



EFFECTIVENESS OF BREATH AWARENESS MEDITATION TECHNIQUE ON LEVEL OF PERCEIVED STRESS AND ANXIETY AMONG STUDENTS PREPARING FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS IN COACHING CENTERS OF SELECTED AREAS.

First & corresponding Author: Abhijeet Maruti Dube M.Sc in Mental Health Nursing (Psychiatric Nursing),

Second Author: Mrs. Sadhana Shinde Lecturer Department of Mental Health (Psychiatric Nursing) Sinhgad College of Nursing, Narhe, Pune

ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Breath Meditation means to be aware of your natural breathing. The breathing process is a powerful variable, which has an enormous impact on the tension level of your body, as well as on the calmness and clarity of your mind. The technique of mindfulness on breathing or Breath meditation is such a method to focus our attention on our own reality in this moment. Evidence indicates that most of the human successes are created in stressful conditions; but high rate of stress would follow by numerous consequences, including mental and physical illnesses, dysfunction and adjustment disorder and ultimately reduction of individuals, quality of life. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat. It can be a normal reaction to stress. One of the easiest ways to reduce stress is to simply focus your attention on your breath. It's a form of "entry level" meditation that anyone can do. You'll notice an immediate sense of relaxation that could help protect your health over time. The need to do study on such topic because researcher have observed many stressors which are affecting psychological status and health of the student. Students are the first responders exposed to stress and anxiety. The present study was conducted to assess effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of perceived stress and anxiety among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas. **Objectives:** 1. To assess the pre-existing level of perceived stress among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas. 2. To assess the pre-existing level of anxiety among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas. 3. To assess the effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of perceived stress among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas. 4. To assess the effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of anxiety among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas. 5. To find association of study findings with selected demographic variables.

Method: The researcher used quantitative research approach in the present study. The research design that is chosen for this study is Quasi- experimental design. The non-randomized control group design was used for the study. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples. **Tool:** The researcher used structured questionnaire to assess level of perceived stress and anxiety. **Results:** The finding of the study revealed that highly significant difference was found between pre and post-test score of breath awareness meditation technique of respondents from Experimental group. No significant difference was found between pre and post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Control group. Highly significant difference was found between post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Experimental and control group. Highly significant difference was found between pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Experimental group. No significant difference was found between pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from control group. Highly significant difference was found between post-test anxiety score of respondents from Experimental and control group. The study came to the conclusion that students had high and moderate perceived stress and severe anxiety in the pre- test. Breath awareness meditation technique was found to be effective in reducing the perceived stress and anxiety of the samples.

Keywords: breath awareness meditation technique, perceived stress, anxiety, students, coaching centers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Breath meditation is an ancient technique to achieve pure consciousness or self- realisation. Meditation techniques called “Yog Nidra” proposed by Swami Satyanand Saraswathi also describe ‘Breath awareness’ as a tool of deep relaxation technique. You are aware of everything else except this most vital process. Breathing is the key to life, and it is also the basis of dharana and meditation. Breath Meditation means to be aware of your natural breathing. The breathing process is a powerful variable, which has an enormous impact on the tension level of your body, as well as on the calmness and clarity of your mind.¹ Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat. It can be a normal reaction to stress. For example, you might feel anxious when faced with a difficult problem at work, before taking a test, or before making an important decision. It can help you to cope. The anxiety may give you a boost of energy or help you focus. But for people with anxiety disorders, the fear is not temporary and can be overwhelming.²

One of the easiest ways to reduce stress is to simply focus your attention on your breath. It's a form of "entry level" meditation that anyone can do. You'll notice an immediate sense of relaxation that could help protect your health over time. If you enjoy it, breath meditation can be a gateway to a broader practice of "mindfulness," in which you learn to accept and appreciate what comes in life and stop fighting your own thoughts and feelings. "Many people take up mindfulness practices thinking they'd like to relax more, but where it leads is a very different approach to life and its inevitable challenges," says Dr. Ronald D. Siegel, assistant clinical professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School.³

BACKGROUND OF STUDY:-

Stress is defined as body's nonspecific reaction to demands made on it. It is a process by which we perceive and cope with environmental threats and challenges. Hence, stress is defined as emotional and behavioural changes caused by stressors. Growing competition and pressure of performance is turning student into victims of stress. This is true with those appearing for competitive exams. The student's performance is evaluated through examinations. This has increased academic pressure on student's preparing for competitive exams. Academic stress has become a prevalent problem across countries, cultures, and ethnic groups. Parental expectations and fear of failure in exams are the two significant factors responsible for academic success.⁴

Anxiety is a common symptom which is found in almost every individual of today. Anxiety can be defined as a ‘state of arousal’ caused by threat to well-being (Spielberger,1960). ‘State’ means a condition involving the entire organism. ‘Arousal’ means a condition of tension, unrest, or uneasiness, or a readiness to act the respond. ‘Threat’ means anticipation of pain or danger or serious interference with goal seeking activities. Operationally, anxiety can be defined as the automatic response pattern characteristic of a particular individual organism after the administration of a noxious stimulus. (Wolps, 1952).⁵

