one has can help managing crises (D1), Doing right without regard to results can help managing crises (D2), and Dependence on Supreme Lord for all benedictions can help managing crises (D3). F1 and F2 fall under D1, F3 and F4 fall under D2, and F5 to F6 fall under D3. These D1, D2, and D3 represent the objective variable COVID'19 Crises Management Based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions (O). Likewise, three independent variables such as Spiritual well-being (I1), Spirituality (I2), and Indian Vedic Scriptures (I3) to test their need during COVID'19 Crises. It is also presumed that there will be an association between Spirituality as means of recouping back from COVID crises (I2) and COVID'19 Crises Management Based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions (O).

As part of the explanatory design, the study further tries to describe the causes of the pandemic followed by crises from the core perspective of spirituality to find out the possible measures to cope with the same. Qualitative researchers adopt a "causes-of-effects" way of explaining the theory. Skocpol's (1979), through their famous theory, explained sufficiently all instances of social revolution amongst France, Russia, and China, the agrarian-bureaucratic states which were not conventionally colonized (James and Mahoney Gary Goertz, 2006).

For this purpose, observation, discussion, and survey methods were used to come up with some measures to cope with the pandemic crises. An

attempt was made to integrate and interpret the past works to the present context. The non-statistical technique used to integrate, evaluate, and interpret the findings of multiple qualitative research works is known as meta-synthesis. It aims at the transformation of individual findings into new concepts and interpretations. Integration and usage of the findings from phenomenological, grounded theory or ethnographic studies are allowed (Polit and Beck, 2006) in (Cronin et al., 2008). A random sample opinion of about 223 respondents on the findings of the study was raised using structured questionnaire on a five point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree in validating the findings (or contextual items relevant to findings) as measures to coping with COVID crises. The questionnaire is sent randomly to Indian nationals aged 20 years and above through online using Google Forms. Descriptive statistical measures like Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation; and inferential statistical measure Correlation Coefficient were used for empirical analysis of survey responses.

Findings and Discussions

This section is divided into THREE parts. Part I deals with demographics of respondents and their opinion on the need for Spiritual Well-being, Spirituality, and Indian Vedic Scriptures during COVID Crises; Part II deals with COVID'19 Crises Management Based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions, and Part III deals with empirical analysis of survey responses.

Part I - Demographics of Respondents and their opinion on the need of Spiritual Well-being, Spirituality, and Indian Vedic Scriptures during COVID Crises:

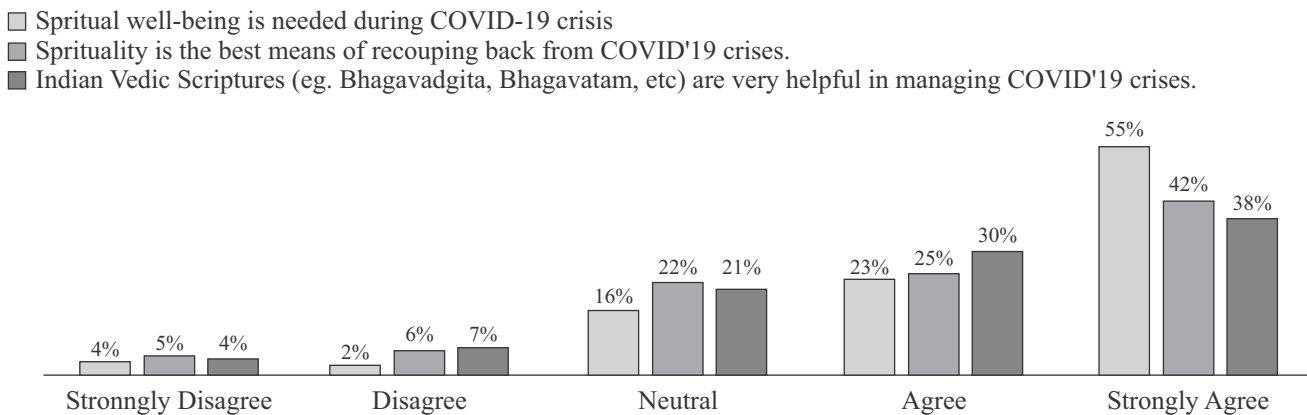
The break-up of respondents is done on the basis of gender, religion, age, education, occupation, spiritual belief and practice. About 51% of respondents are male while 46 are female; 94% are

