

# A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of the Seminarians During Formation

A Research Project Submitted to Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong  
Submitted In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology

**Fr. Jobin Joseph OSB, MScp**

Sampurna Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

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**Declaration:** I, Jobin Joseph, hereby declare that this Research Project **A Phenomenological study of the Experiences of the Seminarians during Formation** was carried out by me under the guidance of Sritha Sandon, Associate Professor, Montfort College, Bengaluru.

This Research Project is submitted in candidacy for the award of M.Sc. in Counselling Psychology, to Martin Luther Christian University, in the month of May 2019. This research work or parts of it have not been submitted to any other University for any purpose so far. References borrowed from other sources have been duly acknowledged.

**Abstract-** This research is an attempt to study the experiences of the seminary students during the formation. A lot of students join the seminary where they teach Biblical themes, moral themes, and even secular themes. The student in the seminary stays for about 10 to 15 years under formation and finally becomes a priest. But it is to be noted that not all who enter the seminary becomes a priest. The number is very less. If a student is taught for so many years about religion, theology and philosophy then what makes them not to stay in the seminary? After a student completes the formation why there are scandals in the church. Why do they leave the seminary in the middle of formation? In this study I have used the Phenomenological method. To answer these questions, 10 boys aged between 16 to 25, in formation are interviewed and they said that they needed more of human concern rather than spiritual learning. There needs changes in the formation in accordance with the time. They also suggested psychological studies to be inculcated to the curriculum. And this study suggests that human and psychological studies together with the normal seminary curriculum will help the students to feel better and remain faithfully in the seminary.

**Index Terms-** seminary, formation, formater.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Religion is one of the important factors in the society that makes the life of the people smooth and safe. Some of them experience God's presence in their life while others live peacefully in their religion. There are so many factors that make the life of the people, whether they believe in any religion or not, smooth and

happy. Some believe that Gods who are in the particular religion give them everything, their life, their job, money and all they need. And to facilitate this, are pastors, priests and several other people who contribute to the system.

Now in every religion there is a place for priest, pastor who is believed to be talking directly with God, who intercedes for the people and who pray on their behalf. These categories, as a rule, are set apart for this special purpose while taking care both of spiritual and material needs to a certain extend. And these are approached by the people at any time of need. Therefore, they are known to be infallible, sacred, powerful, knowledgeable and sometimes, function as judge over the society or the particular system.

Now to make such a great personality there are certain rules and regulations concerning their studies, life and wellbeing.

As in every religion, in Christianity also, there is a system set apart for the study of becoming a priest or pastor. The particular system is called Seminary. According to the Cambridge university dictionary the meaning of seminary is that "a college where people are trained to become priests, ministers, or rabbis".

To point out the example of a particular monastery established in 1987, though they used to recruit at least 15 candidates every year, there are only 7 priests remaining today.

According to a study done (Cassidy caption, 2018) in the year 2006 by the Vatican City News Fide, the total number of priests in the world decreased to 414.969 (- 687). The continent which registered a major decrease was again Europe (- 2.583). There was also a decrease in America (-589). Increase was registered in Africa (+ 1.181) and Asia (+ 1.304) Oceania remained unvaried. Diocesan priests increased by 317 units, reaching a total of 281.831 with a decrease only in Europe (- 1.611) and increase in Africa (+ 983); America (+ 180), Asia (+ 744) and Oceania (+ 21). The number of Religious priests decreased by 1.004 units to a total 133.138. Increase was registered in recent years in Africa (+ 198) and in Asia (+ 560), whereas numbers dropped in America (- 769), Europe (- 972), Oceania (- 21). This statistics shows that in Europe and in the US there is a big change in terms of less members becoming the priests. These are the proportionate studies made in the US. Considering all these studies done so far to find the reason in the decrease of the candidates becoming priests or the reason why they leave in between their particular way of life are many. Today

roughly there are 37000 Christian denominations in the world. The study also says that as many churches or denominations are there so the number of members in those churches abounds to the one third of the whole world population. But the interesting fact is that roughly around 6000 churches are being closed down every year while new ones are being built in different part of the world. The reason for the churches to close down is that either there are not enough priests; the priests don't live a life appealing to the people so they tend to join different churches or denominations or leave Christianity itself, or that newer denominations are being formed. Now, when we consider all these figures and facts together with the recent happenings in the Catholic Church especially – the so called scandalous life of the priests and looking at the priests and students leave the seminary – and the churches being closed down or the people joining other churches, we understand that the need for the study is important.

There are so many studies (Agenzia Fides ,2018) conducted in the Christian world regarding all the above mentioned issues, but to a limited realm either it is done in only one denomination- mostly in the protestant denomination-, among one sector or country –mainly in the US and the Europe .Therefore the need for other denominations as well, is important especially, in the Catholic world which is the largest among all the denominations and in India from where hails the most number of candidates to the priesthood. But I must also state that –it's in Asia the most number of students come for the studies and leave largely, to make it a figure -264 according to a recent study.

All these studies throw light on the need for psychological studies not only for the students but also for the teachers as well. The study in particular states that the teachers are to understand the needs – emotional and physical – of the students and in turn the students, their emotional as well as social needs apart from their faith and beliefs. Finally, faith and belief together with appropriate emotional and social relationship make the life of any student better and thus the life of society or the congregation or whatever denomination he or she lives in.

Here, in this, study I wish to concentrate on the emotional and mental status of the students in formation. I would like to also refer to those who left this particular of life during their studies and the reason why they did. I also wish to interview the teachers or the so called formators who is in charge of the students throughout regarding the pattern they follow in the life of the students and what are the changes they make when, if they found them inadequate.

## II. REVIEW

In this chapter certain articles are reviewed studies done in different seminaries and institutions where the religious students study. These studies are conducted on the basis of the need for psychological education for the students in the seminary. These are done because of the certain incidents that took place in the church, among the students and their relationship, and their attitude towards their life and choice. Most of the studies show the necessity of psychological education to be included together with the theological or philosophical curriculum. After comparing the studies and research, they say that those with some knowledge of psychology of humanity do well in life and remain faithful to the life they have chosen, while others do not care for their life, do not

respect others nor understand the human values thus making the life of one and that of others miserable.

In the meeting that was conducted in the month of February, 2019 in the Vatican, regarding the misbehaviour of priests and religious. The topics to be discussed are gay life among the priests, sexual abuse, violence, immorality, and many other similar topics. Most of the experts say that all these happen because of the lack of proper education from the beginning of formation from the early years. The initial years are normally soon after High School or college.

Thus the need for psychological, moral studies, knowledge about the human mind in particular and about relationship, looking at the other person through the eyes being human is very important, the failure of which, will cause problems of all the kind.

The article “Life Satisfaction Of Seminary Final Year Students In Yangon ,Myanmar :A Path Analytic Study Of The Direct And Indirect Influences Of Coping Styles Being Mediated By Stress , Anxiety And Depression by Skeeter Win and Robert Ho ( 2017).This study was conducted to know the level of the stress, depression, anxiety among the final year seminary students in Myanmar. These being the primary variables the study was focused on employment of the method of coping mechanisms that is Emotion focused and Avoidance focused. The question was which of these two would help the students more in coping up with the primary variables. The study was conducted among 218 students aged between 20 and 45. The report was that as per the understanding that the Seminary study was to help the students to grow more in spiritual life. But, they also concluded that the Seminaries are meant to be centres' of not only spiritual learning but also of academic, social, and learning of every kind. But the learning is stressful for most of the students because of the change of style in life, ministry, assignments, strict timetable and disciplined life. While some students cope with these stressors others who would find it difficult. Therefore the researchers focused on the type of coping styles that each of them put in. Because these stressors would affect the quality of the seminary life positively and negatively. Therefore this study is to understand what style of coping would help the students to be successful in life amidst these stressful factors. It was a quantitative study. There were 218 students both male and female. The method was using questionnaire and there were three inventories: CISS – coping inventory for stressful situations. It contained 48 questions. The second was the DASS- depression anxiety and stress scale. The third one was SWLS – satisfaction with life scale. They used the convenient sampling method to choose the population. They also obtained proper permission from the authorities of the four seminaries from which they selected the students.

