

## RELIGIONS & PERSONALITY VARIABLE OF ALTRUISM

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The processes like adaptation and co-evolution mentioned by the evolutionary theories are also important. The adaptation is a process making the organism better suited to the current situation. Co-evolution is a process where a group of organism try to survive through different mechanism such as conflict or cooperation.*

*According to the biological theories of altruism it may be considered as part of the pre-programmed genetics. Newer studies demonstrated a strong evidence to support the genetic influence on prosocial behaviors. Studies examined the commonly occurring variation in the serotonin transporter gene, specifically the 5-HTTLPR. The genetic variation of the 5-HTTLPR triallelic genotype was found to be associated with prosocial tendencies through effects on anxiety in social situations. It suggests that genetic variation influences one's decision about helping others significantly (Hu et al., 2006; Wendland et al 2006; Ratner & Way, 2013).*

**KEYWORDS:** *Altruism, Different Perspective of Altruism, Religions*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Willingness to help seems to, be related to one's religious and ethnic affiliation. There are many religious which foster concern for other people. So, the question arises, do highly religious people tend to be more altruistic? The evidence is unequivocal and mixed. Measures such as church attendance do not predict helping behavior (Latane and Darley, 1970). Batson and Gray (1981) distinguished between two types of religious students on the basis of paper-pencil scales; those who viewed religion as an end in itself and those who viewed it as a quest or process of questioning to satisfy curiosity. They reported that those who viewed religion as an end in itself and had a high need to be helpful, quest oriented students were more sensitive to the victims-needs, helping only when any one wanted to be helped. Therefore, Batson and Gray argue that what matters may not be whether people worship frequently but whether their beliefs make them sensitive to the needs of others.

Apart from the influences of religious institution affiliation; like church; there are some studies on Indian sample by the Indian investigators which show the effect of religious or ethnic affiliation of the subjects on their altruistic or helping behavior.

In a study on 50 Hindu and 50 Muslim Indian girls of undergraduate class of Lucknow City, Seth and Gupta (1983) found that both Hindu and Muslim were equally altruistic and no significant difference was obtained in the degree of altruism exhibited. Both groups showed tendency to higher award to their own group. They were also able to ascertain that Hindu and Muslim girls exhibited greater generosity towards members of their own groups. And thirdly, this study led

the investigators to conclude that both the groups revealed greater generosity with distribution of grades as compared to salary. Sawyer (1966) had found that altruism in situations involving grades corresponds rather closely to altruism in situations involving salary. In an other study, Rai and Gupta (1966) varied the culture by selecting Hindu and Muslim subject and hypothesized that altruism differed between Hindu and Muslim culture did not differ significantly in donation.

It is common knowledge that the personal, domestic and social life of people is largely governed by the rules of what they regard as their religion. People have definite beliefs for which they stand and which have helped them to survive as a Hindu, Muslim or Christian for so long. All religions emphasizes the authenticity of altruism.

To recapitulate, it was evident that mood and guilt of a person dramatically affect altruism. In the same fashion, psychologists and personalogists questioned whether there are similar dramatic effects of a person's enduring personality traits. Are there characteristics or traits that distinguish the good Samaritans or benefactors or altruists from those blinded by their own self-centeredness?

Surely; On the basis of careful review of the classic studies of moral behavior conducted by Hartshorne and May (1928). Hartshorne and Miller (1923), it may be concluded that, "there is a trait of altruism. Some people are consistently more generous, helping and kind than others. There is an altruistic personality".

## **EVOLUTION OF ALTRUISM IN HUMANS THROUGH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

The evolution of altruism in humans may be understood in better way through three different perspectives such as; (1) evolution of altruism as part of evolution of species, (2) evolution of altruism in the history of human civilization, and (3) evolution of altruism in the life span of an individual.

### **Evolution of Altruism as Part of Evolution of Species**

According to the evolutionary theory the survival of a species or an individual member can happen in many ways. The natural selection refers to various processes brought by organisms in order to get better adapted to their environment. It helps the organism to survive the challenges or existence through the process called as reproductive success. Through these mechanisms the organism tries to survive and protect its species and also try to ensure future generations. The evolution of altruism can be seen as a necessary biological behavior to support these processes. The level of altruism is very high when it comes to their immediate biological mates or kin. It is because of the process called kin selection in which the organism try to protect its genetic copies and/or passes its genes to the next generation by protecting another one related to him/her genetically by considering the shared genes passed on by the organism's close relative. the altruism tends to decrease progressively according to the genetic distance of the organism with relative. Next is at the group level, through the process called group selection. In this the organisms try to protect another one or many in group level. The group can be defined in community level or species level. In this, because of the pre-programmed genetic behaviors an organism tries to fight for and protect another member of the same group (Goodnight & Stevens, 1997; Zimmer et al, 2013; Cartwright, 2000).