from Hindu religion while 3% each from Christianity and other religions; 68% are aged between 20-40 years while 28% are aged between 40-60 years and only 4% are aged between 60-80 years; most of the respondents of about 92% are qualified graduation and above; and about 45% are employed, 7% are professionals, 5% are business people, 29% are youth (students), 6% are home makers, and 9% are others like unemployed-retired-social and spiritual servicers. Majority of respondents of about 95% have belief in Spirituality and faith in Indian Vedic Scriptures,

while 89% are practicing spirituality somehow or other.

It is found that 55% of respondents were strongly agreed and 23% were agreed on the need of spiritual well-being during COVID crises. It is further found that 42% of respondents were strongly agreed and 25% were agreed on spirituality as the best means of recouping back from COVID crises. It is also found that 38% of respondents were strongly agreed and 30% were agreed on the need of Indian Vedic Scriptures in managing COVID crises (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Need of Spiritual well-being, Spirituality, & Indian Vedic Scriptures during COVID'19 Crises



Part II - COVID'19 Crises Management Based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions:

Below mentioned six Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions are presumed to be as measures to cope with COVID'19 crises and validated by the respondents through their agreement of different degree.

- *One should accept only those things necessary for oneself, which are set aside as one's quota*

Discussion:

The Supreme Lord is the supreme owner and controller of everything, animate or inanimate, within this universe. Therefore, one should accept only those things necessary for oneself, which are set aside as one's quota, but not things belonging to

other living entities - both animate and inanimate (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1974). The Supreme Lord is one and the only proprietor of this material world; and all others are His expansion or energy just like a fire has light and heat as its energy. Even though He distributes His energy in different ways, He remains His ultimate proprietorship to control, sustain, and dictate everything as He is completely detached (renounced) despite His all inconceivable potencies: power, wealth, fame, beauty, and knowledge, but none of us. Therefore, we have to recognize His proprietorship and accept everything or anything given by Him as our quota just like the cow eats grass and gives us milk which she doesn't drink as it is food for all of us. That is the arrangement of the Lord, we all (as His servants) have to accept His proprietorship instead of quarrelling and enmity with one another over

material possessions. Human life is not meant to quarrel like cats and dogs, but it is a life of responsibility. One who doesn't satisfy with the privileges that are given by the Supreme Lord and quarrel unnecessarily will certainly be punishable by the laws of nature through different means of miserable conditions like wars, natural calamities, epidemics, etc. Because the tendency of enviousness vanishes everything, while loving each other increases prosperity.

It can be understood that this is the root cause of the massive and devastating attack of COVID'19 on a human being due to not obeying the laws of nature by animal killing for satisfying the uncontrolled taste, while lower forms of life such as animals, birds, reptiles, etc., are strictly following the laws of nature by accepting their own food. Hence, it is suggested one and all to accept the Supreme Proprietorship and obedience to the laws of nature (instructions of Sri Isopanisad) to save the mankind at large and the whole world from the clutches of COVID'19.

The survey also states the same thing by way of strong agreement of about 58% and agreement of about 24% of respondents respectively. Only few respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed upon this to the extent of 2% and 1% respectively, while about 14% of respondents were neutral.

- *Supreme Lord provides us what we lack and preserves what we have*

Discussion:

In Bhagavad-gita (9.22) Krishna says that He provides for His devotees by giving them what they lack and preserving what they have (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1972a). There is a saying that God helps those who help themselves. But, it should be understood properly that helping ourselves means putting ourselves under Krishna's protection as His parts and parcels.

It just like our hand can help us only when it is situated properly on the body and works on behalf of the entire body. It will die, if it thinks to help itself in separation from the body. Similarly, it is our spiritual death as soon as we think that we shall live independent of the Supreme Lord Krishna. Hence, helping oneself means knowing one's constitutional position in relation to the Supreme Lord and performing activities accordingly.

