



Egotism: Bane or Boon for Spiritual Consciousness The Rocket Approach

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Abstract

This paper exposes a perspective on Egotism and its probable maneuvering advantage an individual can put to use. Though Egotism has highly been discouraged in both Eastern and Western culture and has also been considered as an impediment on the road to Spiritual Consciousness; the researcher from the accumulated data supports that there might be an importance Egotism serves. The understanding has been based on data collected from 36 adults. The relationship between Spiritual Consciousness and Egotism was studied. After which the researcher has come up with a conceptual understanding of the subject matter.

INTRODUCTION

A complex relationship between egotism and spiritual consciousness persists even without one realizing it. In the positive, it provides a unique personal identity that helps fulfill life's purpose. On the other hand its negative impact encompasses not only overly identifying with our body but also ones emotions and thoughts. This 'attachment' fools the individual in not believing the fundamental i.e that one is not separate from the Supreme Being' (Alexandra, 2015).

Egotism is the "drive to maintain and enhance favorable views of one, and generally features an inflated opinion of one's personal features and importance. It often includes intellectual, physical, social and other overestimations. Egotists have a strong tendency to talk about themselves in a self-promoting fashion, and they may well be arrogant and boastful with a grandiose sense of their own importance" (Kowalski, 1997). Egotism is closely related to an egocentric love for ones imagined self or narcissism ; 'By egotism one may envisage a kind of socialized narcissism', Schmalhausen(2004). Leary(2007) suggested that it is accompanied by 'the inability to recognize the accomplishments of others' ; thus it can be said that individuals with egotism are profoundly self-promoting; while sensitive to criticism may lead on the egotist's part to narcissistic rage at a sense of insult.

Sarkar Sahab (1938) suggested that '*Ahang*' is the root of all evil. This first seed leads to *kaam* (lust), *krodh*(anger and rage), *Lobh* (greed)and *Moh* (attachment); thus leading to downward progress and development. Egotism creates wider and inconceivable gulf between the spirit and the original source. *Ahankaar* (Egotism) comes to be at once the prime cause of the condition known as material creation and is, in essence, the source and distraction and dissipation of spirit. To counteract repulsion and distraction, there must be attraction and concentration. *Ahang* is opposed to *Dinta* (humility) . *Dinta* is constituted of intense consciousness of all energy flowing from a source from which one is only an insignificant emanation, accompanied with the condition of absolute dependence upon the source. Thus, while *ahang* centers round the

consciousness of a false source of energy, *dinta* at once converges from all directions into the real source itself. *Ahang* is responsible for our separation from the source; *Dinta* must be indispensable for our union with the source.

Egotism is characteristic of a person in which a person is having a feeling of superiority, an exaggerated sense of self importance. The egoistic feels superior to others physically, intellectually or in some other way and carries the impression that he is the ultimate doer. 'Egotism is a mask of delusion which one wears to hide his faults and weakness. At the base of egotism there is a delusion that 'I am' better than others. Much of the harm is done in the world by people who want to feel superior,.' Sisodia(2014). *Ahankaar*, according to religious scriptures is known to be the worst of the vices as one does not ask for forgiveness once one indulges in egoistic behavior. Repentance or guilt thus remains farfetched from the human soul.

Spiritual Consciousness on the contrary believes in understanding the expansive sea of growth a soul can attain via persistent attention. The rocky road of life not only distracts from the bird's eye but also oneself is enough to create impediments on the path to spiritual consciousness. Spiritual intelligence (SI) emphasizes the abilities that draw on such themes to predict functioning and adaptation (Emmons, 2000). Hence, spiritual intelligence can be differentiated from spiritual experience (e.g., a unitary state) or spiritual belief. Emmons (2000) also mentioned five components of spiritual intelligence as 'the capacity for transcendence', 'the ability to enter heightened spiritual states of consciousness', 'The ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of sacred' and 'the capacity to engage in virtuous behavior'.

METHOD

Aim: To see the relationship between Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness among adults.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness.

Relevant Variables

- Age
- Education
- 'food' preference
- Alcohol consumption

Inclusion criteria

- ❖ Age range was between 30 to 60 years
- ❖ The subjects were graduates.
- ❖ The chosen subjects were vegetarian and 4367eetotaler.

Exclusion criteria

- ❖ Individual below 30 and above 60 years of age were not included in the study.
- ❖ Undergraduates were not a part of this research.
- ❖ Non-vegetarians or alcohol consumers were not a part of the study.

Sample

36 Adults were purposively selected from Agra and surrounding areas. Their age range was 30 to 60 years.

Tools

I. Egotism

The inventory was constructed by Das and Sisodia (2011). It consists of 30 items in Hindi language. The egotism scale has six dimensions. These are:

- (1) Egotism of physical and mental energy.
- (2) Egotism of beauty, smartness and physical attraction.
- (3) Egotism of wealth, property and luxury items.
- (4) Egotism of social status, and connection with influential and powerful people.
- (5) Egotism of superior genes, caste or race.
- (6) Egotism of community services, charity and religiosity.

