

Spirituality among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Most of the research and researcher's focus on the Physical and Therapeutic benefits of Yoga Asanas and Pranayama's, but very few focus on the practice of entire Ashtang Yoga (eight-limbed yoga) solely and their effects on Spirituality. The current study was undertaken to assess the level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners who practice basic Yoga Asanas and Pranayama's and Non-Yoga practitioners who doesn't Practice yoga at all. The sample comprised of 100 participants (50 Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga practitioners each) belonging to the age range of 19 to 25 years. The Spiritual Well-Being scale by Paloutzian & Ellison (1982) was used for the purpose of assessing Spirituality, which has 2 subscales namely Religious and Existential well-being. Research is Exploratory in nature and the Sample Survey Research Design was adopted. The obtained results were analysed using Independent Samples t-test. The findings indicated that there is no significant difference in the level of spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners. However, the study also revealed that the level of Religious well-being is comparatively high among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners than Non-Yoga Practitioners. Practicing only Yoga Asanas and Pranayama's, may not have much effect on Spiritual development of an individual, but practice of all the eight limbed yoga's may have.

Keywords: *Spiritual well-being, Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners, Non-yoga practitioners*

Yoga is a philosophy of life-based on certain psychological facts, and its aim is the development of a perfect balance between the body and the mind that permits union with the divine, i.e., an ideal harmony between the individual and therefore the cosmos. According to the yogic tradition, evolution is a systematic process through which a person learns to harmonize oneself. It is a process through which one can develop the ability to express the qualities of oneself optimally and creatively. It is the union of body, mind, and spirit, in this state individual experiences enhanced emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being (Ananda, 2003). Yoga is an ancient system of philosophy, lifestyle, and techniques that evolve the entire person, the physical, the vitality, the mind and emotions, wisdom, ethics and a better quality of relationships, and the realization of the spiritual reality of each of us (Vivekananda, 2006).

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Yoga has originated from the Sanskrit term 'yuj', which means 'joining together', unity, harmony, the balance between internal and external consciousness and manifestations. The mechanism by which the human beings can evolve to their highest potential was mentioned by sage Patanjali in the instruction manual on meditation, the 'Yoga Sutras' over 2,500 years ago (Vivekananda, 2005). The word "yoga" suggests that, "which brings you to the current reality". Literally, it means "union." Union means it brings you to the ultimate reality, where individual manifestations of life are surface bubbles in the process of creation (Sadhguru, 2017).

Eight limbs of Yoga:-

Sage Patanjali has described these eight limbs of Yoga (Ashtang Yoga) in his Yoga Sutra. These are: - Yamas, Niyamas, Yoga asanas, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhyana, Samadhi

1. Yamas - Truth, Honesty, Continence, Non-violence, Non-possession
2. Niyamas- Self-study, Cleanliness, Tapas, contentment
3. Yoga Asanas- These are the different postures and exercises which are done to be fit and healthy
4. Pranayama- These are the breathing exercises
5. Pratyahara – It means withdrawal of senses from external information
6. Dharana- It means Concentration
7. Dhyana – It means meditation
8. Samadhi- It means integration. Integration is a state wherein the subject, object and the process become one.

Yoga Asanas

The word asana means 'seat' or 'position'. It is the primary requisite for the development of the physical, moral, mental and spiritual aspects of an individual's personality. Asanas at a deeper level mean the full expression of mind-body integration, in which an individual is aware of the flow of life energy throughout the body (Yogendra, 2000). Asanas provide endurance value throughout the day and increase the physical and emotional flexibility in addition to the direct benefits. Some of the asanas includes Halasana (Plow Pose), Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose), Dhanurasana (Bow pose), etc. The life force which is the essential energy that animates inert matter into living, evolving biological beings is also known as 'Prana'. Free flow of prana throughout the body and mind leads to a healthy and vibrant individual. A key way to enliven prana, according to Patanjali is through conscious breathing techniques known as pranayama. Pranayama means mastering the life force which indicates the intimate relationship between the breath and mind. Some of the examples of pranayama are: Bhastrika (Bellows breath), Kapalabhati (Shining breath), Dirgha (Complete breath), NadiSodhana (Channel clearing breath), etc. The mental and physical relaxation is very much essential for an individual which is obtained by practicing asanas and pranayama. The Physical effort engenders a demand for blood by the body. All the body parts receive adequate blood supply during the relaxation after the execution of the asana. For the maximum blood supply an individual should completely relax before beginning and ending each asana with rhythmic breathing practice (Ananda, 2003; Chopra and Simon, 2006; Yogendra, 2000). Khanna, S. and Jeffrey M. Greeson, (2013) Yoga and mindfulness teachings share a fundamental belief in "mindful" awareness of experiences and emotions as they arise, without having to change them.

