

Spirituality and Modern Day Life: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract

Spirituality was not really a sought after research topic till a few decades back. Researchers started focusing on the same somewhere in 1980s and 1990s. Different researchers have given different reasons for the same. Over the years many definitions of spirituality have been formed and yet there is no consensus. The paper aims at providing a comprehensive view of different definitions and interpretations of Spirituality by researchers and examines the relation between religion and spirituality. Further the paper will also highlight the use of spirituality in some sectors and thereby combing the definitions, interpretations and implementation to make a conceptual model for “Influence of Spirituality on modern day life”. The integrative consolidated model combines the different sectorial research by finding a common link. The paper aims at providing a model which has a general route to use spirituality in life and yet can be customized as per needs of specific sector. The model contributes by introducing self-management and external management as two important constructs of spirituality. Harmony with internal and external environment are identified as two dimensions of spirituality.

Keywords : *Spirituality, SelfManagement, External Management, Spirituality based Model.*

Introduction

“Spirituality is the Science of Soul”

-Swami Vivekanand

In recent times there has been much talk about spiritualism, though most are not clear about the definition and many have confused views about it. Till some decades back, spirituality was not really an area of interest for the scientifically minded people. However somewhere in 1980s and 1990s, researchers started conducting focused research in spirituality. In fact this gave birth to new areas like Neuroethology and Theo biology (Ratnakar and Nair, 2012). Some researchers believe that important element in the emergence of spirituality was that it offered an alternative to religion. It allowed the inclusion of a variety of traditions under the rubric of universal morality without the baggage of competing religious Institutions and

their authoritative boundary maintenance. (Van der Veer, 2009). Though spirituality is Universal, Asian link to spirituality is evidently strong, for example, the vision of Purusartha (four main aims in life) in Hinduism highlights that human development calls for realization of dharma (right conduct), artha (wealth), karma (desire) and moksha (salvation). Giri (2011) argues that elements of Purusartha must be looked in a creative spirit of autonomy and interpretation resulting in practical spirituality. Spirituality uses and transforms existing traditions but goes beyond the authority of priestly lineage and monastic Institution (Van der Veer, 2009). Different researchers have put forth different reasons for interest in spirituality. Chen and Sheng (2013) feel that moral abnormalities, twisted social values, greed and all kinds of crimes have caused an imbalance in the material and spiritual life of an individual. Spirituality fills this gap as an evolution

of human consciousness that helps in giving meaning to lives and make sense out of things (Biscop, 2014). Valente (1995) argued that spirituality is to fill the gap that has resulted due to confusion about life and the desire to seek meaning of life. Researchers have also explored the relevance of spirituality to workplace (Aravamudhan and Krishnaveni, 2014), to medical sector (Caoili, 2015), to education (Wintersgill, 2008) and so on. And yet there has been no clear consensus on the definition and meaning of spirituality. The papers aims at providing a comprehensive view of different definitions and

interpretations of Spirituality by researchers. Further the paper will also highlight the use of spirituality in some sectors and thereby combing the definitions, interpretations and implementation to make a conceptual model for “Influence of Spirituality on modern day life”.

Spirituality—is there a definition?

Over the years researchers have defined spirituality in many different ways...but there never has been a consensus. Some have defined it as an energy, while some have defined it as an experience.

Author	Definition of Spirituality
Hinnells, 1995	Awareness of one’s sense of self, others, spirituals and the ultimate force needed in search for being humane and becoming perfect human being
Marjolein, 2002	Finding meaning and purpose in one’s work and living out deeply held believes
Hollins, 2005	The ontological significance of life: making sense of life situations, deriving purpose in existence.
Pargament and Mahoney, 2005	Considered as sacred process of which one finds meaning, aims and energy as means to impact on others and environment
Rego and Cunha, 2008	The five dimensions of workplace spirituality are team’s sense of community, alignment with organizational values, sense of contribution to society, enjoyment at work and opportunities for inner life
Lavie et al, 2009	Spirituality in the context of advertising is defined as an experience that is broader than religion, occurs within the context of our daily life, deals with our efforts to reach our highest potential, offers judicious tools with which to deal with suffering and revolves around the notion of meaning
Lunn, 2009	Spirituality is the personal belief by which an individual relates to and experiences the supernatural realm.
Bosch, 2009	Applied spirituality is in reality inner spirituality in action in the external world.
Brooke and Parker, 2009	Being human involves a spiritual dimension.

