



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Stress Management Through Patanjali Yoga Sutra

¹Gaurav Bhatt, ²Pritha Ram Mohan,

¹Student, ²Student

¹MLSU Yoga Department,

¹Mohan Lal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, India

Abstract:

Stress has become a prevalent concern in today's time, necessitating effective strategies for management and alleviation in our fast-paced and demanding modern lives.

The exploration of stress management techniques derived from the Patanjali Yoga Sutra reveals a rich and comprehensive framework for addressing stress in modern society.

The analysis of the primary text and the synthesis of insights highlights how efficiently sage Patanjali defines modern day mental conflicts and ways to overcome them.

This article explores stress management techniques derived from the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, that offers insight into the human experience and practical guidance for attaining balance and inner peace.

It includes understanding the nature of pleasure and pain, cultivating even-mindedness, nurturing positive attitudes, and values, surrendering to higher consciousness, and practicing Ashtanga Yoga.

The teaching of Patanjali yoga sutra like asanas, pranayama, and meditation, have been shown to reduce stress and enhance well-being. It offers a promising avenue integrating ancient wisdom with modern therapeutic modalities can cultivate resilience, inner calm, and effective stress management.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra includes physical, mental and spiritual components and focuses on restoring one's provide a systematic approach to self-discipline, self-awareness, and self-actualization through practices including asana (postures), pranayama (breath control), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (transcendence).

The objective of teaching is to provide guidance on cultivating mindfulness, developing resilience, and attaining a state of inner calm amidst life's challenges. In addition, it offers a framework for recognizing mind-body relationships and encouraging holistic well-being.

Keywords: Stress Management, Patanjali Yoga-Sutra

Introduction

The Yoga Sutra of Patañjali is a group of 195 Sanskrit sutras at the theory and exercise of Yoga. It is the most translated ancient Indian textual content in nearly 700 years from the 12th to 19th century and made a comeback in nineteenth century because of the efforts of Swami Vivekananda, the Theosophical Society, and others. It gained importance again as a comeback classic in the 20th century.

Sage is believed to have authored a number of Sanskrit works, the most prominent of which is the *Yoga Sutras*, a classical yoga text dating to 200 BCE – 200 CE.

YOGA texts that existed were very elaborate, complex and diverse for the general public, so Patanjali created the *Yoga Sutras* as a way of compiling already existing teachings into a format easier to follow and understand.

Today, the *Yoga Sutras* are the most commonly referenced text on yoga, making Patanjali “the father of yoga”.

The classical Shloka determined in Bhoja’s observation at the Sutras this is addressed to him as follows:

“योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां, मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन।

योऽपाकरोत् तं प्रवरं मुनीनां, पतंजलि
प्रांजलिरानतोऽस्मि॥ “

The Patanjali Yoga Sutra includes short Sutras that run together as if they were making up a garland of flowers on a string. This method was a common practice to, teach orally. The Sutras had been usually kept short as they had been intended to be learnt and memorized.

The 195/196 Sutras) are organized in a logical form and positioned into 4 Pada.

The Four Padas are:

Samadhi Pada

- Samadhi Pada is the first chapter comprising 51 sutras focused on Enlightenment.

Sadhana Pada

- Sadhana, translates into ‘Discipline’ or ‘Practice’.
- Patanjali refers to two yoga systems i.e. Kriya Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga (‘Eight Limbed Yoga’).

Vibhuti Pada

- Vibhuti, in Sanskrit, means ‘Power’ or ‘Manifestation’.
- Yoga Sutras in this chapter points out the mind’s power in the manifestation of siddhis.

Kaivalya Pada

- The soul becomes free of all attachments and desires to reach Kaivalya. In the final chapter, Kaivalya means State of bliss and solitude.
- It is the final stage of Enlightenment which is also known as Nirvana or Moksha.

Yoga According To Patanjali Yoga Sutra

The answer to this question is given with the aid of Patanjali on the very beginning of his unparalleled teachings. Yoga sutra to cope up with the definition of Yoga as a process of mental purification.