Spiritual well-being

A sense of peace and happiness stemming from an individual's relationship with the spiritual aspects of life.

The spiritual well-being is often outlined as a sense of human action with the others, having which means associate degree goal in life and having belief and relation with an exalted power (Hawks, et al. 1995). The term search for the sacred is a widely accepted description of spirituality. The unique and distinctive function of religion is defined by spirituality (Snyder, Lopez, Pedrotti, 2011). Spirituality is a quality that goes beyond religious affiliation that strives for inspirations, reverence, and meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in any God. The spiritual dimension tries to be in harmony with the universe, strives for answers about the infinite and comes into focus when the person faces emotional stress, physical illness or death (Murray and Zetner, 1989).

Summary of Review of literature:

The Study's revealed that those who were practicing Yoga showed an increase in their Spiritual well-being. One of the studies showed that mindfulness enhanced spiritual well-being by increasing participant's sense of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and 'connectedness'. Not much of empirical study has been conducted on the level of spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners. An information from a book named The science of Yoga: The Risks and Rewards suggested that yoga caused harm to the people who practiced it– from ruptured disks and stroke to brain injury. However very less evidences are there to justify that Yoga actually causes harm widespread.

METHOD

Rational for Present study:

The understanding of different branches of yoga like Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga particularly, on the effects on human health, mind and behavior is limited. Hence, the present study

Research Question:

Is there any significant difference in the level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners?

Objective:

- 1: To find the level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non Yoga Practitioners?
- 2: To find the level of Religious well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners?
- 3: To find the level of Existential well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners?

Hypotheses:

- Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of Spiritual well-being among Non Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners.
- Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of Religious well-being among Non Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners.
- Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of Existential well-being among Non Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners.

Variables:

Independent Variable: Non Ashtang Yoga Practitioners, Non-Yoga Practitioners

Dependent Variable: Spiritual well-being

Participants:

Purposive sampling method was used for data collection. Sample for the study consisted of 100 participants (50 practitioners and non-practitioners of yoga each) belonging to the age range of 19 to 25 years, who could communicate in English.

Operational Definition:

Non- Ashtang Yoga Practitioners are those who have been doing basic Yoga asanas and Pranayama's on regular basis for minimum of 1 year but not practicing the entire eight limbed yoga i.e. Ashtang Yoga.

Non- Yoga Practitioners are those who have never practiced yoga in their life time.

Tools:

Spiritual well-being:

The Spiritual Well Being scale was developed by Paloutzian & Ellison in the year of 1982 with adequate reliability and validity. It is composed of 20 items, 10 of which assess religious well-being and 10 of each assess existential well-being

Personal Data Sheet

The personal datasheet was prepared by the researcher. The data sheet contains Socio-demographic details like Name, Age, Sex, Education, Marital status, etc.

Research Design:

Research is Exploratory in nature and the Sample Survey Research Design is adopted.

Procedure:

Written Consent was taken from the Institution. The Purpose of the study was explained to the participants. The participants who fulfilled the criteria were met personally by the researcher. The participant's willingness to participate in the study was ascertained after the establishment of rapport. The socio-demographic details were collected. The participants were briefed about the inventory and was provided with clear instructions. After the completion of administration of Spiritual well-being Scale, the inventory was collected and was checked for any kind of omissions. After completion of all the assessments the researcher spent some time with the participants and they were thanked for their participation and cooperation. Then the scoring was done for the responses obtained and interpretation were made.

Ethical Issues:

Written consent was obtained from the participants of the research. The participants were assured about the confidentiality of the information provided by them. The obtained data has been used only for the purpose of the research. Participants were permitted to withdraw from the research any time

Statistical Analysis:

Descriptive statistics: Mean and Standard Deviation

Inferential Statistics: Independent samples t-test

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained were analysed using Independent samples t-test. The independent samples t-test was used to understand the significant difference in the level of Spiritual well-being among Non- Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non-practitioners of Yoga.

