



MEDITATION AN ESSENTIAL INTEGRANT FOR GROWING KIDS

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Abstract:

Meditation is one of the ancient solution to modern problems. It has gained a lot of popularity around the world during the century. Meditation, as many people often subscribe to, is not merely a method to attain mental peace, but also a powerful method to get rid of ignorance which causes various kinds of suffering in human life. 'Education is the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. It emphasizes on life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. The very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. Meditation is not simply sitting and Gazing eyes on light. Meditation stabilizes a person in the real and original self and enables him to have his divine worth and dignity. It also involves certain ethical practices. These ethical practices are known as Moral, Spiritual, social, Professional and family values. Meditation provides peace of mind, relaxed body, positive attitude in every situation, improves concentration and increases clarity of thought, develops the positive relationships, it realizes the purpose of life, feeling of content and stability and it provides good health, happiness and prosperity in life. With such understanding of meditation it can be a wonder if enrolled to every toddlers and growing kids life. Psychologically each child grows differently as the responds towards different environment and attitude differs on the basis of learning. Learning comes from exposure to different scenarios and reactions to it. But there a child is unprepared as everything comes for first time once in life before getting stored as memory. If the child is more vulnerable, less stable and less flexible there can be some unpredictable effects in this natural process which can lead to various psychological illnesses which usually get neglected. These common problems can be attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), eating disorders, depression and mood disorders and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD).

Keywords: Children, meditation, mental health

Introduction:

Parents find easy to identify their kid's physical needs like to put them on with warm clothes in cold weather, to make them sleep on time, nutrition, immunization, health, shelter and most importantly healthy living environment. But it's not enough with today's scenario of life. Therefore along with the physical demands parents should also be aware of child's social and emotional demands which are more of a mental task. Good mental health allows the children to grow encouragingly, confidently, skilfully and disciplinary.

Growing Children and Meditation:

Children of growing age demands great attention for nurturing their all the behaviours, activities and interest for further directions¹. During this whole process of growth which goes parallel, physically and mentally a lot of implementations via different modes are done according to their presence in demand². Like school going kid's should have good self-confidence, self-esteem, neutral outlook for the life and majorly ability to learn all new things and finding them interesting and well developed cognitive skills³. During all this social exposure a child develops both negative and positive attitude which should be counterpoise by something which works and builder as well as detoxifier for the system for the growing individual. Here comes the role of "Meditation"⁴.

Meditation is the process of activating the subconscious mind which is a hard-drive for the new learning and skilful screening of the thoughts not to be adopted⁵. There are different methods to perform meditation *focused sound meditation, mantra chanting meditation, Om meditation*⁶. All these meditation have their own process to be performed, some involve the breathing techniques like, focused meditation which talks about observing the breathing pattern by sitting in a comfortable meditative posture with head, neck and back held straight⁷. Feeling the warmth of positive air which is entering inside with every inhalation and negative air expired out with every exhalation. Second comes the mantra chanting meditation, mantra is sacred utterance, a numinous sound mainly in language Sanskrit which is chanted repetitively in different manner like starting with the loud and slow chanting followed by fast and inner chanting. This mantra can be a religious chanting belonging to each once religion. The motive is to collect positive by all. The most common and easy to practice one is om (AUM) meditation which is also one of the meditation performed the most by any group of

people and have great results⁸. The process is like, meditation starts with starting prayer “*Shana bhavatu sahano bhunnatu, sahaviriyam karvavahey tejaswi navadhitamastu maa vidvisha vahayehai. Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!*” Followed by loud Om chanting for nine times loudly and nine times silently and then imagining the Om all around and then in between your brows. Followed by expansion of the Om to the universe and coming to back to the own body to the Jana chakra⁹.

Personality Development

The specialty of meditation processes is that, the faculties get sharpened in tune with the spiritual progress of child by an integrated personality development with spiritual growth¹⁰.

Physical level

An ideal body has the following features brought about by meditation;

- * A proportionate body with all muscles relaxed in the normal state. It is soft like a flower and flexible to the core.
- * Instantaneously it can acquire a diamond's hardness. All organs and systems in the body work in harmony and with least abnormalities.
- * The chronic and acute ailments vanish or are absent in such a body.