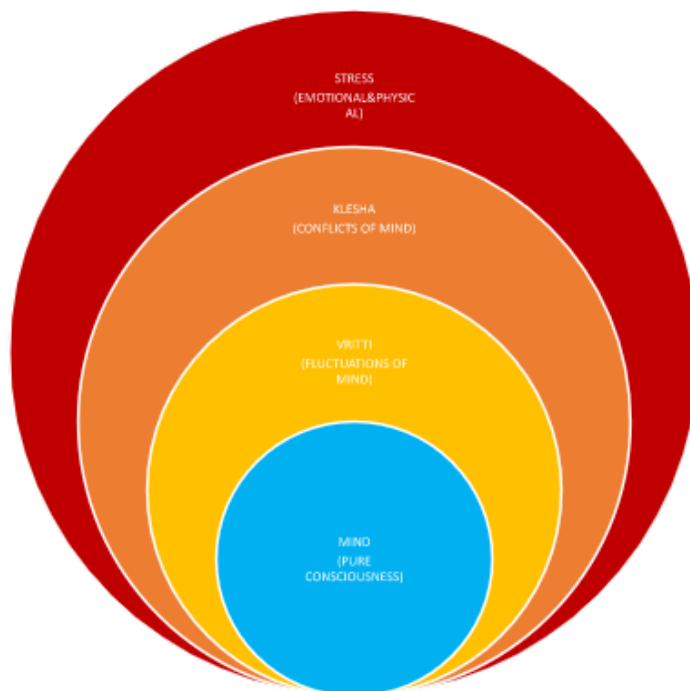
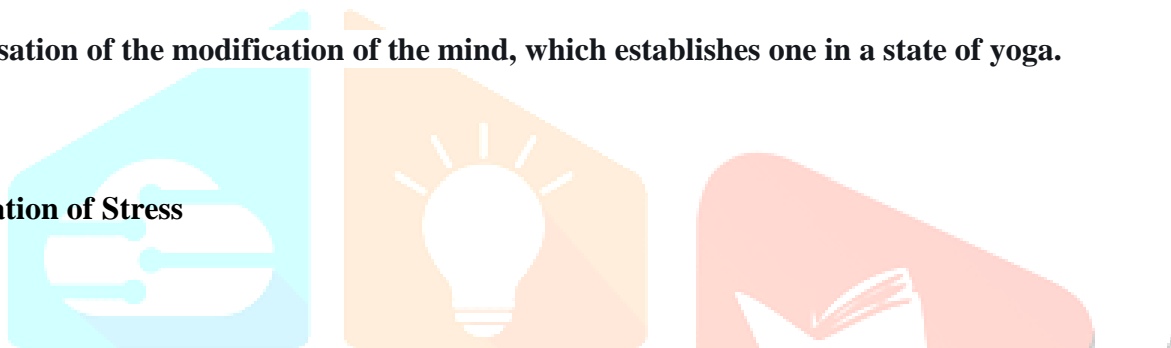
The classical definition of Yoga as a subject to control the whirlpools of the unconscious / Yoga Sutras of Patanjali:

“योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः”

- **Chitta:** mind, consciousness
- **Vritti:** waves, fluctuations
- **Nirodhah:** to control, to quiet

Cessation of the modification of the mind, which establishes one in a state of yoga.

Creation of Stress



The 5 Vrittis which might be particularly:

- **Pramana** – cognitive system
- **Viparyaya** – process of misconception
- **Vikalpa** – illusionary and fable susceptible states
- **Nidra** – the state of sleep, sleepy dullness
- **Smriti** – the internal method of reminiscence

These vrittis are responsible for klesha of the mind.