The results showed that the more the seminary students employed emotion focused coping to deal with the stressful situations, the higher the reported level of stress and the more they employed avoidance focused coping to deal with the stressful situations the lower the level of depression. The result also showed that the above mentioned two coping styles are below the problem focused coping styles in relation to the life satisfaction and stressful situations. The findings show that the students could employ problem focused coping style in stressful situations. These findings are in line with Lazarus and Folkmans theory that when people are aware that they are capable of solving a problem, they

would employ problem focused coping mechanism. The purpose is to enable the person to solve the issues very effectively. The study also found that the use of emotion focused coping strategy and avoidance focused coping strategy are used because of the various levels of life satisfaction they get and to get out of the stressful situation. Thus it negatively affected them in certain ways. This could be because of the spiritual aptitude or interest they showed in their life which they learned from the formation time.

Finally, the study says that the students should be made aware of the various coping strategies under different situations and help them to act accordingly so that the stress can be reduced and they become more effective.

According to the review by Peter Klpeonis on the book *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in Seminary Admissions* by the United Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington. This book was published so that all of the seminary rectors and bishops could make use of this. It was written in the light of psychology using and following psychological theories and terms. This article was written after studying the reports written by the rectors and in charges that had no background of psychological and learning. According to the author, the purpose of the psychological evaluation is to predict whether the candidate can live a healthy way of life and be effective in the future life as well. He says these evaluations are to be carried out seriously and with discretion. These assessments could help the rectors to know the intellectual, emotional, and psychological functioning of the particular student. The report suggests certain components how to make the assessments. They are:

1: psychosocial and psycho sexual interview which will tell about the student's unwanted sexual (orientation) attractions to both men and women, about the social relationship among the others, and social behaviours.

2: intelligent assessment which will tell about the student's current intelligent status.

3: Psychological Testing (structured written, visual, or verbal measures administered) to assess the cognitive and emotional functioning of the applicant.

4: Oral Feedback Session (a meeting of the psychologist with the applicant and some responsible person to discuss the results of the psychological evaluation. This is both for the student and the formater. This will help the formater to know more about the candidate and to form him or her well.

The report also suggests certain impediments to the formation that if the student is from an abusive family background and then he or she can become abusive of others and can be incorrigible. Students with addiction and disorders and students with learning disability can also make impediments to the correct formation. Therefore, the authors suggest that the formaters should be having enough knowledge in human formation, psychology and secular studies. So that he can understand the student well and form in a better way. It also suggests that the assessments and evaluations made should be kept secure and confidential both for future assessment and for the safety of the candidate. Finally, the goal of the psychological evaluation is to help to ensure that only the healthiest men become priests. If a man is accepted in the seminary, the information from the evaluation would be shared with the seminary rector and appropriate formation faculty. An abbreviated report should be shared with the

formation personnel that omit the most intimate details of the seminarian. It is also suggested that all these assessments and reports are to be checked by a professional psychologist. (USCCB, 2015)

The article namely, *Comparison of depression level and identity styles between students in Allameh University and Islamic Seminary* written by A Mahdavi, M Aghaei, MA Besharat, F Khaki Seddigh, SH Akbari, and Z Hamidifar (2015) tries to compare depression and identity styles to specify in which of these groups the level of depression is higher, in addition, which of the identity styles is more prevalent in both groups, thus predicting the depression level.

The study was based on the theory of Erick Erickson's identity v/s role confusion. To say that how depression affects the identity of the person. it was conducted among the youth of 18-25 years old both male and female. According to the study there are four styles of identity: identity gain, interval, identity record and identity dispersion. The individuals who have a dispersed identity present no specified direction, do not adhere to goals and values, and do not bother to reach them. The individuals, who have a recorded identity, have committed themselves to the goals and values without assessing other options. The individuals, who have an interval identity, did not create any definite obligation for themselves, looking for process, so that they were able to collect information and test various activities and hope that someday they will find some values and goals to direct their lives to. Finally, the individuals who have a gained identity have already assessed the options and they adhered to a series of values and goals that they have chosen. The result showed that students with informative life style are better in managing the issues in the life.

The number of samples collected from two universities and were about 100. They had to fill-in certain questions and then, the collected data were analysed by using ANOVA and Regression statistical methods by employment of SPSS statistical software. They used the ISI and BDI. The result showed certain differences in the depression level in between the two groups of the students but the level of avoidance and information were the same. Therefore according to the findings and the theory that the personality styles are formed during the childhood days and its effects is in full swing in the adult age and therefore, the parents and the educators are advised to prevent depression from the primary level itself.

The study article namely the *Christian Seminary Students Attitude Towards Psychology: Effects Of An Introductory Course On The Integration Of Psychology And Theology* by Scott W Woods (2010) as a part of his PhD studies. This study is meant to inculcate the study of psychology into spiritual studies as well because long since psychology was not thought about as a subject to be taught in the seminaries. The main purpose was to examine the effectiveness of introductory psychology course in the seminary curriculum and tests both before and after the assessments were done on the students and the author found significant changes in the attitude of the seminary students. The author begins the chapter by acknowledging the fact that there have been substantial rifts between the psychologists and the theologians in their specific fields of belief and practice and to be frank the theologians were unwilling to inculcate psychology into theological studies. but since 2002 after many studies in the field they are willing to accept psychology. That is to integrate science

with faith. They both –the clerics and the psychologists deal with issues of cognition but in different manner one in the light of faith and the other with the help of epistemology. This is because the Christians complain about the psychologists that they overlook the facts of sin and hell. They also hold that psychological principles are antithetical. This article is based on the theory of different psychologists that after the study of psychology many have agreed to change their way of life broadly or to look at situations with more understanding thus reducing risks in life. Therefore the hypothesis was that the attitude of the seminary students towards psychology would change after the psychological studies.

This study was to know about the seminary student's mentality towards psychological study as a part of the curriculum. There were 45 students both male and female aged between 18-54. These were from different parts of the world. The instruments used were the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), the Brief Religious Coping Inventory (RCOPE), and the Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help scale. In the first two tests they all showed high spirit and the attitude towards the third question was not as the author expected. But, all the same, he noticed a change in the student's attitude towards counselling and psychology. Therefore, this study intent to put forward a message that psychology is also to be a part of theological studies. It doesn't mean to make a comparative study but to change of attitude in seeking psychological help also. And therefore from the results the author intends to say that psychology is to be considered as a subject together with the theological studies.

The research article "Values As Predictors Of Religious Experience In The Lives Of Seminary Students Of Philosophy And Students Of Physics" was written by Stanislaw Glaz (2016). This study was to analyse the relation of values in the life of both religious students and physics students. Because it develops both personal and religious life. According to the social science, value has different meaning but psychologically it can be put into two different standpoints. One is the subjective standpoint i.e.: it is people who create values. Something becomes a value when it is preferred and accepted in the society. The other view is objective i.e.: values exist regardless of the subject. Therefore a person should realize and learn them. According to different psychologists values are desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance and serving as guiding principles in people's lives. Values, being socially approved verbal representations of basic motivations, play an important role in our functioning and are linked to motivational goals. Religious Experience, in the broad meaning of the word, is a fundamental form of human cognition, and it denotes a certain process, "movement" of consciousness, thanks to which a human being establishes contact with the reality, with a view to getting to know it. Some researchers also describe religious experience as profoundly spiritual. It is perceived as a type of genuine and immediate contact with a power recognized as divine presence or divine reality. It is most often accompanied by tension, inner conflicts about sin and the sacredness of God. Some psychologists say that it falsely assures of gods careful providence, which eventually leads to self-deception and neurotic disorders. In response to these features, the author of this paper, referring to Christian understanding of religious experience (Saint Jean de la Croix 1915; Tauler 1826)—created, on the basis of that concept, a tool for measuring experiences with a religious character: God's presence and God's absence. The scale will be

employed for the purpose of the article. It consists of statements referring to the Christian religion which takes into account all of the dimensions described above: the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural experiences of God's presence and God's absence. Two kinds of lifestyle are encountered in our culture: clerical and secular (lay). The clerical lifestyle is directed at self-realization with respect to God and another person, whereas the secular one is directed at self-realization with regard to another person and the surroundings. The former suggests that a human being's care about their own development, experiencing happiness, and solitude takes place in an institutional religious group where a person finds fulfilment individually and socially.

