

Effect of School Intervention Programme on Nurturing Spiritual Development among School Students with reference to School Assemblies: An Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

The current research has tried to explore the effect of a school intervention program on nurturing spiritual development among school students through school assemblies. The objective of the research is to design a framework for school intervention program and construct a spiritual assessment tool for assessing spiritual development. To test the effectiveness of the intervention program in developing spirituality, the researcher had developed a spiritual assessment tool. In the present study, a quasi-experimental research methodology has been designed with a sample of 128 students of class 5th to 8th from a school in Hisar, Haryana, and divided into two groups i.e. Control group and the Experimental group. A nonequivalent Control Group Posttest-Only Design was used in the present study. A significant effect was assessed of intervention program of morning school assembly on the spiritual values of the students at school level. The results of the study indicated the significant effect of the intervention program on the above spiritual dimensions.

Keywords: School Assemblies, Spirituality, and Spiritual Development etc.

Indian Educational Philosophies are essentially spiritual. It is dressed up in myths, legends, and stories for understanding of the common man. Spirituality is extremely prized in the school system. School assemblies can perform a better role in nourishing and developing spiritual development among children. Morning school assembly is an essential part of school education where spiritual activities are conducted globally. Spiritual practices in morning school assembly like reciting secular devotional songs, prayer, meditation, yoga play a major transformational role in spiritual development among students especially in Indian context. Recent findings advocated that the spiritual exercises or practices positively affected students' life. Adolescent's behavior is transformed in positive direction through secular spiritual practices in educational institutions. Spiritual

development among students has been a core issue for psychologists in present time. In the School system, we find that all children have spiritual needs and for achieving holistic development, it should be considered essential to enrich developmental needs. It is fact that all children have a natural curiosity about their surroundings. They express curiosity with wonderful questions about their birth, death, etc. Spirituality is innate in children. Chittenden (2003) & Burrows (2006) focused that schools are considered more responsible and accountable to offer a holistic education to all children. Mata-McMahon (2014) & Davies (2007) indicated that schools play

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a vital role in generating and enhancing spiritual development. Schools have had a constitutional duty to contribute to and promote spiritual development. School Assemblies are a constituent part of the school. Hart (2005) supported that child has in born spiritual capacity that shapes his life in powerful and persistent ways. Studies revealed that there exists a direct or indirect relationship between spiritual development and religiousness regarding school assemblies. Some psychologists argued that there is no difference between spirituality and religion. Spirituality may not be defined and expressed vividly without religion. Pearce & *et al.* (2003) examined that various religious practices and spirituality are helpful to reduce students' anxiety and frustration. Participation in Church activities, spiritual process, prayer and positive interpersonal understanding show spiritual attitude of the students. The components of morning school assembly activities promote a positive relation between students and their spiritual needs. Spirituality helps to reduce instinct problems with the help of moral values. Spirituality provides a meaningful purpose of life which directs to positive ethos. Spiritual practices and exercises which are conducted in the morning school assembly develop and reinforce certain qualities of character building and life among students. These spiritual practices emerge strong, deep and closeness relationship among students. Morning school assembly strengthens the commitment of engagement with community which shows higher accomplishment with more understanding and awareness. Cohen (2006) & Zins (2003) clarified that the spirituality enhances problem solving ability, coherent thinking and it develops positive approach towards teamwork and interpersonal compassion, increases and social justice.

School assembly is a stimulating setting or venue where children learn, grow and develop with excellent inputs in form of inculcating values, gaining confidence, and enriching diverse skills like critical understanding, communication, and collaboration with the creative spark. Morning assemblies are essential beginning sessions of a school that help children to grow into responsible citizens of a country. In fact, these sessions influence children to shape their personalities. Carlson Paige (2001) stated that the child is having curiosity about

God and its existence. Even he starts to build his own theories, hypothesis, and assumptions about philosophical and theological questions. With regard to mapping child spiritual development, it is essential that the concept of spirituality must be integrated into the school curriculum. Mahmoud *et al.* (2012) revealed that Pestalozzi, Montessori were of the view that when a child searches for the meaning of life and surroundings, he must have connections with his surroundings, nature and the world. Schools as a miniature of society should provide a holistic approach rather than the mere accumulation of knowledge, facts, and figures. At school level, the framework of morning school assembly can play a transformable role in spiritual development of the students. It may be helpful in declining crime rate and foster values among students at school level. The study will provide a direction which may helpful in creating a peaceful and loving society. It will provide a secular outline of morning school assembly that may be adopted at education level. The secular outline of the morning school assembly is essential for the development of spirits; tolerance, compassion, respect for others, religious and cultural harmony etc. in divergent and multicultural society. To see the vital importance of role of the school assembly in developing Spiritual Development among School Children, an idea has been conceptualized to hypnotize and test a School Intervention Programme for Spiritual Development with reference to spirits and supposed activities.

