

Role of meditation on general wellbeing of females

Shalini Kumari Bhawsinka^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Meditation is a type of inward concentration that allows to focus on own senses, step back from thoughts and feeling, and perceive each moment as a unique event. In this study role of meditation on general wellbeing of female was examine. The study was conducted on 60 females (age range- 25 to 50) – 30 rural and 30 urban of Gopalganj district. Subjects were randomly divided into two group – control group and experimental group. Experiment group underwent meditation for 45 days (15 min daily). Test was performed on both groups after experiment. ‘General Wellbeing Measure’ developed and standardized by Verma, S.K. and Verma, A. (2009) was used to measure general wellbeing of females. The obtained data was statistically analyzed by using t-test. Result shows that there is a significant difference between general wellbeing scores of experiment group and control group. Insignificant difference was found between urban and rural females on their general wellbeing. Study indicates that meditation is beneficial technique to improve the general well-being of females.

Keywords: *Meditation, General wellbeing*

The nature of mind is such that it does not want to stay concentrated. Meditation is an art to concentration and fixes the mind on a single object. It was first used by yogis in eastern ancient culture. In English the word meditation comes from the Latin root word *meditari*, which derives from the same root as the word meaning ‘to heal’. The English connotation of word meditation is therefore more associated with healing and relaxation. In Sanskrit ‘Dhyana’ is the generic term for meditation. The yoga sutras refer to the act of inward contemplation in the broadest sense and more technically to the intermediate state between mere attention to an object (*dharna*) and complete absorption in it (*Samadhi*).

Meditation is a mental exercise in which one directs one’s mind to think inwardly by shutting one’s sense organs to external stimulations. It can be used as a powerful instrument to restrain sense organs, control autonomic nervous system and also to attain super consciousness. It is the part of ashtanga yoga. It is the 7th step of raja yoga. Different types of meditation technique are used-like – omkar meditation, savita meditation, tratak, sahaj raj yoga meditation, vipassana, transcendental meditation etc. Meditation is obtained when the mind is trained to concentrate on an outer or inner object, long enough for all distractions to be eliminated and when the stream of thought flows in a single direction without interruption toward a definite subject. In other words, when the mind is fixed upon one

¹Research Scholar in Psychology, J.P. University, Chhapra, Bihar, India

*Responding Author

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object, whether external or internal, concrete or abstract, if the flow of thought remains steady towards that objects for a certain length of time and the mind runs unbroken, as it were, towards the object, it is meditation.

Meditation practice brings balance to our body and peace to our mind. Meditation is 'to break distracting thought and reach deeper levels of internal awareness. The mind become free from all thoughts and brings a deep relax. Significantly and potentially beneficial changes do occur in basic biological process during meditation. During meditation, oxygen consumption decreases, heartbeat becomes slow, and an alpha brain wave gets stronger. These are the sign of physical and mental wellness. Meditation also helps people in getting over the addiction to drugs or alcohol. It helps us to develop greater calmness, clarity and insight in facing and embracing life experiences. Meditation helps to understand mind. it transforms our mind, from negative to positive, from disturbed to peaceful, from unhappy to happy.

Well-being is a positive state of human being. It refers to how people evaluate their lives. It involves subjective satisfaction and individual's pleasure depending upon psychological status of the individual and his environmental conditions. Well-being may be defined as a subjective, positive emotional state with general life satisfaction. It involves the way the individual feels about himself or herself due to achievement of goals in life. Therefore, the most common and comprehensive indicator of the sense of wellbeing includes life satisfaction which refers to an individual's own global judgment of his or her quality of life, feeling of contentment and happiness. The sense of enjoyment of life (commonly referred as satisfaction, happiness and joy) or subjective appreciation of life is also conceptualized as an indicator of wellbeing.

Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, ability to manage stress and feelings ranging from depression to joy. More generally, well-being is just feeling well. it is a positive outcome that is meaningful for people and for many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well. Good living conditions (e.g., housing, employment) are fundamental to well-being. Many indicators that measure living conditions fail to measure what people think and feel about their lives, such as the quality of their relationships, their positive emotions and resilience, the realization of their potential, or their overall satisfaction with life, i.e., their well-being. Well-being generally includes global judgments of life satisfaction and feelings ranging from depression to joy.