These aspects of personality development at physical level make the body work most efficiently by harnessing the energies in the right direction¹¹. At resting periods all the muscles are relaxed and the joints remain loose to conserve energy and the metabolic rate is very low. During normal activities, just the necessary amount of energy is used by the body¹². At crucial times, under conditions of high stress, the functions of the organs co-ordinate so nicely that the necessary energy gets evoked and flows profusely into those regions which need more energy¹³. The body gets all the necessary strength to deal with the situation. This 'stamina' through harnessing of inner vital energies and training the different organs and systems to work in such co-ordination, can be effectively accomplished by yogic practices¹⁴. It is in this area of application of yoga that the specialists in physical culture, wrestlers, sportsmen, acrobats, gymnasts, etc., are keenly interested and are putting Yoga to utmost use¹⁵.

Mental level

The power of imagination 'Creativity' and steadfastness (Will-power) are the two aspects of mind which come under this head of personality development. It has been well recognized that creativity is the core of 'Arts' and 'Technology'. It has been seen that yogic practices enhance the creative power of man¹⁶. As such, many musicians, poets, film artists, engineers and technologists have been attracted to Yoga. 'Will power' is an essential requirement for all persons to accomplish any work, however insignificant or great the task is¹⁷.

Meditation by its systematic and conscious process of calming down the mind erases the weakness in the mind and builds will power¹⁸ into it. In such a mind each obstacle is conceived as a challenge and arouses tremendous energy to combat the situation¹⁹. Bravery becomes a part of the personality. Steadfast to the core, such a person takes up with marvellous sobriety the challenges of life and converts them into opportunities for accomplishing his mission²⁰.

Emotional level

Our emotion controls our behaviour especially at crucial junctures. The challenges of the modern era pose a great threat to the emotional faculty of man²¹. Yet the culturing of our emotions – development of our emotional faculties finds no place in the whole scheme of education²². Man looks lost amidst the atrocities of life unable to overcome his emotional conflicts, blocks, and turmoil's. The result is deep unrest, agony and psychosomatic ailments²³.

Meditation trains us to; Systematically sharpen and sensitize our emotions and Consciously expand and diffuse the overtones of such sensitization. Thus, meditation offers a fine tool for the development of the emotional personality of man.

Intellectual Level

In the modern era of science, a sharp intellect plays a key role in the scheme of education. Rather than mechanical cramming up of information, thinking and understanding are valued more in the learning process²⁴. The children are taught right from the primary level to think logically and scientifically. The capacity to analyze and correlate relevant information forms the function of the intellect; concentration is the expression, precision is the outcome²⁵.

However, this enhanced power of the sharpened intellect associated with deep powerful concentration among the intellectual cream of the society has also bound man into the whirlpool of intellectual slavery. He finds himself unable to come out of the strong clutches of deep concentration. Though it is torturous and he very much wants to come out of it, he finds himself stuck. His worries and attachments do not release him. The development of personality at intellectual level should not only result in an intense sharpening of the intellect but also include a mastery to come out of the enslaving power of the sharpened intellect. Swami Vivekananda therefore rightly emphasized “concentration and detachment” as the two vital parts of education. Not only should it be possible for one to dive deep into any subject but also be able to come out of it at any moment. It is again the specialty of Yoga that can bring about this comprehensive development of intellect. As we have seen, yoga emphasizes the skill to calm down the mind and it is this skill to pacify the mind that brings the capacity to detach. Hence, yoga is attracting the attention of many 'intellectual sufferers'.

Spiritual Growth

A man may have a very sturdy physique, amazing creative power, a powerful intellect and a highly sensitized emotional grasp, yet may have no iota of spiritual progress. He may not possess even an inkling of the spiritual dimension.

All of us are so structured that we look mostly outside of ourselves at the environment. The senses grasp things around them predominantly we spend the whole life in understanding the grandeur of the world outside, solving the problems associated with it; unravelling the mysteries therein; using such knowledge to make our life more comfortable and enjoyable; bringing up our children to perpetuate and sustain the society around us striving to set patterns of behaviour and etiquettes of transactions, and so on. We are busy throughout. Notwithstanding this pattern of life, some glimpses into the depths of our inner dimension occasionally flash in all our lives. Very few catch these glimpses but some are awfully struck by the hitherto unknown dimensions hidden within. The search begins; the quest starts. Then, that person is on the march towards spirituality.

Thus the spiritual dimension of man concerns itself with the inner world – the move towards the causal state of mind, the root of the intellect and the substratum of the emotions²⁶. Man starts looking inwards. It is this inward journey that marks the beginning of the spiritual quest. Introspection, an inward look, an inner awareness, features the quest. The subtler layers of mind unfold themselves – the inner dimensions of the personality open out.