Major Objectives

- ❑ To explore spirits of spirituality and design a School Intervention Programme for nurturing Spiritual Development among school children with reference to School Assemblies.
- ❑ To measure the significant effect of the intervention program on the above spiritual dimensions.

Review of Literature

After exploring children's spiritual development in research literature, it is found that besides Coles's work (1990) there is dearth of such kind of literature concerning spiritual development among children. Yee-Ling Ng (2012) stated the importance of spirituality which is protected in legislation and policy directives in England and

Wales. Holder, Coleman Wallace (2010) reported that happiness and spirituality is strongly related with each other. They suggested that educational strategies such as volunteering and meditation can be utilized to increase higher spiritual development. Abi-Hashem; (2001) & Davies *et al.* (2006) reported that this human ability can be strengthened in schools where humanity, values and spirituality can be promoted and informal institutions such as family, society can also contribute to children's and adolescents' spiritual development. Love, P. & Talbot, D. (1999) had argued that student development theories are lacking of spiritual and its concerns conspicuously and suggested a definition, framework and directions for future practice and research for spiritual development for students by scrutinize. Mountain (2005) stated that pupil cherished school prayer and found satisfaction in praying together as a community. She had pointed out that prayers must be included in the curriculum as an academic component and as an experiential knowledge. Seo (2004) indicated that the Morning Prayer affected students positively and developed spiritual sentiments among participants. Mohanty (2019) focused on teacher training to transform that secular spiritual beliefs through trained teachers conducting debates, dialogue, sessions, discussions for spiritual development in schools.

Conceptual Framework

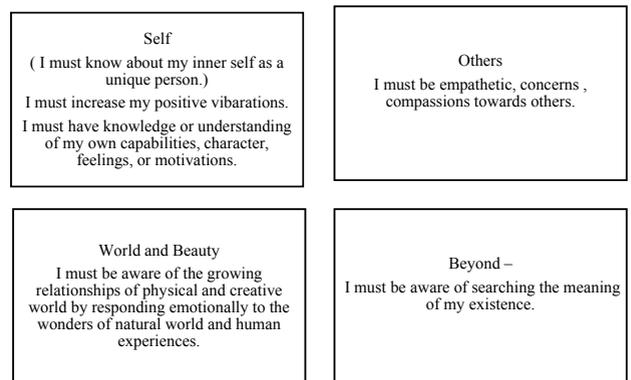
Meaning of Spiritual Development

OFSTED (1994) states: *“Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterized by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a nonmaterial dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality.”*

Spiritual Development is related to one's belief that builds their perception towards life, their surroundings, and respect for other people's feelings and values. Religion can be seen as the inspiration for Spirituality a means through which spirituality may be expressed. Spiritual Development is related to non-material life. It focuses on personal insight, values, meaning, and purpose and provides prospects to experience the “awe and wonder” of life. Spiritual development

relates to essential questions about life's connotation and perseverance, specifically existential questions. It is different from a person's religious beliefs. It is concerned with exploring the universal search for individual and collective identity. It is related to our responses to challenging human experiences of philosophical perspectives such as metaphysics (existence of human beings, death, and suffering) epistemology (knowledge), and axiology like beauty, good and evil.

Rebecca Nye (2009) had defined spirituality as Relational consciousness. Enlighten the spirit is spiritual development. It means consciousness of my relationship with:



Spirituality has some explored elements which includes:

- A Sense of Meaning and Purpose of life
- Consciousness with the Self
- Consciousness with Others
- Consciousness with some higher power beyond the self

Spirituality believes in the innate goodness of humankind rather than individual's personal progress which creates a peaceful and empathetic environment for all community of society. It requires looking for the best in every person and situation. It means one should think positive about him/her as well as others and proclaim this fact to the world through his/her noble and quite deeds. Qualities associated with spirituality include compassion, forgiveness, generosity, gratitude, humanity, kindness and a genuine love for mankind.

