



Raj Yoga Meditation as a Pivotal pillar of Holistic Health-Mini Review

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Abstract:

Ancient rich traditional knowledge patanjali sutras written in sacred text mentions the importance of *dhyana* (meditation) for well-being of human. These days stress has become the lifestyle problem leading to various physiological problems such as hypertension, insomnia, Diabetes etc. Meditation techniques had proven to be panacea for human by realization of super consciousness state. Specially the royal yoga technique Raj yoga which has positive effect on human physiology, various health parameters and improves the quality of life. This review paper clearly mentions the uniqueness of Raj yoga mediation over other meditative techniques for attaining inner peace and holistic health.

Keywords: *Brahma Kumari's; Mindfulness; brain wave; physiological variables; harmonization*

Research Strategy

Relevant scientific literature from major databases were searched for original research articles on the relaxation responses of Raj yoga effect on meditation on various physical, physiological and spiritual aspects. and the use of microbial cell to remediate heavy metals. The following databases were searched: PubMed, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. The keyword combinations for the search were raj yoga, relaxation response.

Inclusion Criteria

Original scientific research studies that reported on the distress, beneficial aspects for mental, physical, physiological effect of raj yoga meditation were included.

Exclusion Criteria

Articles that reported on the general meditation, spiritual aspects of meditation specifically are excluded.

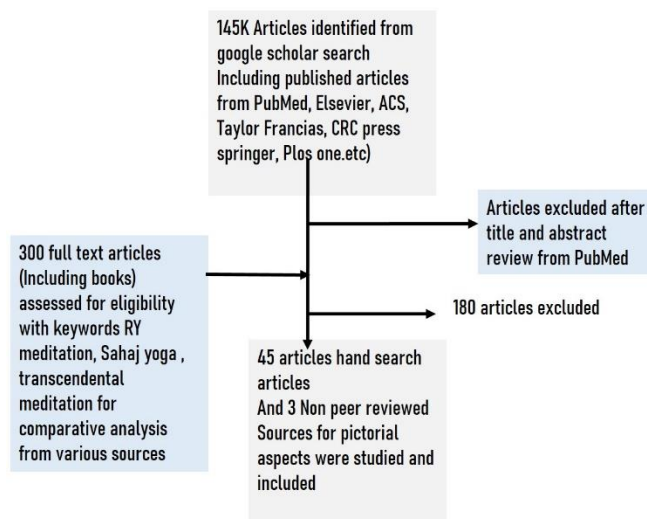


Fig 1: Overview of Study Design

Introduction

Today's competitive era has afflicted stress based on both young and adult and enforced them to adopt it as a normal and integral part of life. Effects of stress are not much symptomatic at prime stage so undervalued and ignored, till the final culmination of serious disease in the physical body [1 Brown et al., 2009]. High level of stress, undoubtedly aggravates the already existing pathological conditions or any new illness. Covid 19 has clearly validated the fact that the people already having a pre historic record of heart disease, breathing problem and diabetes were more prone to the covid attack [Behan et al., 2020]. Stress acts as a catalyst for weakening of immune system, body brain functioning impairment and even death in some cases [Anand 1991]. Inability to cope up with stress, mental tension, emotional ups and down, anger, irritability, fear, nervousness, stressful situations has led the man to search for alternatives for attaining mental peace. Moreover, emphasis has been laid on overall thinking pattern change from destructive state of mind to constructive state of mind. Meditation is the panacea in such cases. Various forms of mediation main aim is to increase self-awareness and increase concentration. Both mindfulness and concentration technique are quite effective in lowering levels of stress and resuming of health after its regular practice [4 Chakrabarti et., al 1988]. After keen observation, its health benefits supported scientifically and is readily adopted by not only laymen but also scientists. Scientists has validated that regular practice of meditation can even inculcate the behavioral modification in the person. Positive psychology can be imbibed in mediator and ability of coping with stress is largely increased [Telles et al., 1985; Selvamurthy et al.,1983]. The simplest meditation technique is of Raj yoga. Raj yoga is popularly called as royal path, mental yoga, which focusses on awareness of one's present state of mind and live like king of their life. It includes teachings from different paths of spirituality. It helps in human interaction at three dimensions, viz., physical, mental and spiritual. Prime objective behind writing this article to highlight the uniqueness and effect of raj yoga meditation on various human physiological variables [Rajoria et al., 2017; Naragatti et al., 2019].

