Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will study how the research fulfills the research objectives and the findings from the structured interview schedule which give a detailed view on behavioral transformation experienced by practitioners on the seven parameters.

In the last chapter, the hypotheses were tested and in-depth analysis of the effect of fixed factors on the seven constructs affecting behavioral transformation was conducted.

The conclusions of the same are as follows:

The results obtained justified that there was a significant increase of behavioral transformation with practice. This was also the result obtained from the data that was collected through the administration of the questionnaire, the interviewees mentioned about undergoing strong behavioral transformations thus disproving the first null hypothesis and concluding that there was behavioral transformation on account of the practice.

The second null hypothesis showed that despite of different backgrounds there was a significant increase in the behavioral transformation of individuals. It was also observed that it varied significantly with different backgrounds thus disproving the null hypothesis that the impact on behavioral transformation of bhakti yoga is independent of the individual’s background.

Proceeding to the third null hypothesis, it was observed that the behavioral transformation varied significantly with different age groups positively and the impact on the same was dependent on the different age groups therefore this disproved the null hypothesis that behavioral transformation was independent of age groups.

With respect to different occupations, it was observed that behavioral transformation did show a positive impact. Infact it was observed that behavioral transformation did vary significantly with different occupations. Thus the null hypothesis was disproved.

Considering the effect of different genders on behavioral transformation, there was positive effect on the same meaning that there was behavioral transformation on individuals of different genders which showed significant variation implying the negation of the fifth null hypothesis which is that impact of bhakti yoga on behavioral transformation is independent of gender.

A significant increase in the behavioral transformation of individuals was seen in individuals belonging to different nationalities which varied significantly implying the
disproving of the sixth null hypothesis that the impact of bhakti yoga on behavioral transformation is independent of nationality.

In relation to individuals with different marital status, it was observed that there was a significant increase in behavioral transformation of individuals whose level varied significantly with marital status disproving the hypothesis that the impact of bhakti yoga on behavioral transformation is independent of marital status.

Thus we observe from the above statements that the practice of bhakti yoga does show an impact on the seven constructs namely compassion, emotional stability, experience of spirituality, substance abuse, life satisfaction, focus and clarity in life and development of sattva guna. Also we saw that impact of parameters such as age, nationality, gender, occupation, background and marital status on behavioral transformation.
5.2) Discussion of results
The behavioral transformation is with respect to the following seven constructs:
1. Compassion
2. Focus and clarity
3. Life Satisfaction
4. Development of sattva guna
5. Substance abuse
6. Experience of spirituality and
7. Emotional Stability
Let us discuss each one in detail.

1. Compassion
Findings of the structured interview schedule:
In the structure interview schedule some questions were asked based on the behavioral transformation that the individuals observed within themselves based on the 7 parameters.
Question: Do you feel compassion for other members of society? Any activity in particular that you perform for their sake?
Answers:
Ans1. This process in general makes us very compassionate for other members of the society because it’s very dynamic and includes not only human beings but also animal as a part of the society.
The level of compassion which we develop is far more than any altruistic person or any philanthropists because their concern is only to do good to humans and no consideration about other sections of the society. They organize big conferences to invent some peace formula and their breakfast is chicken sandwich which is based on violence and hence its very partial.
Krishna consciousness teaches us that every living entity in the world is a part and parcel of Krishna and hence should not be troubled unnecessarily.
So following this principle I try to engage people in my society in Krishna consciousness by giving them Krishna conscious scriptures, encouraging them to come to the temple and take this process seriously. We give people the real peace formula which is to understand that Krishna is
the real master, real enjoyer and best well wisher of all living entities. Understanding of this formula makes us a happier person in life.

Ans2. Yes. I can offer prasadam, gift books, talk with them about importance of spiritual development, encourage them to attend spiritual programs and attend spiritual excursions to holy places.

Ans3. Yes. By distribution of sanctified food and higher knowledge that leads to quality existence.

Ans4. I take sessions for life style management. Basically I share the things I learnt with other members of the society so that they also get a chance to change.
I am also visiting faculty in many colleges across India and provide seminars on

- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Enriching Body, Mind and Soul
- Principle Centered Leadership

Ans5. Yes I feel compassionate to people in general.
To people close to me, or whom I know, I gift them spiritual books time to time, listen to them and try and guide them as per what I got from this practice and from Srila Prabhupada’s books. It has helped them a lot.
To people who are strangers, I try to distribute this knowledge to them by going out on the street and distributing this literature.

Ans6. Yes I feel more understanding and compassionate for other members of the society and understand that it is my duty to preach about this jewel of Krishna’s love which everyone can have.
I often organize kirtan and festivals at my place, decorating our deities, calling devotees to preach to invitees. I preach to some people on regular basis the importance of sadhu sastra and
sanga. I help in distributing books. I donate in projects associated with furthering Krishna conscious activities.

Ans7. I regularly contribute for the food of poor and under privileged children.

Ans8. Yes, giving knowledge about who we are and what is the purpose of this life, on the basis of Bhagavad Gita, is the highest compassion towards the members for society, and for that training and giving classes is done by our group members.

Ans9. I do feel that they are wasting their valuable life and therefore I've tried giving books and Krishna Conscious android apps to some friends who I thought were simple and favorable towards taking up Krishna Consciousness.

Ans10. Yes, I go out every Sunday for harinam sankirtan to give people the holy name and distributing free prasadam or sanctified food by which people are spiritually benefitted.

Ans11. I now understand the real problems of the people. I try to distribute prasadam. Give out Srila Prabhupada’s books, preach in my capacity, and help in serving in the temple.

Ans12. I try to help people by giving them Krishna Consciousness, a new way of life, a new path. We see that even people who are poor, when they get this gift of divine knowledge of Krishna Consciousness, their hearts become transformed and they become happier, peaceful individuals whereas we see that even big millionaires who might be very successful materially are not happy at all but Krishna Consciousness is a process that can make one happy without any material aspect.

Thus we observe that throughout the replies, the respondents have shown great eagerness and enthusiasm to help other members of the society. Also as was evidenced by the replies to the questions of the interview schedule, we observe that practitioners showed very high compassion scores as compared to their non-practicing counterparts.

The responses shown by individuals regarding the activities that they perform for other members of the society were based strongly on the distribution of literature, sanctified food that would inspire people to take up the spiritual process. This is based on the understanding that they
are the soul not this body. (Prabhupada 1986). Therefore to connect the soul with God through the process of bhakti yoga is what is the highest form of compassion to the soul according to the Bhagavad Gita. The respondents also stated the practice of spreading the word and message of God and inspiring the growth of faith in others. The effort was to link other individuals to this process of God realization and help them in developing their lost relationship with God as stated in the Bhagavad Gita. (Prabhupada 1986). Another activity was to inspire people to face life’s difficulties with the solutions offered in the Gita. This would not be called a conventional approach to compassion but since the aim of bhakti yoga as stated earlier was to bring about inner transformation and happiness therefore all activities which are related to helping other individuals of society are centered around the taking up of the practice of bhakti yoga which can enable them to develop human qualities of peacefulness, love, kindness, equality towards all beings, tolerance, mercifulness, cleanliness, increased life satisfaction thereby increased happiness.(Plante 2008)

Questions from the survey questionnaire as regards compassion:
In order to measure the level of compassion of the individuals the following questions were asked to the respondents:
Let us analyze each question in detail for the responses:
1. I help people by offering Scriptural lessons and principles as solutions to life's various challenges
The above question is an indicator of how much an individual helps others with respect to connecting them with God during their difficult times with lessons from scriptures.

The responses to the above question showed the scores of the non-practitioners to be lesser than that of practitioners. Thus it can be concluded that by the practice of bhakti yoga, the helpful attitude of practitioners increases, the more the practice, the higher such a nature.

2. I like to inspire growth in those whose faith in God is stagnant
The above question is an indicator of how much an individual helps others with respect to connecting them with God by increasing their faith in Him.

From the low scores of non-practitioners and higher scores of practitioners, it can be concluded that the helping nature of a person increases with the practice of bhakti yoga.
3. I personally apply spiritual knowledge in my life and learn through experiences which I offer to others who are facing similar difficulties or challenges that I have had. The above question is an indicator of how much an individual helps others with respect to connecting them with God on the basis of spiritual knowledge.

It can be observed that since practitioners of bhakti yoga showed higher scores than non-practitioners which proves that the practice of bhakti yoga makes a person more compassionate.

4. I believe in mercy towards all of God’s creatures and therefore do not kill animals for food. The above question is an indicator of how much an individual perceives the presence of God in other living entities and thus does not kill or harm them.

The responses of the practitioners showed higher scores than those of non-practitioners from which it can be generalized that the practice of bhakti yoga can make a person more merciful.

5. I feel I have a strong relationship with God and always inspire others to build their relationship with him.

The above question is an indicator of how much an individual helps others with respect to connecting them with God on the basis of spiritual knowledge.

The practitioners showed higher scores than the non-practitioners which proved that a person becomes more compassionate onto others as a result of the practice of bhakti yoga.

6. I like to eat meat/fish/eggs (NF)

The above question is an indicator of how much an individual perceives the presence of God in other living entities and thus does not kill or harm them. Since this is a negatively framed question, the higher score will indicate lower levels of compassion.

From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners showed nil scores. Thus it can be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga increases the compassionate nature of the person which is evidenced by the individual showing mercy to all of God’s creatures.

*Problem of lack of compassion*
In modern society compassion is conspicuous by its absence. In the U.S., certain surveys and studies as one conducted in Michigan University among college students showed that the level of compassion and empathy among the youth especially has been steadily declining.

There is tendency to confuse empathy with sympathy. Sympathy includes compassion for someone destitute whereas empathy implies an individual putting himself in one’s shoes and then experiencing the same emotions. Empathy is relating to them at a more personal and a deeper level.

The emotional and cognitive aspects are the two components to empathy. Cognitive aspect is the one by which one can identify the person’s feelings and thoughts whereas the emotional one is the one in which one can respond appropriately to the individual’s feelings and thoughts. For empathy one has to have both these components. Just like a person who is a psychopath would be able to recognize a painful situation but would not be capacitated to respond appropriately to the person. This is the same mentality when an individual starts treating another person as an object acting impersonally. A person becomes cruel when he ceases to be empathetic according to Smith.

Personality disorders, hormonal problems, genetic problems are some among the many causes of cruelty. The major factor that is seen as of today is the impact of social networking on the same. The avoidance of people wanting to communicate personally due to the high degree of social networking options available has made people very impersonal. This is especially prevalent among the youth. Care and concern for others are the factors which form the basis of all human relationships. Without this a person becomes dull and void from within.

Technological advancement is not the problem but modern society must find the balance by which they donot neglect these most essential values. Especially since empathy forms the most valuable human resource. Empathy can be very effective in resolving conflicts. It costs nothing and in fact, it has the potential to become one of the most successful strategies. (Painadath 2001)

The above problem finds its solution by the increase of empathetic values amongst people in general. It is measured by the questions asked above. Infact we also observed that this process of bhakti yoga is capable of increasing one’s level of compassion. This is irrespective of the individual’s background or circumstances.
The compassion measured here was measured in terms of activities performed taking into consideration the understanding that one is not merely the body but the spirit soul inside the body according to the Bhagavad Gita. (Prabhupada 1986)

Since such a person exhibiting a high level of compassion, which has been previously defined and described in Chapter 3 under ‘Operational Definitions’, he sees all living entities with equal vision therefore shows mercy towards all creatures and does not kill other living entities to eat or for any other purpose. He is non-violent.

