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**ARTICLE**

**A Holistic Perspective of Well-being: A  
Psycho-Spiritual Approach**

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**Abstract:**

*Well-being, the goal and final end of all creatures, is common to all. In the natural level, well-being is holistic which incorporates all the spheres of a being in an integral sense. In an organism lower than the human beings, well-being includes every aspect of its being, whether it is physical or emotional or social necessity. However, in human beings, it is obvious that they can, by their reason and will, endanger their own well-being and that of others. They, due to various dichotomizations, have segmented the holistic nature of well-being into physical, spiritual, social, economic and political realities. This paved the way to understand the uniqueness and wholeness of human well-being with many adjectives, as physical, spiritual, psychological, social, economic, etc. Currently, a holistic view of well-being is being developed, an integral and whole-person model, called the psycho-spiritual approach, which examines the interconnectedness of the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the human person. This paper, after dealing with different types and theories of well-being analyses it in its psychological and spiritual domains. The combination of them is presented as psycho-spiritual well-being which is integral in its nature. Recent studies show that the psycho-spiritual approach is the conduit that can express*

*sufficiently the holistic character of the concept of well-being. Such an integrated vision affirms the microcosmic character and the personhood of the human beings together with their potentials for self-realization and self-transcendence which are considered as the epitome of human well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Holistic, Dualism, Emotive, Positive Psychology, Self Transcendence, Existential.*

## **Introduction**

All the creatures in this world, in some way or other, want to be well and happy. Well-being, which integrates all that are included in wellness and happiness, is considered as the final end of all the beings. Other creatures, except human beings, enjoy this well-being naturally, because they are perfectly guided by their instinct. Exceptionally, their well-being can be interrupted by some natural or artificial interruptions. In the natural level, well-being is holistic, since it incorporates and permeates all the spheres of a being in an integral sense. In an organism lower than the human beings, well-being includes every aspect of its being, whether it is physical or emotional or social necessity.

However, the well-being of human beings can be endangered not only by the natural or artificial adversities, but also by themselves. The unique reason for this is that they are endowed with reason. They are not merely guided by the instinct, but by the intellect and will, which are the essential principles of human rationality. They have segmented the holistic aspect of well-being through their rationalization. Such segmentation began in human beings by dividing the holistic

nature into physical, spiritual, social, economic, and political aspects. Thus, the view of the well-being which should be integrally including all the realities related to the human beings became distorted. This paved the way to understand the unique property of the human well-being with many adjectives, as physical well-being, spiritual well-being, psychological well-being, social well-being , economic well-being , etc. This paper focuses on the human well-being in an integrated sense, which is also considered as sine qua non condition for the well-being of the whole universe.

In general, well-being in relation to human beings was understood as having a healthy and happy life. However, the concept of well-being goes beyond all the petty perceptions of bodily health, momentary pleasures, and external satisfactions. The broad use of the terms 'well-being', 'wellness', 'happiness' and 'pleasure' in an overlapping manner varies when used in the technical contexts of philosophy, psychology, spirituality and in other social sciences. Well-being, therefore, has to be understood as a holistic theme encompassing all the aspects of human existence which can be achieved only when the entire constituents are contented.

A careful scrutiny of the human history would show that "well-being has been a paramount concern of thinkers since ancient times, as witnessed in much of Greek philosophical writings on the nature and pursuit of happiness or the good life" (Keyes & Cartwright, 2013, p.10). However, an integrated purview of the concept of well-being was not developed until recent times due to the dualistic and sectarian

understanding of the human nature. The dualistic tradition started with Plato in the West and the predominant *Dvaita Vedanta* philosophy in the East heavily damaged in general the holistic perspective of all realities. There have been partial views developed about the real nature of the human being in both traditions. Some of such views focused only on spiritual or physical or social or political or economic aspects of the human being in a partial manner. These are reductionist approaches to the concept of human being.

