



ENHANCEMENT OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG FUTURE LEADERS: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

Due to vast technological advancements, business leadership has been construed differently across cultures and languages over time. To meet the pressing needs of world-class organizations and respond to a constant flow of turbulent and complex conditions, the business needs different kind of leadership. The leadership based on spiritual intelligence has an impact on how we manage and organize, especially in contributing to a diversity of organizational outcomes. The pioneers of this kind of leadership mainly by connecting to the cosmic consciousness becomes more creative and are able to fully exploit technology to forge an innovative path. There is a greater need than ever before for today's business leaders to possess a vast thinking capacity involving consciousness. The most recent view of effective leadership stresses the spiritual intelligence of the leader to assist change. The students of business studies are anticipated as playing the role of business leaders in different organizations in future. During the years spent at institutions of higher learning, they learn many types of leadership to serve the society in future. The present paper provides a holistic conceptual framework on the possible effects of enhanced spirituality and also suggests a model for enhancement of spiritual intelligence among future leaders. The proposed holistic conceptual framework may provide an approach for considering the aspects of leader's spiritual development where one may lack rigor.

Keywords: *Technological advancements; Cosmic Consciousness; Holistic conceptual framework; Effective leadership; Spiritual Intelligence.*

Introduction:

*“The capabilities needed for leaders in the next century
Will differ radically from those valued today”*

(Goleman, 1998, para.3, p.313)

We are living in knowledge based era having the use of artificial intelligence. An all-inclusive approach is required in the business world, in putting the management roles, tasks, and responsibilities into a latest and broader perspective. Business spheres are searching for, “a new, more complex psychological model that link the mental, emotional



and spiritual intelligence of employees” (Zohar, 1997, p.17). The contemporary era is characterized by the collapse of the family unit, society, and traditional faith; the dearth of heroes, and goalposts; clear rules, values, and way to grow up; and, vision of responsibility where the youth is struggling to make sense of the situation at the hand (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). This verity, along with the varying values in society, requires a very different form of leadership that may serve as a mechanism of service to society. By incorporating the principles of integrity, accountability, empathy, respect, and fairness the modern-day managers can lead their organizations up to their fullest potential (Hongal & Kshirsagar, 2023). Thus, a leader needs to imbibe a special attitude and inherent abilities that enlightens one's path towards efficient performance.

In the contemporary age, various leadership scholars found clear consistency between spiritual values and effective leadership (Alberts, 2006; Amram, 2009; Bansal & Kapoor, 2022; Bass, 1999; Davis, 2010; Dent et al., 2005; Dhiman, 2017; Fairholm, 1997; Fry, 2003; Gortschacher, 2010; Maralack, 2008; Reave, 2005; Roberts, 2013; Zohar, 1997). Spiritual leadership has an impact on management especially in contributing to a diversity of organizational outcomes. A leader following the Spiritual values may serve as a precious asset to any organization. As Pathak (*n.d.*) states that “A leader has to transform his business into a winning organization not only in the present but also for the future”(p.103), holding a belief that that the firm would prosper following his guidelines even in his absence also.

Zohar and Marshall (2000) define Spiritual intelligence as “the ultimate intelligence which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess that one life path is more meaningful than other.” Practicing spirituality at workplace can enhance worker performance, employee commitment, satisfaction, altruism, conscientiousness, engagement, loyalty, sales growth, work unit productivity and organizational citizenship behavior. It also helps to rule out the fear, stress, burnout, conflict, frustration, earning manipulation, and instrumental commitment (Samul, 2020; Maharana, 2022; Navya & Sharma, 2022).

A leader is one who gets others to take action towards a common goal. Whereas, ‘Leadership’ is a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to lead or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations. Goleman (1998) opined that the effective leader is the source of an organization’s emotional tone and this tone flows downward from a leader to the entire organization.

