

MIND MANAGEMENT BY 'RAJ YOGA' MEDITATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON STUDENTS' CONCENTRATION LEVEL

Abstract

This study is conducted focusing on 'MIND MANAGEMENT' through the effect of 'Raj Yoga' meditation in enhancing the concentration level among students. Owing to various challenges and inevitable technological distractions of present-day life, it has become a serious issue for the students to concentrate on their study impacting their academic success to a considerable extent. 'Raj Yoga', is a form of meditation, which emphasizes upon mental stability and self-awareness & is considered to have great benefit for enhancing concentration level among students and also contributing for their well-being.

On perusal of earlier studies, it is quite apparent that various researches have been conducted with the grown up youth or common people showing positive impacts of Meditation in managing anger, anxiety, stress, promoting emotional health, enhancing self-awareness, enhancing continuous span of attention, various physical ailments, improving sleeping pattern, decreasing blood pressure, enhancing the endurance power of pain and so on. But, few or little studies are conducted over the students showing the impact of 'Raj Yoga' meditation on the students in enhancing their cognitive skills and/or enhancing their power to concentrate on a particular thing, more specifically, on their study, which is a large field yet to be enlightened in broader scale.

This research is a comparative study engaging a sample of 60 students aged between 15-18 years, from various

Authors

Dibakar Singha Ray

Research Scholar
Manipur International University
Manipur, India
mithun.s.ray@gmail.com

Biswajit Roy

Staff Of State Bank Of India
Thalia Branch & Research Scholar
Manipur International University
Manipur, India
moonbiswa123@gmail.com

Arun Kanrar

Assistant Teacher
Kankrai Gangadhar Sikshayatan &
Research Scholar
Manipur International University
Manipur, India
arunkanrar2017@gmail.com

Dr. Indira Prakash

Stores Officer, DPS
Guide & Supervisor-MIU
Manipur, India.
faristhaindira@gmail.com

schools. The participants were randomly divided into two groups – one 'Meditating' Group consisting of 30 students and another 'Non-Meditating' Group also consisting of 30 students. The students of Meditating Group were tutored with 'Raj Yoga' meditation and the students of Non-Meditating Group did not undergo any meditation practices. The study was conducted for a period of 12 weeks assessing their concentration levels at the baseline and at the end of the intervention using standardized concentration tests.

The results showed a significant improvement in 'concentration' level among students, who practiced 'Raj Yoga' meditation in comparison to the Non-Meditating Group. The students of Meditating Group showed a statistically significant enhancement in their ability to sustain attention, resist distractions and perform their task in a better cognitive way by achieving almost desired results.

Thus, this research shows that 'Raj Yoga' meditation is an easy, no cost, simple & applied technique in enhancing the concentration level among students. It is high time that Educational Institutions and policy Makers should think over the matter of including 'Raj Yoga' meditation practice in their educational curriculum to support students' cognitive development and well-being.

In this respect, it is pertinent to admit that this research has its limitations with regard to comparatively small sample size and inability to carry on long term follow up creating a gap for the future researchers to look into its long-term effect on the students by opening a new horizon to the others.

Keywords: Raj Yoga meditation, concentration, students, academic result and mental well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

Students are the pillars of a country or a nation. They are the citizens of tomorrow and the rebuilders of a new society. For this, a student must have to be focused and concentrated. In this fast-paced world of technology and competition when there are so many enticements, which can easily distract a student's mind from any particular topic, it is very difficult for the students to keep themselves focused or concentrated on their study or whatever matter they are pursuing. It is well known fact that in order to achieve a goal, one must have to be bull-eyed while distracted minds will carry one backward from his cherished goal. It is to be reiterated herein that in order to be a successful man in life, you need not be a super intelligent man, rather, you must use your time and energy more efficiently for which, one has to perform his/her work with full concentration. So, there should not be any doubt that how much time, one is engaging in his/her endeavor, is not of a great importance, but it is worthwhile how much time one is engaging in his/her work in a focused or concentrated way.