Poroch et al, 2009	Spirituality is a dynamic, evolving, contemporary expression of indigeneity. It connects past, present and future. It emphasizes people's relationship with each other, the living and non-living premised by an understanding or experience of their place of origin.
Gibson, 2011	Spirituality is a complex and controversial human phenomenon, the meaning of which may be shaped and reshaped by diverse perspectives and experiences. It increases personal, social cultural and transcendent connectedness and a desire to move towards greater authenticity between beliefs, moral values, attitudes and actions.
Ratnakar and Nair 2012	Spirituality is concerned with an individual's inner life which has been found to have positive consequences for his/ her behavior
Chen and Sheng, 2013	Spirituality is an introspective process where individuals connect with others, societies and all beings in nature in a profound manner in order to generate a new set of conceptions, awareness and perceptions that go beyond usual sensory experiences
Yassman, 2013	The basis of spirituality as such, according to Plato is the idea of absolute qualities: good, truth, virtue, beauty, proportionality, justice, perfection, courage, harmony-the ideas of absolute qualities and absolute good that constitute the fixed and unshakeable framework of the ontological foundation of human spirituality
Gold, 2013	In seeking to adhere to a humanistic orientation, the path towards individual fulfillment, defined as, self-actualization, originates in one's spiritual values and identity.
Jirasek, 2013	Spirituality can become not only an existential symbol of a traditionally derived dogmatic system but also a symbol of a present searching for the purpose of life; an unraveling of the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of the world, of a desire for harmony, of a hope for a possible experience of transcendence.
Armando, 2014	Spirituality in modern leadership terminology consist of high energy, initiatives, imagination, entrepreneurship, visionary, transformational and an agent of change
Rowson, 2014	The value of the term spiritual is that it gives permission to speak of things that are unknowable.

Siddall et al., 2015	Spirituality can be broadly defined as an experience that incorporates a relationship with the transcendent or sacred that provides a strong sense of identity or direction that not only has a strong influence on a person's beliefs, attitudes, emotions and behavior but is integral to a sense of meaning and purpose in life
Jirasek and Jiraskova, 2015	The fundamental category of the spiritual dimension to human experience, in the process of self-realization, is the meaning of life. Its indicators include lofty ideals, profound ideas, visions, missions and a belief in purpose. Thus spirituality can be realized within the existential without the sacredness that is a basic characteristic of religion.
Singh (2011)	There are two aspects of spirituality – a negative aspect and a positive aspect, and the two aspects are complementary to each other. Negatively, spirituality means melting or effacing the ego, and positively it means realizing one's unity with others (or in other words, having universal love)

Over the years, researchers have offered different definitions of spirituality. There has not been a consensus and yet there is a common thread that binds all these definitions. The definitions are same in the sense that they encourage to explore and question beyond the normal routine life. They implore the individual to look within oneself and find the true meaning of one's existence. They discuss the importance of ethical dimension and are in search of peace and harmony. Spirituality comes across more like an introspection of oneself. Over the years some definitions are more realistic and have a practical touch where they describe and discuss some parameters that can help identify and reach the respective goals of the individuals. On one hand spirituality is defined as an experience, a symbol of present searching for life, dynamic, evolving, contemporary expression of indigeneity, on the other hand researchers have also defined good, truth, virtue, beauty, proportionality, justice, perfection, courage, of high energy, initiatives, imagination as tools to find spirituality. What is common among all the definitions is the quest to discover oneself, is the process to find the purpose of one's journey, define one's goals and hence be in peace and sync with reality.

The debate between spirituality and religion also invites diverse views. Lunn (2009) has described religion as an institutionalized system of beliefs and practices concerning the supernatural realm while spirituality has been described as the personal belief by which an individual relates to and experiences supernatural realm. Spirituality is viewed as a common man condition while religion is referred to policy, practices and creeds of a particular faith (Phipps, 2012). Religion relates spirituality to doctrine, dogma, tradition, authority-all based on faith. In contrast modern and social science defines spirituality based on universal structures (Biscop, 2014). Ratnakar and Nair (2012) have described spirituality as unifying, inclusive, unconditional, natural and intrinsic. In contrast religion has been described as separating, exclusive, conditional, man created and extrinsic. Some researchers have also shared their concern in trying to differentiate between religion and spirituality. Religion and Spirituality was also used interchangeably in some papers (Martinez et al, 2007; Singh and Ajinkya, 2012). Hill et al (2000) believe that given the significant socio and psychological overlap among religion and spirituality, attempts to measure spirituality as a

