



ROLE OF MEDITATION ON STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG COLLEGE GIRLS

DR. KUNTAL THAKUR

Assistant Professor. Khejuri College, Purba Medinipur., West Bengal, India

INTRODUCTION

The English word 'meditation' is derived from the Latin word 'meditatio' which means "to think, contemplate, devise, ponder, and meditate. The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation. In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation. Meditation is universal. It transcends all divides like religion, country and culture. It is a gift given to mankind to access the infinite spirit not limited by any identity. It is the only tool that can aid a person to return to innocence. In modern life style has high exposure to anger, hate, fear and other negative emotion. Meditation helps an individual overcome these emotions to facilitate a calm peaceful mind and healthy stress free body. Meditation promotes relaxation, develops self-concept, self-confidence, positive attitude and socialability and reduces stress as well as anxiety and depression.

Stress is simply a reaction to a stimulus that disturbs our physical or mental equilibrium. In other words, it's an omnipresent part of life. A **stressful** event can trigger the "fight-or-flight" response, causing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol to surge through the body. A little bit of stress, known as "acute stress," can be exciting—it keeps us active and alert. But long-term, or "chronic stress," can have detrimental effects on health. You may not be able to control the stressors in your world, but you can alter your reaction to them.

Modern life is full of frustrations, deadlines, and demands. For many people, stress is so common a cause that it has become a way of life. Stress isn't always bad though. Stress within your comfort zone can help you perform under pressure, motivate you to do your best, even keep you safe when in a danger situation. But when stress becomes an immense amount, it can damage your health, mood, relationships, and quality of life.

Most of people can manage varying amounts of pressure without feeling stressed. However too much or excessive pressure, often created by their own thinking patterns and life experiences, can overstretch our ability to cope and then stress is experienced.

Singh M. P et. al.(2009) studied on socialability between IIT Gandhinagar engineering students and VGEC Ahmedabad engineering students and results showed that the both institutes confronts to the same level of academic stress which requires almost similar level of attention towards the academics. **Cicilia et.al. (2011)** revealed that the yogic treatment reduced stress on adults individual. **Deshpande, Nagendra and Raghuram (2009)** studied the practice of integrated yoga module consisted of asanas, pranayama, meditation, notional

correction and devotional session on personality and self-esteem in normal adult, compared with the mild moderate physical exercise group.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the present study intended to find out the effects of meditation on stress among College Girls.

METHODOLOGY:

SAMPLE: Total sixty college girls (N=60) of District Purba Medinipur, West Bengal State were selected at randomly as subjects for the present study. The age limit of the subjects was 18-21 years. All the subjects were divided into two equal groups such as Gr. WE and Gr. WC. Group WE was experimental group and Gr. WC served as control group. Stress Questionnaire designed by **The International Stress Management Association (ISMAUK)** and it was employed to all the subjects of Gr. WE and Gr. WC and thereafter specific meditation as a treatment was given to Gr. WE for four days in a week and continued four months and finally the subjects were retested on criterion measures. The data were analysed by paired t-test to find out the effects of the treatment.

TOOLS: Stress Questionnaire designed by **The International Stress Management Association (ISMAUK)** and it was employed to all the subjects of Gr. WE and Gr. WC and thereafter specific meditation as a treatment was given to Gr. WE and Gr. WC for four days in a week and continued four months and finally the subjects were retested on criterion measures. The data were analysed by paired t-test to find out the effects of the treatment. Total twenty-five statements are there and answer all the questions with either a **Yes** or a **No**. Answer yes, even if only part of a question applies to you. The subjects were given 30 minutes for answer and they completed their answer honestly.

SCORES: One or zero score for each answer. i) 4 points or less: You are least likely to suffer from stress-related illness.

ii) 5 - 13 points: You are more likely to experience stress related ill health either mental, physical or both. You would benefit from stress management / counselling or advice to help in the identified areas.

iii) 14 points or more: You are the most prone to stress showing a great many traits or characteristics that are creating un-healthy behaviours. This means that you are also more likely to experience stress & stress-related illness e.g. diabetes, irritable bowel, migraine, back and neck pain, high blood pressure, heart disease/strokes, mental ill health (depression, anxiety & stress). It is important to seek professional help or stress management counselling. Consult your medical practitioner.

TREATMENT CONSISTS OF FOLLOWING MEDITATION:

Prayer is the best to begin all session of meditation. It helps to concentrate our mind, so investigator used to start all the session of meditation with prayer. Then girls of Gr. WE practised slow breathing exercise for three minutes. After breathing exercise they practised following meditation treatment:

- Phase-1: 1st Month meditated with the word of mantra (Guru Mantra) played by audio system and sited in sukhasana.
- Phase-2: 2nd Month meditated with a slow imaginary speech by the investigator and sited in ardha padmasana.
- Phase-3: 3rd month meditated with imaginary speech along with slow audio music and sited in padmasana.
- Phase-4: 4th month meditated with full of silence sited in padmasana, they Concentrated deeply towards the point between their eyebrows. Keep their mind focused and energy internalized, Continued for at least seven to eight minutes. Finished with a prayer to the Divine, offering themselves into the light of God.

All type of meditation like mindfulness meditation, focus meditation, movement meditation, mantra meditation and spiritual meditation were included in treatment programme. Investigators took help from yoga experts for preparing the design of programme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Stress scores for College Girls were analyzed by paired t-test and level of significance was set up at .05 level of confidence.