During the years spent at institutions of higher learning, students are able to learn and experience many types of leadership either through their own capacity as a leader or team member. After completing their education, the students of both Professional and Non-Professional courses are expected to enter in the various professions and engage in



business activities. For this study, the students enrolled in the business studies have been considered as the future leaders in this study. Goleman (1998) notes that “Farsighted companies are realizing that they, too, have a stake in how well the schools are educating their future workers” (para.2, p.314). However, the deficiency of the human conscience is being experienced as the root cause of the degeneration and decadence in our modern generation all over the world. Madan (2013) states that “Youth are emerging as active agents of change, creating their own contexts for development and in search for the ‘self’ in unstable stressful life situations” (p.2). Nowadays, although young adults experience peak of material prosperity and comforts, but their experiences differ by macro-societal changes.

The recent theoretical, as well as empirical research, states that the energy of the spiritual intelligence makes up and maximizes the attribute known as the ‘Conscience’. Reave (2005) extensively studied 150 research articles to explore the relationship between spirituality and leadership and found that spirituality is the source of motivation, leadership success, and leader effectiveness. Thakar (2022) reported that the activities should be designed for enhancement of Consciousness Quotient for successful life. Agarwal and Rao (2022) also suggested that “When you realize who you truly are you are at peace with the world because you will contain the world instead of it containing you”(p.218). Thus, the present study made an attempt to develop a conceptual model for enhancement of spiritual intelligence among future leaders.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF ENHANCED SPIRITUALITY

Vaughan (2002) opined that spiritual intelligence may help individuals to ruminate the multiple ways of knowing to integrate the inner life of mind and spirit with the outer life of the workplace. Vaughan firmly believes that various people have awakened to the sense of gratitude and meaningful purpose when they practiced the inner work towards the enhancement of spiritual intelligence. Training of spiritual intelligence components significantly reduces depression, anxiety, stress and increase self-esteem among adolescents (Ganjivi, 2016). Furthermore, Amram (2009) opined that development of spiritual intelligence may result in improved leadership effectiveness and organizational performance.

For Sisk (2008), SQ is product oriented and “People with high SQ attain a level of connectedness with the world that deemphasizes self” (p.25). They become a transformed being as great leaders and problem solvers, poets, scientists, and writers and humanitarians.

Furthermore, spiritual practices impact positively on the personality traits of an individual. As Madan (2013) opined that the relationship of religion and spirituality is quite responsible for a major shift in personality studies towards extroversion, enhancement of leadership skills, self-confidence, acceptance and emotional equanimity

that also influenced the Eysenck's five-factor model of personality. Importantly, Emmon(1999) also recognized the spiritual intelligence as a set of various abilities and capacities. Therefore, a leader is expected to be aware of the different aspects of today's interdependent world and calculate the risk associated with the challenges in this globalized economy.

Among **social competencies** that guide to handle relationships, Tischler et al. opined that the *awareness* of; Positive social attitudes, empathy and altruism increase with spirituality. And, it further instills the *skills* of; Creating good relation with co-workers and supervisors, social extroversion, collaborative, developmental orientation towards positive values and less sensitivity to criticism.

These competencies result in enhanced awareness and instilling of some specific skills presented as follows (fig.1).

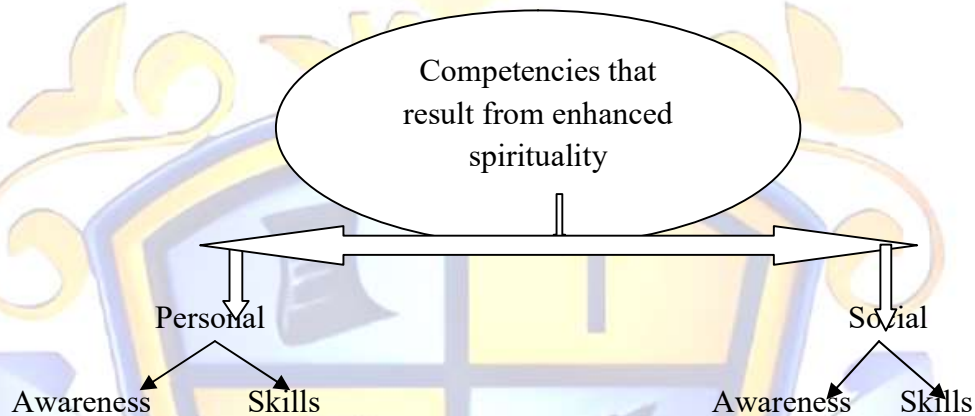


Figure 1: Competencies from Enhanced Spirituality

Source: Adapted from Tischler, Biberman, and McKeage (2002, p.212)

To provide a directional strength to the future leaders for enhancement of their spiritual intelligence based on the available literature, the investigator attempted to outline the suggestions along with the framework for Enhancement of spiritual intelligence (see fig. 2).