Some studies suggest that the seminary students seek more psychological help as they are taught and they believe more in human and religious aspects based on love, salvation and God experience. But the problem of values and religious experience: God's presence and God's absence—an aspect connected with self-realization as a person—is a popular research area. This paper focuses on an attempt to show the relation between terminal values and religious experience: God's presence and God's absence in the group of seminary students of philosophy, who live in a religious community, prepare for "being with others", live their lives in accordance with evangelical advice, and follow the Christ's footsteps, and in the group of students of physics, who are characterized by being open to external experience, belief in a rational world order, and fascination with material reality. In this context the following questions arise: To what extent does lifestyle—as a way of realization of students' individual traits—define and modify the corresponding world of terminal values, which perform an important regulatory function in their lives, as well as religious experience: God's presence and God's absence? To what extent do the most preferred values—as personal standards—imply religious experience: God's presence and God's absence in the seminary students of philosophy and student of physics? On the basis of the presented theoretical material and earlier studies, the following hypotheses were formulated: 1.

There is a difference in the level of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence, and in the hierarchy of terminal values between seminary students of philosophy and students of physics. 2. The most preferred terminal values contribute considerably to the occurrence of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence both in the group of seminary students of philosophy and in the group of students of physics.

The samples were collected from polish students of both theological and physics studies aged between 21-27. Both groups were 50 and 50. Both were asked to complete same questionnaire. The scales to measure these were The Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) by Glaz and Rokeach Value Survey (RVS). For the Statistical Analysis the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. The results obtained in the Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) indicate two differences significant in terms of religious experiences; namely, seminary students of philosophy have a higher level of religious experience of God's presence and a higher level of experience of God's absence than those studying physics. For the interpretation of the preferences of terminal values, the top four values with the highest ranks were considered. The results obtained in the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) concerning terminal values show that seminary students of philosophy respect most values like inner harmony, wisdom, salvation, and freedom,

whereas male students of physics prefer terminal values such as a world at peace, pleasure wisdom and family security. Now the author mean to say that there is a difference in selection of values in these two groups because of their different circumstances. Now, for the religious students it is entirely based on the existence of God and the feeling of sin and truth and thus they sometime fail to understand the full meaning of value as it really is and therefore suggesting the need for psychological and moral studies in the seminary curriculum as well.

The article "Training and education of north American masters of divinity students in relation to serious mental illness" written by Halle e. ross and Matthew s. Stanford (2014) department of psychology and neuroscience, Baylor university, waco, Texas, USA. This article tries to bring out the need for students to have certain knowledge in psychology as well, though they claim to have studied philosophy and theology. The reason to have this study is that they noticed those who had some knowledge of psychology were having less psychological issues or they were better equipped in dealing with the stressful situations. In the US more than 25 % of people suffer from psychological issues. Since most of the Americans claim to be religious they in their distress meet the clergy or the pastors who are not that equipped to deal with persons of this kind. Therefore, the study tries to make clear that the pastors also need training in psychology. The study also specify that the clergy though they are not well informed in the field of psychology do not often refer the people to professional psychologists and the reasons vary. it says that the clergy are not fully aware of the existence of the psychological help, to avoid stigma in the society, or to that they feel inferior and another reason is that sin and God aspect plays a big role in it. They connect everything with Bible, God and sin. Finally the study says most of the pastors have not received psychological education when they are in the seminary.

Another study revealed that despite the fact they feel inadequate to treat the clients they are also unable to recognize the symptoms of the patients due to the lack of prior knowledge. This is because in the seminaries they were afraid that if they come to know more psychology that would lessen the seminary aspect and God aspect. Therefore they are ready to treat the patients even though they are unaware of the sickness and treatment plan. The study was made among the university students over the phone. And of them 219 were contacted. Of that number, 70 directors agreed to be interviewed, two declined to be interviewed, and 147 did not respond to the request for an interview, resulting in a 32% response rate. Institutions that provided MDiv degrees on more than one campus were assessed one time through the main campus. They were from different part of the Latin America. Of the 219 seminaries contacted only 70 that responded and the study result show that no seminaries had enough access to the knowledge of psychology and so those who come out as pastors had no idea of any psychological issues. Thus the author suggests that those who enter the seminary should also have some knowledge of psychology integrated with bible studies.

The article "Self-Disclosure and Spiritual Well-Being in Pastors Seeking Professional Psychological Help" was written by Erik D. Salwen<sup>1</sup> & Lee A. Underwood<sup>2</sup> & Gabriel S. Dy-Liacco<sup>2</sup> & Kathleen R. Arveson.(2017). This topic was researched because the pastor's mental and physical health can have tremendous impact on the life and faith of the believers. Another reason for the

study was that the pastors were found to object to the findings of the psychology because of the faith that it is beyond and their personal benefits. They tend to focus more on traditional faith, belief systems and overlook the psychological aspects of life. But the fact is that they have issues in the family itself and they are unwilling to open up because of the faith, their position and high regard. And so they very often do not disclose the issues they face and therefore suffer. Certain studies in the 1990s proved that there are pastors who suffer but don't seek help because of the faith and belief. Further studies proved that there is a correlation between the spiritual struggle and psychological issues such as anxiety stress etc. Another study in the 2012 found that the pastors and the people believed that talking to psychologists would not help their issues as they believed this to be spiritual in nature. Thus, the purpose of this study is to state that in seminaries there is a need for study of psychology and pastors should disclose themselves if they are struggling with issues and are to approach the psychologists.

The samples were selected from the seminary students who are getting ready to go the parishes. The hypotheses was that There is a significant difference in willingness to seek professional psychological help as measured by the ATSPPH Scale by the level of self-disclosure flexibility as measured by the SDI Scale (non-directional). The data was collected through electronic gadgets, internet. The result however was neutral saying that the pastors' willingness to self-disclosure, spiritual wellbeing and willing ness to seek professional help are based on various other factors which are to be found out. However the implication is that the attitude of the person, necessity of the help and the situation all must be considered while seeking help. However this study also says that more spiritual maturity will make a pastor seek professional help and therefore, there should be study from the beginning regarding mental health issued together with the spiritual studies. Thus, they will be able to analyses and relate the mind with the spirit.

The article on "Sexual Minority Students in Non-Affirming Religious Higher Education: Mental Health, Outness, and Identity" by Joshua R. Wolff ,Heather L. Himes ,Sabrina D. Soares ,and Ellen Miller (2016) who are practicing psychologists and experts in the area of education. The authors wanted to conduct the survey on the sexual minority students in different college with Christian background and where the Seminarians also study. They wanted to know how the sexual minorities are treated in these colleges and universities. According to them the SM find it difficult to live in the society because they are a minority and that they are harassed for their being different in gender and other aspects of life. Because of these they are more prone to addiction and suicide. So the purpose was to study the psychological functioning of the SM students amidst all these difficulties. According to the study they said that the SM are more prone to be introvert without going out with the others and if they are in a religious situation they are not accepted in the society by the family or in the churches by the pastor because of their difference. Because they are labelled as punished by God and their same sex orientation is considered as sin.

Thus the study found out that in the US where the study is done in the colleges and universities with seminarians and religious background don't accept the SM students in the college. Thus, they don't divulge their identity and if they are found to be SM they are harassed. They also said to have regretted regarding

their selection of studies and career. Therefore, the hypothesis was that the SM students who join the universities and colleges with Christian attitudes will have trouble and psychological issues in their life. They selected 213 SM students from different colleges with Christian management or seminaries involved. The data was collected through questionnaires and they are selected through emails or advertisements without revealing the identity.

