A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINDFULNESS AND SPIRITUALITY AMONG INDIVIDUALS PRACTICING CELIBACY

A

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SUPERVISOR

Dr. Jasleen Kour
Assistant Professor

INVESTIGATOR

Voamnika
Roll No. 2415018
Sem.IV

MIER COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (Autonomous)

JAMMU – 180001

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Ms. Voamnika** student of **Master of Arts in Psychology (Clinical and Counseling) Semester IV, Session 2024-2026**, bearing **Roll No 2415018,** has worked under my supervision on her dissertation entitled**:**

"A Study of the Relationship between Mindfulness and Spirituality among Individuals Practicing Celibacy".

Her dissertation is fit for submission, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree in **Master of Arts in Psychology (Clinical and Counseling).**

DATE:

(Dr. Jasleen Kour)
SUPERVISOR

Head,
School of Social Sciences and Humanities

श्रेष्ठ

B.C. Road Jammu
180 001

Ph.: 0191-2546078,2565098
Fax:0191-2548239

Email:principal@miercollege.in
Website: www.miercollege.in

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the dissertation entitled:

"A Study of the Relationship between Mindfulness and Spirituality among Individuals Practicing Celibacy"

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Psychology (Clinical and Counseling) to MIER College of Education (Autonomous), is an authentic record of my own research work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Jasleen Kour, Assistant Professor.

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a) Is my original work and has not been copied from any research journal, dissertation, thesis, or book; and

b) Has not been submitted by me for the award of any other Degree/Diploma/Certificate of any University or Institution.

c) All sources of information used in this study have been duly acknowledged.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APA	American Psychological Association
FFMQ	Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire
IAA	Intention, Attention, Attitude
J&K	Jammu & Kashmir
M	Mean
MBSR	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
MIER	Model Institute of Education and Research
MMT	Mindfulness-to-Meaning Theory
MPS	Master of Psychology
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
SD	Standard Deviation
SMS	Spirituality Measurement Scale
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Celibacy, mindfulness, and spirituality represent deeply interconnected dimensions of human consciousness that have been practised across cultures for centuries. Despite growing empirical interest in both mindfulness and spirituality as psychological constructs, their systematic relationship within celibate populations remains largely underexplored. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among individuals practicing celibacy, and to explore gender differences in both constructs. A correlational research design was employed using purposive sampling. The sample consisted of individuals voluntarily practicing celibacy from Jammu & Kashmir. Data were collected using the Spirituality Measurement Scale (SMS) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), which assesses five dimensions of mindfulness: Observing, Describing, Acting with Awareness, Non-Judging, and Non-Reactivity. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and independent samples t-tests were computed using SPSS for data analysis.

Results revealed a significant positive correlation between spirituality and overall mindfulness among celibate individuals. Among the mindfulness subscales, spirituality showed notable associations with Observing and Non-Reactivity. Gender-based analysis indicated differences in both spirituality and mindfulness scores between male and female celibate practitioners. These findings suggest that celibate practice may serve as a facilitative context for the co-development of spiritual orientation and mindful awareness, each reinforcing the other through shared mechanisms of self-regulation, present-moment attention, and intentional living.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on contemplative psychology and highlights the relevance of spirituality and mindfulness in understanding individuals who adopt celibacy as a conscious lifestyle choice. Implications for counselling practice and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Spirituality, Celibacy, Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, Contemplative Practice, Self-Transcendence.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Celibacy, spirituality, and mindfulness represent three profoundly interconnected dimensions of human consciousness and behavioral practice that have been recognized across cultures and traditions for millennia. Celibacy, defined as the deliberate abstinence from sexual activity, transcends mere physical restraint and represents a conscious redirection of vital energy toward higher purposes of self-realization and spiritual development (Sipe, 1990; Abbott, 2001). This practice has historically been embedded within broader spiritual frameworks, where it serves as both a prerequisite and catalyst for deepening one's connection with the transcendent dimensions of existence. Spirituality, in contemporary understanding, encompasses the search for meaning, purpose, and connection with something greater than oneself, whether conceived as the divine, universal consciousness, or the interconnectedness of all life (Pargament, 1997; Miller & Thoresen, 2003). It represents an experiential dimension of human existence that seeks to transcend the limitations of material reality and ego-bound consciousness (Elkins et al., 1988). Mindfulness, rooted in ancient contemplative traditions yet increasingly validated by modern psychological science, refers to the practice of maintaining moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and non-judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Bishop et al., 2004).

These three domains converge in their shared emphasis on intentionality, self-regulation, present-moment awareness, and the cultivation of inner resources for personal transformation (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009). The relationship between celibacy and spirituality manifests in the channeling of sexual energy toward contemplative practice and the dissolution of attachment to sensory gratification, creating conditions conducive to mystical experience and self-transcendence (Foucault, 1988; Sipe, 1990). Spirituality provides the philosophical framework and ultimate purpose that gives meaning to celibate practice, transforming what might otherwise be experienced as mere deprivation into a sacred discipline with transformative potential (Abbott, 2001; Cozzens, 2000). Mindfulness serves as both a spiritual practice and a psychological skill that facilitates the awareness necessary for

maintaining celibacy and deepening spiritual insight (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). Through mindfulness, practitioners develop the capacity to observe desires and impulses without automatic reactivity, creating space between stimulus and response that is essential for voluntary celibacy (Brotto & Heiman, 2007; Garland et al., 2009). Furthermore, mindfulness enhances spiritual experience by cultivating the quality of attention and presence that allows for direct perception of spiritual realities beyond conceptual thought (Shapiro et al., 2006; Davis & Hayes, 2011). The interconnection among these three domains creates a synergistic system wherein each element supports and reinforces the others: celibacy creates the conditions of simplicity and energy conservation that facilitate deeper meditation and spiritual practice; spirituality provides the motivational framework and ultimate meaning that sustain both celibate discipline and mindful awareness; and mindfulness offers the practical methodology through which both celibacy and spiritual development can be effectively pursued (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Carmody & Baer, 2008). Research increasingly demonstrates that these practices share common neurological substrates, psychological mechanisms, and developmental outcomes, suggesting that they represent different facets of an integrated approach to human flourishing and self-transcendence (Newberg & Iversen, 2003; Davidson & Lutz, 2008). This interconnected framework offers profound implications for understanding human potential, the nature of consciousness, and pathways to psychological well-being and spiritual fulfillment in an increasingly fragmented modern world (Harris et al., 2009; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

1.1 SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality represents a multidimensional construct that has garnered increasing attention from researchers, clinicians, and scholars across diverse disciplines over the past several decades. Unlike religiosity, which typically involves adherence to specific institutional beliefs, practices, and communities, spirituality encompasses a broader, more individualized search for the sacred, meaning, and connection with transcendent dimensions of existence (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2000). Contemporary conceptualizations of spirituality recognize it as a fundamental aspect of human experience that can manifest both within and outside traditional religious frameworks (Pargament, 1999). The phenomenological characteristics of spirituality

have been extensively documented in the scholarly literature. Elkins and colleagues (1988) identified nine core components of spirituality through comprehensive research: transcendent dimension (belief in a higher power or force beyond the self); meaning and purpose in life; mission in life (a sense of calling or responsibility); sacredness of life (ability to see the sacred in all aspects of existence); material values (recognition of spiritual values as superior to purely material concerns); altruism (sense of social justice and compassion); idealism (vision of a better world); awareness of the tragic (realistic acceptance of human suffering and mortality); and fruits of spirituality (positive life outcomes resulting from spiritual practice). These components collectively describe a comprehensive spiritual orientation that integrates cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral dimensions of human functioning (Elkins et al., 1988).

Spirituality fundamentally involves the human capacity for self-transcendence the ability to extend one's boundaries beyond immediate ego concerns and personal gratification toward connection with larger wholes (Reed, 1991; Piedmont, 1999). This capacity enables individuals to experience profound states of unity, interconnectedness, and dissolution of subject-object dualities that characterize ordinary consciousness (Newberg et al., 2001). Such transcendent experiences have been reported across cultures and traditions, suggesting they represent universal potentials within human consciousness rather than culturally constructed phenomena (Hood, 1975; Hood et al., 2009).

The cognitive dimension of spirituality encompasses specific beliefs, attributions, and meaning-making frameworks through which individuals interpret their existence and experiences (Park, 2005). Spiritual individuals tend to perceive life as inherently meaningful rather than random or absurd, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and development rather than mere obstacles (Pargament, 1997). This meaning-making capacity serves as a crucial resource for coping with adversity, loss, and existential anxiety (Park, 2010; Wortmann & Park, 2008). Research demonstrates that individuals with well-developed spiritual frameworks exhibit greater resilience in the face of trauma, illness, and life transitions (Pargament et al., 2004).

The affective dimension of spirituality includes the emotional experiences associated with connection to the sacred, including feelings of awe, reverence, gratitude, love, peace, and joy (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003). These positive emotions are not merely pleasant subjective states but appear to serve important adaptive functions, broadening individuals' thought-action repertoires and building enduring psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001). Spiritual practices cultivate these emotions deliberately through rituals, contemplation, and devotional exercises that orient consciousness toward transcendent objects (Pargament, 1997). The motivational dimension of spirituality manifests in the pursuit of spiritual goals and the organization of behavior around spiritual values (Emmons, 1999). Spiritual individuals demonstrate distinctive goal structures characterized by ultimate concerns—overarching purposes that integrate and coordinate subsidiary goals into coherent life narratives (Emmons, 1999; Pargament, 1997). These spiritual strivings provide sustained motivation for self-development, ethical behavior, and service to others even in the absence of external rewards (Emmons, 2005).

The behavioral dimension encompasses the practices and disciplines through which spirituality is cultivated and expressed (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). These may include prayer, meditation, contemplation, ritual observance, study of sacred texts, pilgrimage, service to others, and ascetic practices (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Such practices serve multiple functions: they express and reinforce spiritual beliefs and values; they cultivate specific states of consciousness conducive to transcendent experience; and they foster community and tradition that support spiritual development over time (Pargament, 1997). The relational dimension of spirituality recognizes that spiritual development occurs within networks of relationships with the divine or sacred, with spiritual teachers and communities, with nature, and with one's authentic self (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). The quality of these relationships shapes spiritual experience and growth, providing both challenge and support for the difficult work of self-transformation (Pargament, 1997). Many spiritual traditions emphasize the importance of spiritual direction or mentorship, recognizing that guidance from those further along the path facilitates progress and helps practitioners navigate obstacles and crises that inevitably arise (Fischer, 1990).

Contemporary research has increasingly examined the physiological and neurological correlates of spiritual experience and practice. Neuroimaging studies reveal that spiritual practices produce measurable changes in brain structure and function, particularly in regions associated with attention regulation, emotional processing, and self-referential thought (Newberg & Iversen, 2003; Davidson & Lutz, 2008). These findings suggest that spirituality represents not merely a psychological or cultural phenomenon but an embodied capacity with biological substrates that can be developed through intentional practice (Newberg et al., 2001). The developmental dimension of spirituality has been articulated through stage models that describe progressive transformations in spiritual consciousness and identity (Fowler, 1981; Wilber, 2000). These models generally describe movement from conventional, authority-dependent forms of spirituality toward more autonomous, individuated spiritual consciousness characterized by the ability to hold paradox, embrace mystery, and maintain multiple perspectives simultaneously (Fowler, 1981). While specific stage sequences vary across theoretical frameworks, common themes include increasing differentiation and integration, movement from concrete to abstract spiritual understanding, and development of more inclusive and universal spiritual orientations (Wilber, 2000).

The relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being has been extensively documented. Meta-analyses demonstrate consistent positive associations between spirituality and diverse indicators of mental health, including life satisfaction, positive affect, self-esteem, optimism, and sense of coherence, as well as negative associations with depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidality (Koenig et al., 2001; Smith et al., 2003). However, the relationship is complex and moderated by numerous factors, including the type of spirituality practiced, the presence of spiritual struggles, and the cultural context (Pargament et al., 2005). Certain characteristics distinguish mature, healthy spirituality from problematic or pathological forms (Pargament, 2002). Healthy spirituality demonstrates flexibility rather than rigidity in beliefs, openness to new experiences and perspectives, integration of spirituality with other life domains rather than compartmentalization, and positive rather than negative orientations toward the sacred (Pargament, 2002). Conversely, spiritual struggles conflicts with the divine, doubts about one's beliefs, or tensions within religious

communities are associated with psychological distress and poorer health outcomes (Exline et al., 2000; Pargament et al., 2005).

The universality versus cultural specificity of spiritual experience remains an important question in the field. While phenomenological studies suggest common core features of mystical and transcendent experiences across traditions (Stace, 1960; Hood, 1975), constructivist perspectives emphasize the role of cultural frameworks in shaping the interpretation and expression of spiritual experiences (Katz, 1978). Contemporary scholarship increasingly adopts nuanced positions that acknowledge both universal capacities for transcendent experience and the crucial role of cultural-linguistic contexts in giving form and meaning to these experiences (Hood et al., 2009).

1.1.1 Theoretical Models of Spirituality

Model of Religious Coping Framework (Pargament, 1997). Pargament's model situates spirituality and religion primarily as coping resources and processes: people draw on religious beliefs, practices, relationships, and worldviews to make meaning of stressful events and to regulate emotions. The framework distinguishes different styles of religious coping (e.g., collaborative, deferral, self-directed, and spiritual struggle), highlights how religious coping can be both adaptive and maladaptive, and provides a structure for examining how spiritual resources interact with broader psychosocial coping strategies (Pargament, 1997).

Developmental Model of Faith (Fowler, 1981). Fowler's developmental model describes spirituality (or faith) as evolving through qualitatively distinct stages across the lifespan, from intuitive-projective faith in early childhood to conjunctive and universalizing faith in mature adulthood. Each stage represents a different organizing structure for meaning, values, and relationship to the transcendent; Fowler's model is widely used to understand how individuals' spiritual beliefs and commitments develop, transform during crises, and influence moral and existential reasoning (Fowler, 1981).

Psychology of Ultimate Concerns Model (Emmons, 1999). Emmons frames spirituality as central to personal motives and ultimate concerns the values, goals, and ends that give life meaning. Rather than treating spirituality only as belief or practice,

this model emphasizes spirituality's role in organizing goals, shaping identity, and motivating behavior; it links spiritual constructs to personality and motivational theory and is useful for integrating spiritual variables into empirical personality and well-being research (Emmons, 1999).

Five-Facet Model of Spirituality (MacDonald, 2000). MacDonald (2000) identified five robust underlying dimensions of spirituality, creating a multidimensional framework culminating in the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI). The five facets are: (a) Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality (COS) reflecting an intellectual interest in spiritual matters and the search for meaning and purpose; (b) Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension (EPD) involving subjective, personal experiences of spirituality, such as feelings of connection or transcendence; (c) Existential Well-Being (EW-B) relating to an individual's sense of peace, purpose, and the meaning of life; (d) Paranormal Beliefs (PAR) encompassing beliefs in phenomena outside mainstream scientific understanding; and (e) Religiousness (REL) focusing on conventional religious beliefs, practices, and behaviors. MacDonald's research indicated that these spiritual dimensions are distinct from the general Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality, suggesting that spirituality is a unique aspect of human experience not fully captured by traditional personality traits.

1.2 MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness represents both an inherent human capacity and a cultivated skill involving the intentional regulation of attention toward present-moment experience with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Bishop et al., 2004). While rooted in Buddhist contemplative traditions spanning over 2,500 years, mindfulness has been increasingly studied, operationalized, and applied within Western psychological science and clinical practice over the past four decades (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011). This cross-cultural translation has generated considerable debate regarding the essence of mindfulness, its defining characteristics, and appropriate methods for its cultivation and measurement (Grossman, 2011; Dreyfus, 2011). The most widely cited operational definition comes from Bishop and colleagues (2004), who propose a two-component model of mindfulness. The first component involves the self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in

the present moment. The second component involves adopting a particular orientation toward one's experiences in the present moment, characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004). This definition emphasizes both the attentional and attitudinal dimensions that collectively constitute mindful awareness.

Kabat-Zinn (1994), who pioneered the integration of mindfulness into Western medicine through the development of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), defines mindfulness as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally (p. 4). This elegant definition captures three essential features: intentionality (mindfulness is deliberate rather than accidental), present-centeredness (attention is anchored in current experience rather than dwelling on past or future), and non-judgment (experiences are observed without evaluation, criticism, or reactivity) (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). The attentional component of mindfulness involves several distinct yet interrelated capacities. Sustained attention refers to the ability to maintain focus on a chosen object (such as the breath) for extended periods despite the mind's tendency toward distraction (Jha et al., 2007). Attention switching involves the ability to disengage from distractions and return attention to the intended focus (Lutz et al., 2008). Attention inhibition involves the capacity to prevent attention from being captured by salient but irrelevant stimuli (Moore & Malinowski, 2009). Together, these capacities enable practitioners to cultivate stable, flexible attention that can be directed and maintained according to intention rather than being driven automatically by habit or external stimuli (Lutz et al., 2008). Meta-awareness represents the ability to observe the current state of one's attention itself, recognizing when the mind has wandered and whether attention is focused or diffuse (Schooler et al., 2011).

The attitudinal component of mindfulness encompasses several interrelated qualities. Acceptance involves allowing experiences to be as they are without attempting to change, suppress, or avoid them (Hayes et al., 1999). This does not imply passive resignation but rather a willing acknowledgment of present reality as the necessary starting point for appropriate response (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Non-judgment involves observing experiences without immediately categorizing them as good or bad, desirable or undesirable, thereby creating space between experience and reactivity (Bishop et al., 2004). Curiosity represents an attitude of interested

investigation toward one's experience, approaching even familiar phenomena with beginner's mind rather than automatic assumptions (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Compassion, particularly self-compassion, involves treating oneself with kindness when confronting difficulties or personal shortcomings rather than with harsh criticism (Neff, 2003; Germer & Neff, 2013). Mindfulness is fundamentally distinguished from related constructs such as relaxation, concentration, or dissociation (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). While mindfulness practice may produce relaxation as a side effect, relaxation is not its primary aim; rather, the goal is clear awareness of whatever is present, whether pleasant or unpleasant (Bishop et al., 2004). Unlike concentration practices that narrow attention to a single point to the exclusion of all else, mindfulness maintains an open, spacious awareness that can hold multiple aspects of experience simultaneously (Lutz et al., 2008). Unlike dissociative states that involve disconnection from immediate experience, mindfulness involves intimate connection with and full presence to current reality (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

The practice of mindfulness develops through both formal and informal methods (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Formal practice involves dedicated periods of structured meditation, which may take various forms. Focused attention meditation involves sustaining attention on a single object, typically the breath, and repeatedly returning attention to that object when the mind wanders (Lutz et al., 2008). Open monitoring meditation involves maintaining broad, non-reactive awareness of whatever arises in the field of consciousness thoughts, sensations, emotions without focusing on any particular object (Lutz et al., 2008). Body scan meditation systematically directs attention through different regions of the body, cultivating detailed awareness of physical sensations (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Loving-kindness meditation involves deliberately generating feelings of compassion and goodwill toward oneself and others (Salzberg, 1995). Informal mindfulness practice involves bringing mindful awareness to ordinary activities of daily life eating, walking, washing dishes, conversing thereby transforming routine experiences into opportunities for present-moment awareness (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). This integration of mindfulness into everyday life is essential for translating insights gained in formal practice into sustainable changes in how one relates to experience more broadly (Carmody & Baer, 2008).

Research on the psychological mechanisms through which mindfulness produces beneficial effects has identified several key processes. Exposure and extinction involves sustained, non-reactive attention to previously avoided experiences, leading to reduction in fear and avoidance responses (Baer, 2003). Cognitive change involves shifts in how one relates to thoughts, recognizing them as mental events rather than accurate representations of reality (Teasdale et al., 2002). This metacognitive awareness sometimes called decentering or reperceiving creates distance between the observer and mental content, reducing identification with thoughts and the automatic reactivity they trigger (Shapiro et al., 2006; Fresco et al., 2007). Self-regulation improves as mindfulness enhances awareness of internal states and impulses, creating space for choice in how to respond rather than automatic reaction (Brown et al., 2007). Values clarification occurs as mindfulness enables individuals to distinguish between authentic values and conditioned responses, supporting behavior change aligned with deeply held principles (Shapiro et al., 2006).

The neuroscience of mindfulness has revealed significant structural and functional brain changes associated with regular practice. Neuroimaging studies demonstrate that mindfulness meditation is associated with increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, associated with executive function and emotion regulation, and decreased activity in the amygdala, associated with threat detection and emotional reactivity (Davidson & Lutz, 2008; Hölzel et al., 2011). Structural studies using MRI reveal increased gray matter density in regions associated with learning, memory, emotional regulation, and perspective-taking among experienced meditators compared to controls (Lazar et al., 2005; Hölzel et al., 2011). These findings suggest that mindfulness practice produces measurable neuroplastic changes that support enhanced self-regulation and well-being (Davidson & Lutz, 2008). The effects of mindfulness training have been extensively documented across diverse populations and outcomes. Meta-analyses demonstrate that mindfulness-based interventions produce moderate to large effects on anxiety and depression, with effects comparable to other established treatments (Hofmann et al., 2010; Khoury et al., 2013). Effects extend beyond mental health to include improvements in physical health outcomes such as chronic pain, immune function, and blood pressure (Davidson et al., 2003; Grossman et al., 2004). Mindfulness training enhances cognitive functioning, including improvements in attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility (Zeidan et al., 2010). Relational outcomes

also improve, with research demonstrating that mindfulness enhances relationship satisfaction, communication quality, and empathy (Barnes et al., 2007; Kozlowski, 2013).

Individual differences moderate the effects of mindfulness practice. Individuals with certain personality characteristics, such as openness to experience, show greater benefits from mindfulness training (Baer et al., 2008). Practice quantity matters, with dose-response relationships evident between amount of meditation practice and magnitude of benefits (Carmody & Baer, 2008). However, quality of practice particularly the degree to which practitioners maintain the attitudinal foundations of acceptance and non-judgment may be as important as quantity (Baer, 2003). Potential challenges and adverse effects of mindfulness practice have received increasing attention. While generally safe, mindfulness meditation can occasionally precipitate difficult experiences, including anxiety, depression, disorientation, or confrontation with traumatic memories (Lustyk et al., 2009; Lindahl et al., 2017). These challenges are more likely with intensive retreat practice than with standard clinical applications, and typically resolve with appropriate guidance and support (Lustyk et al., 2009). Such findings underscore the importance of proper instruction, gradual progression in practice, and awareness that mindfulness, while beneficial for most people, is not universally appropriate or risk-free (Lindahl et al., 2017).

The integration of mindfulness into secular contexts has raised questions about whether essential elements are lost when mindfulness is extracted from its original Buddhist ethical and philosophical framework (Purser & Loy, 2013). Critics argue that Mc Mindfulness superficial, consumerist applications that promise stress reduction without challenging fundamental values or behaviors represents a dilution that undermines authentic practice (Purser & Loy, 2013).

1.2.1 Theoretical Models of Mindfulness

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Model (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Kabat-Zinn's MBSR program frames mindfulness as a systematic, secular training in moment-to-moment, nonjudgmental awareness developed through formal practices (e.g., sitting meditation, body scan, mindful movement) and informal daily-life exercises. Originally developed to help patients manage chronic pain and stress, the

MBSR model emphasizes cultivating sustained attention to present-moment experience and an attitude of acceptance, with therapeutic aims that include reducing reactivity to stressful stimuli and improving emotional regulation and well-being (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). MBSR has since served as the practical backbone for many clinical mindfulness interventions and theoretical work linking attentional training to psychological outcomes.

