

Efficacy of Spiritual Bibliotherapy in the management of common mental disorder

Abstract

Background: Religious and spiritual factors are increasingly being examined in psychiatric research. Despite the growing research evidence that supports correlation between spirituality, stress and well-being, paucity of research existed in India regarding actual intervention trials involving spiritual bibliotherapy. **Aims:** This study was conducted to assess the impact of spiritual bibliotherapy on patients suffering from Common Mental Disorders in order to assess its effectiveness on psychological well being and stress reduction. **Methodology:** The study was experimental research having 24 patients suffering from common mental disorders. The Purposive Sampling Technique was used. PGI General Well-being Measure, Psychological Well-being Scale and Perceived Stress Scale were applied on the subject those who fulfill inclusion-exclusion criteria. **Result:** Findings indicated that patients on spiritual bibliotherapy (SBT) had higher scores on General Well-being (GWB) and PWB; however, patients on SBT and BT both reported similar improvement on PSS. These results highlight that the conceptual approaches where spiritualism is enhanced in one's life via reading of religious texts can promote mental well being. **Conclusion:** The study pointed towards the psychological health benefits of spiritual bibliotherapy, in practice, to promote psychological well being and achieve stress reduction.

Keywords: Religious, Spiritual, Bibliotherapy, Well-being.

Introduction

Religious and spiritual factors are increasingly being examined in psychiatric research. Despite the growing research evidence that supports correlation between spirituality, stress and well-being, paucity of research existed in India regarding actual intervention trials involving spiritual bibliotherapy. The power of literature has been recognized for thousands of years, dating back at least as far as ancient Greece. They

recognized the spiritual and psychological benefits of reading. Psychiatric hospitals have long used books to help patients in their recovery. Therapists have recommended books to their clients for decades. However, bibliotherapy as a form of mental health treatment is still relatively new and research on the subject is limited. Bibliotherapy can be beneficial for anyone who likes to read as well as those who don't necessarily love to read, but are

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willing to read a book or story to help them cope or gain understanding.

Professional and Scientific Psychology also have *rediscovered spirituality and religion* in recent years (Hartz, 2005; Plante and Sharman, 2001). Eminent Psychologists like *William James (1890, 1902), Carl Jung (1938)* had *keen interest in the relationship between psychology and religion*. Towards the very end of the twentieth century, double blinded trials were conducted by several psychologists which included the influence of religious and spiritual behavior and beliefs on mental and physical health and well-being. Despite the growing research evidence that supports correlation between spirituality, stress and well-being, paucity of research existed in India regarding actual intervention trials involving spiritual bibliotherapy. Stress is a common precursor to anxiety and depression; owing to changing life-style patterns in India, most people are suffering from stress. The experience of spirituality although cannot be clearly defined as it ranges from a spectrum of ordinary, daily experiences to rare mystical experiences (Pargament and Mahoney, 2005). Moreover, these experiences are often reported as descriptive qualities such as blessed, compassion, gratefulness and precious. Since, the field of spiritual psychology is only beginning to find its ground in India, a short study was designed in which both quantitative and qualitative psychological scales were employed.

Religious involvement is also common today, with surveys showing that a significant proportion of the world's population has religious beliefs and practices that are important to daily life. For example, the World Gallup Poll surveyed representative populations of 143 countries ($n = 140,000$), finding that 92 percent of people in 32 developing countries indicated religion was an important part of daily life (S. Crabtree & B. Pelham, 2009). A large and growing volume of research suggests that religious or spiritual beliefs and practices may be used to cope with or adapt to stressful life circumstances.

Although there are many genetic, developmental, and environmental factors contributing to the onset and maintenance of depression, failure to cope with life stress is often a major underlying factor. ®. P. Auerbach, et al 2010)

Several high-quality studies published since the year 2000 have found a positive link between R/S and depression in various other settings. (L. Wijngaards et al 2005).

Aims of Study

This study was conducted to assess the impact of spiritual bibliotherapy and biblio-therapy on people suffering from Common Mental Disorders in order to assess its effectiveness on psychological well being and stress reduction

Methodology

This was experimental research having 24 patients suffering from common mental disorders such as mild depression, mixed anxiety depression, anxiety disorder and psychosomatic disorder. The Purposive Sampling Technique was used. The sample was collected from the out-reach clinics of IHBAS, Delhi from the period of January 2013 to April 2013.