Vrittis are the ripples on the surface of the still lake of our consciousness, the chattering of the mind that can obscure the clarity of self-realization. To delve into the depths of yoga is to navigate these fluctuations and gain mastery over them, ultimately leading to a profound understanding of oneself. At its core, the term “Vrittis” refers to the whirlpool of thoughts, emotions, and mental activities that constantly occupy our consciousness. These fluctuations can be compared to the ripples on the surface of a serene lake, disrupting its tranquility.

Chitta Vritti: Vrittis, often translated as “mind chatter” or “mental waves,” Chitta Vritti means much more.

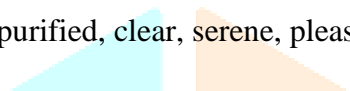
Chitta represents the entirety of consciousness in a person, and Vrittis are the thought patterns that emerge from it. These thought impulses can be fickle, chaotic, and disruptive, preventing us from experiencing our true nature.

The Five Vrittis

Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra categorizes Vrittis into five types, each with its unique characteristics and effects on the mind.

- **Right Cognition (Pramana):** It refers to the ability to perceive information correctly based on our beliefs, experiences, and moral values.
- **Misconception (Viparyaya):** This vritti occurs when the mind incorrectly interprets sensory information.
- **Imagination (Vikalpa):** This vritti represents the mind’s ability to create mental images, fantasies, and daydreams.
- **Sleep (Nidra):** This vritti is more than just the absence of wakefulness. It is an altered state of consciousness where the mind’s thought patterns are significantly reduced.
- **Memory (Smriti):** Smriti, or “memory,” involves the recollection of past sensations or emotions, both conscious and unconscious.

- Are the four attitudes towards different types of people that need to be cultivated for managing the situations peacefully.
- **Sukha** = happy, comfortable, joyous
- **Duhka** = pain, misery, suffering, sorrow
- **Punya** = virtuous, meritorious, benevolent
- **Apunya** = non-virtuous, vice, bad, wicked, evil, bad, demerit, non-meritorious,
- **Vishayanam** = regarding those subjects, in relation to those objects
- **Bhavanatah** = by cultivating habits, by constant reflection, developing attitude, cultivating, impressing on oneself
- **Chitta** = mind field, consciousness
- **Prasadanam** = purified, clear, serene, pleasant, pacified, undisturbed, peaceful, calm



|| □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□□□□□ ||

1.33

“Or that calm is retained by the controlled exhalation or retention of the breath”

|| □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ||

1.35

“Or the concentration on subtle sense perceptions can cause steadiness of mind.”

|| □□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ||

1.36

“Or by concentrating on the supreme ever-blissful light within”

|| □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ ||

1.38

“Or by concentrating on a great soul’s mind which is totally freed from attachment to sense objects”

|| □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ ||

1.38

"Or by concentrating on an experience had during dream or deep sleep.

|| □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ ||

1.39

"Or by meditating on anything one chooses that is elevating."

In these sutras, Patanjali is offering several methods of meditation and contemplation with the intention of finding and maintaining single-pointed focus. I am of an opinion that Patanjali does not seem to be concerned with the particular path that a yogi takes, as the end goal is the same, and what's important is that we stay focused on the methods that best resonate with us in our pursuit of self-awareness and transcendence of the mind.

Methodology

Research design:

This study will be based on qualitative research design, using hermeneutics as method.

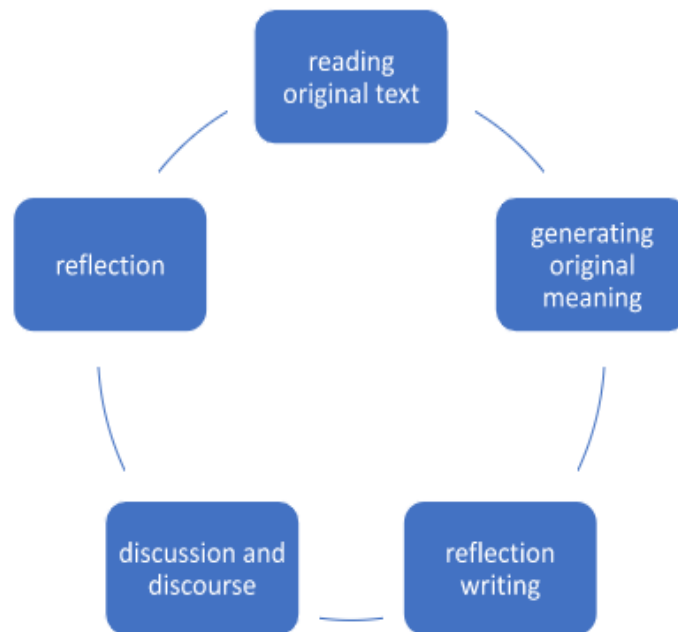
Hermeneutical cycle is reading original text and generating meaning