With the advancement of civilization, the life style pattern of students has changed to a great extent. Now-a-days, a student has latest technological gadgets like mobile, computer, tablet, etc., within their reach and these technological devices have jeopardized them and left a great impact on the life of the students creating an easy path to distract their attention

II. ROOT CAUSES

Now, let us have a look about the root causes, which are responsible for hampering the concentration level of the students:

- 1. Digital Addiction:** There cannot be any doubt that the tool, which hampers the students' education to a larger extent this day, is no other thing but the mobile itself. Very few students can resist them from watching mobile even after a gap of 30 minutes. Most of them are completely addicted to social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter etc. Even during study, they cannot resist their intention of having a glimpse of what changes are taking place in social media at the cost of their study. Though there are many negative effects of digital devices, we cannot its positive sides too. It is often seen that parents give digital devices in order to make themselves free from the children and thus, the aged ones help the students to get addicted.
- 2. Family Problem:** A student is supposed to spend most of his time either in school or at home. So, any type of family dispute – that can be dispute between parents or other family members, financial disturbances ETC affect their concentration level to a great extent.
- 3. Relationship Issues:** During this stage, due to hormonal and other bodily changes, students have a natural tendency to get attracted to other sex resulting in involving in relationship. The concentration of the student get diverted from the aim to the game and this type of relation often affects their study in a reverse manner. Any type of changes in the intensity of this relation is always a great threat to their study.
- 4. Peer Pressure:** During this stage, peer pressure is a great factor, which is very difficult to avoid. Peer pressure can be both way – negative and positive. Negative peer pressure is

very common and alluring, which often goes against the students by disturbing their concentration. Often, it is seen due to the peer pressure, the students not only get addicted to various filthy habits, but also spoils their time and energy, health and career and diverse from studies.

- 5. Disturbances in School:** Students spend a considerable period of time in their school. So, it is bound that the students carry forward the incidents, which takes place at school – it can be both for good and bad reasons, but whatever the reasons may be, it is seen that all these incidents often peep in their mind during their adolescent stage, hampering the intensity of their study to a great extent.
- 6. Over Reactive to External Issues:** Being emotional and considering themselves right to do everything, the students are prone to react over external issues and even on trifling matters and thus, they disturb their mental stability by reacting unrealistically.

So, in a word, it can be said that the concentration of the students is basically disturbed by the incidents of outside world rather than their own inner senses. So, if one can handle the impact of outer world matter more efficaciously, he will be able to move to the path of success in a more precise manner.

Various researches have been undertaken showing its impact over the adolescents. Amongst them, one research had been conducted by one Schaeffer in the year 2002; after the completion of the research, Schaeffer found that Meditation has the power to prevent the memory loss and it can improve their power of concentration. It also enhances the power of recall among the adolescents by enhancing the blood circulation of brain. In another research, conducted by Kabir in the year 1984, it was found that Meditation has positive impact on its practitioners with regard to attention, concentration and memory. In the year 1984, another researcher proved that Meditation enhances memory and attention amongst the adolescents, who regular practice Yoga on regular basis. In another study, conducted by Peck, Kehle, Bray & Theodore in the year 2005, detected that by the practice of Yoga, children showed improved functions on measures of attention. In the year 2011, another researcher, namely, Dolde found that meditation brings positive changes with regard to concentration, wellbeing and energy. In another study on adolescents in the year 2012, one researcher, namely, Amit and Neelam proved that the adolescents, who practiced meditation, had higher concentration level and had equipped better short-term memory.

In this respect, it is to be reiterated herein that although India has a long heritage of practicing mediation since from the early days of 'Muni' and 'Rishi' when the students in the 'Guru Ashrama' were taught to practice meditation for their mental stability and development and the said tradition is visible if we go through two of our great epics 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata', still, the applicability of mediation in our present generation has been neglected to a great extent. Unfortunately, we have missed our own rich traditional culture.

In this respect, Raj Yoga, has a great role to play by keeping the concentration level of the students almost constant for a longer period of time. It is worthy to note that Mr. Giuseppe Pagnoni, italian neuron-scientist, had undertaken a study, in which he

compared the brain functions of several people practicing 'Yoga'/ 'Zen' meditation and several other persons, who never practiced Zen meditation. After the completion of the study, Giuseppe Pagnoni found that the mind of the mediators was more stable in comparison to the mind of those persons, who did not practice meditation. Moreover, their ability to remain focused was higher than the other group.

Hence, my further study in this aspect leads to study of 'Raj Yoga'.

The word 'Yoga' means 'connection' or 'union' and the word 'Raj' means Princely. 'Raj Yoga' is not only meditation, but also a lifestyle. It teaches one about his two existence – one is outer self-i.e., the corporeal body and another is inner self i.e., the soul. Through 'Raj Yoga', one is able to understand his real identity and is able to connect his soul with the supreme Soul i.e., the God. It is through the practice of 'Raj Yoga', one is able to reach a state of mental stability, where responses from the outer world – whether favorable or unfavorable – do not impact him too much, rather it always remains under his control – moderate in intensity. Regular practice of 'Raj Yoga' enables one to attain mental serenity, better self-realization, more focused and can keep the same state of mind for a longer period of time. Regular practice of 'Raj Yoga' enables one to free himself from the addiction of social media to a great extent and becomes tolerant to the intoxication of the outer world. It is proved that mental and physical health remain peaceful with mind and heart being stable. So, it is realized that this mental stability and peace are bound to have positive impact on the students.