It can be explained through an example: no mother tells her child to sit down and do nothing unless the child is bad and disturbs her natural duty. But the same mother asks for help in her natural duty if the child can work nicely. Sitting calm is for those who do not know how to work sensibly. Sitting calm is not a positive activity as it negates nonsense. No one can see life in negation. But only through the positive activities, one can see life. Nature, the external energy of the Supreme Lord, through its energy (now we named it as COVID'19) forced all of us to be in a situation like doing nothing (lockdown) except praying constantly and waiting for help from the Supreme Lord. By this, it can be understood that everything which has been done is probably of negative and disturbing Mother Nature. The message of Bhagavad-gita is also to perform a positive activity. Spiritual life is not about "Don't Do Things," but it is about "Doing Things Right" i.e., in a proper manner. In Bhagavad-gita, it can be apparently seen that Krishna inspires Arjuna to work on His behalf and He never tells Arjuna that doesn't concern with the war. It means that it is required to stop all those activities that take us away from the Supreme Lord Who can provide what is lacking and preserve what is already there for all of us. Researchers, clinicians as well, revealed that they must go on doing their service in the best interest of the patients by practicing evidence-based medicine (without fear) and incorporating the new interventions to save lives by refereeing the teaching of Bhagavad-Gita (i.e., renunciation of results). They further revealed that they must also be ready to hold in hands the danger of life by

respecting the fact that neither of the two (life or death) is in their control. They considered themselves as the channel of dharma the COVID has shown to them. They further considered it as the choice to align with it (Ankur Karla, et al, 2020).

The survey also reveals the same thing by way of strong agreement of about 56% and agreement of about 24% of respondents respectively. Only few respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed upon this to the extent of 4% and 5% respectively, while about 10% of respondents were neutral.

- *Varnasrama System of Society Results in Peace and Prosperity*

Discussion:

The Varnasrama system⁽¹⁾ based society is arranged in such a way to please the Lord by performing one's occupational duties under the guidance of qualified Brahmanas to achieve peace and prosperity (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1972a). The Varnasrama system (four occupational divisions and four spiritual divisions) is a process of recognizing the natural talents and abilities of each person and accordingly providing the work to each person (Exhibit 1-BG.18.47). All the four divisions of work are given equal importance when they are performed in connection with satisfying the Supreme Lord. Therefore, no one is supposed to imitate another's duty. For example, in Bhagavad-gita, we can see that Arjuna, although Kshatriya, was not interested in fighting at all as he was to kill many. Similarly, we see some times the business people have to tell lies to make a profit to exist in the business. Sometimes a servant has to carry out the instruction of a bad master even though it is not supposed to do. It is not advised to give up one's prescribed duty by looking at its natural faulty characteristics and take up other occupational duty (Exhibit 2-BG.18.48).

Despite the flaws (caused by contamination of material modes of nature), it is suggested to carry out one's prescribed duties continuously just like as we cannot stop the fire by seeing smoke on it. It means that all those defects will be nullified or purified as the prescribed duties are performed for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord. Hence, the prescribed duties are considered as auspicious. One who does good is never encountered by bad things or evil forces (P NVV Satyanarayana and V. Ramanujam, 2021). Auspicious works are the basis of prosperity. Skill and perseverance are the root causes of it. It grows out of an activity and stables out of good management. The seven factors that stimulate prosperity are:—self-confidence, tranquillity, discipline, purity, compassion, absence of harsh speech, and unwillingness to do anything disagreeable to friends. Forgiveness is a great force. Violence is the strength of hostile people, punishment is the strength of the legal system, caring for others is the strength of women, and similarly, forgiveness is the strength of virtuous people. Forgiveness is the one supreme contributor to peace (Sri Rama Ramanuja Achari, 2017). Although wealth is required to achieve something good, health is to be given the priority always (especially during pandemic COVID'19) with which one can establish wealth and good quality as well.