The processes like adaptation and co-evolution mentioned by the evolutionary theories are also important. The adaptation is a process making the organism better suited to the current situation. Co-evolution is a process where a group of organism try to survive through different mechanism such as conflict or cooperation. The conflict means to fight or conquer. The cooperation is to cooperate with other members. Both adaptation and cooperation demand a kind of

reciprocal responsibilities which subsequently brings a set of rules and moral to maintain the equilibrium. The organism tries to adjust by contribution. Conflict directly requires to take pain for others or their own survival in which the person himself/herself not sure about their own survival (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Orr, 2005; Wilson, & Holldobler, 2005; Wade, 2007; Reeve & Holldobler 2007; Hall & Hallgrimsson, 2008).

According to the biological theories of altruism it may be considered as part of the pre-programmed genetics. Newer studies demonstrated a strong evidence to support the genetic influence on prosocial behaviors. Studies examined the commonly occurring variation in the serotonin transporter gene, specifically the 5-HTTLPR. The genetic variation of the 5-HTTLPR triallelic genotype was found to be associated with prosocial tendencies through effects on anxiety in social situations. It suggests that genetic variation influences one's decision about helping others significantly (Hu et al., 2006; Wendland et al 2006; Ratner & Way, 2013). Although it can explain higher levels of altruistic behaviors in many of the animals including humans, left limitations to explain higher levels of altruistic behaviors related to morality and social values. Considering something as altruistic varies from person to person and place to place according to the psychological and socio-cultural influences (Darlington, 1978; Hoffman, 1978; Piliavin & Charng, 1990; Feigin et al, 2014; Kurzban et al, 2015).

Altruism in other point of view helps the individuals to get a good social status, acceptable roles and leadership in the society. Being altruistic will attract more people. Her according to the humanistic theories man is naturally motivated to positive goals. The altruistic traits in this way may evolve to support the individuals to achieve his needs in different hierarchy. According to Maslow's theory, individuals move in to the hierarchies a need of sharing is important to fulfill the needs. Being altruistic help one to get better acceptance in the family and society which will return them through enhancing the quality of the emotional attachments. Altruistic behaviors help individuals to fulfill their self-esteem and self-actualization needs. Maslow said satisfaction of higher needs is closer to self-actualization and one should be less selfish for that (Maslow, 1954; Piliavin & Charng, 1990).

### **Age and Altruism**

Social psychologists hold this view that altruism is indeed not inborn but learned. Children can learn to be altruistic, friendly and self-controlled by modeling and socializing. Therefore, age of children is an important determinant of altruism across the life span. Children do not need to learn to be prosocial.

### **Education and Altruism**

Education plays a vital role in shaping and directing the interactional behavior of individual. So is the case with altruism- a prosocial behavior. A few relevant studies in this regard substantiate the view.

In a very recent Indian study Puspa, Vedagiri, Ramaswamy and Nalini Devi (1994) assessed the levels of different types of prosocial behavior like sharing, reciprocity, compensation and emergency among primary school children, using situational lists. No significant difference in prosocial behavior of boys and girls at different levels was found. Grade 5 boys differed significantly in their prosocial behavior, though no significant differences were observed in the case of Girls.

## Religiosity and Altruism

It may be noted here that the terms altruism, benevolence, compassion, empathy, fellow feeling, sympathy and love (despite distinction among them) – all refers to behaviors that has aim to produce, maintain or improve the physical or Psychological welfare and integrity of another person.

Differential Personality Scale (DPS) was primarily developed as a tool of personality measurement by which we measure nine personality traits; which are being dealt as follows:

- **Decisiveness:** Decisiveness refers to person's ability to take quick decisions in controversial issues, to decide priorities and attend accordingly to take clear-cut stand over the given issues etc.
- **Responsibility:** Responsibility is defined in terms of a number of behavioral syndromes such as finishing a task in time, meeting people on appointed time; going some-where according to fixed schedule, attending meeting in time.
- **Emotional Stability:** Persons having trait of emotional stability has well control over the emotion, talk confidently with other, consider ailments in their proper perspective, face comments and criticism realistically, etc.