➤ **LESSONS FROM BHAGAVAD-GITA**

A large and growing body of evidence (Bansal & Kapoor, 2022; Bedia & Joshi, 2016; Dhiman, 2015; Mahadevan, 2012; Parekh, 2005; Satija, 2011; Satpathy & Muniapan, 2008; Sundari & Rao, 2014) accumulated from studies of effective leadership shows the Bhagavad-Gita (great Indian epic) that embodies the teachings of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the battlefield, has been the greatest source of improving spiritual intelligence. According to Bedia and Joshi (2016), the message of Bhagavad-Gita is not only limited to spiritual development but also in other aspects of human capital development including leadership. Additionally, the relationship between Bhagavad Gita and business ethics

highlight the relevance of a spiritually-centered approach to business organization (Sharma & Monika, 2022).

As quoted in Bhagavad-Gita (chap. 16, v.20), a *Being* can change his nature or may spiritually develop during human life only. To enhance spiritual intelligence, human beings are expected to perform virtuous actions, such as sacrifice, charity, penance, meditation, the study of scriptures, pilgrimage, and fasts, etc. Furthermore, as described in Bhagavad-Gita, one has to understand in the right perspective the yoga of division between the Divine and Demoniactal nature. These two natures are contrary to each other but reside in the same human beings. It is learned that the renunciation of demoniac traits leads to revealing the Divine nature automatically.

