

Effect of Spiritual Counseling on Stress Level of College Going Students

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ABSTRACT

Today Stress is a part of our daily life work. Stress free life is nearly impossible to all people. But management of stress can be life easeful to live. Spiritual counseling can be one of the best tools for stress management. This research explores the effectiveness of spiritual counseling on stress level among college going students. Two group pre-post designs were used on Sample of 50 (25 in experimental and 25 in control group) college students. They were selected by incidental sampling method from the various colleges of Chhattisgarh. The age of the subjects ranged from 18 to 22 years. The experimental group was regularly exposed to Therapeutic intervention for 45 days. During this intervention the researcher discussed the problems with students & suggested them with solution through the reference of “Amritwani” heard every day. Data were collected through the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by “Cohen”. For Statistical analysis of data “t-test.” Used. Results indicate highly significant effect of spiritual counseling on stress of college going students at 0.01 level of confidence.

Keywords: *Stress, Spiritual Counseling, College Students.*

All over the word stress is very common terror in every mind. Stress is a state of mind and can be perceived in behavior or action of human. It is very common phenomenon of every individual life mostly in modern life system. Every people face stress regularly but they are unaware of handle it or management and cope efficiently. Modern life style is full of stress and least of ease. Every culture has own different coping management of stress but in India, Spirituality was always a core subject of Indian culture. So, now a day it is still awesome and wonderful therapy is being used in India. This research includes such an effective Spiritual counseling therapy as a tool.

Fresher college student usually has expectations about college life long before actually leaving home. Some students look forward to college, and are eager to experience more freedom and

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adventure. Other individuals may be enthusiastic about college initially, but then discover that the actual experience falls short of their expectations. They don't feel happy, comfortable, or secure in their new environment. In addition, some students know that leaving home may be difficult and, attained college. Expectations easily destroy and encounter challenging experiences or obstacles at the beginning of college. This step is positive for life even produce stress, and the environmental changes lead to varying emotions including sadness, loneliness and worry. At the very beginning, from the college admission and up to the passing is not so essay. However, some students can't really handle stress perfectly that sometimes, it even affects their performance in college.

They have competition for grades, the need to perform, relationships, career choice, and many other aspects of the college environment cause stress. Before condemning stress outright, we need to understand that stress is only harmful when it is excessive. Much of the stress that we all experience is helpful and stimulating called Eustress. The challenges of life event tend to be stressful and avoid stress completely is rather difficult. The problem comes when you experience too much stress.

College students are exposed to many problems from family, financial, peers, and school environment. As he proceeded, continued and finally ended his courses enrolled in college, various stressors hamper the successful attainment of his primary and secondary goals. There are common stressors that affect college students: intrapersonal, interpersonal, academic and environmental stressors (Bulo 2014).

Summer M. Berman (2000) stated that 37 percent of Americans between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, many of whom are college students, have a diagnosable mental illness. The fact that the age of onset for many major illnesses is the years from eighteen to twenty-four, the range in which most traditional-age students fall, further complicates the matter. Higher education must realize that a large percentage of college students are, or will be, affected by mental illness. These disorders range from mild and short-lived to chronic and severe, including such illnesses as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder, and appear at varying rates on campuses. (p. 92)

When a child or adolescent is experiencing difficulties coping with stress, he or she is likely to show changes in mood, behavior, and/or physical appearance. Physical changes include muscle tension, headache, stomachache, trouble sleeping, trouble eating, and lack of energy. Emotional changes include nervousness, anxiety, loss of enthusiasm about things he or she used to enjoy, anger or hostility towards peers, shyness or withdrawal, and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Behavioral changes include poor eating habits and excessive weight gain/loss over a short period of time. (Terzian, et al., 2010)

Arun, et al. (2009), stated on students with academic problems and unsupportive environment at home perceived life as a burden and had higher rates of suicidal ideations. India has one of the

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world's highest rates of suicides among people aged between 15 years and 29 years. Each year, between 30 and 40 people per 100,000 Indians aged between 15 and 29 kill themselves. This accounts for about a third of all suicides in the country. Bangalore: Growing up is fraught with suicidal tendencies. A Nimhans, Bangalore study under way has found that 11% of college students and 7%-8% of high school students have attempted suicide. In the survey, 1,500 school and college students were studied on suicide prevention (Rao 2014).

