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**IMPACT OF YOGA AND MEDITATION ON MENTAL HEALTH**

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We are living in uncertain times, social environmental and financial instability is most of our world right now , majority due to the consequences of the ongoing Covid Crises. Such global scenarios practicing yoga can be our “Secret Key’ for achieving holistic well-being, as it can assist us in bringing our minds, souls and bodies back to state of natural calm, rest and balance.

Even though yoga is an ancient practice but it is beneficial in today’s day age and the term yoga itself means to connect combine, balance or integrate mind and body. A genuine yogic approach is characteristically an integrative approach, orchestrating body,prana sense, mind and consciousness .Yoga can’t simple seclude the physical aspects of yoga like Asana. We can call “asana” the outer pharmaceutical of yoga. It essentially treats musculoskeletal disorder, yet it benefits numerous other conditions and gives an ideal form of exercise to everyone.Asana works best with regards to Ayurvedicdictary and life style recommendations. According to Patanjali”the primary aim of yoga is to restrict modification or tendencies of Chitta or mind. “YogaschittavrittinirodhPatanjali described the different levels of consciousness and stated that only a small fragment of the mind was conscious while its larger part was unknown. This was the same concept of Freud.

Meditation- Meditation means to engage in mental exercise [Such as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of mantra] the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness. Meditation is a practice in which an individual uses a technique- such as mindfulness or focusing the mind on a particular object, thought or activity to train attention and awareness and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state

Shapiro (1982) described three broad groupings of attentional strategies employed in meditation.

First, a focus on the very specific object within a field as in concentration.

Second, a focus on whole field (wide angle lens attention)

Third, a shifting back and forth between these two strategies as in integrated meditation.

Some key things about meditation.

(1) Meditation has been practiced in cultures all over the world for thousands of years.

(2) Nearly every religion, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, has a tradition of using meditation practice.

The importance of mental health is nothing new in the history of mankind. Human beings have two kinds of health, physical and mental or Psychological

Mental health also been defined as optimum development of human abilities, optimum growth towards maturity with freedom neurotic tension.

Triandis [1994] related health to physical and social surrounding.

Mental health was considered to be a reflection of individual response to stress and change in social, cultural, economic and social environment Corse et al (1996). Mental health is explained in terms of negative or positive of the scale value, which differs from individual to individual. On the other hand avoiding negative goals, mental illness is reduced. The closely

related problems with mental health are addiction and violence (Phillip 1992). Usually depending on an individual's positiveness towards his fellow members in the society itself. Adaptation to extreme social and physical environment might provide long term benefits to mental health [Glass (1989)]

Mental health – Practicing yoga can positively affect our mood, behaviour and overall mental health in various ways. Yoga practice brings increased concentration relaxation and peace of mind, helps to relieve symptoms of anxiety, stress .Yoga can even aid anyone to fight depression, maintain a positive self image and positive outlook towards life and help in developing high will power and tolerance [towards self and others]

Yoga As a Philosophy. – Dharana is the essential Centralization of mind and the improvement of the attention required to maintain any recuperating practice. Dhyana is reflective contemplation of the internal balance of awareness, which enables mind to mend it self.

Samadhi is unitary perspective Prana and awareness that builds up the full emotional and spiritual and discharges us from physical,emotional and spiritual suffering. These higher parts of yoga, help in giving the positive attitude and perspective for healing to on any level.

It is not merely a postures but a complete way of life. It is an integrated system of self culture which aims at harmonic development of body, mind and covers all aspects of human life that lead to mental harmony culminating into positive thinking happiness and peace. The yogic practice not only serve as prevention and care of mental disorders, but also result in mental peace and higher psychic and spiritual attainment.

Yoga in Neuropathy- believes in the inhered healing power of nature and uses non-invasive methods of intervention of the body by itself.

Patanjali and Yoga -We have our thoughts, emotions, feelings and conditionings in the mind. Yoga is the technique to control all these functions .BhagavatGeeta Lord Krishna defines. – yoga is a balanced state of the body, mind, emotions, balanced state of thoughts and intellect, balanced state of behaviour. Yoga is to maintain equilibrium of the mind in any situation .

Shri Aurobindo conceived the super mind state of mind.

Many researches revealed that yoga and meditation both help in calming and to center the mind. Yoga also brings mental benefits such as reduced anxiety and depression .

Study also shows that yoga and meditation may improve executive functions, such as reasoning-decision making , memory and learnings, reaction time and accuracy on tests of mental activity,improved mood .All exercise can boost mind by lowering levels of stress, harmonies, increasing the production of feel good chemicals known as endorphins and brings more oxygenated blood to our brain. Yoga may have additional benefits. It can affect mood by elevating levels of brain chemicals (GABA), which is associated with better mood and decreased anxiety.

Meditation also reduces activity in limbic system ,the part of the brain dedicated to emotions. As the emotional reactivity diminishes, we have more tempered response when faced with stressful situation. [Bussing, Michalsen, Khalsa (2012)].Desirable yoga practice and health characteristics of individual who practice yoga and to explore their beliefs regarding the effects of their yoga practice on their health( Bussing et al (2013))

(Bang, Donna (2009))-The older population may greatly benefited from the practice of yoga. The study proved that individual who practice yoga are not free from health concerns but most believe their improved because of yoga. Yoga may be beneficial for a number of populations including elderly with chronic health conditions.

Over 6 weeks period, findings indicate yoga's potential for improving psychology health in older adults. [Bonura. Tenenbaum, Gershon (2012)]

The study suggests that a brief yoga program. May be beneficial in decreasing anxiety, somatization of stress and discomfort, improving health related quality of life and self rated sleep quality.(Telles, Singh, Balkrishna (2012) )

Certain scientific findings justify many of the yogic assumptions and demonstrate the Psychotherapeutic Value of yogic practices. [ Vahia et at (1973)]

Elaborating dealt with the practice of various techniques of Patanjali and their therapeutic implication in treatment of psychiatric patients. They found the yogic treatment to be more efficient than Psychoanalysis or psychotherapy and behavior therapy.

According to a review in Harvard Mental Health (April 2009) Yoga has been shown to be

helpful in reducing anxiety and depression as well as some forms of Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).A Study Conducted at AIIMS, Delhi by (Gupta et al 2006) found reduction in both state and trait anxiety, within a period of 10 days with a intervention consisting of Asana, Pranayam, relaxation techniques group support, individualized advice and lecturers and films and philosophy of yoga, in daily life meditation stress management, nutrition and knowledge about the illness.

Psychological Effect of yoga- The Psychological effect of yoga is very important regarding reducing level of anxiety improving concentration, memory, learning and psychomotor performances.

Impact of Meditation on Mental health – Meditation is a practice of focusing one’s mind for a period of time. Some studies suggest that meditation can help managing negative emotions such as anger and fear.

According to a study (2017) Gallery Poll, 8 in 10 American report being frequently stressed or sometime stressed in their daily lives .In contrast 171 people said they rarely felt stressed and 47 said they never do.

In Present Context – Modern era is the era of science. Man’s life has become very resourceful .We are completely based on external means. The result is that man is satisfied with the pleasure he gets from his senses and never tries to look inside himself. In this way,a situation of imbalance arises between outer and inner world due to which stress and outbreaks of various types of diseases are increasing. These diseases are spreading from the family to the global level. The means of nature are being increasingly exploited which is the cause of many disturbances .Also increasing use of medicines is making human physiologically disabled and weak. In this situation when we look at yoga, we find that in today’s situation it can help human life in various forms especially in relieving stress and preventing disturbances that is happening in nature and environment .In this way with the advancement of science the relevance of yoga and meditation is increasing day by day.

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