PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY, SPIRITUALLITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

This research study examines how psychological security, spirituality, and women empowerment interact dynamically in the context of India, providing a thorough analysis of their complex interrelationships. This research paper underscores the importance of recognizing spirituality as a potent tool for empowerment, urging its inclusion in policy and practice. The findings not only contribute to the Indian context but also provide insights with broader implications for global peace and security efforts. This paper mainly focuses on Psychological and Mental Health Security. It will shed light on the potential of spirituality as a tool for empowerment and emotional security as well. A mixed-methods methodology will be used in this study, integrating qualitative and quantitative research techniques. It will involve the collection of data through a survey, as well as a comprehensive review of existing literature. This research contributes significantly by addressing the research gap in understanding the multifaceted relationship between psychological security, spirituality, and women's empowerment within the Indian context. The research provides policymakers, practitioners, and activists with useful insights. In the end, this research offers a roadmap for transformation, paving the way for women's empowerment and well-being in India.

KEYWORDS: Psychology, Security, Spirituality, Women's Empowerment, Interrelationships

INTRODUCTION

A person's psychological security is a prerequisite for his or her growth in the course of life, the prevention of psychosomatic diseases, and the discovery of individual potential. In addition, a psychologically secure person is the one who "builds his own life in the context of unity with the society, nature, the universe, delivers on the capabilities, ideals and aspirations through a system of meaningful life regulation, is ready to ensure his own safety and health through the transformation of dangers into a factor of his own development"(Hajek, and König, 2018).

The interaction between psychological security, spirituality, and women's empowerment is a multifaceted and complex relationship that has a significant impact on women's lives in India and elsewhere. Spirituality, which entails religious beliefs and practices, and psychological security, which includes a sense of emotional well-being and self-esteem, are connected. For many women, spirituality provides a source of resiliency, deep connection to a greater purpose, and inner strength. It fosters self-acceptance and provides comfort through trying times. However, psychological security is crucial to women's empowerment since it supports their confidence, ability to make decisions, and participation in society.

As spirituality fosters emotional stability, offers support in the face of hardship, and adds to psychological security, this interconnectivity becomes clear. Practices like meditation and mindfulness, often associated with spirituality, aid in stress management and anxiety reduction. Women who find identity and comfort in their spiritual convictions may feel more psychologically secure. Additionally, this feeling of security gives women the confidence to take on difficulties, pursue education and professional possibilities, and deal with social norms. Spirituality builds self-confidence in women, which enables them to make the right decisions.

In psychological security, spirituality may act as a catalyst for women's empowerment. It fills people with the principles of justice, compassion, and equality, inspiring women to fight for their rights and dismantle ingrained gender prejudices. Spiritual activities help women become more self-aware and confident, giving them the inner strength to face cultural pressures. As a result of the interconnectivity of psychological safety, spirituality, and women's empowerment, they become advocates of women's rights, social change agents, and for gender equality.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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The United Nations has defined women's empowerment as 'the process through which women gain ownership of and control over their lives by expanding their options.*(UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women - Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth)* On the one hand, it has been demonstrated that an effective political, economic, social, and cultural environment contributes to an individual's sense of security. On the other hand, a society's security is a result of the security of its members as a whole. It has been demonstrated that enhancing a society's psychological safety is essential to ensuring the wellness of various demographic groups. Additionally, it has been shown that psychological factors, including individual and group characteristics, influence how people perceive and judge their level of security. Today's security psychology may be regarded as a rather resilient, cogent, and comprehensive body of knowledge that incorporates the most important levels of contemporary cognition.(Zotova, & Karapetyan,2018).

In the context of women's empowerment, the idea of psychological security is essential. An individual's entire sense of emotional well-being, self-esteem, and confidence are referred to as psychological security. This idea is of utmost significance to women on their path to empowerment. It acts as the unnoticeable framework on which their empowerment is constructed. A woman is more inclined to embrace her self-worth and make herself heard in all spheres of life if she feels psychologically secure.

SPIRITUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

To understand the interconnection between spirituality and women's empowerment, the researcher defined what spirituality is and how it differs from religion. 'Although the terms spirituality and religion are frequently used interchangeably, they are not the same. Some writers assert that although religion comprises a structured organization with rituals and practices centered on a higher force or God, spirituality involves a personal search for meaning in life.'*(Spirituality/Religiosity: A Cultural and Psychological Resource among Sub-Saharan African Migrant Women with HIV/AIDS in Belgium.,2016, July 22. NCBI)* For some people, spirituality and religion may be associated, but not for atheists or yoga practitioners, for instance.(Tanyi, 2002) 'Healthy spirituality gives a sense of peace, wholeness and balance among the physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of our lives. However, for most people the path to such spirituality passes through struggles and suffering, and often includes experiences that are frightening and painful.' *(What is spirituality? Is it different from religion? What if I don't go to church or belong to a faith community?)*

METHODOLOGY

To gain a deeper understanding of this concept, an online survey was conducted with the participation of 200 respondents, comprising 123 males and 72 females. Additionally, 5 respondents chose not to mention their gender The survey centered around three main questions concerning spirituality and women's empowerment. The questionnaire is as 1.Can spirituality bring about changes in the status of women? 2.How can spirituality contribute to women's empowerment? 3. How can spirituality be used as a tool for social and political change?

DISCUSSION

Table-1: Can spirituality bring about changes in the status of women?

Options	percentage	No. of respondents
Yes	59.50	119
No	4.50	9
Maybe	31.50	63
No answer	4.50	9

Out of a total of 200 respondents, 119 individuals, constituting 59.50% of the participants, believe that spirituality can bring about changes in the status of women. On the other hand, 9 respondents, accounting for 4.50% of the total, expressed the view that spirituality cannot bring about such changes. Meanwhile, 63 participants, making up 31.50% of the respondents, were uncertain, indicating a possibility (maybe) regarding the impact of spirituality on the status of women. Additionally, 9 respondents (4.50%) chose not to provide an answer to the question.

Table-2: How can spirituality contribute to women's empowerment?

Options	Percentage	No. of respondents
By providing a sense of purpose and meaning	18.5	36
By promoting self-awareness and self-confidence	36.4	71
By encouraging connection and community-building with other women	21	
All of the above	60.5	118

According to the responses gathered:

• By providing a sense of purpose and meaning: 36 individuals, constituting 18.5% of the respondents, believe that spirituality can contribute to women's empowerment by offering a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

• By promoting self-awareness and self-confidence: 71 participants, accounting for 36.4% of the total, stated that

spirituality plays a role in women's empowerment by promoting self-awareness and self-confidence.

- By encouraging connection and community-building with other women: respondents, making up 21% of the participants, think that spirituality contributes to women's empowerment by encouraging connection and community-building with other women.

- All of the above: A significant majority of 118 individuals, constituting 60.5% of the respondents, agreed that spirituality can empower women through all the mentioned means: providing a sense of purpose and meaning, promoting self-awareness and self-confidence.

How can spirituality be used as a tool for social and political change?

Table- 3

Options	Percentage	No. of respondents
By inspiring individuals to take action and make a difference in their communities	19.01	50
By promoting values of equality, justice, and compassion	25.48	67
By challenging oppressive systems and structures	12.17	32
All of the above	37.64	99
Not useful enough	5.70	15