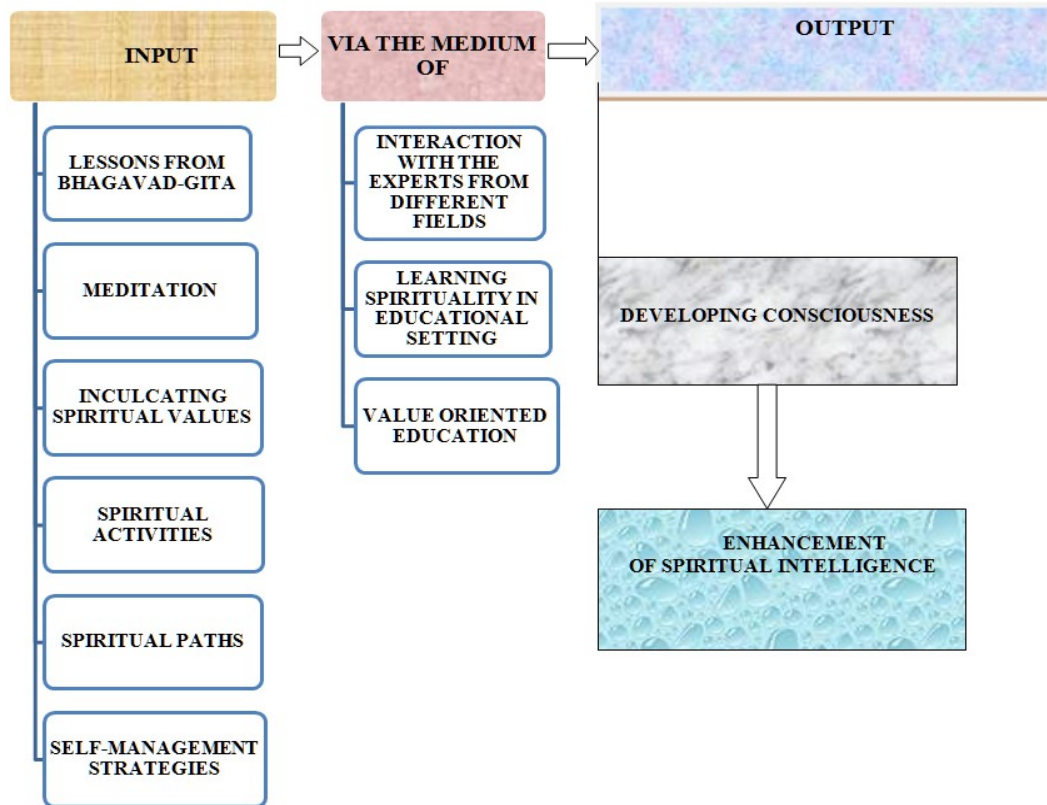


Figure 2: Conceptual Model for Enhancement of spiritual intelligence

➤ **MEDITATION**

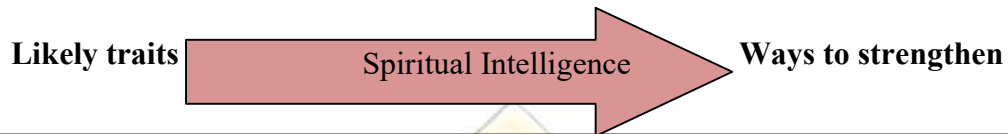
Evidence suggests that Meditation has been the major focus of different researches (Esmaili et al., 2014; Ganjivi, 2016; Singh & Sinha, 2013; Vaughan, 2002) to enhance the spiritual intelligence of individuals. Meditation nurtures the body, mind, senses, and intellect. Through meditation, there is an accumulation of energy, which is not possible through spiritual knowledge only. Meditation generates the power that helps in responding to the people and the circumstances with a more effective manner. Through



Meditation, one gets connected with the universal powers that ultimately help in understanding the meaning and purpose of life. Thereby, the following meditation makes a person more spiritually intelligent.

➤ **SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES**

Various activities as ways to strengthen spiritual intelligence for likely traits for learning (as cited in Sisk, 2008, p.27) have been mentioned as follows:-



1. Uses inner knowing	⇒	Provide time for reflective thinking
2. Seeks to understand self	⇒	Use journal writing and processing
3. Uses metaphor and parables to communicate	⇒	Read lives/works of Spiritual Pathfinders
4. Uses intuition	⇒	Use problem solving (predicting)
5. Sensitive to social problems	⇒	Conduct service-learning projects
6. Sensitivity to their purpose in life	⇒	Use personal growth activities
7. Concerned about inequity and Injustice	⇒	Use problem-based learning on real problems
8. Enjoys big questions	⇒	Provide time for open-ended discussion
9. Senses gestalt (the big picture)	⇒	Use mapping to integrate studies/big themes
10. Wants to make a difference	⇒	Use group personal growth activities
11. Capacity to care	⇒	Study lives of Spiritual Pathfinders
12. Curious about how the world works	⇒	Integrate science/social science
13. Values love, compassion, concern for others	⇒	Use affirmations/think-about-thinking
14. Close to nature	⇒	Employ eco-environment approach
15. Uses visualization and mental imaging	⇒	Read stories and myths
16. Reflective, self-observing and self-aware	⇒	Use role-playing/sociodrama
17. Seeks balance	⇒	Discussions and goal setting activities
18. Concerned about right conduct	⇒	Process discussions



Source: Adapted from Sisk and Torrance (2001)

Accordingly, these likely traits needed for spiritual intelligence may serve as foundation in science, psychology, and the lives of Spiritual Pathfinders. Sisk and Torrance (2001) proposed multisensory approach to access one's inner knowledge using intuition, meditation, and visualization. For the enhancement of spiritual intelligence, Joy (2011) also developed various strategies using lectures, the activities of discussion, reflection and group sharing and found continuous transformational change among the student teachers.

➤ **INCULCATING SPIRITUAL VALUES**

Spiritual values and practices approved for spiritual success in various researches, pave the way towards leadership success. Reave (2005) point out the spiritual values of integrity, honesty, and humility, and the spiritual practices of treating others with respect and fairness, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, appreciating others, and taking time for personal reflection that have quantifiable positive effects for organizations and individuals. Reave further believed that these values increase the effectiveness of leadership in the eyes of both their peers and their subordinates. Singh and Sinha (2013) also suggested that the use of Meditation, Prayers, Reiki as a tool to empower and observance of spiritual values/qualities improve the quality of life.

