



# *Spirituality in Elderly: An Exploratory Study on Life Orientation and Life Satisfaction*

<sup>1</sup>Vijaya Upadhyay, <sup>2</sup>Satyendra Mani Vikram, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Arati Pandey

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, <sup>3</sup>Associate Professor

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Psychology

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>3</sup>BRDBD PG College, Ashram Barhaj, Deoria Affiliated to DDU University Gorakhpur U.P.(INDIA)

<sup>2</sup>SSB PG College, Raniganj, Ballia Affiliated to JNCU University Ballia U.P.(INDIA)

**Abstract:-** This exploratory study on life orientation and life satisfaction aims to find out the relationship with spirituality in elderly people. Furthermore, studies have shown that spirituality can support good ageing, which may lead to improved mental and physical health as well as a reduction in the need for ongoing care. The present study focuses on assessing spirituality, satisfaction with life, and orientation towards life in 55 elderly people living in an old age home. A primary correlation analysis revealed a high correlation between spirituality, both internalized and transformative, satisfaction in life, and orientation towards life. Moreover, regression analysis shows that spirituality explains 26% of the variance in life satisfaction. It can be safely speculated and predicted that elderly people higher on spirituality are generally more satisfied with their lives. Spirituality also explains approximately 6% of the variance in orientation towards life.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Life Orientation, Life Satisfaction & Elderly people.

## **1. Introduction-**

The last phase of human evolution, including all earlier developmental phases, is getting older. In addition to promoting self-care and integration, it provides an opportunity for growth, experience, and independence. The growth rate at this time incorporates many physiological and psychological factors. These differences affect thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and interpersonal effectiveness in addition to personality. The cumulative changes that an organism or object goes through with ageing are called ageing. One aspect of the experience of life that spirituality develops is a spiritual identity. It adheres to a set of values that include respect, love, and compassion. The word "spirituality" can be used to describe a wide range of concepts, such as knowledge of a transpersonal nature, a relationship with nature, and practices like prayer or meditation. It may also be used to describe any other kind of spiritual practice. It displays one's deepest understanding of life's meaning and purpose, as well as connections to reality and God. Spirituality is crucial for the elderly and has a significant effect on many aspects of society. An increasingly important necessity for elderly people is a solid spiritual base. Today, there is growing evidence of the significance of spiritual well-being throughout recovery. Doctors, nurses, and geriatric social workers are among the health professionals who need to be able to recognise the spiritual needs of their elderly patients and respond appropriately. The increasing number of old people in India is the cause of this. But the lack of education and understanding of spirituality that a professional has affects how comfortable they are attentive to these spiritual aspects when providing healthcare. Older people's spiritual needs are therefore either ignored or delegated to religious leaders. Spirituality is an important predictor of late-life functioning in relation to elder care, despite its complexity, and has been favourably associated to wellness. However, it is vital to understand the relationship between each spiritual route and wellness, accounting for the individual preferences about one or more spiritual connection types. The psychological state that emerges from successful or unsuccessful coping and the capacity to overcome obstacles have both been connected to life satisfaction. Measures of subjective well-being have often focused

on the respondent's positive or negative responses to his or her current living environment. A person is said to be in a state of life satisfaction when they firmly believe that their life is of a high quality overall. A review of one's objectives and real accomplishments indicates that life satisfaction is a measure of one's general state of being.

