

The Impact of Yoga Practice on Occupational Stress of Managers

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ABSTRACT

Yoga and Meditation are household terms today. For varieties of problems experts recommend Yoga and Meditation; this includes health, education, managerial, social and even ecological. Keeping in view the wide range of benefits of Yoga/Meditation, the present study was undertaken with the objective of studying the impact of Yoga practice (SAVPY) on the efficacy of stress management in managers. The sample consists of 60 managers. The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Dr. A. K. Shrivastava was used. The results revealed that there was significant reduction in total occupational stress of managers after practicing yoga for two months.

Keywords: *Yoga, Meditation, Occupational Stress and Managers.*

Stress is a well-known term today that is affecting life of people in various ways significantly. Some level of stress is required to keep an individual to perform his job well but if and when it exceeds it begins to affect an individual adversely.

An excessive stress can negatively affect individuals' psycho-physiological, emotional functioning and behaviors in various ways.

It is found from many researches that work related stress affects the way an employee performs his/her job. Some of the Researchers also investigated that it causes low productivity in work; it also has a negative impact on outcomes of the organization like decreased job performance, increased absenteeism and job dissatisfaction.

High level of stress can drop off Performance sharply. It makes the performance of an organization go down. Excessive stress may decrease employee's ability to work or communicate effectively and efficiently with others or lessening ability to make rational or good decisions.

It is especially true for those people who are in higher positions in the organizational hierarchy like Chief Executive Officers and Managers, whose roles demand multiple tasks to be performed while remaining mentally calm and emotionally stable.

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Managers are the key persons in Organization. They are engaged in certain fundamental functions: decision making, motivating, planning, communicating, organizing, leading, managing interpersonal relations, conflict resolving etc.

But, the reality is, managers or executives perform their roles being highly stressed out, that many times they are not fully aware of and sometimes despite of being aware of it they are not able to manage or cope up with effectively. In high stress jobs like managerial and executive, individuals have a prevalence and incidence of wide range of negative effects of stress.

Higher levels of stress or negative stress not only affect managers at individual level but also their relations with team members, manages and superiors and organizational/working climate.

It negatively affects their decision making, patterns of communication, conflict resolving, relations with customers and also their personal and team growth in organization; sometimes repercussions may not be immediate but in long run can lead to organizational politics, yelling at others and leading to avoidance of people and situation.

Managerial practices either in India or abroad produce lots of stress and strain on the individual in that position. Just trying to avoid stress does not work, managing stress effectively is very essential.

To make use their skills and to carry out their jobs more efficiently, to maintain healthier organizational climate, they must manage their stress effectively.

Now, as many people are aware of stress and its consequences, they are keenly interested in and prefer non-drug techniques to address their anxiety, stress related effects and conditions.

Yoga/Meditation is one of such methods that helps individual not only to cope up with anxiety, stress but also enhance their physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

Perhaps, the technique of yoga /meditation is a powerful way to combat the effects of stress. Deeper relaxation, greatest increase in alertness, mental and physical energy are an important outcomes of meditation practice. Stress relief and deeper relaxation is the main outcome of yogic meditation.

Results of meditation practice also indicate a decrease in the psychosomatic stress and improvement in the capacity to do more of intellectual work. Research has demonstrated that meditation may decrease stress, highly effective for the individuals who had highest stress level. Evidence of significant stress reduction was found after only three weeks of meditation intervention.

Brief, daily meditation sessions can alter one's behavioral response to stressors, improving coping mechanisms and decreasing the adverse impact caused by stress. So, now there is increased demand and importance for yoga and meditation in many aspects of life.

In the present study, "SAVPY" yogic meditation technique was used.

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SAVPY is – Shridharanandji's Atma Vidya Parisheelana Yoga. It's an open eye meditation technique, based on the principles of Ashta anga yoga (eight-fold path) having a very clear-cut theme for concentration.

Hypothesis

H¹ – There would be significant reduction in the level of total occupational stress after practicing yoga (SAVPY).

Participants

A sample size of 60 managers from private and public sectors were taken for the present study. Sample were randomly selected from different institutions.

Tools

The Organizational Stress Index developed by Dr.A. K. Shrivatsava and A. P Singh was used. It measures the extent of stress which the employees experience from their job. This tool may be conveniently administered on the employees. The scale consists of 46 items which is five-point rating scale. The items related to almost all relevant component of job life.

Procedure

The present research consisted of sixty managers from private and public sectors. Managers keenly interested in practicing Yogic meditation were included in the study through simple random sampling.

The study was split in to two parts- pre and post intervention.

The test material was distributed to all the participants and the instruction were given. Assistance was given to them to complete the test. All the doubts of the subjects were dealt with; the filled in data was collected from the subjects.