In recent times a new approach is being developed to understand the human beings in a holistic manner by amalgamating both the Western and Eastern thought patterns. This approach surpasses the narrow, dualistic and partial understanding of the human nature and integrates the spiritual, physical, emotional and social aspects together. It is widely called the 'psycho-spiritual' approach which understands human reality in an integrated manner and promotes a 'whole person model' of well-being. This approach encompasses both the recent positive developments in the field of psychology as well as the new way of looking at spirituality developed as a result of integrating the riches of the Western and Eastern religious traditions. Such an integral approach to human life and well-being will always enhance the integrity of human existence. This paper deals with the basics of this new venture and examines the interconnectedness of the psychological and spiritual dimensions. The hypothesis is that the psycho-spiritual approach is the conduit that can express sufficiently the holistic character of the concept of well-being . Such an integral vision while promoting the dignity

of the human being would also lead to admire the romance of the inter-connectedness of every creature in their search for well-being .

### **What is Well-being ?**

In English 'well-being' was traditionally considered as a phrase with two words, that is, 'well' and 'being' where 'well' served as an adjective to the noun 'being' and the hyphenated usage as 'well-being' was the standard form. However, presently it has come to be understood as a single noun with a unique meaning. It has become a widely used term today covering all the spheres related to the human beings to express the ultimate purpose or goal of human existence.

Wellbeing is also known as wellness or quality of life referring to what is intrinsically valuable to someone. The concept behind these phrases is multidimensional that includes the physical, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social and environmental (Rowold, 2011, p. 954). The full integration and pursuit of growth and balance of these dimensions are necessary for the human well-being. There is an increasing discourse, measurement and action regarding its theory and practice over recent years. Further, there is a growing interest for academic research in this field which has created a much greater understanding of the concept, both in terms of what it is and the conditions necessary for it to emerge.

The notion of well-being is unquestionably composite such that, it is somewhat described than defined, since it is an ongoing deliberation (Dorge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012). Consequently, there is currently no commonly accepted definition for well-being. Defining the term well-being

superficially would indicate the 'quality of life' in which people evaluate their life. Various authors from the fields of philosophy, psychology, and spirituality have conceptualized the meaning of quality of life in different ways. Therefore, it is easier to describe what well-being is, rather than defining it. The Oxford English Dictionary defines well-being as "the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy." Everybody desires to be healthy and happy which are connected to physical and mental conditions. But the concept of well-being is much broader than them and also inclusive. It includes many other aspects of human existence including the purpose, achievements and how a human being is satisfied with his or her life holistically. In this background well-being may be described as how people feel and function both individually and socially, and how they assess their lives as a whole (Michaelson & Mahony 2012).

### **Types of Well-being**

'Positive - negative' and 'subjective - objective' domains are identified as principal types of well-being . Since well-being is strongly linked to happiness and satisfaction in life, positively, well-being is considered as the availability of comforts, health and happiness in life. Negatively, well-being is seen as the absence of illness, poverty, and other physical and mental deficiencies. Subjective well-being denotes how human beings experience and assess their lives in terms of all that are available (Diener, 2000). Objective well-being means what is well-being in its theoretical sense without considering whether the conditions of well-being are concretely fulfilled or not (Hutchinson, 2011). Thus, the objective type of well-being

agrees with, that the events and things do benefit a person independent of that person's subjective outlook towards them. For example, fulfillment of the essential needs is the objective well-being of an individual; however, the level and grade of the fulfillment could vary among the individuals and this situation is identified as subjective well-being .

From the above mentioned principal types, various other types of well-being can be listed, like mental well-being, physical well-being, social well-being, emotional well-being, and economic well-being. However, these different types are also closely linked to each other.

There is a tendency among the scholars of various disciplines to emphasize one type of well-being as 'whole-well-being' or 'well-being as such' and neglect other types as less important. For example, a medical practitioner will highlight the importance of physical health and thus consider physical well-being as whole-well-being. Therefore, there is a need to search for a holistic and whole person model of well-being which integrates all the aspects that are essential for human existence.

