

THE IMPACT OF SPIRITUALITY ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality is gaining traction in recent times. The significance of human development has enhanced the need for spirituality. Our current lifestyle and education has led to increase in individual wants. With a view to maximize human potential for all-round development of an individual, this paper focuses on the role of education, health, and capability of an individual in the context of spirituality. Human development is evaluated in this direction. As we become increasingly concerned about our wholesome wellbeing, there is an upsurge in spirituality becoming a matter of interest for individuals. In this regard, there was a significant momentum of the concept of workplace spirituality since 1990s, in which individuals seek to live their faith and spiritual values. People find nourishment for both vertical and horizontal dimensions of their spirituality at work and in life. Human transformation embedded with spiritual input results in holistic human capital formation. In view of this, we explore the untapped resource of spiritual potential of people i.e. spiritual quotient and how it affects our spiritual health, comprising of values, positive thinking, trust, faith, integrity, etc. Spiritual health, combined with equanimity as a state of balance, in turn, support and enhance human development. This paper looks in to the link between spirituality and human development.

KEYWORDS

Impact of Spirituality, Human Development

INTRODUCTION

Life can be looked at from the points of view of material and spiritual, where they represent two wings of a bird – a bird, which flies on its two wings, guided by its tail, our heart. Every human being has a duty to society, a 'dharma'.

As we move through various stages of life, there is a lot of experience one gathers, which, in turn, supports our daily living. Even though human development takes a centre stage, it has several components that influence. Development of body, mind and character [1] leads to holistic growth of an individual. These parameters support and enhance our quality of life. Often, health, related to mind and body, is dependent on the way we live.

"Only a healthy mind can sustain a healthy body." P. Rajagopalachari [1]. Brown [2] sums up, at its best, "Spirituality provides direction, connectedness and wholeness." (Brooke and Parker, 2009) [3]. Thus, to maximize human potential in the areas of education, health, and capability of an individual in the context of spirituality, a holistic development of individual becomes imperative. Balancing our tendencies and needs, that is, the need for material life together with the need for spiritual life, requires that we move little by little, like a man who is walking on a tight rope [4]. A simple and balanced life is a result of meditation – it helps regulate us [5]. "The goal

of human life is evolution. And the crux of life – balance: balance between having and enjoying, knowing and feeling, being and becoming, life and death.” P. Rajagopalachari [6] [7].

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Human development represents a broader concept, many of its elements overlap significantly with the more traditional notion of human capital.” (Ranis, 2004) [8] Human capital cannot be separated from the individual; it is augmented or diminished through everyday activities.

“Economic development can be seen as a process through which persons and communities learn to care for and use the resources that sustain life...Here, genuine economic growth...takes into account...the physical, mental, social, cultural and spiritual lives. In the ultimate sense, spiritual capital may be the third or missing leg in the stool which includes its better known relatives, namely: human and social capital.” (Malloch, 2003) [9].

A report by UNDP establishes, “True development has to be ‘people-centered’. When development is defined in terms of human welfare, it means that people are put first. This ‘people-oriented’ view of development is to be called human development.”(Human Development Report Office, 2015) [10]

Acclaimed economist, Amartya Sen states the basic focus of, “Human development, as an approach, is...advancing the richness of human life, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live, which is only a part of it.” [11] He explains, “Income is one of the factors that contribute to welfare and freedom, but not the only factor.” [11] Thus, GDP is not a measure of human welfare; it can be considered a component, besides also being an indicator of welfare. (Oulton, 2012) [12]

Considering the distinct impact of human development on economic growth in the areas of education and health, Ranis [8] shows how productivity, innovation, technology and incomes improve through investment and enhancements in the fields of education and health, when looked at in tandem with the choice of technology and overall policy environment.

“Theodore Schultz, an economist, coined the term human capital (1961).” (Hewlett) [13] Hung et al. described human capital to be an “intangible resource”, which “has been viewed and defined by researchers and organizations in a number of different ways.” (Hung, et al., 2009) [14] Middlebrooks & Noghiu [15] described human capital as “value created through investment in human skills.”