Reflection writing, discussion, and discourse, reading and re-reading texts, analyse, compare the takes of different authors.

Hermeneutics is the best approach to explore and analyze the Sanskrit literature and Hindu-scriptures.

A detailed study was carried out by me for 8 weeks which makes 56 days following the ashtanga method to combat daily life pressure and stress.

Hermeneutic research



A detailed study was carried out by me for 8 weeks which makes 56 days following the ashtanga method to combat daily life pressure and stress.

I, incorporated

- **Yamas**

- Ahimsa
- Satya
- Asteya
- Bramacharya
- Aparigraha

- **Niyamas**

- Internal And External Purification
- Contentment
- Austerity

- Self-Study
- Devotion To God

Into my daily routine as outlined in the Patanjali Yog Sutra.

These ethical principles of Ashtanga Yoga promoted positive values and contributed to the prevention of stress-related issues. It had a direct impact on my psychological well-being and emotional distress.

Practicing kindness and nonviolence (ahimsa) toward oneself and others increased positive emotions, improved relationships, and reduced mental conflict.

Practice of honesty (satya) and non-stealing (asteya) promoted trust, trustworthiness, and integrity, contributing to overall well-being and resilience to stressors.

The principle of brahmacharya, which encouraged moderation and wise use of energy, which led to better emotional regulation and greater life satisfaction.

By cultivating non-possessiveness (aparigraha) and contentment, I developed a sense of gratitude, reduced materialistic pursuits, and find fulfillment in the present moment, which increased selfness in me.

The niyamas, including

- Internal And External Purification,
- Contentment,
- Austerity,
- Self-Study,
- Devotion To God, Offer Further Avenues For Stress Management.

Self-reflection and self-study (svadhyaya) increased my self-awareness, personal growth, and spiritual inclination. Additionally, I also practiced Mindfulness meditation and journaling all the subtle changes and self-learning, small improvements, and controlled reaction.

I found satisfaction (santosh) and acceptance which greatly improved my psychological well-being and reduce stress.

I embraced gratitude and focusing on what I have, rather than what is lacking, led to greater satisfaction and peace and bliss.

After these positive psychology and values-based approaches, I aligned with the principles of Ashtanga Yoga. These frameworks emphasize the importance of cultivating positive values, ethics, and character strengths to enhance well-being and effectively manage stress.

Asana

The practice of asanas (physical postures) assists in cultivating a steady and comfortable posture, as indicated in the Patanjali Yog Sutra “स्थिरसुखम् आसनम्” by engaging the body in certain physical poses.

Practicing asanas consistently also helped me manage stress by avoiding letting the duality of life get in the way “ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघातः” It also increased my physical health and resistance.

This signifies the ability to maintain equilibrium and composure when presented with contrasting circumstances and experiences such as hot and cold, good, and bad, pain and pleasure, and success and failure.

By developing a state of stability and unresponsiveness to these dualities, I learned to control and manage stress in their life. It relieved stress and promote overall well-being.

These postures enhanced relaxation, lower physiological stress and boost psychological states connected with calmness and tranquility.