### **Theories of Well-being**

The developments in social and human sciences during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the field of psychology, have resulted in many theories to conceptualize the notion of well-being. The division of the traditional psychology into rational and empirical was proposed by Christian Wolff (1679 - 1754) after which rational psychology continued with the ancient way of the philosophical study of the human being, while empirical psychology took a new turn to study the

human behavioural and emotional patterns (Mondin, 1991, p.13). This new approach incorporated the physiological and emotive aspects into the study of human nature which were neglected in the dualistic Western thought dominated by the spiritualism of Plato. This initiated a wider range of explorations on well-being which resulted in many theories. Theories of well-being deal with the physical and emotional states that are responsible for the well-being of the whole human person. Such theories are classified as hedonic and eudaimonic, and both have their roots in ancient Greek philosophical traditions (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p.154).

Hedonic theories are suppositions according to which the degree of well-being of a person depends on the subjective mental states and attitudes. These theories emphasize the necessity of evaluating a person's life both emotionally and cognitively. This indicates that well-being means what the human beings think (cognitive) and feel (emotive) about life (Diener & Lucas, 2000, p.328). In short, hedonic well-being refers to a pleasant life. Increasing happiness at the cognitive and affective levels was taken granted as the highest goal in life (Kahneman et al., 1999). This approach depends on the overall judgment of the pleasant and unpleasant feelings and the emotional conditions of them. These are mental states mingled with pleasure and pain which prioritize self-assessment of one's life, to consider how well his or her life is going on and whether he or she is getting the necessary things for life without specifically concerning the purpose of them.



According to eudaimonic theories, well-being of a person depends on a variety of basic objective goals. Such theories are objective approaches to well-being which suppose that there are definite goals and necessities that are essential for one's personal growth and satisfaction. Eudaimonic approach reflects the dictum of Socrates "know thyself" and that of Aristotle "become what you are" and claims that the highest goal of a human being is to lead a meaningful and authentic life. In short, good life is teleological, with an ability to pursue an ultimate goal that would be beneficial to the individual and society, rather than leading a pleasurable life (Ryff & Singer, 2008, p.21).

These two theories heavily influenced the notion of well-being, especially during the modern era. According to the hedonic perspective, well-being is seeking for pleasure and personal satisfaction in life (Kahneman et al., 1999). However, the eudaimonic theory considers well-being as the self-knowledge of a human being about his or her goal in life, the process of achieving it with the resources and potentials that are available and the attainment of self-realization (Delle Fave & Bassi, 2009, p.206). Hedonic theories equate well-being to health and happiness which are partial and momentary; eudaimonic theories focus on a holistic well-being. As result, considering the variety of approaches well-being becomes a wider concept; there are pleasures which bring about happiness but do not lead to well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p.159). Such theories of well-being which are the results of the growth of positive psychological studies on the human behavioural and emotional patterns, opened new horizons to

approach the notion of well-being from a holistic perspective, incorporating the physical, mental, emotional and social factors. This expanded its partial understanding as the accomplishment of health and happiness to view it as the sum total of human satisfaction and self-realization which can be explained as 'whole-well-being' or 'well-being as such'.

### **Psychology and the Pursuit of Well-being**

Up to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychology mainly focused on the understanding, treating and preventing psychological disorders (Ryff, 1989). However, the pursuit of human well-being became the core concept of psychology during the 20<sup>th</sup> century which had created a positive purview of human life. This resulted in introducing a psychological pursuit of well-being which covers various dimensions of human nature. "The psychological domain includes all affective or emotional functioning and well-being, as well as all aspects of cognitive abilities and functioning" (Sperry, 2005, 93). The psychological approach tries to overcome the negative understanding of well-being as an absence of illness or sorrow and promotes a positive understanding as the dynamic and ultimate goal of being human. There are three sub disciplines in the psychological approach to the study of well-being: a) developmental psychology, in which psychological well-being is analysed in terms of the human development across the lifespan; b) personality psychology, in which psychological well-being is explained based on the views of existential psychologists who developed the concepts of self actualization, self transcendence, personhood and individuation of the human beings; and c) clinical psychology,

in which psychological well-being is described in terms of biological health and social wellness (Ryff, 1989). This paper concentrates on the contribution of personality psychology for pursuit of holistic well-being .

Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939) initiated an approach to psychology which focused mainly on all that affects or controls the human well-being and to look for the ways to remedy them (Benjamin, 1992, p.127). This was considered a negative way because the deep-buried deficiencies and suppressed emotions were highlighted and removal of them was considered as the way for well-being . However, his successors who gave a positive turn to 'Freudian Psychoanalysis' gradually developed a psychological theory of personality to look at the human wholeness, potentialities and aspirations. They are named as existential psychologists who affirmed that well-being depends on the human existential situations where the human beings have to strive through to achieve their goals.

Among them, the contribution of Carl Jung (1875 - 1961) is considered influential in the development of psychological pursuit of well-being. His concepts of archetypes and integration of polarities proposed an integrated theory of personality which viewed the human beings in their entirety. The 'self', 'shadow', 'persona' and 'anima - animus' are the principle archetypes proposed by Jung which also include their polarities; the self has its conscious and unconscious states; shadow has its dark and light sides; persona includes true and false images; and anima - animus represents the female and male genders. These polarities are included in the archetypes

and they are holistically present in the human beings. Therefore a human being is both, conscious and unconscious, good and bad, and male and female. The self is an archetype that represents the transcendence of all opposites, so that every aspect of human personality is expressed equally. According to Jung the goal of life is to realize the self. (Jung, 1933) Therefore self-realization becomes the epitome of human well-being .

Abraham Maslow (1908 - 1970) agreed that so far psychology has been far more successful in revealing the shortcomings, illnesses and deficiencies of the human beings. However, he was also concerned that it has contributed only a little to focus on the human potentialities, virtues and aspirations. Therefore Maslow and other existential psychologists wanted that psychology must focus on the health, wellness, happiness and creativity of the individuals based on their potentials, and proposed a psychological purview which was later named as positive psychology (Maslow, 1954). The humanistic call to well-being was reclaimed when positive psychology launched an affirmation on the human potentials and capabilities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). Such an affirmation highlighted the need 'to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology' from the limitations, deficits and pathologies, to the human potentialities, resources and well-being . This became a call for a balance in the psychological outlook (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7). However, it was not an effort to deny the limitations of life and the need to study them; rather it was a call to counter balance the concentration laid on

mental illness and deficiencies, and to focus on the potentialities and virtues that contribute to the favorable functioning of individuals and societies (Gabel & Haidt, 2005, p.112). In other words, such shift of emphasis from negative approach to be positive has made psychology as a science of well-being (Delle Fave et al., 2011).

The psychologists with such positive outlook to the human well-being vary in providing different interpretations regarding the combination of the human potentialities and the basic objective human needs. Fulfilling these needs by their capacities, the human beings achieve satisfaction, realization and actualization of their full potentials. Basing on the interpretations of Erikson, Jung, Maslow and Rogers (among others), there can be six kinds of people who are performing well in life or who enjoy the well-being as such:

1. *Autonomous*: people who have the maturity to be guided by internal standards;
2. *Positive relations*: people who are capable of trusting and loving others;
3. *Environmental mastery*: people who are able to manage external stressors and leverage on opportunities;
4. *Self-Acceptance*: people who have positive assessments of oneself and one's past life;
5. *Purpose in life*: people who have specific aims and goals, and
6. *Personal growth*: people who accept new challenges in life to further their development (Ryff and Keyes, 1995, p.720).

These are six distinct features of positive psychology leading to well-being .

Such positive approach given by the existential psychologists to the notion of well-being invites researchers, especially those in the counselling profession, to direct their efforts towards promoting people's positive affect, happiness and well-being (Seligman, 2011). It also asserts that, shifting focus from simply fixing deficiencies and underlining what does not work, to looking into what actually contributes to human life becomes the key in the holistic notion of well-being (Kwiatek, 2014). In this way, positive psychology looks into human qualities and character strengths with the aim of promoting well-being (Scorsolini et al, 2013). Thus, well-being has become the subject matter to be examined in the existential and social psychology domains with a number of arguments on its meaning and measurements. As a result, it embraces people's positive functioning needed to cultivate the ability to obtain resilience in time of distress, strength, and attainment of health and happiness (Layard, 2010, p.534).

