



SPIRITUALITY AND RESILIENCE AMONG ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

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Abstract: The armed forces of the country are unique organizations, quite different from other government organizations and the private entities. The rules and regulations governing the armed forces are also different from that of the civil organizations. So, in the present study a pioneer attempt has been made to see the relation between spirituality and resilience in 60 defense personnel. The study was done with the help of The spirituality questionnaire: core dimensions of spirituality (Johan Hardt, 2012) and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor KM, Davidson JR 2013). Correlation scores were obtained. Results indicate that there was positive relation between spirituality and resilience which was significant at .01 level of significance. Defense personnel have heavy work load and occupational stress especially when they are posted on dangerous postings. They are supposed to stay away from their families and hence lack required emotional support. It is recommended that the defence personnel's should be given special training in spirituality, which will help them become more resilient and help them in facing their day to day stresses of occupational life.

Keywords- Spirituality, Resilience, Armed Forces

Earlier psychology focused on abnormality and negative aspects of the personality but as the time changed the trend shifted on positive psychology which emphasizes on spirituality & resilience. As we thought of working on armed forces the research aimed at studying the variables related with positive psychology which can be effective for the armed forces personnel in leading them a healthy life.

The country faces security threats from the external sources across the border as well as internal threats emanating within the country. The external threats may originate from the hostile neighboring and other countries, in the form of full-fledged war or proxy war. Internal threats emanate from within the country in the form of insurgency, naxalism riots and mass unrest and other events, leading to large scale disruption of peace and tranquility. The word military represents the Armed forces of a country. In our country, it constitutes of the ARMY, the NAVY, and the AIRFORCE of the country. The Armed forces of the country are unique organizations, quite different from other government organizations and the private entities. The rules and regulations governing the armed are also different from that of the civil organizations. As a result, the organizational culture and working environment may differ widely. On this count, the difference may not be only between the Armed forces. In fact there are three different sets of rules and

regulations to ensure the smooth functioning of the three Armed forces; one set each for the army, navy and airforce. Highlighting these differences amongst the three services, one of the non –official witnesses in the report of standing committee on defence 2006-2007 is quoted as saying *Like all arms of the government or all organizations ,even the armed forces have their individual subcultures .We have our individual autonomy and our identity.*

Soldiering is not just another profession .Nor is the Army just another government department .To a soldier, his profession is a way of life. The Army is an institution that moulds his life and makes him a part of it .Here there is no ten to five day ,nor an eight hour work schedule .Soldier works till the work is done and remains at the back and a call of duty any time, throughout the year and year after year. That is why a soldier is said to be on duty all the 24 hours of the day.

The Armed Forces have four main tasks;

- To assert the territorial integrity of India.
- To defend the country if attacked by a foreign nation.
- To support the civil community in case of disasters (e.g. flooding).
- To participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in consonance with India's commitment to the United Nations Charter

Armed forces are a large conglomeration of values, experiences, regimentation, customs, traditions, ethos, cultures and religions. When combined it takes the shape of a multi-spectral kaleidoscope, covering many centuries of illustrious history. Inspite of India being a country of large size and diverse regional cultures, its Army is apolitical, and a shining example of unity in diversity as also the strength of our Nation.

Armed forces organization is considered stressful organization because individuals are confronted by a multitude of stressors arising from physical and emotional changes. In this organization individuals are required to develop personal values and sense of identity, to fulfill social roles with family and peers to complete the requirements of organization and make decisions regarding the duties. Adequate psychological well-being and behavioral styles are vital to deal with the stressful situations .Basic factors which may influence the individual in organization are personality, adjustment, self - esteem, locus of control, coping style ,personal-worth, self- confidence , self-satisfaction ,self-deprecation etc.

The Indian Armed Forces exist to uphold the ideals of the constitution of India. It is a major component of national power. Its primary role is to preserve national interests and safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of India against any external threats by deterrence or by waging war. Its secondary role is to assist government agencies to cope with ‘proxy war’ and other internal threats and provide aid to civil authority when requisitioned for the purpose. It serves as the ultimate instrument for maintaining the unity and the integrity of the nation in the face of external threats and internal unrest and disturbances. The Indian Armed Forces is one of the national

institutions which have to remain highly effective so as to ensure security of the nation. The Armed Forces strive on its soldiers who are motivated to sacrifice their lives at the time of need. This can be largely attributed to the silent, sacrificing soldiers, and above all, the role by the armed forces leadership in upholding their values and image.

As the age old dictum goes, "a nation's army is as good or bad as its officer's corps".

They are the pace setters and conscience keepers of the Armed Forces. Therefore, any change, adjustment, innovation and behavioral pattern, has to emanate from the top leadership and flow down the hierarchy to spread into the system.

