

## RELATIONSHIP OF SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION: VIEWS OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*The relationship between religious orientations and social welfare is essential. Specially in social work practice, influences of religious and spiritual orientations has been accepted worldwide. Like other regions, Pakistan has also a sound system of social welfare base don spiritual and religious values. However, from research paradigm, this relationship is rarely highlighted. The present study aims to sustain ther evidences of role of spirituality in social work practice in Pakistan. Being a mixed method study in nature, relationship between spirituality and social work practice was highlighted. Using convenient sampling method 100 students were selected in final sample from Deprtament of Social Work, University of the Punjab.*

*Findings are in accordance with worldwide studies that concept of spirituality has significant impacts on students' perceptions about social work education. Spiritual oreintations inspire studnets of social work as core element in adopting social welfare as career for them. These not only work as guiding principlesm, but also reflect practiotioners' own humanitarian values in dealing with sensitive issues of human society.*

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Education, Social Work, Values, Attitudes

### INTRODUCTION

Religion is the main driving force for human beings (Gotterer, 2001; Patel, 1998). Since known history mostly people link their life matters with religion and spirituality (Wilkinson, 2012). Their cultures, civilizations, socialization and development are influenced by their religious and spiritual beliefs. Concept of spirituality in social work practice in not new, since inception, it has its roots in religious orientations (Mabvurira & Nyanguru, 2013).

However, in last century these religious orientations were challenged. Major factors reinforcing this trend were rapid scientific advancements, emergence of economic schools of thought, reliance of positivist approach, radical social sciences paradigm and of course postmodernism (Canda, 1989).

Then, in last two decades same factors inversely promoted the role and significance of religious and spiritual values in social work services. Specially in Muslim communities, spiritual beliefs provide even the code of ethics for social workers (Devore & Schlesinger, 1994). This suggests social work models adapted in Islamic values (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000).

Assuming religious orientations and spiritual beliefs as guiding force, this study aims to explore the views of students regarding role of spirituality in social work education.

## OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objectives of the research can be explained as:-

1. To get information about the perceptions of respondents regarding spirituality.
2. To explore the role of spirituality in social work education.
3. To examine the effects of spirituality on respondents.

While the Research Statement is stated as:

“The Relationship between Spirituality and Social Work Education: Views Of Social Work Students”

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study aimed to explore the views of students regarding role of spirituality in social work education. It was a cross sectional, quantitative study. The geographical universe was Department of Social work, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Using the convenient sampling method, 100 students were selected from MSc. final year (80%) and M. Phil final year (20%) as respondents. Among these 69 were females and 31 males.

Spirituality was the major independent variable and its role in social work education was main dependent variable, whereas practice, philosophy, self esteem and self evaluation were taken as indicators to assess the views of students. Survey method comprising 26 questions was used to collect data and to analyze three point Likert Scale was used.

**Table 1. Views of Respondents Regarding Spirituality**

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Frequency %</i>	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
Religion is truly authentic set of certain beliefs.	78	22
To perform ikran Islam (toheed-e-Risalat, prayer, fasting, zakat and Hajj) is source of spirituality.	75	25
Spirituality stems from religion.	70	30
Spirituality is a fundamental aspect of “Self Awareness”.	83	17
Spirituality plays an important role in career development of social worker.	68	32
The principle of acceptance is based upon spirituality.	71	31
Social work strengthens human functions and enhance the human potential.	89	11
Spirituality and social work are both are linked with charity.	43	57
Spirituality and social work education assist an individual to set direction of life.	71	29
Spirituality helps you to practice social work education.	67	33
Philosophy of social work education lies in spirituality.	60	40
Various subjects of social work education and aspect of spirituality share common ideology.	63	37

Spirituality boosts your social work value up.	69	31
You experience joy at work because of spirituality.	65	35
Spirituality affects your day to day attitudes and actions.	76	24
Spirituality avoids sectarianism and all kind of discrimination, thus enhances dignity of human beings.	75	25
Spirituality helps you to develop strong social work strategies for the suffering humanity.	79	21
I feel myself spiritually blessed to be a professional social worker.	80	20
Spirituality strengthens social worker's commitment to social justice.	82	18
The objective of "welfare" is the common factor for social work profession and spirituality.	70	30
Social work practice can be used to get spiritual values.	76	24
Spirituality provides right path to social work practitioners.	83	17
Social work value the role of spirituality and religion in personal and professional life.	77	23
Spirituality should be taught as a subject in social work education.	80	20
Spirituality and social work education both involve "humanistic value" as purpose of life.	78	22
Spirituality enhances the quality of services delivery of welfare institutions.	80	20
Total	1908	692
%	73%	27%

**Table 2. Significance of Spirituality in Social Work**

<i>Opinion of students</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Agreed	1908	73
Disagree	692	27
<i>Total</i>	<i>2600</i>	<i>100</i>

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Findings reveal a direct impact of spirituality on social work practice among students. Consistent with prior studies (Gotterer, 2001; Patel, 1998), findings show a direct link between religious orientations, spirituality and social work practice (73%). This suggests social work models adapted in Islamic values (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). In this modern era, understanding this relationship is essential for social workers. In their trainings, they need to consider religious values and spiritual beliefs not only for their own cultural competencies but also to respond to needs of their clients (Gilligan, 2006). However, a considerable number of respondents (27%) did not consider spirituality as having any significant effects on their social work orientation. It shows that many factors influence people's preferences of social work as a discipline and profession. However, these preferences are not part of this study and needs further investigation.

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