

State Anxiety and Anger levels among listeners of Vedic Mantra Chanting

Mrs. Kavitha Dhanaraj^{1*}, Dr. V. Balaji Srinivasan²

ABSTRACT

The Vedas are impersonal and inspirational hints of ultimate reality unveiled by persons of peerless perseverance for perfection, the Rishis. Vedic chanting is a meditative practice from the rich tradition of Indian spiritual practices (Sripad Ghaligi 2006). The present study focuses on the effect of state anger and anxiety levels of the Listening to Vedic chanting, who had minimum exposure to such chanting. Data of the pre and post levels of state anger and anxiety was statistically analysed and the results show a considerable reduction in the post test scores of both the state anger and anxiety levels of the listeners of Vedic mantras.

Keywords: Listeners, Vedic mantra chanting, State Anxiety level, State Anger level.

“Even if you cannot chant the *Vēdas*, if you only listen to the sounds with devotion, they will elevate you to a higher level. Though the child does not know the meaning of the lullaby sung by the mother, it is induced to sleep hearing the tune. Similarly, listening to the chanting of the *Vēdas* with undivided attention, will give you immense benefits. The hymns of the *Vēdas* constitute the Cosmic sound (*nādabramhan*) which is highly potent.” Bhagavān Sri Sathya Sai Baba – Discourse on 18 October 1993.

Vedic mantras are energy based sounds or vibration that one can use to enter a deep state of meditation, which is believed to awaken the body's natural healing mechanisms and is said to help treat physical and mental illnesses. UNESCO proclaimed the tradition of Vedic chant a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on November 7, 2003. Modern doctors advise the people under high tension to sit and listen to music or mantras for few minutes. The frequencies and the sympathetic overtones generated by *mantras*, which have a vibration pattern of their own, influence the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves, which are spread in a fine network around the internal organs. David B. Wolf and Neil Abell (2003) suggest that the Maha Mantra has potential in addressing problems related to stress and depression and that it be considered as one possible component of a spiritual approach to social work practice. Mantras can have beneficial effects on the health of the body as well as positive results in Mental & Physical levels (Balaji Deekshitulu 2015).

¹Assistant Professor in Psychology; JBAS College for Women, Chennai, India

²Orthopaedic Surgeon, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, India

*Responding Author

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Occasional anger or anxiety is a normal part of life, but chronic anger or anxiety can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships. If S-scores (State or Situational) are elevated, the individual's feelings are influenced by situational factors that are interpreted as indicating present or anticipated danger, or by thoughts relating to traumatic past events associated with the present situation. State anxiety (a psycho physiological state) is defined as a transitory emotional state consisting of feelings of apprehension, nervousness, and physiological sequelae such as an increased heart rate or respiration (Spielberger 1979). *State anger* is defined as an episode of anger occurring at a specified time; a psychobiological emotional state or condition marked by suggestive feelings that vary in intensity from mild irritation or annoyance to intense fury and rage (Spielberger 1999). Anita Padam et al (2017) has proven in her study that listening to Vedic chants has beneficial effects on alleviating anxiety levels, improved physiological parameters and can be of therapeutic use.

The present study focuses on the relationship between listening to Vedic chanting and the situational levels of anxiety and anger. Though researches have been carried out in measuring the impact of chanting the mantra, but not many studies have focused on the effect of merely listening to Vedic chanting. Hence the researchers have made an attempt to study the pre and post situational levels of anxiety and anger of the listeners of Vedic chanting.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The Objective of the study is to analyse the effect of listening to Vedic chanting on state-anxiety and state-anger levels of the participants. This is a cross-sectional study with One group pretest-posttest design. 100 healthy volunteers aged between 20-55 years were randomly selected from a population of 300 gathered participants who came to attend the Inter-paatasala Vedic competition in Chennai. Both males and females, irrespective of socio economic status, marital status, occupation, and educational status were included in the study. Though some of the participants knew the mantras themselves, they were requested to listen to the chanting without chanting the mantras mentally or loudly. After obtaining a verbal consent to participate in the study, the 100 volunteering participants were given a brief instruction on filling the questionnaires before the program on chanting commenced. After a period of one hour of listening to the Vedic chanting (all Vedas included) done by eminent Vedic scholars from all over India, a post assessment of the same questionnaires was done after 10 minutes. The obtained results were then statistically analysed using SPSS package.