In India, the armed forces highlight as their core values as:

- a) *Integrity*
- b) *Duty*
- c) *Self less service*
- d) *Courage*
- e) *Loyalty*
- f) *Virtue*

Spirituality refers to certain kinds of activity through which a person seeks meaning, especially a "search for the sacred". It may also refer to personal growth, blissful experience, or an encounter with one's own "inner dimension". Spirituality is one of the most important sources of strength and direction in peoples' lives. Spiritual side of human nature remains important to Indian lives. (*James,1902/1958*) and (*Allport,1961*) have considered spirituality as a proper subject for scientific study. Spirituality is a human phenomenon, which exists in almost all persons(*Husain, 2002*). Spirituality is a grounding wire, a lens to look at life through, the roots that hold us firmly to the ground and the trunk that holds strong against inclement weather as branches continue to grow and change. Spirituality is a picture of our essence, a snapshot of our most basic understanding of ourselves, the world around us, and the world beyond us. The term spirituality is coined from the Latin word **spiritus**, meaning "breath of life". In modern dictionary the word spirituality is a translation of the term *Ruhnaiya* (in Arabic) derived from the adjective *ruhani* which means, mind or animating principles as distinct from body. The definition of spirituality provided by the tenth edition of Oxford English Dictionary is as follows: "*the quality or condition of being spiritual, attachment to or regard for the thing of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interest.*" Belief in the spiritual reality continues to characterize majority of people, be it belief in a Supreme Being or order, life after death, an ultimate reality or super- natural beings, like angels and demons. Whatever behavioral scientists and health care professional may themselves believe the spiritual side of human remains important to many or most people. A substantial number of people describe spirituality as the most important source of strength and direction in their lives. We inherent spiritual elements from our parents as well as from the previous elements. Our spiritual essence possesses the assimilated elements of past lives of the community, history, arts, and cosmic world and beyond.

(*Elkins, 1988*), a vocal proponent of humanistic oriented spirituality offers six qualities of spirituality.

- (1) Spirituality is universal;
- (2) it is a human phenomenon;
- (3) its common core is phenomenological;
- (4) it is our capacity to respond to numinous;
- (5) it is characterized by a mysterious energy and
- (6) its ultimate aim is compassion.

DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY

The dimensions of spirituality includes both conscious and awareness aspects. It is the basic substance out of which everything is form. It is everything, which exists between this world and other world. Those who are aware of the spiritual dimension of personality often explain the thing from the phenomenology. The spiritual realm is beyond our five senses. Most of us are bodily conscious (public or private) of the world that centered around us. Spiritual realms taught us how to transcend physical consciousness into spiritual consciousness. Spiritual consciousness is becoming consciousness of the spirit or soul. Spirit is a conscious entity that inhabits the body. Spirit is an ocean of unconditional love. The study of the dimensions or the components of spirituality is a matter of both serious debate and scientific study. Different scholars describe spirituality into a large number of dimensions. For example: (*Glock and Stark, 1965*) described four elements or domains all of which are associated with the context of religion: the experiential, the ritualistic, the intellectual and the consequential. (*Capps and others, 1976*) offered six spiritual dimensions within religion; the mythological, ritual, experiential, dispositional, social and directional. (*Elkins et al, 1988*) identified nine core dimensions of spirituality: transcendent, meaning and purpose in life, mission in life, sacredness of life, material values, altruism, idealism, and awareness of the tragic and the fruits of spirituality.

CENTRAL FEATURES OF SPIRITUALITY

(*Kuhalampi, 2010*) lists the following central features of spirituality.

- Meaning of the ontological significance of life;
- Making sense of situations;
- Deriving purpose in existence. Value beliefs and standards that are cherished; having to do with the truth
- Beauty, worth of a thought, object or behavior; often discussed as ultimate values. Transcendence experience and appreciation of a dimension beyond the self;
- Expanding self –boundaries. Connecting relationship with self, others, God and the environment.
- Becoming an unfolding of life that demands reflection and experience;

- Including a sense of who one is and how one knows. Hope a prospect of confidence and trust towards the future

TYPES OF RESILIENCE

1. **Physical resilience**- you are physically resilient if you don't sit still longer than an hour at a time. You keep moving, especially when you don't feel like it. I don't know about you, but as I age, the temptation to sit on the couch or to nurse a pain by not moving is high. A physically resilient person works out the kinks and makes physical activity a priority.
2. **Mental resilience**- you are mentally resilient if you test your brain. Do puzzles. Play board games. Try new hobbies. Read new books. Stay engaged in work. Grow a garden. In short, mentally resilient folks stay challenged.
3. **Emotional resilience**-you are emotionally resilient if you engage in regular reflection on things beautiful, fanciful, and visionary. Emotional resilience exercises our capability to imagine, dream, plan and create. It fortifies the soul. Emotional resilience allows us to find positive things even when circumstances stay grim.
4. **Social resilience**.- When you stay in touch with others socially, you are being socially resilient. Hugs and handshakes stimulate the brain. Having a friend who you look forward to visiting with and taking the initiative to stay engaged is social resilience.