A cross-sectional study was done on students preparing for various competitive exams to get a deeper understanding on depression, anxiety and stress and their social aspects, to identify the various factors responsible for depression, anxiety, and stress and to identify the ill-effects of depression, stress, and anxiety on their health and daily life. It also helps to find the relatable factors in stress and depression-like income, duration of sleep, social media, peer pressure, parental support, mentor's support and their relation to the level of mental stress. It is the age of biological and physiological changes and hence there is greater vulnerability

and susceptibility. Candidates may show symptoms like- feelings of sadness or unhappiness change in appetite or weight, slowed thinking or speech, loss of interest in activities or social gatherings, fatigue, feelings of guilt or anger over past failures. Among 400 participants, 21.8% were found to be mildly anxious, 17.8% with moderate anxiety and 27.3 % with severe anxiety. 19% were mildly stressed, 14.8% were moderately stressed and 7.5 were having severe stress. Overall, stress management involves complete lifestyle change that requires a range of strategies and techniques. They include good eating habits, proper exercise, good family and social life, mood management and relaxation techniques. These allow the individual to reduce, avoid or cope with the negative emotions related to the condition and recognize the triggers and situations that lead to these negative emotions.⁶

Need of the study:-

In recent years, there has been an increased number of instances of suicide and depression among Indian students. The competition to secure a seat in a reputed educational institution and the decrease inadequate number of jobs has often been described as a possible cause of this. The pressure put upon the students by their families and educational institutes is another reason with causes physiological stress.⁷

Alidina (2010). Has mentioned ten ways in which breath awareness meditation technique helps: 1. Training the Brain 2. Improving Relationships 3. Boosting Creativity 4. Reducing Depression 5. Reducing Chronic Pain 6. Giving Deeper Meaning to Life 7. Reducing Stress 8. Combating Anxiety 9. Regulating Eating Habits 10. Increasing Your Happiness.⁸

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD:

The researcher used quantitative research approach in the present study. The research design that is chosen for this study is Quasi- experimental design. The non-randomized control group design was used for the study. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples.

Inclusion criteria--

- In the age between 21 to 35 years.
- Present in the coaching centers of selected areas at the time of data collection.
- Students willing to participate in this study.
- Students who are vaccinated for covid-19.
- Student able to understand and write English.

Exclusion criteria-

- Not willing to participate.
- Students affected with physical or mental illness.
- Receiving or practicing other relaxation therapy.

Tool: A structured questionnaire to assess level of perceived stress and anxiety among students preparing for competitive exams. The following sections consist of:

Part I Consent form Part II

1. Semi structured questionnaire to assess Demographic variables of samples.
2. Standardized Structured Perceived stress scale (PSS) of Sheldon Cohen to assess the level of perceived stress of the samples.
3. Standardized structured Westside test anxiety scale of Richard Driscoll to assess level of anxiety of the samples.

Written permission was obtained from the selected coaching centers for conducting main study. Written consent was obtained from the students who did participate in the study. The data was collected by the Investigator himself. Subjects were selected from theselected coaching centers using non-probability purposive sampling technique. The investigator introduced himself and informed the samples about the nature of the study in detail so as to ensure better co-operation during the data collection. Objectives of study were discussed and the confidentiality of the data was assessed. Followed by taking consent and collection of demographic data, study was conducted on samples. In this study, the sample size comprises of 80 students preparing for competitive exams among whom control group (40) and experiment group (40) were divided who were studying in the coaching centers.

3. RESULT:

Analysis will be done as following-

Section I

This section deals with the data pertaining to the demographic variables of the students with respect to age, gender, education, type of family, occupation, monthly family income and residential background.

Section II

Section II-A

Analysis of data related to the effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of perceived stress among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas.

Section II-B

Analysis of data related to the effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of anxiety among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas.

Section III

Section III-A

Analysis of data related to association between perceived stress with selected demographic variables.

Section III-B

Analysis of data related to association between anxiety with selected demographic variables.

SECTION I: DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES BASED ON THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (N=80)

Table 4.1- Distribution of samples according to Age of respondents.

1	Age	Frequency	Percentage %
a	21 to 25 years	37	46.25
b	26 to 30 years	36	45
c	31 to 35 years	07	8.75
d	36 and above	00	00

Table 4.2- Distribution of samples according to gender of respondents.

2	Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
a	Male	47	58.75
b	Female	33	41.25
c	Prefer not to specify	00	00

Table 4.3 Distribution of samples according to the Type of Education.

3.	Education	Frequency	Percentage %
a	Secondary education	00	00
b	Higher secondary education	13	16.25
c	Diploma	12	15
d	Degree and above	55	68.75

Table 4.4 Distribution of samples according to the Type of Family.

