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## Role of spirituality and Self-esteem in stress management of farmers in distress prone area of Vidarbha

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### Abstract

The present research was undertaken on topic 'Stress Management of Farmers in Distress Prone Area of Vidarbha' conducted purposively in Six distress viz, Akola, Buldana, Washim, Amravati, Yavatmal and Wardha as distress prone districts during 2017-18. Exploratory and analytical research design was used for the present research. Out of six districts, six talukas and 24 villages, 360 respondents constitute the sample size.

The findings of the research study revealed that large majority of the respondents were feelings of God's presence followed by very meager per cent (5.00%) of them were not in opinion about feelings of God's presence which may be because of frequent adverse situation in their life while in case spirituality levels, higher proportion of the respondents (56.38%) were found in medium level of spirituality level followed by little more than one fourth of them (25.84%) were in high level of spirituality whereas only 17.78 per cent of the respondents were in low spirituality level. Further it is reported that majority of the respondents (71.78%) were in medium level of self-esteem followed by 15.55 of them were in high self-esteem level whereas only 12.78 per cent of the respondents were found in low category of self-esteem.

**Keywords:** Distress, stress, self-esteem, spirituality

### Introduction

Stress has become a pervading feature of people's life in modern world. The modern world which is said to be a world of achievements is also a world of stress. Stress is everywhere, whether it is in the family, agriculture, business organization, enterprise, institute or any other social or economic activity. Right from birth till death, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations.

Despite tremendous advancements in science and technology, and remarkable growth of economy and sources of luxury, people all over the world seem to experience stress in various spheres of their lives. Consistently psychosomatic and psychological disorders are increasing; the feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction with life in general reflect the stress being experienced by people.

Stress was defined as "any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organism equilibrium" (Selye Hans, 1956) [4]. The agricultural sector encompasses a large variety of activities that has seen a number of major changes in recent years. These changes, along with a distinctive rural life and work related problems may considerably influence stress levels in farming communities which may causes stress to the farmers. Therefore there is need to manage for farmers happy life. Monat and Lazarus (1991) [2] described stress management as a general treatment approach to a wide variety of adaptations and health problems.

Depression is the most common mental health problem in general and has been the focus of much of the research exploring the relationship between spirituality and mental health. The evidence shows a positive association between church attendance and lower levels of depression amongst adults, children and young people in UK. It also shows that belief in a transcendent being is associated with reduced depressive symptoms.

Spirituality is an internal sanctuary, free of the rules and expectations of the physical world, it is a place where one can submit to one's mortality and rest properly, without worry, anxiety, desire and striving.

Faith and spirituality are many more than just comforting rituals to religious individuals. They have the ability to have a positive impact on mood and mental health.

Aspects of faith enable tangible reductions in, and protection from stress. Faith and spirituality provide a sense of purpose, allow people to connect to something greater than themselves, and enable us to release control. These abstract gains then translate into concrete ones: an expansion of social networks and improved health. All of these points are essential to stress reduction. Prayer provides stress relief in a variety of ways. A prayer for help is a great source of comfort and relief because a person does not feel they have to bear their burden alone. Often when people are hurting or confused, they can feel as if there is no one to talk to or depend on. A prayer during these tense times relieves that feeling of loneliness. The belief that God is listening to their prayers and will help them is a source of hope to many individuals.

Self-esteem is the decision made by an individual as an attitude towards the self. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves. It is our thoughts and feelings about ourselves.

Our mind has the power to help us maintain a healthy physical and mental disposition when it produces high quality, positive thoughts. The physical well-being and positive self-esteem allow us to energetically embrace our daily routines with more motivation, enthusiasm and inspiration. Conversely, negative thoughts encourage a downward spiraling of confidence and self-belief. Maintaining a positive mental perspective is one of the most important stress management tools on overcoming the sense of loss. Understanding that life changes are inevitable and that everyone will experience the end to a relationship at some point in their lives may help keep things in perspective. Thus, in view of the importance of the spirituality and self-esteem in stress management these variables were considered.