School Assembly: *“A high quality school assembly is one of the most important aspects of a school's curriculum. It's potential to nurture a positive school ethos that stresses care for self and others and the pursuit*

of all forms of excellence should not be underestimated. It powerfully nurtures the development of interpersonal intelligence”; Barahate (2014).

The school assemblies are nothing but a meeting or conference in schools where all the school members, be the students or teachers get together to pray and also make the entire day a positive one. The fact is that conducting a better and more impactful school assembly that helps schoolchildren to learn something is absolutely the best thing. Morning school assembly or school assembly is an integral part of the curriculum framework of any education system. “It is important to understand that morning school assembly is not just a formality and standing in long queues and reciting prayers or National Anthem, but it is something away from just prayers. All the activities of the morning school assembly are conducted by the school staff and students have a great influence in the early point of life. During the morning school assembly session, all the students stand at the appropriate place, as an essential part of an organization regardless of their age, culture, religion, sex, etc. which develops a feeling of unity that stays perpetually in the students’ minds and set up a happy society.

Identification of Three Spirits as a source of Spiritual Development

On the basis of relevant literature, researcher had identified three spirits which can be source of generating spiritual development among children. These are inner peace, good sense and humanity. These are called Spirits.

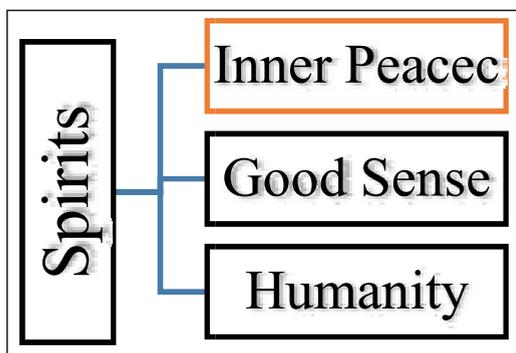


Fig. 1: Showing Spirits of Spiritual Development

Inner Peace: Inner peace is defined as peacefulness and composure which shows a composed face away from the effects of stress. Some cultures considered that serenity and calmness may be cultivated

through various practices such as inhalation exercise, prayer, meditation or yoga. Many spiritual practices call inner peace as an experience of knowing oneself (Wikipedia, 2007).

Good sense: According to Wikipedia, Good sense is a response of an individual behavior towards others or society. Individual behavior depends on the awareness and self-belief of oneself. Good sense helps an individual to behave consciously with others which also reflects in his/her personality.

Humanity: Humanity shows an individual’s capacity that he/she offers care, respect, tolerance, love and the habit of forgiveness which is helpful to promote genuine harmony and continuity for mankind. It is like an emotional aspect which creates pleasant relationships not only in a community but in entire world.

Research Methodology

Research Design: The present study was quasi-experimental in nature. Nonequivalent Control Group Posttest-Only Design was used in present study. Using the Nonequivalent Control Group Posttest-Only Design, the researcher measured to one dependent variable as Spiritual development following a treatment in one group and compares that measure to a nonequivalent control group that does not receive the treatment. The Nonequivalent control group would have some similar characteristics to the treatment group but participants would not be randomly assigned to this group, typically because it is not possible to do so.

Population and sample: In the present study, the investigator selected one school of Haryana. The experiment was conducted in Garmin Senior Secondary School, Hisar. The 128 students of class 5th to 8th were selected and divided into two groups i.e. Control group and Experimental group. There were 64 students in control group and 64 in experimental group.

Tools used: Intervention programme and Spiritual Assessment Tool.

(a) Intervention Programme: Basically, intervention programme deals with the psychological approaches of human being. In the present study, intervention programme of morning school assembly was planned through different activities. Activities of morning School assembly were administrated

in controlled environment for the students of experimental group as an Intervention Programme. After reviewing the literature, the proposed design has followed:

- ❑ Key outcomes of Spiritual Development were specified as Humanity, Inner Peace, Good Sense
- ❑ Associated activities are identified as Recitation of Bhajan, Meditation, Yoga, Reflecting Experiences, Narrating Stories of Great Thinkers, and Awareness towards Surroundings.
- ❑ Thirty experts were selected for the evaluation of contents of the intervention programme of morning school assembly from various specializations like; spirituality, religion, psychology, research, education etc.
- ❑ On the basis of suggestions and recommendations of the experts, intervention programme would be administrated on the students with the minor modification as per needed. According to day wise activities, a fifteen day roadmap was proposed for the implementation of intervention programme of morning school assembly. The activities of intervention programme are associated with the different spirits of the students.