The results showed that these have suffered a lot, were bullied, mocked upon and were dismissed sometimes from the colleges and apart from that, they were psychologically suffering from anxiety both personal and social, stigmatized, and were depressed. Though they approached councillors from the same campus they were not allowed because of the restriction from the part of the management. So they were denied either ways. These results were applicable to both theist and atheist because of their religious beliefs and others beliefs. They also noted that those colleges who received psychological classes or information about the SM community or group were much tolerable than the others who believed so much in religious and theological aspects. Therefore, the author suggested that the Christian colleges and universities supposed to have psychological education, significant staff training is needed to be models of psychotherapy which are exceptionally focused on encouraging self-determination, sensitive to religious spirituality, embrace a developmental view of sexual and gender identity, and have safeguards to protect students from therapist bias and potentially harmful practices.

The title of the article is "A Study Of Psychological Assessment Practices In The Screening And Admission Process Of Candidates To The Priesthood In The Us Catholic Church" written by Gerard J McGlone, he received his PhD in psychology from California school of professional psychology San Diego. He is a Jesuit priest. Fernando A. Ortiz, is a PhD scholar in clinical psychology from the University of Memphis and is working closely with the seminarians and church. And Ronald J Karney is also a PhD scholar in clinical psychology from the University of Memphis and is working closely with the church and seminarians (2010).

This is a survey conducted among different seminary rectors who were psychology professionals themselves and it was to investigate the policies and procedures concerning the psychological assessments of candidates to the Catholic priesthood. The rationale of the study was that the church exerted the need of cooperating in different areas of study while recruiting the students to the Seminary, especially that of psychology. The basis was that there were sexual abuses happening. Therefore the church documents insisted on the need of psychological evaluation in this area. This was to ensure the suitability of the candidate to the particular way of life. They used the systematic method in exploring the different phases, exploration, consultation, commissioning and data collection. For data collection, they conducted a series of surveys both among the catholic rectors and mental health professionals. This was done under the supervision of a psychiatrist and licensed psychologist. The samples were religious rectors 86 of them, who were also mental health professionals. They were also both diocesan and religious rectors. Survey measures for each – diocesan, religious and psychologists were different. These surveys contained certain questions which rated the answers like, not at all, little, very little and somewhat and very much. The results showed that nearly all of them

suggested the need for psychological assessments during the admission of the students and this formed the basis for the admission or rejection of the candidate. The cost was to be taken care by the particular congregation or the diocese. The psychologists were also asked to look for the background of the candidates for the admission. This included the ethnicity, family history of illness, social relationships, employment history, spiritual aptitude, educational history etc. To assess the candidates they said to have used certain inventories like Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory, wide range achievement test, etc. These were to assess the areas of maturity, interpersonal skills, empathy and psychosexual development. While doing the survey, they also followed all the ethical concerns regarding the confidentiality, rights to privacy, and they were all given proper guidelines while having the survey. As a result they suggested that while having the survey among the students there should be professionalism, rights to privacy and confidentiality because they are dealing with issues of personal rights. And there should be consistency in what they are doing and there should be periodical or on-going assessments. While giving the candidates platform for growth, they also suggested that these reports should be given to the authorities or the in charges in each period of the studies.

The research article: "Seminary Formators And Psychologists: A Collaboration Model" written by Fernando A Ortiz (2010) having a PhD in psychology from the Washington state university. He is also an assistant director of counselling in Gonzaga University and his area of research and practice include personality assessment and multicultural psychology. This study was conducted to refer that evaluation of candidates, when it includes the multicultural and multiphase process it needs to include the psychologists together with the rector. This is to integrate the anthropological and formative realms together. The study shows that the vocational assessment is purely Catholic and pastoral. But once vocation is purely dynamic and developmental which also includes behavioural, humanistic, bio-psycho social, neuro- psychological and multicultural. And so is the need for psychologists in evaluating the student in to the religious institute, which calls for an integrative assessment. The author suggests different phases of psychological assessment. Pre-date collection, to get to know the student, initial data collection, where in the psychologist will collect the data's regarding the human aspects, behavioural aspects – HEXACO DIMENSIONS. Then the development of interference – where the psychologists begin to formulate hypothesis regarding the students cognitive, emotional and interpersonal functioning through a clinical interview. Then the interactive phase where in the psychologists will approve or disapprove the hypotheses. Then the integrative hypothesis where in the psychologist elaborates each interface of the behaviour of the candidate. Next is the situational variable that is to avoid the purely individualistic interpretation of the data. Then the completion and the submission of the report to the sources of reference. This report contains relevant, clear, explanation that meet the needs of the formation plan and the language used in it will be therapeutic and is to help the student in needs. Finally, the seminary formation will be using the most important, accurate specific interventions for the usage. There will be on going and regular communication and meetings. These data can be used for admission and assessments.

### III. METHOD

#### Research question

What are the experiences of the seminarians that determine the following?

1. Their choice to remain in the seminary life
2. Their choice of and ability to cope with seminary life
3. Their general well being
4. Their attitude towards others in the seminary

#### Paradigms

This research is based on the lived experiences and the choice they – the seminary students make in their life. As research tool, **Phenomenology** (Croswell, John, 2007, 159-164) is based on the academic disciplines of philosophy and psychology and has become a widely accepted method for describing human experiences. It's a qualitative research method to describe how the human being experiences a certain phenomenon or life experience. It is beyond any biased feelings and preconceived ideas about human experiences, feelings and responses to a certain question. It allows the researcher to delve into the feelings, experience and perspective of the person who actually lived in a particular situation. Therefore, this method uses in-depth qualitative interview or direct investigation. When we consider the Phenomenological Analysis in research, we need to look into four aspects in order to analyse and represent the data. And they are the phenomenology that is to talk about the detailed experience of the participants personal world, which includes the description (drawing of meaning) of the personal details, events in life, through an interpretative process.

The next one is the grounded theory, similar to phenomenology, which uses detailed procedure for analysis. It provides a coding system that builds a story that makes the connection. These are different methods of interviews which will be coded and encoded to make meaning out of the session. With the help of this theory the researcher generates the proposition or the hypothesis.

The next is the ethnographic analysis and representation that is to study certain culture group. The ethnography and the chronological order will give the researcher more details. In this there are three aspects, description of the data, analysis and interpretation. The researcher with the help of the data collected makes inferences regarding the group of particular people.

And finally, case study analysis and representation that is as in ethnography, the particular situation is considered to study in detail and then analyse the data. The analysis is done in detail. Thus using these steps the data collection and analysis becomes easier and accurate.

#### Settings

The background of the settings for the interview study is the seminary. Seminary is where the students join to become priest and have their studies. Here they live together for some time. I have interviewed them from a closed room and have the sessions recorded with due permission. There were no obstacles they were free to speak to me.

#### Population and participants

Population is the seminary students who are doing their studies in philosophy and theology. They are boys aged from 16

to 20. The data is collected from 10 students. I also spoke to five Rectors so as to get more details regarding the study pattern and the ambience where these students are in.

#### Data sources and collection process

Data is collected through in- depth interview in which is used and prepared questions and followed by questions according to the situation. The interview will be recorded. The interview is meant to be one to one and will be conducted in an enclosed area. For more data and for validity of the data the superiors, rectors or the mistresses will be interviewed.

#### Data analysis strategy

For the analysis of the data the thematic analysis approach is used. Thematic analysis according to Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) is a rarely used and less acknowledged but is the widely used method for analysis for the qualitative research. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility. Qualitative analytic methods can be divided into two that this is in a particular theoretical position and secondly this is based on theories that are independent and based on epistemology. And it provides theoretical freedom; thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data. Thus thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic. The range of different possible thematic analyses will further be highlighted in relation to a number of decisions regarding it as a method. It is different from analytic method. It is a method used to report reality and meaning from the interviewee, it can be constructionist, it draws meaning from the experiences of the person.