## Materials and Methods

### Locale of the study

The present study was undertaken in purposively selected, Akola, Buldana, Washim, Amravati, Wardha and Yavatmal districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra State as a distress prone districts. The above six districts are considered as distressed districts in the report of fact finding team on Vidarbha - of Planning Commission, GOI (2006). Exploratory and analytical social research design was used for the present study. On the basis of suicidal talukas in the six respective districts, one taluka from each selected district was selected by lottery method. Thus, from six districts, six talukas were selected based on the suicides of the farmers which may be because of stress. Thus, Akola, from Akola district, Chikhali

from Buldana district, Karanja (Lad) from Washim district, Morshi from Amravati district, Darvaha from Yavatmal district and Wardha from Wardha district were selected for the study.

From the list obtained from collector office of the respective district, the list of villages where the farmers committed suicides was considered and proportionate numbers of villages were randomly selected from each taluka by lottery method of random sampling and from each taluka four (04) villages were selected. Thus, from six selected talukas total 24 villages were selected.

### Selection of Respondents

In the previous research studies on suicides of farmers, it is evidence that maximum number of the farmers are committing suicides having dry land upto 4.00 ha., who are in debt, and having no irrigation facilities. Hence, for the selection of respondents, the farmers having dry land, debt and no irrigation facilities were considered as selection criteria for selection of respondents. From each selected village, the list of farmers was obtained from talathi / Sarpanch, bank officials and key informants of the village based on the selection criteria. Amongst the selected list, 15 farmers were selected randomly from each selected village and from four selected villages and from each selected taluka 60 farmers were selected. Thus, from six districts, six talukas and 24 villages 360, farmers were selected to constitute sample size of the respondents.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Spirituality

Depression is the most common mental health problem in general and has been the focus of much of the research exploring the relationship between spirituality and mental health. The evidence shows a positive association between church attendance and lower levels of depression amongst adults, children and young people in UK. It also shows that belief in a transcendent being is associated with reduced depressive symptoms. Similar research has examined the relationship between spirituality and anxiety or stress. Quantitative research demonstrates reduced levels of anxiety in a number of populations, including medical patients in later life, women with breast cancer, middle aged people with cardiac problems and those recovering from spinal surgery. Therefore researcher selected this variable for the present investigation.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to their spirituality

S. No	Statements	Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	I feel God's presence	342	95.00	18	5.00
2	I experience a connection to all of life	268	74.44	92	25.56
3	During worship or other times when connecting with God, I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.	255	70.83	102	28.33
4	I find strength in my religion or spirituality	250	69.44	110	30.56
5	I find comfort in my religion or spirituality	227	63.06	133	36.94
6	I feel deep inner peace or harmony	220	61.11	140	38.89
7	I ask for God's help in the midst of daily activities	245	68.06	115	31.94
8	I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities	250	69.44	110	30.56
9	I feel God's love for me directly	272	75.56	88	24.44
10	I feel God's love for me through others	210	58.33	150	41.67
11	I spiritually touched by the beauty of creation	280	77.78	80	22.22
12	I feel thankful for my blessings	145	40.28	215	59.72
13	I feel selfless caring for others	172	47.78	188	52.22
14	I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong	103	28.61	257	71.39
15	I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine	265	73.61	95	26.39