The survey, on the peace formula of performing one's own occupational duties, also reveals a strong agreement of about 56% and agreement of about 29% of respondents. Only few respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed upon this finding to the extent of 2% and 2% respectively, while 11% of respondents were neutral.

- *Regulated Way of Life Mitigates All Material Pains*

Discussion:

Excessive eating, sleeping, defending, and mating

are the demands of the body. These can block advancement in the practice of yoga which can mitigate the miseries of material existence (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1972a). Birth, death, old age, and disease are considered to be the most painful aspects of this material world. It is stated that the eating habit can be regulated by practicing to take sanctified food (prasadam) which is offered to the Lord who is offered vegetables, flowers, fruits, grains, milk, etc (BG 9.26). It is also found that an individual who is engaged in prescribed duties considers the time spent in sleeping unnecessarily as a great loss. Take for example all saintly people like Srila Rupa Goswami were not interested to pass an ample amount of their life without being engaged in the service to the Lord. Therefore, their sleeping is kept to a minimum. Hence, it is advisable to follow the saintly people for a regulated way of life. Following in the footsteps of great people can help individuals overcome the material pains (Exhibit 3–BG 6.17).

It is well known that so many lives were lost of pandemic due to not having immunity. Here is the best way of developing immunity (Exhibit 4 - BG.17.8-10): it is necessary to admit that the purpose of food is to increase the duration of life, purity of the mind, and strength of the body but not to spoil these things. All great authorities considered food such as milk products, sugar, rice, wheat, fruits, and vegetables that best aid health and increase life's duration. All these foods are pure by nature because they are far away from meat and liquor which are untouchable as they spoil health. Animal fat is sufficiently there in milk, butter, cheese, and similar products. Hence, it rules out any need for the killing of innocent creatures. It is because of uncontrolled taste, the killing of animal is happening. Protein is amply available through split peas, dhal, whole wheat, etc. The civilized way of obtaining needed fat is through milk. Slaughter is the way of subhuman. Now the question is as to which way to go: the civilized way

(strengthening life) or the subhuman way (spoilage of life)? Obviously, the civilized way as it is accepted by the laws of nature and scriptures.

Foods of too salty, or too hot or excessively mixed with red pepper are considered to be foods in the mode of passion. They are miserable and cause disease as they produce mucus in the stomach. Foods that are not fresh or cooked more than three hours before they are eaten are considered to be in the mode of ignorance (darkness). They are decomposed and give a bad odour, which often attracts people in the mode of ignorance. Remnants of food (except those offered to Lord or saintly persons) are also considered to be in the mode of darkness, and they increase infection or disease.

The survey also reveals that living against laws of nature and scriptural injunctions causes painful life in terms of strong agreement of about 59% and agreement of about 23% of respondents respectively. Only few respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed upon this to the extent of 3% and 2% respectively, while about 14% of respondents were neutral

- *The only bestower of the benedictions of religion, economic development, sense gratification, liberation or elevation to the heavenly planets is the Supreme Personality of Godhead*

Discussion:

Apart from liberation, the primary needs of life like religion, economic development, and sense gratification (dharma, artha, kama) are different for every individual. Hence, it must be understood that not only for liberation but also for primary needs in this material world, one should depend on the Lord who is the ultimate benedictory of everything (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1972b). Sometimes, as King Pruthu Maharaja reminded, it is visible that children are not happy despite having

rich parents, patients die despite valuable medical treatment by competent clinicians, and people drown despite having a safe boat, so on and so forth. There is always a great struggle that one has to confront as long as one is not favoured by the Lord. It is also evident in conditions of religion followed by different people, economic development of different people, sense enjoyment of different people, liberation obtained by different people, that behind everything there is Supreme Authority one must have to accept (Exhibit 5 - SB.4.21.30). It can further be understood through a case of varying results of two individuals working hard. One may get an opulent life even without working, while another does not even get minimum life despite hard work. It is required to answer these differences if anyone doesn't want to accept the Supreme Authority.

The survey, on the need for dependence on Supreme Lord for benedictions, also reveals a strong agreement of about 45% and agreement of about 23% of respondents. Only few respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed upon this finding to the extent of 5% and 5% respectively, while 23% of respondents were neutral.

