CHAPTER - V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
DISCUSSION

One of the most challenging aspects of research is the interpretation and discussion of results obtained. Not only does each individual statistics obtained have to be given meaning but the composite and integrated picture of the phenomenon must be evolved.

In the preceding chapter-IV results have been described and in the present chapter-V, the results obtained will be discussed in the light of experimental studies. The discussion is divided into three sections as per the objectives of the study.

1) Relationship between NEO-FFI and spirituality.
2) Relationship between NEO-FFI and religiosity.
3) Relationship between spirituality and religiosity.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEO-FFI AND SPIRITUALITY

Personality psychology is a natural home for the study of spirituality. It has been suspected from a long time that a predisposition towards spirituality is somehow inherent in human nature, and defining human nature is like answering the question “what do we know when we know a person?” (Mc Adams, 1995)-falls within the province of the field. The second principle focus of personality psychology is to study the individual differences which are related to spirituality. Spirituality is a profound force in the lives of people. In order to understand the
whole person, spirituality cannot be ignored. Spirituality is perceived as a Universal human experience and it comprises a unique factor to explain human behavior above and beyond the heritable features that comprise personality.

In this section, the investigators will discuss the relationship between the NEO-FFI and spirituality, in accordance with the tables given in the preceding chapter-IV.

Table 4.1, 4.1 (a) and 4.1(b) reveals that among the five-factors of personality openness to experience is the construct that is related most closely to spirituality in the whole sample.

Table 4.2, 4.2(a) and 4.2 (b) also showed the same finding in males.

Table 4.3, 4.3(a) and 4.3 (b) also suggests the positive relationship between openness to experience and spirituality in females. Another personality factor found to be related to spirituality in females is agreeableness.

Openness which is defined in terms of imaginativeness and creativity, intellectual and aesthetic interests, broadmindedness and unconventionality, overlaps conceptually with spirituality and spirituality being a vast realm of human potential deals with ultimate purpose, with higher entities, with God, with love and with purpose (Tart, 1975). This definition emphasized broad ideas and the meaning of life. Individuals who are more open intellectually would seem to be people who are more interested in such matters. In contrast, individuals who tend to have a purpose and meaning in life, which is a dimension of spirituality, would seem to be more interested in intellectual pursuits and examining new
ideas. Piedmont (2005) has also found positive relationship between openness and different measures of spirituality.

Spirituality which is regarded as a trait, an individual difference that is presumed to be relatively stable across time and situations, is found to be related to agreeableness among females. Females, who on an average are more agreeable than males (McCrae & Costa, 1996), vividly shows the qualities like emotionality, always ready to cooperate with others and more liberal in her social and moral beliefs. Women always are more lovable and compassionate towards others. Thus relationship between agreeableness and spirituality may be attributed to the fact that a positive relationship towards others and a sense of belonging is a component of spirituality.

Thus the fact that gender differences were seen to exist is also an important finding because it is in accordance with the popular presumptions that males and females are bound to differ on various behavioral dimensions. At present, although men and women have similar opportunities, differences still are operative.

Table 4.4, 4.4 (a) and 4.4(b) reveals that openness to experience is the factor of personality which has a profound influence on spirituality in Hindu males.

As far as Hindu females are concerned the same dimension of personality i.e. openness to experience vividly influences spirituality as shown in table 4.5, 4.5 (a) and 4.5 (b).
Openness which is defined as a willingness to consider new ideas, as well as question one’s values and beliefs predispose adults to consideration of the spiritual dimension of life. People who score high on openness to experience are insightful, imaginative, affectionate, and curious and have wide interest. Spirituality, which is simply defined as “a breath of life”, is the personal quest for understanding answers to the ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendence. Thus, the above definitions have so many commonalities within that the relationship between the two constructs is clear.

Table 4.6, 4.6 (a) and 4.6 (b) highlights that in Muslim males, spirituality is predicted by two predictor variables i.e. conscientiousness and agreeableness.

In Muslim females as revealed in Table 4.7, 4.7 (a) and 4.7 (b) conscientiousness and agreeableness are the two dimensions among the Big five that predicts spirituality.

Conscientiousness is what we call the character, guided by “conscience”. The individuals scoring high on this dimension are purposeful and have strong will power. They have a positive attitude towards life and accept the hurdles which life places in their way and fulfill their moral obligations successfully. Spirituality, on the other extreme is the individual’s synchronicity to life and a sense of commitment to others (Piedmont, 1997). The relationship between the two is due to the fact that a person who is highly conscious has a desire to live in the moment.
and embraces the experiences that life confronts us with opportunities for growth and joy, which is also a component of spirituality.