4	Type of Family	Frequency	Percentage %
a	Nuclear	47	58.75
b	Joint	30	37.5
c	Extended	00	0
d	Single parent	03	3.75

Table 4.5 Distribution of samples according to the Occupation.

5	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage %
a	Private employee	11	13.75
b	Student	45	56.25
c	Business	07	8.75
d	Agriculture	17	21.25
e	Any other (specify)	00	0

Table 4.6 Distribution of samples according to the Monthly family income.

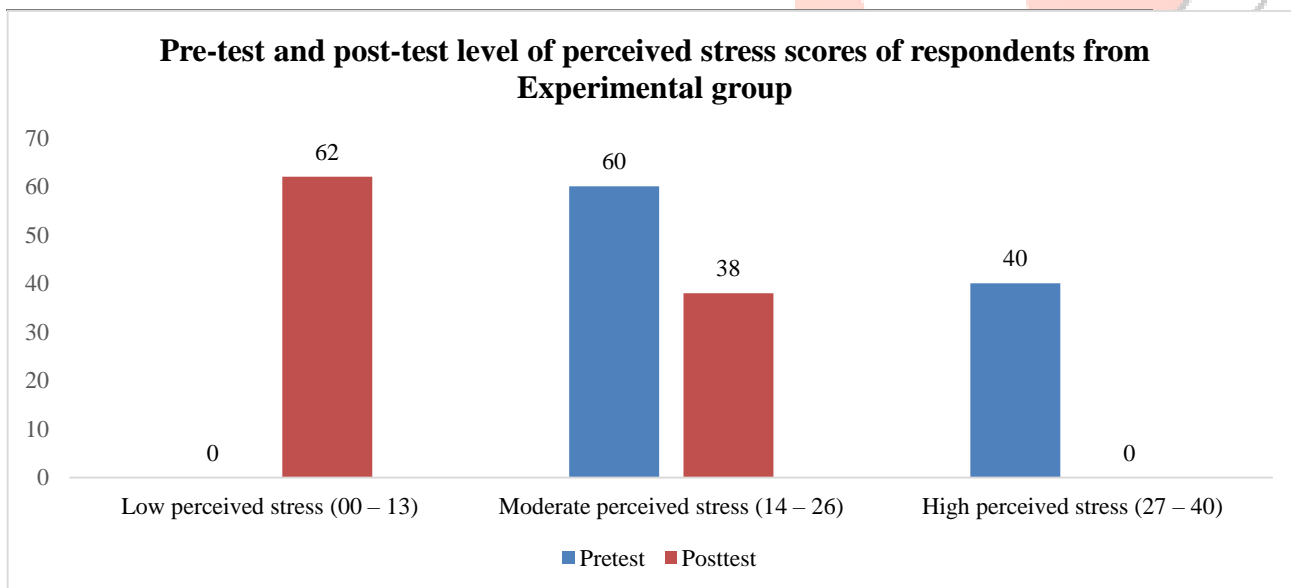
6	Family Income Monthly	Frequency	Percentage %
a	Rs.15,000 to Rs.20,000	23	28.75
b	Rs.20,001 to Rs.25,000	27	33.75
c	Rs.25,001to Rs.30,000	22	27.5
d	Rs.30, 001 to above	08	10

Table 4.7 Distribution of samples according to the Residential Background.

7	Residential Background	Frequency	Percentage %
a	Urban	14	17.5
b	Rural	66	82.5

Section II-A**Table No: 4.8 Frequency and percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test level of perceived stress scores of respondents from Experimental group.**