The young people in the age group of 10-24 yr. in India constitutes one of the precious resources of India characterized by growth and development and is a phase of vulnerability often influenced by several intrinsic and extrinsic factors that affect their health and safety. Nearly 10-30 per cent of young people suffer from health impacting behaviors and conditions that need urgent attention of policy makers and public health professionals. (Singh & Gururaj 2014).

The student life is getting complex day by day. Guidance and counseling is needed to help the students for optimum achievement and adequate adjustment in the assorted life situations. Counseling Services provides individual and group counseling to students experiencing difficulty in adjusting to university life. Consultation with a counselor is an opportunity for the student to describe personal concerns and what he or she hopes to gain from counseling. Counseling may be conducted either individually or in a group with other students expressing similar concerns. (Roy 2011).

Counseling generally refers to a service where a person provides advice or guidance to another person or group. Spiritual Counseling refers to such a service when the advice or guidance provided is based on spiritual principles. This does not have to be associated with a major or organized religion. The focus could simply involve connecting the benefits of spirituality with the improvements that a person wants to see in her life. Many Americans are becoming interested in the role of spirituality in their health and health care. This may be because of dissatisfaction with the impersonal nature of our current medical system, and the realization that medical science does not have answers to every question about health and wellness.

Koslowski (2012), examined the relationship between spirituality and secondary traumatic stress with counseling professionals in a Midwestern metropolitan area & he found the relationship of spirituality and STS could be beneficial as a possible prevention tool and means for the general health and well-being of counselors, therapists and the like

According to a Cooperative Institutional Research Program survey administered nationally by the Higher Education Research Institute, Fresher students' self-ratings of their emotional health dropped to record-low levels in 2010. Only 51.9% of students reported their emotional health was in the "highest 10%" or "above average," a drop of 3.4 percentage points in 2009 and a considerable decrease from the 63.6% who placed themselves in those categories in 1985 (Driscoll 2011).

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Spirituality is fundamental to understanding the ways in which a person finds purpose in life. Spirituality can play a useful role in helping the body heal from physical injuries or emotional trauma. The feelings of optimism, coping and support that spirituality promotes help reduce feelings of stress and encourage healthy behavior. This can influence the immune, cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels), hormonal and nervous systems. Spirituality has proven particularly effective in overcoming addiction, allowing the addict to have something to focus their feelings on and get support from. Simpson 2005 & Graham et al. (2001), Stated that an increasing number of studies indicate that those who are more spiritual experience a greater sense of well-being and life satisfaction, coping better and are less likely to commit suicide.

The role of present study was to examine and management of stress in young generation through spiritual counseling. The research might help students to cope up with difficult circumstances in their life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

VARIABLES:

Dependent Variable: Stress.

Independent Variable: Spiritual Counseling.

Spiritual counseling will used with reference of “Amritvani” audio of Acharya Pt. Shriram Sharma.

OBJECTIVE:

- Is still today spiritual counseling can manage or cope stress effectively?
- Is spiritual counseling is effective for college student?

HYPOTHESIS: (Directional Hypothesis)

“Spiritual counseling reduces the stress level of college students.”

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Two group pre-post designs were used.

SAMPLE & SAMPLING:

The selection of sample is based on used of Incidental sampling techniques.

Total sample consisted of 50 subjects equally divided into experimental & control group.

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DATA COLLECTION:

The entire subject college students they selected from colleges of Chhattisgarh with the help of incidental sampling method.