Agreeableness which is the capacity to care for and respond to the needs of others and spirituality is also a belief that one is a part of larger human orchestra whose contribution is indispensable in creating life’s continuing harmony and a belief in unitive nature of life. Thus, when a person has a sense of belongingness towards others, that is when a person is spiritual, and then he is bound to care for others and is motivated to subvert his own needs for the benefit of the larger group.

The results discussed above imply that there is no difference in Hindu male and female participants and Muslim male and female participants as far as the relationship between NEO-FFI and spirituality is concerned. But there is a difference between Hindus and Muslims.

There are different notions used to define spirituality among Hindus and Muslims as per the religious literature. The Hindu spirituality is typically the affirmative, using things found in the realm of the many as means of affirming the one. The nature of “Spirituality” (atmyan) is outreaching and therefore, we can say that the spiritual is the soil or ground, intrinsically prior to beyond the forms of religion that are cognate with a seed or roots. Spirituality surrounds and underlies its religious expressions and is not reducible to the latter. What is unique about Hindu notion of spirituality is intrinsic otherness in relation to its “expression” as
the ethical, the political, the aesthetic, and even the religious. In their very midst, spirit remains transcendent.

In Islam, the spirit breaths through all that reveals the one and leads to the one, for Islam’s ultimate purpose is to reveal the Unity of the Divine Principle and to Integrate the world of multiplicity in the light of that unity. Spirituality in Islam is inseparable from the awareness of the One, of Allah, and a life lived according to His Will. The principle of Unity (al-tawhid) lies at the heart of the Islamic message and determines Islamic spirituality in all its multifarious dimensions and focus.

The results although revealed that there is enough evidence that spirituality and religiosity are two different constructs (Fetzer Institute, 1999) but spirituality and religiosity have been conceptualized to foster the development of the other, for example religious practices encourage spiritual growth, while spiritual practices are often a salient aspect of religious participation (Armstrong & Crowther, 2002). In fact the primary objective of religious organizations is to bring individuals closer to God (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney, 1986) or to whatever is defined as the transcendent. Certainly some groups may have lost sight of this goal, but the search for the sacred remains the most fundamental of religious missions.

Thus the results obtained highlight on the fact that spirituality is study of meanings and values, the ideas and ideals, the visions and virtues that lie at the
heart of the personality psychology. How can there be any explanatory theory in personality unless spirituality is adequately addressed.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEO-FFI AND RELIGIOSITY.**

The teachings of the major religions proclaim brotherly love but there are numerous evidences in history, where religion has often been used as a justification for violence and prejudice. This amongst other reasons has been a spur for researchers to shed light on personality - religiosity relationship.

One of the major starting points for improving the relationship between personality and scientific study of religiosity is to determine how major dimensions of personality are related to religiosity.

In the last decade, a series of researches were conducted to investigate whether individual differences in religiosity are associated with individual differences in the personality traits of the Big Three- or the PEN (i.e. psychoticism, extraversion and neuroticism) taxonomy (Eysenck, 1968, 1985).

In the present section, the results pertaining to the relationship between NEO- FFI and religiosity is discussed. In examining these associations using step wise multiple regression, the researcher is able to confirm the well established correlates of religiosity, including the robust gender differences and importance of religion (Flor & Knapp, 2001).

Results in Table 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 indicate that personality factors have a significant influence on religiosity in the whole sample, in males and in females.
respectively that is the relationship between NEO-FFI and religiosity is not due to chance.

The results in Table 4.8 (a), 4.8 (b), 4.9 (a), 4.9 (b), 4.10 (a) and 4.10 (b) revealed that conscientiousness and agreeableness are the two constructs of personality that significantly predict religiosity when whole sample, males and females are studied.

Agreeableness and conscientiousness are basic, biologically rounded and largely heritable tendencies (McCrae & Costa, 1995, 1996, 1999) towards certain patterns of thought, feeling and behavior. These tendencies motivate people to develop certain characteristic adaptations to their environment. The positive relationship between conscientiousness and religiosity and agreeableness and religiosity can be conceptualized as a characteristic adaptation that people adopt to fulfill or express basic personality tendencies of being religious.

Guided by different reasons, people who score high on conscientiousness and agreeableness are motivated to conform to the rules and laws, abide by rules and conventions (McCrae & Costa, 1995).