#### Ethics

All ethical considerations will be met – that of the agency where the interview is conducted and of the college from where I go for the interview. The permission will be sought in writing and the participant's permission will be taken in writing. The data collected will be confidential and is used only for the purpose of research.

### IV. FINDINGS

Another word for Seminary is formation house. Therefore, in the seminary the students are formed to become priests or ministers of the Church, which is a system in the Christian religion. This system is managed by a hierarchical order which is formed within the system itself. The leaders are formed within the system itself. Thus a student to be a priest joins at the age of 16 or above. Then onwards the student who is called formees goes through certain studies of the church for about ten years or even more. Many students join with eagerness and interest but leave immediately after joining or after a few years. The teaching in the seminary is very systematic and is based on the biblical principles and certain secular aspects. But still, the students find it difficult to adjust or to continue within the system due to certain reason or because of lack of interest.

This research “A Phenomenological study of the Experiences of the Formees during the first few years of Formation” is an attempt to find out what are reasons for the students to join the seminary at a very younger age and what makes them remain while so many others leave and what s their coping mechanism while they have a lot of studies based on the scripture, philosophy and theology which are supposed to give them enough knowledge and understanding about the life they have chosen.

**The participants**

10 brothers (boys), students from five different seminaries were interviewed in the process of collecting the data. They are aged between 16 to 25. They are students of degree, philosophy or theology. They have not made the final commitment to the congregation. They are from different backgrounds, from different States of India speaking different languages. By now they will have lived five to seven years in the seminary under formation. They will have travelled and lived in several places. Therefore they are with rich experiences and knowledge. Some of them have left one seminary to join another seminary. Some of them have joined after some years of working outside. I also have interviewed some superiors for better understanding. I also have spoken to a few people who have already left the seminary and are into life of marriage.

**Method of data collection and analysis**

In the study, the phenomenological paradigm (Clarke Moustakas, 1994) for the interview and the data collection is used. It’s a 20th century philosophical movement based on the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl. As research tool, phenomenology is based on the academic disciplines of philosophy and psychology and has become a widely accepted method for describing human experiences. It’s a qualitative research method to describe how the human being experiences a certain phenomenon or life experience. It is beyond or doesn’t hold any biased feelings and preconceived ideas about human experiences, feelings and responses to a certain question. It allows the researcher to delve into the feelings, experience and perspective of the person, who actually lives in a particular situation. Therefore, this method uses in-depth qualitative interview or direct investigation and I have also used the same in-depth interview of 10 participants. I have interviewed the participants, have studied their perspectives and have done the thematic analysis.

For the analysis of the data the thematic analysis approach prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2016) is used. After the collection of the data, through interview and recording, it is Tran-scripted. Then the data will be read completely – in an unbiased manner. Browse through the data, make notes and re read. Using the notes made while reading code them or label them according to different content, section or relevance. Then do the conceptualisation based on the questions and the hypothesis. Then bring them together put them under categories or themes after defining each headings proper. (Moirra Maguire & Brid Delahun, 2017) Special consideration a Blind Coder was used to verify the coding for thematic analysis.

**Participant summary**

Name	Age	Level which the participant is	Remarks
Participant A	23	Completed Philosophy	Has taken a break for other secular studies.
Participant B	22	Studying Philosophy	
Participant C	22	Completed Philosophy	He joined the seminary because of pressure from home
Participant D	25	Completed Philosophy	Doing some secular studies.
Participant E	23	Doing theology	
Participant F	22	Completed Philosophy	
Participant G	25	doing Philosophy	Came out of one Seminary and joined another
Participant H	23	Doing Theology	
Participant I	23	Doing Philosophy	
<b>Participant J</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Completed Philosophy</b>	<b>Came out of one Seminary and is planning to join another</b>

In the research three major themes evolved from the analysis. The study sought to understand what the experiences of the seminarians are in the early stages of the formation. This is not a criticism of the church but an inquiry into the realities and its relation with the actual happenings in the seminary. The themes that emerged are related to the structure which is rigid in the seminary, the strict hierarchy and the meaningless emphasis on the Biblical meanings to the formation.

**The unfulfilled promise and disillusionment**

What is the reason why so many are joining and then leaving the seminary is a question asked by many. They also ask why a lot of scandals are in the church now and within the system, in spite of long time of formation – mostly spiritual. This was the idea long back but today the system has changed, people have changed. People have made immense technological progress, which actually generate the feeling of self-realisation and has helped the person to realise the need for healthy and wealthy

living, free thinking, and freedom in all strata of life. This is the idea which actually is against the old culture, morality and thinking within confines of seminary. After the student becomes a priest, his role in the society is to be expert in the ritual part of the religion and lead the faithful into religious activities. Later on he begins to manipulate the powers and begins using his powers for healing, witchcrafts etc. In the Middle East he was an incarnation of God. Thus he occupied a major role in the society somewhere near to the king. In the ancient Greece and Rome there was a clear hierarchy among the Priests. Then came the Judaistic religion from which originated priesthood of family succession. Then came Christianity with its hierarchy system. In the Vedic system the role of the priests were not different. Today we have the so-called priestly system in every religion after a long time of changes and reformation. (Encyclopaedia Britannica.2011).

Erik Erikson, (Saul McLeod, 2018) in his theory of Psycho Social Development, maintained that personality develops in a predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development from infancy to adulthood. During each stage, the person experiences a psychosocial crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome for personality development. According to him, the crises a person experience at these stages are psycho social in nature. And successful completion of each stage results in acquiring a virtue which according to him makes person a healthy personality. Whereas, failure to achieve this virtue will result in making the person less successful and can lead a person to an unhealthy personality. However the virtues that are lost at a period of time can be achieved at a later period of time. The life of a seminarian can be compared to the stage of development; each stages of development can be a step of formation that a person goes through in the Seminary, for 10 to 15 years. In the stages of formation a student is expected to acquire certain virtues based on the Christian principles and the orientation of the particular congregation he is going to be part of. As Erikson explained, a successful formation can result in forming the person in a better manner. And a not so a successful formation can lead the person to be a failure in life, which will lead the person to leave the congregation.

The seminary formation is to teach the students to learn the religious practices normally. And thus, there came the hierarchy to teach the students. The in charges, the superiors, and the mentors who were, most of the times, from different area of life and having different backgrounds. Some were rude while some were very gentle and encouraging. But basically the idea remains the same that the students are to be taught from the beginning itself, about what they are going to become in the future. The formees who are coming to join the seminary are at the infancy level but having some kind of ideas they have learned listening to the sermons, or listening to the priests and sisters, having studied in the Christian schools and colleges, having attended retreats. Thus well motivated, they are offered to God by the parents. They may also have joined with the intention of studying further, due to poverty at home. Today, they have no idea what is happening inside because seminary life is something quite different from all other kinds of life.

The interviewees were of the opinion with regard to their experiences in the seminary that certain priests and sisters are living a very holy way of life and very much accepted in the society because they work for the people selflessly. They are

respected and remembered by the people. This, they said remains in their mind when they were students and they always keep these as their role models. But the fact is that they don't know what is happening within the confines of the seminary or the monastery they live. So the students said they joined to be seen by others, to become like their heroes in mind. This of course is a very noble intention. One of them said that when he saw a new priest in his village for preaching he was attracted to the particular priest and so wanted to become like him in his style of preaching wanted to help people like him. While another one was of the opinion that he too had the same experience as the previous one that he had attended a retreat by a certain priest and was really influenced by him. There he had the desire to imitate his healing ministry and wanted to become a preacher. Another one said that he was so much familiar with the kind of certain congregation that he joined which did well among the people so many good works. He too was drawn to this way of living aiming at the same high ideal .most of them said the same thing.

They were also talking about the recruiting, as to how they were recruited and what they were told in the beginning and how things looked different in their experience later.

