

Editorial

Spirituality and religious practices are now accepted coping strategies with life stress that enhances general wellbeing. Like social support, they seem to be helpful in two ways, viz- maintaining general wellbeing in life and functioning as an effective ‘shock absorbers’ during crisis period. Maintaining general wellbeing can be attributed to the discipline practiced by those adhering to religious and spiritual practices that has significant impact on the life style, the positive psychological state they bring to the individual and the social acceptance of the same. Practices such as regular prayers, chanting, meditation, yoga have proved to be positive contributors to general health and wellbeing. Though we need rigorous control group studies on large samples, the few studies suggest that chanting of some *mantras* and practice of meditation have an impact on neuro conductivity and positive hormonal secretions in the body that helps healing of diseases and enhances the general immunity of the body. Studies have proved the correlation between religious practices and hope. Religious orientation was found to be a good predictor of self -concept and self- esteem. Religiosity was also found to have negative correlation with anxiety and stress.

The religious practitioners normally follow certain rituals, attend religious congregations, participate in religious discussions, visit places of religious significance, follow practices such as fasting, which brings a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment since such practices are normally driven by intrinsic motivation. In addition, some of the practices such as attending or participating in religious discourses, not only keeps the cognitive dimension active but the social networking and group formations constitute a great source of social support , which in itself has the potential to enhance wellbeing. Studies in the last decade have proved the interrelation between religiosity, spirituality, social support and psychological wellbeing. An inverse

relationship of the same with anxiety and stress was also established. Recent study during the COVID pandemic revealed social capital, psychological wellbeing and religious coping showed significant variance of situational stress of Corona virus. Realizing the therapeutic value of religiosity and spirituality, many corporate hospitals in India have allocated special place for prayers for the patients and their relatives. Treatment for many chronic illnesses have physician's advice of supplementing with meditation, music therapy and yoga for long time effect of disease management and prevention of serious adverse events. It is about time that the hospitals realise the significance of some of these indigenous practices and integrate them for enhancing overall health of the Indian population and also chalk out scientifically rigorous research designs to bring global acceptance of the same. This would be a good measure to disseminate Indian Knowledge related to health for global benefit as part of India's endeavor to be *Viswaguru*.

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