### **Spirituality and the Pursuit of Well-being**

A careful study of the human history would show that up to the modern times both in the Western and Eastern traditions spiritual nature of the human beings was overemphasized. The dualistic tradition started with Plato in the West and the predominant *Dvaita Vedanta* philosophy in the East elevated the human soul and suppressed the human body which led to define the human being essentially as a spiritual being. The predominant religions of the West and East promoted different spiritual activities and exercises as a

way of redeeming the soul and to lead it to eternal life. Basing on these religious traditions, spirituality was considered as limited to the confines of some motivated activities leading to the purification of soul from the stains of many types of sin, so that the human beings may attain salvation and eternal life.

Modernity with its illuminist tendencies and scientific developments has slowly changed the traditional and partial understanding of spirituality. The scientific exploration of the universe, industrial revolutions, and the introduction of new scientific disciplines, including the development of existential and social psychologies have radically changed the view of spirituality fostered by religious traditions. Spirituality is no more considered as a specific activity based on any religion; rather it is considered as an attitude, a vision of life, a relationship, a mystical union and an awakening. In this way, it has crossed the limits of religious traditions and has established itself as a separate discipline. In the former days, religious persons were equated with spiritual persons. However, based on the new understanding of spirituality, such equation need not be necessarily true. The yardstick used traditionally to determine what spirituality is has changed. Thus, people who do not belong to any religions, even the atheists who do not accept the existence of God, can be considered as spiritual persons. Such people are considered as having their own spirituality based on varied norms. Therefore, the spiritual domain of human life is considered very broad and inclusive. However, the actual practice of some type of spirituality is seen as one of its most personal and tangible aspect (Sperry, 2001, p.39).

According to the new understanding, spirituality is the science and the art of union with the transcendent and the universal truth to enable the humans to discover the inner self and significance of the surrounding world (Woods & Ironson, 1999, p.394). It is creating an awareness of the self and making an inner journey to seek the indwelling transcendent being and be united with it. It is a process of self-actualization which leads to self-transcendence and is considered as the real embodiment of well-being. Self-transcendence is the clear index of a spiritual element in the human being (Mondin, 1991, p.122).

Contemporary spiritual writers identify spirituality with mysticism in all aspects. For them, spirituality internalizes the human search and directs the mind to the heart of man where the inner search truly commences (Hart, 1994, p.23). Interest in religion and spirituality is motivated by cognitive and affective needs. The spiritual domain includes all religious experiences, feelings, thoughts and beliefs about one's relationship to God and all that may transcend one's self (Sperry, 2005, p.57).

Spirituality differs from religion. Religion is linked with specific rituals, celebrations, institutionalized formulae and social associations; however "spirituality is more about personal experience of what is unseen and recognised as greater than those who seek it." (Tovar-Murray, 2011, p.184) It represents the initiative orientation which tries to bring together the richness of plurality of religions. It is perhaps the most potent force that can bring about an integration of the self with itself and with the immanent within the self. Thus,



spirituality is understood as “a more general, unstructured, personalized, and naturally occurring phenomenon, where a person seeks closeness and/or connectedness between him/herself and a higher power or purpose.” (Joseph et al. 2017, p.506)

Since spirituality forms a multidimensional theoretical construct as a search for the immanent and the transcendent, spiritual well-being is defined as ‘experiencing transcendence through inner peace and harmony of the self in connectedness to other human beings and other creatures’ (Boswell et al., 2006). Thus, spiritual well-being is closely associated with self-transcendent which can take place internally within the person (self-acceptance, self-realization, self-actualization) and externally with other human beings and with the universe at large (Heszen-Niejodek & Gruszyńska, 2004).

Recent studies prove the positive impact spirituality has on physical and mental health as well as on the factors connected to well-being (Miller & Thoresen, 2003, p.27). Various spiritual exercises were found to be powerful shields to handle crises situations, stress and sickness. For example, studies have proved that spiritual practices promoted abstinence and honesty and responsibility among the alcohol dependents (Tonigan, 2003). The potential of spirituality in enhancing health and well-being makes researchers to claim that psychiatry and counselling must incorporate spiritual practices like mindfulness and meditation in order to be effective. In recent years, mindfulness has been scientifically incorporated into psychotherapy (Turbott, 1996, p.724). Mindfulness, one of the yoga practices, is also an essential

component of Eastern spirituality which is essentially connected in studies related to holistic well-being .