Table 1

Dimension	Temporal Stability Coefficient	Internal Consistency Coefficient (Whole Length)	
		Odd-Even	Split-Half
Decisiveness	0.78	0.82	0.83
Responsibility	0.81	0.84	0.82
Emotional Stability	0.80	0.89	0.87
Masculinity	0.86	0.86	0.85
Friendliness	0.77	0.90	0.89
Heterosexuality	0.75	0.90	0.84
Ego-strength	0.82	0.85	0.84
Curiosity	0.84	0.83	0.82
Dominance	0.73	0.85	0.84

All correlation coefficient were significant at 0.01 level of confidence.

It has been validated against the scores of Bell's adjustment Inventory as adapted by Mohsin and Shamshad (1970). The obtained correlation coefficients between each nine dimension as well as five areas of Bell's Adjustment Inventory were negative which ranged from -0.20 to -.37. Some of the values were significant at or beyond 0.05 level and some were significant at or beyond 0.01 level.

It has also been validated against a number of personal and biographical variables. Most of the chi-square values were significant at or beyond .05 and 0.01 level which themselves provide evidence for high validity of scale.

Altruism is considered as one of the mature mechanisms to cope with the vicarious experiences in psychodynamic theories. According to these theories altruism may be evolving to help the individual to cope better with a stressful situation or loss. Vaillant considered altruism as an "an adaptive outgrowth of reaction formation," and believed that it allows individual to fulfill his/her unsatisfied desires through proxy substitutions (Vaillant, 1986). The altruistic behaviors can have lot of implications associated with Erickson's psychosexual stages. The evolution of altruism in various ways and

forms and in different time period can be observed in the psychosexual development of the individuals. The social life of the child starts in the preschool age. According to psychodynamic theories the child will be having problems associated with Oedipus complex this time and doing many role experimentations. The altruistic behaviors may evolve this time to help the child to get appreciation from parents and neighbors and also to develop necessary leadership skills to get adjusted with the surroundings in a better way. Through such activities the child develops a sense of mastery and feeling of self-worth. Continuing to the next stage altruism helps the children to be more confident, which will help them to develop a good sense of self-esteem and competent in school and social life. Studies show that altruistic behaviors help individuals to get more social acceptance, dignity and leadership roles in various social situations.

According to him when they see someone suffer they will sympathize to them and imagine them in sufferers place. It creates a kind of distress in the individual and to get rid of that they will contribute for the relief of original sufferer. Modern behavioral economists elaborated the altruistic behaviors associated with economic transactions more. First in the egoistic perspective individual may do altruistic or charity works to induce or by expect a same return in future. Secondly is egocentric view which thought that the individual some time enjoys more utility by observing something consumed by another one than consuming the product by him/her. That is the marginal utility from a product is more when watching someone else consuming it rather he/she consumes it himself. The individuals may also do such activities just because they are honestly obeying their moral duties. Such altruistic behaviors are called as alter centric perspective of altruism (Khalil 2001s & 2004; Ashraf et al, 2005).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The high Altruist will score high on nine personality traits namely, Decisiveness, Responsibility, Emotional stability, Masculinity, Friendliness, Heterosexuality, Ego-strength, Curiosity and Dominance of Differential Personality Scale (DPS). Nine separate hypotheses related with different dimensions of personality were formulated.

To determine the sex-difference in respect altruism, it was hypothesized that male and female would differ significantly on their altruism score.

The increasing tendencies of selfishness, self-centeredness and unhappiness on the one hand and increasing rate of terrorism, separatism, normlessness and cynicism, arbitrariness in our society on the other led the investigator to think that it would be proper to plan a research on the kindest part of human being i.e; altruism in relation to religiosity and personality traits. The need of the hour is to make earnest effort to encourage and develop a pro-social-altruistic society in India. The study has therefore planned to determine the nature and extent of relationship of Altruism with Religiosity and some personality characteristics.

Sociologists recognized altruism by such tags as benevolence, charity and the like suggested by its speed of diffusion into other people's language. Comote, Durkehim, Sorokin and other made significant contribution in regard to our concern for others.

It implies an unselfish concern, the interest of others above concern for oneself. Walster & Piliavin (1972) said, "Altruism is very special form of helping behavior that is voluntary, costly to the altruist, and motivated by something other than the expectation of material or social rewards".

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