In Indian culture, spirituality has always been highly valued. As one gets older, spirituality becomes more and more significant. Recent empirical studies have found a relationship between spirituality and health (Contrada et al., 2004; Arcury, Quandt, McDonald, & Bell, 2000). O'Neill and Kenny (1998) state that there is a favourable correlation between spirituality and religion, hope, and coping mechanisms. It is claimed to encompass a person's transcendent connection to the universe or a deity. It has been demonstrated to be especially important for older people and to have a positive correlation with older people's self-rated health, according to Daaleman and Frey (2004). Numerous cross-sectional studies indicate that a large percentage of people turn to spirituality as a coping method for their grief (Ashby and Lenhart, 1994; Keefe and Dolan, 1986; Keefe et al., 1997; Rosenstiel and Keefe, 1983). Despite these limitations, a number of long-term research have indicated that spirituality and religion may be positively correlated with lower pain assessments and happier moods (Turner and Clancy, 1986; Keefe et al., 2001). Although it is commonly known that many individuals with chronic pain use spirituality as a coping strategy, it is still unclear how spirituality affects these patients' quality of life, physical health, or mental health because the results to far have been contradictory and inconsistent. The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between senior spiritual practitioners' spirituality and stress. The premise of this study is that spirituality will have a significant impact on one's ability to forecast improved mental health. People are finding that spirituality is a crucial and significant part of their lives that helps them manage their illness and improve their quality of life. For senior citizens in particular, spirituality's potential for personal development and self-discovery is crucial. A number of studies have also discovered a link between spirituality and well-being in later life or good ageing, according to Yorgason (2015). Furthermore, spirituality is important in helping seniors to appreciate life and show gratitude (Krause, 2016) as well as in overcoming difficulties including the death of a loved one, an accident, and other forms of disabilities (Swinton, 2011). Spirituality encourages positive behaviours that are advantageous for a range of illnesses. Additionally, there was a significant correlation found between spiritual activities and the linked emotional and cognitive activity processes and all dimensions of psychological well-being, including emotional and behavioural well-being. The combined benefits of spirituality and depression can reduce long-term suffering. Silva together with others (2011). While optimism refers to an optimistic attitude or a general conviction that good things will happen, pessimism refers to a common anticipation that bad things will happen. Seligman (1991) has studied optimism and pessimism in relation to how individuals see their own experiences. An optimistic attribution or explanatory style is associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms and higher levels of motivation, success, and physical well-being, according to Buchanan and Seligman (1995). Pessimists claim to have more unpleasant symptoms, whereas optimists employ more successful coping mechanisms. Both optimism and pessimism have important implications on human personality, development, adaptation, health, illness, and therapy. Optimism and pessimism can be seen as culturally moulded processes, cognitive preferences, biological dispositions, and personality traits. Both optimism and pessimism are unique markers of both physical and mental health when seen in a two-dimensional manner (Robinson-Whelan et al., 1997). Jason, Witter, and Torres-Harding (2003) found a correlation between elderly people's optimism and their perception of their bodily and mental well-being. Generally unchanging personality traits, pessimism and optimism are seen as generalised expectations of positive or negative consequences of the action (Scheir & Carver, 1985). This explanation is centred on anticipated events and future actions. This idea is generally understood to represent a positive or negative viewpoint of the cosmos, according to Chang, Maydeu-Olivares, and D'Zunilla (1997) and Dember et al. (1989, as quoted in Chang, Maydeu-Olivares & D'Zunilla, 1997). Because of this, the later definition takes into account both present events and conditions as well as future occurrences. Empirical studies (Chang et al., 1997; Marshall, Wortman, Kusulas, Hervis & Vickers Jr., 1992; Robinson-Whalen, Kim, McCallum & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1997) have demonstrated that optimism and pessimism are two separate dimensions. Despite having a high negative link, optimism and pessimism are fundamentally two distinct variables, according to the studies presented. It is implausible to experience both positive and negative emotions simultaneously, according to strong negative connections. Penezi from 2002. Individual differences in optimism are indicative of a person's overall level of optimism about the future. It is associated with higher levels of coping and lower levels of avoidance or withdrawal as a way to overcome the challenges. Conversely, pessimism displays negative outcomes and occurring expectations. Several studies have shown that pessimists are more likely to give up easily and to suffer depressed episodes more frequently. On the

other hand, optimists excel in extracurricular activities, the job, education, and further education. Applying for a job increases the likelihood that they will be employed (Seligman, 2008).

## 2. Objectives:

- a. To examine the relationship between spirituality, life orientation, and life satisfaction in elderly people.
- b. (i). To analyze the contribution of spirituality on life orientation in elderly people.  
(ii). To analyze the contribution of spirituality on satisfaction with life in elderly people.

## 3. Hypotheses:

- a. There would be a positive relationship between spirituality, life orientation, and life satisfaction in elderly people.
- b. (i) There would be positive contribution of spirituality on life orientation in elderly people  
(ii) There would be a positive contribution of spirituality on satisfaction with life in elderly people.

## 4. Methodology-

- I. **Participants-** Total of 55 elderly people of both gender (institutionalized), age range 45-85 years, comprised from rural and urban area of Uttar Pradesh. Purposive Sampling Technique are used for sample selection.
- II. **Study Instruments (Tools)-**

### ▪ Life Satisfaction scale:

The Life satisfaction scale (LSS) developed and standardized by Dr. Pramod Kumar and Dr. Dhyani. The Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) is developed with a view to provide a handy tool for identifying persons having low satisfaction in life, and who may require psycho-diagnostic help. The Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) in its final form consists of 54 highly discriminating items- 45 positively worded and 9 negatively-worded. These items are presented in a 3- point rating format.

### ▪ Life Orientation scale:

Optimism and Pessimism, The Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R; Carver & Scheier, 2003) is a self-report measure of dispositional optimism and pessimism. The LOT-R consists of 10 items, of which three measure dispositional optimism (e.g., "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best";  $\alpha=.50$ ), three measure dispositional pessimism (e.g., "If something can go wrong for me, it will";  $\alpha=.68$ ), and four are filler items. Participants respond on a Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Items were summed so that higher scores indicated higher levels of optimism and pessimism.