➤ **SPIRITUAL PATHS**

Zohar and Marshall (2000) believed that modern society is characterized by spiritually dumb culture. And, spiritual intelligence would serve as an inner compass in search of the true path in the midst of such darkness around. A great leader serves from something beyond oneself. The same authors suggested six spiritual paths symbolized as petals of a Lotus.

In the current study, these paths may guide future leaders to perceive the right opportunities in the market and also to read the signs of threats that others may not have noticed. To attain higher spiritual intelligence, Zohar and Marshall (2000, pp.225-275) suggested these paths as follow:-

1. **The path of duty:** This path is concerned with the belonging to, cooperating with, contributing to and being nurtured by the community. To reach this path, one has to follow the deepest life's intentions to serve with awareness and commitment.
2. **The path of nurturing:** This path is symbolic of the mother goddess who is loving, protecting and fertile. According to Zohar and Marshall, 30 percent of the adult population serve this purpose while playing the roles of parents, teachers, nurses, therapists, counselors, social workers, and saints, etc. This path may direct a person to be receptive and more open with the people by due care in the relationship of any kind.



3. **The path of knowledge:** This path is related to the understanding of general practical problems through the deepest philosophical quest regarding knowledge of God and all His ways.
4. **The path of personal transformation:** The path that leads a person to explore as a whole person by joining one's fragmented selves. In finding a treasure of true self that helps to heal others, this path requires a willingness to sacrifice the ego.
5. **The path of brotherhood:** It is basically a path of transpersonal service that recognizes the interconnectedness between the people and all other beings. The Spiritually intelligent people shine through the realization of this path by having the will to serve for the cause of humanity.
6. **The servant leadership:** This path enables a person to make things happen which others have felt impossible, working on the principle of *the welfare of the society above the individual welfare* in various leadership roles. This path also requires a person to follow the principle of trusteeship on the footing that any amount of extra proportionate share obtained in world's wealth makes him trustee of that portion for God's people.

Each of these six spiritual paths proposed by Zohar and Marshall to attain greater spiritual intelligence has a progression from spiritually dumb to spiritually intelligent. Indeed, all paths lead to and from the deepest center of the self.

➤ **SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

All the efforts to enhance one's spiritual intelligence may not bear fruit unless a person learns to manage his or her inner self. To develop leadership, Brahm Kumari Usha (*n.d.*) proposed the self-managing leadership programme that would stimulate the mind, energizes the intellect, balances emotion, enlightens the spirit and fulfills the heart and notes the following:-

Insight is the spiritual wisdom which is a missing dimension in our present life. It helps to understand our inner self in a better way. So that we identify our inner powers and capabilities which are at our disposal to determine the implications of the changes that going on around (p.103).

From the perspective of same author, there are various levels of change namely behavioral, intellectual, emotional and consciousness in a consecutive manner. To manage the inner mechanism, consciousness plays the lead role. And, consciousness is formed on the basis of thought pattern that gets registered in the memory. Therefore, with cautious awareness of attitude and perception, one may change his/her behavior to bring a change in the personality.

Likewise, Gupta (2012) suggested that the self-management strategies that include self monitoring, self-evaluation, and self reinforcement can be implemented to



avoid any problem behaviors. Gupta identified the need for training to improve spiritual intelligence and outlined the following seven ways to enhance spiritual intelligence:-

1. To think about the goals, desires and wants that bring one's life into perspective. Also, there is a need to balance and identify one's values.
2. To access the inner processes for visualization of the goals, desires and wants to be fulfilled for having the experience of this fulfillment.
3. To Integrate the personal and universal vision so as to recognize interconnectedness towards all the universal forces.
4. To be able to ready for responsibility towards one's goals, desires and wants.
5. To broaden social networking by developing a sense of community.
6. To realize the role of love and compassion.
7. To take advantage of the coincidences, on being receptive for every circumstance.

Uly, Kurniawati, Rahayu, and Mahardika, (2024) also found that the New Students of Public Health Sciences already understand Self-Management Strategies and are able to apply. Moreover, Individual will be more successful and efficient if all aspects related to thoughts, time, location, objects, and other resources that facilitate the development of self-management are systematically arranged(Rahayu, et al., 2024).

