

Effect of Campus Environment on College Students' Spiritual Health

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The present day scenario sets forth some of the pertinent reasons why there is a need for institutions of higher learning to consider giving greater priority to nurturing the spiritual health of students so that they feel empowered to cope with life's inherent uncertainties and discontinuities and live more meaningful life. For this to happen, a study of the contextual setting of the institutions, the vision that they envisage and the milieu that they provide is needed, so as to better understand the effect various campus environments have on students' spiritual health. For this purpose, the present research aimed to study the comparative level of spiritual health of 60 undergraduate students each of Dev Sanskriti Vishwa Vidyalaya (DSVV), Hardwar, a secular university that claims to provide a rich environment for students to explore the spiritual and holistic dimensions of their lives and the conventional Delhi University (DU) colleges. The Spiritual Health Scale (2011) consisting of 3 Domains, 6 Constructs and 27 Determinants of spiritual health was used in the present study. The results indicate that there was significant difference between the two groups with respect to all the 3 Domains of the scale, namely Self Evolution, Self Actualization and Transcendence, with DSVV students scoring significantly higher mean in each Domain as compared to DU students indicating more refined spiritual health. The results are discussed in relation to the difference in the two campus environments. A potential consequence of this research is an enhanced understanding of how colleges and universities can be made more effective in facilitating students' spiritual health..

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Spiritual health is about meaning and values, connection with self (personal dimension), others (social dimension), the nature (the environment) and God (transcendental dimension) and becoming the growth and progress in life (Gomez and Fisher, 2003). In the context of education, it has to do with the students' capacity to deal with stress, empathize with others, examine their values and recognize the importance of larger existential life.

The present day scenario sets forth some of the pertinent reasons why higher education institutions need to consider giving greater priority to facilitating students' spiritual health and development. The growing instances of seriousness of students' conduct on campus including alcohol and drug abuse, racism, materialistic values etc. demand that colleges and universities take more responsibility for fostering the spiritual health of college students.

It is important to mention that contrary to general perception, many a time college students find it threatening to face the world on their own, away from the securities of the protected environment of schools. Unprecedented competition and resulting emotional stress, the insecurities emerging from the success and failure in changing economy and an increasingly specialised job market are some of the genuine concerns which college students struggle with. As they develop cognitively, they often experience a period of displacement, confusion and discomfort.

Assisting students to grow spiritually shall help them to cope with life's inherent uncertainties and discontinuities, live more meaningful lives and undoubtedly create a new generation of young adults who are more caring, are committed to social justice and respond with greater equanimity to the many stresses of our rapidly changing society.