separate construct from religion are difficult. In a research done by Wilkinson and Courtney (2012), results indicated that while respondent's definitions of religion and spirituality differ, themes emerged. Organized set of rules, worshipping a God and community of followers was the theme for religion. Belief in higher power, an individual/personal experience, and morals dominated the theme of spirituality. Clearly religion defines boundaries and do's and don'ts while spirituality allows freedom of thoughts and encourages discussion. The adherent of modern spirituality are notable eclectic, adopting a supermarket approach to religious traditions and practices and constructing a highly individualized private spirituality which is decidedly psychological and holds to the conception of the Divine as innate and within (Parsons, 2010). Spirituality was defined as unfolding of life that demands reflection and experience while religion was seen as relationship with God or the divine (Hollins, 2005). In general, it is seen through research papers that differentiating between religion and spirituality allows individuals power of determination and openness of freedom and speech. Spirituality was looked at being not formal, structured or organized and less encumbered with ideological baggage; but religion was identified as formal and exclusive (Aravamudhan and Krishnaveni, 2014). Spirituality allows itself to be molded with the changing times, has room for innovation—innovation of thoughts, processes, beliefs. This aspect of spiritual diversity allows people to maintain the essence of indigenous spirituality and yet incorporate and be aware of other spiritual practices. There is an advanced acceptance of the idea that a person can be spiritual but not religious.

Use of spirituality in different sectors

There appears to be a growing evidence that spirituality has made inroads in various areas like

medical sector, organizational set up, education sector and others. In a study done in 2014, it was reported that older adults who reported higher levels of daily spiritual experiences and forgiveness were more likely to control their anger by being patient with them, thinking things through, and taking time out before responding to provocations and engaging in reciprocal communication (Mefford et al., 2014). Addressing issues of spirituality was found to be important in people who suffer from persistent pain and long term reductions in physical capacity that can have a severe impact on activities. Spirituality was found to provide meaning, purpose and identity in such cases (Siddall et al., 2015). Research has explored the association between spirituality and mental health and has attempted to identify the mechanism through which potential benefits might occur, some common one's being coping styles, locus of control, social support, social networks, psychological mechanism (Ruddock and Cameron, 2010). Studies have demonstrated how religious and spiritual practices can help improve brain function in both psychological and neurological conditions (Newberg, 2011). Interestingly Lun and Bond (2013) have indicated that relationship between spirituality and subjective wellbeing is also dependent on cultural aspect. Thus cultures where socialization for religious faith is more common, spiritual practice was positively related to subjective wellbeing (Lun and Bond, 2013). Relationship between spirituality and wellbeing has also been reiterated in another study which indicates that people who are spiritual have better mental health (Koenig, 2012). Poroeh et al. (2009) also support that spiritual traditions help in building resilience in those suffering mental health disorders. Meditation, which is considered one of the tools of spirituality in some literature, has been found to increase mindfulness, enhanced working memory capacity, reduced switch costs in the attention task, reduced anxiety, negative affect and depression (Newberg, 2011). It is felt that

study of spirituality and health is becoming part of mainstream healthcare (Koenig, 2012). Some expressions of spirituality that encourage personal empowerment, affirm and embrace diversity and promote importance of emotions like hope, forgiveness and purpose were found useful for mental health (Cornah, 2006)). Spiritual components like meditation when used properly were found to have a profound effect on eating disorder treatment and recovery (Caoili, 2015). Spirituality is increasingly considered an important part of nursing theory and practice where it is thought that by addressing spirituality, nurses can help patients cope with death, suffering and loss (Neil, 2003). Importance of spiritual growth and development is also highlighted when considering the mental, physical emotional health of persons with disorders related due to alcohol. Spirituality was also a positive predictor in reduction of drug use and was found to improve long term drug treatment outcomes (Conner et al, 2008). Positive relationship was found between health resilience and spirituality. Participants who rated themselves higher on spirituality saw themselves as more health resilient. They tended to be high in organismic resilience which included physiological, emotional and cognitive balance (Womble et al, 2013). Singh and Ajinkya (2012) recommend inclusion of competence, communication and training in spirituality for professionals who are involved in taking care of patients with terminal illnesses and chronic medical conditions (Singh and Ajinkya, 2012). Spirituality played an important role in women with HIV as it provided them comfort, an opportunity to share their stress and gave them confidence to cope with life with HIV (Peterson, 2011). Spirituality provides aging and their caregiver's peace, comfort and clarity to face trying times of life (Sherburne, 2008). Increasing evidence of positive health outcomes linked to spirituality may be put forth a strong case of integrating an individual's spiritual practice in their