The IAA Model of Mindfulness (Shapiro, 2006). The IAA Model of Mindfulness (Intention, Attention, Attitude) defines mindfulness as intentionally paying attention to the present moment with a kind, non-judgmental attitude, where each element reinforces the others: Intention sets the purpose (why one is practicing), Attention focuses awareness on internal and external experience, and Attitude (kindness, curiosity) shapes how one relates to what arises, leading to deeper understanding and transformation.

The Five Facet Mindfulness Model (Baer et al., 2006). The Five Facet Mindfulness Model, measured by the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), breaks mindfulness into five interconnected aspects: (a) Observing—noticing sensations and thoughts; (b) Describing—labeling experiences; (c) Acting with Awareness—focusing on the present; (d) Non-Judging—adopting a non-evaluative stance; and (e) Non-Reactivity—allowing thoughts and feelings to pass without being carried away. This model helps understand the multidimensional nature of mindfulness, showing how different facets are related to various well-being outcomes.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study examines the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among individuals practicing celibacy, addressing a significant gap in empirical research concerning the systematic understanding of how these constructs are associated within this consciously adopted lifestyle.

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE STUDY.

1.4.1 Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to the ability to pay attention to present-moment experiences with awareness, acceptance, and without judgment. In the present study, mindfulness is

operationally defined as the score obtained by the participant on the selected mindfulness scale. Higher scores indicate a higher level of mindfulness.

1.4.2 Spirituality

Spirituality refers to an individual's experience of connection with a higher power, inner self, meaning in life, and spiritual values. In the present study, spirituality is operationally defined as the score obtained by the participant on the selected spirituality scale. Higher scores indicate a higher level of spirituality.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy.
2. To explore the gender difference on spirituality among individuals practicing celibacy.
3. To investigate the gender difference on mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy.

1.6 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among the individuals practicing celibacy.

H2: There will be a significant gender difference in spirituality among individuals practicing celibacy.

H3: There will be significant gender difference in mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study was delimited to voluntary celibacy only. Individuals practicing involuntary celibacy were not specifically distinguished or examined separately in the present study.

- The study was delimited to self-reported data only. Observational, physiological, or behavioural measures of mindfulness and spirituality were not employed.

- The study was delimited to adults aged 18 years and above only. Adolescents or elderly populations were not included in the present investigation.

- The study was delimited to non-clinical population only. Individuals diagnosed with any psychiatric or psychological disorder were excluded from the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celibacy, the practice of voluntary sexual abstinence, has been integral to spiritual traditions worldwide, serving as a foundational discipline for achieving spiritual development and self-realization. Mindfulness, characterized by non-judgmental present-moment awareness, has emerged as a significant practice enhancing emotional regulation, mental clarity, and spiritual growth. The intersection of mindfulness and spirituality among celibate practitioners presents a compelling area of inquiry, as both practices demand heightened self-awareness, disciplined sensory control, and intentional cultivation of meaning and purpose. This review synthesizes existing research examining celibacy across cultural, religious, psychological, and anthropological perspectives to establish a comprehensive understanding of how mindfulness practices interact with celibate lifestyles to shape spiritual experiences and well-being among individuals practicing sexual abstinence.

Gregoire (2003) examined the cultural dimensions of religious celibacy within the clinical treatment of Catholic priests and religious individuals experiencing sexual addiction or compulsivity. The primary aim was to emphasize the importance of understanding the theological, spiritual, and institutional culture of celibate religious life for effective psychological intervention. The study highlighted that mandatory celibacy operates within a complex framework of spiritual ideals, institutional expectations, and psychological pressures, which can significantly influence mental health outcomes. The study findings indicate that celibate culture shapes psychological experience, while mindfulness and spirituality appear to support coping and self-regulation among practitioners.

Brown and Ryan (2003) conducted a study to assess dispositional mindfulness and examined its relationship with psychological well-being. The research program comprised multiple studies involving diverse samples totaling over 500 participants. The study aimed at conceptualizing mindfulness as a distinct quality of consciousness and to evaluate its association with well-being and found that higher levels of dispositional mindfulness were significantly and positively related to life satisfaction, positive affect, self-regulation, and overall psychological well-being. The study

findings show that mindfulness was a unique construct, independent of other personality traits.

Carmody et al. (2008) looked at the relationship between spirituality, mindfulness, and health-related outcomes among participants in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs. The study aimed to ascertain if changes in mindfulness were connected to changes in spirituality and health outcomes and discovered significant positive associations between increases in spirituality and increases in mindfulness following MBSR involvement. Both constructs showed a negative and independent correlation with psychological distress and physical symptoms. In showing how spirituality and mindfulness develop together, the study offers a framework for exploring these processes among celibate individuals committed to disciplined self-regulation.

Greeson et al. (2008) examined the effects of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program on mindfulness, spirituality, psychological distress, and medical symptoms. The study included 44 participants enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and utilized several validated instruments. The study aimed to assess whether participation in MBSR led to improvements in both mindfulness and spirituality and how these changes related to health outcomes. The study revealed significant post-intervention improvements in state and trait mindfulness, spirituality, psychological distress, and physical symptoms. Positive correlations were found between increases in mindfulness and increases in spirituality.

Nezlek and Kuppens (2008) examined the relationship between emotion regulation strategies and affective well-being using structural equation modeling in a clinical population. The study assessed strategies such as acceptance, cognitive reappraisal, avoidance, and rumination in relation to psychological well-being indicators. The aim of the study was to identify adaptive and maladaptive regulation patterns influencing well-being in which it was revealed that acceptance was positively and significantly associated with well-being, while avoidance and rumination showed significant negative relationships.

Chambers et al. (2009) reviewed several studies on the effects of mindfulness training on emotional regulation and reactivity. The goal of the review was to summarize evidence about how mindfulness-based methods affect emotional processing and regulation. Their findings showed that mindfulness training significantly improves people's ability to handle difficult emotions, lowers emotional reactivity, and helps regulate desires by boosting present-moment awareness and acceptance without judgment. This study relates to the current research because emotional regulation is essential for practicing celibacy, where individuals often face sexual desires and relationship challenges. For those who practice celibacy, mindfulness can help manage emotions effectively, enabling them to deal with frustrations and remain committed to ..their spiritual discipline.

Greeson et al. (2011) examined changes in spirituality as a mediating mechanism underlying the mental health benefits of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The study included 279 participants who completed online assessments before and after an eight-week MBSR program. The study findings indicated that increases in daily spiritual experiences were significantly associated with improvements in mental health quality of life. This study is relevant to the present research as it empirically supports the interconnected development of mindfulness and spirituality, highlighting their combined influence on psychological well-being among individuals engaged in disciplined contemplative practices such as celibacy.

Koenig et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive meta-analytic review examining the relationship between religious involvement, spirituality, and mental health across more than 3,000 longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. The aim was to synthesize decades of research linking religiosity and spirituality with psychological well-being, depression, anxiety, and related outcomes. The study findings revealed predominantly positive associations between religious involvement and indicators of mental health, with spirituality and intrinsic religiosity showing stronger negative correlations with depression and anxiety than extrinsic religiosity.

Einolf (2013) utilized longitudinal data from the Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) study to examine whether daily spiritual experiences predicted prosocial behaviors, including volunteering, charitable giving, and helping others. The study

findings revealed that daily spiritual experiences were significant positive predictors of all three prosocial outcomes. This study is relevant to the present research as it highlights how spiritual awareness influences behavioral regulation and altruism, processes closely aligned with mindfulness practices and ethical self-discipline often emphasized in celibate lifestyles.

Unterrainer et al. (2014) examined the relationship between different dimensions of spirituality, religiosity, and mental health using validated self-report measures across clinical and community samples. The study findings indicated that individuals high in both spirituality and religiosity demonstrated better psychological outcomes and quality of life. This study is relevant to the present research as it underscores the multidimensional nature of spirituality, suggesting that mindfulness and spirituality among celibate individuals may yield different outcomes depending on contextual grounding, belief systems, and disciplined practice structures.

Fiori et al. (2014) examined how religiosity and spirituality contribute to subjective well-being through the mediating role of perceived control, using data from the MIDUS study. Results showed that all dimensions were positively associated with well-being, particularly among older adults. Mediation analyses revealed that perceived control significantly mediated the relationship between religiosity and spirituality and well-being, with stronger effects observed in later life.

Balducci et al. (2016) examined the relationships among mindfulness, spirituality, and substance use behaviors in an undergraduate sample of 196 students. The study findings revealed that substance use was significantly and negatively correlated with spirituality scores, suggesting that higher spiritual involvement was associated with lower substance use. These results highlight differential pathways through which spirituality and mindfulness influence behavior. This study is relevant to the present research as it suggests that spiritual commitment may exert stronger behavioral self-regulation effects than mindfulness alone, an important consideration when examining celibacy, where abstinence, discipline, and spiritual motivation play central roles.

Wills et al. (2016) investigated emotional self-control and emotional dysregulation using a dual-process model in a large sample of 3,561 adolescents.

Structural equation modeling demonstrated that emotional self-control had significant positive effects on well-being, whereas emotional dysregulation showed strong negative effects on both internalizing and externalizing symptoms. This study is relevant to the present research as mindfulness-based awareness and acceptance are key mechanisms of emotional regulation, which may support spiritual stability and psychological balance among individuals practicing celibacy.

Isacco and colleagues (2016) investigated the psychological well-being of Roman Catholic diocesan priests in the United States. The sample consisted of 38,275 active priests across the United States. The study findings indicated that priests experience significant workplace stressors including administrative burdens, isolation from living alone, and burnout related to expanding responsibilities with diminishing resources.

Hendriks et al. (2017) examined the predictive roles of mindfulness, self-efficacy, and social support on psychological well-being among 630 undergraduate students in the Philippines. Results showed that mindfulness was positively and significantly correlated with psychological well-being. This study is relevant to the present research as it empirically supports the role of mindfulness in promoting psychological well-being, which is particularly relevant for celibate individuals who rely on internal regulation and awareness to sustain spiritual discipline and emotional stability.

Lucchetti et al. (2018) conducted a Brazilian study examining whether spirituality or religiosity was more strongly associated with mental health outcomes among 782 adults. The study findings show that the spirituality components of meaning and peace were more strongly associated with psychological well-being and quality of life than religiosity alone. This study is relevant to the present research as it emphasizes that inner spiritual experience, rather than religious practice alone, plays a critical role in well-being an insight central to understanding spirituality and mindfulness among celibate practitioners.

Campos et al. (2018) examined the relationship between affect regulation strategies and hedonic and psychological well-being using cross-sectional survey data. Results indicated significant positive correlations between adaptive regulation

strategies and both hedonic and psychological well-being. In contrast, dysfunctional strategies such as withdrawal, suppression, and social isolation showed significant negative associations. This study is relevant to the present research as mindfulness-based awareness promotes adaptive affect regulation, which may support emotional balance and spiritual clarity among individuals practicing celibacy.

McGovern (2018) examined Brahman identity as a celibate renunciant in early Buddhist and Jain scriptures, including the Aṭṭhaka Vagga, Pārāyaṇa Vagga, and Āyārāṅga Sūtra. The study findings revealed that Buddhist and Jain celibate traditions had deep Vedic roots and often reflected stricter renunciatory ideals than householder Brahman practices. Celibacy functioned as a central spiritual discipline integrating renunciation, meditation, and liberation-seeking. This study is highly relevant to the present research as it establishes the historical integration of celibacy with contemplative and mindfulness-based practices, providing a strong theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among celibate individuals.

Dhandra and Park (2018) examined the relationship between mindfulness, gender, and ethical beliefs among Indian university students. The study findings revealed that mindfulness significantly predicted ethical beliefs and partially mediated gender-based differences. This study is relevant to the present research as it highlights the link between mindfulness and moral judgment, suggesting that mindfulness cultivated through celibate practices may influence ethical awareness.

Villani et al. (2019) examined the roles of spirituality and religiosity in subjective well-being among 267 Italian adults with religious, non-religious, and uncertain identities. The study findings indicate that spirituality operates independently of formal religious affiliation. This study is relevant to the present research as it supports the examination of spirituality as an internal experiential construct, aligning with mindfulness-based spiritual development among celibate practitioners beyond institutional religious identity.