“The individual and collective capacities generated by a spiritual orientation to life, can be termed “spiritual capital.” (Palmer & Wong, 2013) [16]

“Spiritual capital in this sense is also defined as “spiritual intelligence” [Zohar, Marshall, 2004; Wingrove, Rock, 2008]...Spiritual intelligence is at the root of our aspirations, our ambitions, our associations, and our pain” [Zohar, 1997, p. 10].” (Zymonik & Dobrowolska, 2015) [17]

Thus, the “definition of spiritual capital combines realms of “human capital,” “social capital,” and “cultural capital” as defined by Becker, Coleman, Bordieu and others.” (Iannaccone & Klick, 2003) [18] Spiritual Capital is mainly derived from Spiritual Quotient. Further added is the concept of Spiritual Quotient.

“Spiritual Quotient is human beings’ intelligence or capacity to link them closer to spiritual characteristics and manifestations such as compassion, meaning and purpose, consciousness (self awareness), vision and values.” (Tischler, Biberman, and McKeage, 2002) [19]. The concept of SQ is now increasingly gaining importance, as we see in the world today.

Akhtar, et al. [20] note that “SQ is the ultimate intelligence with which people address and solve the problems associated with meaning and value. It is the intelligence that has the force to help people use their actions and lives in a wider, richer and meaning-giving context. Moreover, promoting the ethical values, most of the organizations focus on ethics training programs aimed at increasing employee’s ethical behavior in organization.

To maintain the SQ in an orderly way, it is necessary to focus on Spiritual Health, for it to naturally lead to, Spiritual Wellness.

Spiritual Wellness involves values and beliefs that provide a purpose in our lives. While different individuals may have different views of what spiritualism is, it is generally considered to be the search for meaning and purpose in human existence, leading one to strive for a state of harmony with oneself and others while working to balance inner needs with the rest of the world. (University of California, Riverside) [21]

“Spiritual Wellness is not independent of physical and mental wellness.” (Jeitschko, et al., 2009) [22] “Wellness is much more than merely physical health, exercise or nutrition. It is the full integration of states of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.” (University of California, Riverside) [21]

EQUANIMITY

Buddha described equanimity as a mind that is abundant, immeasurable and without hostility or ill-will. [23]When we dedicate time for ourselves, for relaxation, reflection and introspection, we develop patience and tolerance within, and allow the mind to gather and organize itself. This happens through the power of observation. A sense of simplicity sets in, as we continue to let our spiritual wellness

develop. When there is simplicity, then balance, harmony and integration are possible.

Thus, equanimity can be described as the evenness and steadiness of mind, irrespective of the circumstance. Vajda [23] considers equanimity to have two aspects: the power of observation and an inner balance. This inner balance stems from maintaining one's temperament in life, thereby, emphasizing the importance of moderation in daily life. Vajda [23] highlights certain qualities, which result in developing equanimity, such as heightened sense of wellbeing, faith in terms of confidence, understanding or wisdom, integrity, and a well-developed mind that reflects stability, balance and strength.

"Samatvam Yoga Ucyate" – "Evenness of Mind is Yoga" (Bhagavad Gita 2:48) [24]
"Evolution of the mind is about cultivating a balanced state and moving from thinking to feeling." (Patel, 2016) [25]

EXPLORING PARAMETERS OF STUDY

EDUCATION

"Education is for Life and Life is for Evolution." P. Rajagopalachari [26] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "education" is derived from the Latin roots, 'educio' and 'educare'. Educare means "to rear or to bring up". Educare itself can be traced to the latin root words, "e" and "ducere". Together, "e-ducere" means to "pull out" or "to lead forth" (The Educare Institute) [27]. According to P. Rajagopalachari [26], "The real definition of education is to draw out from inside yourselves that which is lying hidden, unused as potential material." When discussing the parameter, 'education', a number of terms spring up, such as schooling, learning, knowledge, quality of education, intellectual wellness.

In school, "the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes." (Bernard, 1999) [28]. To discuss or define quality in context of the parameter, education, it is important to note the difference between 'education' and 'schooling', as Barrett, et al. [29] rightly point out. A broad definition of "education" from Hirst and Peters (1970: 19), defines education as "the development of desirable qualities in people...Schooling, on the other hand, is about providing the service of "education"" (Barrett, et al., 2006) [29]. On quality, or excellence of education, (in context of tertiary level of education), Ernest L. Boyer [30] states how through a broad intellectual foundation, by ensuring quality of education, scholars must be liberally educated. In today's world, as one gravitates more and more towards a materialistic attitude, the measure of success is also becoming increasingly related to what one has, as opposed to what one is. Thus, we are more focused on ambition, which relates to what one can achieve, or have, as opposed to focusing on aspiration, which is to become.