health care so that personalized medical care for older adults can improve health outcomes (Lavretsky, 2010). Research has indicated that spirituality offers maximum health benefits in chronic and incurable diseases (Jain et al, 2013). Spirituality and its role in workplace has also featured prominently in many research. Positive statistical significant relationship was found between spirituality and job involvement (Vander Walt and Swanepoel, 2015). Individual spirituality was also found to influence whether an individual perceives a questionable business practice as ethical or unethical (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Significant and negative relationship of workplace spirituality has been found with perception of organization politics (Khatri and Gupta, 2016). Workplace spirituality, is believed to, hold potential to improve organization performance (Aravamudhan and Krishnaveni, 2014). Spirituality at work requires the courage to be ready for change...change that may be different from traditional (Madden, 2008). Brooke and Parker (2009) advocate spirituality at work because organisations involve people and that in itself involves a spiritual dimension. The five dimensions identified of workplace spirituality were team's sense of community, alignment with organizational values, sense of contribution to society, enjoyment at work and opportunities for inner life (Rego and Cunha, 2008). Spirituality at workplace can be based on simple things like treating the workers as if they are kind, intelligent and responsible. This motivates them to develop these traits (Marques and Dhiman, 2008; Marques et al, 2008). For spirituality to be part of workplace, even the leaders should be spiritually infused (Groen, 2003). There have been reservations on linking spirituality to workplace. Izak (2009) has argued that introduction of spirituality to organization demands caution as it is not its natural habitat. A utilitarian approach to workplace spirituality raises further problems should it be confined only to high performance/

profitability rather than matters of physical and mental health, personal growth, higher level of self-esteem and overall life satisfaction (Gotsis and Korteizoi, 2008). Spirituality in modern leadership terminology consist of high energy, initiatives, imagination, entrepreneurship, visionary, transformational and an agent of change (Armando, 2014). Spirituality can be used as a unifying force by leaders through higher levels of constructive development, reflection and self-awareness about how these beliefs are used (Phipps, 2012).

Use of spiritual dimension in education has also been explored. It is believed that for youth this dimension is likely to involve an aspect of meaning in life which takes them beyond the mundane and repetitive activities in life and allows them to experience the wonderment and inspiration which can emerge from a big idea in Science, a meaningful piece of prose or poetry or the elegance of a mathematical model (Ruddock et al, 2010). Educational leaders may find spirituality useful as another lens or learning tool through which they can critically examine their professional practice (Gibson, 2011). Researchers have argued that encouragement of spiritual growth is important in

children and young people because it is related to a non-material, ethical and self-awareness aspect of their development (Ruddock and Cameron, 2010).

Analysis and Discussion

Maybe one point on which all of humanity may agree is that the world has witnessed immense changes in the last few decades. These changes have affected all aspects of life-financial, social, our attitudes, our goals, our dreams. The change has been exponential. It is interesting to note that interest in spirituality too has increased in the same time frame. If the world was changing at an accelerated rate, the interest and research in spirituality was also witnessing an accelerated rate. Maybe spirituality provides that pathway, that link to fill the gaps created by these changes. The period of accelerating change has put a strain on individuals and entire society. Mankind is being increasingly overloaded with more change than it can handle. This need to constantly adapt to changing situations leads to the feeling of helplessness, despair, depression, uncertainty, insecurity, anxiety and burnout. Let us understand the impact of these changes on our lives:

Change	Impact	Result
Technology has collapsed distance and time	“ When you collapse time and distance, everything speeds up because what had been a physical, material limitation to human action is gone” Susan Silbey, Sociologist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Faster has become a way of life. We get impatient with slow drivers. We no longer write the entire spellings but use short forms while using sms/ twitter etc. All this leads to stress
Human being has too many options	There are too many options for everything—product, services, relations. With social media people are friends with 100 people and maybe close to none. A search on google gives 20,000 results though as an individual we do not go beyond 20/25 There are more than 200 TV channels though as an individual we hardly watch 10/15	Confusion is a way of life. People need stability
Family equations have changed	Family size has become smaller. Number of nuclear families have increased and even among them dual income families are on the rise. Physical interaction between members is limited and virtual interaction has increased.	Family is a major socialization agent for children but with busy parents, children are facing social and emotional stress

Alvin Toffler wrote in the book “In Future Shock” that when people go through times of rapid change, they need “islands of stability” ---things that donot change, where one can find solid ground in challenging and difficult times.

