



Meditation: A curative and cleansing method of ashtang yoga

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Abstract

As per the Patanjalyog sutra, the state of 'Dhyana' or Meditation is attained when an individual experiences a consistent state of consciousness for a prolonged period. The 'Yog Vasishtha' posits that the origin of all actions lies in the mind, which formulates a plan of action that is subsequently executed by the physical body. Furthermore, the manifestation of pain occurs initially in the mental realm before it is expressed in the physical medium, which is referred to as 'Vyadhi'. This condition may manifest in various forms, both known and unknown. The extant literature on diverse meditation techniques suggests that meditation can potentially mitigate the impact of karmic imprints stored in the karmashaya. Karmaj Vyadhis, or ailments that are deemed incurable by conventional medical treatments, may be ameliorated or even cured through meditation practices. Furthermore, meditation may also serve as a preventive measure against future illnesses. One such meditation method is Shawasan Dhyana or Atmayog Sadhana. Empirical evidence from practitioners who have undergone this technique indicates a heightened sense of self-awareness. The present study utilized a questionnaire consisting of 13 items to collect data from a sample of 45 individuals who are practitioners of Atmayog Sadhana across varying time periods. The analysis of the collected data is being conducted in accordance with established research methodology.

Keywords: Meditation, atmayog sadhana, shawasan meditation

Introduction

As per the Patanjali Yogasutras, the term 'Meditation' refers to the attainment of unity of the suffix through Dharana or perception. When an individual concentrates their mind on any form of medium, such as a visual or auditory stimulus, a state of peace and happiness may arise. However, if the mind is unstable, it may be subject to fluctuations in thought. When a thought arises, the mind may become fixated on it and continue to wander from one thought to another. Therefore, the presence of a medium is crucial for achieving concentration of the mind. During the pratyahara stage of Ashtanga yoga, the senses are directed inward, and the perception of the medium becomes strengthened. However, any suffix that arises is ultimately transient and may be subject to continuous flow. With repeated experiences of this continuity, the medium may eventually be forgotten, and the mind may settle into a state of Samadhi, characterized by a sense of beyond experience.

The present study investigates the impact of continuity on the Manomay kosha, Pranmay Kosha, and Annamay Kosha. The emergence of psychedelic thoughts on the Manomay Kosha is effectively halted, leading to the cessation of associated rituals. This process also results in the gradual disappearance of previous rites. The process commences at the level of the mind, beginning with thoughts, followed by emerging desires, and culminating in actions. The karmas resulting from these actions may be fulfilled partially or fully, or may remain unfulfilled, and are stored in the psychic corpus. As the accumulation of karmas increases, it manifests in the Annamay Kosha or Body, resulting in disease. The order of progression from Manomay kosha to Annamay kosha is 'Aadhi' to 'Vyadhi,' or

disease. However, a solution may be achieved by addressing the Pranmay Kosha, which can effectively cure the disease or prevent further adverse effects.

Meditation has been observed to provide a beneficial effect on the direction of thoughts. It has been noted that expectations, which may be based on false premises, are dispelled through the practice of meditation. Additionally, the negative consequences of karma are gradually diminished, leading to a sense of release and the avoidance of future pain. The previous rites that may have been hindering one's progress are gradually reduced and eventually eliminated. Furthermore, disorders that may have been present are observed to decrease in intensity and eventually recover completely.

The commonalities among meditation practices include the nature of 'The Meditation', its effects, and the potential outcomes. Although the paths to a village may differ, the ultimate objective remains the same. The journey towards this objective must be sustained, as is the case with meditation techniques. This article provides an overview of various meditation methods and their associated discussions.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the relationship between the concepts of 'Meditation and Shawasan Dhyana or Atmayog Sadhana'
2. Their potential effects, through an exploration of relevant literature.

An overview of meditation methods and techniques

There exist diverse methods of meditation, including those outlined in various texts.