The conscientiousness people are generally self disciplined, reasonably cautious and thinks before acting on things. Therefore highly conscientious people might be more likely to stay faithful to religious activities and beliefs. Moreover, conscientious people simply tend to possess the personal self- control that can be required to maintain a vigorous religious faith (for example, attending religious services, being involved in religious organizations etc.). As they are more dutiful,
they may simply find it easier to keep up with the religious faith. The findings are in accordance with the findings from previous cross-sectional studies (Kosek, 1999; McNally & Streyffeller, 1998; MacDonald & Taylor; 1999) which indicate that religious people tend to be more conscientious than their less religious counterparts.

Agreeableness also motivates people to abide by conventions, particularly out of concern for the feeling and rights of others. They are co-operative and work for the betterment of others. Thus a positive relationship between agreeableness and religiosity may be attributed to the fact that agreeable people move towards religion out of the concern for minimizing conflict and maintaining harmony with their near ones by remaining faithful to their religious faith in part out of an earnest desire to maintain positive relation with God or to be involved in a value system that promotes kindness, altruism, forgiveness and love.

However, the rest of the three domains of personality i.e. neuroticism, extraversion and openness to experience were not found to be significantly related to religiosity in the whole sample, in males and among females providing empirical support to a series of researches.

Chaudhary (1989), Francis and Pearson (1987), Lewis and Maltby (1988) have failed to find any relationship between neuroticism and various measures of religiosity. Freud (1907) who argued that those who are religious, at least those who engage in religious rituals, are afflicted with an obsession neurosis, which leads to the prediction that religious individuals would score more highly than
non-religious individuals on the neuroticism dimension is not supported by the findings of the present study.

However Hills and Argyle (1998) found significantly lower neuroticism scores among church members. Similarly Pfeifer and Wadty (1995) and Taylor and MacDonald (1999) also reported that Big five neuroticism scores greater for those with no religious affiliation.

No significant relationship was found between extraversion and religiosity, thus providing support to a brand of empirical researches done before (Argyle & Hills, 2000: Francis, Lewis & Philipchalk, 1995; Argyle & Hill, 1998: Lester & Roman, 1999; Hutsebaut, & Taylor: 2002).

Openness was also not found to be significantly related to religiosity (McCrae & Costa, 1996:1999; McCrae, Bond, Costa & Zimmerman, 1999; Saraglou, 2002: Dureiz, Hutsebaut, Luyten, & Snauwaert 2002).

Gender is an important variable which determines our behavior on many aspects. Such differences are the outcome of role learning; societal expectations and some may be differences occurring from intrinsic differences between male and female. But in the present study, no gender differences are found in the relationship between the NEO-FFI and religiosity among males and females. The inability to find any difference in the so called different groups may be attributed to the role change that the world is facing these days. Women are being provided with equal opportunities and they are working in every field hand in hands with males. The present study sample comprised of the employees, male and female,
working in the same work setup and thus the differences among males and females, at least as far as the relationship between NO-FFI and religiosity is concerned are not operative.

Table 4.11 to 4.14 reveals the results of the relationship between NEO_FFI and religiosity in Hindu males, Hindu females, Muslim males and Muslim females respectively. For centuries humanity was guided by the impulse of religion with its elements of magic, unquestioning faith and belief in the Super-natural. It is a set of values based on morality. As knowledge spread and reason began to develop, religion began to look more and more like a collection of superstitious beliefs and practices and seemed to demand a surrender of one’s mental faculties in favor of some indefinable emotional experience.

The results in Table 4.11 (a) and 4.11 (b) highlights that in Hindu males neuroticism and conscientiousness are the two constructs of personality which are the real predictors of religiosity.

Neuroticism as both an affective and a perceptual trait clearly colors people’s perception of negative interpersonal events in such a way that they are perceived as more severe. As a result, the general tendency to experience negative disgust increase when clashes occur about religious values and beliefs. People who score high on neuroticism are prone to developing tender minded social attitude such as religiosity because they are amenable to social factors to become religious. Freud (1925) who believed that religion is an illusion based on myth, evolved by society to moderate the nature and he regarded religious rituals were not only
associated with mental illness, it was a “universal obsessional neurosis of humanity” (Freud, (1907), Freud & Meng, 1963) is supported by the results found in Hindu males. Singh and Gupta (1996) found that neuroticism was positively related to religious values and Saraglou (2002) found that extrinsic religiosity is associated with high levels of neuroticism, whereas “open, mature religiosity and spirituality” reflects emotional stability.

Another personality domain related to religiosity in Hindu males is conscientiousness. Conscientious, which means governed by conscience, is assessed by dutifulness. The relationship between conscientiousness and religiosity may be attributed to the fact that people who score high on conscientiousness are more organized, adhere strictly to their ethical principle and scrupulously fulfill their moral obligations and thus tend to carry on his religious duties well.