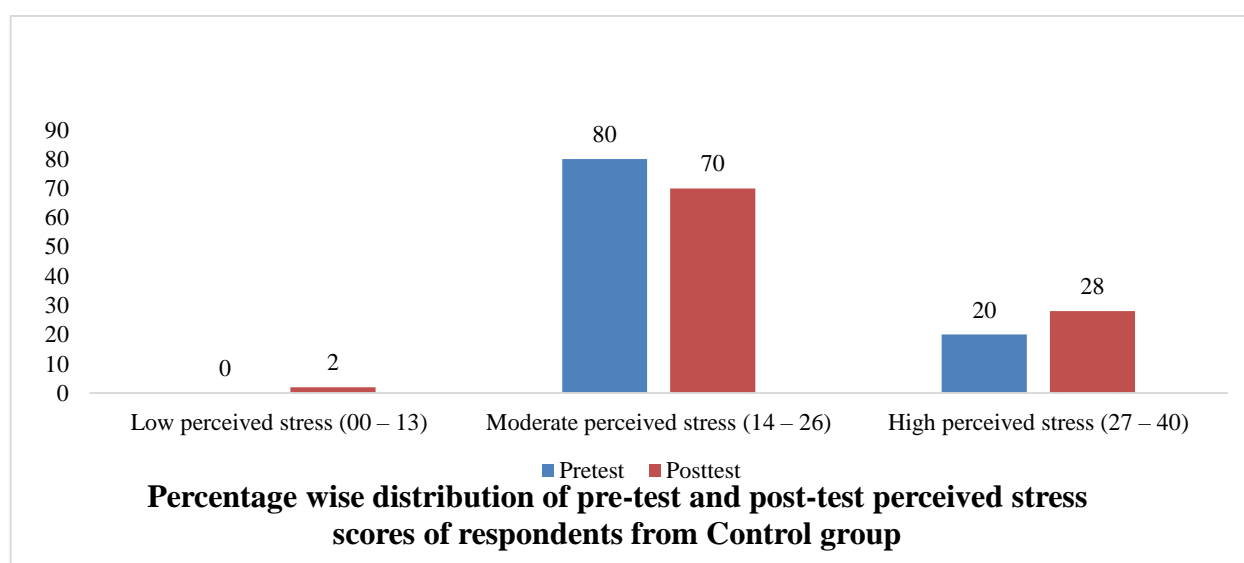
SN	Score	Pretest		Posttest	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Low perceived stress (00 – 13)	00	00	25	62
2	Moderate perceived stress (14 – 26)	24	60	15	38
3	High perceived stress (27 – 40)	16	40	00	00



Percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test perceived stress scores of respondents from experimental group depicts that highest percentage in pretest 60% of them had moderate perceived stress score and 40% of the respondents had high perceived score. In post-test 62% of the respondents had low perceived stress score and 38% of the respondents had moderate perceived stress. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was effective in reducing level of stress in Experimental group.**

Table No: 4.9 Frequency and percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test perceived stress scores of respondents from Control group.

SN	Score	Pretest		Posttest	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Low perceived stress (00 – 13)	00	00	01	02
2	Moderate perceived stress (14 – 26)	32	80	28	70
3	High perceived stress (27 – 40)	08	20	11	28



Percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test perceived stress scores of respondents from control group depicts that highest percentage in pretest (80%) of them had moderate perceived stress score and 20% of the respondents had high perceived stress. In post-test (70%) of the respondents had moderate perceived stress score and 28% of the respondents had high perceived stress. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was not effective in reducing level of stress in control group.**

Table No: 4.10 Paired 't' value of pre and post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Experimental group.

SN	Group	Mean	SD	't' value	P Value	Level of significance
1	Pre-test	26.38	1.705	45.001	0.0001	Significant
2	Post-test	13.05	1.679			

Table value = 2.132 at $p \leq 0.05$

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test perceived stress score of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from Experimental group. **Highly significant difference was found between pre and post-test score of breath awareness meditation technique of respondents from Experimental group ($t = 45.001$)**

Table No: 4.11 Paired 't' value of pre and post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Control group.

SN	Group	Mean	SD	't' value	P Value	Level of significance
1	Pre-test	24.5	2.58	0.848	0.402	Not Significant
2	Post-test	24.12	2.71			

table value = 2.132 at $p = \leq 0.05$

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test perceived stress score of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from control group. **No significant difference was found between pre and post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Control group (t = 0.848)**

Table No: 4.12 Unpaired 't' value of post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Experimental group and Control group.

SN	Group	Mean	SD	't' value	P Value	Level of significance
1	Exp. group	13.05	1.679	21.962	0.001	Significant
2	Control Group	24.12	2.71			