1. Upanishadas

- a. **The Mundak Upanishad:** for instance, advocates for the practice of meditation through the chanting of Omkara, with a focus on the Supreme Being. The Upanishad further suggests that the heart is akin to a wheel, with all pulses serving as joints, and thus, meditation on the Supreme Being should be directed towards this region. ^[5, 16]
- b. **The Shweta Shwatar Upanishads:** propose the visualization of the creator of nature within one's heart, with the mind and intelligence joining in. Pratyahara involves the gathering of all senses for meditation, with attention focused on omkara. Asanas and Pranayama are recommended for effective meditation practice. With diligent practice, disease dissipates and self-awareness manifests, akin to the radiance of a gem after being cleansed of dust. ^[5, 13]
- c. **The Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad:** posits that the instability of the mind can be overcome through meditation, wherein the mind is assured of its consciousness of 'Brahman' and reminded of the holy soul through the phrase 'So-Ham'. ^[4, 6]
- d. **The Yoga Tattva Upanishad:** suggests that by focusing on the deity associated with the five elements of the body, one can gain mastery over these principles. ^[1]
- e. **The Dhyana Bindu Upanishad:** asserts that vitality resides in the eight petals of the Heart lotus, and that by concentrating on Omkara or Pranav and shrinking the senses, one can attain freedom from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Through releasing the mind and realizing the selfness, one can achieve this goal. ^[1]

2. Yoga Texts

- a. **The Yajnavalkya Smriti:** highlights the significance of concentration of the mind and inhibition of the mind's attitudes in transforming the soul into a Brahma congruent Being, which is the essence of meditation. ^[2]
- b. **The Shiva Samhita:** describes the Brahma Padma situated above the Adnya Chakra, where Naada, Bindu, and Shakti converge in three pits. The centre of the head houses the Parabrahma in the lotus of a thousand petals, with the moon of 16 arts and its nectar representing the God-like swan. By directing prana through the Sushumna and meditating on the Swan-like Parabrahma, one can attain spiritual enlightenment. ^[9]
- c. **The Gherand Samhita's:** sixth chapter provides information on meditation, specifically the methods of Sthul, Jyoti, and Sukshma dhyana. The text describes the Heart space as a sea of ambrosia, containing four holy trees made by Vedas and various flowers, with the sound of a cuckoo singing. Sthul meditation brings happiness to the mind. Jyoti meditation involves focusing on the Flames of Omkar between the eyebrows. Shambhavi mudra meditation involves focusing on the root plexus, where the spiral kundalini is settled, and is considered a million times more special than Jyoti meditation. ^[14]

- d. **Yog Vasishtha: Soaham Chinmatrameverati Chintanam Dhyana Muchyate |**
Dhyanasya vismruitihi samyak samadhirabhidhiyate ||

The act of researching oneself, or 'Twam', is considered the essence of the self or Brahma. Through this process, one can attain pure self-awareness and engage in contemplative meditation. By studying the self and the world, the Chitta can achieve stability in self-awareness. ^[3, 11]

3. Meditation by Gurudev Shri Shri Ravishankar: The mediation process begins with Om Chanting, followed by experiencing and feeling Deep Breathing. The sadhak should then focus on each chakra for five minutes, starting with the Root Chakra and progressing through Sacral, Solar Plexus, Heart, Throat, Third Eye, and finally Crown Chakra. ^[22]

4. Himalayan Meditation: The technique known as 'Samarpan Meditation' was established and instructed by Shri Shivkripanand Swami. It involves the recitation of affirmations such as 'I am a holy soul' and 'I am pure soul', followed by a five-minute chant of 'Om Shri Shivkripanand swami namo namaha'. The practitioner then focuses on their Chitta for 30 minutes, resulting in a state of thoughtlessness. Swami asserts that this practice enhances immunity and is an effective means of calming the mind. ^[21]

5. Four parts meditation: Assuming a meditation context, adopt an upright and composed posture while focusing on one's breath. Visualize a stream of white or golden light emanating from the left thigh, passing through the head, and exiting on the right side. While inhaling, silently recite the mantra "soham," and exhale while mentally counting to two. Maintain this practice for 10-15 minutes. Subsequently, cultivate a state of thoughtlessness without the use of the mantra. For five minutes, visualize the flow of white or golden light throughout the entire body. Finally, envision the successful attainment of one's goal and experience the accompanying joy. ^[23]

6. Kriyayog by Swami Satyanand: By focusing on observation rather than concentration, individuals can improve their physical fitness and achieve a healthy body through the use of Asanas, Pranayam, and cleansing techniques. It is important to observe natural breathing patterns during daily activities. With consistent practice, individuals can gain control over their mind by observing and clearing their thoughts. ^[7]

7. Shaktipat Sadhana: Auto suggestion is a technique whereby a Sadhak concentrates on an object such as a photo, shape, idol, or candle light. With the blessings of a Sadguru, the Sadhak enters a Trans stage and expresses themselves through laughing, crying, singing, or shouting in various noises. This process cleanses the mind and the expression changes for each individual. In India, there are various paths of this meditation, including Rajnish Ashram, Nirmaladevi's Sahajyog, and Swami Muktanand. ^[7]