Taube-Schiff et al. (2019) examined the moderating role of mindfulness in the relationship between spiritual coping and personal growth among 534 adults. Results showed significant positive correlations between spiritual coping and mindfulness, as

well as between spiritual coping and perceived personal growth. The study findings revealed that mindfulness amplified the effects of spiritual coping on both personal growth and positive reinterpretation. This study is relevant to the present research as it demonstrates that mindfulness enhances the effectiveness of spiritual coping, supporting its role as a key facilitator of spiritual growth and resilience among individuals practicing celibacy.

Vonderlin et al. (2020) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials to examine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based programs in workplace settings. The analysis synthesized data from 56 studies, comprising 2,689 participants in mindfulness intervention groups and 2,472 control participants. The study findings revealed that mindfulness-based programs produced moderate reductions in perceived stress, burnout, mental distress, and somatic complaints, alongside significant improvements in mindfulness and well-being.

Vally (2020) examined the relationship between emotion regulation strategies and psychological well-being among 147 college students in the United Arab Emirates. The study findings show that cognitive reappraisal was significantly and positively associated with positive affect, flourishing, emotional coping, and instrumental coping, while showing a significant negative association with negative affect. This study is relevant to the present research as cognitive reappraisal reflects mindful awareness and acceptance-based regulation, which may support spiritual growth and emotional balance among individuals practicing celibacy.

Kowalczyk et al. (2020) investigated the associations between spirituality, health-related behaviors, and psychological well-being among 595 university students from six Polish universities. The study findings demonstrated that spirituality and health-promoting behaviors were both positively and significantly related to psychological well-being. These findings are highly relevant to the present study, as they support spirituality as a core psychological resource influencing well-being.

Wenzel et al. (2021) examined how self-control relates to emotion regulation and affective well-being in daily life using ambulatory assessment data from 250 participants providing 22,796 momentary observations. The study findings show that

both trait and momentary self-control were significant and positively associated with affective well-being.

Khoury et al. (2022) examined the effects of mindfulness practice on psychological well-being and resilience among Malaysian millennials affiliated with Buddhist youth organizations. Results showed that mindfulness significantly enhanced psychological well-being and resilience, while psychological well-being also positively predicted resilience. This study is relevant to the present research as it demonstrates mindfulness as a protective and transformative process, facilitating inner strength and psychological balance qualities essential for spiritual development among individuals practicing celibacy.

Galante et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and individual participant data meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials assessing mindfulness-based programs for adult mental health promotion in non-clinical populations. Findings indicated that mindfulness-based programs produced small to moderate reductions in psychological distress. Dispositional mindfulness emerged as a significant effect modifier, with higher baseline mindfulness predicting greater mental health improvements.

Wang et al. (2023) examined the relationships between mindfulness, workplace spirituality, digital competencies, and work performance among 431 web editors in China. The study findings showed that mindfulness had a significant positive impact on workplace spirituality, digital competencies, and work performance. Workplace spirituality significantly mediated the relationship between mindfulness and work performance. This study is relevant to the present research as it empirically demonstrates that mindfulness fosters spiritual awareness, which then influences functional outcomes.

Meher et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive Ayurvedic literature review examining brahmacharya (celibacy) as a foundational pillar of health alongside diet and sleep. Findings emphasized that brahmacharya promotes physical vitality, mental clarity, social harmony, longevity, and spiritual liberation (moksha). This work is highly relevant to the present study as it situates celibacy within a mind-body-spirit

framework, suggesting that disciplined sensory regulation enhances mindfulness and spiritual growth.

Sode et al. (2024) investigated relationships among workplace spirituality, mindfulness, psychological well-being, and digital technology use among 287 full-time employees in India. The study findings revealed significant positive associations between workplace spirituality and psychological well-being, as well as between mindfulness and well-being. Mindfulness was found to mediate the relationship between workplace spirituality and psychological well-being. This study is relevant to the present research as it highlights mindfulness as a bridge between spirituality and well-being.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that mindfulness and spirituality are interrelated constructs that promote self-awareness, inner discipline, and psychological well-being. Mindfulness practices appear to support spiritual growth by fostering present-moment awareness and emotional regulation. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality in this population.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

The present study examines the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among individuals who practice celibacy as a conscious and voluntary lifestyle choice. It seeks to assess the levels of mindfulness and spirituality in this population and to analyze the nature and direction of the relationship between these two variables. The study expects that individuals practicing celibacy may demonstrate higher levels of mindfulness, which in turn may be positively associated with greater spiritual awareness and experiences. The findings are anticipated to provide empirical insight into how mindful awareness relates to spiritual well-being among celibate individuals and to contribute to a better psychological understanding of disciplined and contemplative lifestyles.

3.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Celibacy is a spiritually demanding lifestyle that requires strong self-control, mental discipline, and sustained spiritual commitment. Individuals practicing celibacy often follow rigorous spiritual routines, making mindfulness and spirituality central to their psychological well-being and spiritual growth. Mindfulness, which involves present-moment awareness, non-judgmental observation, and conscious attention, can help individuals regulate thoughts and emotions, maintain inner balance, and remain focused on their spiritual goals. Spirituality, reflecting a sense of connection with the divine, purpose in life, and transcendence, forms the foundation of their spiritual identity and motivation to sustain celibacy. Despite the importance of these constructs, there is limited empirical research examining their relationship within this unique population. Understanding how mindfulness and spirituality interact can provide valuable insights into the mechanisms that support commitment to celibacy, emotional stability, and life satisfaction. The findings of this study may assist spiritual organizations and ashrams in enhancing training programs and support systems for practitioners. Additionally, the study contributes to the broader literature on the

psychology of spirituality, celibacy, and contemplative practices by addressing an under-researched spiritual lifestyle.

3.3 POPULATION

The population targeted for this study consists of celibate adults, including both male and female participants, within the age range of 18–60 years. Individuals were selected from various ashrams and spiritual centers across Udhampur and Jammu,including ISKON(International Society for Krishna Consciousness) and Brahma Kumaris .

3.4 SAMPLE

The investigator randomly selected 113 celibate individuals from different ashrams and spiritual centers in Udhampur and Jammu districts of J&K, including ISKON and Brahma Kumaris centers . The participants include male and female devotees who have taken formal vows of celibacy and were actively practicing celibacy as part of their spiritual discipline.

3.5 SAMPLE TECHNIQUES

In the present study, the investigator used a purposive sampling technique for data collection, as the study focuses on a specific population of celibate individuals.. Participants were selected from various ashrams and spiritual centers to ensure adequate representation.

3.5.1 Inclusion Criteria

1. Male and female devotees practicing a celibate lifestyle.
2. Age range of 18–60 years.
3. Minimum one year of formal celibacy practice.
4. Residing in ashrams or spiritual communities and willing to participate voluntarily.

3.5.2 Exclusion Criteria

1. Individuals below 18 years of age.
2. Individuals not practicing celibacy (those who are married).
3. Individuals practicing celibacy for less than one year.

3.6 TOOLS

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006). The FFMQ was developed by Ruth A. Baer, Carmody, J., & Hunsinger, M. in 2006 to assess mindfulness as a multidimensional construct. The scale was derived through factor analysis of several existing mindfulness measures and consists of 39 self-report items. These items measure five facets of mindfulness: Observing, Describing, Acting with Awareness, Non-Judging of Inner Experience, and Non-Reactivity to Inner Experience. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale. The FFMQ has demonstrated good to excellent reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the total scale and subscales generally ranging from 0.75 to 0.91. Evidence for validity includes strong construct validity and convergent validity, shown through positive associations with psychological well-being and negative associations with stress, anxiety, and depression.

Spirituality Measurement Scale (SMS; Makker & Singh, 2018). The SMS was developed by Shikha Makkar and Ajay Kumar Singh in 2018 to measure spirituality as a psychological construct independent of specific religious beliefs. The original scale consists of 44 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale, and assesses spirituality across five dimensions: Transcendence, Self-Engagement, Self-Efficacy, Self-Awareness, and Service Toward Others. The scale shows high internal consistency reliability, with the overall Cronbach's alpha reported to be approximately 0.94, indicating excellent reliability. The scale shows good validity, as scores on the SMS are positively associated with well-being and meaningful life outcomes, indicating that it effectively measures the construct of spirituality.

3.7 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD, Range) were calculated for mindfulness and spirituality. Pearson's correlation was used to find the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality. An independent samples t-test was used to study gender differences in mindfulness and spirituality.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The current study aimed to examine the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among adults. The sample consisted of 113 participants, comprising 51% males and 49% females, as illustrated in Figure 1. Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the overall distribution and central tendencies of the variables within the sample. The results indicated that males reported a higher mean score on spirituality (M = 184.86) as compared to females (M = 181.15), suggesting that males tend to be slightly more spiritual than females in the present sample.

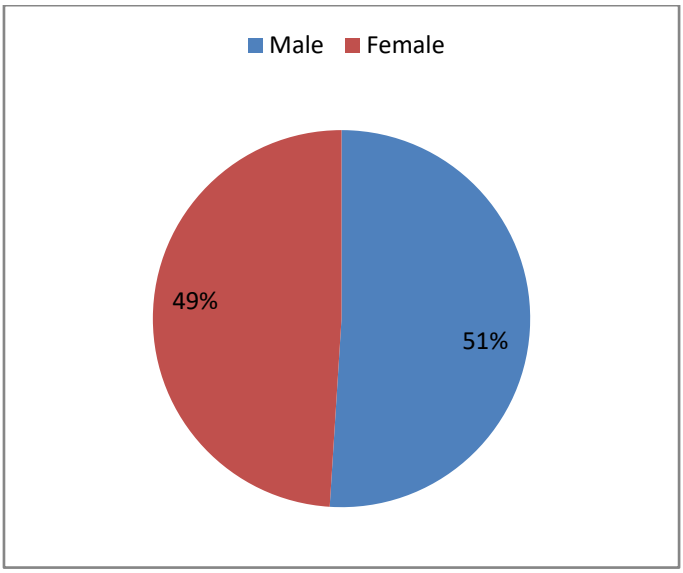


Figure 4.1 Total number of sample on the basis of Gender

The sample consisted of nearly equal gender representation, with 51% males and 49% females (Figure 1).

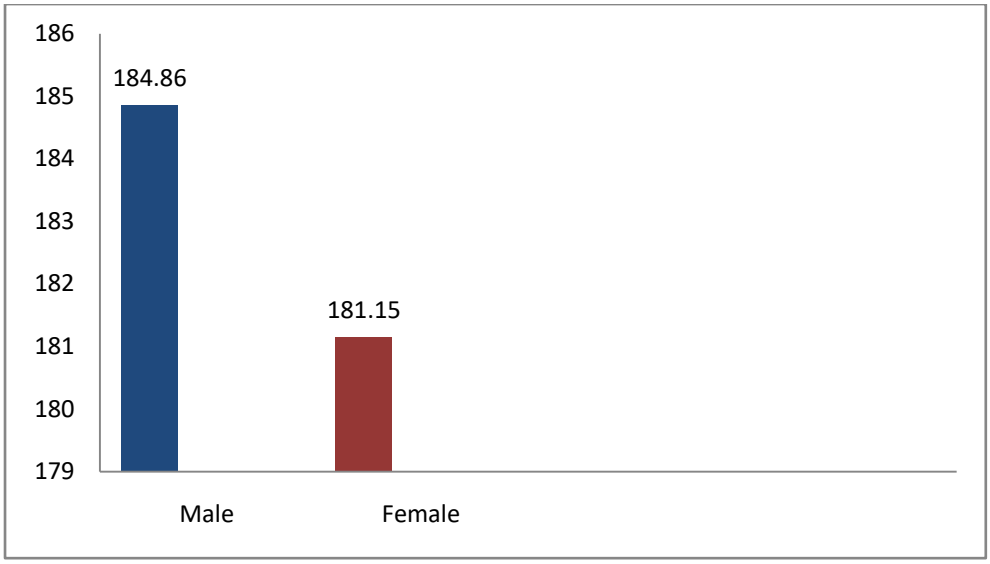


Figure 4.2 . Mean on the basis of Gender for Spirituality

The mean score for spirituality were also computed. The result indicated that the mean score for spirituality among males was 184.86 whereas for females it was 181.15 as illustrated in figure 2.