Meditation Ritual in daily life:

Among the various meditation forms, raj yoga is preferred because of its uniqueness. Prima facie is to attain purposeful consciousness of God and imbibing its divine qualities. Basically, Raj yoga helps in achieving the kindly state and is the highest yoga, and tool to become the king of sense organs. Raj yoga is rightly defined as the science and art of harmony, in terms of spiritual mental and physical via connection with the supreme soul. Spiritual knowledge in form of daily "murli" channelled from the supreme soul helps in getting a new perspective for whatever happens in human life. This perspective ultimately helps in acceptance of self and others, promoting mentally and physically healthy lifestyle. Normally a brain can harness only the 1 % of

intellect and researchers can do up-to 10 %, still 90% stored potential of brain is left untouched and unexplored. This untapped potential can be harnessed via mediation and is strongly validated from the various reports. In case of negative and waste thoughts patterns seen in EEG reports, clearly shows the beta waves but when such person follows the raj yoga mediation ritual brain waves gradually changed to the delta wave as observed in sleep Both the acquired and inborn *sanskars(habits)* are imprinted onto the subconscious mind. In form of impressions of any action such as memory, knowledge, love, day to day learning can be modified and accessed by regular practice of raj yoga mediation [Kaur et al., 2015; Sardito et al., 2020]. Different and diverse modalities of meditation practices have found its roots in the ancient vedic text. Meditation practice shares numerous health benefits has also interested medical field and its acceptance along with prescribed medicine [6-7]. This technique immensely helps in connecting to one's inner self. Vedic science explains the deep inner self as working consciousness responsible for healthy functioning of physical body as well. Some reports justify the connection of meditation in changing DNA feed-back loop (which continues to formation of RNA and finally to proteins) by removing the effects of stress on cell regeneracy power. Mind body interventions also capable of reversing the molecular reactions at DNA level [Bhargav et al., 2014; Epel et al., 2009]. Basic meditation process helps in detaching the mind from the outer realm towards the inner realm which comprises of the ego intellect and chitta (inner faculty; changing consciousness) and finally to deep inner self (pure non changing consciousness). This pure consciousness helps in rejuvenation of the body at all physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level. Nearly all meditative techniques help in controlling myriad of stress related problems such reduction in pain, anxiety, depression, improved memory and enhanced efficiency.

Uniqueness of Raj Yoga Meditative Practice:

Transcendental meditation™ differs from BK mediation in various aspects. In TM no practice of essence of GOD is practices. BK raj yoga focuses on emotion, love and is considered key factor for the peaceful state of mind. In TM there is no such concept. BK philosophy also emphasizes that body consciousness is responsible for all suffering unlike to TM.

Table 1. Comparative Study of Raj Yoga vs. other Meditation Practices.

<i>Forms of meditation</i>	<i>Raj yoga</i>	<i>Transcendental meditation</i>	<i>Mindfulness (Sahaj yoga)</i>	<i>Concentration based techniques</i>
Brain wave	Alpha always	Alpha theta mix	Theta	Beta
Quality of health/ emotional satisfaction	Deep relaxing	Relaxing	Relaxing	Pleasant

Another major difference that is highlighted between BK raj yoga and other transcendental forms of mediation is in the steps opted. In TM form, person is asked to sit in closed state and asked to turn inwards on mantra or breath, whereas BK meditation practitioner are asked to sit effortlessly in closed or open state and mind is focused on GOD and in furthers steps, one is asked to establish and consummate relationship with GOD and is practised specially in early morning hours called as *amritvela* for maximum effect of meditation. Moreover, practising of soul consciousness after every hour and auto suggestions are practised in case of any flickering

of mind from peaceful state. BK raj yoga promotes alertness state of mind i. e. alpha brain wave generation, and TM passivity of mind or theta brain wave pattern is seen.