Well-being or wellness is the condition of an individual or group. A higher level of well-being means that in some sense the individual's or group's condition is more positive. According to Naci and Ioannidis, "Wellness refers to diverse and interconnected dimensions of physical, mental, and social well-being that extend beyond the traditional definition of health. It includes choices and activities aimed at achieving physical vitality, mental alacrity, social satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, and personal fulfillment". *It is the complete integration of body, mind and spirit.*

Bakshi and Kumari (2009) examined effect of practicing yoga on subjective well-being and academic performance. The study found that practicing yoga significantly affected the subjective well-being positively. Sundar (2010) conducted a study on the role of yoga in reduction of problems and bringing happiness in man's life. The results revealed yoga has positive effect on their lives and brings happiness.

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Anand and Das (2016) investigated the effect of prayer along with meditation V/S meditation on emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. They found significant positive effect of prayer along with meditation on psychological well-being and emotional intelligence but insignificant effect of meditation was found on psychological well-being.

Sharma et. al. (2008) conducted a study to examine the effect of yoga-based lifestyle intervention on subjective well-being. They found significant improvement in the subjective well-being scores of the subjects within a period of 10 days as compared to controls group. Ray et. al. (2001) examines the effect of yogic exercise on physical and mental health. They found improvement in various psychological parameters like reduction in anxiety and depression and a better mental function after yogic practices, which is the indicator of wellness.

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of meditation on general wellbeing of females.
2. To examine the impact of meditation on general wellbeing of rural females.
3. To examine the impact of meditation on general wellbeing of Urban females.
4. To examine the impact of residential area on general wellbeing of females.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant positive effect of meditation on general wellbeing of females.
2. There will be significant difference between urban and rural females on their general wellbeing.

METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the aim of study experimental research method was followed. The study was conducted on urban and rural females. The sample comprised of 60 females (age range- 25 to 50) – 30 urban and 30 rural. It was divided into two groups – control and experimental – comprising urban and rural students equally. The sample of the study was collected from Gopalganj district, Bihar with purposive cum random sampling technique. To test the effect of meditation on general wellbeing of females, experimental group were provided the practice of meditation for a continuous period of 45 days (15 min. daily). Control group was not provided such yogic practice. After the elapse of practice period general wellbeing of control and experimental groups were measured and compared.

Tools/Instruments

1. “General Wellbeing Measure” developed and standardized by Verma, S.K. and Verma, A. (2009) was used to measure general wellbeing of females. It has 20 items.
2. A self-made personal datasheet was used to collect the general information like – name, age, residential area, gender, caste etc. of students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparison of different groups on general wellbeing indicates that meditation improve general wellbeing of females. The obtained mean general well-being score of control group was 9.24 and that of the experimental group was 13.41. The obtained t-ratio =3.64 is significant at .01 level (Table-1). Higher mean shows high level of general wellbeing and lower mean shows low general wellbeing. This denotes that meditation has laid positive impact on general wellbeing of females. It is also proved by significantly higher mean general wellbeing scores of rural and urban subjects of experimental group than their control

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group counterparts. Our findings support the findings of Bakshi and Kumari (2009) who reported that yoga practice improves the wellbeing.

Table-1 Showing Means, S.Ds. and t-ratios of General Well-being Scores – Control and Experimental Groups

Groups	N	Means	S.Ds.	df	t-ratios	Level of significance
Control	30	9.24	4.12	58	3.64	.01
Experiment	30	13.41	4.74			
C-Rural	15	8.93	3.63	28	2.91	.01
E-Rural	15	12.84	3.72			
C-Urban	15	9.55	3.21	28	3.59	.01
E-Urban	15	13.98	3.54			

Table-2 Showing Means, S.Ds. and t-ratios of General Well-being Scores – Rural and Urban Groups

Conditions	Groups	N	Means	S.Ds.	df	t-ratios	Level of significance
Control	Rural	15	8.93	3.63	78	0.49	N. S
	Urban	15	9.55	3.21			
Experiment	Rural	15	12.84	3.72	78	0.86	N.S.
	Urban	15	13.98	3.54			

The mean general wellbeing scores of rural and urban sub-groups of control group are 8.93 and 9.55 respectively while those of the same sub-groups of the experimental group are 12.84 and 13.98 respectively. The obtained t-ratios for rural and urban compared sub-groups in control and experimental groups are 0.49 and 0.86 respectively (Table-2). Both the t-ratios are insignificant at .05 level. It indicates that rural and urban females are not significantly different on their well-being.

CONCLUSION

Meditation lays positive impact on general wellbeing of female. Urban and rural females don't differ significantly on general wellbeing.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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