The word resilience derived from the Latin words *resiliens* or *resilire*, which means “to rebound”, or “to jump or bounce back”. According to the Encarta World English Dictionary (2005) resilience refers to a speedy recovery from problems (the ability to recover quickly from setbacks); the ability to react to potential crisis (the ability to identify, assess, and respond to a potentially disruptive situation in order to prevent it from becoming a crisis); and elasticity (the ability of matter to spring back quickly into shape after being bent, stretched, or deformed).

Resilience is defined by Merriam-Webster in the psychological sense as “an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.” The concept of psychological resilience is rooted in a number of fields Sterner and Jackson-Cherry (2015) in their study, participants' spiritual beliefs did not significantly impact their coping style; however, individuals who identified as Christian, as well as those who participated in regular religious/spiritual activities, reported higher coping scores than others. In a study of Berg (2011) argued that PTSD and depression were “associated with profound spiritual factors”. Hourani et al. (2012) examined whether spirituality moderated the relationship between combat and three mental health conditions: depression, PTSD, and suicidality. Craig J. Bryan, Bobb N. Ray-Sannerud, Chad E. Morrow, Neysa Etinne publish research article on (2013, Oct) that suicide risk is an issue of increasing concern among military personnel. To date, most studies have focused on identifying risk factors for suicide in military personnel, but have by and large overlooked possible protective factors that reduce suicide risk, such as optimism. In a clinical sample of 97 treatment-seeking active duty Air Force personnel, the protective effects of optimism on suicidal ideation was investigated by considering the direct effect of optimism on suicidal ideation as well as the possible moderating effects of optimism on several suicide risk factors: depression,

posttraumatic stress, and hopelessness. When adjusting for demographic and clinical covariates, results of multiple regressions indicated that optimism was significantly associated with less severe depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation, but not posttraumatic stress symptoms. Results suggest that optimism is associated with less severe suicidal ideation, and buffer the effects of hopelessness among military patients. Harris et al. (2011) found that a spiritual strength-building group intervention reduced PTSD symptoms among veterans in a Veterans Affairs (VA) treatment facility. Juhnke et al. (2009) discussed the use of prayer with clients with substance use disorders who self-identify as having personal faith. Baldwin and colleagues (2008) suggest that veterans with higher reported spiritual quality of life may have benefited from companions who facilitate their participation in religious or spiritual activities. Pruett, Nishimura, and Priest (2007) discussed the value of meditation in addiction recovery, emphasizing that recovery from addiction is often uncomfortable and frightening. The aim and hypothesis was to see the relationship between spirituality and resilience among armed forces personnel.

Hypothesis

There will be significant positive relation between spirituality and resiliency among armed forces personnel.

Method

Sample

In this proposed research work, the purposive sampling will be used for selection of armed forces personnel from different cantts. The size of sample will be 60 armed forces personnel.

Tools

- The Spirituality Questionnaire: Core Dimensions of Spirituality (Jochen Hardt,2012)
- Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor KM, Davidson JR 2013)

Procedure

After deciding the scales to be used for the research purpose, help from the cantonments will be sought. After seeking facilities and suitable situations the investigation will be conducted in group of 15- 20 armed forces personnel's in cantts, First, the rapport will be established with the subjects and they will be assured that the results will be kept confidential, but the general purpose of the study will not be disclosed.

The subjects will be asked to fill the required biographical information in the booklet. After this they will be asked to read the instructions written on the scale. Necessary clarification if required will be provided. Then the subjects will be asked to start their work. They will be asked to do as quickly as possible without consulting each other. All these scales will be randomly administrated.

Results

RESULT TABLE

	N	R	Sig
Spirituality questionnaire	60	0.528	0.01 level
Connor Davidson resilience scale	60		

Discussion

Result is presented in table which shows relations of different variables among armed forces personnel.

The obtained data was subjected to Pearson correlation .The findings of investigation were found that armed forces personnel were scored positive relation between spirituality and resilience which shows they are having spiritual experiences and resilience daily and take as part of their daily life. The armed forces personnel have different lifestyle and they counter different problems to face these problems sometimes they take help of spirituality .Keeping this in view, the present investigation was designed to study spirituality for the same purpose two measurement devices namely Jochen Hardts The spirituality questionnaire and Connor Davidson resilience scale of 60 age between 23 to 40 years.

After the analysis of result, this indicates that personnel are having positive relationship between spirituality and resilience.

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