Tool 1: The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is a commonly used measure of trait and state anxiety. It has 20 items for assessing trait anxiety and 20 for state anxiety. Internal consistency coefficients for the scale have ranged from 0.86 to 0.95; test-retest reliability coefficients have ranged from 0.65 to 0.75 over a 2-month interval (Spielberger et al., 1983). Test-retest coefficients for this measure in the present study ranged from 0.69 to 0.89. Considerable evidence attests to the construct and concurrent validity of the scale (Spielberger, 1989).

Tool 2: The State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2) is a 57-item inventory which measures the intensity of anger as an emotional state (State Anger) and the disposition to experience angry feelings as a personality trait (Trait Anger). The instrument consists of six scales measuring the intensity of anger and the disposition to experience angry feelings. The psychometric properties include high alpha coefficients for internal reliability for all subscales except for the Trait Anger Scale/Angry Reaction (0.73 - 0.76). Concurrent validity of the original STAXI is strongly presented with correlations with the Multiphasic Inventory

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(Hostility and Over Hostility Scales), Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory, and the Eysenck Questionnaire (Psychoticism and Neuroticism).

Since the researchers wanted to check the cross-sectional level of anxiety and anger experienced by the sample before and after the chanting program, only the State form in STAXI and STAI were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I shows the mean, N, SD, Standard error mean and t-value for the pre and post State Anxiety scores.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t value
Pre State Anxiety level	47.88	100	7.592	0.783	3.342**
Post State Anxiety level	45.57	100	6.358	0.656	

** $P < 0.01$

Table I shows that the mean values of State anxiety, both before and after listening to Vedic chanting. It is observed that the mean value of State anxiety score before listening to the Vedic chanting is comparatively higher (47.88) than the mean value of the state anxiety value (45.57) after listening to the Chanting. The 't' value is 3.342, which is significant at 0.01 level, indicating the significant difference between the two mean value scores. This shows that the state anxiety of the participants has significantly decreased after listening to the Vedic chanting.

Table II shows the mean, N, SD, Standard error mean and t-value for the pre and post STAXI scores

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t value
Pre State Anger level	17.32	100	4.166	0.430	5.212**
Post State Anger level	15.16	100	0.677	0.070	

** $P < 0.01$

Table II shows the mean values of State anger, both before and after listening to Vedic chanting. It is observed that the mean value of State anger before listening to the Vedic chanting is comparatively higher (17.32) than the mean value of the state anger (15.16) after listening to the chanting. The 't' value is 5.212, which is significant at 0.01 level indicating the significant difference between the two mean value scores. This shows that the level of state anger of the participants has significantly reduced after listening to the Vedic chanting.

State anxiety and anger could have been experienced by the participants in the first place as a reaction to certain situational demands during the pre-test period, like obstacles in reaching the venue on time, traffic, family or work pressure etc, which seem to have significantly reduced after listening to the Vedic chanting. Similar result was found by Padam et al (2017) in their study on endoscopy patients that the patients who listen to Vedic chants and/or instrumental music before the procedures shows reduced anxiety scores and improved physiological parameters, which would ease the anxiety and increase patient compliance. Dr. N. Chandrasekhar, VHF explains that some patients with disorganised state who may not be able to be part of a healing programme can just listen to a particular chant, after which they become composed as it regulates blood pressure, the heart rate, brain waves and the adrenalin level.

CONCLUSION

This study statistically shows that the cross-sectional situational anger and anxiety seem to have reduced significantly after the participants concentrated on listening to the Vedic chanting for an hour. This signifies the effect of listening to Vedic chants on one's situational emotion. The practice of merely listening to the Vedic chanting attentively can calm down the mind and keep the listener's levels of anxiety and anger under check.

Limitation and Recommendation

The preliminary study involves only 100 participants and only State forms were used in both the tools. Also, the SES, occupational, marital status was not controlled. A control group could have been included. One more post-assessment after few days could have been done to assess the long-lasting impact.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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