Since such an individual keeps God in the centre of his life, he develops faith by following the scriptures which are word of God. He endeavors to inspire others to develop deeper understanding of scriptures by offering them valuable lessons from the same at the time of crisis and also inspires them to develop faith in God. Since he has a strong relationship with God realized through bhakti yoga practice, such an individual also inspires other people to build their respective relationship with God and thereby experience peace and happiness. (Prabhupada 1986)

Compassion is the bond of love that is divine and it binds a person which can only be achieved with a holistic attitude. The world is designed in a way such that all can live in a single family of the Supreme Lord. With the things of nature everyone can live in the one family of the Supreme Lord (Vasudeva kutumbakam). Naturally there would be no scope for competing amongst equals rather there only exists opportunities to display compassion. Real prosperity can be attained by mutual nourishment. This is an all-encompassing perspective which is very significant in today’s world wherein there is crisis in every field of humankind. (Painadath 2001)

Thus we find that bhakti yoga practice leads to high levels of compassion of individuals who help others become more God conscious by the performance of various activities such as distribution of knowledge about God, chanting His holy names publicly for others to hear and participate in the chanting, giving presentations of the philosophy of life as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita, offering sanctified food to others and worshipping the deities and engaging others in the same. In this way, by the performance of such activities, one gets purified and the selfish mentality present within one’s consciousness transforms that to selflessness wherein one goes out at the cost of personal comfort to help others develop their lost relationship with God which only can give one the peace and happiness that one is looking for.
Therefore when individuals take up the practice of bhakti yoga, then they become more compassionate towards other members of the society and can become great instruments in creating a culture of compassion rather than a culture of competition which is currently going on in the world today. This creates peace despite different backgrounds, age groups, nationalities, genders, etc which otherwise prove to be hindrances to practice these principles. (Prabhupada 1986)

The application of this principle which comes about through bhakti yoga practice can prove to be very effective in creating a general culture of compassion in the society which is the need of the hour. (Painadath 2001)

Therefore the practice of bhakti yoga causing a behavioral transformation with regard to compassion is highly significant and can help the world community at large and therefore should be taken up by the leaders of society. This will involve them to understand deeper principles of the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita and the Vedas and also imbibe the practice of bhakti yoga. This will enable them to experience firsthand the transformation themselves. This will also give them the impetus to share the message with others leading to other leaders taking up the above mentioned activities. When leaders of the society take up these practices, it inspires the other members of the society to also take up the practice. In a culture where compassion is stressed on becomes a very peaceful society. This creates an extremely positive environment removing the cut-throat competition that causes individuals to breakdown in the long run and establishes a culture of love and compassion. This can become the key to transform the society and step towards world peace.

1. **Focus and Clarity in life**

In order to measure the life focus and clarity of individuals the following multiple choice question was asked in the interview schedule:-

**Question:** Has this made a difference in clarifying the purpose of your life?

- a. Little
- b. Average
c. Very clear and focused

The following are the answers of the 12 respondents interviewed:

Ans1. C. Yes it’s now very clear and focused. Now I know who I am and why I am here, who is god and what is my relationship with god, why I am suffering here and how I can go back to my original home from where I have come. Apart from this I can lead a peaceful life knowing well the aim of my life.

Ans2. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans3. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans4. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans5. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans6. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans7. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans8. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans9. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans10. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans11. C. Very Clear and Focused

Ans12. C. Very Clear and Focused
The responses to the above question are unanimously the same amongst all practitioners since they responded that the practice of bhakti yoga did positively impact their focus and clarity in life clarifying the purpose of their life and making it very focused. The responses to the questions in the questionnaire also have shown significantly increased scores of practitioners as regards their individual focus and clarity than their non-practicing counterparts. This indicates a significant relationship between practice of bhakti yoga and increase in focus and clarity of life. (Klerk 2005)

This is attributed to the understanding of meaning and aim of life which is revealed through the study of scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita which is one of the principle practices of bhakti yoga. As mentioned by respondent 1, the practice has resulted in a deeper understanding about life’s essentials questions such as

- Who am I?
- What is my life purpose?
- What is the final destination?
- What is life’s aim?

The answers to these questions bring about a change in perception of the individual who sees things with clarity. Infact scriptural wisdom also allows one to perceive situations in knowledge and not just grossly. This helps in making proper goal-oriented decisions rather than rash decisions which makes one progress towards the ultimate aim. This understanding also brings about peace in one’s life since one is focused and not very distracted by temporary situations or losses.

Clarity results from an understanding of transcendental philosophy and focus in life is attributed to the development of knowledge about the meaning and purpose of life. Gita wisdom enlightens about the aim of all research related to philosophy which is to find the ultimate purpose of life- relief from misery due to material bondage and gain entry into the spiritual realm. (Prabhupada 1986).

The practitioners show increased means of focus and clarity especially with increase in number of years of practice which means after undertaking this process, there develops a transformation of clarity of thought and focus in the practitioner’s life which is clearly not seen or observed with a non-practitioner.
The following were the questions asked in the survey questionnaire to measure focus and clarity of an individual by way of self-assessment:
This was tested on parameter of the degree of an individual feeling confused about certain aspects about his life.
Let us analyze each question in detail:

1. I feel confused most of the time. (NF)
The above question is an indicator of the person’s lack of clarity. It is a negatively framed question therefore high score would indicate lower clarity.
From the responses to the above question it was observed that non-practitioners showed average to high scores whereas practitioners showed low scores. Thus it could be concluded that the practice of bhakti yoga dissipates confusion and increases clarity.

2. I can clearly see what needs to be done in every situation
The above question is an indicator of the person’s clarity.
The responses to the above question show higher scores for practitioners and lower for non-practitioners from which it can be concluded that the practice of bhakti yoga dissipates confusion and increases clarity within an individual.

3. I am very clear about what the purpose of my life is
The above question is an indicator of the person’s focus.
The observation was that the scores of the non-practitioners were low to average whereas practitioners showed high and very high scores thus indicating that confusion is cleared and focus and clarity in one’s life is increased by the practice of bhakti yoga.

4. I understand my life’s meaning
The above question is an indicator of the person’s understanding about his meaning of life.
The responses were average to low for the non-practitioners whereas they were higher for the practitioners thereby concluding that the practice of bhakti yoga contributes to the individual’s understanding about the meaning of his life.

5. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.
The above question is an indicator of the person’s having a life satisfying purpose. It was observed that non-practitioners had low to average scores whereas practitioners had high scores which indicates that the practice of bhakti yoga gives deeper meaning to life and also a purpose.

**Problem of lack of focus and clarity in life**
It is ironic that although Western culture has improved living standards by making it possible for people to live a long, healthy and a prosperous life more now then any other time. Unfortunately this culture has given rise to youngsters who are isolated and lonely from their own selves. The advanced living standards have led to people showing a lack of inquisitiveness in matters related to the spiritual realization. The disadvantages of Western civilization have greatly surpassed the benefits offered by it.

Such discussions however, may not be appreciated by politicians looking forward to address the serious issues and problems related to youth discontent and high rates of youth suicide throughout the world. Smith explains that most of the modern day sociologists are radically secular and according to them anything related to the matters of spirituality is therefore non-existent and not practical.

It is an indisputable fact that suicide indicates a loss of deeper meaning and purpose of the soul and life. This seems to be unreal to the academics who need display numbers and figures for causal relationship. This necessitates the finding of a cause which is political, social, socio-economic, and structural and accommodates all the rest. Because of neglecting the cause for such events unemployment has been made as the common target.

By working with youth for a long time, Smith reports that the main reasons are loss of ethical/religious values in the lives of young individuals and nuclear families.

It is pointed out by Richard Eckersley, a social scientist who examined the behavior of children and teens for a while observed that the increasing trends of youth being homeless, youth committing suicide, taking drugs and other problems are a result of them having no meaning, sense of belonging and purpose in life, and a value system to depend on.

Eckersley mentions most of the young people strongly refuse to accept anything that transcends the physical world and that might give them the strength to tolerate disappointments and dangers. Abundance of material opulence, drudgery and economic rationalism are not
enough to sustain and safeguard the passionate, young people who are always in a hurry and are harassed.

Dr. Jean Leane, a psychiatrist from Sydney, believes that the key factor behind the increasing youth suicide rates is the decline in observance of spiritual practices and the strength and support it previously offered. This decline, along with the declining ideals of humanitarian service to others, as well as the boosting of the ‘I am the only enjoyer’ mentality has all made a deep impact. The growing demand for legal euthanasia and family breakdown are among other important contributing factors.

On the basis of a new study conducted at the University of Florida, the lack of information regarding the ultimate purpose of life is considered a significant aspect of spirituality is generally teamed with substance abuse and addiction of alcohol, and many other mental health problems including depression and anxiety.

Researchers have examined about how the security level of an individual and one having a deeper meaning to life’s purpose were related with symptoms of depression. It was found that giving people the opportunities to serve others, boosting their creative talents (painting, writing etc.) and assisting them by making them able to helping them to develop a deeper value system and through prayer and meditation helping them to redefine the final purpose and meaning of their life and thus recover.

An important finding that their research has shown is that having an insecure attachment style proves out to be a risk because then there is higher probability of developing depression. Having an understanding of life’s ultimate meaning and having a deeper purpose of existence was an important consideration regarding symptoms of depression.

Although the findings of the researchers suggested that psychotherapists should try to help individuals develop better relations with others thereby reducing insecurity, they did give very high priority to having a deeper meaning and purpose to life.

It is noted by Graham, at University of Florida who works under the department of social work mentions that this research work provides an insight on the various techniques that can be used to treat addictive behavior.

The solution to this problem of lack of focus and clarity of life or lack of meaning in life is in the practice of bhakti yoga as described above. We have observed that the practice of
reading scriptures takes care of this need of search for meaning on life. One imbibes the philosophy, understands it and applies it in his life thereby one has an aim, a goal.

Thus the practitioners showed higher life focus and clarity as compared to their non-practicing counterparts. This meant that they showed less incidences of being confused while taking life decisions. Their life decisions were governed by a purpose. This purpose also was highly satisfying. Their clarity in decision making stemmed from a deeper understanding about the meaning and purpose of life.

This meaning of life that develops with scriptural understanding is attributed to the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita which puts into perspective life purpose, final destination and the situation around us. Equipped with this understanding, a person takes clear and focused decisions since he is clear about the ultimate goal.

According to Prabhupada, the practice of bhakti yoga develops focus and internal clarity within an individual. This is confirmed by the results of the questionnaire. When the individual’s ability of perception is changed due to deeper scriptural knowledge, he takes clear decisions as a result of being able to analyze things in proper perspective thus working towards life’s higher goal thereby removing negative thought process and actions like suicide which is a characteristic of individuals lacking focus and clarity.

Such an individual is sustained even in situations of danger and disappointments since having good financial situation or having all material things in plenty, or having a self centered network cannot by themselves protect the young generation. (Eckersley 2005) Infact it is this focus and clarity in life that gives one the strength to decide good over bad and avoid evils such as substance abuse, etc (Pederson)

By analyzing the questionnaire responses and also by analysis of the interview schedules, it was observed that the practice of bhakti yoga increases life focus and clarity. Those individuals who have a high level of focus and clarity in life can win over difficult situations, remain peaceful in provoking situations and are free from negative, self destructive thoughts. Since the lack of meaning in life or emptiness that individuals felt was a major causative factor triggering youth suicide, the practice of bhakti yoga can actually be a tool to improve the focus and clarity of individuals life, adding value to life and its meaning, and improving confidence in decision making and overall life satisfaction. Therefore bhakti yoga proves to be efficacious in improving
the focus and clarity in individual’s life therefore directly increasing the quality of life of the individual.

