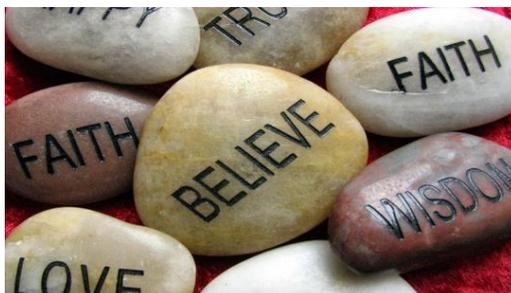


A STUDY OF IMPACT OF SPIRITUALITY ON YOUTH**Dr. Sr. Alice Thomas**

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Abstract:- Since ages, spirituality has always been a significant source of strength for those who believe in God. Spirituality is a very important part of positive youth development. Spirituality denotes relationship with god. In the present world, the youth is confronted with varied and complex problems as compared with the situation that prevailed a couple decades ago. Thus, today's youth must stay positive and spiritually strong through which they can acquire faith and proper understanding. Prayer plays a crucial role in developing spirituality. This paper with more than 100 respondents has attempted to understand to effect of prayer and spirituality in augmenting the spiritual health of the youngsters. The study concludes with 75% of youth surveyed having a positive response for prayer augmenting their spirituality and helping them find solutions to their problems.

Keywords:- Spirituality, Prayer, Belief, Life Problems.

1 INTRODUCTION

Spirituality though challenging to define, yet may be related with an inner personal feeling and relationship with God. Like all phases of life, spirituality is also a very significant aspect of youth phase in life. Youth is an important time for young people to discover and practice spirituality and take help of prayer for taking decisions in life. Adolescence is a mainly powerful period of moral hunger, a striving for purpose, and wish for relationships and connectedness.

Accordingly, spirituality plays a pivot role in shaping the perception and construction of meaning in the lives of young people. Youth is an important phase of life which involves maturation, transformation of the brain, emotional turmoil, hormonal changes and many other complex issues. All these are new to a child as he/she enters into adolescence and adulthood. A youth on misleading path may end his life into miserable and hopeless condition. Whereas, a young person who has fear and nearness with God tend to combat teenage problems in a better manner. To support regulation of emotions, cognitive sophistication, and prosocial awareness and behavior, all of which are related to spiritual development.

2 RATIONALE OF STUDY

The complexities in life has increased. A few decades ago, life was simple. The pressure of life, peer pressure, competition and expectations of elder were comparatively less. But with advent of modernization and increased complexities, the youth of today is posed to life problems that are not easy to be solved. There has always been debates between the atheist and theist with regards to existence of God, spirituality and power of prayer. For those who believe in God, their faith has moved mountains like problems. So not considering atheism for a while, it can be said that nearness with god can help youth find solution to problems of life. Thus, the rationale of this study lies in interrogating from youth themselves whether prayer and belief in God can help them in their growth.

2.1 Objectives

The study has been conducted with the following objectives:-

1. To thrash out the importance of prayer and belief in god for youth.
2. To elucidate the need of prayer and faith while distracting in life of youth.

2.2 Hypothesis

- **H₀**: There is positive impact of prayer on the growth of youth.
- **H₁**: There is negative impact of prayer on the growth of youth.

3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mary M. Sweatman BRMH & Paul Heintzman (2011) in the 'Perceived Impact of Outdoor Residential Camp Experience on the Spirituality of Youth' investigated the perceived influence of outdoor residential camp experience on the spirituality of youth. Focusing on 11 participants was done during one month leadership programs at two YMCA residential camps in Ontario, Canada. The study indicated that the participants felt that camp had an effect on their spirituality. The setting of camp provided a natural setting and an opportunity for the participants to get away from their routine urban environment. Majority of the participants expressed that the camp provided them with positive feelings that they associated with their spirituality. This study concluded that the themes of the camp setting, alone time, social experiences, and positive feelings played an interconnected role in the participant's camp involvement and spirituality.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/04419057.2004.9674345>

Peter L. Benson Eugene C. Roehlkepartain (2008) in *Spiritual development: A missing priority in youth development* opined that spiritual development of young people has the power to strengthen youth work. Their research points towards the positive impacts of spiritual development for youth and indicate that in progressively pluralistic society everyone needs to shape skills for transferring religious and spiritual diversity. The authors suggested that spiritual development includes interplay of three dynamic dimensions: belonging and connecting, awareness and awakening, and a way of living. The study concluded with the possibility of three emerging initial challenges and opportunities that are empowering youth to discover core developmental issues, inspiration and focus, and multisector involvement. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/yd.253>

Pamela Ebstyne and Ciprian Boitor (2011) in Chapter titled Religion, Spirituality, Positive Youth Development, and Thriving of the book *Advances in Child Development and Behavior* expressed that spirituality issues are related to period of adolescence given the marked changes in body, mind, and relationships. To develop relationship between religion, spirituality, and positive youth development, this chapter offered a developing systems viewpoint and suggested relational spirituality as an outline for considering adolescent religious and spiritual development. They examined numerous psychological method through which religion and spirituality may encourage positive youth development.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780123864925000075>

Daniel T. L. Shek (2012) in the article titled 'Spirituality as a Positive Youth Development Construct: A Conceptual Review' studied the concept of spirituality as a positive youth development construct. After examining both broad and narrow definitions of spirituality he proposed a working definition of spirituality. With regards to theories of spirituality, different models relevant to spiritual progress and the connection amongst spirituality and positive youth development are emphasized. Diverse ecological factors, particularly family and peer influences, were found to effect spirituality. Research on the influence of spirituality on adolescent developmental outcomes was also examined and the ways to increase adolescent spirituality were discussed.

