

## **DEVELOPING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES: SOME REFLECTIONS FROM SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Akancha Srivastava\***

---

### ***Abstract***

Throughout the lifespan the individual is faced with many challenges in the form of crisis. The greatest learning in life is attained when an individual emerges out from these vicissitudes without being psychologically contaminated, fatigued and exhausted. In the case of adversity the individual utilizes the psychological resources to experience real meaning of life. Psychological resources are the ability of individual to utilize their own inner psychological strength for maintaining well-being, contentment, and satisfaction. These are open to change in the process of lifespan development. These psychological resources could be enhanced bringing spirituality into practice. The focus of spirituality is on certain 'way of being' the inner self i.e. the Aatma. This paper is an attempt to understand how psychological resources could be enhanced through adopting the spiritual aspect of existence.

***Keywords:*** *Psychological resource, Spirituality, Hope Optimism*

---

**\* Assistant Professor, Amity Institute of Behavioural & Allied Sciences, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, Malhaur (Near Railway Station), Gomti Nagar Extension, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**

With the work of Seligman, the field of positive psychology came into existence. According to Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5, “The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.” Researchers in the domain of positive psychology have largely concentrated on the role played by psychological resources in human thriving. Owing to the field of positive psychology the pertinent theme that emerged very lucidly mirrors it as the composition of some constructive reflections of life. Positive psychology emerged as the answer to many of the life’s existential crisis. This relaxing discipline started expanding its root to varied sub disciplines and as a consequence it came at workplaces also. Drawing from positive psychology, which aims in developing individual’s positive psychological resources. Positive psychological resource can be defined as individual’s own inner strength for ensuring subjective well-being which is sovereign of any tangible material prosperity.

Drawing from the humanistic approach of psychology, Roger (1946) propounded that people could only fulfill their potential for growth if they had a basically positive view of themselves (positive self regard). This can only happen if they have the unconditional positive regard of others – if they feel that they are valued and respected without reservation by those around them. The problem that most people have, as Rogers saw it, was that most people don’t perceive the positive regard of others as being unconditional. Rather, they think they will only be loved and valued if they meet certain conditions of worth (e.g. behaving well, passing lots of exams etc.) These conditions of worth create incongruity within the self between the real self (how the person is) and the ideal self (how they think they should be). The person tries to close the gap between the real and idea self but most people do this in unhelpful ways, possibly by chasing achievements that won’t actually make them content or by distorting their view of themselves or

the world. The basic assumption of Humanistic approach relies on the fact that humans have enough potentiates and it is up to them to realize the same.

These psychological resources will enhance the person to grow at a psychological level. This means that the person is in touch with the here and now, his or her subjective experiences and feelings, continually growing and changing (Rogers, 1961). Psychological resources helps the person to be in contact with, his or her subjective experiences and feelings, continually growing and changing ( Rogers, 1951). Researchers have shown that psychological resource in the form of gratitude correlated positively with emotional and instrumental social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, active coping, and planning. Gratitude correlated negatively with behavioural disengagement, self-blame, substance use, and denial (Wood, Joseph & Linley, 2007)

The purpose of positive psychology is to develop, enhance ad work uupon the varius psychological strengths within the individual. These strengths are built-in capacities for certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Everyone possesses all the character strengths associated with the six virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, to a greater and lesser extent. At workplace Psychological capital or PsyCap (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans et al. 2007) is a form of psychological strenghts. This intricate construct has been defined as “an individual’s positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success” (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 3).

Recent researches have shown that employees who are more hopeful, optimistic, efficacious, and resilient have higher probability to “weather the storm” of the form of vibrant, global environmental contexts confronting most organizations today better than their counterparts with lower PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap connotes to “who you are”, instead of what areor who you know ((Luthans et al., 2004)

India is a country which is known for its peacemaking negotiations. The historical antecedents of India have reflected the fact that India has indomitable will power to fight against any atrocities. An intriguing question which nearly bewilders all of us is that how can a country that is still be counted as a developing country can rise to a threshold where peace harmony and spirit of life is always celebrated. Nevertheless India is strong because it is the hub of spiritual thinking. It draws its strength by focusing on the inner sense of beauty i.e spirituality. Spirituality has been treasured in the Indian civilization from the beginning of time. Spirituality has been defined in many ways “the unique inner search for the fullest personal development through participation into transcendent mystery” (Delbecq, 1999). Hodge (2001) directly defined spirituality as a relationship with God, or whatever was held to be the Ultimate, that fostered a sense of meaning, purpose and mission in life. Research suggests that spirituality provides varied perspectives as its is derived from Ratnakar & Nair, (2012) opines that, “there seemed to be as many dimensions/ingredients of spirituality, as there are approaches - or people that are making these approaches”. Patnaik (2018) in his book, *My Gita*, illustrates the fact of *dehi* and *deha*. Accordingly *dehi* is the immortal Atma , that does not require security and hence does not care for limitations, on the other hand *deha* is the mortal body.