3) Life Satisfaction

In order to assess life satisfaction of individuals the following question was asked in the interview schedule:

Q. How would you rate your life satisfaction before and after starting to practice bhakti yoga?
The following are the replies of the respondents:

Ans1. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 6/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 9/10.

Ans2. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 5/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 9/10.

Ans3. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 4/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 8/10.

Ans4. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 6/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 9/10.

Ans5. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 4/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 9.5/10.

Ans6. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 2/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 10/10.

Ans7. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 3/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 8/10.

Ans8. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 2/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 9/10.

Ans9. Before I could rate my life satisfaction as 4/10 and now I would rate it as 9/10.

Ans10. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 3/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 9.5/10.
Ans11. Before practice I would rate my life satisfaction as 5/10 and now after many years of bhakti yoga practice I would now give it a 10/10.

Ans12. Before I used to be mostly depressed so I would rate it 1/10 and now I would rate it as 10/10. This is because of the deeper understanding that one develops about life and the involvement of fate, free will and karma and most importantly the hand of God in one’s life.

From the above replies to the question on life satisfaction to the respondents, we observe that when asked for evaluating their own satisfaction with their life, before and after taking up bhakti yoga, the mean score of life satisfaction on a scale of 1-10 before the practice of bhakti yoga is 4 and the mean score of life satisfaction of the respondents of the interview schedule after taking up bhakti yoga is 9 on the scale from 1-10.

Since all respondents who are practitioners of Bhakti yoga show significantly increased life satisfaction after taking up the practice as evidenced by their scores, we can conclude that life satisfaction of an individual increases with practice.

Also as in the last response, the respondent gives reason for the increase in life satisfaction as a result of the process. The respondent attributes the increase in life satisfaction to the change of attitude towards life situations. This develops through a deeper understanding about what life is all about through the scriptures. One develops the understanding about the law of karma and its application in one’s life which helps one to develop an appropriate worldview which is optimistic and hopeful. Rather than worrying about situations that one has no control over, Gita wisdom teaches us to focus on our inner selves and cultivate positivity within. As a result one can face any life situation with a smile and see the good even in adverse material situations thereby achieving equanimity and peace in life. This increases one’s life satisfaction.

The following are the questions which were asked to the respondents in the survey questionnaire which they answered by way of self assessment. The negatively framed questions as denoted by NF:

The respondents were tested on the questions to measure their life satisfaction. They were asked to choose options from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree as regards the above statements. A higher score on the positively framed questions indicated a higher life satisfaction whereas a low score on negatively framed questions indicated higher life satisfaction. The values
were inverted for the negatively framed questions which led to uniformity in answering. Therefore a higher mean indicates higher compassion.

Let us analyze each of the questions individually.

1. I am personally satisfied with my life
The above question is an indicator of the life satisfaction of the individual. Non-practitioners of bhakti yoga scored average and on the other hand practitioners scored very high in terms of responses to the above question thereby indicating that life satisfaction of an individual increases with the practice of bhakti yoga.

2. I feel happy in performing devotional activities
The above question is an indicator of the satisfaction level of the individual by the performance of bhakti yoga. For this question the responses of those practicing bhakti yoga were high whereas those not practicing were low. Thus it could be concluded that the practice of bhakti yoga increases the happiness level of individuals.

3. I often feel like a victim. (NF)
The above question is an indicator of the life satisfaction of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, a high score will indicate lower life satisfaction. It was observed that those not practicing bhakti yoga scored average whereas those who are practicing scored nil. This points out that practice of bhakti yoga increases life satisfaction of the individual by decreasing the feeling of victimization that the individual feels.

4. I feel that my spiritual beliefs have a lot to do with my happiness.
The above question is an indicator of the satisfaction level of the individual owing to the beliefs one develops as a result of bhakti yoga practice. For the above question, the responses were that non-practitioners scored average whereas practitioners scored very high, the increase in seniority showing increased scores. Thus it can be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga increases life satisfaction of the individual by increasing the happiness level through spirituality.
5. I usually feel discontented with life. (NF)

The above question is an indicator of the life satisfaction of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, a high score indicates lower life satisfaction. From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners scored average whereas practitioners scored nil. Thus it can be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga increases life satisfaction of the individual by decreasing the discontentment level.

**Problem of decreased life satisfaction**

Is lowered life satisfaction a result of materialism or is it that one tries to seek happiness in accumulating material goods. Opree conducted study to find out the relationship that having materialistic attitude and mentality have with satisfaction of life amongst children.

It was observed that those children who were regularly exposed to advertisements were the ones who were found to have lower life satisfaction. Certain studies that were conducted say that the relationship between satisfaction of life and materialism is negative resulting in an unprogressive situation. Studies among adults state that people with decreased satisfaction tend to become more materialistic and it is true otherwise also. The increased rate of mental problems like having depression, neurotic illnesses, and bipolar disorders is evidence to this. It is important to intervene in the current time period so that more children becoming dissatisfied and depressed can be avoided.

**The Rise In Youth Suicide**

The statistics obtained from the US database are quite alarming in the sense that the rate of suicide has reduced for those who are old and are adults whereas it has increased three times in the last half century for fifteen to twenty four old youth. Suicide has become one of the major causes of death which includes thirteen youth out of a lakh who commit suicide. The following are the remarks on the data:

- There is a progressive connection between suicide and homicide.
- With age increasing after adolescence suicide rate clearly decreases
- Suicides attempted and completed by blacks are fewer compared to whites.
The spiritual dimension evokes feelings which demonstrate the existence of trust, awe, inspiration, love, faith, hope; therein providing meaning and a reason for existence, according to Narayanasamy. It comes into focus, particularly when an individual faces emotional stress, physical illness or death. Mohan considers that spirituality takes a cosmic rather than a personal view of God. It emphasizes on oneness of the body and the soul; matter and the spirit and therefore is holistic. The whole universe is seen interwoven under one Supreme Personality. Life’s contradictions are seen as two poles of one reality and not mutually cancelling each other, one giving meaning to the other. The focus in terms of practice of spirituality is on contemplation, silence, and intuitive prayer, bodily postures in prayer and all of this under the guidance of a bonafide guru or spiritual teacher. More emphasis is on striving for perfection, asceticism, abnegation, self control and building one’s relationship with God.

Spirituality is an integral part of one’s inner belief system which concerns the essence of being in relationship with self, others, God and the universe. It helps people in seeking personal truth, developing the sense of unity of life and developing a personal philosophy, reaching and exploring challenges; develops a sense of higher consciousness that connects the creator and the created. It helps in nurturing values (such as balance, compassion, wisdom, humility, maturity, piety, and serenity); integrating body, mind and spirit; searching the existence of God. To each individual, spirituality is unique influenced by culture, development, transcendent, hope, love, quality, relationship experiences and ideas, meaning, and existence.

It is the result of practicing the different aspects of bhakti yoga as recommended that result in increase in life satisfaction of the individual. This life satisfaction not only stems from a positive outlook and optimistic worldview but also from the performance of recommended bhakti yoga activities. Such activities include chanting, hearing, worship, etc which inspire one to develop a deeper relationship with the Lord. (Prabhupada 1896)

Life satisfaction can be defined as the way people evaluate about how they feel presently about how they think their future will be. It is assessed based on individual’s mood, one’s achievement in terms of his goals and relationships. It is also evaluated in terms of his ability to cope up with day to day life and conceptions that he holds. It is related to having an overall assessment of one’s life. It is measured with reference to one’s financial situation, place of stay, educational qualification among other aspects.
Satisfaction with one’s life is more of an individual evaluation related to the feelings and attitudes that one has developed at a certain point in his life. It can range from positive to negative. According to Diener, well-being has three aspects namely satisfaction with life, positive and negative effects. Suh et al include desiring to change one’s life and satisfaction with the past under life satisfaction.

It is the perspective that one possesses about his life being in the right direction and happy with one’ life according to Lippman. When a survey was carried out, it was observed that the relation it had with substance abuse, depression, conflicts was negative whereas it was positively related to good grades in youth.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, life satisfaction is an experience for one in spiritual consciousness; and it occurs when an individual refrains from material enjoyment, the desires for which stem up in the mind. An individual who is in pure transcendental consciousness is the one who can experience life satisfaction. A person performing pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord is the one who is actually satisfied and can remain so. A person can feel happiness and satisfaction by engaging himself in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord. This is an integral part of the practice of bhakti yoga and it is this which brings about the transformation in an individual which enables to experience happiness and thereby increase his life satisfaction. (Prabhupada 1986)

Pradhan states that among young adults that high spirituality group (comprising of beliefs, experiences and practices) have greater life satisfaction have important implications for ensuring the well-being of young adults. Life satisfaction is an important dimension of subjective well being that incorporates the presence of positive affects, absence of negative affects and life satisfaction.

If there is a significant increase in life satisfaction of practitioners that implies greater happiness of the person. Infact such an individual shows good confidence and belief that his life is on the right track. Such an individual rates high on the subjective well being scale of which life satisfaction constitutes an important parameter. Individuals with high life satisfaction have a favorable outlook towards life and are generally remain happy despite conflicting situations and have very low suicide rates or fulfillment in material possessions. (Opree)

Such individuals help others willingly since they themselves are satisfied. Their satisfaction stems from understanding of scriptures which is deep rooted. Their helpful activities
are too based on such knowledge. Therefore their happiness is related to their spiritual beliefs. They are free from negative thoughts such as feeling of being victimized and are happy with life. Their happiness lies in performing devotional activities and they make it a point to spread it to others to share their experience. Thereby we observe that practitioners of bhakti yoga score higher in life satisfaction for the above mentioned reasons. This was evidenced through the survey questionnaire and also through the structured interview schedule wherein we studied the same in detail. Life satisfaction is related to the happiness index of an individual. Infact, it is directly proportional to the same. Also in this way one understands that these individuals who are practitioners of bhakti yoga show a higher degree or score of happiness index.

Individuals with high life satisfaction can win over difficult situations, remain peaceful in provoking situations and are free from negative, self destructive thoughts. Since the lack of meaning in life or emptiness that individuals felt was a major causative factor triggering youth suicide, the practice of bhakti yoga can actually be a tool to improve the satisfaction of individual’s life, adding value to life and its meaning, and overall life satisfaction. Through the analysis of the responses of the survey questionnaire and the structured interview schedule, it was observed that the practice of bhakti yoga resulted in increased life satisfaction Therefore, we can conclude that bhakti yoga does prove to be efficacious in improving the life satisfaction in an individual’s life therefore directly increasing the quality of life of the individual and the happiness experienced by performing devotional activities.

4) Development of sattva guna

Inorder to assess the sattva guna of individuals the following question was asked in the interview schedule:

Q Do you think you have developed some habits in sattva guna? Name a few?
Ans1. Yes of course my whole life style is now transferring into mode of goodness. For example getting up early and sleeping early, not watching television, or listening to loud music, not getting angry very soon, completely lost the taste in roadside spicy food and just like to have simple homemade prasad(food).
Ans2. Definitely. Few habits – like Offering to Krishna whatever we eat, and eating as prasadam, Forgiveness considering that everything is temporary, Things cannot be enjoyed without Krishna, Chanting daily.

Ans3. Cleanliness, tolerance, honesty, knowledge.

Ans4. Yes.
My food habits have changed – More fruits, juices, salads etc. No junk food.
Reading books – No television as it took a lot my time earlier.

Ans5. Yes, a few habits.
1. I love to gift people
2. I try to devote my time more on reading scriptural topics
3. I feel compassionate to people around me, who are struggling but still not strong enough to accept the reality
4. I don’t feel like taking things back onto the people, who have done wrong to me.