P.A: In my parish there used to come a father with nice hairstyle and look, he used to preach well and I was fascinated by his style. (Interviewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2019)

P.B: From childhood onward I used to see my father working with the sister's school, so I am so much used to be with the fathers and sisters. (Interviewed on 24<sup>th</sup> march 2019)

P.G: since our community is a minority and we don't have any one, priests talking our language I left the congregation and joined the diocese.(interviewed on 23<sup>rd</sup> march 2019)  
The other scholars have given their views as well:

"Bill sees his work as more than simply getting students to the Seminary," says Dr. David R. Schmitt, the Gregg H. Benidt Memorial Professor of Homiletics and Literature. "His work is actually supporting the Seminary in preparing people for mission and ministry in the Church and world."(Melannie Ave 2015)

This is what supposed to be the way they are to be recruited. A seminary is a school in which priests are trained. A priest is the representative of Christ among men: his mission is to carry on Christ's work for the salvation of souls; in Christ's name and by His power, he teaches men what they ought to believe and what they ought to do: he forgives sins, and offers in sacrifice the Body and Blood of Christ. He is another Christ (sacerdos alter Christus). His training, therefore, must be in harmony with this high office and consequently different in many ways from the preparation for secular professions. He must possess not only a liberal education, but also professional knowledge, and moreover, like an army or navy officer, he needs to acquire the manners and personal habits becoming his calling. To teach candidates for the priesthood what a priest ought to know and to make them what a priest ought to be is the purpose of seminary education; to this twofold end everything in the form of studies and discipline must be directed.(Vieban A,2019)

This is actually what should happen and what they should have in mind while they recruit someone to the seminary. One person enters into a life completely different from that of the family life and into a new set up and in company with new, unknown people. There they experience the hierarchy, the different languages, places, and types of people with different

temperaments and of different age. This is actually a difficult situation for a new comer. And so he should be informed properly what he is into and who he is living with. He is into new different timetable which they didn't experience at home, they are into different work which some of the students may not have even experienced, they are into new studies, new language- as they have to study different languages. So there should be a family atmosphere where they can adjust until they are ready to face with maturity that these are part of the system they are into and they have to uphold. For this they need proper guidance, accompaniment and care.

While interviewing them they were of the opinion that they experienced the same kind of life they have heard of in the 6th century that is a very rigorous life which of course was the fashion then. Now, they said they are in the 21st century and so they wanted some kind of change. One of them said he expected a very loving atmosphere because that was what was told to him and then he had to live with lot of different people which gave him a very negative idea about the seminary life altogether. He said he expected some love, care and concern from the authorities. But it was not there. While another brother said that he had to literally fight with different language people as there were already biased on the basis of language and caste. This made him feel bad and even wanted to leave the seminary.

But against all this there were some other opinions as well that they joined because of the issues at home like poverty, sickness, and that they were offered to God from the early age, itself so that they were obliged to join against their will and wish. While, yet another said that he wanted to reform his community which is a minority in that area and that they are illiterate. So that he wanted to reform, to teach them about Christianity and about the other aspects of living outside their own world.

P.H: we are from a poor area in the north, I experienced a lot of poverty and I wanted to live a better life. (Interviewed on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019)

P.J: we are a convert family and my father is very much involved with the sisters and fathers and I joined the seminary after a long time of thinking and prayer. I feel obliged to my life for god. (Interviewed on 30<sup>th</sup> march 2019)

These students joined the seminary from different background, with different expectations and because of different reasons. The basic fact they expressed was that they had the call of God, they wanted to become priests, and they also wanted to serve God and others. These students came to the seminary with these various ideas and expectations. When they see that most of the things are different from what they had expected they tend to go back. All the interviewees said that when they joined there were like 18 to 25 but after three or four years, there are only two or three students remaining. The main reason they said what made those who left was the insufficiency, inadequate love and care or personal respect according to the age that they had expected. At home they said, they experienced more love and affection than in the seminary. Lack of the attention and care from the part of the authorities made them feel unwanted.

So what they were saying was that there needs some kind of changes from the "6<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when people are looked up as they are and are given freedom with respect and responsibility. This they said will make the person and the community a heaven. These are the students who are going to be

priests in the future and in whom they are going to invest. You reap the fruit of what you sow, in with time, energy, good qualities, education and care. Therefore, if they experience the affection in the beginning of the formation and throughout the formation, then they can be formed well for the future. They can become good formators later on. They can lead the church or the parish or the institute where they are appointed. These are the human resources for the future. Therefore, it is the duty of the authorities to form them properly so that the students will believe what they only have heard about before they came in and they will feel that they are in the right place. On the other hand, if we don't create such an environment for growth then they are going to leave the seminary or they are going to be misled and frustrated. Thus they might distract themselves from the church and they might even talk against the church. As one said in the interview that, I won't bring anyone to the congregation nor will I go for vocation camp because they should not be deceived by my words. They are free to join but first let them see and believe and then make a decision.

P.A:- difficulties were there in the seminary. (Interviewed on 2 April 2019.)

P.B:- they (superiors) should understand where the person is from and what is his desire and interest. (On 24<sup>th</sup> march 2019)

P.C:- they should respect the individual decision and should be open. (On 24<sup>th</sup> march 2019)

P.G:- it is 21<sup>st</sup> century and not 6<sup>th</sup> century. (On 23<sup>rd</sup> march 2019)

### **Strict Hierarchy**

"Most of the priests of my generation are undoubtedly good men, unsullied in their personal life. I hope they will speak loudly from the heart about this crisis and how it must be solved. I think they know what must be done — assuming the Church has the collective will — to absolutely prevent sexual abuse in the church and to vow that never again will becoming a priest end in tragedy for men like my friend Andy."(John Dinges, 2018)

These are words of a journalist, who also was a seminarian once and, whose friend was a priest for some years then left and got married. This person later on committed suicide because of complaint of what he had done in his ministerial life – child abuse. He goes on to say, to some extent, it may be a matter of wilful blindness. At a College, which had a dormitory exclusively for seminarians, I was confronted with the reality of gay priests comprising a small but significant portion of the faculty. Yet in our seminaries counselling sessions there were warnings only about avoiding intimate relationship with women.

These facts I think, in connection with what is happening in the church today, to the priests and the religious as a whole, contribute to the lack of proper seminary formation as most of my interviewees stated. They said if only they behaved with us as they told us when we were recruited or if only they had looked at us as feeble and weak human beings.

That is to say, that these when they join at a very young age of sixteen don't know probably what they are into. If one takes the theory of Erik Erickson devoid of the fact of life span, then the student who joins the seminary in the infancy stage and they are in the so called developmental stage in each step of their formation. It is in this 'each stage' that they learn to accept life, to live with many who are like them or more than them, the seniors

and juniors and the superiors. That is why this stage is called the stage of formation and once they become priests this term is not used anywhere.

Most of whom I interviewed said the moment they joined the seminary they lost the contact with parents, friends and all of a sudden they had to get into contact with another set of people who are completely new. Each of them had different painful experiences in the beginning and they said when they joined there were new people from different areas and they seemed showing partiality from the formators. Another said he had to learn a new language to compete with the others and he felt the authorities showed discrimination because he was from a poor background of life and he felt like challenging them for debate face to face. While another said he experienced very difficult situation altogether that there were partiality in food, room facilities and they were not even allowed to use fan in summer and so he had to keep himself aloof from all the others. He also said that the superiors showed no mercy but insisted on the rules and regulations to the minutest point and he added that this was the reason why many of his batch mates left. There was no empathy from the part of the superiors. He said that the brothers even named some of the masters and superiors 'Hitler'.