Spirituality follows the inner path or looking inward. Bhawuk (2011) maintains the fact that the metaphysical self, Atman, is the real self. This metaphysical self is embodied in a biological self, and through the caste system right at birth, the biological self acquires a social self. Linking it with the management of psychological strength one major cause of not managing our failures is our too much affiliation with our social self. At the time of failure the individual has the tendency to attribute the failure to the social self and as a result feeling of guilt and alienations becomes the pertinent emotional upheaval.

To overcome these intense negative emotions a strategy known as “looking inward at the moment” should be followed. By looking inward the present moment one should first analyze and understand the present moment and should consciously remind ourself that this failure is only one obstacle, in the face of success and the real self which is atman is pure without any contamination and is free of any physical failures. In the paradigm of artificial intelligence the human mind draws a close analogy with computer system. As the systems approach needs

commands to be entered to process the information correctly so does the mind. The mind in itself is in a turbulent state, to control our mind and to inhibit the the processing of toxic thoughts one must consciously remind themselves that failures should not be attributed to the social self as it is the real self which defines us and not the social or biological self. Kattimani (2012) explains the importance of Spirituality among students and suggested spirituality can be taught by developing modules so that students can connect between spirituality and health significance.

The various approaches of spirituality can suggest certain ways through these psychological strengths can be increased. Spirituality focuses only on looking at the inward. In spirituality, the one person which each of us can control is ourself. Spirituality focuses on “I the soul”. Researchers have shown that resilience develops as people grow up and gain better thinking and self-management skills and more knowledge. In order to develop resilience, one should constant remind him/her self. According to BrahmaKumaris, (2018) to manage and understand the mind is the first aspect towards enlightenment, and so the mastery of one’s own mind is the tool to release the self from suffering. Expanding it, to develop resilience a self reflective mode should always be . This further extends the view that one should consciously remind oneself that whatever failure has happened was for “that moment”. By adopting a practice of this type the mind will learn to produce progressive thought thereby ignoring the toxic thought.

“Hope includes a belief that one knows how to reach one’s goals (Pathways) and a belief that one has the motivation to use those pathways to reach one’s goals (Agency)’ (Snyder, 2002). Evidence from the literature shows that hope shares many overlapping domains with self efficacy and optimism. In self-efficacy thinking, people are speculated to examine the contingencies in a detailed goal attainment situation (outcome expectancy); in hopeful thinking, the focal point is self examination of one’s overall ability to produce workable plans required to reach one’s goals (Bronk, et.al , 2009). Similarly according to Scheier and Carver (1985) optimism maintains that people perceive of themselves as being able to move toward desirable goals and away from undesirable ones.

Owing to the studies and understanding spirituality has emerged as a way or approach to life. Spirituality is all about becoming aware about the soul conscious state. This consciousness provides inner psychological strength. Psychological strengths are open of development and measurement. Enhanced psychological strengths provide better vantage point of life. Through practicing various ways of spirituality psychological strengths like hope, optimism, resilience confidence, and self efficacy could be increased and enhanced. An enhanced psychological strength helps to create and find out the meaningful engagement in life and subsequently the person deciphers purpose of life.

To validate our understanding, future studies could be planned by using various activities stemming from spiritual approach. Various intervention programmes and modules could be developed in the form of interventions. These interventions would help in developing and building psychological strengths

## References

- Bhawuk,D.(2011) Spirituality and Indian Psychology. Anthony J. Marsella (Ed) New York, NY. Springer
- Brahmakumari (2018) <http://www.brahmakumaris.org/8-iweb/253-en-gb-teachings-and-way-of-life>
- Bronk, K. C., Hill, P. L., Lapsley, D. K., Talib, T. L., & Finch, H. (2009). Purpose, hope, and life satisfaction in three age groups. *Journal of Positive Psychology: Dedicated to furthering research and promoting good practice*, 4(6), 500-510.
- Hodge, D. R. (2001). Spiritual assessment: a review of major qualitative methods and a new framework for assessing spirituality. *Social Work*, 46(3), 203-214
- Kattimani, S.(2012) Spirituality and medical education in India: are we ready?. *Journal of Research in Medical Sciences*, vol. 17, no. 5, pp. 500–501, 2012
- Luthans, F., Youssef, C.M. & Avolio, B.J. (2007).Psychological Capital: Developing the Human Competitive Edge, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Luthans, F., Luthans, K.W. and Luthans, B.C.(2004). Positive Psychological Capital: Beyond Human and Social Capital. *Business Horizons*, 47, 45-50.

Patnaik, D.(2018) My Gita.Ne Delhi, Rupa Publications.

Ratnakar, R., & Nair, S. (2012). A Review of Scientific Research on Spirituality. *Business Perspectives and Research*, 1(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2278533720120101>

Rogers, C. R. (1946). Significant aspects of client-centered therapy. *American Psychologist*, 1,415-422.

Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist`s View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications and Theory*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1985). Optimism, coping, and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies. *Health Psychology*, 4, 219 –247.

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5–14

Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4).

Wood, A. M., Joseph, S., & Linley, P. A. (2007). Gratitude: The parent of all virtues. *The Psychologist*, 20, 18–21.