INCLUSIVE & EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

Few points are being mentioned below which are need to be considered as inclusion/ exclusion criteria:

- i. Only those subjects were included as a sample whose age limit falls between 18-22 yrs., and students had enrolled in first year in college or undergraduate.
- ii. Those students who didn't know anything about Pt. Shri Ram Sharma Acharya, who is founder of Shantikunj (An Ashram) in Hardwar, were included.
- iii. Additionally, respondents were excluded from analysis if they indicated that they were using medication for mental health concerns and if there is any counseling are taken for mental health problems.

TOOL:

In the present study the “Perceived Stress Scale” constructed and standardized by Cohen et al. was selected to measure the level of stress among college students because it is the most widely used (B.H.U., D.U. & Punjab University, India) in psychological mechanism for assessing perceptual stress and measure the degree of stress to which circumstances in one's life are judged.

Intervention protocol:

As the therapeutic intervention, spiritual counseling was provided to the subjects of experimental group. Before giving the therapeutic intervention, group interaction was done with all and their problems was diagnosed. According to their problem concerned, related “Amritwani” was selected & subjects were instructed for listening and understanding the spiritual thought of “Amritwani”. After that their queries & issues were discussed & solution of their problem was given based on reference of “Amritwani”. This intervention was given for 45 days (working days) for 30-40 minutes in one setting of each day and on every 5th day feedback was taken & on the basis of feedback next “Amritwani” was selected and repeated therapeutically intervention again and again as a spiritual counseling. Before playing the audio cassette some instruction was given to the subjects who are as follows:

- Sit in relax posture.
- Close your eyes and mentally wakeful.
- Concentrate on your breathing.
- Listen carefully this audio that is being played and contemplate on it.

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- Now open your eyes slowly and think deeply (being silent) on thoughts heard for two minutes.
- If it gives a solution of your problem then try to apply in your life.

PROCEDURE:

First of all, sample was selected from different colleges of Chhattisgarh state through incidental sampling. 50 students were selected as sample and divided into experimental group (n=25) and control group (n=25). Selected sample may be male or female. Then, the dependent variable (stress) was measured by applying Perceived Stress Scale on the selected subjects, and thereafter therapeutic interventions were exposed for 45 days only for Experimental Group. No intervention was provided to control group. After such intervention Dependent variable was measured at the end and post test score was analyzed.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES:

The raw data was obtained by using respective manual and analyze it by t-test.

RESULT:

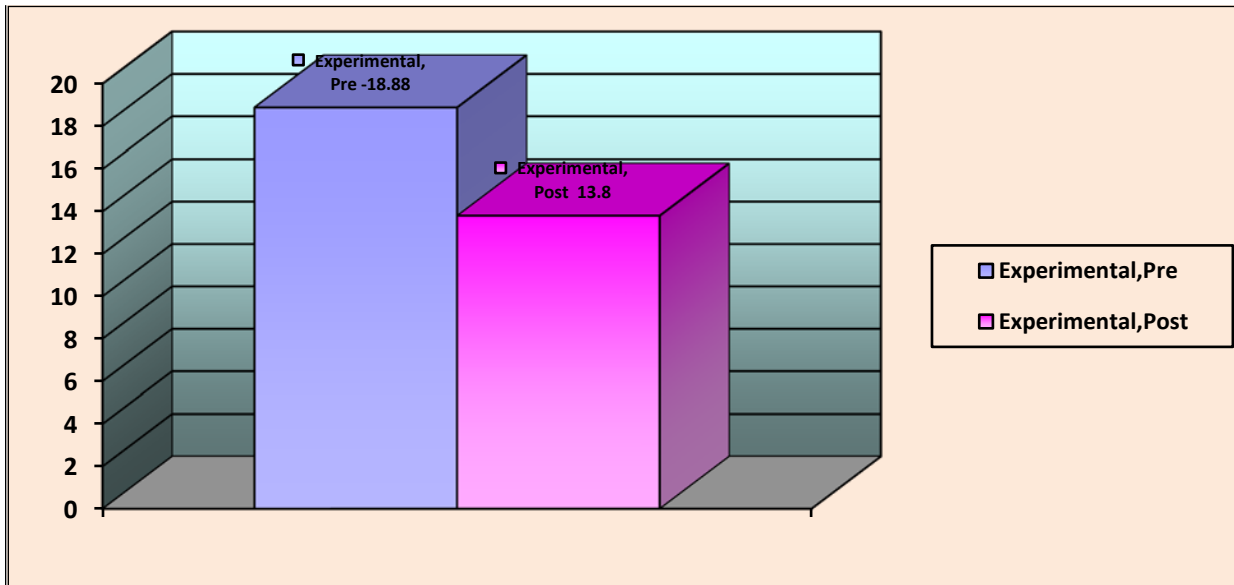
Table 01, Summary of Statistical Analysis