Specialty of the raj yoga meditation lies in its freedom of practice. Unlike other practices it can be practices with eyes open, in any posture and at any point of time. Moreover, no specific posture or breathing practice is required prior to its practice. No mantra chanting either is done. Raj yoga the royal path or sovereign words are rightly associated and helps in utmost control over mind and become raja of our life. Newness in the thought pattern specially about oneself is also attained, leading to complete life change [Keng et al., 2009].

Raj Yoga Meditation: Historical Overview

Many studies have been carried out for accessing the effect of raj yoga mediation on various parameter EEG studies of Raj yogis also further validates that alpha and theta waves are dominant in them. Epitomic example is the raj yogi Dadi Janki who showed delta waves in her EEG at all terms as per the study conducted at Jarka, Becheng., and so declared as most satble mind in the world.

Girish et al., 1984 studies on 25 raj yogis for both males and females showed the remarkable results for the physiological parameters, whether decrease in heart rate or for diastolic and systolic bp. severe problem of sleeplessness, acidity and addiction has also declined by continuous practice of mediation (Nikhil, 1985). Another report by Telles et al. 1993 reported the autonomic changes in the Brahma kumaris yoga followers, such as good flow of blood in brain channels. Syamala et al., 2009 also reported wonderful results of raj yoga in the depression treatment. Satish gupte et al., observed findings for beneficial effect of raj yoga mediation on CAD patients. Several other studies also demonstrated the reduction in calcified blockage by 100 % via mediation [Ray et al., 2014]. Shamatha project et al., 2009 researched the raj yoga mediation effect on the telomerase activity for 3 weeks intensive meditation session [Epel et al., 2009]. Several improvements in the psychological qualities such as personal control, increase in mindfulness are observed. Mindfulness is being in moment or we can say *sakshi bhava* of the self or any experience in non-reactive mode. Raj yoga mediation impact on pain relief is remarkable [Zaiden et al., 2012] in merely a span of 4 days. Sukhsohale et al., 2012 stated the effect of both short term and long-term response of raj yoga meditation practitioners on physiological parameters such as heart rate and respiratory for 15-30 min session for period of 6 months daily. Another report also confirms that such mediation can alter the brain wave pattern and thereby enhancing the cerebral performance. Long term response of meditation is the delaying of ageing and also age-related brain activity deterioration. Dr Elmer Green from the pioneer reports stated in her journal column about the impact of meditation. Mediation clearly helps in development of new neural pathways and amazing changes in personality are also observed. Another study conducted by the Dr Margaret Patterson has stated that few frequencies have special effect on brain activity eg 10 Hz frequency is capable of boosting the serotonin levels in brain, which is a chemical messenger responsible for relaxation response and anti-analgesic action. Catecholamine secreted contributes in memory and learning process. Mishra et al., 2013 reported the raj yoga impact on the cognitive and affective functions of brain for a group of 64 for 2 years meditation session. Kiral et al., 2014 in his findings observed the miraculous effect of raj yoga on the CTTH, a condition associated with muscle pain when headache remains for over a span of 4 hrs. Studies on headache patients for a session of 8 weeks clearly got 100% reduction in headache. Dalia et al., 2014 reported the effect of Raj Yoga mediation finding in migraine. Practising of RY mediation showed reduction in the frequency of migraine attack from 1-2 attack per week to 1 attack in 3 months for 6 months period including both sexes.

Kaul et al., 2010 discussed the impact of sleep deprivation aftereffect on the occurrence of any widespread epidemic, for any loss in memory power, weakening of the muscles, emotional instability and even in cancer. Practitioner of Raj Yoga shows demarcated improvement in the improvisation of sleep disturbance and regularization.

The Raja Yoga Meditation Technique:

Brahma kumaris is an international NGO and has the consultative status with the UNICEF. This non-government organization has its headquarters at the Mount Abu, Rajasthan. Receiver of the 7 peace awards from the UNESCO international organisation. Established the 5000 centres over 135 countries and imparts education related to moral and spiritual life practices. It has been over 8 decades of its mission of spreading love and peace among fellow human beings and making the life experience as sustainable and meaningful. Raj yoga has its research foundation and includes 20 wings. Raj yoga is rightly given the designation of holistic healing.