Teachers' egotism score was validated against the criterion of student's ratings. The coefficient of correlation was found to be 0.65 which is highly significant at .01 level. So the egotism scale is high concurrent validity. The test Retest Reliability of egotism scale with a time gap of 4 months was .55.

II. Spiritual Consciousness

Spiritual Consciousness Scale (SCS-SIA) developed and standardized by the present researcher herself. This tool is reliable and valid and consists of 36 items. The Pearson's coefficient of correlation with Brazdau's (2016) Spiritual Consciousness Scale was .399 displaying high concurrent validity.

DESIGN AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Correlational design has been used to study the relationship between Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness. After the scoring was done on the basis of respective manuals; Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation between the two test scores.

RESULT

Table I – Showing Correlation between Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness

Correlations

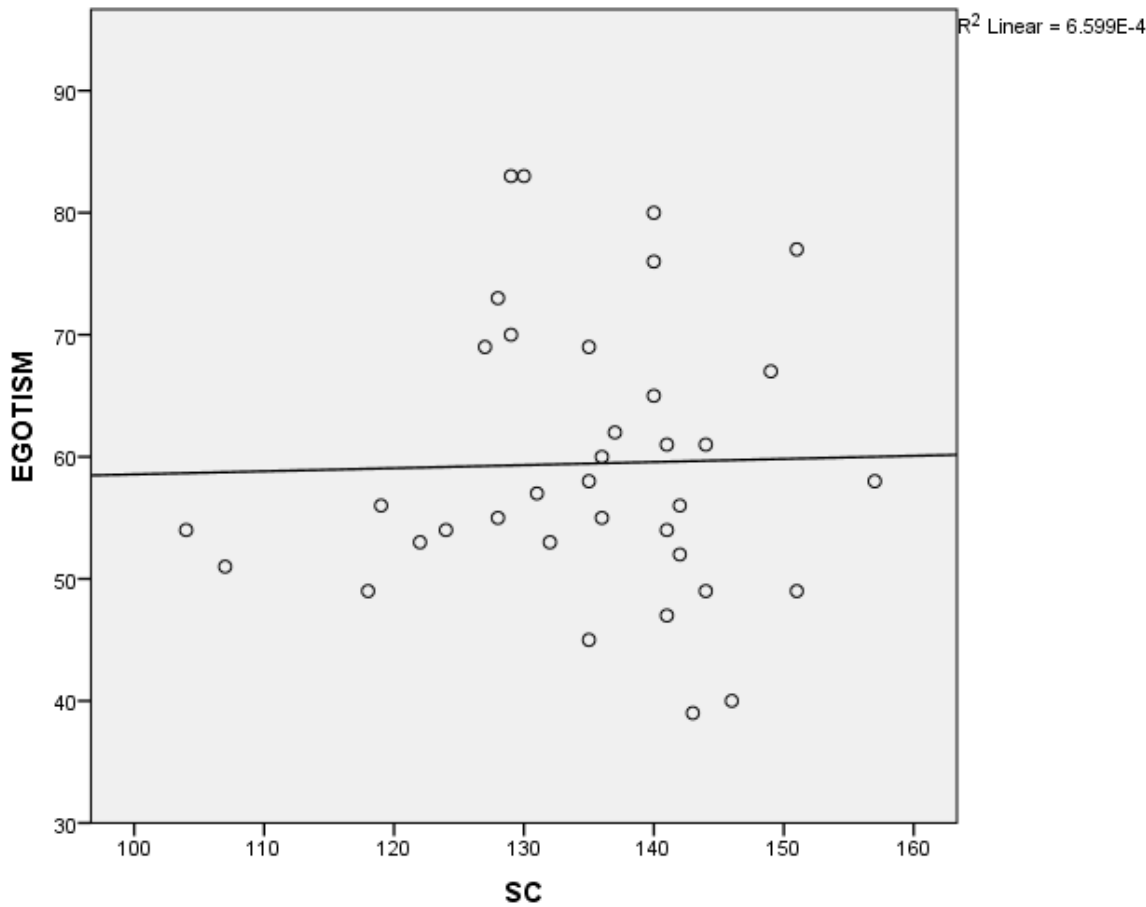
| | | Spiritual Consciousness | EGOTISM |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Spiritual Consciousness | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .026 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .882 |
| | N | 36 | 36 |
| EGOTISM | Pearson Correlation | .026 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .882 | |
| | N | 36 | 36 |

The matrix of coefficient of correlation indicated that there is no significant relationship between the two variables i.e. Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness.

Table II – Showing Scatters of Scores

| E G O T I S M | X Y | SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS | | | | | | fy |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | | 100-109 | 110-119 | 120-129 | 130-139 | 140-149 | 150-159 | |
| | 80-89 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| | 70-79 | | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | 60-69 | | | 1 | 3 | 4 | | 8 |
| | 50-59 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| | 40-49 | | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| | 30-39 | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | fx | 2 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 13 | 3 | 36 |

GRAPH I – Displaying Scatter of Scores



Discussion

As the Table I signifies that the correlation is not significant between the two variables Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness. However, of the results were still noteworthy. On further study of scatter of scores was studied with the help of Table II some unique features were noted. The graph I displays that the correlation between Spiritual consciousness is not linear rather curvilinear. Also, the distribution of Egotism scores is normal whereas spiritual consciousness is slightly skewed indicating individuals have higher spiritual consciousness (SC). The same has been displayed in Graph II and III respectively. There exists a positive correlation between spiritual consciousness and egotism up to the level of SC score of 139 & after 140 score of SC, zero or negative correlation exists between Egotism and Spiritual Consciousness.

