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STRESS MANAGEMENT BY YOGA: A STUDY ON PROFESSIONAL WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Stress has become part and parcel of every individual's life now days. Ever body has stress in one way or the other although level of stress varies from individual to individual. The body experiences a certain degree of stress (either eustress and distress) in all the situations, but here we are primarily concerned with the stress related to work setting. Working women also under go lot of stress as they have multiple roles to perform at workplace and at home. It is in this setting that management can use some preventive approaches. These techniques of handling stress by management at workplace is known as stress management. Yoga is an important technique being used in handling stress now days. Yoga practice helps in alleviating stress and its effects. The practices recommended range from intense to moderate to relaxed asana sequences, plus pranayama and meditation. In all these approaches to dealing with stress, one common element stands out: the process is as important as the activity undertaken. Because it fosters self-awareness, Yoga is a promising approach for dealing with the stress response.

KEYWORDS: Stress, skill, Yoga, meditation, mudras, meditation techniques

INTRODUCTION

The word stress is derived from the Latin word Strainer, meaning to draw tight, and was used in the 17th century to describe adversity or suffering. After 1992, **Dua (1994)** defined stress as a response to challenging events, as an event that places demands on the individual, as an environmental characteristic which poses a threat to the individual, and as a realization by the individual that he or she is unable to deal adequately with the demands placed upon him or her. Stress can be due to work related stressors or Non work stressors. **Allen, Hitt and Green**

(1982) defined "occupational stress as disruption in individual's psychological or/and physiological homeostasis that force them to deviate from normal functioning in interaction with their jobs and work environment." Non-work related stress can also be caused by factors outside the work domain. Non-work stress can be defined as a real or imagined imbalance between the demands on the home and the family's ability to meet those demands (**Jones et al., 1988**). More specifically, non-work stress is pressure or tension within your home that disrupts your normal, day-to-day life. Occupational stress has become an important topic for study of

organisational behaviour for several reasons. First, stress has harmful psychological and physiological effects on employees, second, stress is a major cause of employee turnover and absenteeism, third, stress experienced by one employee can affect the safety of other employees, and fourth, by controlling dysfunctional stress, individual and organisation can be managed more effectively

Many employees have developed stress management programs to teach employees how to minimize the negative effects of job-related stress. A typical program might include instructions in relaxation techniques, coping skill, listening skill, methods of dealing with difficult people, time management, and assertiveness. All of these techniques are designed to break the pattern of tension that accompanies stress situations and help participants achieve greater control of their lives. Many researchers have noted the benefits of exercise in diminishing the stress response, and a host of studies points to these benefits. Yoga, too, has been recommended and studied in relationship to stress, although the studies are less scientifically replicable. Nonetheless, several researchers claim highly beneficial results from Yoga practice in alleviating stress and its effects.

Yoga is one of the six foundations of Indian philosophy and has been used for millennia to study, explain, and experience the complexities of the mind and human existence (Feuerstein, 1998). Patanjali's Yoga sutras outline a skillful way of conducting life that fosters moderation and harmony (Becker, 2000). Bhole(1997) in his conceptual paper, explained different aspect of Yoga. The Yoga way of life encompasses the philosophy of Karma Yoga (path of detached action), Jnana Yoga (knowledge of self), Bhakti Yoga (trust in the supreme order) and Raja Yoga (asana, pranayama, meditation, etc). According to Bhole (1997), hatha-yoga practices like asanas (i.e. posture), pranayama (i.e. breathing practices intended to influence vital forces), kriyas (i.e., cleaning process), mudras (i.e., certain internal attitudes) and bandhas (i.e., neuro –muscular locks) are mostly taught as physical practices. While various meditation techniques work at the mental level, all these practices are intended to develop a certain type of awareness within oneself. This in turn is expected to bring about a change in the emotional and visceral functions and through them, a change in the intellectual and somatic functions of the individual.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

K.N. Udupa in their study on Stress and Its Management by Yoga outlines his research on normal, healthy subjects and on patients in his clinic. He treated 1007 cases of various stress disorders with a combination practice of asana, pranayama and meditation. He reported: "The patients of high blood pressure, diabetes and asthma, who came to us at an early stage, showed

very good improvement. Those who came later, their drug requirement was considerably reduced after starting yogic practice."