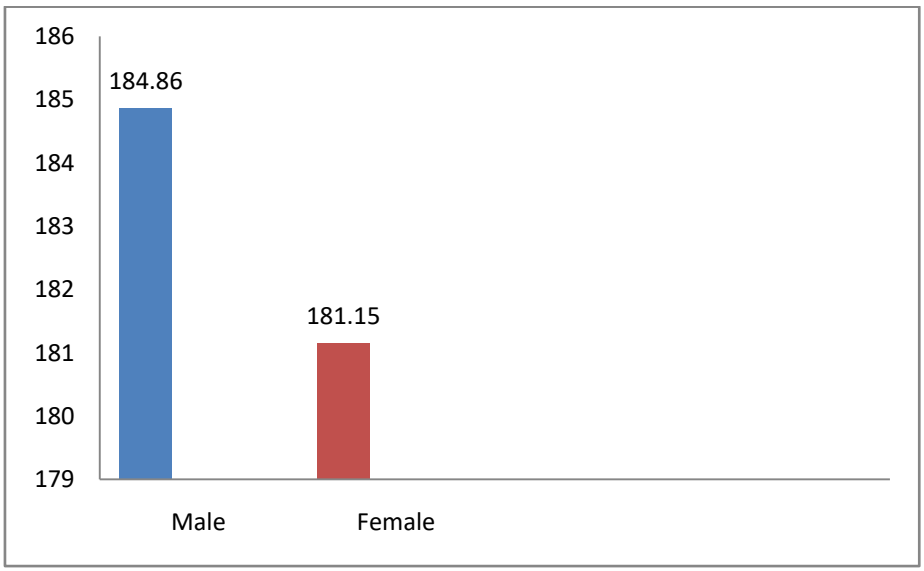


Figure 4.3. Mean on the basis of Gender for Mindfulness

The mean score for Mindfulness. The result indicated that males again scored higher (184.86) than females (181.15), suggesting greater mindfulness in males (Figure 3).

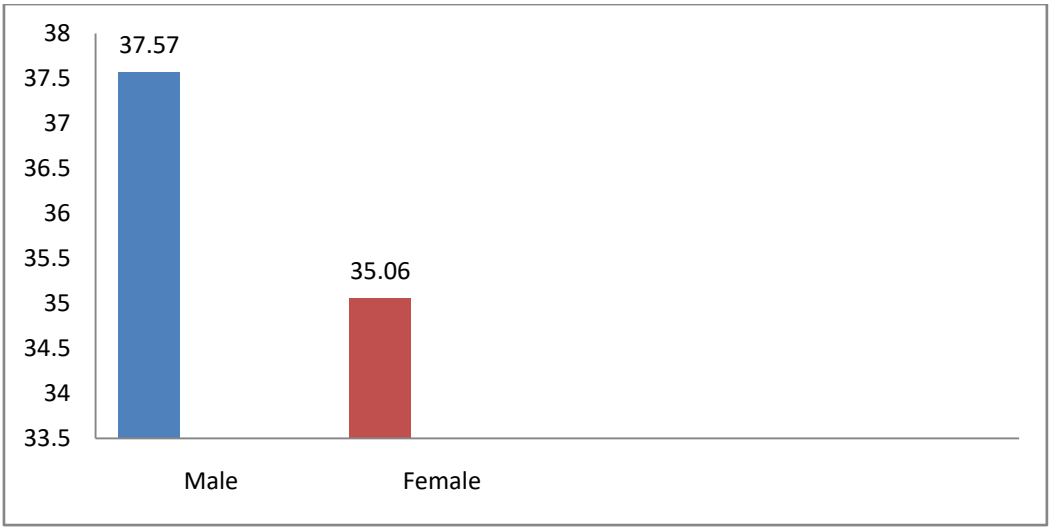


Figure 4.4. Mean on the basis of Gender for Observing

Regarding the Observing subscale of mindfulness, males (M = 37.57) outscored females (M = 35.06), reflecting that males are more observant (Figure 4).

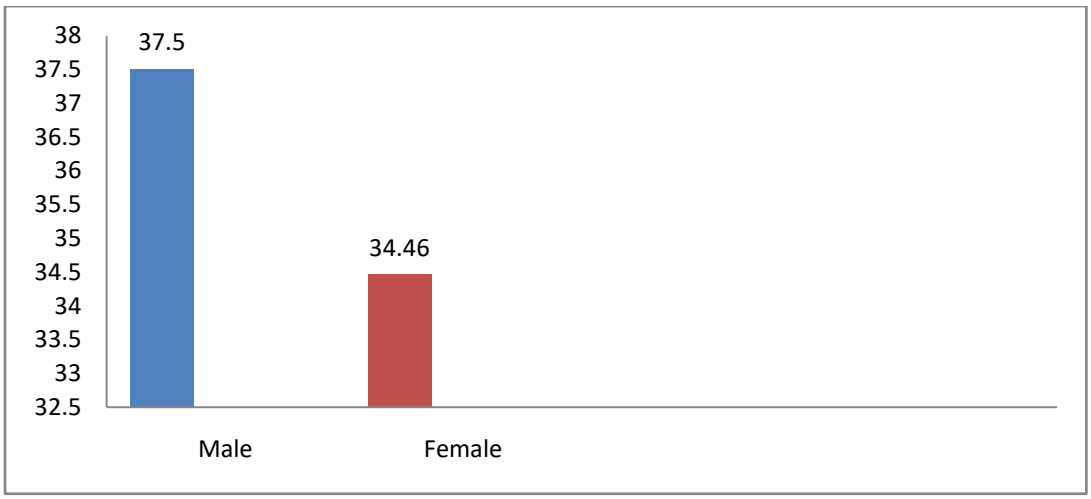


Figure 4.5. Mean on the basis of Gender for Describing

On the Describing subscale, males (M = 37.5) scored higher than females (M = 34.46), indicating males are better at describing inner experiences (Figure 5).

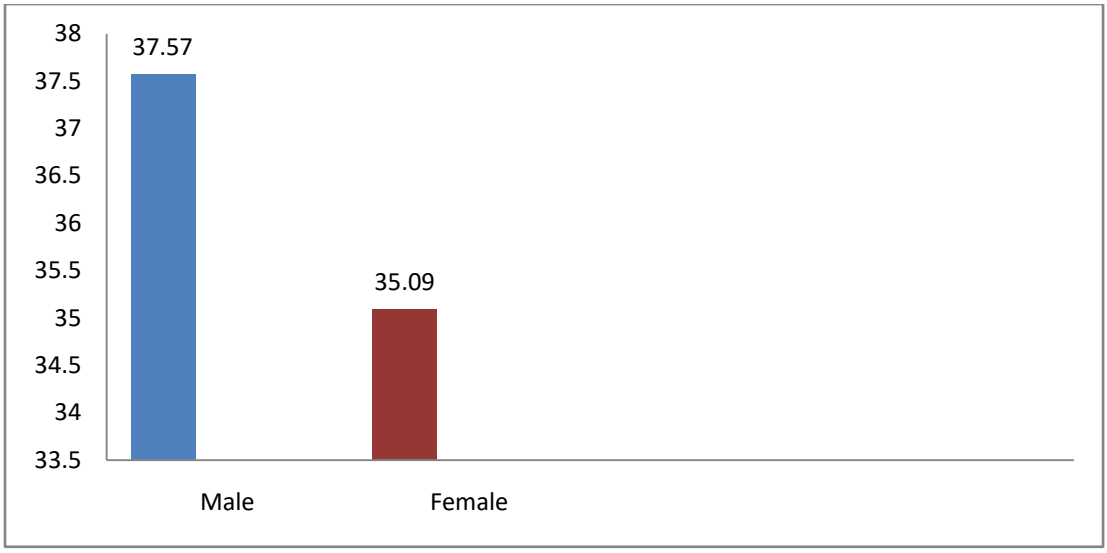


Figure 4.6. Mean on the basis of Gender for Acting and Awareness

For Acting with Awareness, males (M = 37.57) again scored higher than females (M = 35.09), showing males are more aware in their actions (Figure 6).

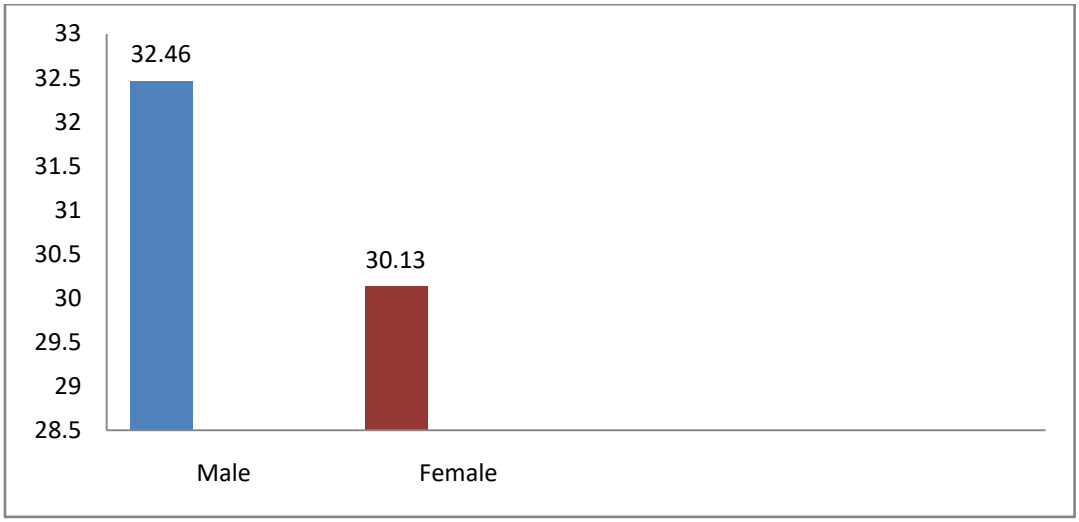


Figure 4.7. Mean on the basis of Gender for Non-reactivity

On Non-reactivity, males (M = 32.46) scored higher than females (M = 30.13), suggesting males demonstrate greater non-reactive tendencies (Figure 7).

4.2 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among spirituality, mindfulness, and all its sub-dimensions. As shown in Table 1, spirituality demonstrated a strong positive and statistically significant correlation with

mindfulness (r = .778, p < 0.01). Furthermore, spirituality was also significantly positively correlated with the sub-dimensions of mindfulness, including Observing (r = .734, p < .01), Describing (r = .763, p < .01), Acting with Awareness (r = .752, p < .01), Non-Judging (r = .737, p < .01), and Non-Reactivity (r = .816, p < .01). These findings indicate that higher levels of spirituality are associated with greater mindfulness across all its facets.

4.4 t –Test

Table 4.2 Significance of differences (t- test result for gender).

Variable	Gender Male	M	SD	Female	M	SD	t Value	p Value
spirituality		184. 86	11.39		181.15	12.75	1.60	0.11
Mindfulness		182.64	21.57		169.63	32.24	2.49	0.14

P < 0.05, p <0.1, p < 0.001.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the significance of difference in spirituality and mindfulness with respect to gender. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in spirituality between males (M = 184.86, SD = 11.39) and females (M = 181.15, SD = 12.75), as the obtained value (t = 1.60, p > .05) was found to be non significant. Similarly, for mindfulness, although males (M = 182.64, SD = 21.57) obtained higher mean scores than females (M = 169.63, SD = 32.24), the difference was again found to be statistically non-significant (t = 2.49, p > .05). Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant gender difference in both spirituality and mindfulness, indicating that gender does not have a significant influence on these variables.

