CHAPTER - VI

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Spirituality is the integration of mind, heart and soul which helps a person not only to lead a more meaningful life but also a healthier one. The study of the relationship between personality and spirituality is a recent focus. The development of rigorous methodological standards has now made it possible to test these ideas empirically. The present work is an attempt to understand the various personality traits which result in the difference in the level of spirituality. There is a huge corpus of evidence which indicates that spirituality has positive outcomes like finding meaning in life, spiritual growth, and development and searching ways of spiritfulness. In case of life-threatening illness, spirituality acts as a buffer against the reality of advancing diseases and psychological benefit or growth associated domains are related to spirituality. We can make attempts to remain optimistic and find meaning in adverse situations. Overall, it appears to be psychologically protective. Thus in depth study of the relationship between personality and spirituality will help us to make a better understanding of how to improve the living conditions of the human beings by means of the values and qualities which are imbibed in each individual person in different degrees as spirituality is the quality that exists in every human being.

Spirituality and religiosity is not merely a solipsistic, private phenomenon. Rather, these dispositional qualities do find expressions in outer behavior in ways that can be identified and recognized by others, just like more traditional
personality variables. The positive relationship between NEO-FFI and spirituality and NEO-FFI and religiosity provided strong evidence of the value of spirituality and religiosity in predicting psychologically relevant outcomes. Thus rethinking on the personality can help us to broaden our conceptualizations of individuals and goals they pursue. In future, the researchers in the area of personality may be able to provide a more holistic understanding of people that speaks not only our heart but also our mind as well.

The study of spirituality can inject new energy and insight in the scientific study of religion and the study of individual differences. The present study reminds that the search for the sacred lies at the heart of every religion and spirituality is a bridge to the new pathways to the sacred.

There is a relative neglect of the psychology of religion and spirituality. But it is now experiencing a renewal of interests and intentions. In the present study, the researcher undertake the diverse ways to understand the concepts of spirituality and religiosity. Today anything and everything, including violence, injustice, and inhumanity, passes under the label of religion. Religious authorities, moreover, resort to communal advocacies and fall short of the values upheld by their scriptures. This degeneration of religion is the seed of the over-all chaos that prevails today. Thus the present study will be helpful in understanding the basics of spirituality and religiosity and use the concept to improve the condition of the world affairs and lives of the people which is detracting day by day.
Moreover spirituality can be used to taught the adolescents and even adults to deal with religious issues in a more systematic and symbolic way. Given the strong positive correlation found in earlier studies between processing religious constructs and a lack of moral competence (Duriez, in press-a), prejudice, dispositions such as authoritainisms, social dominance, and a lack of empathy (Duriez, in press-b: Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002), cultural conservatism (Duriez, 2003a: Duriez, 2002), and cognitive motivational variables such as intolerance of ambiguity and close-mindedness (Duriez, 2003b), starting a program to undertake spiritual training program to undertake spiritual training may provide us with the societal problems associated with religious conservatism and fundamentalism.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The investigator is conscious of limitations of the work done. Individual research must necessarily be very limited in terms of scope and size of sample. Therefore, it is important that more work in the area should be undertaken to ensure that information which will help us to make statements more convincing and more applicable to common man.

Hindsight is always more than foresight. When a researcher begins his/her work, it is within the framework of conjectures, but by the time the work is done, many aspects which would have made the work more informative have come to the mind of investigator. Since research is a continuous process, some suggestions
for further research are being given to be the guiding factors for the present researcher and for others.

One of the first and most important point that strikes the researchers mind is in terms of methodology. It is felt that for a study of this nature; not merely scores of the subjects on various dimensions are important but more informative would be the insight into the phenomenological world, the meaning which he assigns to spirituality and religiosity. In the domain of psychology, the phenomenological studies and in depth analysis is appreciated. The processes which are involved in a particular outcome should be studied rather than forming conclusions merely on the basis of a quantitative score.

Quantification, no doubt is necessary for systematic and scientific analysis but if we proceed from the qualitative towards quantitative, it would be more informative and appropriate. Therefore it is suggested that study on smaller sample conducted with an idiographic bias. It would make available the individual’s views and feelings expressed in narrative forms, together with interview which would expound and clarify, should be undertaken. After the conduct of the research, the investigator felt curious to study in an in-depth fashion individual who scored high on both spirituality and religiosity assessment tools. On the other hand, there were some who scored high on spirituality but low on religiosity. A variation was also found in the dimensions of personality, some respondents scored equally on neuroticism and conscientiousness’ dimensions of NEO-FFI.
Since it was not practicable to reproach participants at this juncture for getting detailed information, the researcher strongly feels that the constructivist approach should be used in studying the phenomenon; at least it should form an important component of social strategy.

In terms of personality factors, more research is needed in general and in particular of those factors involving FFM. Also Saroglou (2002) has previously noted that a relationship exists between religious beliefs and personality factors, this can also be applied to spirituality and, moreover the facet level might reveal further important associations.

Another problem the researcher faces is how psychology should quantify spiritual belief, spiritual behavior and spiritual experience as dimensions of spirituality. Thus, there is a need to develop more reliable psychometric measures for assessing spirituality, which will integrate psychology with spirituality.

Moreover, the researcher felt the need to study the synthesis between spiritual life and practical life that is reflected in the spiritual principles. Spirituality oriented people should remain in touch with their feelings and perception. They should possess empathy and be able to love and should manifest anticipation, altruism and mission in life.

In addition, psychology needs to understand best how to enhance spirituality through religious beliefs and practices, behavioral approaches and cognitive approaches. We should first increase religious practices and rituals and
religious meditative techniques and second should facilitate psychological beliefs such as optimism, personal control, or affirmation and a sense of meaning.

The impact of spiritual awakening on refinement of personality and on growth of desirable personality traits (optimism, hope, life orientation) should be investigated in further studies. These psychological resources not only buffer people psychologically against adverse response to stressful events but also actually influence health in a beneficial direction.

Spirituality can be studied more intensely in terms of its various dimensions like transcendence, innerness or inner resources, purpose and meaning in life etc. in relation to personality as well as religiosity.

Further empirical research particularly in the area of clinical settings might be conducted to establish the strengths and weaknesses of “spiritual psychotherapy” as the need of the present century is to tackle the problems which have resulted due to the disintegration of body-mind-heart-and spirit. King Solomon has rightly remarked, “A merry heart doeth good like medicine.” (Proverb 17:22).

The studies which explore into the human beings unique, dynamic repertoire are a methodological challenge. To study such personalized phenomenon within the restrictions and dictates of science is not an easy task but still the psychologist must continue in this endeavor. What can be more important than discovering strengths within us that can encounter the ill effects of the
technological advancements and spiritual bewilderment which seem to be beyond control? It gives hope to human existence and if this study can contribute an iota of optimism to human sufferings, it will have fulfilled its task.