The physical alignment and engagement of the body in specific postures during asana practice helped to the regulation of the autonomic nerve system and promote a sense of balance and harmony within me

Pranayama

As mentioned in the Patanjali Yoga Sutra “तस्मिन्सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोगतिविच्छेदः □□□□□□□□□□” is the regulation of breathing through regulating the motions of exhale and inhalation. Scientific data supports the significance of pranayama in stress management by activating the relaxation response and cultivating mental peace.

Pranayama techniques have been found to impacted my autonomic nervous system, especially the sympathetic (fight or flight) and parasympathetic (rest and digestion) systems. By taking calm, deep breaths, and actively managing breathing, I could stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which leads to reduced heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels. These physiological changes are associated with relaxation, lower stress reactivity, and increased mental well-being.

Pranayama techniques such as alternating nostrils and diaphragmatic breathing relate to reduced felt stress, depression, and anxiety. These techniques added to increase emotional regulation, attention control, and overall psychological well-being.

Pratyahara

Involves directing the senses away from external distractions. According to studies, pratyahara considerably lowers stress levels by letting me switch my concentration within and away from outside stimuli.

The concept of pratyahara is also aligned with sensory recognition activities such as body scanning and progressive muscle relaxation. These practices entail systematically shifted my attention across the body, evaluating physical sensations, and intentionally relaxing areas of tension within me.

I could minimize the effects of external pressures, promote relaxation, and improve general well-being by focusing on internal physiological experiences.

Sanyama

The integration of *Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi* the integrated practice of dharana (concentration), dhyana (an unbroken stream of similar mental transformations), and Samadhi (deep absorption) brought transformative deep inner shift that can't be measured and only felt at my deepest level of existence.

I personally would always be in a continuous journey to effectively practice the ashtanga yoga for a better holistic living, sustained mindfulness and present-moment awareness, which minimizes reactivity to pressures, enhances emotion control, and builds resilience.

At The summit of this process, Samadhi, comprises deep absorption and a state of heightened self-awareness, where one experiences a great sense of serenity, clarity, and oneness.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra provides excellent insights into understanding and dealing with stress.

By identifying the diversions of the mind, fostering even-mindedness, nourishing positive attitudes, and ideals, and submitting to a higher consciousness, I found solutions to decrease stress and obtain inner peace.

The ancient wisdom of Patanjali continues to give timeless counsel in our modern-day quest for well-being and harmony.

Findings

The exploration of stress management approaches taken from the Patanjali Yog Sutra offers a comprehensive framework for managing stress in modern culture.

- ✓ The teachings of Patanjali highlight the significance of understanding the nature of
 - Pleasure and pain,
 - Fostering even-mindedness,
 - Encouraging healthy attitudes.
 -
- ✓ These principles are consistent with modern approaches such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, mindfulness-based interventions, and positive psychology, all of which emphasize cognitive restructuring, mindfulness, and the development of positive emotions and attitudes.
- ✓ Patanjali's yoga techniques, including asana, pranayama, and meditation, have been found to be beneficial in stress reduction and well-being.
- ✓ Integrating traditional traditions into current therapeutic techniques such as yoga therapy and mindfulness-based stress reduction may provide people with more tools to manage stress and boost their self-esteem.
- ✓ The emphasis on ethical restraints (yama) and observances(niyama) in Patanjali's teachings parallels the principles of ethical conduct and values-based living in contemporary times.
- ✓ These principles can promote self-reflection, personal growth, and a sense of purpose, contributing to stress reduction and overall well-being.
- ✓ Patanjali's yoga sutra teaches us to surrender to a higher consciousness aligns with the concept of acceptance and letting go help balance our mind.
- ✓ It also teaches to encourage individuals to acknowledge and accept their experiences, including stress, while focusing on values, and taking committed action to live a peaceful life.
- ✓ The Yoga Sutra holds that the notion that, the influence of the mind on the body is far more powerful than the influence of body on mind.