Ans6. Yes. Getting up early, avoiding tamsic food, becoming very conscious of what I feed my consciousness with in terms of food, people, media etc.
Trying to respond instead of reacting. Avoiding mundane company. Eating satvic offered food.
Worshipping the Lord. Becoming more peaceful, avoiding material indulgence as far as possible.
More contributing and giving to Krishna conscious projects, my time money energy, intelligence etc. Becoming more aware of importance of association of sadhu Shastra.

Ans7. Yes some habits like fasting on ekadashi, daily reading of scriptures and feeding cows on a regular basis.

Ans8. Yes
A. Never ever find fault in others
B. Sleep early & Get up early
C. Eat food which is offered to Lord (Satvik food)
D. Never associate with Greedy, Lusty & envious persons
E. Always read Bhagavad Gita & Bhagvatam
F. Be humble & tolerant in all situations

Never aspire for praises in life & always give credit to Lord

Ans9. Yes. Now I try to avoid bad association as much as possible, have stopped eating outside food, not waste time watching TV.

Ans10. Praying, chanting, reading, service, regular pilgrimages, getting up early in the morning.

Ans11. Yes. Keeping my paraphernalia neat and clean. Very cautious about eating habits, like avoiding too chilly, sour, pungent items. Getting up early in morning etc.

Ans12. Cleanliness, practicing mantra meditation, taking bath a couple of times a day, increased tolerance, having clean clothes.

When the respondents were asked about the qualities they developed in sattva guna, they mentioned some of the following common qualities:

1. Early wake up
2. Practice of chanting or mantra meditation
3. Reading of scriptures
4. Cleanliness
5. Becoming more peaceful
6. Becoming more cautious about healthy food habits
7. Compassion
8. Tolerance
9. Honesty
10. Cultivation of knowledge
11. Control on anger
12. Simplicity
The respondents claimed to develop the above mentioned qualities as a result of practice of bhakti yoga.

The Bhagavad Gita mentions about the three modes of material nature and how every individual is also influenced by the modes resulting in certain aspects of his behavior.

Sattva guna or the mode of goodness, Rajo guna or the mode of passion and Tamo guna or the mode of ignorance form the three gunas or the three modes of material nature.

Sattva guna is characterized by simplicity, tolerance, humility, peacefulness, austerity, mercifulness, etc. Rajo guna is characterized by qualities such as anger, strong desires, passion, etc and tamo guna is characterized by laziness, indolence and sleep.

The respondents show a transformation with respect to development of qualities in sattva guna which were quite different from their original qualities which would come under the category of the modes of passion and ignorance such as excessive sleep, unhealthy eating habits, etc. This transformation can be positively attributed to practice of bhakti yoga. Since bhakti yoga makes one in connection with the Divine, one is seen to develop saintly qualities. A prominent aspect is the development of peacefulness and self-satisfaction within the individual as a result of bhakti yoga practice which prevents him from becoming excessively attached, materially conscious and helps him refrain from acting on the lower desires of lust, anger and greed.

(Prabhupada 1986)

Questions from the survey questionnaire as regards development of sattva guna:

In order to measure the level of development of sattva guna of the individuals the following questions were asked to the respondents:

The following were the results according to the responses to each of the questions of the three categories of respondents and the indication:

1. I become happy when I think about the material assets that I possess. (NF)

The above question was a negatively framed question which was an indicator of the quality of ‘freedom from covetousness’.

It was observed the non-practitioners of bhakti yoga replied positively to this question which indicated high degree of covetousness. It was also observed the practitioners of bhakti yoga scored low in this question which indicated a high degree of freedom from covetousness-
quality in the mode of goodness or sattva guna. Thus it could be concluded that the practice of bhakti yoga increases the attitude of non-covetousness within an individual wherein he does not think that he is the lord of everything he surveys and accepts the supreme proprietorship of God.

2. I make it a point to maintain external cleanliness but more importantly internal cleanliness by practicing self restraint and mantra meditation.

The above question was an indicator of the sattva guna quality of ‘cleanliness’.

It was observed from the responses that non-practitioners of bhakti yoga scored average in this question whereas practitioners scored higher. It was also observed that there was a trend with senior practitioners having highest scores for cleanliness. This indicates that practice in bhakti yoga promotes external as well as internal cleanliness by the practice of habits and the practice of mantra meditation which is the cause of internal cleanliness.

3. I make it a point to regularly read transcendental literature/scriptures

The above question was an indicator of ‘study of scriptures’ which is a prominent quality in the mode of goodness.

It was observed from the response to the questionnaire that the non-practitioners of bhakti yoga showed a low score as regards this question whereas the practitioners showed higher scores with higher years of practice. Thus it can be concluded that the practice of bhakti yoga facilitates the sattva guna quality of study of scriptures.

4. For me, sex life is a major source of happiness. (NF)

The above question is an indicator of ‘self control’ a quality of sattva guna or mode of goodness.

It was observed from the responses to the above question that non-practitioners of bhakti yoga showed average scores whereas practitioners showed lower scores which varied significantly with no of years. Since this is a negatively framed question, lower score indicated higher degree of self control. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga helps one increase the degree of self control on himself.

5. I do not have doubts about my responsibilities in life.

The above question is an indicator of the sattva guna quality of ‘dutifulness’.
From the observation of responses to the above question, it was seen that non-practitioners showed an average score whereas practitioners showed higher scores of dutifulness with the score increasing with no of years of practice. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga helps one to become more dutiful in his life.

6. I carry out my responsibilities regardless of whether there is success or failure.
The above question indicates the sattva guna quality of ‘responsibility’
From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners showed average scores whereas practitioners of bhakti yoga showed higher scores. The score increased with seniority in practice. Thus it could be concluded that bhakti yoga helps a person become more responsible.

7. Regardless of what I acquire or achieve, I have an uncontrollable desire to obtain more.
The above question is an indicator of ‘greed’, a quality of rajo guna. It is a negatively framed question wherein a higher score would indicate higher degree of rajo guna or mode of passion and lower degree of sattva.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners showed a relatively higher score than practitioners. Infact the score of practitioners decreased with seniority of practice. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga reduces the rajasic quality of greed of an individual.

8. I always think about giving up my wealth and position for a simpler life
The above question measures the sattva guna qualities of ‘simplicity and renunciation’ of an individual.
From the responses to the above questions, it was observed that non-practitioners scored low on this question as opposed to bhakti yoga practitioners showing high scores, the scores increasing with increase in years of practice. Thus it can be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga, can help one increase detachment and simplicity in his life.

9. I regularly suffer from bad health. (NF)
The above question indicates ‘health’ of an individual. It is a negatively framed question and thus a lower value would indicate good health and vice versa.

From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners scored average as compared to the low scores of practitioners, with increase in seniority showing decreased scores. Thus it can be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga helps to improve the health of the individual.

10. I am regulated in my eating and sleeping habits.

The above question is an indicator of ‘regulation’ a quality in the mode of goodness.

From the responses, it was observed that non-practitioners showed average and lower scores as compared to practitioners who showed higher scores with increase in no of years of practice. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga facilitates regulation in eating and sleeping habits.

11. I take an inferior position in front of my seniors even if I might be right about something in any situation.

The above question is an indicator of ‘modesty’, a quality in the mode of goodness.

From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners showed lower scores than their practicing counterparts who showed higher scores with seniority. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga facilitates the development of the quality of humility or modesty in an individual.

12. I feel dull and lazy for majority of the time.

The above question is an indicator of the quality of ignorance which indicates a very low degree of sattva guna. It is a negatively framed question with increased scores indicating higher degree of tamo guna and therefore lower degrees of sattva guna.

From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners scored averagely as compared to the lower scores of the practitioners which decreased with seniority. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga decreases dullness and laziness which are qualities in tamo guna.
13. I feel restless and hyperactive most of the time.
The above question is an indicator of ‘restlessness’, a quality in rajo guna.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners showed higher scores of restlessness as compared to practitioners whose scores decreased with seniority. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga decreases restlessness in an individual.

The above question is an indicator of ‘peacefulness’, a quality in sattva guna.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners showed lower scores of peacefulness as compared to practitioners whose scores increased with seniority. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga promotes peacefulness in an individual.

15. I often feel envious towards my colleagues and friends.
The above question is an indicator of the tamo guna quality of ‘envy’. It is a negatively framed question wherein increased score indicate higher envy that is lower sattva guna.
From the responses to the above question it was observed that non-practitioners showed average scores as compared to the lower scores of practitioners whose scores decreased with seniority. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga decreases envy within an individual.

16. I believe charity should be performed towards the spreading of God’s message
The above question is an indicator of the sattva guna quality of ‘charity’.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners showed average scores as compared to higher scores of practitioners which increased with seniority. Thus it could be concluded that bhakti yoga practice inspires a person to become charitable.

17. I highly value speaking the truth uncompromisingly.
The above question is an indicator of the sattva guna quality of ‘truthfulness’.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners scored average and lower scores as compared to practitioners whose scores increased with seniority of practice. Thus it is could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga inspires a person to be honest and truthful.
18. I make it a point to rise before sunrise for spiritual practice
The above question indicates early wake up as a practice undertaken by individuals in sattva guna.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed that on-practitioners scored low whereas practitioners scored highly with higher scores of senior practitioners. Thus it could be concluded that practice of bhakti yoga inspires a person to practice early wake up-a characteristic of sattva guna.

19. I refrain from gambling
The above question indicates the practice of ‘no gambling’ which is a characteristic of sattva guna.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed that non-practitioners showed average scores as compared to almost nil scores of practitioners. Thus it could be concluded that practitioners of bhakti yoga practice a principle of no gambling.

20. I believe that sex life is meant for the procreation of God conscious children
The above question indicates the practice of ‘no illicit sex’ which is a characteristic of sattva guna.
From the responses to the above question it was observed that practitioners had almost full scores as compared to average scores by non- practitioners. It could be thus concluded that practitioners of bhakti yoga follow regulative principle of ‘no illicit sex’

**Problem of rajasic (passionate) and tamasic (ignorant) habits:**
The working of the three modes of nature (goodness, passion and ignorance) and how the individuals are controlled by these modes is clearly described in the Gita. Here are some of the ways in which the individuals are forced to act under the influence of these modes.

a). Spending excessive time and effort for gaining “things/assets” or being very materialistic.
People living in poor financial conditions tend to become happier when their economic condition improves, however most often this happiness is short-lived since the financial improvement is not stable and drops off quickly. It has been proved by a great deal of research that wealth or
material possessions cannot make one happy. When one endeavors to gain such possessions he is more likely to get frustrated because one not only discovers that he is still unsatisfied but also that he has gained these possessions at the cost of family, friends and prestige. Hence, materialism and greediness not only give one disappointment but they also prevent an individual from developing positive qualities.

b) Self-victimization

Usually most individuals have this default conception about life that it is miserable and beyond their control. Their mentality is that life is full of suffering and all my attempts to improve it are failures. The problem with this kind of mentality is that it makes one feel helpless and such people aren’t likely to take practical decisions to improve their condition. Victimization of oneself may result in individuals develop a sense of inferiority complex and lead them to extreme anxiety. Gradually, this paves the way for depression and ultimately suicide.

c). Negative perspective

Many individuals tend to have a pessimistic approach while dealing with things in their life. The problem with a pessimistic attitude is that it is really hard to overcome and if one by chance fails in an attempt, one is even more reluctant to make further attempts for improvement. Unless one realizes the futility of pessimistic thoughts, it is hard to overcome them. Such attitude makes one frustrated and it may gradually result in hollowness, loss of meaning of one’s life or mental complications.

d). Attitude of complain

A complaining attitude is troublesome not only to oneself but also to others. It is a self-reinforcing behavior. It is a justification of one’s pessimistic beliefs by constantly thinking and then talking about how bad things are. While talking about what bothers one and doing the needful can help one feel better, there’s only a slight gap between complaining being beneficial and it becoming troublesome or stressful.

e). Unnecessary delaying

Because of a pessimistic approach and the conception that life is full of miseries, people tend to delay things that require immediate attention in their lives. Instead of striving to become perfect, setting up and endeavoring to achieve their goals, they just keep on delaying things and wonder why they aren’t progressing. They miss out the important point that the problem is due to their procrastinating approach which can prove detrimental to growth in life.
It is bhakti yoga that facilitates the development of sattvic qualities such as those mentioned above. A person in rajo guna since driven by passionate desire to achieve can never be peaceful no happy. A person in tamo guna because of being ignorant too does not experience happiness infact such an individual becomes used to misery. It is only a person who has by virtue the good, positive qualities in sattva guna can experience happiness in life.