8. Rajyog Meditation: This parampara emphasizes the importance of focusing and concentrating on Jyoti-Bindu swarup Shiv paramatma. One should maintain the thought that 'Myself is Jyotibindu soul' and "I am a child of the great godfather great soul which is Paramatma". These thoughts should be revised daily 3-4 times. ^[7, 15]

9. Dr Benson's Method: Meditation has been found to promote physical and mental well-being by inducing a range of physiological changes. These include an increase in alpha waves in the brain, a decrease in pulse rate, oxygen consumption, muscle tension, and lactate levels in the blood. Dr. Benson conducted research on these effects using his own meditation technique, which involves teaching the Relaxation Response through counting numbers 1 and 2 while sitting in a relaxed position for 10-20 minutes, once or twice daily. [7, 8]

10. Dnyanmudra Meditation by Swami Chakrananda: The practice of Bhasrika pranayama for 20 minutes followed by sitting in Dnyanmudra for 40 minutes can lead to spontaneous meditation. Attention should be paid to the contact between the thumb and pointing fingers in Dnyanmudra, which occurs at a micro level and facilitates the meditative state. This method is equally effective as other forms of meditation. [7]

11. Prankriya by Purnanand: Swami Purnanand's Dnyanmudra method involves remote control of the body through Pranayam. Practitioners should focus on the micro level of the pranayama and observe their thoughts as a third party using the 'Soham' technique. A minimum of 48 minutes of practice is recommended for 100 hours of completion. [7]

12. The pursuit of happiness from various actions: The practice of meditation involves various techniques such as focusing on breathing, relaxation, self-observation, and cultivating positive attitudes towards others. Through these practices, the Manashakti Centre in Lonawala, Pune offers training on self-study sadhana, which aims to reduce selfishness and ego. [7]

13. Vipashyana and Preksha Dhyam: Preksha is a meditation practice in Gautama Buddha's tradition that involves observing one's attention. It entails viewing one's joys and sorrows in the body, paying attention to subtle changes and sensations, and observing the inhalation and exhalation of the nose. This methodology is crucial, and a slight modification involves observing the inhaling and exhaling during shavasana. [7, 20]

14. Krishnamurti Method: Daily observation of breathing for an hour in the morning, with a focus on thoughts, can lead to a calming of the mind. This practice promotes a constant friendship with the body, allowing for a peaceful experience without indulging in bodily comforts. Enjoying meals with happiness and experiencing brief moments of peace can result in a calm and stable demeanour during all actions. [10]

15. Heartfulness: The present discourse pertains to a technique of self-awareness through meditation. The said technique involves the utilization of a primary process known as 'Pranahuti', which is imparted to novice practitioners by experienced 'sadhakas'. It is noteworthy that a vast corpus of research literature exists on this particular method. [12]

16. Shawasan Dhyam: As per Maharshi Patanjali, Asana refers to a stable physical and mental posture that leads to non-dualistic effects. The practice of Asanas promotes

stability and happiness, and helps to alleviate internal conflicts. The 'Abhijat Yoga Sadhana' delves into this concept in detail. Dr. Samprasad Vinod, the founder of this Sadhana, introduced the 'Shavasana Dhyana' meditation technique based on various yoga texts and seeker experiences. This unique practice commences with Shavasana meditation and encompasses meditational yoga poses and a meditational lifestyle. [17, 18]