Table 4.1 Showing Correlation among all variables for total sample.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spirituality	183.04	12.193	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mindfulness	176.25	27.984	.778**	1	-	-	-	-	-
Observing	36.34	5.584	.734**	.967**	1	-	-	-	-
Describing	36.01	5.922	.763**	.981**	.934**	1	-	-	-
Acting with Awareness	36.35	5.682	.752**	.974**	.915**	.946**	1	-	-
Non-Judging	36.24	5.836	.737**	.986**	.953**	.958**	.956**	1	-
Non-Reactivity	31.32	5.632	.816**	.975**	.924**	.952**	.939**	.948**	1

** = p<.01

The correlation analysis showed that spirituality has a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with mindfulness (r= 0.78, p < 0.1). Furthermore, spirituality was also positively correlated with observing (r=0.73, p < .01), describing (r=0.76, p < .01), acting with awareness (r= 0.75, p < .01) , and non – judging (r= 0.74, p < .01). All the variable were significantly correlated at the 0.01 level , indicating a strong association among the them.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, FUTURE IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among adults, with further exploration of gender-based differences in these constructs. The findings derived from descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and independent samples t-tests are discussed in the following sections in light of relevant empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks. The discussion aims to contextualize the results within the existing body of literature and to provide a coherent interpretation of the patterns observed in the data.

Spirituality and mindfulness are two constructs that have received considerable scholarly attention in the fields of psychology, health sciences, and behavioral research. While spirituality is broadly understood as a deeply personal and transcendent dimension of human experience that encompasses meaning-making, purpose, and connectedness to something beyond the self, mindfulness refers to the intentional, present-moment awareness cultivated without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Both constructs have been independently associated with enhanced psychological well-being, reduced psychological distress, and greater capacity for emotional regulation. However, empirical investigations into the nature of their relationship, particularly within the Indian adult population, remain relatively sparse. The relationship between spirituality and mindfulness is not merely coincidental. Historically, mindfulness as a practice finds its roots in Eastern spiritual traditions, particularly Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism, where present-moment awareness is cultivated as a means of attaining inner peace, liberation, and a sense of connection with something greater than the self. Over the decades, mindfulness has been adapted into secular, clinical frameworks most notably through Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program yet it continues to retain its philosophical connection to spirituality. This duality makes the empirical investigation of both constructs together particularly relevant and timely, as it allows researchers to

understand both the clinical and existential dimensions of human psychological functioning. The present study thus addresses a meaningful gap in the literature by systematically exploring the association between spirituality and mindfulness and by examining whether gender plays a moderating role in this relationship. Understanding this association has significant implications not only for psychological theory but also for the development of holistic, culturally sensitive mental health interventions.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.2.1 Objective 1: To examine the relationship between Spirituality and Mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy

The correlation analysis offers a more profound understanding of the relationships among the study variables. The initial hypothesis posited a significant positive correlation between spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy. The results supported this hypothesis, indicating that the correlation was positive and statistically significant.

The first hypothesis proposed that there would be a significant positive relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy. Pertaining to the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness, it was hypothesized that individuals who score higher on spirituality would also report higher levels of mindfulness. It was found that spirituality and mindfulness were significantly and positively correlated ($r = .778$, $p < .01$), lending strong support to this hypothesis.

To comprehend the significant connection between spirituality and mindfulness, it is beneficial to reflect on the internal effects of spiritual practice on an individual. When a person engages in spiritual practice or has a natural tendency toward spirituality, they are essentially training their attention toward present-moment awareness, inner stillness, and conscious living (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). They are, in a very real sense, changing the way that everyday experiences are processed. This cognitive-affective orientation focusing on transcendence, recognizing the sacred in ordinary experience, and cultivating acceptance significantly influences mindful functioning (Keng et al., 2011). The individuals practicing celibacy in this sample

who had higher spirituality scores probably had a deeper quality of present-moment awareness than those who had lower scores, and this difference appears to have had real consequences for their mindfulness.

Theoretically, this finding is supported by the Mindfulness-to-Meaning Theory (MMT) proposed by Garland et al. (2019), which posits that mindfulness is not merely a stress-reduction technique but a pathway toward self-transcendence the experiential core of spirituality. This framework posits that mindful individuals exhibit a persistent inclination to decenter from automatic thinking, broaden attentional awareness, and engage in positive reappraisal, thereby guiding them toward the self-transcendent states that lie at the heart of spiritual experience. This orientation does not remain limited to how one feels at the moment; it spreads into how one interprets existence, relates to others, and pursues meaning. It is this breadth of influence that explains why spirituality is associated not merely with religious behavior but with the deeper, more enduring quality of mindful awareness that the FFMQ captures.

Frankl's existential theory complements this understanding by highlighting that self-transcendence moving beyond ego-centered concerns toward meaning, values, and contribution is the defining feature of mature spiritual functioning. For individuals practicing celibacy, who have deliberately redirected their energy away from sensory gratification toward inner development, this orientation toward self-transcendence may have profound implications for mindful functioning. It counters the distraction and reactivity that ordinary life often demands and cultivates instead a quality of sustained, non-reactive awareness which is itself a foundation for both spirituality and mindfulness.

Lucchetti et al. (2021), in a study examining spirituality and psychological outcomes, discovered that individuals with higher levels of spirituality exhibited enhanced emotional stability, a more reflective orientation toward experience, and improved capacity for present-moment awareness. The current findings align closely with this evidence.

Turning to the sub-dimensions of mindfulness, spirituality was significantly and positively correlated with all five facets: Observing ($r = .734$, $p < .01$), Describing

(r = .763, p < .01), Acting with Awareness (r = .752, p < .01), Non-Judging (r = .737, p < .01), and Non-Reactivity (r = .816, p < .01). Among these, Non-Reactivity showed the strongest association, confirming the breadth and depth of spirituality's relationship with mindfulness.

The connection between spirituality and Non-Reactivity is especially meaningful. Non-Reactivity, in the context of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al., 2006), refers to the capacity to observe thoughts and feelings without being swept away by them maintaining equanimity in the face of internal and external stimuli. When reflecting upon the fact that individuals engaged in celibate spiritual practice regularly encounter desires, impulses, and challenges to their chosen discipline, it becomes clear why those with higher spirituality may develop precisely this quality of non-reactive inner steadiness. Vago and Silbersweig (2012), in a model of self-transcendent functioning, found that advanced contemplative states are associated with reduced emotional reactivity and increased equanimity, supporting this interpretation.

Similarly, the significant relationship between spirituality and Acting with Awareness reflects the integration of spiritual values into moment-to-moment behavior. Spiritual teachings across traditions emphasize purposeful, mindful action as an expression of inner commitment. Among individuals practicing celibacy, where every impulse is potentially subject to conscious evaluation in light of spiritual purpose, acting with awareness is not an abstract skill but a lived daily practice.

In summary, the pattern of associations found in the current study suggests that spirituality is more than a set of religious beliefs. Rather, it is a profound psychological orientation that appears to nurture the whole structure of mindful awareness from the most fundamental quality of attentive observation to the deepest capacity for non-reactive equanimity.

5.2.2 Objective 2: To examine the gender differences in Spirituality and Mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy

The second hypothesis of the study proposed that there would be a significant gender difference in spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy. The independent samples t-test revealed that males scored marginally higher than females

on both spirituality (Male M = 184.86, SD = 11.39; Female M = 181.15, SD = 12.75; t = 1.60, p > .05) and mindfulness (Male M = 182.64, SD = 21.57; Female M = 169.63, SD = 32.24; t = 2.49, p > .05). However, neither difference was statistically significant. The hypothesis is therefore not supported.

This finding suggests that spirituality and mindfulness, as practiced within the context of celibacy, are not substantially shaped by gender. Both males and females appear to develop comparable levels of spiritual awareness and mindful engagement. This can be understood in light of the deeply personal and inward nature of both constructs. Spirituality, as conceptualized by Elkins et al. (1988), encompasses transcendent awareness, meaning-making, and purposeful living qualities that are fundamentally human and not gender-restricted.

Johnstone et al. (2012) found no significant gender differences in spiritual experiences, while Bachtiar et al. (2017) reported minimal variation in mindfulness levels across genders. These studies collectively suggest that spirituality and mindfulness are universal psychological capacities that transcend gender boundaries.

The celibate context may itself serve as a leveling factor. When individuals of either gender commit to the discipline of celibacy, they orient their energies toward inward development, self-regulation, and spiritual pursuit creating a shared psychological environment that minimizes gender-based variation.

Overall, the findings indicate that spirituality and mindfulness are not significantly influenced by gender in a celibate population, supporting the idea that these constructs are universal and applicable across individuals regardless of gender.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To examine the relationship between Spirituality and dimensions of Mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy

Pertaining to the third objective, it was expected that spirituality would show significant positive relationships with all five subscales of mindfulness. It was found that spirituality emerged as significantly positively correlated with all five facets of mindfulness — Observing, Describing, Acting with Awareness, Non-Judging, and Non-Reactivity with Non-Reactivity showing the strongest individual association (r = .816, p < .01).

The particularly strong association between spirituality and Non-Reactivity invites its own reflection. Individuals practicing celibacy have made a deliberate commitment to observe desires and impulses without automatic reactivity. In doing so, they have had to cultivate precisely the quality of inner steadiness that Non-Reactivity represents. This process, reinforced through daily spiritual practice, builds the kind of equanimous self-regulation that Non-Reactivity captures. Yaden et al. (2017) found that self-transcendent states are associated with reduced emotional reactivity and increased equanimity, a finding consistent with the idea that spiritual development strengthens one's capacity for non-reactive awareness.

The strong association between spirituality and Observing (r = .734) reflects the heightened inner awareness cultivated through contemplative spiritual practice. Spiritual disciplines such as meditation, prayer, and self-examination inherently develop the quality of attentive observation by directing consciousness toward present-moment experience and transcendent realities (Baer et al., 2006).

The Describing facet (r = .763) reflects emotional clarity and the ability to articulate internal experiences. Spiritual engagement typically involves rich introspective practice through which individuals develop nuanced awareness of their inner lives including spiritual experiences, struggles, and growth facilitating better emotional articulation.

The facet of Acting with Awareness (r = .752) reflects conscious and intentional behavior. Spiritual teachings across traditions emphasize mindful living and purposeful action, which aligns closely with this dimension. Among celibate practitioners, conscious behavioral regulation in line with spiritual commitments makes this facet particularly salient.

The Non-Judging facet (r = .737) represents acceptance and compassion toward one's own thoughts and experiences. Spiritual frameworks universally encourage a non-critical, accepting stance toward oneself and others. Individuals higher in spirituality appear to have internalized this accepting orientation, viewing their internal experiences including the temptations and struggles inherent to celibate life with compassion rather than self-condemnation (Shapiro et al., 2006).

Collectively, the regression findings confirm that spirituality is significantly positively related to all dimensions of mindfulness. These findings suggest that spirituality contributes not to isolated aspects of mindful awareness but to its holistic development encompassing attentive observation, emotional clarity, purposeful action, acceptance, and equanimity.

5.3 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

From the findings of the present research, it can be concluded that:

- There is a significant positive relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy. Supported

- There is no significant gender difference in spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy. Not Supported

- Spirituality is significantly positively correlated with all five subscales of mindfulness among individuals practicing celibacy. Supported

- The present study set out to examine the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among individuals practicing celibacy in Jammu and Kashmir. The findings collectively demonstrate that spirituality and mindfulness are significantly and strongly related constructs ($r = .778$, $p < .01$), confirming that these two dimensions of inner life are deeply intertwined, particularly within a celibate context.

- The correlation analysis revealed that spirituality was significantly positively associated with all five facets of mindfulness. Both variables showed significant positive correlations with all sub-dimensions, reinforcing the breadth and consistency of their relationship across multiple domains of mindful awareness.

- The t-test results indicated no statistically significant gender differences in either spirituality or mindfulness, despite males scoring marginally higher on both constructs. This finding supports the universality of these psychological

capacities and suggests that celibate practice itself serves as a shared psychological context that minimizes gender-based variation.