With one-week prior notice, participants were assembled in conference hall of respective companies for the yoga demonstration. Brochures on stress, yoga and its benefits and writing materials were provided to them. Brief introduction about the study and benefits of yoga were given by the researcher; demonstration of SAVPY technique was made by yoga expert and participants were made to practice the technique by following the instructions of the experts; Interaction period was given to clarify their doubts.

During the period of two months of intervention, regular follow ups were given as and when necessary. After the completion of two months of yoga intervention post data collection was made.

The collected data was then submitted for scoring and analysis.

RESULTS

People commonly experience stress in their professional and personal lives. As most people spend major part of their life in working, stressors related to the job creates stress, particularly it is true in high stress job like Executive and managerial. It is clear from research studies that excessive stress affects one's personal and work life adversely. Hence, it is an important aspect of the managerial job to cope with stress more effectively, which can be learned/gained through practice of yoga that relieves stress and enhance well being

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Table 1: Mean Scores, SDs and 't' value of total occupational stress.

	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SD Diff.	t-value	df	p-value	Signi.
Pre (Before Yoga)	125.633	18.32	33.050	8.6875	29.4682	59.0000	0.0000	S***
Post (After Yoga)	92.583	14.27						

*** $P < 0.001$ level of significance

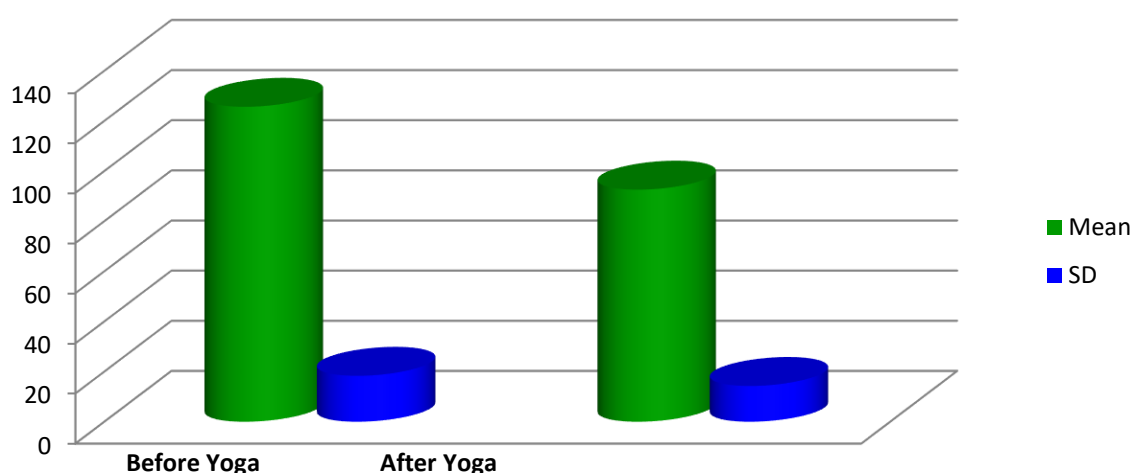
The evaluation and comparison of mean scores before and after yoga and 't' value '29.46' (significant at 0.001) evidently indicate a highly significant reduction in the total occupational stress that can be due to regular practice of yoga (SAVPY).

By seeing the significantly reduced total occupational stress, it is clearly understood that through the practice of meditation, the skill of the managers to manage their stress is enhanced.

Thus, the hypothesis is verified and accepted.

And also, many of the participant's managers reported that after practicing SAVPY they started experiencing more energy to carry on their work without getting much tired, reduced headaches, reduction in getting irritated and over thinking; more patient and able to communicate well with others without yelling both in personal as well as in work life.

Graph 1: Showing Comparison of Mean Scores and SDs before and After Yoga practice is presented in the Graph.



DISCUSSION

It is estimated that 50% of executives and managers suffer from emotional strain and anxiety as they have to face various organizational problems and sometimes the job requirements also produce anxiety.

Hence, one of the important parts of their life is to manage their stress, its negative effects more effectively, which can easily be learned through the practice of yoga/meditation.

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The results of the research carried out to study the impact of meditation on stress, blood pressure and psychological well-being of employees working in the United Kingdom revealed a significant increase in psychological well-being and perceived workplace support; a significant decrease in anxiety and stress levels in the participants who engaged in meditation.

Based on self-report questionnaires, the Results of Research results showed clearly that psychological well-being of the people who practiced meditation has increased significantly and also significant decrease in their stress and anxiety levels was reported.

Other research shows decreased stress levels in people who engage in meditation after shorter periods of time as well. Evidence of significant stress reduction was found after only three weeks of meditation intervention. Brief, daily meditation sessions can alter one's behavioral response to Stress

The results of this study also are supporting the early research findings.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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