<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/tswj/2012/458953/>

4 REASONS FOR DISTRACTION OF YOUTH

Youths are more in number in the worldwide population in the present day and a lot of challenges come in their path which can lead them to a state where everything can get negative. Staying spiritually strong give a mind balance and energizes livelihood.

The following are the causes for distraction in today's youth:-

1. The rise of smart phones has allowed the users to do multiple tasks, but researches indicate that the use has increased ever before thus leading to increased distractibility amongst young people.

2. Due to mechanized life supported by machines, the people between the ages of 13 and 24 lack the ability to perform working memory and attention tasks. The younger generation has difficulty in filtering out disturbances and sticking to the task at hand.
3. The present life demands multi-tasking. The youth have to compete for resources, prove to be the best, working like computers on different tasks thus ending up in severe distraction.
4. The poor concentration of the youth can be attributed to internal distraction as well. The brains are over-occupied with thoughts about self, family, friends, and worries about work and concerns about other relationships.
5. The youth today has to deal with increased social complexities, intellectual challenges and memories.
6. The novel technologies have altered educational landscapes. For every single assignment, children tend to refer to internet. Internet is nothing but a world wide web that encroaches the attention of youth leaving them distracted at the end.
7. Unlike the previous generation who lived without much consumer choices, the present generation has various avenues of leisure along with opportunities by way of benevolent parenthood that is supposed to be the need of hour. This tends to bring forth upon them tendencies of what Psychologists term as Onanistic tendencies or paranoia, from over consumption and under exemption of energy, based on consumption.

5 ROLE OF PRAYER

1. It is undoubtful that prayer helps in developing a relationship with God. It is a strong belief that when someone pray God hears and responds.
2. Prayer assists in gaining an understanding of God’s loving nature. The more a person pray, the more spiritual he becomes.
3. Prayer helps in understanding the purpose of one’s life. Prayer develops nearness with God and this in turn gives the power to understand that everyone’s life on this earth is not by chance but it is through the will of God who has a purpose for each person’s life.
4. Prayer also helps to find direction in your life. It helps in working through serious decisions in your life. It gives hope that if not today definitely the prayer will be heard tomorrow. This gives inner peace.
5. Prayer bestows strength to avoid temptations in life especially that of the youth who are more vulnerable to temptations.
6. Every person including youths are posed to so many stressors but prayer gives power to fight stress. Spirituality provides a divine way to reduce stress level and also gives wisdom to focus on the positive aspects of life.
7. Prayer reduces depression. When a person concentrates in prayer and is near to God, he gets power to fight with the feelings of sadness, guilt and hopelessness.
8. Studies suggest that people who are more religious or inclined towards spirituality and prayer tend to have controlled blood pressure. High blood pressure has positive relation with stress. Reducing stress levels through spiritual practice can, in turn, lower blood pressure.

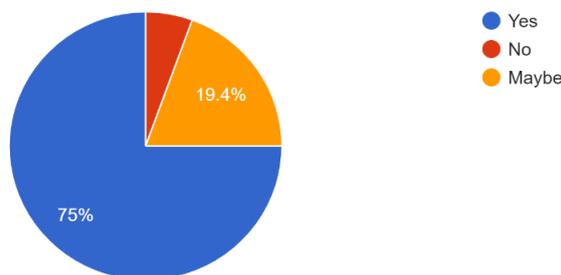
6 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

ANOVA: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Do you believe in god/ prayer	114	324	2.842105	0.293433		
Does prayer help in your career growth?	114	334	2.929825	0.136625		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.438596491	1	0.438596	2.039711	0.154619	3.882934
Within Groups	48.59649123	226	0.215029			
Total	49.03508772	227				

H₀: There is positive impact of prayer on the growth of youth.

Does prayer give you purpose or solution to your problem?

108 responses

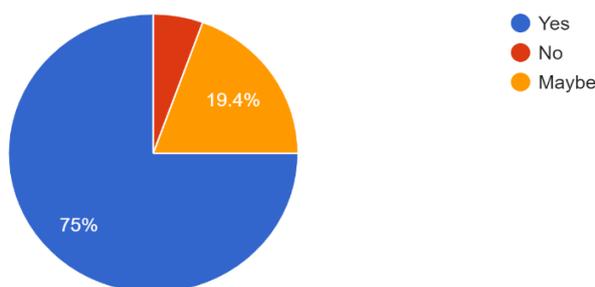


Findings: Above ANOVA is applied on Q1 and Q9, the p- value is 0.154619 which is higher than 0.05. It is proved that Null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. There is positive impact of spirituality on youth.

H1: There is negative impact of prayer on the growth of youth.

Does prayer give you purpose or solution to your problem?

108 responses



Anova: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Column 1	117	343	2.931624	0.133215		
Column 2	117	339	2.897436	0.196286		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.068376	1	0.068376	0.415027	0.520065	3.881853
Within Groups	38.22222	232	0.164751			
Total	38.2906	233				

7 FINDINGS

Above Annova is applied on Q1 and Q7, the P value is 0.520065 which is higher than 0.05. It is proved that Null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. The youth who believe in god, have strong willpower

8 CONCLUSION

This world comprises of so many myths, facts, unrevealed mysteries, untold stories and many hidden aspects. There are so many questions for which the science and humans have not been able to give answer nor establish a scientific base. Spirituality and prayer are of this kind. Belief in god and prayer is relative. But it surely has the base of faith. The youth were questioned with regards to their belief in god, prayer, relation of spirituality with development and career growth. The research is positive as most of the young people have a positive attitude towards prayer. They believe that prayer can do wonders. Hence, this study concludes on an optimistic note that spirituality has a positive impact on the growth of youth.

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