With an aim to establish importance of education in human development, P. Rajagoapalachari [26] explains “Education really means to draw out of you, your best, in terms of your potentials, best in the physical way, that is, to prepare you to be fit citizens who can serve society, serve your brothers and sisters, to draw out of you, your mental and intellectual potential”. “Education is manifestation of perfection which is already within us.” Swami Vivekananda [31] “We want that education by which character is formed, strength of the mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which, one can stand on one’s own feet.” Swami Vivekananda [32]

HEALTH

World Health Organization (WHO) developed a definition of health in 1946 as ‘a state of complete physical, emotional and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’. “This broad definition of health also includes the concept of wellbeing.” (Goodacre, et al., 2009) [33] Thus, an individual’s health can be subdivided into three categories:

- Physical health – well being of the body
- Mental health – cognitive and emotional well being
- Spiritual health – well being of the spirit.

Foster and Keller [34] reviewed literature to highlight the difference between concepts of health and wellness. “Myers, Sweeney, and Wittmer (2005, p. 252) defined wellness as being “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which the body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community.” We focus on the concept of wellness in the context of human development; one notes its several dimensions. “Physical wellness is the active and continuous effort to maintain the optimum level of physical activity and focus on nutrition, and includes self-care and healthy lifestyle choices” [34]. University of California goes on to explain physical wellness as the “ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows us to get through our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress” [21]. “Intellectual wellness is the perception of, and motivation for, one’s optimal level of stimulating intellectual activity by the continual acquisition, use, sharing, and application of knowledge in a creative and critical fashion. This is for both personal growth of the individual and for the betterment of society”. [38] In context of wellness at workplace, “Spirituality in the workplace is about individuals and organizations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to contribute to society in a meaningful way” [35]. Emotional Wellness is the ability to, “not only understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring” (University of California, Riverside) [21], but also “cope with stress, as well as to have a positive attitude about life, oneself, and the future” [34]. Research proves how emotional distress

creates susceptibility to physical illness. To strive for balance at physical and mental level, mind as an instrument connects us to the Nature within. Mind, if it is in perfect balance, not only brings about physical wellbeing, but also helps us to lead a balanced happy life. The willingness to be orderly, regular and systematic helps us restore balance in us [30]. When one connects to the nature within, using the mind as a tool, through spiritual practices of meditation, prayer and other self-reflection practices such as introspection, observing and understanding the self, one allows oneself to be that which one really is. When one discovers and willingly accepts one's true nature, one set off on the path of change stemming first within, then it engages the scope of spiritual wellness.

Thus, when one recognizes the significant impact that our thoughts, actions, and behaviors have on our wellness, and uses the will to implement healthful habits, while avoiding destructive habits, one move closer to optimal health and wellness, thereby contributing positively to human development.

CAPABILITY

“Capability reflects a person's freedom to choose between different ways of living. The underlying motivation—the focusing on freedom—is well captured by Marx's claim that what we need is ‘replacing the domination of circumstances and chance over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances.’” (Sen, 1990) [36].

While the aim of development is to expand people's capabilities, the individual has the responsibility of choosing which capabilities to make use of, which to develop, and so on.

PERSONALITY

Wallace [37] proposed that personality comprises of a set of abilities. Paulhus and Martin [38] distinguished between personality abilities and capabilities. Alkahtani, et al. [63] examined and established in their study the relationship the impact personality has on capabilities of individuals to bring about change. There are different dimensions to capabilities, as tabulated by Stewart [39]. These include the categories of well-being considered above in the parameter, ‘health’.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT, SELF-MANAGEMENT, SELF-DEVELOPMENT

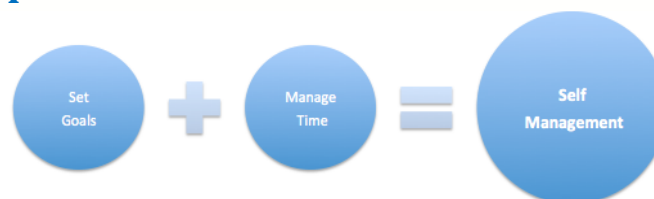


Figure 1: Concept of Self-Management

Development of personality encompasses the vital concepts of self-management and self-development. Self-development is a process by which a person's character or abilities are gradually developed. Self-management stems from self-development. Self-management is defined as taking responsibility for one's own behavior and well-being. The underlying bridge is discipline.