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD	SE _D	r	df	t-value	P
Exp. group	Pre	25	18.88	4.885	0.5508	0.8408	24	9.076	P< 0.01
	Post	25	13.80	4.877					
Control group	Pre	25	18.12	4.411	0.7142	0.7137	24	0.119	P>0.05
	Post	25	18.20	4.9396					

The Directional hypothesis was undertaken in order to analyze that, Spiritual counseling reduces the stress level of college students. Testing of hypothesis Table-1 indicate Hypothesis has been accepted with df=24 and P< 0.01.

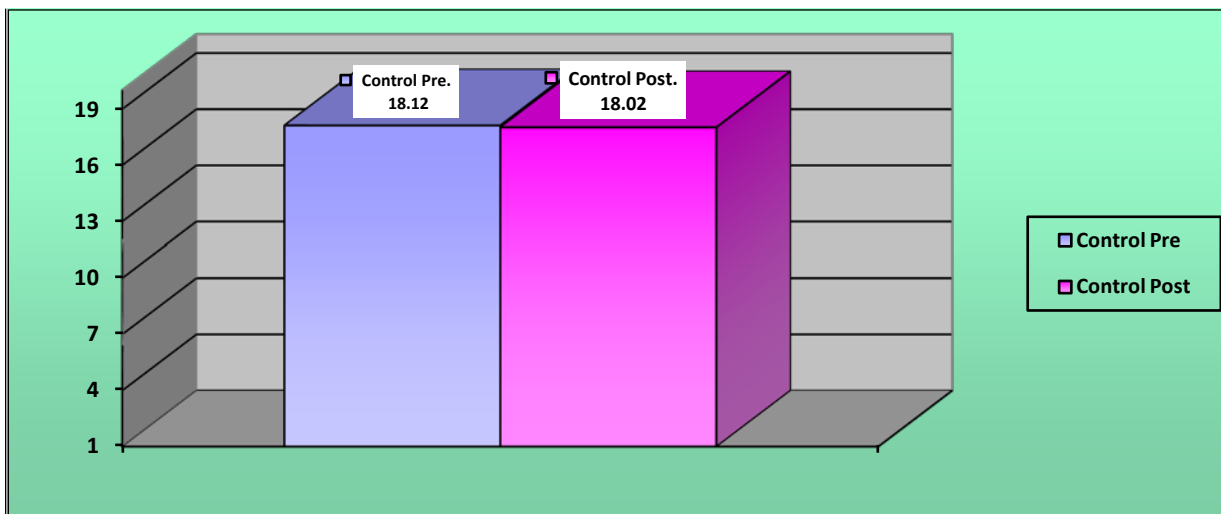
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Plot-1, Mean score of Pre-Post data of Experimental Group



The mean and standard error of mean ($M \pm SD$) of stress level for college students of the experimental group before and after the spiritual counseling were consecutively found (Plot-1) to be 18.88 ± 4.885 and 13.8 ± 4.877 . The correlation (r) is .84 and standard error of deviation (SE_D) is .55 and obtained t-value is 9.076 which are statistically significant at 0.01 significance level of confidence. On the basis of obtained result it can be concluded that spiritual counseling significantly reduces the level of stress in experimental group.