Individuals who possess sattva guna possess the quality of freedom from covetousness. That means they see all items in connection with the Lord and do not claim false proprietorship over anything thereby remain equipoised despite material loss or gain. This is a unique quality that is found in sattvic individuals who are practitioners of bhakti yoga.

Cleanliness—both internal and external also is an important quality found in sattvic individuals. External cleanliness is achieved by bathing, etc whereas internal cleanliness is achieved by the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. Sattvic individuals take care of this aspect particularly.

The study of scriptures is a practice that is undertaken by those in sattva guna. Since it is sattva guna that real spiritual understanding can be developed based on scriptures, individuals take up this practice of regular study of scriptures and because of the practice of sattva guna, the knowledge is revealed within the heart.

A sattvic person exhibits self control as one of the qualities. He does not give in to temptation and can maintain his poise and control. This is because spiritual practices give strength to an individual to deny temptation. Therefore a sattvic individual is not found giving in to lowly desires.

Another quality is dutifulness wherein one performs all activities based on the higher platform of duty rather than profit or desire. A bhakti yoga practitioner ensures that he performs all duties very nicely seeing their connection with the Lord.

A practitioner of bhakti yoga acts in accordance with his responsibilities ensuring that he performs them appropriately. This is also due to the cultivation of sattva guna.

A person in sattva guna does not give in to greed and act based on greedy desires. Because of being purified by the process of bhakti yoga, the individual does not feel greedy which a characteristic of the mode of passion or rajo guna. As a result he is satisfied within himself and does not act greedily.
An individual developing the sattvic quality of simplicity does not increase his possessions or wants unnecessarily. His aim of life is not to collect and accumulate more. Neither is it to show off to other individuals. Therefore he chooses decisions that help him progress on the spiritual path as opposed to individuals who live externally a very pompous life but remain unhappy within.

Such a person practices renunciation. This quality is brought about by the deeper understanding of the absolute proprietorship of the Supreme Lord. So the individual understands that since any material item does not belong to him, he simply uses it in the service of the Lord and gives it up when not required. (Wolf 1998)

A sattvic individual regulates his diet and sleep to maintain good health. Because good health forms the basis of any activity, a sattvic individual regulates his diet and sleep so as to not adversely affect his health.

A sattvic individual is modest and humble about his achievements understanding the source of them being the Supreme Lord.

A sattvic individual is not dull or lazy. These qualities stem from the mode of ignorance. Because of regulation in health, diet, etc such a person is active and enthusiastic throughout the day.

A person who is excessively rajasic or affected by the quality of rajas or the mode of passion remains restless and hyperactive throughout. Since a sattvic individual does not have the above qualities, he does not remain restless and hyperactive. He is calm and peacefully conducts himself.

A practitioner of bhakti yoga does not have envy towards others. He practices charity and lives in a mentality of abundance. Envy towards the Supreme Lord results in envy towards other living entities. The bhakti yoga practitioner does not envy anyone because his heart has affection towards the Lord which is exhibited by affection to other entities.

A sattvic individual practices the principle of charity. He is charitable and willingly gives to the service of the Lord. His understanding is that everything has its origin in the Lord so charity is a method to give a thing back to its source.

A sattvik person observes the principle of truthfulness. Honesty is a virtue that a sattvic person holds dear. This is because he does not conduct his activities with hypocrisy or malintent.
The practice of early wake up is observed by such individuals. Since early morning time is appropriate for spiritual practices as recommended by the scriptures, he ensures that early morning wake up and spiritual practice is an integral part of his life. (Prabhupada 1986)

The bhakti yoga practitioner observes the principle of ‘no gambling’ as a regulation. This is because gambling destroys the propensity of being honest. One is forced to resort to unfair means and looses all that he puts at stake. Therefore the regulative principle of ‘no gambling’.

The practitioner of bhakti yoga also practices ‘no illicit sex’ as a regulation. This is because celibacy and purity are important aspects for spiritual progress. Also there are numerous ill effects of illicit sex.

The above qualities are some which constitute sattva guna. When sattva guna increases in an individual he is peaceful, calm, honest, modest and an abode of good qualities. The more the populace develops sattva guna within themselves, the more they can ensure happiness in their lives. More so there can be peace in the society. A person commits criminal activities because of increased passion or rajas which manifests through uncontrolled lust, anger and greed. When a person cannot control his lust, he commits crimes such as sexual crimes, rape, etc. An individual due to fulfillment of lust develops greed and thereby commits crimes such as theft. The non-fulfillment of lust leads to anger due to which individuals commit crimes such as murder, etc. These propensities of lust, anger and greed can be controlled by the practice of bhakti yoga which decreases the rajasic and tamasic tendencies and increases sattva guna. As a result when an individual is peaceful and satisfied from within he can be an asset to the society rather than a nuisance.

Thus it is observed that the practice of bhakti yoga increases sattva guna in an individual. This implies the reduction of rajas and tamas. (Wolf 1998) The individuals shows qualities of cleanliness, truthfulness, gravity, dutifulness, detachment, discipline, mental equilibrium, and respect for superiors, sharp intelligence, sense control, and staunch determination with increase in sattva guna levels.(Prabhupada 1981) Such individuals do not show the negative qualities of pessimism, envy, material covetousness, hankering, stress, etc. They are free from negative habits of substance abuse, alcoholism etc. They have regulated habits and lifestyle. They observe principles of celibacy and abstinence. They avoid meat-eating, and intoxication. They avoid practices such as gambling. Such individuals are peaceful and content. The decrease in rajas and tamas also decrease mental issues such as depression, anxiety and other disorders. (Wolf 1998)
From the survey questionnaire and the structured interview schedules, it is observed that individuals practicing bhakti yoga show increased sattva guna and decreased rajo and tamo guna. Thus the development of positive qualities within an individual comes naturally who is practicing bhakti yoga.

5). Substance Abuse

In order to measure this parameter of substance abuse, the following question was asked to the respondents as a part of the interview schedule:

Q. Did this practice help you to overcome any kind of addiction—which one and how?

Ans1. I was addicted to watching movies and wasted lot of my time without any positive result or deriving any contentment. But after coming to Krishna consciousness I am able to utilize my time in a better way. Now hearing nonsensical movie songs has been replaced by kirtans and lectures which has made me a better person.
Ans2. Yes, have left eating non-vegetarian food infact even the usage of onions and garlic in food preparations.

Ans3. Yes I used to consume drugs which I left in a short while after taking up bhakti yoga practice. I can also testify the potency of this practice which played a very vital transforming role in the lives of many close friends of mine who had been addicted.

Ans4. I didn’t have any addictions as such but I had a serious issue of very less attention span which was greatly affecting my grades in my college. But with the meditation my mind has become calm and alert at the same time which helped me to overcome this concern.

Ans5. I used to drink as my association was compelling me to do that, or else I had to leave them.
This practice helped me to choose what is right and good for me. Although I was not addicted to alcohol but I was addicted to the association which was the biggest change I found in me.

Ans6. I did not have any addictions before, so cannot comment.

Ans7. Yes I used to consume tobacco regularly. Also I was addicted to drinking coffee. Bhakti yoga practice helped me overcome both these addictions.

Ans8. I was a strong meat eater and my outside habit of eating was more but after coming in to Krishna consciousness in our family by default, we eat only food which is offered to Krishna.

Ans9. Out of ignorance I used to indulge in masturbation and pornography. I have stopped doing it now

Ans10. By regularly taking darshans of the lordships /attending guru puja in the morning and honoring caranamrita, I was able to stop my addictions of tea /coffee /alcohol /smoking and non veg food.
Ans11. I used to drink regularly, smoke marijuana, smoke cigarettes

Ans12. Yes, I was addicted to consuming alcohol which I stopped taking since I started this practice.

From the above replies it is observed that practitioners did see certain changes in themselves especially significant with the reduction of negative self destructive addictions such as:

1. Alcohol
2. Drugs
3. Caffeine
4. Non-vegetarian food
5. Cigarettes

Thus we see that practice of bhakti yoga does have positive effects as the respondents claim to give up the above self-destructive habits.

The following questions were asked to the respondents of the survey questionnaire as regards substance abuse. Let us analyze them:

1. I like to drink tea/coffee. (NF)
The above question is an indicator of an individual’s inclination to consume caffeine present in tea and coffee.
From the responses to the above question it was observed that non-practitioners of bhakti yoga showed high scores on the same whereas practitioners showed nil scores.
This indicates that practice of bhakti yoga helps one reduce his dependence on caffeine.

2. I like to smoke cigarettes. (NF)
The above question is an indicator of an individual’s inclination to smoke cigarettes. The responses showed that those not practicing the principles of bhakti yoga had average scores whereas those who were practicing the principles showed nil scores.
This indicates that practice of bhakti yoga helps one reduce his dependence on cigarettes.
3. I consume drugs occasionally (NF)
The above question is an indicator of an individual’s inclination to consume drugs as intoxication.
Thoe who were not practicing the principles of bhakti yoga showed low to average scores on the same whereas practitioners showed nil scores in response to this question.
This indicates that practice of bhakti yoga helps one reduce his dependence on drugs

4. I feel there is no harm in consuming alcohol. (NF)
The above question is an indicator of an individual’s inclination to consume alcohol as intoxication.
The observation was that those not practicing the principles of bhakti yoga showed average scores whereas those who were practitioners showed nil scores.
This indicates that practice of bhakti yoga helps one reduce his dependence on alcohol.

5. Undertaking spiritual training and practice has helped me overcome my addiction to intoxicants (tea/coffee, alcohol, drugs)
The above question is an indicator of whether the individual perceives that the practice of bhakti yoga has helped him overcome any addiction like caffeine, alcohol or drugs.
From the responses to the above question it was observed that non-practitioners of bhakti yoga showed low scores on the same whereas practitioners showed very high scores.
This indicates that practice of bhakti yoga helps one overcome his dependence on alcohol, drugs, caffeine or other forms of substance abuse.

6. I like to consume tobacco. (NF)
The above question is an indicator of an individual’s inclination to consume tobacco as intoxication.
Those not practicing the principles of bhakti yoga showed average scores whereas practitioners showed nil scores.
This indicates that practice of bhakti yoga helps one reduce his dependence on tobacco.

The problem of substance abuse and addiction
In recent years it’s not at all surprising to come across day to day incidents regarding individuals purchasing drugs and gradually getting addicted to them, ultimately leading to their imprisonment on account of substance abuse. In the modern day society, substance abuse, addiction and chemical dependency have become household words.

Currently, in the US addiction tops the list of problems causing serious health issues. As per the reports put forward by WHO, mental instability and substance abuse disorders will become the prime causes of disability throughout the world by 2020, much higher than other diseases related to the body. In the last decade, more than twenty three million youth in America had to undergo treatment for addiction. More than eleven billion dollars is the amount that is the total cost for problems related to substance abuse.

