Chapter 5
Conclusions
CONCLUSIONS

Youth in the Present investigation perceived religion as mundane, outdated and dogmatic doctrine to which they could not relate. A few identified with ‘no religion’. Religious observances were carried out with the family but these were not considered as meaningful spiritual experiences by the participants.

Youth perceived spirituality as a personal connection with something bigger than themselves (guru/divine/ supernatural power), engaging in spiritual practices, realization of inner self, experience and expression of universal love, belief in supreme consciousness, seeking answers to existential questions, self-growth and transformation and enhancement of qualities of true spirit such as blissfulness, positivity, happiness, simplicity and love. The perception of youth regarding religion and spirituality might be attributed to their AOL involvement.

The major success of the participants involved improved relationships, changes in personality, academic and professional achievements and involvement with AOL. They perceived failures in life to be turned to success after joining AOL. The state of depression was a rare experience. The AOL involvement offered a refuge to them in stress and at the same time enhanced their resilience to cope with challenges in daily life.

Youth were motivated to join AOL, either by their parents, mentors or friends or due to their own inquisitiveness to explore and to experience the course. The benefits derived from the involvement made them stick to the organization. Youth were highly qualified and professionally well-settled. Apparently, the module of AOL satisfied their cognitive and spiritual quench which resulted in their intense involvement.

The verbal protocols for three cornerstones of AOL; sadhana, seva and satsang, also indicate the motivation which sustained youths’ involvement into it.

Youth in the study exhibited intense commitment to AOL by sincerely practicing the techniques and participating in the weekly activities. Sudarshan kriya was perceived to be the most important technique and the cornerstone of AOL. Apart from engagement in spiritual practices, social service was considered to be extremely important and participants devoted time for involving themselves into these activities.
A multistage thematic analysis was carried out for participants undergoing different AOL courses and on variables significant in the lives of youth. The analysis of themes in the verbal protocols revealed that subtle change was evident in perspective from Introductory to the more advanced courses i.e. the other-directedness reduced and inner-directedness increased. Initial courses were done for de-stressing, grooming personality or other specific improvement and later ones were done for higher order purposes such as expansion of self, seeking divinity, transcendence and relatedness with the guru.

A special dimension of spirituality of these youth was devotion for their ‘Guru’. An intense faith, respect, love and attachment was expressed for him. This relationship fulfilled multiple roles such as providing guidance on the spiritual path, becoming an important source of emotional comfort, inner strength, providing a sense of support and belongingness. These were also significant reasons for keeping them involved in AOL.

Positive correlations were obtained between Extent as well as Duration of Involvement with AOL with components of Resilience such as Life Purpose and Satisfaction, Self Confidence during Stress, Confidence in Life and Self, and Index of Core of Spiritual Experiences, perceived current levels of Happiness and Satisfaction and Improvement in Self-awareness, Leadership Skills and Self-Confidence. Negative correlation was obtained between Extent of Involvement with AOL with Chance other dimension of Locus of Control.

The AOL was found to be a strong motivating force towards spirituality. The involvement with the organisation contributed to the experience of positive states, resilience and overall well-being of youth.

The quantitative data significantly threw light on the effects of AOL involvement in lives of youth under various dimensions, and qualitative data revealed rich spiritual experiences of youth in various contexts. Spirituality was found to have a strong impact on the psycho-social variables of youth.