In the light of these numerous studies and findings, it is plausible to claim that well-being is incomplete if it does not include spirituality (Lukoff et al. 1992). As any spiritual experience is progressive, the search for well-being also advances towards some worthy ideals. Physical health, mental health, emotional health, and spiritual health are worthy goals for those who take serious attention to understand the purpose and meaning of life. However, according to an integral spiritual perspective these are not seen as compartmentalized, but as different aspects of human mystery.

Incorporating spiritual dimension in well-being becomes highly essential in the Asian context which is deeply intertwined with the spirituality offered by the world religious traditions. The specific spiritual context of Asia demands the necessity of incorporating its spiritual wellness in the human well-being definitions and explorations which is fulfilled by its proactive spiritual tools such as mindfulness which is guaranteed by yoga practices. The breathing exercises, meditation, relaxation, and centering prayer do help individuals maintain good health and experience a true well-being .

A spiritual person is one who has surpassed the self, the ego, and the boundaries of religions, and transformed himself or herself to be a mature human person. Growing into human maturity and spiritual growth are always an integrated journey. This is called the transformation which is the highest

level of well-being . Across the major religious and spiritual traditions, transformation is considered the endpoint or outcome of the spiritual journey (Sperry, 2001, p.39). This is the state of self-transcendence where the self has realized and actualized all its potentials. Therefore, a true spiritual person will find meaning and purpose in life; his or her lifestyle will be based on an intrinsic value system (Westgate, 1996, p.30). Currently there is a quest in those who are concerned with well-being to turn to religion and spirituality. It is not because religion and spirituality are perfect, but because they help give meaning and purpose to human life and help the humans find consolation from the indwelling power source.

### **Psycho-spiritual pursuit of Well-being**

Psycho-spirituality combines the domains of psychology and spirituality into one model to integrate different aspects of the human well-being. Ancient civilizations conceived of health and happiness as ideals, as values, and as one of the highest goods in life. Today well-being in a holistic sense is considered as an ultimate goal of human life. Well-being is not merely an end. It is also a means to create and sustain a good society (Keyes & Cartwright, 2013, p.19). In this background, it can be noted that psycho-spiritual pursuit of well-being includes the personal well-being of individuals and the public well-being of the society as a whole. In the personal level it takes into account the continued actualization of the individuals as persons; in the public level it incorporates the social relationship and the capacity to incorporate the surrounding world into one's life.

In promoting the personal well-being, psycho-spirituality primarily affirms the personhood of the human beings. Human beings have multidimensional capacities which are partly disclosed and are largely in the state of potentiality. Among the many dimensions, human beings are identified as persons. The concept of person is central to philosophy and it has been addressed throughout its history. The awareness of personhood of the human beings has increased at present. "Our epoch, more than any other, sees at the centre of history the human person" (Bogliolo, 1987, p.119). The theme 'personhood' has become the subject for many branches of study in the human and social sciences. "As a term it has a long history. As a concept it has had many problematic nuances. But when applied to the human beings it makes them more human, more complete and more real." (Onah, 1999, p.72) The concept of person, that is, to consider humans as persons, is a patrimony of Christian culture; Boethius (480-524), a Christian philosopher defined the concept of person as "the individual substance of a rational nature" (Boethius, 1926, p.85) which is considered as momentous in the history of the concept. As a person, a human being is a whole. The wholeness of the person surpasses everything in the universe, because the person, by reason of the subsistence of the spiritual soul, is destined to be united with the transcendent whole. The proclamation of the personhood of the human being is reaffirmed by the psycho-spiritual approach which is acclaimed as an integrated, whole person model of well-being.