The bird eye of the Table 1 shows that large majority of the respondents were feelings of God's presence followed by very meager per cent (5.00%) of them were not in opinion about feelings of God's presence which may be because of adverse situation in their life. With regards to experience a connection to all their life, majority of the respondents (74.44%) were in that feelings and little more than one fourth (25.56%) were not having feelings about the same. Majority of the respondents (70.44%) were in a feeling that during worship or any other time when connecting with God they feel joy which lifts them out of their concern while 28.33 of them were not having the feelings about the same. Maximum numbers of the respondents (69.44%) were in opinion that they found strength in their religion or spirituality while 30.56 of them were not having the same feelings. Relatively higher proportions of the respondents were found comfort in their religion or spirituality whereas 36.94 per cent of the respondents were not found comfort in their religion which may be due to feelings of superstition or no progress. Maximum number of the respondents (61.11%) were in feelings of deep inner peace or harmony while 38.89 per cent of them were not in opinion about the same. About asking for God's help in the midst of daily activities 68.06 per cent of the respondents were agree to this statement while 31.94 per cent of the respondents were not positive about the same. Higher proportion of the respondents (69.44%) were in feelings about guidance by God in the midst of daily activities followed by 30.56 per cent of them were not agree about the same. Majority of the respondents (75.56%) were in feeling of direct love of God while little less than one fourth (24.44%) were not agree to this feelings which may be because of problems in their life. In case of feelings of love through others, higher proportions of the respondents (58.33%) were in the same feelings and 41.67 per cent of them were not in feelings about the same. Majority of the respondents (77.78%) were in opinion that they spirituality touched by the beauty of creation followed by more than one fifth (22.22%) were not agree about the same. Relatively higher proportion of the respondents (59.72%) were not thankful about the blessings of God which may be because of frequent problems in their daily life followed by 40.28 per cent of them were observed in the thankfulness of blessings of God. More than half of the respondents (52.22%) were not in

feelings of selfless caring of others while 47.78 per cent of the respondents were agree to the same. Maximum numbers of the respondents (71.39%) were not in opinion that they accept others even when others do the things which are wrong while 28.61 per cent of the respondents were accepted the same. Majority of the respondents (73.61%) were in desire to be closer to God or union with the divine while little more than one fourth (26.39%) of them were not agree to the same statement.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to their level of spirituality

Sr. No.	Spirituality	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	74	17.78
2	Medium	203	56.38
3	High	93	25.84
	Total	360	100.00

The data presented in Table 2 evident that higher proportion of the respondents (56.38%) were found in medium level of spirituality followed by little more than one fourth of them (25.84%) were in high level of spirituality whereas only 17.78 per cent of the respondents were in low spirituality level. From the above table it is concluded that, relatively higher proportion of the respondents were found in medium to high spirituality level. Subconsciously spiritual persons have the strong faith on God and do the things accordingly which may help to success them in each activity. On the basis of previous research higher the spirituality level, helps to manage the stress effectively.

## 2. Self-esteem

Our mind has the power to help us maintain a healthy physical and mental disposition when it produces high quality, positive thoughts. The physical well-being and positive self-esteem allow us to energetically embrace our daily routines with more motivation, enthusiasm and inspiration. Conversely, negative thoughts encourage a downward spiraling of confidence and self-belief. Maintaining a positive mental perspective is one of the most important stress management tools on overcoming the sense of loss. Thus, in view of the importance of self-esteem this variable was selected for the study.

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents according to their level self-esteem

Sr. No.	Statements	Agree		Can not say		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	145	40.28	46	12.78	169	46.94
2	I feel that I have a number of good quality	157	43.61	107	29.72	96	26.67
3	All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	203	56.39	72	20.00	85	23.61
4	I am able to do things as well as most of the other people	137	38.06	126	35.00	227	63.05
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	133	36.94	00	00	227	63.05
6	I take a positive attitude towards myself	137	38.06	133	36.94	90	25.00
7	On the whole I am satisfied with myself	55	15.28	68	18.90	237	65.83
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself	295	81.94	00	00	65	18.06
9	I certainly feels useless at times	197	54.72	58	16.11	105	29.16
10	At times I think I am no good at all	209	58.06	74	20.56	77	21.39

It is evident from Table 2 that, the less than half of the respondents (46.94%) were in opinion that they were not in feelings as persons of worth, at least on an equal plane with others followed by 40.28 per cent of them were in the same feelings while more than one tenth (12.78%) of the respondents were could not said anything about the feelings that they are person of worth at least on an equal plane with

others. In case of the statement, I feel that I have a number of good quality, maximum number of the respondents (43.61%) were in feelings of having number of good quality followed by 29.72 per cent of them who were not given any opinion about the same while more than one fourth (26.67%) of the respondents were not in feelings of having number of good qualities amongst them.