The meditation principles were adopted by the BK world Spiritual University and its teachings are very unique compared with other philosophies. Emphasis on getting aware of the metaphysical self and getting mind imbued with the purposeful and collective universal consciousness, unconditional love. Its philosophy has helped many souls to attaining realization with reviving the true attributes of the soul, as told by its founder Shiv Baba. Moreover, the name Brahma Kumaris means the “daughters of brahma” has been rightly named since the majority of positions in this organization is embraced by woman. The inner self transformation through this helps in knowing and reunite with our inner divine self. In BK philosophy it is strongly believed that we all are filled by birth with all 7 divine qualities. It is just that that particular divine quality folder is not kept much in practiced so it's not in habit and forgotten. It also mentions the eight fold path or eight limbs, asthanga path namely, *yama* (Abstention), *niyama* (moral observations), *asana* (postures), *prananyama* (breathing), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses), *dharana* (concentration of mind), *dhyana* (meditation), *Samadhi* (super consciousness) Daily messages are also channelled to the followers via the BK spiritual university called as Murli (daily good thoughts). Most marked practices under it, are the special audio frequency ‘Swaman’, special calming frequency which helps in making mind receptive to their well-being and to live in awareness. *Swaman* is like powerful audio affirmations and are seven one for each attribute [Bhupendra et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2015; Bezzera et al., 2014]. Daily listening practice of any swaman for 15 min facilitates rewiring of the brain and can also eradicate even the deep-seated thoughts pattern/ belief. Ultimately, complete change in thought pattern can be achieved. Its online mail query system service is also very prompt and within 24 hours the solution is texted by any BK member.

It is a four-step method: [figure 10]

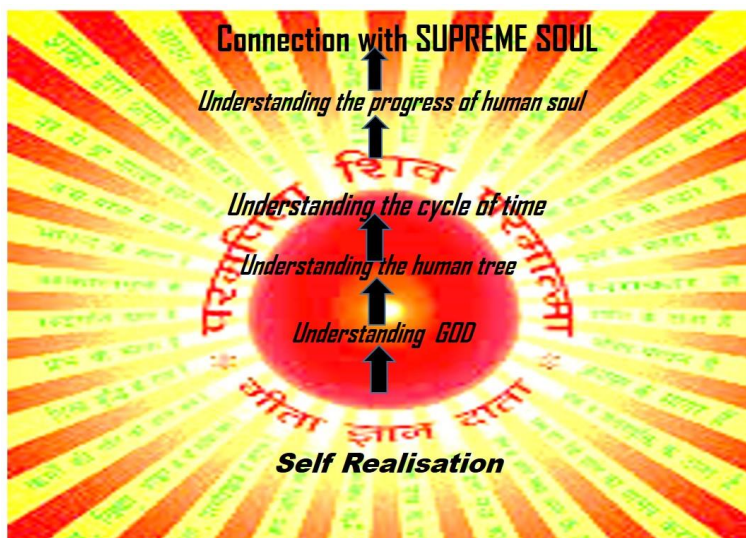
Sit in a secluded place and relax yourself.

Keep your eyes open and stare at something to focus in front of you.

Feel and make contact with divine father.

Recognize the soul

Continue staring process until you start feeling peaceful and then try to connect with the supreme soul. Imagine the scene of the beautiful earth, green trees, blue oceans, colorful birds and diversity.



Technique of Raj Yoga Meditation (courtesy: BK.org)

Try to feel you have made the connect with the supreme soul which is in heaven deep in sky. Sense of awareness and self-realization starts developing gradually.

Recognize the soul: In this meditation practice main focus is done on soul-consciousness and its philosophy is based on the belief that all souls are inherently good and is in the likelihood of the goodness of Supreme soul or God. Among the umpteen benefits, lies the freedom from stress and anxiety. A calm mind helps in better dealing with difficult and everyday situations of life. Other is harmonization of relationship. Raj yoga practices strongly believe that only one person righteous and true self-realization can also improve the relationship. Most beautiful and striking principle is to break karma by doing the righteous deed whatsoever the situation. As the BK Shivani frequently speaks in her lecture in order to combat one black ball (wrong behavior) we need to send white ball (pure thoughts to the utterer) in order to harmonize and cut the karma instantly. For improvising relationship emotional wellness, it is crucial to overlook weakness and considering each one is a soul and has one supreme father with all 7 divine qualities. It also improves sleep quality. Practicing right karma philosophy makes the life path clear and easy.