Table-I, Group means reflects in Stress parameter among Gr. WE and Gr. WC after three months treatment

Variable	Type of test	Gr. WE (n=30)			Gr. WC (n=30)		
		Mean	SD	T	Mean	SD	t
Stress	Pre-test	7.9	1.29	1.86	7.83	0.98	0.29
	Post-test	3.0	1.34		8.1	1.39	

Significant at .05 level of confidence

Table-I, represents the mean values of pre and post test for stress parameter of Gr. WE and Gr. WC. The mean values of pre-test and post-test of Gr. WE were 7.9 and 3 respectively in stress scores of college girls. The mean value of post-test of Gr. WE is smaller than the mean value of Pre-test of Gr. WE. The t-value of stress parameter of Gr. WE was 1.86 and the t value of Gr. WE in relation to improvement of stress was not statistically significant at .05 level of confidence after three months treatment. On the other hand, mean values of pre-test and post-test of Gr. WC were 7.83 and 8.1 respectively in stress parameter. The mean value of post-test of Gr. WC is greater than the mean value of Pre-test of Gr. WC. The t-value of stress parameter of Gr. WC was 0.29 after three months of this study. To be significant at .05 level of confidence the t-value should be greater than 2.04. The t-value of Gr. WC was not improved significantly at .05 level of confidence after four months treatment.

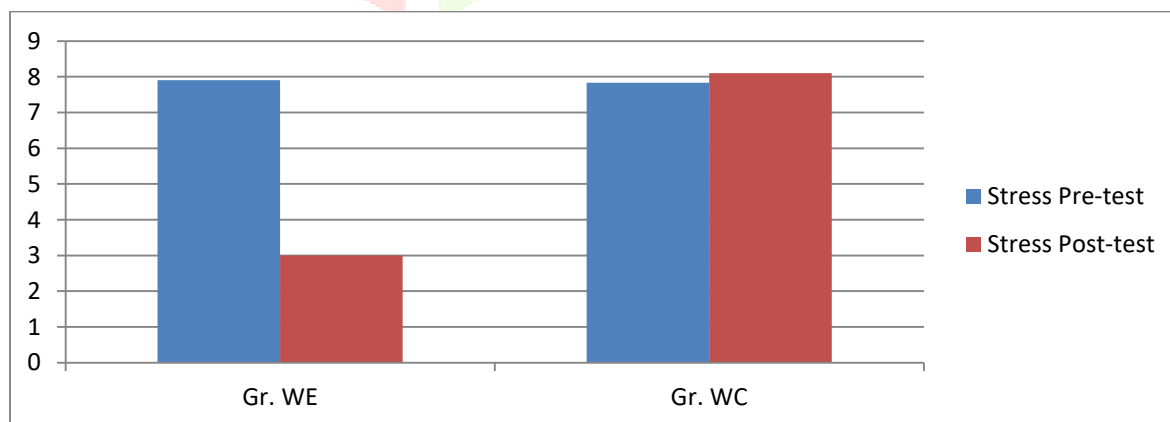


Figure-1: A comparison of means of pre-test and post-test data on stress among Gr. WE and Gr. WC.

Experimental Group improved or managed their stress through the treatment of different types of meditation. Meditation or Dhana, a part of astanga yoga play great role for the reduce of stress which has been reported by Baruch, Biener and Barnett (1987), Spielberger (1988), Deshpande, Nagendra and Raghuram (2009), Secilia et.al.(2011) and Brief, Schuler, Van and Sell (1981). In this study, Meditation reduced stress after three months treatment among experimental group. But the mean values of post test data of Gr.WC was increased when they were controlled but some factors such as environment, teaching-learning status, economic status, peer group and so smoney factors were not under control.

Experimental group improved their stress level through the meditation practices. When people face any challenge or threat, they have a partly physical response. The body prepare and help people either stay and confront the challenge or get to safety as fast as possible. In this time, the body produces larger quantities of the chemicals like cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine. Norepinephrine and epinephrine also cause a faster heart rate. These trigger the following physical reactions such as increased blood pressure, heightened muscle preparedness, sweating and alertness. These factors all improve a person's ability to respond to a potentially hazardous or challenging situation. But some time people can't manage their stress by inbuilt body mechanism, then it is harmful for them.

Stress can be a motivator sometimes, and it can even be essential to survival when it is under control. The body's fight-or-flight mechanism tells a person when and how to respond to danger. However, when the body becomes triggered too easily, or there are too many stressors at one time, it can undermine a person's mental and physical health and become harmful. Then it needs to practice meditation or larger part of yoga or any other ways to built up their body mechanism and mental state.

Some environmental factors that trigger this reaction are called stressors. Examples include high noises, very aggressive behavior, reckless car drive, scary moments in movies, or even going out on a first date. Feelings of stress tend to increase in tandem with the number of stressors. According to the American Psychological Association (APA)'s annual stress survey in 2018, average stress levels in the United States were 4.9 on a scale from 1 to 10. The survey found that the most common stressors were employment, money or created demand. Most of the countries as like United States or India, are going through these stressful situation. Thousands of researches already have done stress related studies. Many of them were advised that the meditation practice of chronic patient who are suffering from chronic stress, should practice meditation for overcome or manage these stressful situation.

Meditation have a greater impact on the mind and the senses than other exercises with the result that meditation help to develop one's physical and mental powers to make the mind clam and control the stress. Yoga involves and includes eight paths (i.e. astanga yoga – yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi.). Meditation, a part of astanga yoga based on idealistic approach, a real road to attain god consciousness and self-consciousness. Meditation helps an individual defence these stressors to facilitate a calm peaceful mind and healthy stress free body. Meditation promotes relaxation, develops self-concept, self-confidence, positive attitude and socialability and reduces stress as well as anxiety.

CONCLUSION:

Under the conditions of the present study the results seem to be concluding that the following:

1. Stress was reduced by administering three months treatment of meditation among experimental group.
2. Stress parameter of control group was not improved significantly after three months of experimental period.

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