Theoretically, the findings support the Mindfulness-to-Meaning Theory (Garland et al., 2019), Frankl's existential framework of self-transcendence, and Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory, all of which conceptualize mindfulness and spirituality as convergent pathways toward self-transcendence, meaning-making, and psychological well-being.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Educational Implications

The findings of the present study indicate that spirituality and mindfulness may contribute significantly to the development of self-discipline, emotional stability, concentration, and self-awareness among individuals practicing celibacy. The study suggests that educational institutions may incorporate mindfulness-based practices, meditation, yoga, and spiritually oriented value education programs to promote holistic personality development and psychological wellbeing among students.

Social Implications

The present study highlights the importance of spirituality and mindfulness in fostering positive social behaviour, compassion, patience, ethical values, and harmonious interpersonal relationships. Individuals practicing celibacy may develop greater emotional regulation and self-control through spiritual and mindful practices, which may positively influence social adjustment and social wellbeing. The findings of the study may also encourage society to recognize the importance of inner peace, moral values, and mindful living in maintaining healthy social relationships.

Psychological and Mental Health Implications

The findings of the study suggest that spirituality and mindfulness may positively contribute to psychological wellbeing and mental health among individuals practicing celibacy. Mindfulness may help individuals in reducing stress, improving emotional regulation, and maintaining mental calmness, whereas spirituality may provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and inner strength. The findings may be beneficial for

psychologists, counsellors, and mental health professionals in designing holistic interventions aimed at enhancing emotional wellbeing and overall mental health through spiritual and mindfulness-based approaches.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was conducted on a limited sample size; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population.
- The study was confined only to individuals practicing celibacy, which limits the applicability of the findings to other populations.
- The study relied on self-report measures of spirituality and mindfulness, which may be affected by personal bias and social desirability.
- Time constraints and limited resources acted as barriers during the research process.
- Only two variables, spirituality and mindfulness, were included in the study, whereas other related psychological variables were not considered.
- The study was limited to a specific geographical area, which may affect the generalization of the findings.
- The data collected from participants reflected their responses only at a particular period of time; therefore, changes in spirituality and mindfulness over time were not examined.
- The study included participants aged 18–60 years. Differences in age and life experiences may have influenced spirituality and mindfulness levels, affecting the consistency of responses. Future studies may focus on a more homogeneous age group for more specific findings.
- The study used a correlational research design; hence, cause-and-effect relationships between spirituality and mindfulness could not be established.

- Differences based on demographic variables such as educational background, socio-economic status, and cultural factors were not studied in detail.

- The possibility of participants giving socially acceptable responses could not be completely avoided.

- The study did not include qualitative methods such as interviews or case studies, which could have provided deeper insights into the experiences of individuals practicing celibacy.

- Environmental and situational factors influencing spirituality and mindfulness were not taken into consideration during the study.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- The findings of this study open several promising avenues for future research. Most urgently, longitudinal investigations that track spirituality and mindfulness across time among individuals practicing celibacy would substantially strengthen causal inference. Such designs would also allow researchers to examine how these resources develop across different stages of contemplative practice and in response to specific life challenges.

- Intervention-based studies represent another critical frontier. Given that both spirituality and mindfulness can be cultivated through targeted practices, experimental studies implementing and evaluating spirituality-informed mindfulness programs within contemplative communities could establish whether the relationships observed here can be harnessed for practical benefit.

- Future research should also explore the mediating and moderating mechanisms that link spirituality and mindfulness. Variables such as self-transcendence, positive affect, meaning-making, coping style, and social support within spiritual communities may explain how and when these relationships are strongest. In particular, given the strong association between spirituality and Non-Reactivity, mediation models in which spiritual development promotes non-reactive equanimity which in turn supports broader mindful functioning deserve formal testing.

- Mixed-method approaches combining quantitative correlation analyses with qualitative phenomenological inquiry would provide a richer understanding of how individuals practicing celibacy subjectively experience and integrate spirituality and mindfulness in their daily lives.

- Finally, extending this line of inquiry to more culturally and occupationally diverse samples across India is essential. The present study represents one of the relatively limited number of investigations into the spirituality-mindfulness relationship within a celibate Indian population, and the field needs more such work not only to validate and extend the present findings, but to explore how cultural values, spiritual traditions, and regional contexts shape the contemplative resources that celibate individuals bring to their psychological well-being.

SUMMARY

TOPIC : A Study of the Relationship between Mindfulness and Spirituality among Individuals Practicing Celibacy.

SUPERVISOR

Dr. Jasleen Kour
Assistant Professor

INVESTIGATOR

Voamnika
Roll No. 2415018
M.A Psychology
Semester IV

Introduction

Celibacy, spirituality, and mindfulness represent three profoundly interconnected dimensions of human consciousness and behavioral practice that have been recognized across cultures and traditions for millennia. Celibacy, defined as the deliberate abstinence from sexual activity, transcends mere physical restraint and represents a conscious redirection of vital energy toward higher purposes of self-realization and spiritual development (Sipe, 1990; Abbott, 2001). This practice has historically been embedded within broader spiritual frameworks, where it serves as both a prerequisite and catalyst for deepening one's connection with the transcendent dimensions of existence. Spirituality, in contemporary understanding, encompasses the search for meaning, purpose, and connection with something greater than oneself, whether conceived as the divine, universal consciousness, or the interconnectedness of all life (Pargament, 1997; Miller & Thoresen, 2003). It represents an experiential dimension of human existence that seeks to transcend the limitations of material reality and ego-bound consciousness (Elkins et al., 1988). Mindfulness, rooted in ancient contemplative traditions yet increasingly validated by modern psychological science, refers to the practice of maintaining moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and non-judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Bishop et al., 2004).

These three domains converge in their shared emphasis on intentionality, self-regulation, present-moment awareness, and the cultivation of inner resources for

personal transformation (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009). The relationship between celibacy and spirituality manifests in the channeling of sexual energy toward contemplative practice and the dissolution of attachment to sensory gratification, creating conditions conducive to mystical experience and self-transcendence (Foucault, 1988; Sipe, 1990). Spirituality provides the philosophical framework and ultimate purpose that gives meaning to celibate practice, transforming what might otherwise be experienced as mere deprivation into a sacred discipline with transformative potential (Abbott, 2001; Cozzens, 2000). Mindfulness serves as both a spiritual practice and a psychological skill that facilitates the awareness necessary for maintaining celibacy and deepening spiritual insight (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). Through mindfulness, practitioners develop the capacity to observe desires and impulses without automatic reactivity, creating space between stimulus and response that is essential for voluntary celibacy (Brotto & Heiman, 2007; Garland et al., 2009). Furthermore, mindfulness enhances spiritual experience by cultivating the quality of attention and presence that allows for direct perception of spiritual realities beyond conceptual thought (Shapiro et al., 2006; Davis & Hayes, 2011). The interconnection among these three domains creates a synergistic system wherein each element supports and reinforces the others: celibacy creates the conditions of simplicity and energy conservation that facilitate deeper meditation and spiritual practice; spirituality provides the motivational framework and ultimate meaning that sustain both celibate discipline and mindful awareness; and mindfulness offers the practical methodology through which both celibacy and spiritual development can be effectively pursued (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Carmody & Baer, 2008). Research increasingly demonstrates that these practices share common neurological substrates, psychological mechanisms, and developmental outcomes, suggesting that they represent different facets of an integrated approach to human flourishing and self-transcendence (Newberg & Iversen, 2003; Davidson & Lutz, 2008). This interconnected framework offers profound implications for understanding human potential, the nature of consciousness, and pathways to psychological well-being and spiritual fulfillment in an increasingly fragmented modern world (Harris et al., 2009; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Spirituality

Spirituality represents a multidimensional construct that has garnered increasing attention from researchers, clinicians, and scholars across diverse disciplines over the past several decades. Unlike religiosity, which typically involves adherence to specific institutional beliefs, practices, and communities, spirituality encompasses a broader, more individualized search for the sacred, meaning, and connection with transcendent dimensions of existence (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2000). Contemporary conceptualizations of spirituality recognize it as a fundamental aspect of human experience that can manifest both within and outside traditional religious frameworks (Pargament, 1999). The phenomenological characteristics of spirituality have been extensively documented in the scholarly literature. Elkins and colleagues (1988) identified nine core components of spirituality through comprehensive research: transcendent dimension (belief in a higher power or force beyond the self); meaning and purpose in life; mission in life (a sense of calling or responsibility); sacredness of life (ability to see the sacred in all aspects of existence); material values (recognition of spiritual values as superior to purely material concerns); altruism (sense of social justice and compassion); idealism (vision of a better world); awareness of the tragic (realistic acceptance of human suffering and mortality); and fruits of spirituality (positive life outcomes resulting from spiritual practice). These components collectively describe a comprehensive spiritual orientation that integrates cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral dimensions of human functioning (Elkins et al., 1988).

Spirituality fundamentally involves the human capacity for self-transcendence the ability to extend one's boundaries beyond immediate ego concerns and personal gratification toward connection with larger wholes (Reed, 1991; Piedmont, 1999). This capacity enables individuals to experience profound states of unity, interconnectedness, and dissolution of subject-object dualities that characterize ordinary consciousness (Newberg et al., 2001). Such transcendent experiences have been reported across cultures and traditions, suggesting they represent universal potentials within human consciousness rather than culturally constructed phenomena (Hood, 1975; Hood et al., 2009).

The cognitive dimension of spirituality encompasses specific beliefs, attributions, and meaning-making frameworks through which individuals interpret their existence and experiences (Park, 2005). Spiritual individuals tend to perceive life as inherently meaningful rather than random or absurd, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and development rather than mere obstacles (Pargament, 1997). This meaning-making capacity serves as a crucial resource for coping with adversity, loss, and existential anxiety (Park, 2010; Wortmann & Park, 2008). Research demonstrates that individuals with well-developed spiritual frameworks exhibit greater resilience in the face of trauma, illness, and life transitions (Pargament et al., 2004).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness represents both an inherent human capacity and a cultivated skill involving the intentional regulation of attention toward present-moment experience with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Bishop et al., 2004). While rooted in Buddhist contemplative traditions spanning over 2,500 years, mindfulness has been increasingly studied, operationalized, and applied within Western psychological science and clinical practice over the past four decades (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011). This cross-cultural translation has generated considerable debate regarding the essence of mindfulness, its defining characteristics, and appropriate methods for its cultivation and measurement (Grossman, 2011; Dreyfus, 2011). The most widely cited operational definition comes from Bishop and colleagues (2004), who propose a two-component model of mindfulness. The first component involves the self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment. The second component involves adopting a particular orientation toward one's experiences in the present moment, characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004). This definition emphasizes both the attentional and attitudinal dimensions that collectively constitute mindful awareness.

Kabat-Zinn (1994), who pioneered the integration of mindfulness into Western medicine through the development of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), defines mindfulness as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally (p. 4). This elegant definition captures three essential

features: intentionality (mindfulness is deliberate rather than accidental), present-centeredness (attention is anchored in current experience rather than dwelling on past or future), and non-judgment (experiences are observed without evaluation, criticism, or reactivity) (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). The attentional component of mindfulness involves several distinct yet interrelated capacities. Sustained attention refers to the ability to maintain focus on a chosen object (such as the breath) for extended periods despite the mind's tendency toward distraction (Jha et al., 2007). Attention switching involves the ability to disengage from distractions and return attention to the intended focus (Lutz et al., 2008). Attention inhibition involves the capacity to prevent attention from being captured by salient but irrelevant stimuli (Moore & Malinowski, 2009). Together, these capacities enable practitioners to cultivate stable, flexible attention that can be directed and maintained according to intention rather than being driven automatically by habit or external stimuli (Lutz et al., 2008). Meta-awareness represents the ability to observe the current state of one's attention itself, recognizing when the mind has wandered and whether attention is focused or diffuse (Schooler et al., 2011).