Socio-demographic details

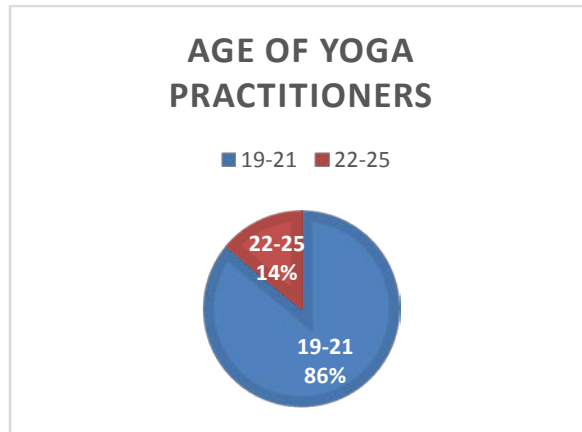


Figure 1: Age of Yoga Practitioners

The age of Yoga practitioners indicates that 86% falls under the age range of 19-21 and 14% falls under the age range of 22-25.

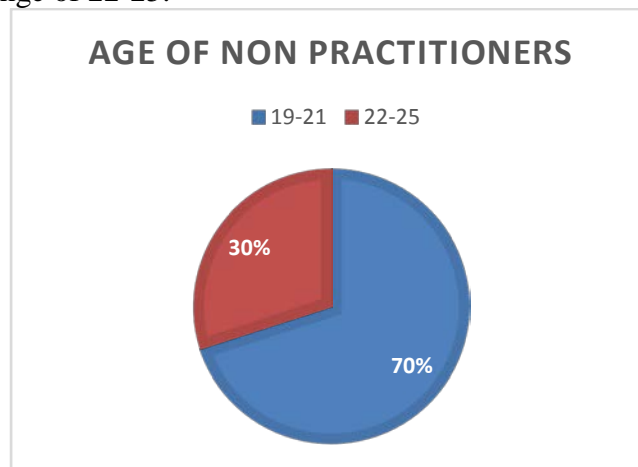


Figure 2: Age of Non Practitioners

The age of Non-practitioners indicates that 70% of the participants falls under the age range of 19-21 and 30% falls under age range of 22-25.

Religion

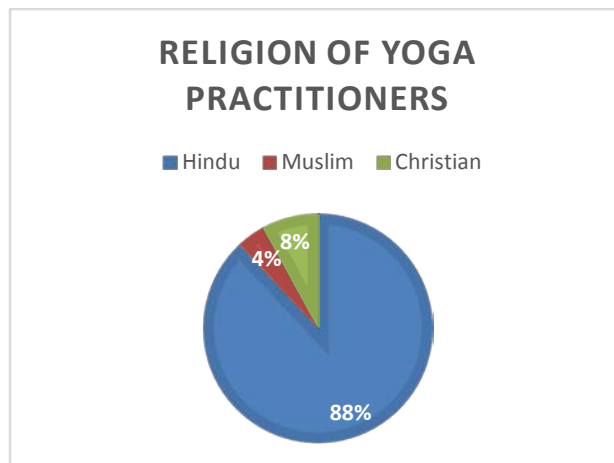


Figure 3: Religion of Yoga Practitioners

Spirituality among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners

The Religion of Yoga Practitioners indicates that 88% of the participants are Hindu, 4% are Muslim and 8% are Christian