### ▪ Spiritual Quotient Scale-:

Spiritual Quotient Scale (Dr. G. Ahluwalia, Prof. N. K. Chadha & Dr. S. S. Vohra) was developed in two languages, English and Hindi. The Scale has been divided into two parts. S.Q. (Part-1) has 17 items and has a total of 6 dimensions (Factors) S.Q. (Part-2) comprised of 34 items and has a total of 8 dimensions (Factors). The Scale can be administered both individually as well as within a small group. It takes approximately 50-60 minutes to complete. The test can be applied to the age range 18 to 85+.

## 5. Result:

**The correlation coefficient of Spirituality and its dimension with life orientation and satisfaction with life (N=55)**

Variable	Life Orientation	Satisfaction with Life
Liberative	.304*	.304*
Self-transformative	.192	.039
Empowerment	.215	.389**
Profound thinker and Visionary	.200	.149
Blissful	.422**	.549**
Uprightness	.225	.439**
Existential Clarity	.073	.447**
Clairvoyance	.237	.390**
Spirituality Total	.337*	.498**

Above table summarizes the results of correlation analyses between dimensions of life orientation and satisfaction of life. It is evident from the findings that Liberative was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .304$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .304$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Another variable self-transformative was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .192$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .039$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Next variable Empowerment was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .215$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .389$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Profound thinker and visionary was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .200$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .149$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Another variable Blissful was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .422$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .549$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Uprightness variable was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .225$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .439$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Further, Existential clarity was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .073$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .447$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Clairvoyance was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .237$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .390$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Lastly, Spirituality total was found to be significantly positively correlated with Life orientation ( $r = .337$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Satisfaction of Life ( $r = .498$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Over all, all the results of correlation analysis between dimensions of life orientation and satisfaction of life over all variables significantly positively found.

**Regression Analysis-**

**Table:** Step-wise multiple regression analysis using the dimension of spirituality as predictor (Blissful) and Life orientation as a criterion variable-

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	β	F Change
.422	.178	.162	.178	.422	11.235

Step-wise multiple regression analysis shows that, Life Orientation playing a significant role in predicting Spirituality. Result indicates that the association between spirituality and Life orientation ( $\beta = .422$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found significantly positive and it explains 17.8% of the total variance [ $F_{\text{change}} = 11.235$ ;  $p < .01$ ] in explaining spirituality.

**Table:** Step-wise multiple regression analysis using the dimension of spirituality as predictor (Blissful, Uprightness and Existential Clarity) and Satisfaction with life as a criterion variable-

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable (Satisfaction with life)	
	Step 1	Step 2
<b>Blissful</b>	-----	<b>0.343</b>
<b>Uprightness</b>	-----	<b>.276</b>
<b>Existential Clarity</b>	-----	<b>.257</b>
R	0.458	0.489
R <sup>2</sup>	0.211	0.239
R <sup>2</sup> change	.211	0.028
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.204	0.226
F change	31.197**	4.344**

Result of step-wise multiple regression analysis shows that, Satisfaction with life playing a significant role in predicting Spirituality (Blissful, Uprightness, Existential Clarity). In step 1, Blissful statistically significant positive relationship with Life Satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.343$ ). This indicates the higher levels of blissfulness tended to have greater Life satisfaction. This result indicates that the association between spirituality and, Satisfaction with life was found significantly positive and it explains 21.1% as indicated by the value of  $R^2$  (0.211) of the total variance [ $F_{\text{change}}=31.197$ ;  $p<0.01$ ] in explaining spirituality. In step 2, Uprightness and Existential Clarity, both variables exhibited statistically significant positive relationships with Satisfaction with life, with Uprightness ( $\beta = 0.276$ ) and Existential Clarity ( $\beta = 0.257$ ), This result indicate that the association between spirituality and, Satisfaction with life was found significantly positive and it explains 2.8% as indicated by the value of  $R^2$  (0.028) of the total variance [ $F_{\text{change}}=4.344$ ;  $p<0.01$ ] in explaining spirituality.

The results highlight the significance of multiple dimensions of spirituality in influencing individuals' satisfaction with life. Specifically, higher levels of blissfulness, upright behaviour, and clarity about existential issues are associated with greater satisfaction with life. Each dimension makes a unique contribution to explaining life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of considering various aspects of spirituality in understanding subjective well-being.