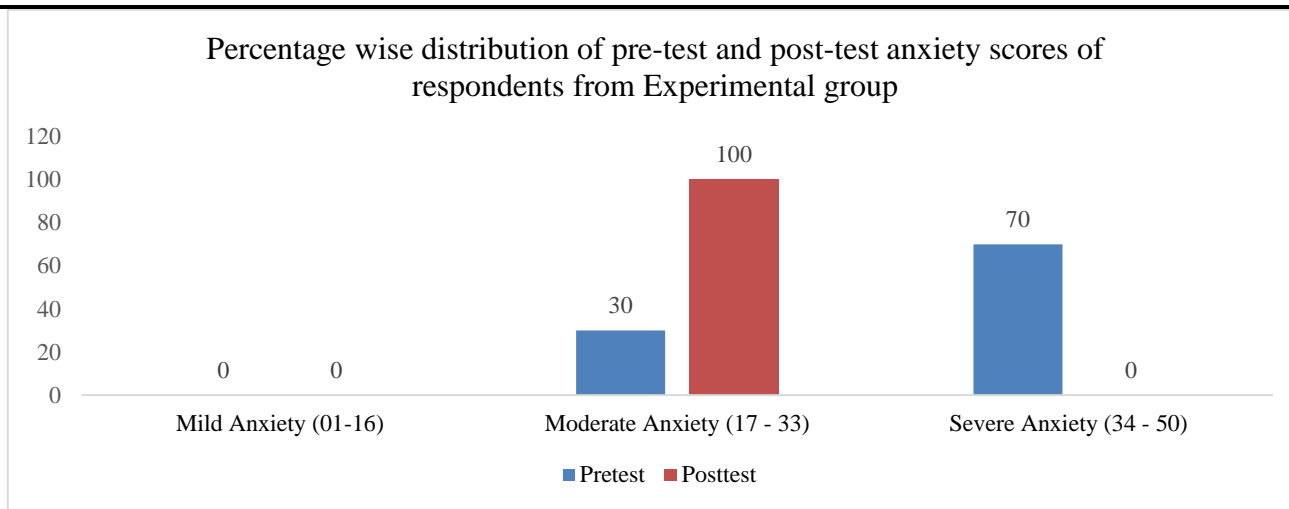
Table value = 1.860 at $p = \leq 0.05$

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in post-test perceived stress score of respondents from experimental and control group. **Highly significant difference was found between post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Experimental and control group (t = 21.962).**

SECTION II- B

Table No: 4.13 Frequency and percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Experimental group.

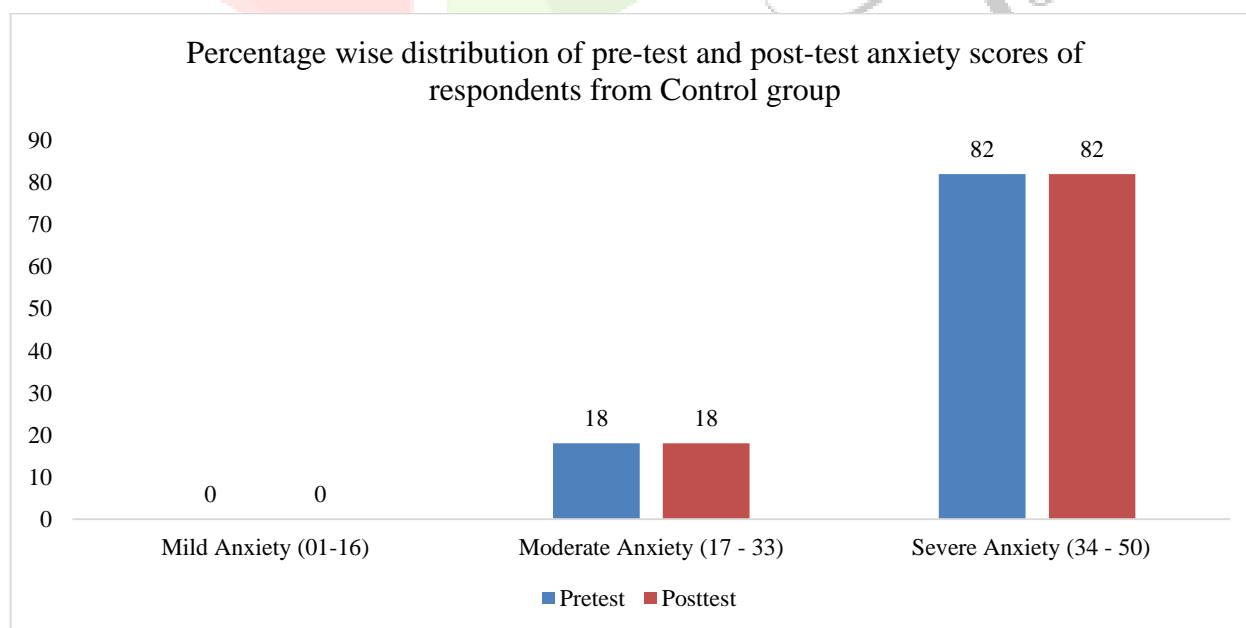
SN	Score	Pretest		Posttest	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Mild Anxiety (01-16)	00	00	00	00
2	Moderate Anxiety (17 - 33)	12	30	40	100
3	Severe Anxiety (34 - 50)	28	70	00	00



Percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from experimental group depicts that highest percentage in pretest respondents (70%) of them had severe anxiety scores and 30% of them had moderate anxiety scores. In posttest all (40), (100%) of the respondents had moderate anxiety scores. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was effective in reducing level of anxiety in Experimental group.**

Table No: 4.14 Frequency and percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Control group.

SN	Score	Pretest		Posttest	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Mild Anxiety (01-16)	00	00	00	00
2	Moderate Anxiety (17 - 33)	07	18	07	18
3	Severe Anxiety (34 - 50)	33	82	33	82



Percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from control group depicts that equal number of respondents in pretest and post-test (82%) of them had severe anxiety scores and (18%) of them had moderate anxiety scores. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was not effective in reducing level of anxiety in control group.**

Table No: 4.15 Paired 't' value of pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Experimental group.