III.METHODOLOGY

As the main object of this research is to see the impact of 'Raj Yoga' meditation on students in enhancing their concentration level by way of Mind Management, there is no other option left, but to use the experimental methodology to get a clear idea about its objectives. The study was conducted among 60 students, studying at various schools at the Block – Udaynarayanpur, District – Howrah within the State of West Bengal. The students were aged in between 15 years to 18 years – mostly students of Class-IX to XII. The students were divided into two groups by way of random selection method. In the first Group i.e. the 'Meditating' Group, there were 30 students (Girls – 18 and Boys – 12). In the other Group i.e. the 'Non-Meditating' Group, there were also 30 students (Girls – 14 and Boys – 16). This research was conducted at a Private coaching Center, namely, Sikshaniketan Coaching Center. First of all, permission was sought for from the Chairman of the Sikshaniketan Coaching Center. Thereafter, the students were made aware about the process and objectives of this research program. After getting consent from the students, who showed positive signs of contributing to this research process, a concern letter from the guardian/ parents was acknowledged before conducting this research. The concerned letter consisted of elaborate purpose and time frame along with maintaining personal details to be confidential and its probable impact on the students and declaring the fact that this research has no connection with any RELIGION. 110 students have shown their consents for participating in the research program. On scrutiny, 80 students were selected for issuance of concerned letter for parents/guardians with a deadline of five working days for submission of consents from parents. 65 guardians gave their consents for participating of their ward for this research program. Out of sixty five guardians, five parents have given conditional consent and hence, these five conditional consents were not accepted. The rest 15 parents did not respond within

the time prescribed in the letter. The students, who participated in this program, mostly belong to the same socio culture group and from the lower middle- or middle-class financial community.

The participants of the first group i.e. the 'Meditating' Group consisting of 30 students were called for every morning at about 6.30 am and were practiced 'Raj Yoga' Meditation for about 20 minutes for a continuous period of 12 weeks. However, the second group i.e. the 'Non-Meditating' group also consisting of 30 students were not tutored with 'Raj Yoga' meditation. After the completion of the fixed time period, both the groups were examined or testified with Paced Auditory Serial Test (PASAT), which was invented and developed by Gronwall and Sampson in the year 1974 and with the Work Recognition Test (WRT), which is basically used to assess verbal episodic memory with regard to short term memory and it was developed by Baddeley & Eruslie and Nimmo-Smith in the year 1994 with the purpose to collect data. Along with these tests, LSDT i.e. Letter Digit Substitution Test, which was invented by Jolles in the year 1995, was also conducted to assess the general speed of visual information processing. All these tests were conducted as all these impact on the concentration level of the students in their own way.

IV. ANALYSIS

After the completion of the period of 12 weeks, the students of both these groups were testified in the above stated process. The scores obtained by the two groups – 1. 'Raj Yoga' 'Meditating' Group and 2. 'Raj Yoga' 'Non-Meditating' Group are shown in the following table –

Table 1: Scores obtained by the students with regard to Mean and SD in the four tests and its impact on 't' values

Variables	Students practicing 'Raj Yoga' 'Meditating' Group		Students of 'Non-Meditating' Group		't'
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Attention Level	69.11	18.74	48.73	17.95	5.85**
Working Memory Level	68.94	14.43	57.87	22.38	3.03**
Visual Information Processing and Working Memory Level	44.55	19.44	27.79	5.95	6.26**
Complex Cognitive Speed & Flexibility Level	411.99	9.17	36.05	8.78	3.46**

**significant at the 0.01 level

Variables	Medth	PASAT	WRT	LSDT-1	LSDT-2
PASAT	-0.491**	1	0.594**	397**	342**
WRT	-0.281**		1	228**	246**
LSDT-1	-0.519**				584**
LSDT-2	-0.317**				1

V. FINDINGS

The result as shown in the table clearly indicates that the students of Group-1 i.e. the 'Raj Yoga' 'Meditating' Group has gained better scores in the four fields of their tests i.e. Attention Level, Working Memory Level, Visual Information Processing and Complex Cognitive Speed & Flexibility Level in comparison with the scores gained by the students of the 2nd Group i.e. the 'Non-Meditation' Group. All the above four stated factors contribute a great deal in enhancing the concentration level of the students and also develops the functioning power of the brain to a great extent. So, this research clearly proves the hypothesis - "Raj Yoga Meditation improves the concentration level of the students by way of Mind Management" as it improves the cognitive function of the brain. Thus, this research clearly enlightens the fact that by practicing 'Raj Yoga' Meditation, students can improve their power of maintaining the concentration level for a longer period of time.