From the time of Greek philosophy human beings were understood as microcosm of the macrocosm. The Western philosophical terms 'microcosm and macrocosm' designated the human being as 'microcosm - a little universe' which reflects 'macrocosm - the whole universe'. This analogy refers to a structural similarity between the human being (microcosm) and the universe (macrocosm). This perception was revised by Plotinus (204 - 270), a Neo-Platonist, who conceived the human being and the universe are not totally separated but as having continuous existence. The 'soul and body' 'spirituality and materiality' were conceived as merged in the human beings. The analogy of 'microcosm and macrocosm' is renewed in the psycho-spiritual approach to the well-being . This holistic notion makes the human nature honourable and elevated than other creatures. The physical body embodies in it all that is in the material world and the spiritual soul corresponds to the divine and eternal elements in the human being. It is this integration and wholeness that makes the human being, a being open to God, to the world, to the fellow human beings and to all the possibilities of life. According to the Christian belief it is this human being which contains the image of God. The capacity for self-transcendence is possible only in the psycho-spiritual wholeness.

Psycho-spiritual pursuit of well-being promotes a holistic understanding of the human beings. The dichotomies that have been haunting the humanity as mind-body, matter-spirit and interior-exterior narrowed down the perceptivity of the wholeness of the human being. The distinction between

mind and body (body and soul) had gone deep into the Western and Eastern thinking which remained as a source of controversy down through the centuries. However, there is a deep yearning in the human beings to arrive at one unifying element, cutting across all the separations of mental and material aspects. It is very revealing to learn that Albert Einstein, a great genius ever lived and a person with deep spirituality, (of course not of any particular religion) tried to solve the mind-matter dualism by attributing energy and spiritual realm even to matter. He claimed that both mind and matter are essentially the same in the deepest level of being and the material components too have mental aspects (Einstein, 1949, p.3). In this context, the propositions of quantum physics which affirmed the energy patterns found in spirit, also in the matter, became a redeeming factor of various dichotomies. Quantum physics helped to realize that matter and consciousness, though one cannot be reduced to another, have the same origin. Thus, quantum theories and the affirmation of energy source to matter enabled the human beings to retrieve the holistic attitude towards life, universe and society which they had lost due to various dichotomizations. According to modern physicists, the deep study of matter has revealed its abstract and mysterious state. Modern science as a whole has also arrived at the same understanding by showing "that we are an integral part of nature, dependent on cosmic forces beyond our control, and that time, space, matter and perhaps consciousness are mysteries which transcend our present understanding." (Brown, 1986, p.183) The psycho-spiritual approach which

affirms the mind-matter integration in a holistic manner sees the human being as physical and spiritual, male and female, sinner and virtuous, and genius and stupid.

### **Conclusion**

Psychological well-being includes the cognitive, affective, emotional and behavioural functioning of the human being. Spiritual well-being includes the interior and mystical aspects of the human being together with the human capacity for self-realization and self-transcendence. In a broader sense spiritual well-being offers an opportunity for personal satisfaction, self-actualization and to find meaning in life, which also contributes for psychological well-being. Therefore, the combination of psychological and spiritual perspective could offer a holistic approach to the notion of well-being. Thus the psycho-spiritual approach promotes a harmony between the body and soul, and matter and mind. In fact, there are number of researchers who agree that only a psycho-spiritual approach can be effective in the discourses of well-being which promotes the physical and mental health.

Spiritual well-being arises from the human spiritual dimension. This spiritual dimension makes objective measurement difficult since it cannot be adequately expressed through physical dimension. Therefore, spiritual well-being must be expressed through other human dimensions. In such dilemma situation the psychological dimension is regarded as the conduit through which spiritual well-being can be expressed sufficiently. Studies examining the interconnectedness of the psychological and spiritual dimensions offer support for the combination of psychological

well-being and spiritual well-being into one construct as psycho-spiritual approach.

Thus, the hypothesis of the study, that is, the psycho-spiritual approach is one of the powerful means to express sufficiently the holistic character of the concept of well-being is verified. Such an integral vision affirms the dignified state of the personhood of the human beings together with the potentials they have for self-realization and self-transcendence which are considered as the epitome of human well-being. It also essentially leads to admire the interconnectedness of all the beings as part of the whole macrocosm.



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