S N	Group	Mean	SD	't' value	P Value	Level of significance
1	Pre-test	35.2	2.80	11.662	0.0001	Significant
2	Post-test	28.4	2.43			

table value = 2.132 at $p \leq 0.05$

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from Experimental group. **Highly significant difference was found between pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Experimental group** (t = 11.662)

Table No: 4.16 Paired 't' value of pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Control group.

SN	Group	Mean	SD	't' value	P Value	Level of significance
1	Pre-test	35.83	2.69	0.599	0.551	Not significant
2	Post-test	35.48	2.53			

table value = 2.132 at $p \leq 0.05$

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from control group. **No significant difference was found between pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from control group.** (t = 0.599)

Table No: 4.17 Unpaired 't' value of post-test anxiety score of respondents from Experimental group and Control group.

SN	Group	Mean	SD	't' value	P Value	Level of significance
1	Exp group	28.4	2.43	16.510	0.0001	Significant
2	Control Group	35.48	2.53			

table value = 1.860 at $p \leq 0.05$

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in post-test anxiety score of respondents from experimental and control group. **Highly significant difference was found between post-test anxiety score of respondents from Experimental and control group** (t = 16.510).

Section III-A

Table No: 4.18 Contingency table to find out the association between level of perceived stress score and age.

SN	Age	Moderate perceived stress		High perceived stress		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	21 to 25 years	28	25.90	9	11.10	37	1.30
2	26 to 30 years	24	25.20	12	10.80	36	
3	31 to 35 years	4	4.90	3	2.10	07	
Total		56		24		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 5.99$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (1.30) is less than table value (5.99) shows there is no significant association between Age and perceived stress score.

Table No: 4.19 Contingency table to find out the association between level of perceived stress score and Gender.

SN	Gender	Moderate perceived stress		High perceived stress		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Male	30	32.90	17	14.10	47	2.06
2	Female	26	23.10	7	9.90	33	
Total		56		24		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 3.841$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (2.06) is less than table value (3.841) shows there is no significant association between Gender and perceived stress score.

Table No: 4.20 Contingency table to find out the association between level of perceived stress score and Education.

SN	Education	Moderate perceived stress		High perceived stress		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Higher secondary education	10	9.10	3	3.90	13	2.77
2	Diploma	6	8.40	6	3.60	12	
3	Degree and above	40	38.50	15	16.50	55	
Total		56		24		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 5.99$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (2.77) is less than table value (5.99) shows there is **no significant association between Education and perceived stress score.**

Table No: 4.21 Contingency table to find out the association between level of perceived stress score and Monthly family income.

SN	Monthly family income	Moderate perceived stress		High perceived stress		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Rs.15,000 to Rs.20,000	18	8.54	5	4.46	23	5.24
2	Rs.20,001 to Rs.25,000	14	17.74	13	9.26	27	
3	Rs.25,001to Rs.30,000	18	14.46	4	7.54	22	
4	Rs.30, 001 to above	6	5.26	2	2.74	08	
Total		56		24		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 7.815$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (5.24) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is **no significant association between monthly family income and perceived stress score.**

Table No: 4.22 Contingency table to find out the association between level of perceived stress score and Occupation.

SN	Occupation	Moderate perceived stress		High perceived stress		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Private employee	8	7.70	3	3.30	11	2.06
2	Student	30	31.50	15	13.50	45	
3	Business	4	4.90	3	2.10	07	
4	Agriculture	14	11.90	3	5.10	17	
Total		56		24		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 7.815$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (2.06) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is **no significant association between occupation and perceived stress score.**

Section III- B

Table No: 4.23 Contingency table to find out the association between pre-test anxiety score and age.

SN	Age	Moderate Anxiety		Severe Anxiety		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	21 to 25 years	8	8.79	29	28.21	37	0.21
2	26 to 30 years	9	8.55	27	27.45	36	
3	31 to 35 years	2	1.66	5	5.34	07	
Total		19		61		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 5.9$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (0.21) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is **no significant association between Age and anxiety score.**

Table No: 4.24 Contingency table to find out the association between anxiety score and Gender.

SN	Gender	Moderate Anxiety		Severe Anxiety		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Male	10	11.16	37	35.84	47	0.38
2	Female	9	7.84	24	25.16	33	
Total		19		61		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 3.841$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (0.079) is less than table value (3.841) shows there is **no significant association between Gender and anxiety score.**

Table No: 4.25 Contingency table to find out the association between anxiety score and Education.

SN	Education	Moderate Anxiety		Severe Anxiety		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Higher secondary education	4	3.05	9	9.91	13	3.42
2	Diploma	5	2.85	7	9.15	12	
3	Degree and above	10	13.06	45	41.94	55	
Total		19		61		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 5.99$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (3.42) is less than table value (5.99) shows there is **no significant association between Education and anxiety score.**

Table No: 4.26 Contingency table to find out the association between pre-test anxiety score and Monthly family income.