This is where spirituality steps in. As Indian epics say-Spirituality is about 'antaryatra” (quest within). An analysis of definitions of spirituality indicates that spirituality is not about religion, about gods or rituals; spirituality is an attitude, it's a principled way of life. Spirituality is that “island of stability” that provide a path to discover oneself,

identifies tools and processes to find meanings and give shapes and definitions to the questions (Poroch et al, 2009). Spirituality transcends and breaks the barriers of different religions and helps people of all backgrounds and religions to come together. In that way spirituality is truly global. No doubt there is good research being conducted to understand the use of spirituality in sectors like medicine and organizations and others. Change and stress binds these sectors together. Researchers have also identified the tools/ dimensions of spirituality:

Spirituality for self	Spirituality for dealing with illnesses	Spirituality for dealing with workplace
High energy	Social support	Sense of community
Initiatives/ Innovation	Meditation	Sense of contribution to organization and society
Visionary	Social networks	Enjoyment at work
Yoga		Opportunities for inner life
Meditation		
(Armando, 2014; Jirasek, 2013)	(Ruddock and Cameron, 2010; Newberg, 2011)	(Rego and Cunha, 2008)

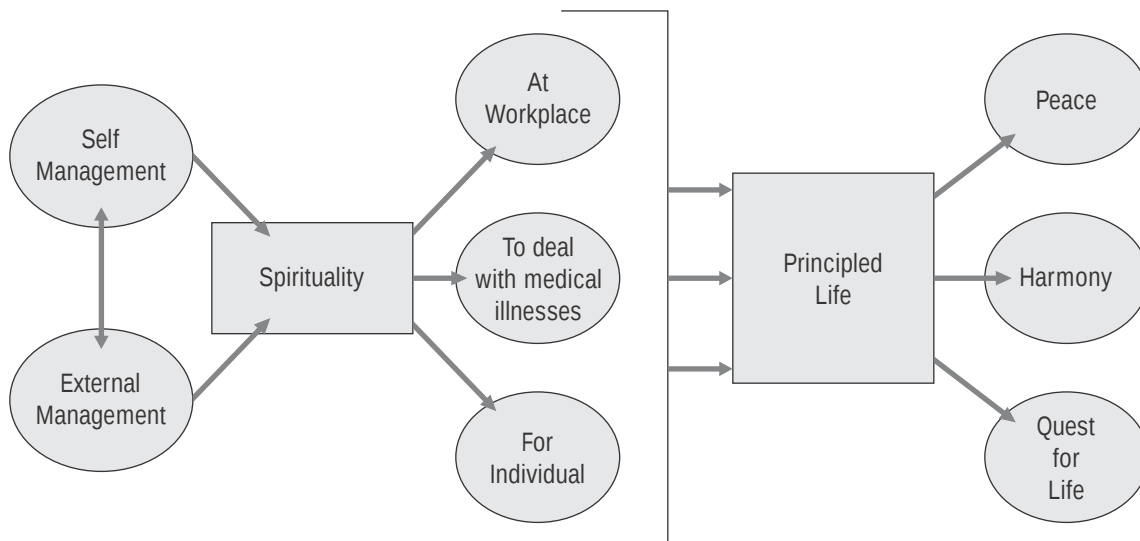
The tools may have been identified for different sectors and yet they speak a common language. They speak about understanding self and understanding the environment around us. They

talk about synchronization of both internal and external self. Based on literature review, broadly the tools fall in two categories:

Tools for Spirituality	Description
Self-management	Innovation, meditation, yoga, high energy, opportunities for inner life
External management	Social support, sense of community, visionary, sense of contribution to organization and society.

Research has been undertaken to understand spirituality. Research has also been undertaken to understand role of spirituality in different areas like medicine, work place etc. However the research has been done in individualized compartments and the commonality among them has not been explored. The tools of spirituality for peace and harmony in organization are also linked to tools of spirituality for peace as an individual or peace for

patients dealing with illnesses. The conceptual model aims at combining these theories to present an integrative consolidated model. As indicated the broad tools of spirituality identified are self-management and external management. Customization of these tools can be done for any sector. The path of spirituality leads to a principled way of life. Researchers may wish to add more dimensions to these as per the sector.



Conceptual model to present an integrative consolidated view of use and role of Spirituality in Modern Life.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study explores the various definitions of spirituality, examines the relation between religion and spirituality, analysis the role of spirituality in different areas and proposes an integrative consolidated model combining the different sectorial research by finding a common link.

The paper aims at providing a model which has a general route to use spirituality in life and yet can be customized as per needs of specific sector. The model contributes by introducing self-management and external management as two important constructs of spirituality. Harmony with internal and external environment are identified as two dimensions of spirituality. Use of spirituality in any phase of life, be it at individual level, organization level will help in leading a principled life which will result in peace, harmony and may be an answer to quest for life. We hope researchers will test this model empirically to contribute and strengthen it further.

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