- *Whoever acquires the brahminical qualifications gets all the opulence of the world*

Discussion:

Supreme Lord respects and protects the brāhmaṇas and brahminical culture, as well as the cows (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1972b). The specific mentioning of the word gavām by the King Pruthu Maharaja is significant because the Supreme Lord is always associated with cows and His devotees (Exhibit 6 - SB.4.21.44). That is why His devotees worship Him with the prayer namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca: Obeisances to the Lord Who is the benefactor of Cows and Brahmanas. Where there is a brahminical culture, there is also cow protection.

Where there is no brahminical culture, cows are slaughtered as ordinary animals at the sacrifice of human civilization. As the Supreme Lord is the maintainer of all living beings and the provider of necessities of all living beings, everyone must be grateful to Him. One who attains good qualities by taking shelter of a superior person (bonafide spiritual master) and becomes grateful for the mercy of the Supreme Lord, is surely bestowed with all opulence. Then he is considered to be a Brahmana or Vaishnava. Therefore, King Pruthu Maharaja pleaded the blessings and mercy of the Supreme Lord, with His associates, devotees, Vaishnavas, Brahmanas, and cows.

Brahmana is one who conquers over the arishadvarga - the six enemies of mind² attains self-control; and never shows iniquity and therefore never experiences calamity. The significance of self-controlled behaviour and well-being is unquestionable. Several researchers have revealed that self-control practices at young age can help predicting the cognitive and self-regulatory status at adolescence age (Shoda et al., 1990), and the necessary health and well-being outcomes at older ages in life (Moffitt et al., 2011). Most importantly, individuals with high self-control can improve the quality interpersonal relationships (Vohs et al., 2011), and mostly a life of joy (Cheung et al., 2014; Hofmann et al., 2014). On the other hand, individuals with low self-control are prone to be associated with tricky behaviours and outcomes like patterns of impulse buying (Baumeister, 2002), financial debt (Gathergood, 2012), defective eating (Elfhag and Morey, 2008), and delaying tactics (Tice and Baumeister, 1997). In the light of these behaviours, self-controlled behaviour has been constituted as a 'Hallmark of Modification' (De Ridder et al., 2012).

It is further stated that the happiness increases at the end, if that is derived from a judicious course of study, from a virtuous battle, and severe austerities. If you want happiness in the night, do that in the day.

If you want to spend four months of monsoon happily, do that in the eight months of the year. If you want a happy old age, do that in the youth. And, similarly, if you want a happy life hereafter, do that during your whole life here now. For enduring happiness to achieve and maintain, gratitude is essential (Sri Rama Ramanuja Achari, 2017). Contentment increases satisfaction and motivates individuals to have a positive point of view towards the prevailing conditions. Both gratitude and contentment mostly deal with common purposes rather than personal purposes (Lobsang Yeshe and Eugene Y. J. Tee, 2018).

The survey, on the given finding, also reveals a strong agreement of about 43% and agreement of about 27% of respondents. Only few respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed upon this finding to the extent of 7% and 3% respectively, while 20% of respondents were neutral.

Part III – Empirical Analysis of Survey Responses:

Descriptive statistics reveal that the mean response of all the findings (F1 to F6) is between 3.82- 4.35 which is considered as agreed with a standard deviation ranging from 0.90 – 1.25. Dependent variable satisfying with what one has (D1) has the highest mean response of 4.5 which is considered as strongly agreed with a standard deviation of

0.79, while the remaining two dependent variables viz., doing right without regard to results (D2) and dependence on the Lord for all benedictions (D3) have mean responses of 4.32 and 3.97 which are considered as agreed with standard deviations of 0.74 and 0.98 respectively. Finally the objective variable COVID'19 Crises Management Based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions (O) has a mean response of 4.18 which is considered as agreed with a standard deviation of 0.74. All the three independent variables need for spiritual well-being (I1), spirituality (I2), and Indian Vedic Scriptures (I3) during COVID crises have mean responses of 4.24, 3.93, and 3.91 which are considered as agreed with standard deviations of 1.03, 1.15, and 1.12 respectively.