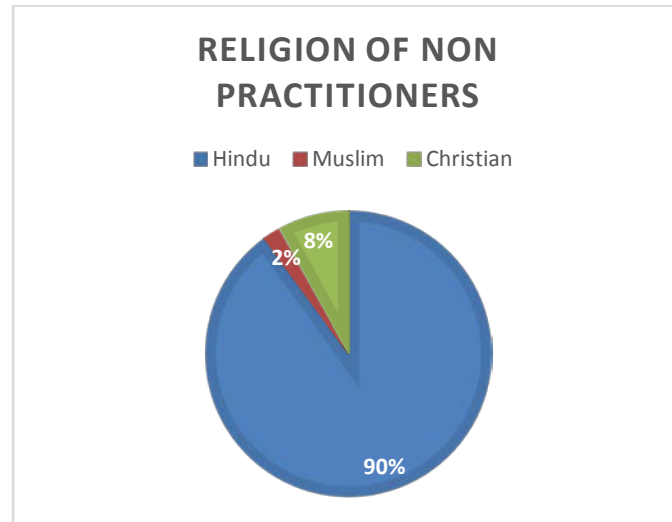


Figure 4: Religion of Non-Practitioners

The Religion of Non-Practitioners indicates that 90% of the participants are Hindu, 2% are Muslim and 8% are Christian.

Variables

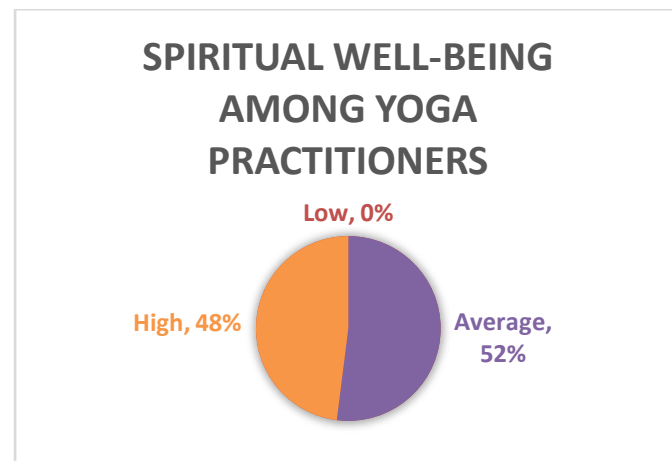


Figure5: Level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners.

The Level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners indicates that 0% of the participants showed low level of Spiritual well-being, while 52% of the participants showed average Spiritual well-being and 48% showed high Spiritual well-being.

Spirituality among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners

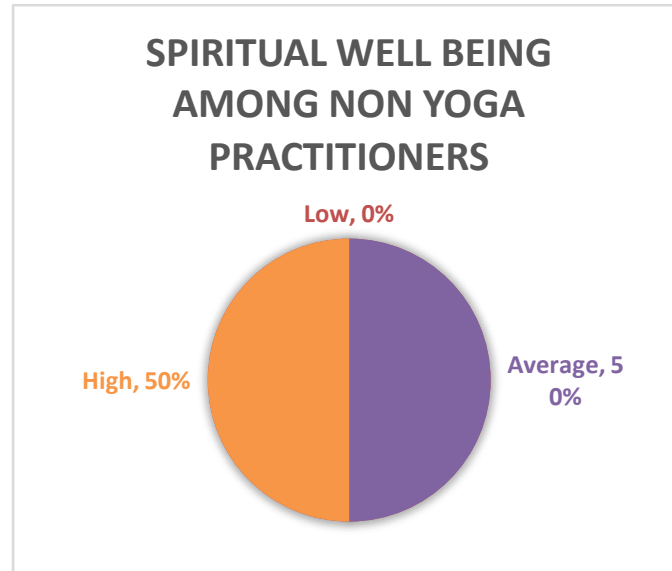


Figure 6: Level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Yoga Practitioners.

The Level of Spiritual well-being among Non-yoga practitioners indicates that 0% of the participants showed low level of Spiritual well-being, while 50% of the participants showed average Spiritual well-being and 50% showed high Spiritual well-being.

Independent Samples t-test

Table 1: Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation and t value for Religious well-being, Existential well-being and over all Spiritual well-being among Non- Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga practitioners.