Reibel, D. K., J. M. Greeson, G. C. Brainard, and S. Rosenzweig (2001) conducted a study which examined the effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on health-related quality of life and physical and psychological symptomatology in a heterogeneous patient population. Patients participated in an 8-week MBSR program and were required to practice 20 minutes of meditation daily. Pre- and post-intervention data were collected, and after a one-year follow-up, revealed maintenance of initial improvements on several outcome parameters. The author concluded that a group mindfulness meditation training program can enhance functional status and well-being, and reduce physical symptoms and psychological distress in a heterogeneous patient population, and that the intervention may have long-term beneficial effects.

Siva Prasad A. V. V. (2013) studied a stress management program based on cognitive behavioural therapy principles was compared with a Kundalini yoga program. A study sample of 26 women and 7 men from a large Swedish company were divided randomly into 2 groups for each of the different forms of intervention; a total of 4 groups. The groups were instructed by trained group leaders and 10 sessions were held with each of groups, over a period of 4 months. Psychological (self-rated stress and stress behaviour, anger, exhaustion, quality of life) and physiological (blood pressure, heart rate, urinary catecholamines, salivary cortisol) measurements obtained before and after treatment showed significant improvements on most of the variables in both groups as well as medium-to-high effect sizes. However, no significant difference was found between the 2 programs. The results indicate that both cognitive behaviour therapy and yoga are promising stress management techniques

According to Sonia (2004) managers can be trained to identify the beginnings of mental stress among their workers. This is according to the 'Managing Stress' reported by Sydney University's ACIRRT. The study warns managers that stress issues must be addressed if they do not want to face workers' compensation claims.

Chitra (2007) explains the biggest occupational hazard at most workplace today is stress. After surveying 81 companies, a recent study by Alka *et al.* 2007 of the New Delhi based research group, ICRIER says that if corrective action is not taken quickly, the losses from occupational stress-induced diseases could total a staggering \$200 billion (approx.. Rs. 7,800 trillion) in the next 10 years.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Women are putting their steps in all fields now. They are not only good home makers but are

also doing very well professionally. In this tussle of balancing home and work life they often face stress. Women is an important part of workforce now days. Stress can decrease her efficiency to work, her performance and may even force her to quit job. So there is a need to study various techniques to handle this stress. This study focuses on one of the stress management technique that is yoga. This study has also identified common cause of stress among all professional working women in Shimla City and how yoga helps in reducing stress.

OBJECTIVES

1. To trace the reasons behind stress among working women.
2. To analyse how stress affects their health, relationships, works and family.
3. To analyse how yoga helps in handling stress and enhancing performance

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study is explorative as well as descriptive in nature.

Population: The population selected for this particular study is professional working women in Shimla city in Himachal Pradesh working in different sectors (education, banking, health etc).

Sample Size: 200 professional working women in Shimla city

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling method.

Research Instrument: A questionnaire was distributed among 200 professional working women in Shimla City. Purpose of the questionnaire was explained to the respondents in advance. Secondary Data: It was collected from the internet, books on related issues and research reports relevant to the study.

Statistical tool: The percentage method was used to analyse the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Yoga helped the working women to deal with stress.

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	88	44
Agree	88	44
Cant say	6	3
Disagree	10	5
Strongly Disagree	8	4

Table 1 reveals that maximum percentage of working women, 44% strongly agree that yoga helps to deal with stress. Yoga is the answer for healing stress among working women. This all-in

one formula is not only acting as a soothing agent for the burned-out Indian working women but is fast growing on the popularity.

Table 2. Yoga helps in solving the basic problems at work place

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	8	4
Agree	58	29
Cant say	30	15
Disagree	96	48
Strongly Disagree	8	4

Table 2. The maximum percentage of working women 48% disagree that yoga helps in solving the basic problems at work place as because basic

problem might relate to their personnel life which could not be solved through yoga.