When one engages in a continual process of self-observation, i.e. when one taps into knowledge, understands through analysis, and introspects, one is able to prioritize and implement, thereby enabling holistic decision-making. This contributes to self-development. A formula to define self-development:

Knowledge + Understanding + Implementation = Self-Development

Thus, it becomes crucial to know one's strengths and weaknesses (in relation to time management), develop a positive attitude, a plan to achieve, develop persistence, and set goals. It doesn't matter how many resources you have, if you don't know how to deploy them to their best advantage. Thus, developing capabilities through one's personality development contributes positively to human development.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH, VALUES, SPIRITUAL QUOTIENT

"Empirical work establishes spiritual health as a correlate of physical and mental health" [22]. Spiritual health correlates to spiritual wellness, which enables an inner compass to guide one through the process of human development, thereby enriching the development process. The inner compass entails faith, values, beliefs, principles, and morals. On the journey towards self-development, a set of values emerges from a combination of one's background, experiences, and an evolving sense of self. As a result of these values, one's attitude and subsequently, behavior emerges. When our core values are such that they naturally align with the nature within, one is likely to have a meaning and purpose in life.

Certain principles stated by Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, in his book, 'Commentary on Ten Maxims', enable one to create our goals and values, to lead a spiritual way of life. Through a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors, entailing discipline, forgiveness, gratitude, honesty, acceptance, and a prayerful approach to life, there arises a natural sense of responsibility to the self and towards others.

Principles of Life

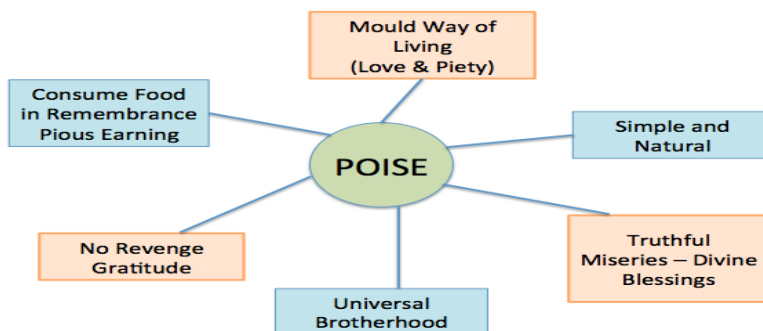


Figure 2: Principles of Life – Pursuit of Inner Self-Excellence (POISE)

As a result, spiritual quotient comes into play. It gives people potential to assess and understand that one course of action or one way of life is more meaningful than the other [40]. Stead & Stead indicated that people look for meaning and values in what they do as people are driven by questions that why we exist and what is the meaning of our lives [41].

QUALITY OF LIFE

World Health Organization defines quality of life as individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of their environment” [42].

“People are the real wealth of nations. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.” Mahbub ul Haq [43]. Quality of life leads to happiness and a feeling of well-being. “When one rates his or her life as having quality, one will concurrently have a sense of self-esteem and pride regarding his or her life.” (Meeberg, 1993) [44]

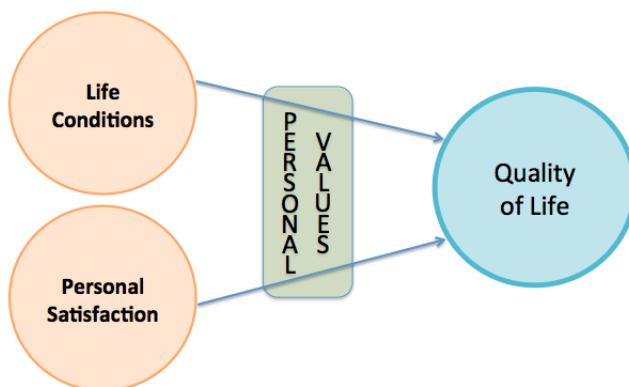


Figure 3: Quality of Life

“Quality of life often seems to be an umbrella term, covering a variety of concepts, such as functioning, health status, perceptions, life conditions, behavior, happiness, lifestyle, symptoms, etc.” (Moons et al., 2006, p. 891) [45]. “Coverage may be categorized within five dimensions: physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, social wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and development and activity,” (Felce and Perry, 1995) [46] and spiritual wellbeing.

INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALITY ON PARAMETERS

For the wellbeing of an individual, spiritually oriented material life is a need of the contemporary world. Individuals cannot overlook one for the other. They are more complementary in nature for human development.



Figure 4: Influence of Spirituality on Parameters of Human Development

EDUCATION

“The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.” Sydney J. Harris

Noting the influence of spirituality in the field of education, P. Rajagopalachari [30] explains how “education gives culture because we look to the inner values of things.” With education, one is essentially giving a child a firm foundation to stand upon a rock, with faith and confidence, where the foundation is formed by values, which are invisible, but are nevertheless there. Value based spiritual education is one such wing that supports the spiritual development of pupils. Sahaj Marg Research and Training Institutions (SMRTI) is a functional body of Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM), which experiments with various activities to enhance the students’ ability to accept spirituality in a flexible means [47]. Regular study of values and spiritual principles expose younger generation to develop interest to know and understand the underlining principles of spiritual value [47]. To sum up, quoting P. Rajagopalachari, “In the process of education, there are four stages – knowledge which is taught, knowledge gained through intuition, knowledge gained through revelation and the ultimate knowledge which comes from within ourselves through meditation, through yogic practice.” [30]

HEALTH

There are factors, which affect health and wellbeing, such as lifestyle and behavior choices, food and nutrition intake, and exposure to different influences in the environment. "Change relating to a person's state of health is not necessarily predictable, nor is it necessarily progressive, as it is in the case of development. In order to be healthy, a person must make decisions about when to change behavior and when to maintain current behaviors" [33]. The discrimination whether to change behavior, maintain current behavior, and regarding various lifestyle choices, gets honed as a result of certain spiritual practices – such as meditation, prayer, as well as through a purification technique prescribed under 'Heartfulness', called 'cleaning', where one applies one's will power to do away with the impressions accumulated during the day. [50] Furthermore, extensive empirical research established connections between health and spirituality [22]. As a result of yogic practices, one may notice changes in our overall sense of being as a host of health benefits may prevail: physical exhaustion melts away, mentally one de-stresses, emotionally one's perceptions changes and spiritually, one feels lighter; with time, overall behavior changes and enhancements reflect as a result of regularity in practice.

CAPABILITY

When noting the influence of spirituality on capabilities of an individual, the concept of personality development is highlighted. For a wholesome development of personality, if real transformation is to take place, inner development through spiritual practices yielding spiritual wellness becomes essential. In situations involving change, perception and attitude, which relate to personality, play very important roles since each one perceives things differently. This is basis the different attitudes, values, norms stemming from different backgrounds. This results in different personalities that determine one's actions and behaviors [48]. In the case of human behavior, what is visible in the form action, and response is only the manifestation of a hidden cause and it is the invisible cause, which must be addressed to facilitate the process of refinement – refinement of one's capabilities, such that thinking evolves to feeling, logic to intuition, knowledge to wisdom, and all faculties of the body and mind are optimized to their fullest potential. Therefore, for change to manifest outside, it must begin with an earnest and willing change within.

CAPITAL FORMATION

When one reviews influence of spirituality on capital formation, Malloch [9] summarizes the argument to consider spiritual capital and its impact on development: "Spiritual capital can become a useful concept and term for a vital feature of economic development that has been largely overlooked in modern theories of development. Indeed, the often used terms social capital and human capital themselves are based to a large extent on the existence of good faith, trust,

stewardship, a sense of purpose and other moral characteristics which cannot persist in the absence of the piety, solidarity and hope that come from spiritual sentiments. When this is lost, societies and economies often decline rather than grow. When this abounds societies and economies prosper”.

INTEGRATION THROUGH SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

“yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam”
 “Excellence is Action in Yoga”

(Bhagwad Gita 2:50) [24]

“Meditation [with Yogic transmission] helps us tune ourselves to be able to meditate on our heart. This helps us integrate our various dissipated capacities and fragmented selves into a single, whole channel. By doing this, we progressively become better and better at everything we do, and eventually become the best possible human being that we can be!” [49].