Methamphetamine or Methedrine are considered to be extremely addictive drugs in the U.S. since artificial versions of the same are possible to be manufactured by lay people and therefore the S.A.M.H.S.A. labeled them. They are categorized as stimulants although their potencies are different. Stimulants can increase the average heart rate, alertness and agitate person’s mood by specifically acting upon the CNS and the internal neuro-transmitters according to Fisher.

Initially substance abuse was thought to be a problem only concerning the men. However, recent statistics show that there are 19 men against one woman when it comes to substance abuse challenges.

A coping strategy can be considered as a technique that allows an individual to deal with significant stressors. The common factor in the responses of individuals in society when asked how they would cope with daily stressors was their taking to religion and spirituality. In most religious or theistic environments, people tend to take shelter of some higher power that can address their problems and attach meaning to it.

Experts dealing with substance abuse often ponder over spiritual and religious activities that facilitate treatment. Previous experimental evidence regarding the effects of religion and spirituality has shown a very positive influence on individuals according to Blanch.

According to Emerson and Woo (2006), religion and spirituality can be justly categorized as leading to positive mental health and sources of interpersonal social connection.

The health and well-being of a person can be influenced be religion and spirituality in many ways. Beginning from adolescence, individuals gain the strength to successfully pass from
one phase of life to the next by practicing the rites and rituals prescribed in the major religions of the world.

Religion and spirituality influence the well-being of many individuals. From the beginning of childhood, the rituals which have been practiced by the religious traditions of the world have had a tremendous role in helping people grow and transition from one phase of life to the next. Most of these transitions, such as baptisms, circumcisions, confirmations, coming-of-age rituals, and marriages occur in the early phases of life. However, the rules and regulations put forward by these religious traditions help one lead a balanced and healthy life, especially in adolescence and early adulthood.

Some religions for example have particular rules regarding intake of foodstuffs and intoxicants and most religions lay stress on maintaining the purity of the body as the residing place of the soul. Religious beliefs do discourage indulgence in intoxication. In fact, many spiritual and religious practices put temporary and intermittent, or lifelong restrictions on acts that are performed by people seeking immediate pleasure, such as drinking, meat eating or having sex.

Stress which is primary cause of chronic diseases still remains the main reason for death in materialistic society. Temporary periods of rest from work and daily life can be effective in reducing stress. Transcendental religious and spiritual practices tend to have a healing, positive, and restorative effect, especially if they are performed regularly such as on a daily, weekly, seasonal or annual basis. A significant positive impact on health by religiousness and spirituality can be clearly observed only in later stages of life of practitioners.

The effect of incorporating meditation based counseling sessions among the Hindu laborers helped in stabilizing delusional disorder and schizophrenia (Raghuram, Venkateswaran, Ramakrishna & Weiss, 2002). May such practices suggested that religion and spirituality did have a very important role to play in the holistic health of individuals. The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (2005) further deemed it necessary to include spiritual assessments into the treatment plans of consumers facing substance abuse problems which could assist the recovery process well.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, intoxication which is a characteristic of the mode of ignorance puts an individual in a hallucination. As a result the person forgets the situation and feels free from the pressure that is otherwise created. It is an artificial situation which can be
considered to be escapism. The individual’s consciousness is altered in intoxication and in order to continue escaping from stress or other negative emotions, an individual takes shelter of intoxicants and becomes a repeated behavioral pattern. Thereby it becomes an addiction.

Although previous research has shown that the practice of meditation or spirituality can positively affect the tendency to intoxicate, on the observation of the above results, it can be concluded that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one overcome the habit of intoxication to a variety of substances. This is attributed to the development of higher taste of spirituality which makes one give up the lower taste to intoxicate. Since this practice completely shuns the use of intoxicants, it prevents the practitioners from consuming intoxicants and the negative effects of the same.

Although previous research has proved that spiritual and religious practices have had effect on substance abuse and improved mental health, this practice has shown to completely eliminate the habit of intoxication as in the case with many individuals. The responses related to substance abuse in this study also support this. This practice can serve as a major breakthrough to stop the growth of intoxication among the youth the world over. There is great scope of integrating this practice with therapy or in rehabilitation. (Raguram et al, 2002) Thus we can conclude from the survey questionnaire and structured interview schedule that the practice of bhakti yoga has a positive effect in decreasing substance abuse addiction to the extent of eliminating the same as evidenced by interviews of previous addicts who successfully gave up the addictions on taking up 243 the practice of bhakti yoga attributing it to the higher taste obtained from the spiritual practice that enabled them to give up the addiction to certain substances.
6). Experience of spirituality

The following two questions were asked as a part of the structured interview schedule as a means to measure the experience of spirituality in an individual.

Q. Do you feel your relationship with God has grown through the practice?
   a. Little
   b. Average
   c. A lot

Q. How important to you is surrendering to God? Why?

Let us look at the responses to each question in detail.

Q. Do you feel your relationship with God has grown through the practice?

Ans1. c) A lot Yes I definitely feel that my relationship with god has increased a lot. Now my whole life is centered around god whom I used to earlier remember only on certain festivals or pujas.

Ans2. C) A lot

Ans3. C) A lot
Ans4. C) A lot. My faith has also increased multiple folds. And as they say – worry ends where faith begins.

Ans5. C) A lot

Ans6. C) A lot

Ans7. C) A lot

Ans8. C) A lot

Ans9. C) A lot

Ans10. C) A lot

Ans11. C) A lot

Ans12. C) A lot

Thus through the above responses to the question about the degree of growth of an individual’s relationship with God, all of the respondents replied the option that their relationship with God has grown ‘a lot’.

The following are the responses to the question ‘How important to you is surrendering to God? Why?’

Ans1. Very important because I understand as now I have understood my connection to God and purpose of my life, this valuable human form. Plus for me surrendering has the biggest relief for me is HIS SHELTER. Only Krishna is full, permanent and capable of sheltering and surrendering gets you HIS eternal shelter.
Ans2. It is of utmost importance to surrender to God since material world is maya and temporary, we are stuck into cycle of birth and death in this material world. Vaikuntha is the place where one should target to be in as it is Krishna’s abode. Getting out of this material world cannot happen without Krishna’s mercy and we can get Krishna’s mercy only by surrendering to him.

Ans3. Highest priority. Because it offers a clear goal in the present misguided society, that couldn’t offer me the solution to the problems of life, and because it is tangible and pleasing to the mind, body and soul.

Ans4. Well, it’s a deep subject matter but in a nut shell it’s the most important aspect of being a human. The constitutional nature of the Human Being is to serve. Everybody is serving someone or the other. When you surrender and serve God you are serving the whole humanity as when you water the root of the tree and whole tree gets nourishment. So short cut to happiness is – Surrender unto God, Chant His holy names and be happy.

Ans5. It’s very important. To answer the question ‘why’, I remember one example from one of the Prabhupada’s books. Just like a maid servant has a task to clean the house, she just know that she has to clean the house, from where the water will come, mop will be arranged, or any other things will come, she need not to bother. Similarly, when we surrender ourselves to God, we become more focused on what we need to do, how it will start and what it will result into, we need not bother. This surrender gives us right to work, at the same time takes away the anxiety of its beginning and of its end result.

Ans6. It is of utmost importance to me to surrender to God as now I have understood my connection to God and purpose of my life, this valuable human form. Plus for me surrendering has the biggest relief for me is HIS SHELTER. Only Krishna is full, permanent and capable of sheltering and surrendering gets you HIS shelter, what more can one ask.
Ans7. It is of utmost importance to me to surrender to God as now I have understood my connection to God and purpose of my life, this valuable human form. Plus for me surrendering has the biggest relief for me is HIS SHELTER.

Ans8. It is very very important to surrender to Lord, because we are part & parcel of him & it is a prime duty to LOVE & SERVE HIM.

Ans9. It’s the most important thing because as a part and parcel and servant of God my only business should be to surrender to Him and that shall be the perfection of my life.

Ans10. Extremely important. After understanding this philosophy one also understands about what the nature of God is and how is he a person with whom we can establish a strong relationship with in this life. Once one understands the concept of fate, free will and karma, one also understands the importance of surrendering our lives to God and therefore it ought to be done.

Ans11. It is very important to surrender to Lord, because we are part & parcel of him & it is a prime duty to LOVE & SERVE HIM.

Ans12. Because it offers a clear goal in the present misguided society, that couldn’t offer me the solution to the problems of life, and because it is tangible and pleasing to the mind, body and soul.

From the above responses to the question about the importance of surrender to God, we can conclude that all the respondents consider the aspect of surrender to God as being highly important. The reasons they state for the same are:

3. Prime duty
4. Aim of life
5. Scriptural recommendation
6. Experience of shelter
7. Cause of happiness
8. Pleasing to body, mind and soul
9. Cause of liberation from bondage

It is observed that this inclination of surrender develops from the intelligence given by the scriptures especially the Bhagavad Gita which describes in detail the significance of surrender.

The following were the questions asked in the survey questionnaire as regards experience of spirituality. Let us analyze each question in detail:

1. I believe that all living entities are essentially spiritual.
   The above question is an indicator of the spiritual viewpoint of an individual with relation to other living entities.
   From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average to low whereas practitioners score full as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop a spiritual view towards other living beings.

2. I believe life is over when the body dies. (NF)
   The above question tests the respondent’s belief in reincarnation. Since this is a negatively framed question, a higher score would indicate a lack of belief in reincarnation.
   From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored high whereas practitioners score nil as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop an understanding of reincarnation in individuals.

3. Self-realization is not important for me (NF)
   The above question tests the respondent’s valuing the process of self-realization. Since this is a negatively framed question, a higher score would indicate a lack of valuing self-realization.
   From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored high whereas practitioners score nil as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one value the process of self-realization and keep is as high priority in an individual’s life.

4. I live a simple lifestyle so that I can give a larger portion of my income to The Lord's work.
   The above question tests the respondent’s willingness to live simply and perform charity to the Lord’s work.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored low whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop simplicity and also develop a charitable disposition.

5. I live confidently knowing that God is intimately concerned and involved with my life. The above question tests the individual’s faith in God.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop faith in God.

6. I spend a considerable amount of time daily praying and deepening my relationship with God.
The above question tests the individual’s faith in God and willingness to develop a relationship with Him.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop faith in God and increases the willingness to deepen the relationship with Him.

7. I accept the difficult phases in my life as the mercy of God.
The above question tests the individual’s ability to view the difficult phases of his life in connection with God.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop the ability to view the difficult phases of his life in connection with God.

8. I always count the blessings of God.
The above question tests the individual’s faith in God.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop an attitude of gratitude towards God.

9. I believe that surrendering to God is always the best way in every situation.
The above question tests the individual’s faith in surrendering to God in life situations.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average to low whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop one’s faith in surrender to God as the best solution.

10. I make it a point to take association of people committed on the spiritual path
The above question tests the individual’s belief in associating with spiritually committed people.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored average to low whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop valuing association of spiritually committed people.

11. I regularly attend spiritual discourses
The above question tests the individual’s belief in attending programs in which his faith in God is nourished.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored low whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop one’s belief in attending programs in which his faith in God is nourished.

12. I make it a point to eat only sanctified food (food offered to the Lord)
The above question tests the individual’s practice of consuming only sanctified food.
From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored low whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga helps one develop appreciation and value sanctified food.

13. I chant 16 rounds of Hare Krishna Mahamantra daily
The above question tests the individual’s practice of chanting at least 16 rounds of the Hare Krishna mahamantra.

From the responses to the above question, it was observed the non-practitioners scored nil whereas practitioners score very high as regards this question. Thus it can be concluded that bhakti yoga involves one getting fixed up in his spiritual practice.