Inclusion Criterion: (a) Literate Patients suffering from common mental disorders (b) Both male and female patients from age range of 18 – 50 years (c) Patients who were willing to participate in the spiritual reading exercises (d) Patients who do not have a current daily active practice of reading books (religious or otherwise) (e) Patients who had similar scores on Psychological Well Being, General Well Being and Perceived Stress Scale.

Exclusion Criterion (a) Patients suffering from severe mental illnesses, physical illnesses, neurological disorders and other developmental deficits or mental retardation. (b) Patients who did not have time to become a part of the study for the entire duration. **Tools Used** (a) PGI General Well-being

Measure (GWM) by Santosh K. Verma and Amita Verma (1989) (b) Psychological Well-being Scale by Ryff et al. (1989) (c) Perceived Stress Scale by Sheldon and Cohen (1988). Procure :Frist, all the persons were diagnosis according to ICD-10 criterion for having common mental disorder. After it socio demographic details were collected by using socio-demographic data sheet. Those people who fell under inclusion criterion were provided information SBT and BT. The person who agreed for the therapy and ready to give written consent for being the part of SBT and BT were included in the study. Then all me above mentioned tools were administered on the person prior to the therapy for baseline data. According to religion all the people were advised to read Geeta and Koran.

Twice a month group meeting was conducted having the person of common mental disorder for period of four month according to module of SBT and BT set by researcher specially for these people. To find out efficacy of this therapy, post assessment of this person were done having applying previously mention tools.

All statistical analysis were carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20. Descriptive analysis (Mean & SD) and inferential analysis followed by t test. A value of $p < 0.05$ was considered significant for the purpose of the study.

Table 1
Characteristics of socio-demographic

Table 1 showing the number and percentage of the person selected for intervention . Distribution of the sample indicated that most of the person from Hindu background, married and urban background either from SBT or BT.

| Variables | Details | SBT (N=12) | % | BT (N=12) | % |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Gender | Male | 4 | 33.33 | 5 | 41.47 |
| | Female | 8 | 66.67 | 7 | 58.33 |
| Education | Up to 12 th | 2 | 16.67 | 4 | 33.33 |
| | Upto Post Graduation (PG) | 6 | 50.00 | 5 | 41.47 |
| | Above PG | 4 | 33.33 | 3 | 25.00 |
| Marital status | Married | 7 | 58.33 | 8 | 66.67 |
| | Unmarried | 5 | 41.47 | 4 | 33.33 |
| Religion | Hindu | 8 | 66.67 | 7 | 58.33 |
| | Muslim | 4 | 33.33 | 5 | 41.33 |
| occupation | Homemaker | 5 | 41.47 | 3 | 25.00 |
| | Private job | 4 | 33.33 | 6 | 50.00 |
| | Government Job | 3 | 25.00 | 3 | 25.00 |
| Residence | Urban | 10 | 83.33 | 9 | 75.00 |
| | Rural | 2 | 16.67 | 3 | 25.00 |
| Socio economic status | Lower | 5 | 41.47 | 6 | 50.00 |
| | Middle | 4 | 33.33 | 3 | 25.00 |
| | Upper | 3 | 25.00 | 3 | 25.00 |

Table 2

Table 2 depicting the Mean, S.D. and t-values comparing the two sample groups at Pre Intervention levels on various tools included in the study

| Variables | Bibliotherapy | | Spiritual Bibliotherapy | | t value |
|------------|---------------|------|-------------------------|------|--------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| GWB | 3.66 | 2.77 | 3.58 | 1.97 | .085 ^{NS} |
| PWB | 14.23 | 2.21 | 13.46 | 1.65 | .313 ^{NS} |
| PSS | 26.75 | 4.59 | 26.33 | 5.91 | .193 ^{NS} |

Table 3

Depicting the Mean, S.D. and t-values comparing the two sample groups at Pre & Post Intervention levels on various tools included in the study

| Variables | Bibliotherapy | | Spiritual Bibliotherapy | | t value |
|------------|---------------|------|-------------------------|------|--------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| GWB | 17.83 | 0.83 | 19.33 | 0.65 | 4.91 ^{**} |
| PWB | 29.42 | 2.19 | 33.41 | 1.83 | 4.84 ^{**} |
| PSS | 11.41 | 2.23 | 11.16 | 1.80 | 0.30 ^{NS} |