It is found that a moderate positive correlation of 0.57 between spirituality as the best means of recouping back from COVID crises (I2) and COVID'19 Crises Management Based on Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions (O). Hence, there is an association between the two. It is further found that there is equal amount of correlation between need of spiritual well-being during COVID crises (I1) and (O), while the highest moderate positive correlation of 0.60 between need of Indian Vedic Scriptures for managing COVID crises (I3) and (O) as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Variables & Items	Descriptive Statistics			Correlation		
	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	I1	I2	I3
D1	4.23	4.50	0.79	0.57	0.51	0.53
F1	4.35	5.00	0.91	0.47	0.34	0.36
F2	4.22	5.00	1.13	0.31	0.28	0.28
D2	4.32	4.33	0.74	0.53	0.47	0.45
F3	4.34	5.00	0.93	0.32	0.26	0.19
F4	4.34	5.00	0.96	0.39	0.37	0.36
D3	3.97	4.00	0.98	0.44	0.53	0.58
F5	3.82	4.00	1.25	0.38	0.43	0.50
F6	4.05	4.00	1.15	0.32	0.43	0.43
O	4.18	4.25	0.74	0.57	0.57	0.60
I1	4.24	5.00	1.03	1.00	0.73	0.65
I2	3.93	4.00	1.15	0.73	1.00	0.68
I3	3.91	4.00	1.12	0.65	0.68	1.00

Source: Calculated by authors using Eviews software

Calculated by Eviews

Limitations of the Study

The present study is carried out from Indian Vedic perspectives. Therefore, it can be extended or applicable to only those who are practicing spirituality on the basis of Indian Vedic scriptures or who believe in Indian Vedic Scriptures. Hence, it has its limitation in application to a larger extent. However, it can yield better results if one applies it in the present situation without regard to ones beliefs whether it works or not. It is just like a medicine works when taken it knowingly or unknowingly that it can work. Hence, belief in the absolute and the resulting experience of spirituality lead to positive psychological states of peace, healing, satisfaction, optimism, and joy (Fides A. del Castillo, 2021). Secondly, it is not possible to measure the potency of spirituality like other

variables such as sales and profits of some business. Because it is an unlimited and unending process that one must have to undergo and experience the pleasure of its potency. Thirdly, the intensity of the present situation is different from the intensity of the past situations. Fourthly, validating the findings-the Indian Vedic Scriptural Injunctions as coping measures for COVID crises is purely based on the commentaries of select spiritual authorities and opinion of very limited respondents. Therefore, the results may depend upon the intensity of applying it to the time, circumstances, place, and people. It is also to be kept in mind that it is the study or the person (the author) who carried out the study has a limitation in bringing it to the current situation, but not the spirituality has a limitation. It is possible to address only a few things through a study by an individual.

Future Direction and Conclusion

The present study motivates readers who are practicing and having belief in spirituality to intensify their practice and beliefs further. A study, that explored the relationship between religiosity and spirituality; and the mental health repercussions of social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil, found high level of religious and spiritual beliefs during the pandemic and the beliefs associated with better health outcomes, as indicated by higher states of optimism and lower states of fear, disturbing and sorrow in religious and spiritual practicing respondents at large (Lucchetti et al., 2021). Coping strategies have been used frequently in stressful situations (Ebadi et al., 2009; Schuster et al., 2001; Thune-Boyle et al., 2006). Another study (Schuster et al., 2001) has reported that 90% of respondents of a sample representing US have taken to the path of religion to handle the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. Also analogous results were found in the events of war (Ebadi et al., 2009) and chronic diseases (Thune-Boyle et al., 2006). All these evidences might motivate the non-believers also to take the path of perfection to the possible extent. This study also encourages both the existing researchers and the emerging researchers in this area to take it forward to the future needs.