Openness to experience is the construct which is real predictor of religiosity in Hindu females. The correlation between openness to experience and religiosity in Hindu females is based on the fundamental belief that universe is created, preserved and destroyed by gods. Hindus have evolved different gods so as to satisfy the needs of different people. The people who score high on openness to experience are willing to entertain new ideas and consciously as a traditionalist does. Moreover Hinduism also emphasized on asceticism, renunciation of worldly life and open-mindedness as the best ways to attain the desired fruits, which means
that the basic of the religious teachings in Hinduism leads a person to be open to experience to inculcate new values and ideas.

The importance of openness to experience towards religiosity is also supported by McCrae (1993-1994, 1994, 1996); McCrae and Costa (1997); Riemman, Grubich, Hempel, Mergel and Richter (1993); Saucier, (2000); Trapnell (1994); Van Hiel, Kossowska and Mervielde (2000) who considered openness to experience as highly relevant towards social attitudes and ideologies in general and Streyfeller and McNally (1998), who found liberal and fundamentalist protestants to differ with respect to this factor but not with respect to any other factor of the five factor model.

The difference of the results between Hindu males and females may be attributed to the perception and practice of religion. Since the psychological make-up of males and females is different, this may result in differences in the attitude and behavior.

Table 4.13, 4.13 (a) and 4.13 (b) depicts that agreeableness and consciousness are the real predictors of religiosity in Muslim males, providing empirical support to previous studies (Francis, 1992a; 1992b; 1993: Francis & Katz, 1992: Francis & Pearson, 1993: Lewis & Joseph, 1994: Lewis & Maltby, 1995; 1996: Maltby, 1999a; 1999b: Saroglou, 2002), who reported that psychoticism which is regarded as a dimension representing both conscientiousness and agreeableness (Digman, 1997; McCrae, 1996a) in the Eysenck’s model is the dimension of personality fundamental to individual
difference in religiosity. The finding is substantiated by two recent reviews (Argyle, 2000; Eysenck, 1998) and a meta-analysis (Saraglou, 2002).

Studies among members of the Greek Orthodox Church (Diduca, Joseph, & Youtika, 1999) and Moslems (Joseph & Wilde, 1997) also suggested that the relationship between conscientiousness and agreeableness and religiosity may be mirrored in other cultures.

Conscientiousness refers to the individual’s degree of organization, persistence and motivation in goal directed behavior. Islam is the organization of life around the depth dimension of experience—varied in form, completeness, and clarity in accordance with the environing culture. Islam widened the scope of practicing worship, not keeping it confined to the devotional practices but extending it to the whole of man’s practical life as well. Conscientiousness, which is characterized by the facts like self-discipline, a sense of direction in life and purposiveness which lead a person to be committed to the religious practices, beliefs and values.

Table 4.14, 4.14 (a) and 4.14 (b) depicts that agreeableness is the real predictor of religiosity in Muslim females. Agreeableness measures attitude of sympathy, concern for others and a sense of modesty. Women, who tend to be more religious than men are more governed by religious principles and values in their personal and social life. The teachings of Islam, in the form of “Quran” provide the proper guidelines not only about personal life but also social lives.
One of the basic teachings of Islam is a total surrender to Allah. The motivating force for all actions should always be to seek the pleasure of Allah, the Almighty rather than one’s own self. Adherence to Agreeableness established in the personality of its possessor, humility, sweetness, gentleness, patience, sympathy for fellow human beings and many other virtues. The following beautiful verse of Holy Quran says about the code of conduct: “Allah commanded justice, and doing of good (i.e. kindness) to Kith and Kin, and He forbids shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion. He instructs you that you may receive admonition”. Thus the higher scores on agreeableness results in the higher religiosity in Muslim females, again supporting the role of religion and religious teachings have on the personality structure.

The varied results found in the relationship between personality and religiosity among participants of two different religious groups further strengthen the fact that religion plays a very important role in structuring the personality. Religion brings into a person a sense of orderliness, rationality and purposiveness and thus no stable social structure can be built without living a day in God’s faith.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOSITY**

A perusal of the literature on spirituality and religiosity over the past decade reveals a broad spectrum of conceptualizations that range from New Age Mysticism to traditionally religious approaches applied to everyday life.
Increasingly, there is discussion in literature regarding the relationship between spirituality and religiosity.

Throughout human history, religiosity has represented a major source of spirituality and as such there is a natural tendency to associate spirituality with religiosity but they are different.