(b) Spiritual Assessment Tool. In present study, descriptive statistics, reliability, construct validity are used for construction of spiritual development scale. The process of content validity is followed in the Spiritual Assessment scale of morning school assembly. In present study, descriptive statistics used to develop spiritual development scale.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Spiritual Development among Students (N = 64)

Descriptive Techniques	Statistics	Std. Error
Mean	36.84	.69086
95% Confidence Interval for mean	Lower Bound	35.46
	Upper Bound	38.22
5% Trimmed Mean	37.04	
Median	37.50	
Variance	30.54	
Std. Deviation	5.52	
Minimum	23.00	
Maximum	45.00	
Range	22.00	
Interquartile Range	8.00	

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Spiritual Development among Students (N=64) with respect to Gender

	N	Mean	S.D
Male	32	36.34	6.16
Female	32	37.56	4.52
Total	64		

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett’s Test for Spiritual Development

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.583
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	104.374
	Df	36
	Significance	.000

Table 4: Communalities for Spiritual Development

Item No.	Initial	Extraction
1	1.000	.840
2	1.000	.605
3	1.000	.652
4	1.000	.733
5	1.000	.654
6	1.000	.610
7	1.000	.731
8	1.000	.674
9	1.000	.842

**Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.*

Table 5: Latent Factors Determination for Spiritual development

Total	Initial Eigen Values		Extraction Sums of Squared Loading			Rotation Sums of Squared Loading		
	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
2.312	25.683	25.683	2.312	25.683	25.683	1.781	19.791	19.791
1.785	19.833	45.516	1.785	19.833	45.516	1.737	19.295	39.086
1.194	13.267	58.783	1.194	13.267	58.783	1.583	17.591	56.677
1.051	11.677	70.460	1.051	11.677	70.460	1.240	13.783	70.46
0.852	9.466	79.926						
.572	6.355	86.280						
.450	5.000	91.280						
.447	4.970	96.250						
.337	3.750	100						
		.000						

Table 6: Latent Factors Determination for Spiritual Development with Factor Loading

Factors	Item Number	Factor Loading
Humanity	2	.723
	5	.678
	6	.646
	7	.501
	9	.519
Inner Peace	3	.616
	4	.813
Good Sense	1	.552
	8	-.872

Procedure of Experimentation: Before commencement of the experiment various activities was planned to deliver the intervention programme of morning school assembly. The activities of the intervention programme are correlated with the spiritual development of the students. The students 5th to 9th class are divided into two groups i.e. control group and experimental group. One group participated in intervention programme of morning school assembly and second group were participated in general morning school assembly of the school. The post test was conducted on the control group and experiment group after the commencement of the experiment to know the level of spiritual development among students. In order to know the existing level of spiritual development among students after experiment data is collected through a standardized test.

Data Analyses and Interpretation

In order to know the existing level of spiritual development among school level students after experiment data is collected through a standardized test. The data is interpreted by different statistical techniques i.e. Mean, SD and t-value which is presented below. The data from the research was adopted and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between post-test of control group and experimental group regarding spiritual development of students.

Table 7 depicts the mean and standard deviation scores and t-value of the post-test of students of control group and experimental group regarding spiritual development at school level. The mean

scores of post-test of students of control group and experimental group are 36.85 and 40.14 respectively and standard deviation scores are 5.52 and 5.41 respectively.

Table 7: Mean, SD and t-value of post-test of control group and experimental group regarding spiritual development of students at school level

Group	Sample Size	Mean	Std	t-value
Experimental Group	64	36.85	5.52	3.40**
Control Group	64	40.14	5.41	

*significant difference at 0.05 level of significance.

The calculated t-value is 3.40 which is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypotheses i.e. ‘there is no significant difference between post-test of control group and experimental group regarding spiritual development at school level’ is rejected. It may be concluded that there is a significant difference of post-test of students of control group and experimental group regarding spiritual development. The mean score of post-test of students of experimental group is greater than control group. It shows that the level of spiritual development among students of experimental group is higher because they are participated in the intervention programme of morning school assembly while the students of control group are not participated in general morning school assembly of the school. Hence, level of spirituality among them is found lower. The results indicated that the significant effects of intervention programme of morning school assembly on spiritual development of the students were observed. *Bhajan* and meditation were associated with the spiritual development of the students. The positive effects of these activities have clearly been seen on students of experimental group.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between post-test of control group and experimental group regarding different dimensions of spiritual development of students at school level.