Variables	Non- Ashtang Yoga Practitioner	Non-Yoga Practitioners	N	df	t	P value
Religious well-being	M- 44.22 SD-7.346	M-43.12 SD-8.273	100	98	0.703	0.484
Existential well-being	M- 37.34 SD-4.074	M- 37.32 SD-4.345	100	98	0.024	0.484
Over all Spiritual well-being	M- 44.22 SD-7.346	M- 43.12 SD-8.275	100	98	0.703	0.484

Spirituality among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners

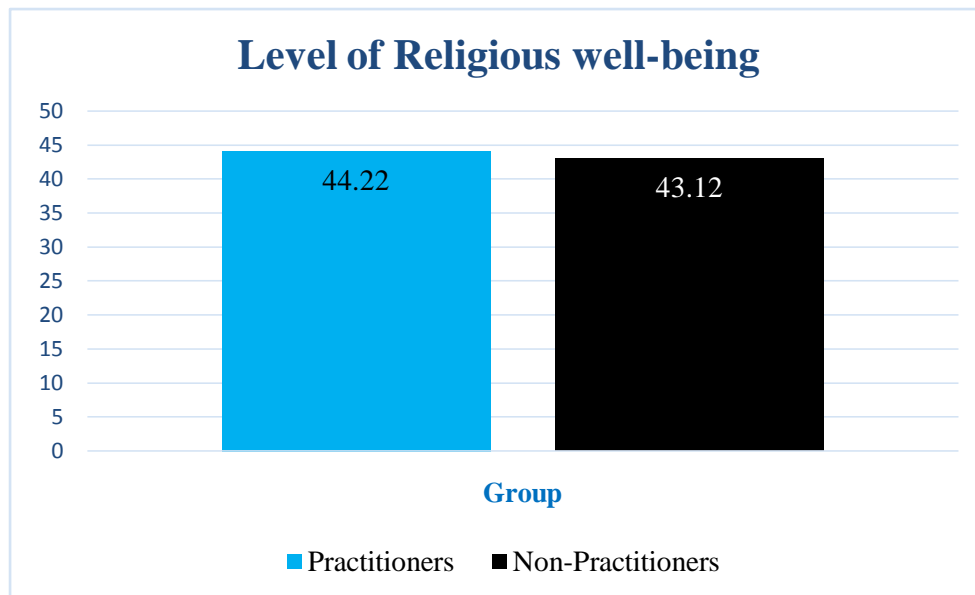


Figure 7: Mean Scores of Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non- Practitioners of Yoga on Religious well-being.

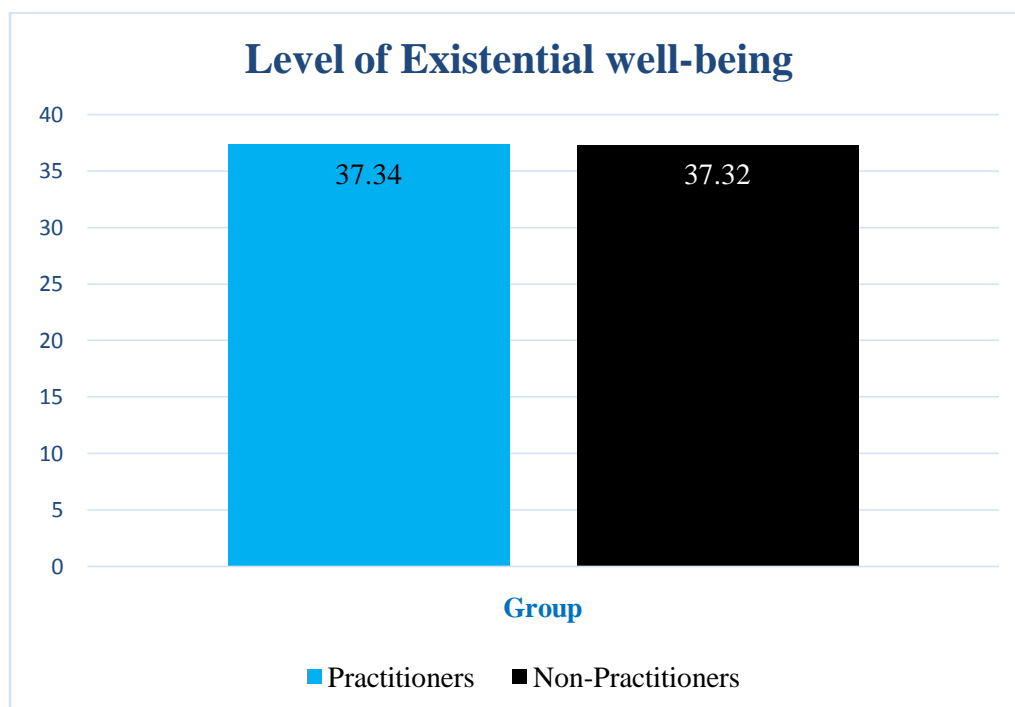


Figure 8: Mean Scores of Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non- Practitioners of Yoga on Existential well-being.