Although spirituality can be regarded as life and soul, many are yet to know this fact. Just knowing this fact is not sufficient; one must practice it and experience it. Therefore, it is advised everyone to take the path of perfection of life just not as a remedial measure to confront the difficult situations, but as an integral part of life. Then it can serve as the best means of managing difficulties or crises just like a well serves one if it is dig when one is not thirsty. It was also propounded that spirituality can be employed as a coping strategy in people's life-threatening situations (Panzini et al. 2007). The Supreme Lord also assures all those

who take the path of perfection of life with required knowledge to free from the miserable conditions of material/phenomenal world. Hence, it can be presumed that the spirituality is considered to be one of the possible means of managing any difficulties or crises including the COVID'19 crises of all individuals without any discrimination at all places and all times.

Notes:

- *Varnasrama system* basically consists of four occupational divisions or qualities such as Intelligent class (*Brahmanas*), administrative class (*Kshatriyas*), business class (*Vaisyas*) and the working class (*Sudras*) prescribed according to one's mode of nature viz., mode of goodness, mode of passion, and mode of ignorance; and four spiritual divisions or orders of life such as student life (*brahmacharya*), married life (*grihastha*), retired life (*vanaprastha*), and renounced life (*sannyasa*).
- Arishadvarga: *kāma* - selfish desire, *krodha* - anger, *moha* - delusion, *mada* - arrogance, *lobha* - greed, *mātsarya* - envy.

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Appendix

Exhibit 1

Bagavad-gita Chapter 18 -Text 47

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ
para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma
kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam*

Translation

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Prescribed duties, according to one's nature, are never affected by sinful reactions.

Exhibit – 2

Bagavad-gita Chapter 18 - Text 48

*saha-jam karma kaunteya
sa-doṣam api na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa
dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ*

Translation

Every endeavor is covered by some sort of fault, just as fire is covered by smoke. Therefore one should not give up the work which is born of his nature, O son of Kunti, even if such work is full of fault.

Exhibit – 3

Bagavad-gita Chapter 6 (Sankhya-yoga) - Text 17

*yuktahara-viharasya
yukta-cestasya karmasu
yukta-svapnavabodhasya
yogo bhavati duhkha-ha*

Translation

He who is temperate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

Exhibit – 4

Bagavad-gita Chapter 17 Text 8-10

ayuh-sattva-balarogya-
sukha-priti-vivardhanah
rasyah snigdhaḥ sthira hr̥dya
aharah sattvika-priyah
katv-amlā-lavanaty-usna-
tikṣṇa-rukṣa-vidahinah
ahara rajasasyesta
duḥkha-sokamaya-pradah
yata-yamam gata-rasam
puti paryusitam ca yat
ucchistam api camedhyam
bhojanam tamasa-priyam

Translation

Foods in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such nourishing foods are sweet, juicy, fattening and palatable. Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, pungent, dry and hot, are liked by people in the modes of passion. Such foods cause pain, distress, and disease. Food cooked more than three hours before being eaten, which is tasteless, stale, putrid, decomposed and unclean, is food liked by people in the mode of ignorance.

Exhibit - 5

Srimad Bhagavatam (SB), Canto 4, Chapter 21 Text 30

dauhitrādīn ṛte mṛtyoḥ
śocyān dharmā-vimohitān
varga-svargāpavargāṇām
prāyeṇaikātmya-hetunā

Translation

Although abominable persons like my father, Vena, the grandson of death personified, are bewildered on the path of religion, all the great personalities like those mentioned agree that in this world the only bestower of the benedictions of religion, economic development, sense gratification, liberation or elevation to the heavenly planets is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Exhibit – 6

Srimad Bhagavatam, Canto 4, Chapter 21 Text 44

guṇāyanam śīla-dhanam kṛta-jñam
vṛddhāśrayam samvṛṇate 'nu sampadaḥ
prasīdatām brahma-kulam gavām ca
janārdanaḥ sānucaraś ca mahyam

Translation

Whoever acquires the brahminical qualifications—whose only wealth is good behavior, who is grateful and who takes shelter of experienced persons—gets all the opulence of the world. I therefore wish that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His associates be pleased with the brāhmaṇa class, with the cows and with me.