Table 3. Yoga helps in unravelling the hidden dimensions of human potential.

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	96	48
Agree	88	44
Cant say	8	4
Disagree	8	4
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 3 depicts that maximum percentage of women 48% strongly agree that yoga helps in unravelling the hidden dimensions of human potential. As one regularly practices yoga, she

becomes mentally, physically fit and alert, her thought process is activated and consequently she becomes innovative and works with a positive frame of mind

Table 4. Yoga helps in personality development

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	82	41
Agree	88	44
Cant say	14	7
Disagree	8	4
Strongly Disagree	8	4

Table 4 shows that maximum percentage of women 44% agree that yoga helps in personality development.

Table 5. Yoga is beneficial for performance enhancement.

scale	Frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	60	30
Agree	110	55
Cant say	14	7
Disagree	16	8
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 7 reveals that maximum percentage of working women 63% strongly agree that Yoga is beneficial for performance enhancement in corporate sector as high levels of stress due to

extreme pressure give rise to sleep disorders, digestive, eyesight and spinal problems.

Table 6. Yoga act as motivator and helps in improving the work efficiency of people.

scale	Frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	66	33
Agree	96	48
Cant say	16	8
Disagree	14	7
Strongly Disagree	8	4

Table 6 shows that maximum percentage of working women 48% agree that Yoga acts as a motivator and improves the work efficiency.

Table 7. Yoga can affect the human relationship at workplace.

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	96	48
Agree	74	37
Cant say	16	8
Disagree	14	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 7 shows that maximum percentage of working women 48% strongly agree that yoga can affect human relationships.

Table 8. Yoga can affect the human relationships at home.

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	96	50
Agree	74	39
Cant say	16	8
Disagree	14	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 8 shows that maximum percentage of working women 48% strongly agrees that yoga can affect human relationships.

Table 8. Yoga helps in balancing work and life.

scale	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	120	60
Agree	46	23
Cant say	20	10
Disagree	14	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 8. shows that maximum percentage of working women 60% strongly agree that yoga helps in balancing work and life.

The causes of stress specified by professional working women in Shimla City irrespective of their sector of work.

WORK DOMAIN CAUSES

1. Limited job opportunities.
2. Lack of career development and growth policies.(promotions/increments)
3. Job insecurity
4. Financial instability
5. Work load(deadline, targets, long working hours)
6. Leaves/vacations
7. Monotony/ boredom
8. Unreasonable group and political pressure
9. Relationship problems at workplace
10. Conveyance is a big problem. Not all schools, colleges, universities have good road connectivity specially and in traffic is a matter of concern

FAMILY RELATED CAUSES

1. Lack of support from spouse, family and society to working women
2. Joint family culture is prevalent here in most parts and working women have many household responsibilities to perform without domestic help.
3. Lack of day care facilities and parental care facilities for small children and elderly people.

INDIVIDUAL RELATED CAUSES

1. Self- indiscipline
2. Individual personality factors
3. Presence of physical illness
4. Faulty time management
5. Inadequate rest
6. Inadequate exercises
7. Inadequate coping skills
8. Faulty dietary habits

CONCLUSION

To conclude yoga is a very important therapy in coping up stress among working women. It has been found that Yoga also helps in solving problems at workplace and improves the performance and efficiency of working women. It

also helps in building good relationships not only at workplace but also at home. Work life imbalance is a current being faced by all working women and can make both personal and professional life stressful. It has been found in the study that yoga as one of the technique of stress management helps in balancing work and life. The employers should invest time and resources in a company-based wellness culture, with the focus on “maintenance” rather than “repair”. Upbeat, energetic employees result in a healthy, relaxed environment with less absenteeism. It is not necessary to keep the yoga session long, it can be customized as per requirement. Even 15 minutes rapid session can yield good results, there is no need to dedicated separate session. Yoga can be done while sitting on the chair or standing in the desk space area. Stress is a burning issue in every organization and yoga would be the stressing solution.

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