SN	Monthly family income	Moderate Anxiety		Severe Anxiety		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Rs.15,000 to Rs.20,000	5	5.46	18	17.54	23	1.44
2	Rs.20,001 to Rs.25,000	5	6.41	22	20.59	27	
3	Rs.25,001to Rs.30,000	6	5.22	16	16.77	22	
4	Rs.30, 001 to above	3	1.90	5	6.10	08	
Total		19		61		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 7.815$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (1.44) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is **no significant association between monthly family income and anxiety score.**

Table No: 4.27 Contingency table to find out the association between pre-test anxiety score and Occupation.

SN	Occupation	Moderate Anxiety		Severe Anxiety		Total	χ^2
		O	E	O	E		
1	Private employee	3	2.61	8	8.39	11	0.22
2	Student	10	10.69	35	34.31	45	
3	Business	2	1.66	5	5.34	07	
4	Agriculture	4	4.04	13	12.96	17	
Total		19		61		80	

Table value of $\chi^2 = 7.815$

The above table shows that calculated value of chi square (0.8) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is **no significant association between Occupation and anxiety score.**

4. DISCUSSION:

Section I- Findings related to demographic data of the samples

1. Age: Sample distribution of respondents according to their Age depicts that highest percentage (37), (46.25%) of respondents were in the age group of 21 to 25 years and (36), 45% of the respondents were in the age group of 26-30 years and 8.75% of the respondents were in the age group of 31 to 35 years. It can be interpreted that most of the respondents under study were in the age group of 21 to 25 years.

2. Gender: Sample distribution of respondents according to their gender depicts that highest percentage 58.75% of respondents were male and 41.25% of the respondents were female. Hence, it can be interpreted that most of the respondents under this study were male.

3. Type of education: Sample distribution of respondents according to their Type of Education depicts that highest percentage (68.75%) of respondents had education up to Degree and above and 16.25 % of the respondents had higher secondary education and 15% of the respondents had Diploma. Hence, it can be interpreted that most of the respondents under this study were Degree and above.

4. Type of family: Sample distribution of respondents according to their type of family depicts that highest percentage (58.75%) of respondents were from nuclear family, 37.5% of the respondents were from joint

family. It can be interpreted that most of the respondents were from nuclear family.

5. Occupation: Sample distribution of respondents according to their occupation depicts that highest percentage (56.25%) of respondents were student, (21.25%) of the respondent's occupation was Agriculture, 13.75% of the respondents were private employee and 8.75% of the respondent's occupation was Business. It can be interpreted that most of the respondents were student.

6. Monthly family income: Sample distribution of respondents according to their Monthly family income depicts that highest percentage (33.75%) of respondents had monthly family income Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 25,000, (28.75%) had monthly family income Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000, 27.5% of the respondents had monthly income Rs. 25,001 to 30,000 and 10% of the respondents had monthly family income Rs. 30,001 and above. It can be interpreted that most of the respondents had monthly family income Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 25,000.

7. Residential background: Sample distribution of respondents according to their Residential Background depicts that highest percentage (82.5%) of respondents were from rural area and 17.5% of the respondents were from urban area. It can be interpreted that most of the respondents were from rural area.

Section II- A- Effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of perceived stress among students.

Percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test perceived stress scores of respondents from experimental group depicts that highest percentage in pretest 60% of them had moderate perceived stress score and 40% of the respondents had high perceived score. In post-test 62% of the respondents had low perceived stress score and 38% of the respondents had moderate perceived stress. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was effective in reducing level of stress in Experimental group.**

Percentage wise distribution of pre-test and post-test perceived stress scores of respondents from control group depicts that highest percentage in pretest (80%) of them had moderate perceived stress score and 20% of the respondents had high perceived stress. In post-test (70%) of the respondents had moderate perceived stress score and 28% of the respondents had high perceived stress. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was not effective in reducing level of stress in control group.**

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test perceived stress score of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from Experimental group. **Highly significant difference was found between pre and post-test score of breath awareness meditation technique of respondents from Experimental group** ($t = 45.001$).

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test perceived stress score of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from control group. **No significant difference was found between pre and post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Control group** ($t = 0.848$).

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in post-test perceived stress score of respondents from experimental and control group. **Highly significant difference was found between post-test perceived stress score of respondents from Experimental and control group** ($t = 21.962$).

Section II- B- Effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of anxiety among students.

Distribution of pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from experimental group depicts that highest percentage in pretest respondents (70%) of them had severe anxiety scores and 30% of them had moderate anxiety scores. In posttest all (40), (100%) of the respondents had moderate anxiety scores. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was effective in reducing level of anxiety in Experimental group.**

Distribution of pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from control group depicts that equal number of respondents in pretest and post-test (82%) of them had severe anxiety scores and (18%) of them had moderate anxiety scores. **Hence it can be interpreted that breath awareness meditation technique was not effective in reducing level of anxiety in control group.**

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from Experimental group. **Highly significant difference was found between pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from Experimental group** ($t = 11.662$).