More than half (56.39%) of the respondents were in opinion that all in all they were inclined in feelings of failure whereas less than one fourth of them (23.61%) were in not in feelings about the same and only one fifth of the respondents (20.00%) could not said anything about the same. With regards to the statement 'I am able to do things as well as most of the other people', relatively higher proportion of the respondents (63.05%) were not in opinion that they are able to do things as well as most of the other people' which was followed by 38.06 per cent of them were in confidence that they are able to do the things as most of the other people while 35.00 per cent of the respondents could not given any opinion about their ability to do do the things as well as most of the other people.

In case of the statement as 'I feel I do not have much to be proud of' maximum number of the respondents (63.05%) were expressed disagree opinion and 36.94 per cent of them were in feelings that they do not much to be proud of. Taking a positive attitude towards themselves with this statement maximum number of the respondents (38.06% were having positive attitude towards themselves followed by 36.94 per cent of them were not given their opinion about the same while, one fourth (25.00%) of the respondents were having negative attitude towards themselves. Relatively higher proportion of the respondents (65.83%) of the respondents were not in opinion that on the whole they are satisfied with themselves while 18.90 per cent of them could not said anything and only 15.28 per cent of the respondents were in satisfaction with themselves. About their wish for having more respect for themselves majority of the respondents (81.94%) were wishing the same and only 18.06 per cent of them were not in expectation of having the more respect for themselves. 'I certainly feel useless at times' with this statement, more than half (54.72%) of the respondents were agree followed by 29.16 per cent of them were expressed disagree opinion and only 16.11 per cent of the respondents could not expressed anything may be because of thinking that everything depends on situation. 'At times I think I am no good at all' in this regards 58.06 per cent of the respondents were expressed agree opinion followed by 21.39 per cent who were disagree and nearly one fifth (20.56%) could not expressed anything about their thinking of they are not good at all.

**Table 4:** Distribution of respondents according to their levels of Self-esteem

Sr. No.	Self-esteem	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	46	12.78
2	Medium	258	71.67
3	High	56	15.55
	Total	360	100.00

The data presented in Table 4 reveled that majority of the respondents (71.78%) were in medium level of self-esteem followed by 15.55 of them were in high self-esteem level whereas only 12.78 per cent of the respondents were found in low category of self-esteem.

From the above findings it can be concluded that majority of the respondents were in medium level of self-esteem. These findings are in accordance with the findings of Anonymous (2017) [1] and Rani Palskar 2018 [3].

## Conclusion

Higher proportion of the respondents (56.38%) were found in medium level of spirituality followed by little more than one

fourth of them (25.84%) were in high level of spirituality whereas only 17.78 per cent of the respondents were in low spirituality level.

Therefore it is concluded that, relatively higher proportion of the respondents were found in medium to high spirituality level. Subconsciously spiritual persons have the strong faith on God and do the things accordingly which may help to success them in each activity. On the basis of previous research it is indicated that higher the spirituality level, helps to manage the stress effectively.

With regards to self-esteem, majority of the respondents (71.78%) were in medium level of self-esteem followed by 15.55 per cent of them were in high self-esteem level whereas only 12.78 per cent of the respondents were found in low category of self-esteem.

Self-esteem helps us to maintain a healthy physical and mental disposition when produces high quality, positive thoughts. The physical well-being and positive self-esteem allow us to energetically embrace our daily routines with more motivation, enthusiasm and inspiration. Conversely, negative thoughts encourage a downward spiraling of confidence and self-belief. Maintaining a positive mental perspective is one of the most important stress management tools on overcoming the sense of loss. Thus, in view of the importance of self-esteem this variable was selected for the study. In view of the importance of spirituality and self-esteem it is implicated that extension functionaries should make regular counseling with the farmers to develop these variables for managing the stress effectively.

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