**The current status of spirituality**

In recent years in many parts of the world, a growing interest in spirituality has been observed. Millions of people are taking to the practices of yoga, meditation, zen, vipaasna meditation and other such spiritual practices. Spirituality can be a simple and effective solution to present day personal as well as social problems. God applies the spiritual laws of the universe to create all in material existence. A sense of good health, well-being, fulfilling relationships, energy and enthusiasm for life and material abundance can spring forth effortlessly and easily to our lives if we understand our true nature and apply these spiritual laws in our lives (Chopra, 2000). The interest of people in spirituality is the result of the natural psychosocial evolution of human consciousness which marks the attainment of maturity and autonomy of the human mind in determining its course of development which belongs to the mainstream thinking and social life. The followers of present spiritual movement are normal successful individuals from different fields like lawyers, engineers, executives, therapists and managers (Swami Bhajanananda 2011).

Paranjpe states that it is useful to refer to a distinction commonly made in India between ‘spiritual’ as opposed to ‘religious’ pursuits. The word ‘spiritual’ refers to a deep personal concern about psychological and moral well-being regardless of the ritualistic, theological, dogmatic, liturgical, magical or mystical aspects often associated with religious life.

One holistic purpose of world religions which is the exploration of spirituality (Smith, 1994) shares some characteristics common with religious views such as search for what is sacred or holy in life, coupled with some kind of transcendental relationship with the Divine or the God or universal energy (Thoresen, 1998). But the concept of spirituality is broader than religion (Astrow, Puchalski and Sulmasy, 2001). Although most people express their spirituality in religious practices, spirituality is about the search for transcendental meaning. Others express it
exclusively in their relationships with nature, music, arts or a set of philosophical beliefs or relationships with friends and family.

The definition of spirituality, as provided by the tenth edition of Oxford English Dictionary, is equated to the condition of being spiritual with attachment to or regard for the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests. The term spirituality comes from the Latin word ‘spiritus’ which means ‘breathe of life’. Spirituality is a term difficult to define, although it is a proper subject for scientific study (Allport, 1961, James, 1958). It is a term that has been used to denote a deep vibrant and mature religious faith by Benson; ‘Certain positive qualities and perception’ while avoiding application of narrow dogmatic beliefs and obligatory religious observances (Wulff, 1996); A search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, for the highest of human potential is encompassed in it (Pargament, 1997). It also refers to transcendental, meta empirical dimension of reality (Kelly, 1995; Pargament and Park, 1995; Worthington, et al., 1996), and a deep vibrant and mature religious faith (Benson, 1993); the feelings, thoughts and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred (Hill, 2000); and people can take a virtually limitless number of pathways in their attempt to discover and conserve the sacred. (Pargament and Mahoney, 2002). Peterson and Seligman (2004) contended that spirituality is universal strength of transcendence and although the specific content of spiritual beliefs varies, all cultures have a concept of an ultimate, transcendent, sacred and divine force.

The two largest spiritual/religious traditions in Asia are Hinduism and Buddhism. Of these two, larger impact on western psychology has been made by Buddhism. The influence of the Buddhist philosophy has been seen in empirical research on both mind body medicine and psychotherapy. Many therapists like Meissner, Karasu, Richards and Bergin and Sperry are exploring theistic framework for psychotherapy. Hindu spiritual philosophy is transpersonal and theistic meaning that psycho spiritual growth perceives a prepersonal and then personal stages of identity formation to finally transpersonal ones. Hinduism describes the real, transcendental self (atman) which is psychological equivalent to a Western view of enlightenment (Buddhism).

In India there are several philosophers and schools who have presented their views regarding Spirituality. There is the Vedic literature, Charvaka school of philosophy, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christian and Islamic literature on spirituality and religiosity, but it is revealed that the milestones of spirituality-the Vedas are world’s oldest books of knowledge. The
Hindu faiths, practices and philosophies have evolved from the Vedic tradition which has a deserved reputation of being highly tolerant of other religions. Therefore spiritual thoughts should be considered as basic tenets of Indian spirituality, as mentioned in the Vedas. As expressed in Vedas and Upanishads, Ekam sat viprah bahuda vadanti (Truth is one, but called by many names) Rig Veda 1:164:46.

To strive for the eternal search for the divine, the Supreme Immanent and Transcendental truth or the Cosmic spirit is spirituality to the Hindu. This is Dharma, or individual ethics, obligations and duties. Moksha which is known as liberation from material bondage and cycle of birth and death and developing a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate goal of all Hindus. A birth with higher consciousness results by the performance of pious or virtuous actions and take the soul closer to the Supreme Lord. Evil actions cause the soul to take lower forms of worldly life and hinder his recognition of the supreme divine. Guru, (the spiritual master) can guide the Shishya (the disciple) to the virtuous path of life. Thus Indian views or Vedic views on spirituality focus on giving the knowledge between spirit, matter and the controller of both.

Spirituality is the source of self-confidence. This is because of one’s faith in God. Without such strong determined faith, nothing much can be accomplished.

The hindi translation of the term spirituality is ‘Adhyatm’ which means ‘atmanah sambadham gyanam’ which means ‘the knowledge related to the nature of the soul’; or ‘knowledge related to mind’. Thus spiritual subject matters are those which discuss about nature, its existence and the true purpose of human beings, not only as material and biological organisms but as being with a unique relationship with something which is beyond time and the material world.

An issue of debate and scientific study are the different dimensions of spirituality. Glock and Stark, within the context of religion described four elements or domains: the experiential, the ritualistic, the intellectual and the consequential. Capps et.al offered six spiritual dimensions within religion: the mythological, the ritual, the experiential, the dispositional, the social and the directional. Elkins et.al identified nine core dimensions within spirituality: transcendence, meaning and purpose in life, mission in life, sacredness of life, material values, altruism, idealism, awareness of the tragic and fruits of spirituality. Benson et al highlighted eight dimensions of spirituality. Miller and Thoresen proposed three broad measurement domains i.e.
spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices. These three domains were meant to characterize spirituality within and also outside religious context.

The content of spiritual beliefs differs with culture and its dimension is large in horizon (Smith, 1994). Measures of spiritual belief are generally specific to a particular form of spiritual thought or a religion. The concept of God that is included in spiritual beliefs and is under the conception of being loving, indifferent or punitive towards humankind is an interesting dimension. Generally, spiritual beliefs would incorporate the emotional acceptance of God and his reflections in the form of nature (air, water, plants, sun, space, etc), fellow human beings and our own self.

The second dimension, spiritual experiences offer the greatest challenge for valid measurement. Such experiences can be roughly divided into daily routine encounters of the transcendence or sacred, versus exceptional mystical and spiritual experiences. Many people do undergo experiences which are frequent interactions with the transcendence as a fundamental part of life, and not merely in moments of stress. It is inclusive of ordinary experiences of spirituality such as awe, joy, forgiveness and sense of deep inner peace. As widely addressed mystical experiences are felt as profound and are difficult to communicate. They generally have a transcendental dimension.

Spiritual practices can be assessed easily because they focus on overt behaviors. The extent to which they engage in spiritual practices such as meditation, use of imagery or visualization, prayer, and contemplation, people can be described. The participation in specific religious activities such as worship, reading religious scriptures, confession and public prayer are also included under this dimension.

Pervez identified different dimensions of spirituality in Hinds and Muslims while 15 dimensions of spiritual quotient were identified by Daftaur.

Thus, taking into consideration the above mentioned views, spirituality can be understood as adopting a framework to creative positive attitude towards the Supreme higher power or God, self, others, nature and life ensuring wellbeing of the self and society as a whole. In simpler words, spirituality is what draws one to transcend one’s material self and gives meaning to one’s life. There are two paths to the ultimate truth. First one is the extrovert western path of pursuing physical and biological sciences that comprises of an intense analytical study of the nature around us. This path creates material comforts as by products but it does generate internal and
external turmoil in the society as well as the environment. The second one is the introvert and spiritual Indian path of intense self analysis, meditation and yoga that lays little emphasis on comforts but generates internal and external peace and harmony as by products while providing deeper fulfillment due to establishing a relationship with the Absolute.

Young adulthood is the time which opens up exciting possibilities for spiritual growth. It is of particular importance for the study of spirituality. It is a period marked by redefining self, relationships with others and values, the development of self identify as well as rationality and logical thinking. This can prove to be a great time for them to clarify and embrace spiritual values or a time of rejecting and rebelling against such values. In the contemporary world, if the young adults are reared to disbelieve in their power to choose the nature and direction of their lives and in their own creative capacities, they develop a negative self image, are fearful and uncertain and are apologetic, hesitant and pessimistic.

That spirituality helps people to maintain health and well-being, cope with illness, traumas, losses and life transitions through integration of body, mind and spirit is revealed from previous researches. However, these studies have limitations and have not analyzed the pattern of Indian conditions nor incorporated all three dimensions of spirituality, i.e. belief, experience and practice simultaneously. These three dimensions are interrelated and a long-term effect on the well-being of the individuals is seen in their integration and congruence. Therefore, it is necessary that all these three dimensions should be studied simultaneously and their impact on level of life satisfaction of young adult’s life should be explored.

There is a genuine need to develop such a spiritual perspective in young minds which is strongly based on scientific understanding and also ensures a functional value of spiritual beliefs, practices and experiences.

According to Swami Bhajananda, the prominent feature of spirituality of young minds is their shifting of attention from God to man. Rather than being interested in and pursuing spiritual aspects like theological questions about God, they are interested in their own inner problems, especially existential problems like meaninglessness, powerlessness, unfulfillment, love etc. Now spirituality has become a question of individual quest for achieving lasting security, happiness and peace instead of conforming to customs, religious tradition and practices.

**Human development**
On the basis of scientific research some significant conclusions can be drawn. Religious and spiritual practices, empathy and ethical values play an important role in human developmental procedure, social behavior and personal character and contribute significantly in the field of healthcare. People engaging in spiritual practices develop higher levels of empathy enabling them to control their behavior and emotions in a better way compared to people possessing lower levels of empathy.

In a research by Czerniawaska (2002), it was observed that aggressive youths preferred hedonistic values whereas youths who were socially well brought up preferred moral and religious values. People possessing lower levels of empathy respected more hedonistic values and values helpful in gaining material success. On that other hand, people with higher empathetic levels respected more ethical values and values such as freedom, mature love and family security. A higher level of sympathy and care for others was shown by nurses and voluntary workers compared to other people of varied professions.

Those who are less empathetic are very respectful towards values that are hedonistic and values that are success-centric whereas people who have a high level of empathy respect most terminal values like family security, mature love, mature love and freedom. A higher level of empathetic care about others was shown by voluntary workers and nurses more than individuals in other career fields. One study says that the more the religious experience is intense it is strongly related to happiness and its frequency with relationships with people. Glaz mentions from the results that he obtained from his experiment related to the SRE which was carried out in groups of young people revealed that the same group of students scored high in the subscale of experience of God’s presence and at the same time low in the subscale of experience of God’s absence.

Buksik stated that individual practice of religion was found to be significantly related with sentivity and moral values. The students who were more open to different experiences were found to feel a stronger presence of divinity. Their beliefs were more flexible and they were also found to have greater curiosity or willingness to search for higher experiences than other students lacking the same. According to Krok, they had better familial relations, higher level of personal security and were involved in social dealings also.

According to research by Glaz, among some values that are terminal numbering eighteen, the strongest relation to experience of God is salvation or liberation.
It is important to note that even empathic behavior, interpersonal conflicts and the surroundings can lead to disharmony. This was also put forward in a research by Reykowski et al, which lead to the conclusion that empathic behavior could lead to an increase in aggression towards an individual, which in turn leads to empathic stimulation, release of anxiety and also a tendency to justify oneself by overlooking the distress of others.