Religiosity is an organized system of beliefs and the worship of God or gods. Spirituality is finding one’s own authentic self. Spirituality is a way of life that affects and includes every moment of existence. It is at once a contemplative attitude, a disposition to a life of depth, and search for ultimate meaning, direction and belonging (Teasdale, 1999, pp.17-18).

The results in Table 15 imply that there is no significant correlation between spirituality and religiosity in the whole sample. The results of the present investigation are in accordance with the studies conducted by a series of researchers, who have made a discernible step towards the differentiation between spirituality and religiosity, which were formerly used interchangeably ( Elkins, 1998; Harris, 1997; Pargament, 1997; Roof, 1993; Zinnabeurer, 1997).

Indeed research in measuring religiosity has begun to give respondents a choice as to whether they want to express themselves in terms of either religious or spiritual themes (e.g. Fiorito & Ryan, 1998).

Certain sub groups like mental health professionals, New Agers and college students are more likely than others to identify themselves as spiritual but not
religious, indicating that most people view the terms as distinct as both religious
and spiritual (Cook, Borman, Kunkel & Moore, 1997).

As far as males and females are concerned, no significant correlation was
found between spirituality and religiosity as depicted from table 16 and 17. Although there is a general trend of females being more religious as compared to
males but they do not differ in their level of spirituality, thus supporting the fact
that spirituality is an endeavor that is ultimate or absolute (Wilber, 1996) and a
relation with higher power (Emmons, 1999; Kass, 1991).

When the investigator in the present study studied the participants from
different religious groups, Hindu and Muslim, no significant correlation was found
between spirituality and religiosity in Hindu males, Muslim males, and Muslim
females as shown in Table 18, 20 and 21 respectively. The results further
strengthening the view that spirituality and religiosity are two different constructs.

However, Table 19 reveals that there is a positive correlation between
spirituality and religiosity in Hindu females which may be due to the fact that they
have extended their religion as a means to search for many ostensibly secular
goals like prayers for the health of the loved ones, selfishlessness, gratitude and
other spiritual qualities.

Although, there is a distinction between spirituality and religiosity but they
cannot be totally separated from each other. Religiosity is the body and spirituality
is the soul of a faith tradition. In the practical sense, the role of spirituality is to
counter balance the centripetal pull of religiosity that excludes non-members from the zone of love and compassion. Religiosity excludes and spirituality includes.
CONCLUSION

In this section, the findings of the present study are concluded as under:

- When the relationship between NEO-FFI and spirituality was studied in the whole sample, there was found positive relationship between openness to experience and spirituality.

- In males, positive relationship was exists between openness to experience and spirituality.

- In females, openness to experience and conscientiousness appeared as the real predictors of spirituality.

- In Hindu males and Hindu females, openness to experience emerged as a significant predictor of spirituality.

- In Muslim males and Muslim females, Openness to experience and conscientiousness influenced spirituality.

- In the whole sample, agreeableness and conscientiousness were positively related to religiosity. In males and females, the same personality dimensions were the predictors of religiosity.

- In Hindu males, neuroticism and conscientiousness were found related to religiosity.

- In Hindu females, openness to experience was related to religiosity.

- In Muslim males, agreeableness and conscientiousness depicted the religious behavior.
• In Muslim females, agreeableness was the real predictor of religiosity.

• There was no significant correlation between spirituality and religiosity in the whole sample, in males and females, in Hindu males, in Muslim males and females.

• Significant correlation was found between spirituality and religiosity in Hindu females.

The results of the present investigation thus indicate that spirituality is a complex yet identifiable that extends beyond religiosity. The results are impressive enough and indicate that there was a conceptual relatedness between Five-Factor model of personality and spirituality.

Five Factor model of personality was also found to be related to religiosity in the present study and the relationship between the two is sturdy and substantive. Moreover, the results in the present study help to shed light on which personality traits are the real predictors of religiosity when gender and religion are included, which would be a logical and incremental step in pursuing Allport’s vision for the psychology of personality that sheds light on the religious dimension of human functioning.

In the present research, the investigator obtained the results that suggest spirituality and religiosity being different from each other but there is some commonality between the two, as was found among the Hindu females where a positive relationship was found.
These are exciting times for the psychology of spirituality and religiosity in relation to the individual differences. In the midst of changing religious and spiritual expressions, psychologists have an opportunity to help shape the ways in which these terms are understood in the next millennium. Thus by undertaking the present study, the researcher shed some light on the most elusive and yet most human of all phenomenon.