All-round personality development by; deep relaxation at muscular level, slowing down of breath and maintaining balance at Pranic level, increasing creative and will powers at mental level, sharpening the intellect and calming down the mind at intellectual level, enhancing the happiness in life and equipoise at emotional level and Manifesting the innate divinity in man in all aspects of life²⁷.

Benefits of meditation are innumerable:

Meditation is not only a process for leading man towards this astounding hidden inner personality of man by bringing mastery over the body, mind, intellect and emotional faculties, but also a powerful tool to manifest those hidden potential powers in him.

As man progresses, his zeal to perfect himself grows. In the process, he learns and understands the expressions of nature around him. The inner growth and outer expressions go hand in hand. He starts manifesting the inner divinity in his behaviour. His lower animal pulls and emotions, the six major enemies of man namely intense desire, anger, miserliness, infatuation, arrogance and jealousy diminish continuously. His slavery reduces. He starts becoming the master by gaining control over them. And that is the growth process which is in tune with spiritual growth.

Being the spiritual practice it is the greatest gift we can give to children in the correct age in which they should get exposed to their roots. Meditation enhances the awareness, cognitive functions, emotional stability and social abilities²⁸. (Crescentini, Capurso, Furlan, & Fabbro, 2016a) Studies have shown that it reduces the latency of auditory and vision evoke potentials and increase the amplitude²⁹. (Telles, Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Desiraju, 1994) Meditation also improves the physiological functions mainly improves the vitals like improved oxygenation and reduced oxygen consumption³⁰ (Telles, Reddy, & Nagendra, 2000). It trains the brain for improved responses like reward anticipation, decision making and impulse control. Children being hyperactive have very unstable thoughts and mind meditation helps them being focused and reduces the wandering of mind. Improves the ability to recognize the words, colour, person and much more. Children at growing age have wonderful imagery memory at natural meditation enhances the left hemisphere functions. And the most importantly multitasking to be active and fast and on time is the most favourable gift of meditation to the future of this smart and fast working society.

Literature review:

A total of 50 subjects (yoga, n=25 and control, n=25) participated in this study. The mean age of participants was 34.36 ± 9.35 years in yoga group and 35.25 ± 8.17 years in Control group.

The effectiveness of Brahmakumaris Raja Yoga Meditation on Quality of life domains on normal healthy volunteers compared to control group. The study showed a significant improvement in yoga group on all the four domains of WHO QOL scale such as physical health, psychological domain, social relationship domain and environmental domain compared to control group. With this a simple and easy practice of regular Brahmakumaris Raja Yoga Meditation technique helps in improving the quality of life. The other meditation techniques such as Transcendental meditation, Zen meditation, Om meditation, cyclic meditation etc have also shown the beneficial effects on various physiological parameters³¹. (Siddappa Naragatti, 2019)

Researches shows that practicing meditation helps children to become more independent on field. There were evidence of reduction in Test anxiety scale for Children when measured after 18 weeks of meditation practice³². (Linden, 1973) Psychologically meditation helps to improve and emphasise very much on the behaviour.

A pilot study on 20 adolescents practicing Mindfulness meditation for 6 weeks shows that along with reduction in disability, chronic acute pain and depression of child, parents worry also reduces by the observed changes in their child by the intervention³³. (Waelde et al., 2017)

Children age 7-8 years participated in the mindfulness based intervention study where got the meditation training for 8 total weeks and they were assessed on the basis of the observations of the teachers in regular days on baseline and at the end of intervention. It was found in teacher's assessment by pre-post training evaluations of behaviour, social, emotion, and attention regulation skills in the children were improved. Whereas in the self-reported evaluation by the children of mood and depressive phase was also completely reduced post to the meditation training³⁴. (Crescentini, Capurso, Furlan, & Fabbro, 2016b)

This type of simple meditation practices can be adopted in daily life to maintain good health and also helps in prevention of many psychosomatic disorders where psychological stress is believed to play a role. These practices mainly reduce psycho

physiological arousal but also enhance different aspects of attention, such as the ability to sustain; focus and shift attention thereby instils a greater amount relaxation³⁵.(Siddappa Naragatti, 2018)

Conclusion:

Introduction of meditation at the growing age of child contributes significantly on mental, social and spiritual health as a response. Meditation contributes to better skilling, improved attention, confidence and enhanced cognitive abilities and reduced risk of mental illnesses.

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