Limitations of this study include its reliance on self-report measures, which may introduce response biases. Additionally, the cross-sectional design precludes establishing causality or assessing temporal relationships. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and include a broader range of participants to improve generalizability. The findings of this study highlight the important influence of (Blissful, Uprightness, Existential Clarity) spirituality on life orientation in elderly individuals. Emphasizing and nurturing spiritual bliss may contribute to a more positive outlook and engagement with life among the elderly population. Further research is needed to explore the contributions of other dimensions of spirituality to different domains of well-being in this demographic.

## 6. Discussion:

There is evidence to suggest that existential clarity and uprightiness can have a positive impact on life satisfaction among elderly individuals. These qualities help individuals develop a sense of purpose and meaning in life, resulting in increased life satisfaction. Existential clarity refers to a clear understanding of one's own existence, values, and beliefs. It involves acknowledging the finite nature of life and finding purpose within that context. Elderly individuals who have a clear understanding of their own existence and values are more likely to have a sense of direction and significance in their lives. This can lead to higher levels of life satisfaction as they feel that their lives have purpose and meaning. Uprightiness, on the other hand, refers to living in accordance with one's own moral and ethical principles. Elderly individuals who strive to adhere to their own values and principles generally have a stronger sense of integrity. Living with integrity can contribute to feelings of self-fulfilment and contentment, which are associated with higher life satisfaction. When elderly individuals possess existential clarity and uprightiness, they are more likely to experience a greater sense of psychological well-being. They may have a lower likelihood of experiencing existential crises, and instead have a foundation on which to build a meaningful life. This, in turn, can contribute to overall life satisfaction.

## 7. Implications and Conclusion:

The findings of this study have important implications for the well-being of elderly individuals. Addressing spiritual dimensions, particularly blissful spirituality, uprightiness spirituality, and existential clarity spirituality, may enhance life satisfaction and contribute to overall happiness in this population. Interventions targeting spiritual dimensions could include spiritual counselling, mindfulness-based practices, and participation in religious or spiritual communities. Such interventions can help promote a sense of fulfilment, contentment, and purpose in the lives of elderly individuals. In conclusion, the results of this study highlight the significant relationship between spiritual dimensions and life satisfaction in elderly individuals. By acknowledging the importance of spirituality and incorporating it into holistic care approaches, healthcare professionals and carers can contribute to the well-being of the elderly population.

**REFERENCES-**

1. Borg C, Fagerström C, Balducci C, Burholt V, Ferring D, Weber G, et al. Life satisfaction in 6 European countries: the relationship to health, self-esteem, and social and financial resources among people (aged 65- 89) with reduced functional capacity. *Geriatr Nurs*. 2008; 29(1): 48-57. doi: 10.1016/j.gerinurse.2007.05.002. PMID: 18267177.
2. Chang, E.C., Maydeu-Olivares, A. & D'Zunilla, T.J. (1997). Optimism and pessimism as partially independent construct: Relationship to positive and negative affectivity and psychological well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 23 (3), 433-440.
3. Davis, S. F., Miller, K. M., Johnson, D., McAuley, K., & Dinges, D. (1992). The relationship between optimism-pessimism, loneliness, and death anxiety. *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 30, 135-136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/BF03330419>.
4. Fehring, R.J., Miller, J.F., Shaw, C. (1997). Spiritual well-being, religiosity, hope, depression, and other mood states in elderly people coping with cancer. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 24, 663-671.
5. J. J. Kurtz and S. Wolk, Continued Growth and Life Satisfaction, *The Gerontologist*, 15, pp. 129-131, 1975.
6. Krause, N. (1998). Neighbourhood deterioration, religious coping, and changes in health during late life, *Gerontologist*, 38(6), 653-664.
7. Levin, J.S., Larson, D.B., Puchalski, C.M. (1997). Religion and spirituality in medicine: Research and education. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278(9), 792-3.
8. N. Lohmann, Correlations of Life Satisfaction, Morale, and Adjustment Measures, *Journal of Gerontology*, 32, pp. 73-75, 1977.
9. Neugarten B. J., Havighurst R. J., and Tobin S. S., the Measurement of Life Satisfaction, *Journal of Gerontology*, 16, pp. 134-143, 1961.
10. Raïkko-nen, K., Matthews, K. A., Flory, J. D., Owens, J. F., & Gump, B. B. (1999). Effects of optimism, pessimism, and trait anxiety on ambulatory blood pressure and mood during everyday life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 104-113.
11. Roshani, K. (2012). Relationship between Religious Beliefs and Life Satisfaction with Death Anxiety in the Elderly. *Annals of Biological Research*, 3(9), 4400-4405.
12. Subaşı F, Hayran O. Evaluation of life satisfaction index of the elderly people living in nursing homes. *Arch Gerontol Geriatr*. 2005; 41(1): 23-9. doi: 10.1016/j.archger.2004.10.005. PMID: 15911035.