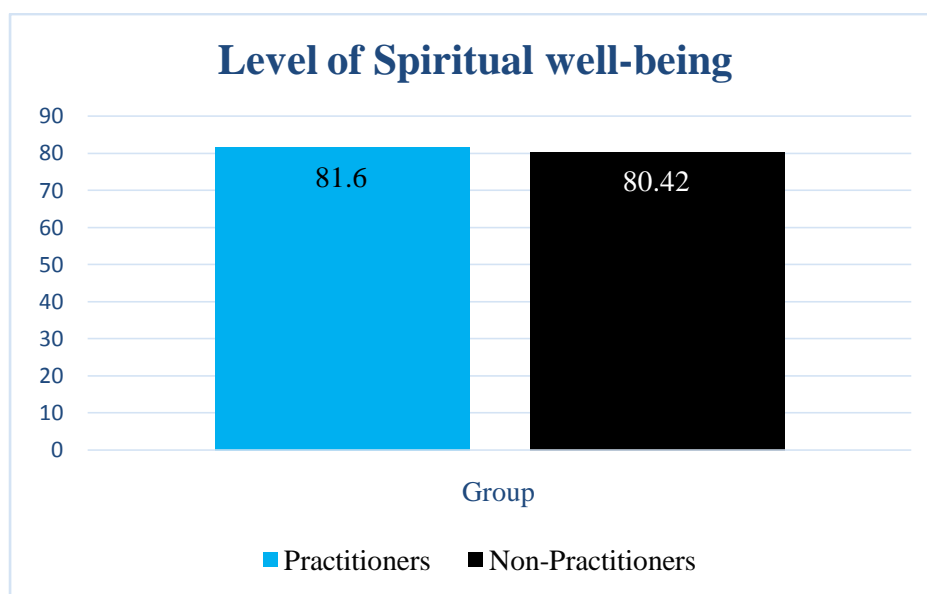


Figure 9. Mean Scores of Non-Ashtang Yoga Practitioners and Non- Practitioners of Yoga on Spiritual well-being.

The hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of Religious well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners was tested using independent samples t-test. The obtained t value is 0.703 which is not significant. Thus, the obtained result indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of Religious well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. However, the mean value of Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners on Religious well-being scale indicated that Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners have higher level of Religious well-being compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of Existential well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners was tested using independent samples t-test. The obtained t value is 0.024 which is not significant. Thus, the obtained result indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of Religious well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners was tested using independent samples t-test. The obtained t value is 0.612 which is not significant. Thus, the obtained result indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of Spiritual well-being among Non-Ashtang Yoga practitioners and Non-yoga practitioners. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. The Contradictory result was found in the study conducted by Turner and Turner (2010), Nandesh Y.D, Kulkarni. D, Kamble S.V (2016), Büssing A, et al. (2012) which indicated that practice of Yoga leads to increased Spirituality.

CONCLUSION

The effects of Yoga, in general on human body and mind is well studied and documented, but the impact of the subsets of Yoga like Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga is poorly understood. The following study was done to understand the effect of one of the branch i.e. Ashtang Yoga in particular on Spiritual well-being. Majority of the studies did not specifically look into the Ashtang Yoga practice solely. The overall findings of the present study indicates that, though practice of yoga has little bit influence on the participants

Spiritual well-being, the practice of only Basic Yoga Asanas and Pranayama's has no significant influence on the level of Spiritual well-being of the participants, but if the practice of entire Ashtang Yoga sometimes referred to as eight-limbed Yoga is practiced, it may have greater influence on the level of Spiritual well-being.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The impact of other factors such as environmental influence, hobbies, interests, meditation practitioners etc, which are also the major contributing factors were not considered for the study
- Only quantity analysis was done and quality analysis was not used.
- The data was obtained using only self-report inventories.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study can be conducted to identify the influence of Ashtang Yoga among Non-yoga practitioners.

The study can also be conducted to identify the level of Spirituality among Ashtang Yoga Practitioners.

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