Within the five options mentioned in the Google form, 37.64% of respondents selected 'all of the options,' including 'inspiring individuals to take action and make a difference in their communities,' 'promoting values of equality, justice, and compassion,' and 'challenging oppressive systems and structures.' The majority of respondents viewed spirituality as a tool capable of empowering women by promoting these values and, consequently, driving social and political change. Only 15 out of 200 respondents chose the 'not useful enough' option, indicating strong agreement among a large number of respondents regarding the utility of spirituality as a tool for promoting women's empowerment. These diverse perspectives highlight the multifaceted role of spirituality as a driving force behind social and political change, encompassing inspiration, values, and activism.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY AND SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality and psychological security interact in complex ways. By giving people a source of resiliency, emotional stability, and inner strength, spirituality can aid in psychological security. Spiritual activities can help people feel more at ease, relieve stress and anxiety, and improve their overall emotional health. In turn, this strengthens psychological security. 'High levels of spirituality and religiosity have reportedly been shown to aid HIV/AIDS patients in managing their condition by changing their behavior and lowering anxiety and other mental issues that could develop as a result of their HIV positivity.(Abu-Raiya, 2013) There is some research that suggests spirituality and religion may be damaging for those who are psychotic.' Indeed, spiritual and religious issues may contribute to both the issue and the solution: According to some accounts, organized religion may be a cause of suffering, shame, or persecution. For some patients, the religion community was a helpful tool for healing and was warm and accepting; for others, it was stigmatizing and rejecting. Spiritual practices inspired some people while burdening others. 'Some people found strength and solace in their religion, while others felt let down and discouraged.(Fallot, 1998) Ten methods that religion might enhance mental health were suggested by Koenig.'(Koenig, 2005) Therefore, religion and spirituality: 1 Spread a positive point of view. 2 Assist in making sense of challenging circumstances. 3. Provide direction and meaning.4. Encourage healthy coping methods. 5 Increase your social network. 6 Encourage 'other-directedness'. 7 Assist in letting go of the demand for control. 8 Offer and promote forgiveness. 9 Encourage feeling grateful. 10 Give hope.(Cook & Powell,2022).

RESULT

The research paper provides a comprehensive overview of the interplay between psychological security, spirituality, and women's empowerment. It is well-structured and covers key concepts related to each of these areas. The paper begins by defining 'women's empowerment' as the process through which women gain control over their lives and expand their options. It highlights the importance of an effective political, economic, social, and cultural environment in contributing to an individual's sense of security. Psychological security is crucial to women's empowerment as it influences their self-esteem, confidence, and overall well-being. The distinction between spirituality and religion is explained, with spirituality being described as a personal quest for meaning in life, often separate from organized religious practices. The paper emphasizes that spirituality can play a significant role in women's empowerment by providing a sense of purpose, self-awareness, and self-confidence. It also explores how spirituality can be a tool for social and political change. The paper outlines the methodology used, including an online survey with 200 respondents, which aimed to explore the interconnection between spirituality and women's empowerment. The survey focused on four key questions related to the role of spirituality in changing the status of women and promoting empowerment.

The paper presents the survey results, highlighting the percentage of respondents who believe that spirituality can bring about changes in the status of women (59.50%). It also discusses how spirituality can contribute to women's empowerment by promoting self-awareness and self-confidence (36.4%). The survey results show that a majority of respondents believe in the positive impact of spirituality on women's empowerment and social change. The paper also emphasized the complex interaction between spirituality and psychological security. It explains how spirituality can enhance psychological security by providing emotional stability and inner strength. It also acknowledges that the relationship between spirituality and mental health can vary, with both positive and negative outcomes reported.

CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment involves expanding women's choices and control over their lives. Psychological security, encompassing emotional well-being, self-esteem, and confidence, is crucial for women's empowerment. A survey with 200 participants explored the link between spirituality and women's empowerment. Results showed that 59.50% believed spirituality could positively impact women's status. Spirituality was seen as a tool for empowerment, primarily in promoting self-awareness and self-confidence (36.4%). Spirituality can promote values of equality, justice, and compassion, motivating individuals to drive social and political change. Spirituality and psychological security are interrelated, with spirituality enhancing emotional stability. Recognizing the importance of psychological security and spirituality in women's empowerment is a key takeaway. Future research can further explore spirituality's role in women's empowerment and mental health across diverse cultures. This research highlights spirituality as a valuable resource for women's empowerment, fostering gender equality and positive societal change.

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