Empathy means understanding another individual’s mental perspective and also the individual’s attitude towards other persons and values. These determine the individual’s most important aims and ambitions. These are related to his personal character which are manifest through social dealings and they are also indicative of his religious experience. This is an important component of religion and all these above mentioned aspects are related significantly in the lives of the youth. Psychologists studying existential issues are familiar with this.

Despite this the scope for research on the aforementioned grounds is tremendous especially with consideration to detailing. The empirical data related to aspects of terminal values, religious experience and empathy are unambiguous since they depend upon the specific understanding of the given problem in the subject group which is used in the individual study procedure.

Buksik et al comment that in actuality the deciding factor related to the choice of values and their realization is the individual’s sensitivity. Czernaska in his studies suggested that the appearance of a pro social behavior can be increased and enriched by empathy which also increases the ability of the youth to restrain themselves from aggressive behavior.

According to Franklin (1987) and Sl’iwak (2001), a human being depending upon the sensitivity to another person's mental state and understanding decides whether to perform a certain social action or not and also whether a given value will be understood at a particular point of time or not.

In the context of these problems, here are some questions that arise:

To what extent does the level of a human being’s individual characteristics such as empathy have a role in defining and modifying the choice of terminal values which perform a regulatory function in human life.

To what extent is Gods’ presence or absence implied by the character of values of an individual.
Jones et al make a statement that the values in social dealing of an individual which define and recreate the social style of interpersonal communication perform regulatory functions in an individual’s conduct by the suggestion of a compliance between empathy - a personal trait and the religious experience of God’s presence. It is concluded that there is an important relation between the above aspects of human life.

Rokeach et al state that the hierarchy of values is different for different individuals. The value which is most preferred plays the most important role in an individual’s life and it also becomes within an individuals’ personality, an important function. It is to be noted that terminal values most preferred by people play an important role in determining the differences that exist in the experience of God's presence and God's absence. Terminal values in social character take into account the relation and attitude to another person while terminal values in personal character lay more stress on an individual and accomplishment of one's existence, according to Rokeach (1973). Therefore it is considered that empathic behavior is strongly related to the terminal values in social character. For a group of people having a high level of empathy, the terminal values in social character rather than in personal character have a significant influence on religious experience related to God's presence or His absence.

We have observed that the practice of bhakti yoga makes one undergo an experience of spirituality. The individual feels the presence of God in his life based on the sincerity of his practice.

Thus from the above analysis, we can conclude that by the practice of bhakti yoga, one gets a significant experience of spirituality. An individual practicing bhakti yoga undergoes an experience of spirituality wherein he loses taste for paltry pleasures, establishes a deeper connect or communion with God. He shows equality towards all beings seeing the presence of God in everyone. Such an individual works for the benefit of everyone and therefore is the greatest philanthropist. He is extremely joyful and happy. (Fisher 2001) Such individuals have higher self control that prevents them from becoming stressed or depressed while pursuing difficult tasks or life situations.

Such an individual spreads the message of God as an expression of love, compassion and altruism. Helping others also brings a sense of self-worth, personal fulfillment and satisfaction to him. Moreso all his activities are in sync with wanting to help others develop their relationship with God. Therefore he is the actual philanthrophist.
Thus we have observed from the structured interview schedule and the survey questionnaire that practice of bhakti yoga does make one experience spirituality and the presence of God.
7). Emotional Stability

The following question was asked as a part of the interview schedule to the respondents as regards emotional stability.

Q. How would you rate yourself emotionally from a scale of 1-10 before taking up practice and now?

The following are the responses to this question.

Ans1. I was always a emotional person but earlier my emotions were completely based on sentiments without a proper understanding of things and it would leave me with frustration at the end of the day as people have the tendency to take undue advantage of an emotional person. So I would rate myself emotionally as 3 out of 10.

I have not become emotionless after coming to Krishna consciousness or I have become stone hearted, I am still an emotional person but yes now I don’t let my emotions overcome my intelligence which I get from reading scriptures and hearing to lectures. I see myself more stable as a person than before. I just don’t get carried away with my emotions as earlier but analyze things properly before taking any step. And of course now my emotions have changed from being just nice and kind to people to try to really help them by giving them Krishna consciousness so they can also live a better, happier and peaceful life.

So now I would give myself 7 points out of 10.

Ans2. Before : 4
    Now : 8

Ans3. Before 6, now-9

Ans4. Earlier emotionally on scale I was 4 but now am at 8
Ans5. I rate myself at 6.5 now. Prior to taking up the practice I would be 4.5

Ans6. Earlier 6, present 8.

Ans7. Before – 3
    After - 7

Ans8. I would rate myself at 6 before and at 9 now.

Ans9. Before-6
    After-9

Ans10. Before taking of the Krishna consciousness emotionally there is world of changing me, Before you can rate me 1 - 2 but now it is 9 - 10.

Ans11. Before-3, After-8

Ans12. Earlier 3, now -7
From the above responses, we can observe that the respondents describe a significant improvement in their emotional stability which grows an upward trend as regards to growth with increased practice.

The following were the questions that were asked as a part of the survey questionnaire as regards emotional stability. The following is an analysis of the questions individually:

1. I often feel depressed. (NF)
The above question tests the level of depression of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of depression.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps remove depression.

2. My job is a source of anxiety. (NF)
The above question tests the level of anxiety of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of anxiety. From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps remove anxiety.

6. I become greatly distressed when things don’t work out for me. (NF)
The above question tests the level of stress of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of stress. From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps deal with stress.

4. I get angry easily. (NF)
The above question tests the level of stress of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of stress. From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps deal with stress.

5. I feel fearful in most situations. (NF)
The above question tests the level of fear of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of stress. From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps deal with fear.
6. I often feel emotionally unbalanced. (NF)
The above question tests the level of emotional balance of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of imbalance. From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one remain emotionally balanced and stable.

7. I take offense easily. (NF)
The above question tests the level of emotional balance of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of imbalance. From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one remain emotionally balanced and stable and tolerate offences or unpleasant dealings.

8. I have frequent mood swings. (NF)
The above question tests the level of emotional balance of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of imbalance and more mood swings.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one remain emotionally balanced and become less prone to mood swings.

9. I panic easily. (NF)
The above question tests the level of emotional balance of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of imbalance and increased feeling of panic that an individual would experience.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one remain emotionally balanced and less panicky.
10. I get irritated quickly. (NF)
The above question tests the level of emotional balance of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of imbalance and higher irritability that an individual would experience.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one remain emotionally balanced and less irritable.

11. I feel threatened easily. (NF)
The above question tests the level of emotional balance of the individual. Since it is a negatively framed question, we can understand that higher score would indicate higher levels of imbalance and higher feelings of being threatened that an individual would experience.
From the responses it was observed that non-practitioners scored average to high whereas practitioners scored almost nil. Thus we can conclude that the practice of bhakti yoga helps one remain emotionally balanced and feel less threatened.

Problem of mental health
A significant number of reports indicate that mental illness has become an epidemic leading to the death of one out of every four people worldwide. This indeed is a matter of concern. Mental illness being very dangerous can only be combated by immediate and massive increases in funding. According to the source of alarming reports, the psychiatric industry warns of the disastrous effects of withheld appropriations. However, the psychiatrists never give a warning of the fact that the very diagnostic system employed to acquire the alarming statistic which is their own Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV (DSM-IV) and its equivalent, the mental disorders section of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) are under attack as a result of one-pointed emphasis on psychotropic drug treatment and lack of scientific authority and veracity. This leads to a lack of authenticity.

This report and its recommendations have been devised keeping in mind the responsibilities of those involved in deciding the funding and fate of mental health programs and insurance coverage, including legislators and other decision-makers involved in the task of protecting the health, well-being and safety of their citizens.
The DSM being heavily relied on by psychiatrists for each of which a psychiatric drug could be legally prescribed gave the following results, especially with its ever-increasing list of illnesses. It included these staggering statistics:

- Twenty million school-going children throughout the world were prescribed powerful antidepressants and cocaine-like stimulants as treatment, after they were diagnosed with mental disorders.
- Psychiatric drug use and abuse was surging worldwide: More than 100 million prescriptions for antidepressants alone were written in 2002 at a cost of $19.5 billion (€15.9 billion).
- In France, one out of every seven prescriptions was for a psychotropic drug and more than 50 percent of the unemployed i.e. 1.8 million took psychotropic drugs.

Problems such as child abuse, suicide, drug abuse, violence and crime continue to increase in spite of heavy spending. The psychiatric industry can neither identify the causes behind these problems nor provide solutions to it. Therefore, the conclusion is that reducing the funding for psychiatric programs won't lead to a degradation of mental health rather it will help to curb harmful psychiatric practices and thus improve the state of mental health.

The evidence put forward in this report was gathered from parents, psychiatrists, physicians, judges, attorneys and experts dealing with mental health or related fields. These experts mutually agreed on the fact that expanding the so-called community health plans and DSM-based psychiatric initiatives such as the broadening of involuntary commitment laws were detrimental to society in human and economic terms. The same thing holds true in the case of programs such as the screening for mental disorders of young children in schools.

The claim that increasing the funding would cure the problems of psychiatry loses its significance. Fields of expertise which were based on scientific claims were routinely asked to present empirical proofs to prove their theories. The funding received by the Centers for Disease Control to combat a dangerous disease led to the discovery of a biological cause and development of a cure. Biological tests exist to determine the presence or absence of most bodily diseases. Psychiatry has no objective, physical tests to confirm the presence of any mental illness, although people can have serious mental difficulties. Diagnosis is therefore subjective.

The many critical challenges faced by the societies today reflect the vital need to strengthen individuals through viable, workable and humanitarian alternatives to harmful
psychiatric options. For this reason we turn to the ancient and deep system followed by seers of the past which had its roots in the Vedas.

The practice of bhakti yoga has shown to increase the emotional stability of individuals. Such individuals possess the ability to withstand minor setbacks, failures, difficulties, and other stresses without becoming upset emotionally. They tolerate minor stresses and strains of day to day living without becoming emotionally upset, anxious, nervous, tense, or angry. They are able to maintain composure under minor emotional stress. (Gangadharrao 2011) Such individuals are least likely to become victims of substance abuse, mental health problems, etc. Their strength is derived from a deeper understanding about life and its purpose through scriptural reading and the chanting itself. (Gayathri 2014)

Such individuals are able to manage their own emotions as well as those of others. They show very high emotional quotient and can act very competently as managers. (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). Thus bhakti yoga can be efficacious in increasing the emotional stability of the individual.

From the above discussion and analysis of the findings of the two tools used namely the survey questionnaire and the structured interview schedule, the efficacy of the practice of Bhakti yoga as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita as regards behavioral transformation is established with respect to the seven parameters of behavioral transformation namely compassion, emotional stability, life satisfaction, effect on substance abuse, life focus and clarity, experience of spirituality and development of sattva guna.

Thus these traits which are related to one’s character and personality are of great value to an individual. Since these qualities of being sattvic, emotionally stable, satisfies, free from addictions, compassionate, focused and clear in life, having spiritual experiences indicate an individual who has developed very good qualities which would mould him into a person of impeccable character. Even those having problems of addiction, unhealthy lifestyle, personality issues and mental problems undertaking this process can witness a profound change within themselves thereby improving in their dealings with other individuals, being peaceful within themselves and also with society at large. So in terms of an individual level or even when these practices are adopted at a broader level in terms of community groups, ethnic groups or even countries, it can show the resultant development of the above mentioned qualities within
individuals which can contribute towards a bright future and an absolute way of solving problems.