The attitudinal component of mindfulness encompasses several interrelated qualities. Acceptance involves allowing experiences to be as they are without attempting to change, suppress, or avoid them (Hayes et al., 1999). This does not imply passive resignation but rather a willing acknowledgment of present reality as the necessary starting point for appropriate response (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Non-judgment involves observing experiences without immediately categorizing them as good or bad, desirable or undesirable, thereby creating space between experience and reactivity (Bishop et al., 2004). Curiosity represents an attitude of interested investigation toward one's experience, approaching even familiar phenomena with beginner's mind rather than automatic assumptions (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Compassion, particularly self-compassion, involves treating oneself with kindness when confronting difficulties or personal shortcomings rather than with harsh criticism (Neff, 2003; Germer & Neff, 2013). Mindfulness is fundamentally distinguished from related constructs such as relaxation, concentration, or dissociation (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). While mindfulness practice may produce relaxation as a side effect, relaxation is not its primary aim; rather, the goal is clear awareness of whatever is present, whether pleasant or unpleasant (Bishop et al., 2004). Unlike concentration practices

that narrow attention to a single point to the exclusion of all else, mindfulness maintains an open, spacious awareness that can hold multiple aspects of experience simultaneously (Lutz et al., 2008).

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

The study investigates the intricate relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among individual practicing celibacy. Given the unique lifestyle and spiritual commitments of this population, understanding these factors is crucial for comprehending their psychological well-being and spiritual development. Celibacy as part of their spiritual discipline, which requires exceptional mental strength, self-control, and spiritual dedication. Examining the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality can provide insights into how these practices support their commitment to celibacy and overall life satisfaction.

Mindfulness, encompassing aspects like present-moment awareness, non-judgmental observation, and conscious attention, is vital for individuals following rigorous spiritual paths. Investigating how devotees' mindfulness practices relate to their spirituality can uncover mechanisms for maintaining mental clarity and emotional balance in their unique lifestyle. Spirituality, reflecting connection with the divine, sense of purpose, and transcendence, plays a central role in the lives of celibacy. This study aims to identify the specific contributions of mindfulness practices to celibacy,' spiritual experiences and vice versa.

Understanding the dynamics between mindfulness and spirituality among individual practicing celibacy can have practical implications for spiritual organizations and ashrams. Insights gained could lead to enhanced spiritual training programs, better support systems for devotees, and improved understanding of how contemplative practices contribute to successful maintenance of celibacy and spiritual growth. Furthermore, this study can contribute to the broader literature on the psychology of religion, celibacy, and contemplative practices, offering valuable perspectives on alternative lifestyles and spiritual commitments in contemporary society.

Statement of the Problem

The present study examines the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality among individuals practicing celibacy, addressing a significant gap in empirical research concerning the systematic understanding of how these constructs are associated within this consciously adopted lifestyle.

Operational Definitions of the study.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to the ability to pay attention to present-moment experiences with awareness, acceptance, and without judgment. In the present study, mindfulness is operationally defined as the score obtained by the participant on the selected mindfulness scale. Higher scores indicate a higher level of mindfulness.

Spirituality

Spirituality refers to an individual's experience of connection with a higher power, inner self, meaning in life, and spiritual values. In the present study, spirituality is operationally defined as the score obtained by the participant on the selected spirituality scale. Higher scores indicate a higher level of spirituality.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study

1. To investigate the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among individuals practice celibacy.

2. To explore the gender difference on spirituality among the individual practice celibacy.

3. To investigate the gender difference on mindfulness among the individual practice celibacy.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among the individuals practice celibacy.

H2: There will be a significant gender difference in spirituality among individual practice celibacy.

H3: There will be a significant gender difference in mindfulness among individual practice celibacy.

Population : The population targeted for this study consists of celibate adults, including both male and female participants, within the age range of 18–60 years. Individuals were selected from various ashrams and spiritual centers across Udhampur and Jammu,including ISKON(International Society for Krishna Consciousness) and Brahma Kumaris.

Sample

The investigator randomly selected 113 celibate individuals from different ashrams and spiritual centers in Udhampur and Jammu districts of J&K, including ISKON and Brahma Kumaris centers . The participants include male and female devotees who have taken formal vows of celibacy and were actively practicing celibacy as part of their spiritual discipline.

Tools

- **The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) by Ruth A. Baer, Carmody, J.,& Hunsinger, M. 2006 :** It was developed by **Ruth A. Baer,** Carmody, J., & Hunsinger, M. **in 2006** to assess mindfulness as a multidimensional construct. The scale was derived through factor analysis of several existing mindfulness measures and consists of **39 self-report items.** These items measure five facets of mindfulness: **Observing, Describing, Acting with Awareness, Non-Judging of Inner Experience, and Non-Reactivity to Inner Experience.** Responses are recorded on a Likert-type

scale. The FFMQ has demonstrated **good to excellent reliability,** with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the total scale and subscales generally ranging from **0.75 to 0.91.** Evidence for **validity** includes strong **construct validity** and **convergent validity,** shown through positive associations with psychological well-being and negative associations with stress, anxiety, and depression.

- **The Spirituality Measurement Scale (SMS) by Shikha Makkar and Ajay Kumar Singh 2018** : It was developed by **Shikha Makkar and Ajay Kumar Singh in 2018** to measure spirituality as a psychological construct independent of specific religious beliefs. The original scale consists of **44 items,** rated on a **5-point Likert scale,** and assesses spirituality across five dimensions: **Transcendence, Self-Engagement, Self-Efficacy, Self-Awareness, and Service Toward Others.** The scale shows **high internal consistency reliability,** with the overall Cronbach's alpha reported to be approximately **0.94,** indicating excellent reliability. The scale shows **good validity,** as scores on the SMS are positively associated with well-being and meaningful life outcomes, indicating that it effectively measures the construct of spirituality.

Statistical Analysis

Data is analyzed by using SPSS (version). Descriptive Statistics Mean, SD, Range calculated for mindfulness and spirituality .Pearson's Correlation to find the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality . Independent t-test to study gender differences in mindfulness and spirituality.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

- In this study, the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness among adults was examined. The sample consisted of 113 participants comprising 51% males and 49% females. The results indicated that males reported a higher mean score on spirituality (M = 184.86) as compared to females (M = 181.15), suggesting that males tend to be slightly more spiritual than females in the present sample.

- The second objective's result shows that spirituality has a strong positive and statistically significant correlation with mindfulness ($r = .778$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, spirituality was also significantly correlated with all sub-dimensions of mindfulness including Observing ($r = .734$), Describing ($r = .763$), Acting with Awareness ($r = .752$), Non-Judging ($r = .737$), and Non-Reactivity ($r = .816$), all at $p < .01$ level. Thus, it can be inferred that higher spirituality is strongly associated with greater mindfulness across all its facets.

- The third objective's result reveals that an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences. The calculated t-value for spirituality was 1.60 ($p > .05$) and for mindfulness was 2.49 ($p > .05$), both of which are non-significant. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in spirituality and mindfulness on the basis of gender, indicating that gender does not have a significant influence on these variables.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was conducted on a limited sample size; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population.

- The study was confined only to individuals practicing celibacy, which limits the applicability of the findings to other populations.

- The study relied on self-report measures of spirituality and mindfulness, which may be affected by personal bias and social desirability.

- Time constraints and limited resources acted as barriers during the research process. Only two variables, spirituality and mindfulness, were included in the study, whereas other related psychological variables were not considered.

Suggestions for Further Research.

- The findings of this study open several promising avenues for future research. Most urgently, longitudinal investigations that track spirituality and mindfulness across time among individuals practicing celibacy would substantially strengthen causal inference. Such designs would also allow

researchers to examine how these resources develop across different stages of contemplative practice and in response to specific life challenges.

- Intervention-based studies represent another critical frontier. Given that both spirituality and mindfulness can be cultivated through targeted practices, experimental studies implementing and evaluating spirituality-informed mindfulness programs within contemplative communities could establish whether the relationships observed here can be harnessed for practical benefit.

- Future research should also explore the mediating and moderating mechanisms that link spirituality and mindfulness. Variables such as self-transcendence, positive affect, meaning-making, coping style, and social support within spiritual communities may explain how and when these relationships are strongest. In particular, given the strong association between spirituality and Non-Reactivity, mediation models in which spiritual development promotes non-reactive equanimity which in turn supports broader mindful functioning deserve formal testing.

- Mixed-method approaches combining quantitative correlation analyses with qualitative phenomenological inquiry would provide a richer understanding of how individuals practicing celibacy subjectively experience and integrate spirituality and mindfulness in their daily lives.

- Finally, extending this line of inquiry to more culturally and occupationally diverse samples across India is essential. The present study represents one of the relatively limited number of investigations into the spirituality-mindfulness relationship within a celibate Indian population, and the field needs more such work not only to validate and extend the present findings, but to explore how cultural values, spiritual traditions, and regional contexts shape the contemplative resources that celibate individuals bring to their psychological well-being.

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APPENDIX A

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)

(Baer et al., 2006)

Instructions: Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Write the number that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.

Rating Scale:

1 = Never or very rarely true

2 = Rarely true

3 = Sometimes true

4 = Often true

5 = Very often or always true

OBSERVING

When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.

When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.

I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.

I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.

I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing.

I notice the smells and aromas of things.

I intentionally stay aware of my feelings.

I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.

DESCRIBING

I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.

I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.

It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking. (R)

I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things. (R)

When I have a feeling, I can usually describe it in detail.

Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.

My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.

I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.

ACTING WITH AWARENESS

When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted. (R)

I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted. (R)

I am easily distracted. (R)

I find myself doing things without paying attention. (R)

I rush through activities without being really attentive to them. (R)

I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing. (R)

I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time. (R)

I drive on "automatic pilot" and then wonder why I went there. (R)

NON-JUDGING

I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions. (R)

I tell myself that I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling. (R)

I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way. (R)

I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad. (R)

I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them. (R)

When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad depending on what the thought is about. (R)

When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.

I tell myself I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking. (R)

NON-REACTIVITY

I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.

I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.

When I have distressing thoughts or images, I am able just to notice them without reacting.

I watch my thoughts without being carried away by them.

When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.

I can observe unpleasant feelings without being drawn into them.

In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.

APPENDIX B

Spirituality Measurement Scale (SMS)

(Makkar & Singh, 2018)

Instructions: This questionnaire provides the measure of an individual's spirituality. The statements listed below describe an attitude, feeling or behavior. State your level of agreement/association ranging from 1 to 5. There is no right or wrong answer. Tick the box according to your own judgment.

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree (S.D.)

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree (S.A.)

I engage in Meditation.

Spirituality is a holistic approach that embraces all, under one super natural being.

I have awareness about my career.

Spirituality creates an atmosphere of positivity.

I engage in Spiritual singing.

Spirituality relates to a person's search for finding greater meaning in one's existence.

I give my time to help others.

Spirituality is a feeling of oneness with all living beings.

I have awareness about my aspirations.

I engage in Chanting Mantras.

Spirituality is utilizing the power of the rational mind for the benefit of the society.

I have a meaningful life.

I have awareness about my spirit.

I sacrifice my personal ego needs to do what best serves others.

Spirituality is a belief, that we all derive the supreme power from one common source.

I attend spiritual workshops/activities/events.

Spirituality promotes togetherness among all beings.

I am aware about my desires.

Spirituality promotes peaceful living.

I have confidence in my actions.

Spirituality is being connected with divinity.

Most of the time, I have a positive approach.

Spirituality is what keeps people anchored to happiness.

I am a self content person.

Spirituality helps in realizing one's higher purpose in life.

I am aware about my daily needs.

Spirituality is the spirit of keep going and not giving up.

I give my material resources to help others.

Spirituality helps in having clarity in life.

I have awareness about my body.

Spirituality enhances healthy lifestyle.

The progression of my life is as expected.

Spirituality is working together to resolve conflicts in a positive way.

I am satisfied with my life, as a whole.

Spirituality helps in reducing depression.

I have awareness about my family.

Spirituality is bowing before His will without any doubt.

Spirituality spreads the message of unity in diversity.

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