P.A: I used to be working with the political parties in the school days so I used to be little rebel in the seminary when things didn't go well with me. (2<sup>nd</sup> April)

P.D: the superiors should have certain human values and they should not be judge before they listen. (2<sup>nd</sup> march)

Most of them said their basic needs were not met which included food, no proper sleep hours and self-care. Thus they said if there was equality formation in terms of recognition everyone would be happy. One of them said that he was already from a low income family and he experienced lot of poverty in the family. When he joined the seminary, the situation was not different, that they gave him limited food and he, like others was pressed hard in every basic need.

There were also other different opinions that the superiors needs to spend time with the students and they are to treat the students with the same respect and empathy. Lack of family atmosphere, from which the students were coming, makes the students feel discouraged, tired and lost. Slowly they tend to do things that are not permitted, like stealing food items, watching pornography, spend more time when they are sent out on a picnic or walking and make friendship with outsiders. They also used to get out in the night without permission for which they would be punished of caught by chance.

While something interesting I found, different from all the others, is that some found happiness when the superiors gave them freedom, freedom to speak, to play to enjoy, though in a limited manner. And in such a situation they found happiness. They had meetings like common gatherings when they discussed about any issues how they should behave in the seminary. This gave them more understanding and they said it helped them to open up their mind and to be free of inner conflicts.

They said their coping system in times of difficulty was to speak to the person directly, to go for games where they expressed their anger and distress. They also said prayer and meditation, spiritual direction also helped them.

P.A:- difference in formators and friends (2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019)

P. G:- human attitude is important, there were lot of partiality by the superiors.(23<sup>rd</sup> march 2019)

P.E :- I experienced situation with lot of difficulty we even called the superiors by names – e.g. Hitler. (On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019)

### **Biblical meaning contrasted with humanness**

The decree of the Council of Trent imposes on every bishop the duty of having a seminary, that is, a school exclusively destined to prepare candidates for the priesthood. It says that the student should receive all the necessary education, ecclesiastical training, secular training and theological training which are most necessary for the formation. The student whether under a formator or living alone shall be under some rector for some time in the middle of the studies so as not to forget what he is called to be or into what he is formed to. The student must strictly observe the rules, regulations and timetable of the particular seminary even while in the college or university. The church demands that from each student. (The Catholic Encyclopaedia)

This is the basic decree by which formation is conducted but it differs from place to place and congregation to congregation. This is mostly based on the biblical aspects and the amendments happening in the governance of different congregation from time to time. Some of the students whom I interviewed said that the formation should be based on the biblical principles of love and care. Most of them said when they joined the intention was to follow Jesus. Some they said they found the preaching of the some of the priests very good and appealing and so they joined. Now if we bring together all these arguments we find that bible is the basis of the formation and the principles in the Bible are what is taught. The students said there were difficulties in life when they began their life in the seminary they were reminded of the call they received and so used to pray so hard that it gave them energy and power. When that didn't seem working they went for spiritual direction and they were just advised to read bible to find happiness and joy. But that was only for a while and thus most of them ended up in prohibited activities like making friends with girls whom they met in the school or colleges, watching pornographic videos and slipping out in the night for some enjoyment. Some said they smoked; they were into reading pornographic books and masturbating. They said some of these students remained while most of them left. The spiritual talks were mainly focused on bible and biblical aspects of life. Thus it didn't give them much of a personal touch which they really yearned for at that moment. Thus most of the time it was boring but they had to attend such session because it was compulsory for them.

I had a chance to interview three brothers who once left the seminary to join other congregation. They said they left because they didn't find the previous seminary better and so they searched for better one. Now when I asked further about what was their experience at home they said it was very sad and different. Because the moment when others heard that these have left the seminary it was a shock to their parents and relatives and they felt shame. Because they said, to enter the seminary was the call of god and it brings blessings to home. One of them said when he joined the seminary he was very poor, his parents were working as coolie, now after he joined the seminary his family became very rich, his father quite the habit of drinking and they built a new house. When they left the seminary they were given a tag of 'seminary jumper' or the cursed, or they all were afraid that the

neighbours would mock them for having a son who didn't bring blessing upon them or that he blocked the blessings from the god. These kinds of details are in the bible very much,

"And now, you priests, this warning is for you. If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honour my name," says the Lord Almighty, "I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honour me. "Because of you I will rebuke your descendants (Malachi, 2:1-3).

These are the words from the Bible and these kinds are explained and misspelt at different occasions and so when anyone leaves the seminary. And according to a recent study the identity of a priest and a monk is identified with that of Christ which levies a lot of stress on the candidates and would be priests. Thus the goal of formation is to make the person like that of Christ.

Therefore there is a blessing if you continue to remain in the seminary and if you leave there is the curse. One of them said it was really distressing to see their friends leaving and to hear scandalous news in the TV and newspaper. It was shameful to leave and to face the people due to the latest scandals in the Church. This, the fear of curse and happiness of blessings to a certain extent made them remain inside the seminary in spite of any difficulties.

In 2015 there was a study conducted by Igor J. Pietkiewicz in Poland on ten former priests regarding their decision to leave priesthood and how they felt afterward. The study said he interviewed ten former priests and they said to have experienced needs and aspirations conflicting with their social role and the expectations by others in the society. They found the decisions they made and the life afterward very frustrating and stressful because of social stigma, fear of breaking community norms, and a kind of disbelief in them to cope with the life outside and they all found to be seeking help from counselling.

In the present study most of them said the teachings were of mostly biblical and less secular studies. Few of them said since they had sister siblings they never had any unwanted sexual feelings because they are familiar with girls. While I also heard few others say they are afraid to face the girls because they don't know how to talk to them and behave with them. When they informed about the difficulty in controlling the sexual passions the spiritual directors advised them to keep away from girls and women so that they won't have such feelings. They were of the opinion that it was the curiosity from the part of their friends' regarding sex and money that caused them to leave or that they are sent out. Most of who were sent out had illegal relationships with girls whom they contacted outside the seminary.

They were having such an idea or opinion that if they all were sent to co-education or if they were given such awareness and freedom to mingle with girls then they would not have left. They said since they had less sexual education and psycho social awareness they didn't know how to speak, how to mingle, and how to behave with others even with same sex. Today we hear a lot of homosexuality within the boundaries of seminary walls.

The students' altogether said if only they had proper studies and information then they would be happy. They said some of them since they had community meetings in which they shared issues of this kind they were helped by others and that since they are given freedom – freedom with responsibility- and awareness they were able to manage their life well and they are happy today.

And they added they experienced less drop outs from the seminary where they lived.

P.C:- after I joined my father quit the habit of drinking, we got nice house and we became wealthy.(24th march 2019)

P. H :- we are afraid to go back we are public figures and we are meant to be praying for others.(on 8th April 2019)

P. J:- my family and I believe that god chose me. (30th march 2019)

P.C :- I got a vision from the retreat place and I enquired to the priest and he said I was called by god (24th march 2019)

From the articles (Fr. Earl K. Fernandez, S.T.D., 2015) I have reviewed, there were some articles that spoke about gay sexuality, the seminarian's attitude towards the other students with them. It said that there were a lot of gay priests and some others who didn't care about the lay people or cared less about the lay people. The so called priest students had a kind of idea that they are near to god and that they are intermediaries of god to men and that they are high in the society because of their status. The reason for this, according to the author was that, these attitudes were mostly because of the lack of proper formation from the beginning itself i.e. Formation on psycho –social education.