VI. LIMITATION

It is an admitted fact that every research has its own limitation in its own way. Like all other researches, this research has its own limitations with regard to comparatively small sample size as this research has been conducted over 60 students and also it is conducted among students of a particular block and it is a long terms research and this research has its lacuna to carry on long term follow up and thus, it creates a gap for the future researchers to look into its long-term effect on the students by opening a new outcome from their researches.

VII. CONCLUSION

The present students are the future citizens of any country. So, the future of country depends upon the proper guidance of the present days' students. It is well known fact that keeping concentration level for a longer period of time at the same level helps students to achieve their cherished goal. This research clearly unfolds, Brahamakumaris 'Raj Yoga' Meditation helps the students to improve their concentration level by way of Mind Management. It is proposed, the Educationists and Policy Makers can review this impact while considering the curriculum and syllabus of the academic as well as overall growth of students for a better future and healthy India. So, it is high time for both the Governments (Central or State) to rethink the way of implementing the meditation as a part of education for an all-round development of a student.

REFERENCE

- [1] <https://mindworks.org/blog/how-meditate-better-concentration/>,
- [2] Uthaman, S., & Uthaman, S. (2017). Impact of Yoga and Meditation on Cognitive Functions of Students. *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice*, 2(2), 53-57,
- [3] Sharma, V., Shrivastava, S., MalhSharma, U. K., Shrivastava, S., Malhotra, S., Singh, R., & Singh, T. B. (2010). Yoga and cognitive behavior techniques for academic stress and mental wellbeing among school students. *Delhi Psychiatry Journal*, 13(1), 12-19,
- [4] Misra, N., Gupta, A., Alreja, S., & Prakash, O. (2013), Effect of Raj Yoga meditation on affective & cognitive functions. *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 3(2), 38-46.
- [5] Christal Jeba, N. (2018). A study on effects of yoga and academic achievement of high school students. *International JI. Of Research Granthaalayah*, 6(7), 23, 27.
- [6] Shields, G. S., Skwara, A. C., King, B. G., Zanesco, A. P., Dhabhar, F. S., & Saron, C. D. (2020). Deconstructing the effects of concentration meditation practice on interference control: The roles of controlled attention and inflammatory activity. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 89, 256-267.
- [7] Fisher, R. (2006). Still thinking: The case for meditation with children. *Thinking skills and creativity*, 1(2), 146-151.
- [8] Choi, E. H., Chun, M. Y., Lee, I., Yoo, Y. G., & Kim, M. J. (2020). The effect of mind subtraction meditation intervention on smartphone addiction and the psychological wellbeing among adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(9), 3263.
- [9] Quach, D., Mano, K. E. J., & Alexander, K. (2016). A randomized controlled trial examining the effect of mindfulness meditation on working memory capacity in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 58(5), 489-496.
- [10] Anand, H., & Das, I. (2016). Effect of prayer along with meditation v/s meditation on emotional intelligence and psychological well-being: A comparative study. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(4), 68.
- [11] Lemay, V., Hoolahan, J., & Buchanan, A. (2019). Impact of a yoga and meditation intervention on students' stress and anxiety levels. *American journal of pharmaceutical education*, 83(5).
- [12] Ratanasiripong, P., Park, J. F., Ratanasiripong, N., & Kathalae, D. (2015). Stress and anxiety management in nursing students: biofeedback and mindfulness meditation. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 54(9), 520-524.
- [13] Travis, F., Haaga, D. A., Hagelin, J., Tanner, M., Nidich, S., Gaylord-King, C., ... & Schneider, R. H. (2009). Effects of Transcendental Meditation practice on brain functioning and stress reactivity in college students. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 71(2), 170-176.
- [14] Breedvelt, J. J., Amanvermez, Y., Harrer, M., Karyotaki, E., Gilbody, S., Bockting, C. L., ... & Ebert, D. D. (2019). The effects of meditation, yoga, and mindfulness on depression, anxiety, and stress in tertiary education students: A meta-analysis. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 10, 193.
- [15] Csaszar, I. E., Curry, J. R., & Lastrapes, R. E. (2018). Effects of loving kindness meditation on student teachers' reported levels of stress and empathy. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 45(4), 93-116.