The analyses of distribution of scores suggests that maybe some amount of Egotism is present with those who have moderate spiritual consciousness; but it obviously needs to let go off after some point; so that high spiritual level could be achieved. Thus, the researcher is suggesting a possible **Rocket theory** for the same. It is suggested here that the relationship between the two variables seems like the functioning of a multi- level rocket.

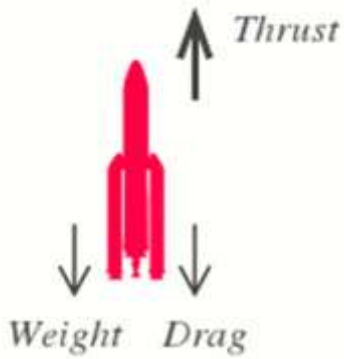


Figure 1: Displaying the working of a rocket; Picture Courtesy: Woodford,(2019)

Rockets move upward by firing hot exhaust gas downward with the help of booster engines; Just like Newton's Law of motion suggests 'Action and Reaction'. After reaching the atmosphere the booster detaches to reduce weight of the rocket. The basic functioning of the rocket is thrust (The force that pushes a rocket upward); Drag (Air Resistance) and weight try to pull it down. A well-functioning thrust from the engines will push the rocket forward and as the rocket accelerates upward its force is greater than both the drag and weight. For this process in a multistage rocket there is a separate propellant and engines which are mounted on top of another. When the booster engines after propelling the rocket run out they are detached from the rocket itself. This is the point of similarity which is observed and thus suggested that the process of rocket launching is most likely similar to a launching of spiritual consciousness of a person. As egotism propels the individual upwards and once its function is over the individual is bound to release it or else its extra weight will drag him downward and will never allow the individual to completely propel beyond. So is the case of persons with high egotism people

can achieve highest level of spirituality on if they get rid of their Egotism so the relation is not positive rather negative for persons having Spiritual Consciousness scores more than 140.

'It must be understood that an individual is a microcosm of the grand macrocosm. The macrocosm is a grand source of infinite energy' (Satsangi, 2011). Any individual thus has the ability to transcend spiritually because of the ability to be spiritually conscious by connecting to its spiritually natural energy. Macrocosm is abundant, timeless and not confined by space. Since everything is energy, tiny particles form waves of potential to ultimately work together and make all the incredible things happen around us; including us, Chopra (2017). Researcher is of the view that an Individual works in the humdrum of the life's illusion and so why would one want to care to grow?

According to Maslow (1971), to attain life's homeostasis an individual eats, secures self, loves, earn respects and self-actualizes. The cycle of reaching homeostasis is never ending. It is due to pain (pain hurts the human Ego) the individual would want break the deliberate cycle of life and pain. Thus, the human Egotism which needs to be controlled is also the driving force behind finding the true spirituality; as one only moves towards homeostasis when one is not satiated. Eckhart Tolle suggested 'people may awaken simply because they can't stand the suffering anymore'. In the Eastern culture soul or the *aatman* i.e. the real self cannot be hurt by anything not even fire or water. Thus in the lower region of the mind-body matter where the microcosmic soul is it has a body and mind which can feel hurt. Both body and mind instruments meditation and can help the soul reach its true eternal and everlasting pure region of spirituality. Thus when an individual is hurt or pained the egotism acknowledges the need of ultimate survival and a spiritual homeostasis. This generates the 'will' and emotional drive in an individual to awaken. Thus, Egotism to a point powers spirituality; but in the end it is a vice and thus to be one with the Supreme Being the 'I' has to be relieved because it's purpose is solved.

Future Deliberations:

The researcher is still bound with questions such as

1. Is the working of spiritual consciousness and Egotism similar?
2. Is Egotism the reason behind the 'Rocket' of spiritual consciousness to want to change the present circumstances?
3. Does egotism work like the expelling exhaust?
4. As the rocket leaves the earth atmosphere it needs to let go of the exhaust i.e. egotism to reduce its weight because egotism just like the exhaust does not serve any more. So, ultimately is egotism the extra weight?

Along with the hovering questions and the researchers' strong will to read between the lines of the data; the researcher is strongly perturbed by the methods used by researchers to study such deep, personal, complex and un-quantific matter. This leading to another question.

5. Are the approaches in psychology impactful or precise enough to understand the complex web nature of spirituality? As according to a famous Doha by Rahim ji; it is useless to think of the use of sword where the needle is used? Maybe a newer or different approach could lead researchers towards better understanding of the matter.

Limitations

The sample size could have been more in number. The researcher strongly feels that a larger sample could be engaged to get a better quantitative understanding of the subject matter. Further study with larger and more representative sample would give better picture of the relation between egotism and spiritual consciousness. This being an exploratory study gives direction for further research in this area.

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