Discussion and Conclusion

Studying the four chapters of sutra using the various commentaries available and a systematic learning helped me to understand:

- What constitute Mind and Consciousness
- Characteristic activities of mind
- The source of Mental agitation
- Consequences of such agitations
- Means of reducing conflicts and gaining clarity
- Potentials of a stable and one pointed mind.
- The transformative power of mind and the consequent clarity and freedom

Today, when we are more focused on excelling in Yoga Asanas, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras come as a reminder to all that Yoga is a way of life with a sole objective to attain that realized knowledge where one can differentiate between what's self and what's not.

Bringing the cessation of fluctuations in the mind, which in turn helps us manage stress.

The goal of yoga is to obtain freedom (mentally and emotionally) and to do this, one does not have to renounce their regular life. These benefits of Yoga practices are rarely acknowledged or comprehended.

The spiritual dimension adds depth to the person, being spiritually rooted, stable, and strong helps us achieve bliss and oneness with mind- body -soul.

Studying and profoundly understanding these SUTRA , which were prescribed to mankind thousands of years ago suggest that, stress and mental conflicts are root cause to many complications that confronts us on a day to day basis and so these sutra are guidelines to a balanced, peaceful and a stress free life !

References

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327176973> Patanjali Yoga Sutras in the Light of Medical Neuroscience
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308711025> Lesson Plan Yoga as a Research Methodology

/Satish, L. (2016). Yoga in India. Editorial. Employment News, 18-24 June 2016, pp. 45. Schell, F. J., Allolio, B. and Schonecke, O. W. (1994). Physiological and psychological effects of Hatha-Yoga exercise in healthy women. *International Journal of Psychosomatics*, 41(1- 4), pp. 46-52. Schmidt, T., Wijga, A., Von Zur Muhlen, A., Brabant, G. and Wagner, T. O. (1997). Changes in cardiovascular risk factors and hormones during a comprehensive residential three-month kriya yoga training and vegetarian nutrition. *Acta Physiologica Scandinavica Supplementum*, 640, pp. 158–162. Scully, D., Kremer, J., Meade, M. M., Graham, R. and Dudgeon, K. (1998). Physical exercise and psychological well-being: a critical review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 32 (2), pp. 111-120. Selvamurthy, W., Sridharan, K., Ray, U. S., Tiwary, R. S., Hegde, K. S., Radhakrishnan, U. and Sinha, K. C. (1998). A new physiological approach to control essential hypertension. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, 42 (2), pp. 205–213. Sharma, A., Barrett, M. S., Cucchiara, A. J., Gooneratne, N. S. and Thase, M. E. (2016). A breathing-based meditation intervention for patients with major depressive disorder following inadequate response to antidepressants: A randomized pilot study *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, Online article, November 22, 216, PMID: 27898207. Sharma, R. (2004). *Hindu Techniques of Mental Health*. Spring Books, pp.150. Sharma, V. K., Das, S., Mondal, S. and Goswami, U. (2008). Effect of sahad yoga on autonomic patients in healthy subjects and patients of major depression. *Biomedicine*, 28, pp. 139- 141.14. Sharma, V. K., Das, S., Mondal, S., Goswami, U. and Gandhi, A. (2007). Comparative effect of sahad yoga on EEG in patients of major depression and healthy subjects. *Biomedicine Journal*, 27, pp. 95-99. Singh, S., Soni, R., Singh, K. P. and Tandon, O. P. (2012). Effect of yoga practices on pulmonary function tests including transfer factor of lung for carbon monoxide (TLCO) in asthma patients. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, 56 (1), pp. 63-68. Sodhi, C., Singh, S. and Dandona, P. K. (2009). A study of the effect of yoga training on pulmonary functions in patients with bronchial asthma. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, 53 (2), pp. 169-174. Stancak, A. Jr. and Kuna, M. (1994). EEG changes during forced alternate nostril breathing. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 18 (1), 75-79. Streeter, C. C., Jensen, J. E., Perlmutter, R. M., Cabral, H. J., Tian, H., Terhune, D. B., Ciraulo, D. A. and Renshaw, P. F. (2007). Yoga asana sessions increase brain GABA levels: a pilot