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of respondents before and after giving breath awareness meditation technique from control group. **No significant difference was found between pre and post-test anxiety scores of respondents from control group.** ($t = 0.599$).

t value was calculated to analyze the difference in post-test anxiety score of respondents from experimental

and control group. **Highly significant difference was found between post-test anxiety score of respondents from Experimental and control group** ($t = 16.510$).

Section III- A: Analysis of data related to association between perceived stress with selected demographic variables.

- 1. Age-** The analysis was done to find out the association between perceived stress and age of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (1.30) is less than table value (5.99) shows there is no significant association between Age and perceived stress score.
- 2. Gender-** The analysis was done to find out the association between perceived stress and gender of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (2.06) is less than table value (3.841) shows there is no significant association between Gender and perceived stress score.
- 3. Education-** The analysis was done to find out the association between perceived stress and education of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (2.77) is less than table value (5.99) shows there is no significant association between education and perceived stress score.
- 4. Monthly family income-** The analysis was done to find out the association between perceived stress and monthly family income of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (5.24) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is no significant association between monthly family income and perceived stress score.
- 5. Occupation-** The analysis was done to find out the association between perceived stress and occupation of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (2.06) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is no significant association between occupation and perceived stress score.

Section III- B: Analysis of data related to association between pretest level of Anxiety score with demographic variables.

- 1. Age-** The analysis was done to find out the association between anxiety and age of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (0.21) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is no significant association between Age and anxiety score.
- 2. Gender-** The analysis was done to find out the association between anxiety and gender of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (0.079) is less than table value (3.841) shows there is no significant association between Gender and anxiety score.
- 3. Education-** The analysis was done to find out the association between anxiety and education of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (3.42) is less than table value (5.99) shows there is no significant association between Education and anxiety score.
- 4. Monthly family income-** The analysis was done to find out the association between anxiety and monthly family income of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (1.44) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is no significant association between monthly family income and anxiety score.
- 5. Occupation-** The analysis was done to find out the association between anxiety and occupation of respondents, where calculated value of chi square (0.8) is less than table value (7.815) shows there is no significant association between Occupation and anxiety score.

5. CONCLUSION:

The main aim of the study was to assess the effectiveness of breath awareness meditation technique on level of perceived stress and anxiety among students preparing for competitive exams in coaching centers of selected areas. The study came to the conclusion that students had severe and moderate perceived stress and severe anxiety in the pre- test. Breath awareness meditation technique was found to be effective in reducing the level of perceived stress of the samples and also is effective in reducing the level of anxiety of samples. The students who underwent breath awareness meditation technique had decrease in their level of perceived stress and anxiety. But the students in the control group who did not undergo any intervention had no change in the level of perceived stress and anxiety. Also the association was absent between perceived stress with demographic variables and anxiety with demographic variables.

6. REFERENCES :

- 1) Chobe R. The effect of breath meditation mindfulness of breathing on selected psychological variables of adolescents. 2016; Available from: <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/122998>.
- 2) Anxiety. Mental Health and Behavior. Available from: <https://medlineplus.gov/anxiety.html>
- 3) Breath meditation: A great way to relieve stress [Internet]. Harvard Health. 2014 Available from: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/breath-meditation-a-great-way-to-relieve-stress>
- 4) Mann V, Tiwari GN, Mishra L. Study of Stress and Coping Strategies in Competitive Entrance Exams Aspirants Attending Medical and Engineering Coaching Institutes in Delhi. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN INDUSTRY. 2021 Apr 3;9(2):789-802. Available from URL: <http://www.it-in-industry.org/index.php/itii/article/view/413>
- 5) Steimer T. The biology of fear-and anxiety-related behaviors. Dialogues in clinical neuroscience. 2022 Apr1. Available from URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181681/>
- 6) Shrivastava A, Rajan D. Assessment of Depression, Anxiety and Stress among Students Preparing for Various Competitive Exams. International Journal of Healthcare Sciences. 2018;6(1):50-72. available from URL https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ashish-Shrivastava-15/publication/337951203_Assessment_of_Depression_Anxiety_and_Stress_among_Students_Preparing_for_Various_Competitive_Exams/links/5df7ceb392851c836482f7b4/Assessment-of-Depression-Anxiety-and-Stress-among-Students-Preparing-for-Various-Competitive-Exams.pdf
- 7) Banerjee A. Is the pressure of competitive exams ruining an entire generation? [Internet]. Youth Ki Awaaz. 2021 [cited 2023 Mar 3]. Available from URL: <https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2021/06/pressure-of-competitive-exams-on-indian-students-are-we-ruining-an-entire-generation/>
- 8) Alidina S. Mindfulness for dummies. John Wiley & Sons; 2014 Nov 11. Available from URL: https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=37ZYBQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR13&ots=mxx3XhF7UG&sig=rwSo8uAbB5jzby-SyxShmIg97MQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