➤ **INTERACTION WITH THE EXPERTS FROM DIFFERENT FIELDS**

To produce a human being who is fearless, greedless and heatless, Bhoslay (2015) felt the need to improve his/her spiritual quotient. Having the participation of experts from different fields, Bhoslay organized a detailed programme for one year. Using the experimental method to analyze the post values of spiritual quotient, the study included 16 fields of spiritual intelligence adapted from Danah Zohar's book '*Rewiring the Corporate Brain*' namely; virtuous, vision and insight, commitment, Divinity, Compassion, Flexibility, Gratitude, Being Holistic Intuition, Self-awareness, Inquisitive, Resilient, Mission and Servant leader, Value, Field independent, Inner Peace and Contentment. In order to enhance spiritual quotient, Bhoslay invited experts from different fields who delivered the lectures and also organized various activities related to the fields of spiritual Intelligence including:-Narration of self experience, Roleplaying, Lecture on value education, Yoga, Storytelling, Diary writing, Group Discussion, Interview of social worker, Daily prayer and Guidance on Vipshyna. Indeed, Bhoslay found the experiment to be effective in developing the spiritual intelligence of the teacher trainees.

➤ **LEARNING SPIRITUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTING**

Preston (2012) proposed that a teacher who encourages learner spirituality and delivers a style of education infused with respect, relationship, reciprocity, and rewards, would be able to create an emotional and spiritual atmosphere imbued with positive energy. By going through a personal teaching narrative, Preston suggested the ways to foster the



learner spirituality of students within the classroom environment. Accordingly, Preston began with the simple technique to breathe and then extended toward the judgment of the effect that his thoughts, words, and actions on each student along with the learning energy of the entire class.

To produce holistically empowered youth, Madan (2013) proposed that spiritual engagement must be incorporated into the education system. For the enhancement of spiritual intelligence, Madan suggested the Art of Living (AOL) course which is based on the basic philosophy of various disciplines and perspectives of spirituality. The Art of Living is an organization being founded by Sri Sri Ravishankar in 1982 that derives its teaching from ancient Upanishads and Vedas. AOL course incorporates the essence of various ancient epics like Bhagavad Gita, Narada Bhakti Sutras, Ashtavakra Gita, Patanjali Yog Sutras, Shiva Sutras and other texts of wisdom. Madan further described that the workshops of AOL serve as a pool of spiritual knowledge combined with yoga, meditation, and Sudarshan Kriya. Additionally, Kanchibhotla, Harsora and Subramanian (2024) also found yogic breathing to be useful among Indian adults to socialize and Pandya (2015) suggested Sudarshan Kriya to be fruitful in practicing social work.

➤ VALUE ORIENTED EDUCATION

Among six dimensions of spiritual intelligence as given by Zohar and Marshall (2000), Value orientation constitutes the sixth dimension in this paper that contributes towards enhancement of spiritual intelligence. Kaur [Ranjumandeeep] (2011) notes that "In ancient India the main goal of education was spiritual development which was to be achieved through leading a pious and virtuous life. For such a life, the inculcation of values was considered essential" (p.228) and proposed certain values imbibed in Adi Granth and the Bhagavad-Gita. To encourage value oriented education, the same author suggested various methods as follows:-

- **Role Reversal:** By playing the role of another person in an ideal setting, it helps the learner to learn values like 'dignity of individuals' in their own right, non-discrimination, equality, humility, patience, and services.
- **Project Method:** Under This method, a useful task is carried out in a group working cooperatively that helps learners to develop independent thinking as well as learning association between separate subjects and community as a whole.
- **Story Telling Method:** The art of telling moral stories using the ordered sequences of events, is also another way to attract the attention of the learners that easily impress on them. Encouraging classroom transactions that involve the teaching of particular value by narrating a story regarding that value is also recommended.