Table 8 reveals the mean, standard deviation and t-value of post-test of control group and experimental group regarding the different dimensions of spiritual development of student at school. The calculated t-values of different dimensions of

spiritual development i.e. Inner Peace, good sense and humanity are 2.73, 3.33 and 2.53 respectively.

Table 8: Mean, SD and t-value of post-test of control group and experimental group regarding different dimension of spiritual development of students at school level

Dimensions	Group	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Inner Peace	Control Group	7.95	1.52	2.73**
	Experimental Group	8.62	1.69	
Good Sense	Control Group	8.43	0.67	3.33**
	Experimental Group	9.15	1.01	
Humanity	Control Group	17.37	1.18	2.53**
	Experimental Group	18.12	1.84	

*significant difference at 0.05 level of significance.

These values are greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis is 'there is no significant difference between post-test of control group and experimental group regarding different dimensions of spiritual development of students at school level' is rejected. It means there is significant difference between post-test of control group and experimental group regarding different dimensions of spiritual development of students at school level.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between post-test of male and female students of experimental group regarding spiritual development at school level.

Table 9: Mean, SD and t-value of post-test of male and female students of experimental group regarding spiritual development at school level

Group	Sample Size	Mean	Std.	t-value
Male	32	30.06	6.39	3.30**
Female	32	42.21	3.13	

*significant difference at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 9 depicts the mean and standard deviation scores and t-value of the post-test of male and female students of experimental group regarding spiritual development at school level. The mean scores of post-test of male and female students of experimental group are 30.06 and 42.21 respectively and standard deviation scores are 6.39 and 3.13 respectively. The calculated t-value is 3.30 which

is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypotheses i.e. 'there is no significant difference between post-test of male and female students of experimental group regarding spiritual development at school level is rejected.

It may be concluded that there is a significant difference of post-test of male and female students of experimental group regarding spiritual development. The mean score of post-test of female students of experimental group is greater than male students of experimental group. It shows that the level of spiritual development among female students of experimental group is higher than male students of experimental group. Male and female students of experimental group both are participated in intervention programme of morning school assembly but female students higher than the male students because female students generally loyal and faithful with their cultural and religious beliefs. It means that there is significant effect of intervention programme of morning school assembly on the spiritual development of female students at school level.

The results showed that there is significant difference between post-test of control group and experimental group regarding different dimensions of spiritual development. The mean scores of experimental group are greater than the control group. It clearly shows the significant effect of the intervention programme of morning school assembly on the spirit of inner peace, good sense and humanity of the students. Inner peace, good sense and humanity were correlated with activities of intervention programme of morning school assembly. Changes regarding an inner peace, good sense have been clearly seen among students of experimental group.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Spirituality among Children and school assembly are connected with each other. School assembly can be a great source to generate spiritual development among children by incorporating proposed intervention programme in which some activities have been incorporated under the able guidance of their teachers. Three type of Spirits have been identified which can be source of generating spiritual development among children. These are inner peace, good sense and humanity. A

programme intervention for Morning assembly has been hypothesized in which dimensions have been incorporated through different activities. These are Prayers, Yoga and Meditation, Reflective Experiences, Narrating Stories of Great Thinkers, Awareness towards Surroundings etc. By doing experimental research, results indicated that the significant effects of intervention programme of morning school assembly on spiritual development of the students were observed.. The positive effects of these activities have clearly been seen on students of experimental group. With regard to School Assembly Intervention Programme, Egan (2001) in blog had proposed five component to promote the spiritual development among children through school assembly.

1. In school assembly, Teacher must encourage children to raise curiosity about the conservative beliefs for world and daily life experience.
2. By narrating stories, teacher can introduce various people struggle stories to make diverse range of human experience in diverse categories.
3. Teacher can introduce them to scholarly virtues.
4. Teachers can encourage them to feel the pleasure of self-sacrifice.
5. Teachers can engage them in seeing the ancient and how it fashioned the current.

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