Plot-2 Mean score of Pre-Post data of Control Group



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The mean and standard error of mean ($M \pm SD$) of pre-test and post-test on level of stress of the control group were consecutively found to be 18.12 ± 4.411 and 18.2 ± 4.939 . The correlation (r) is .71 and standard error of deviation (SE_D) is .714 and obtained t-value is .119 which is statistically not significant even at $P > 0.05$ significance level of confidence in control group.

DISCUSSION:

Result indicates that intervention program in experimental group shows significant effect on stress, but there is no effect in stress level on control group college student.

The exploration of the relationship between spiritual counseling and Stress of the Fresher student of college were examined. In other research conducted by Koslowski (2012), examined the relationship between spirituality and secondary traumatic stress with counseling professionals & there is a possible correlation between levels of spirituality and secondary traumatic stress symptoms. Furthermore, the results of the study also imply that spirituality may very well be a protective factor and a means of self-care for those at risk of developing secondary traumatic stress symptoms. Religion and spirituality are traditional means of coping, as they promote an internal locus of control in stressful situations. The religious and spiritual activities help to reframe stressful events in a way that motivates the individual intrinsically to deal with life stressors. Hefti (2011), described that spirituality increases personal empowerment in the face of stressors with the sense of being secured by God. Yonker, et al. (2012), studied that examine the association between spirituality and religiosity and psychological outcomes in adolescents and emerging adults. Results show that spirituality and religiosity has a positive effect on psychological outcomes in adolescents and emerging adults. Graham, et al. (2001), reported on a survey conducted by the American Counseling Association that indicates counselors view spirituality as an important component of mental health. These authors conducted additional research that examined the relationship between religion and spirituality in coping with stress and found a positive correlation between spiritual health and immunity to stressful situations.

At present time many researcher & psychologists accepted spirituality as a tool for mental health & psychological well-being. The use of spiritual talk directly not found as a spiritual counseling yet, there has some event in ancient time taken for research which has been quoted by few researchers such as Reddy (2012), *psychotherapy – Insights from Bhagvad Gita*, used the term “counselor” for Sri Krishna & explained that the guilt, negative thoughts, anxiety, depression of “Arjuna” is being removed by the counseling by Sri Krishna. In the same manner, another research of Bhattathiry (2015), also explains the Krishna as counselor. It means that a thousands of year ago the “lord Krishna” was a spiritual counselor, who had given a spiritual talk to “Arjuna” for his better insight, as a counseling in the form of Bhagvad Geeta.

Hindu psychologists show us how some of the disturbed emotions can be transformed by cultivating opposite tendencies. Patanjali declares that positive, constructive thoughts and emotions should be cultivated in order to obstruct and remove the disturbing mental states. In

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America, a few psychotherapists have started giving thought training and relaxation exercises. Patanjali and Tantrika schools were fully aware of the necessity of psychophysical practices for physical health and religious growth. Akhilananda (2005), in this way spirituality was most important phenomena in ancient India. At present time stress & adjustment are the common problems in the progress of student life. So spiritual counseling can highly support in their academic and personal problem.

As the results of this study the relationship of spiritual counseling and stress could be beneficial as a possible prevention tool and means for the general health and well-being of students and other people. It might be help in cope up with difficult circumstances and daily life.

CONCLUSION:

In this study result shows that effectiveness of spiritual counseling significantly reduce the level of stress of college students. Religiousness and spirituality were highly correlated, although personal characteristics, institutional variables, and college experiences were also associated with these constructs. Bryant, et al. (2003) the findings of the study suggest that schools, college and parents need to be aware in the promotion of a healthy life style and a bright future of their students through spiritual counseling. It is hoped that this study will further help to open experimental research on spiritual counseling.

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