Impact of Raj Yoga Meditation on various parameters:

Regular practice of raj yoga mediation is responsible for remarkable changes at physical, mental spiritual and physiological level. Some major effects on physical and physiological variables are enlisted below:

- a) Blood pressure and pulse rate.
- b) Cholesterol level.
- c) Mental peace/ Nervous system.
- d) To get rid of Addictive habit such as tobacco chewing, Obsessive disorder



Figure 2. Benefits of Raj Yoga Meditation.

a) Blood pressure and pulse rate:

RM very effective in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, reduction in blood pressure. It normalizes the chronic stress related disturbance in the functioning of neuroendocrine systems. Heart rate, systolic and diastolic BP is considerably decreased by regular practice of meditation [Gorton et al., 1977; Horowitz et al 2010; Tyagi et al., 2014; Ray et al., 2014; Patel G et al., 1993]. Considerable decrease in the heart rate, systolic and diastolic pressure is observed for the rajyoga mediators for over a period of 6 months. Autonomic balance of the body is shifted towards the parasympathetic system. Activation of parasympathetic impulse stimulates the vagus nerve on SA node, thereby causing decrease in heart rate. Furthermore, parasympathetic based cholinergic dilation leads to decrease in the diastolic blood pressure [Telles et al., 1993; Sukhsohale et al., 2012].

b) Cholesterol level: meditators show decrease in the serum cholesterol level and are less prone towards the cardio vascular diseases. Autonomic system of the body is activated by continuous practicing of mediation [Corti et al., 1995; Gubda et al., 2014; Maini et al., 2014]. Parallel reduction in sympathetic activity is majorly responsible for the reducing as well as maintaining the low levels of serum cholesterol irrespective of the diet. HDL (high density lipoprotein) levels in the body determines the occurrence of the heart disease and has inverse relationship with the likelihood of heart attack. High HDL people show less incidence and risk of coronary disease specially in older people practicing meditation.

c) Stress related disease and neurological disorders:

Regular meditation practice is responsible for the increased thickness of cortical regions of brain, for better auditory, visual, auditory and somatosensory processes. Frontal cortex thinning is also slowed down and efficient language, memory functions can be maintained. Release of endorphins during the meditation decreases the pain [Zaiden et al., 2012]. Major improvement in serious neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson and Alzheimer disease are also its strong after affect. Continuous practicing of raj yoga philosophy that we are soul and our father is one, with *swaman* has the potential to thought patterns and *sanskars* of the depression patient [Khare et al., 2000; Lavretsky et al., 2013; Suryaji et al., 2000; Syamala et al 2009]. RM practice is considered as booster of antioxidants in the body, thereby decreasing the oxidative stress related chemicals formation. It beneficial in conditions such as insomnia, schizophrenia. Ageing slows down both inside and outside. It is well proven that RM controls the depression, by significantly increasing the levels of the serotonin, which is responsible for the breakdown of stress hormone, cortisol. Cortisol is the main hormone secreted in the stressful conditions, migraine, psychiatric disorder etc. Immune system also becomes stronger and capacity to combat infections remarkably increases. Regular practice of it helps in maintaining and harmonizing the well-being of the person at the personal, professional and community level. Various findings

on raj yoga meditation also clearly validates that significant decrease in all of above physiological variables specially for long term meditation practitioners over short-term mediators is observed [Vyas et al., 2008].

Conclusion:

Enormous benefits are achieved such as lowering of Blood pressure, cholesterol level, and stress reduction. Unconditional love and acceptance-based philosophy practiced under it has helped immensely towards increasing the happiness quotient. Getting rid of any type of addictive habit is also one of its benefits. Medical practitioners have also reported the change in the brain in more use of parasympathetic system than ANS. It is also a no surprise to note that various IT people are very actively involved as BK here. It helps in improving the quality of life and better life satisfaction. The decrease in heart rate and diastolic blood pressure indicates tilt in the autonomic balance towards parasympathetic dominance. Meditation affects by modifying the state of anxiety makes the subject undergo relaxation and sustainable mental peace is attained. Harmonization in the society can ultimately lead to world peace.

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