Integrated existence means:

- Aligning Goals, Priorities and Values
- Developing positive attitudes and aptitudes
- Molding one’s behavior – prepare and persevere
- Balanced Existence to enable one to reach the Spiritual goal with material support
- Using tools wisely to grow continuously

These tools include the various spiritual practices; in case of ‘Heartfulness’, the tools are meditation, cleaning (purification technique), and prayer [50]. Daily practice allows one to reach the Highest, through changes inside, in one’s attitude, perception, discrimination, focus and the inner ‘switch’ which turns skill into action. “The idea of personal motive lurks behind every act, albeit very subtly at times. Morality helps regulate the self, and seeks to curb all selfishness in any form. Morality thereby enables one’s tendencies to be curbed through self-settledness. The conscience only tells us what not to do. And it awakens as the deepest layers of consciousness become purified. Thus, conscience becomes our most reliable and immediate guide. When we are sincere about our own betterment and become attentive, it speaks with increasing clarity. Its perfection lies in its purification, which goes on to establish the connecting link between heart and mind. Conscience now becomes perfectly reliable. It lends to a refinement of one’s character. And as we go on performing rightful acts, one’s inner peace remains undisturbed. This we note is a result of Balanced Existence.

Thus, an integrated existence implies a total integration of spiritual, material and cultural aspirations.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND EQUANIMITY

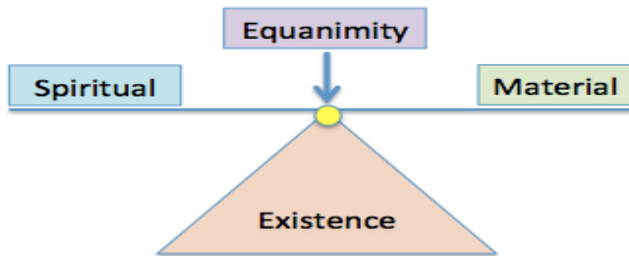


Figure 5: Equanimity as Balanced Existence between Spiritual and Material Existence

Spiritual health translates to purity within, as one of its aspects. This purity helps one withstand circumstances in life, and in turn, leads to integration given a single focus. This results in Equanimity, where there is a balance between material and spiritual. Once the mind and system get balanced, it leads to a Balanced Existence, and when balanced, it leads to perfection.

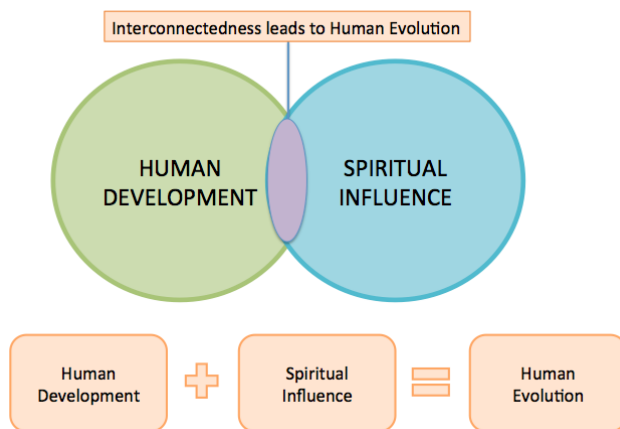


Figure 6: Interconnectedness leads to Human Evolution

CONCLUSION

In exploring the three parameters of human development undertaken for this study, i.e. education, health and capability of individuals, a multidimensional approach becomes necessary to get a more comprehensive view of quality of life, in context of spirituality.

When one considers aspects of human development, one can summarise development into 3 distinct areas: physical, mental, and spiritual (inner). Each area provides for a scope for change, of further development. Upon closer analysis, one notes a limit to development both in physical as well as mental aspects. The inner untapped potential within each one of us, remains to be developed by oneself to the extent of one’s willingness and motivation. Learning to tune into the treasure-store within us is all the gist of Spirituality. Development of an inner (spiritual) life does

not come at the expense of the other two (mental and physical), instead it harmonises, regulates and optimizes them to their fullest potential. Thus, human transformation is embedded with spiritual input.

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