In 2019 in the month of February the leaders of the church from all over the world joined at Vatican at the synod to talk about the sexual abuses that were happenings in the church, the meeting was convened by the Pope himself. They talked about child abuse, gay sex, pornography and other sexual problems among the clergy and the students in general. They also convicted some priests and they were dismissed from the offices. They also met the abused victims. The committee said that they would make a committee to study the matter and take necessary step to stop these sorts of scandals in the church. And the pope asked pardon to all the victims. (Common weal magazine 2019)

Rulla,L.M(1986) in his study explains, the identity of the priest is defined in his relationship with Christ .to become Christ like the priest in the throughout his life, especially in the period of formation goes through lot of studies which will prepare him to develop a profound identification with Jesus Christ. Thus, the role of priestly formation is to help to prepare to be like Christ in mind and body. The priest is also working for and with the people. Therefore, he should be trained in human aspects as well. For that he needs commitment to his vocation and knowledge of human being with whom he is working with. Human beings are fallible but can be trained and formed. There is a struggle in the life of priest as well. There can be lack of capacity and desire towards his vocation and it is at this situation he tends to fall away. As a result there can be reduced desire to spiritual activities, lack of enthusiasm, frustration, workload, ambiguity in living priestly celibacy, and other environmental factors. Therefore the role of the psychology is to make the person aware of his own ambiguities and problems with regard to the particular way of life. If the problems persists that can cause issues. Here the role of a good formater becomes important. The formater without losing the values of the church teachings needs to walk with the candidate. The formater needs to make oneself aware of the life per se. thus, helping the candidate by using pedagogical methods, formative methods, guiding personally and encouraging without biases. All this will help the candidate to cope up with situations and live responsibly. Thus the formation becomes healthy and meaningful and productive.

## The insight and reflection

### The difficulty encountered in internalizing and identifying one to the priestly vocation.

As in any society by the very fact that a person joins a system he or she has to or is forced to become part of it in order to get maximum output. This is common to all the form of system or organization. Thus the moment a person joins anywhere he or she is asked to put the heart and soul into it and hard work and sincerity is expected. It is the same in seminary where a person is moulded into becoming a priest or an important personality in the Christian society. So the life of a person in becoming a priest begins immediately after 10<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 16 or at later age. However he has to go through a period of 10 to 15 years of formation. This formation includes mostly spiritual and church related matters. Very often secular studies are overlooked.

Thus identity of a person to be priest is likened to that of Christ and thus he is formed. This for a student at the age of 15 is difficult internalize immediately even though he has some idea to he has come into. But the moment the person enters the seminary he is to act as and in the name of Christ, which requires a lot of difficulties. Therefore such is the identity of a person in the seminary and thus will be the formation he will receive.

One has to change his behaviour to such an extent that he tends to leave in certain situations and this is what happens to most of the students who join. Social psychologist Herbert C. Kelman cited by H.E Howe, (1980) says if a person is to change his personality or attitude he has to have three process of change that is compliance or self-interest, which is an attitude to change once idea in order to gain something or to avoid punishment. However compliance is not commitment. Secondly identification or self-gratification that is the change in the attitude of the person occurs because of the interest that he needs to be part of a system to maintain relationship with certain person or system. This, too, is not commitment. Thirdly internalisation occurs when a person really understands what he is into and why he has chosen a particular way of life. This is identification and commitment.

According to the new document on formation by the Catholic Church, *The Gift of Priestly Vocation* published in the year 2016, part 130, by the present Pope, a seminarian is a protagonist of his own formation in the area of spiritual, mental and pastoral fields taking into account of his own situation, family background and relation to the Gospel values being responsible for himself. Thus, it means to say that the formation is actually an integration of all the aspects of human life. That is true to certain extent or fully but still to internalise something and to change one's attitude he or she needs to understand, get convenient ambience and should be rightly motivated. The research here is to identify what are the issues in internalising the ideals of priesthood and religious life. Why do people leave? Why do they get hurt and wounded, why people become rigid and head strong, why there is failure in the religious life? The reason for it is, mainly, the contradiction between virtue and sin, normality and psychopathology. Thus psychology today speaks about understanding, creating awareness about ones needs and desires and thus, to create motivation by personal accompaniment and formal training with all the necessary discernment and knowledge, and I feel that the Church can benefit from this field.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Every field of psychology focuses on the development of the society and the organisation which is inhabited by human being. Therefore, by default human development is the important matter in any field of study of psychology because any society begins and ends with human beings. Thus, the study of Psychology is to improve the performance of any human being for the growth of the particular society or organisation.

This study on "what are the Experiences of the Formees During the first few years of Formation" focuses on the experience of the Seminary students. Experiences would mean their life in the Seminary which is an organisation. Their experiences includes, their desire to join such a particular institute, their ability to cope up with situations in life, their relationship with different personalities like superiors and inferiors, their ability to stay while some leave in the middle of the studies.

According to the Organizational Psychology (Kendra Chery, 2019), which is a branch of psychology that talks about the increase of workplace productivity and the related issues such as the physical and mental well-being of employees. Industrial-organizational psychologists perform a wide variety of tasks, including studying the worker attitudes and behaviour, evaluating companies, and conducting leadership training. The overall goal of this field is to study and understand human behaviour in the workplace. The organizational side of psychology is more focused on understanding how organizations affect individual behaviour. Organizational structures, social norms, management styles, and role expectations are all factors that can influence how people behave within an organization. By understanding such factors, I-O psychologists hope to improve individual performance and health, while, at the same time benefiting the organization as a whole. To increase the productivity and profit, the company management focus on the overall wellbeing of the employees and the atmosphere as a whole. This will include giving extra benefits apart from salary and extra effort to increase the physical and psychological wellbeing of the employee which will benefit in the profit, productivity and the strengthening of the employee.

To find out the details regarding the research question, the phenomenological paradigm guided study was done to collect the of data in-depth qualitative interview. Ten students, aged between 16 to 25 from different Seminaries and different language group were approached for the interview. From the interview three themes emerged and they are the unfulfilled promise and disillusionment, strict hierarchy and Biblical meaning contrasted with humaneness.

Thus, the first theme, the unfulfilled promise and disillusionment, reveals how the students felt when they joined the Seminary. They said it was all different from what they heard and what they were told. The Seminary is to be a place of holiness and piety where a person is formed to be a spiritual leader. And it is true. But the way it was handled was different. Everyone speaks about peace and harmony, brotherhood and forgiveness while it was all in theory and not in practice. Thus most of those who entered the seminary felt that there lacked human formation, with kindness and love. Some of the studies done among the seminary students in Europe, it was revealed that a number of the students felt that they lacked proper behaviour in society. This study also revealed that seminary life and formation lacked understanding and humanity.

The second theme strict hierarchy says that there seems to be very little understanding from the part of the hierarchy towards the students. The students also felt that there were partiality and discrimination from the part of the superiors. Thus, most of them were disheartened. The formators had less idea of human formation and they insisted on strict rules, regulations and timetable. The students said when they were not given enough free time they took refuge in illicit and activities that were not permitted within the seminary. Some of them got into troubles and some even left. The studies done elsewhere in the different seminaries showed that formation with respect and care, love and concern made a great impact on the minds of the students that they felt to remain faithful to their vocation.

The third theme about the Biblical theme contrasted with humaneness speaks about the formation and attitude that were mostly tied up with biblical teachings. Thus anything and everything was looked at through the eyes of the Biblical themes and misinterpreted, so as to make life less meaningful. The students felt that we are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and not in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, making, necessary changes can make life more meaningful and happy.

All the themes focus on the fact that Seminary formation with humanness, and understanding can make the lives of the formees more meaningful and productive. This study shows the need for a formation with understanding the students personally and inculcating all the other aspects of the different kind of learning so that formation becomes a great experience. Apart from the proper Seminary study curriculum, psychological studies for the formater and students needs to be inculcated. This will help the widening of the knowledge of the human mind and personality so as to make the lives of everyone in the Seminary meaningful.

This study is not to criticise anyone or to find fault with any system, but, to look at the lives of the seminary students from a different point of view. The Seminaries are known to be places where the students are taught to be leaders of the churches. There they are taught the Bible, the word of God and values and morals. Still the statistics show that less and less students remain to complete the years of formation. In spite of all the knowledge and teaching still what is the reason why students quit the seminary? So the above research was a humble trial to look into some of these facts.

Since only one in-depth interview per participant was carried and time didn't permit respond validation, it is recommended that a deeper and wider study dedicating more time be carried out.

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#### AUTHORS

**First Author** – Fr. Jobin Joseph OSB, MScp,  
jobinosb@gmail.com, Sampurna Institute of Advanced Studies,  
Bengaluru