- **Discussion Method:** Discussion that promotes the sharing of information, ideas and involvement may also serve as an effective strategy for teaching values. This method helps one to identify the problem and share the experiences.
- **Debates:** Conducting contests on themes related to social, moral, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual values of life for value orientation.
- **Talking Circle:** Under this method, a group of persons sits in smaller circles with an opportunity of speaking freely to share their feelings.
- **Brain Storming:** This method adopts the strategy to generate ideas values-based ideas by stimulating thinking towards possible solutions to a problem.
- **Pictures:** By showing the pictures of a different kind that help to create and maintain interest for the values concerned with lifelike; punctuality, courtesy, patience, perseverance, compassion, love, and respect for elders, patriotism, faith, truth, righteous conduct, nonviolence, peace and facing adversity with a smile.
- **Drawing:** Drawings serve as an important method through developing an observation and cooperation skills, imagination, feelings of empathy for people in the pictures, or to get to know the others,
- **Cartoons:** A cartoon is a metaphorical presentation of reality and makes a strong appeal to the emotions and thus enhances learning.
- **Personal example:** To make a positive impact on pupils, the teachers have to become their role models. If a teacher is truthful, honest and an idealist, his verbal advice may also influence the behavior of pupils.
- **Slogans:** Suitable sayings and quotations adopted from the world religions as well as from the speeches and writings of great people who served the world.
- **Morning Assembly:** The silent sitting or meditation for a few minutes followed by moral and spiritual talks by students, teachers, and outside guests.
- **Social Service:** The National Service Scheme should be properly implemented to prepare the pupils to engage in social service of the needy people that may cover various projects to help people living in slum areas.
- **Spiritual diary:** The art of writing the details of their good/bad habits and actions for making aware of them.
- **Suggestion box:** Suggestions and grievances also serve a great role by bringing new ideas to further extend the knowledge.
- **Dealing with negative elements:** Instead of direct punitive measures, dealing with negative elements using the reformatory spirit (pp.186-192).

Thus, the role of academic life in preparing the leaders of tomorrow may not be denied. In a study on job satisfaction among IT professionals, Varghese and Chirayath (2016) state that “The academics also can work on developing methods and tools for



improving the SQ of students so as that they come out well prepared for the future value oriented skill set for the employment”(p.539). Among the important tasks of the educator's activity is the development of a high level of spirituality among students because it determines the scientific outlook on human existence and value orientations (Vasianovych, et al., 2024). Taking examples from the Indian history, its cultural heritage states that in ‘Gurukul’, the guru guided their pupils with their spiritual insights to identify their value-system. By citing their own example, the pupils were taught the art of self-management so as to rule the kingdom with responsibility, commitment along with the motivation to lead.

➤ **DEVELOPING CONSCIOUSNESS**

Consciousness is the awareness about the thoughts and sensations that one directly perceives. According to the universal reality, as presented in Bhagavad-Gita, the Universal Conscious Being is behind the absolute cause of all causes. Whereas, the manifestations of material energy are the exhibitions of that Being’s conscious will. With regard to the spiritual life for the man of earth, Besant (1912) also proposed that it requires the recognition of one’s interconnection to all of life, and the capacity to use the powers of perceptions beyond the five senses, that is to be seen as another level of consciousness and a special kind of intelligence which is beyond any rational thought.

Thus, developing one’s consciousness about the realities of the universal forces that science also approves (e.g. Schwartz et al., 2014 a) would serve a great purpose to enhance spiritual intelligence among the future leaders. Esmaili et al. (2014) also believe that the conscious awareness, compatibility with the events and experiences of life and increased self-awareness constitute the main factors for enhancement of spiritual intelligence. There is a greater need than ever before for today’s business leaders to possess a vast thinking capacity involving consciousness.

Hence, the relevant education is must to foster self-reliance and independence among future leaders. Various research studies showed that self-management strategies can be used to improve spiritual intelligence. Finding collective spiritual intelligence in modern society as low, Zohar and Marshall (2000) also contend that by improving personal SQ, each individual may contribute to the pool of SQ in the further evolution process of society. Beyond doubt, the internal recognition efforts to self-discovery are important.

In the age of knowledge, a business leader is assumed to be tested for his success in perceiving an opportunity and reading the sign of threats that others may not have noticed. The use of appropriate training in improving the spiritual intelligence may trigger the urge for qualitative thinking and service to humanity. The proposed holistic conceptual framework provides an approach for considering the aspects of leader’s spiritual development where one may lack rigor.



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