^{**}= significant at 0.01, NS= Non-significant

Abbreviations: GWB, PWB, PSS

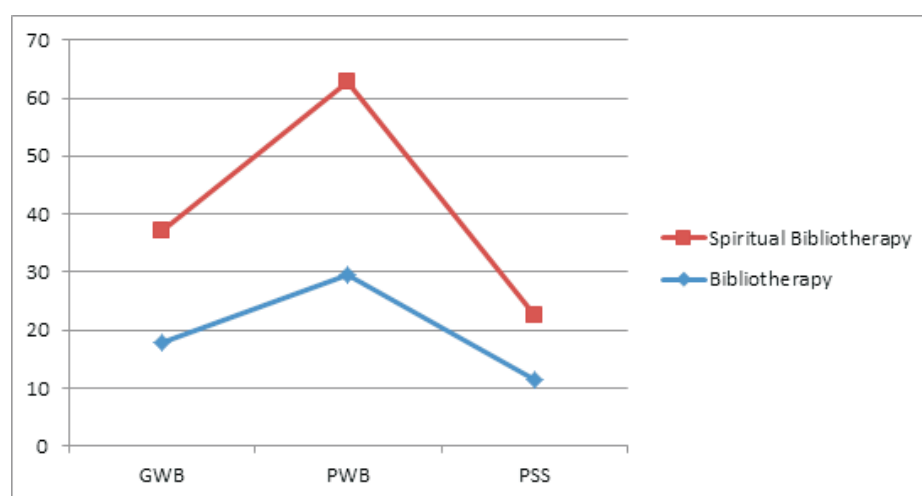


Figure: showing the comparison of SBT and BT on GWB,PWB and PSS.

Discussion

Bibliotherapy is already an established form of intervention method, it was extended to spiritual bibliotherapy wherein people under stress were advised to read spiritual books on meditation, religion etc. as a part of the intervention process so as to enhance their positive belief, hope for betterment and daily involvement in a positive activity. The majority of studies (61%) find less depression or faster recovery from depression for those who are more Religious/Spiritual (R/S) or a better response to an R/S intervention compared to other treatments or controls. Even a higher percentage of studies (75%) find inverse relationships between R/S and suicide attitudes, attempts, and completed suicide. (H. G. Koenig et al 2012)

The aims of the present study were to assess the impact of spiritual bibliotherapy on patients suffering from Common Mental Disorders in order to assess its effectiveness on psychological well being and stress reduction. Findings of the present study indicated that, there was no significant effect of post intervention found in the area of both group i.e (SPT & BT) on PSS (t value is 0.30). People on SBT had higher scores on GWB and PWB; however, patients

on SBT and BT both reported similar improvement on PSS.

Several studies indicate that spiritual and religious people benefit from spiritually and religiously integrated interventions. (M. A. Cornish and N. G. Wade, 2010) Present findings was also beneficial and important specially for the country like India, where, eight-in-ten Indians said religion is very important in their lives (Pew Research Center survey 2005). The studies by Rungreangkulkij et al. 2011, Tarakeshwar et al. (2005) and Austad and Folleso (2003) had successfully integrated spiritual/religious factors into group psychotherapy and had delimited the spiritual/religious factors of the group interventions.

Spirituality and religion have received increased attention in health research, and they appear to be mostly associated with quality of life and improved health (M. Cobb et al 2012 & H.G. Koenig et al 2012).

Conclusion

The study pointed towards the psychological health benefits of spiritual bibliotherapy, in practice, to promote psychological well being and achieve stress reduction. Findings of the present study indicated

that patients on SBT had higher scores on GWB and PWB; however, patients on SBT and BT both reported similar improvement on PSS. These results highlight that the conceptual approaches where spiritualism is enhanced in one's life via reading of religious texts can promote mental well being. Spiritualism has always had a unique space in Indian culture. Revival of specific interest in spiritual pursuits has taken place at a rapid pace over the last decade across communities in the country. Considering this, therefore, spiritual bibliotherapy can be explored and might emerge, through systematic and scientific research, as an effective intervention approach in treating various stressful conditions and common mental disorders with easy receptivity particularly among those who tend to avoid other intervention methods due to *stigma* associated with mental disorders and associated conditions.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size was small– Larger study sample can be taken to enhance the validity of the study.
- The study can be made more specific so as to be able to study the specific effect of spiritual bibliotherapy with regard to specific common mental disorders.

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