Practice of shavasana meditation

1. To achieve a comfortable sleeping position, it is recommended to lie on the back with hands positioned approximately 1-1.5 feet away from the body, with the palms facing upwards and fingers relaxed. The feet should be spaced 1.5 to 2 feet apart, and the head can be positioned to the left, right, or centre. It is important to ensure that the body is in a relaxed and comfortable state.
2. It is recommended that the entire body be relaxed, starting from the left side and progressing to the right side, with a conscious and mindful focus on the body. This includes relaxation of all body parts, from the feet to the head.
3. Once the body achieves complete relaxation and stress reduction, focus on the natural breathing process without exerting control.
4. Achieving a state of relaxation and reduced stress requires synchronizing the body and mind, comprehending breathing patterns, and cultivating a friendly relationship with thoughts. One should refrain from reacting to thoughts, and instead allow them to come and go freely.
5. Following a 15-20 minute meditation, perform supplementary exercises for the neck, shoulders, hands, waist, knees, and feet.
6. Subsequently, the asanas of Supine, Sleeping, and Sitting positions ought to be approached amicably during meditation to enable the mind to register physical changes.
7. Following this, Surya Namaskar, Kapalbhathi, Shuddhi Kriya, Happy and Wordless Pranayama, Anulom Vilom Pranayama, Omkar Chanting, and Shanti Mantra should be practiced, followed by another session of Shavasana meditation.
8. The daily practice of 'Abhijat Yoga Sadhana' is believed to lead to self-realization. This is supported by the Patanjali Yoga Sutra, which states that through the practice of 'Tada Drashtu Swaropeavasthanam', the seeker gradually experiences happiness and peace by removing the confusion of thoughts. As a result, this state of being persists even when living in the outside world, allowing the individual to witness events without being affected by them emotionally. Over time, this leads to the development of a stable and calm lifestyle. The emphasis is on gaining a better understanding of situations, thoughts, and people without adopting a right or wrong role.

The Maharishi Vinod Research Foundation (MVRF) located in Pune, India, has been providing training in advanced yoga practices since its inception in 1983. The Foundation emphasizes that yoga should not be viewed solely as a physical exercise, but rather as an integral component of daily life. The organization places great importance on the quality of the Asanas, rather than the quantity, with the

ultimate goal of transforming one's perspective on life. Through consistent practice, individuals can experience sustainable peace of mind, contentment, happiness, and openness in behaviour, leading to a meditative daily routine. This approach enables individuals to effectively manage and overcome the challenges and stressors of daily living.

Hypothesis

H1: Meditation impacts on disposition results in a state of blissful daily existence.

H2: Meditation has no impact on individuals' attitude and daily life.

Research method

The present study researcher used an experimental research method to investigate the effectiveness of Shawasan Meditation or Atmyog sadhana.

Sample selection

A test design was selected to gather feedback from 48 sadhakas who practice this meditation method. These participants were administered a questionnaire consisting of 13 questions to assess their experiences with the meditation practice.

Research tool

For the present research researcher used Percentile and Correlation techniques for statistical analysis.

Data analysis

Correlation between Meditation and Experience

H1: Meditation impacts on disposition results in a state of blissful daily existence.

H2: Meditation has no impact on individuals' attitude and daily life.

Observed frequencies	Completely	A small	A lot	Total
1 Hour	3	8	15	26
1-2 hour	1	13	3	17
more than 2 hour	2	1	1	4
Total	6	22	19	47

Expected Frequencies	Completely	A small	A lot	Total
1 Hour	3.319149	12.170213	10.510638	26
1-2 hour	2.170213	7.957447	6.872340	17
more than 2 hour	0.510638	1.872340	1.617021	4
Total	6	22	19	47

	(O-E)*2/E	
(O-E)	(O-E)*2	((O-E)*2)/E
-0.31915	0.101856	0.030687398
-1.17021	1.369398	0.63099708
-4.17021	17.39067	1.428954025
4.489362	20.15437	1.917520889
5.042553	25.42734	3.195414723
-3.872340	14.99502	2.181937949
1.489362	2.218198	4.343971631
-0.872340	0.760978	0.406431335
-0.617021	0.380715	0.235442329
Total		14.37135736

Chi calculated (Sum of ((O-E)*2)/E)	14.37136
degrees of Freedom (r-1)(c-1)	4
Chi_table	9.487729

Conclusion

Here Calculated value > Chi Table Value here we reject the Null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. we can achieve our objective including yoga on our daily routine.

Conclusion

The practice of meditation encompasses various techniques. In contemporary society, individuals are increasingly preoccupied with competition, envy, and comfort, leading to a decline in both mental and physical health.

As a result, illnesses and disorders often go unnoticed until they become problematic. Despite taking numerous medications, stress levels remain high, highlighting the importance of yoga and meditation.

By adopting a meditation practice, individuals can learn to view both positive and negative events in life with equanimity, cultivating an attitude of acceptance. Meditation is not a process that can be achieved through effort, but rather a natural occurrence.

However, following the path demonstrated by Sadhguru can lead to successful meditation practice.

Further literature references on the topic of Meditation can be sought in addition to the provided reference. Despite numerous scientific studies, there is no assurance of complete recovery from illnesses through medication alone. Thus, it is imperative to investigate the underlying causes of such ailments and tailor treatments accordingly. The dissemination of research findings to the public is crucial.

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