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Yog Nidra and its Impact on Physiological and Psychological Parameters

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Abstract – *Yogic relaxation therapy (yognidra) has been effectively prescribed along with other medical and yogic procedures in the management of various physiological and psychosomatic diseases like anxiety, cancer, peptic ulcer etc. The aim of study was to assess the impact of yognidra on physiological as well as psychological problems in early adolescents. The current study suggests that yognidra have positive significant impact on physiological and psychosomatic diseases.*

Key Words: Yognidra, Adolescents, Physiological, Diseases

INTRODUCTION:-

In the raja yoga of Patanjali there is a state called pratyahara where the mind and mental awareness are dissociated from the sensory channels. Yoga nidra is one aspect of pratyahara which leads to the higher states of concentration and Samadhi. It is therefore important to investigate multiple aspects of Yoga Nidra through interdisciplinary research. The present work "Psychophysiological changes as Related to Yoga Nidra is an attempt to investigate the effects wonderful Yogic practice with multiple dimensions. In this study nidra has been taken as independent variable whereas some physiological and few psychological parameters have been taken as dependent variable.

Indian yogis and mystics classify the seven states of consciousness differently. They point out that human beings normally experience only three states: sleeping, dreaming and waking. In meditation, fleetingly one can experience fourth state, or transcendental consciousness commonly known as Samadhi. When this state coexists and stabilizes with the other three, which is the fifth state, where I-consciousness expands to become cosmic consciousness. The sixth state is God consciousness whereby individual sees God everywhere, in everything. The last is unity consciousness: what is within is also outside— pure consciousness and nothing else is.

How Yoga nidra is different from sleep? Sleep is one of nature's greatest inventions and a blessing of life it is a periodic rest of the body which is absolutely essential for its efficient functioning, it has been called "most cheering restorative of tired bodies." It is the

indispensable condition to the recuperation of energy. We go to bed fatigued and get up refreshed.

Benefits of Yoga Nidra

The practice of yoga nidra has a number of benefits. Important among them are as follows.

Minimizes tension

In the modern world the international problem is not poverty, drugs or fear of war; it is tension and only tension. A high percentage of people remain in a state of tension and frustration. This continuous level of tension in the body, mind and emotions predisposes the individual towards psychological and psychosomatic disorders. Modern psychology as well as yogic philosophy believes in three kinds of tension - muscular tensions, emotional tensions and mental tensions - which can be progressively released through the systematic and regular practice of Yoga Nidra. Muscular tension results from nervous and endocrinal imbalances. It manifests in the form of stiffness and rigidity in the physical body. In the practice of Yoga Nidra the body is progressively relaxed, which in turn releases the accumulated muscular tensions. In day to day life individuals fail to express their emotions freely and openly, resulting the emotions are repressed and manifest in the form of emotional. In the practice of yoga nidra, the practitioner slowly moves towards deeper realms of the mind where he or she confronts the deep-rooted emotional tensions. When the practitioner recognizes these emotional tensions with full awareness and a

witnessing attitude, then repressed ions are released and the practitioner becomes calm and tranquil.

Due to excessive activity on the mental plane, the mind always remains in a state of arousal, which results in mental tension. Throughout life the mind is with negative data. In the practice of yoga nidra, especially in rotation of consciousness and breath awareness, the mind is relaxed, thereby releasing the mental tensions. In this way, through the regular and sincere practice of yoga nidra, tensions at the physical, emotional and mental level can be minimized. According to Swami Satyananda (1998), "a single hour of yoga nidra is as restful as four hours of conventional sleep".

Enhances memory and learning capacity

The present popular method of teaching is classroom teaching using rewards and punishments. This method may be good for the intelligent students but is not beneficial for the dull students because the conscious brain or intellect of these students is incapable of receiving the information directly. The technique of yoga nidra can be used as an educational tool for such dull children, where the knowledge is transmitted directly into the subconscious mind. The technique of yoga nidra is helpful in increasing learning and memory capacity. When yoga nidra is used in education, both hemispheres of the student's brain are involved in learning the subject. whereas in classroom teaching the left hemisphere functions more. In this way, the practice of yoga nidra involves the total mind in learning.

COUNTERACTING STRESS

A survey conducted by the Australian Federal Health Department in 1980 revealed that stress is the aspect of modern life that concerned most people. It is clear that life has become so complex, hypnotizing and confusing for many people today that they find it very difficult to slow down, relax and unwind even when they get the opportunity.

Constant concern with 'making ends meet' economically, coupled with the tensions and frustrations of modern social, marital, family and community life, frequently transform life into a pressure cooker without a safety valve. Deprived of more traditional forms of emotional and psychosomatic release such as prayer, religious worship, sport or creative recreation, many sensitive modern men and women confront a situation of spiraling tension without escape. When the cooker explodes, mental breakdown and physical disease commonly result.

States of anxiety, depression, frustration and anger are accompanied by a variety of physical responses including palpitations, excessive sweating, diarrhoea, indigestion, headache and weakness. These responses are the outcome of the complex process by

which the physiological systems of the body adapt to stress. This process has been termed the 'stress response' by pioneering researchers such as Dr Hans Selye & of Canada, and includes states of accelerated heart rate and increases in blood pressure, skeletal muscle tension and cortisone and noradrenalin levels in the blood.

As stressful conditions persist, the body's resistance is sapped away. Imbalances in the autonomic nervous system, endocrine glands, and in the chemical and hormonal composition of the blood become permanent, with increasingly disturbed functioning of all the organs and systems of the body.

As the equilibrium of the body, even at rest, becomes increasingly disturbed, a variety of nervous symptoms usually manifest, including insomnia, anxiety and irritability, often leading to neurosis. As the imbalance is further aggravated, physical changes in sensitive or weakened organs result. In this way, major psychosomatic diseases such as asthma, peptic ulceration and hypertension evolve out of poorly managed psychological tensions which are relayed into the physiological systems of the body.

The present study was planned to assess the effect of *Yoga Nidra* on psychological and physiological parameters on children aged 9-13 years.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design and setting

We conducted a randomized controlled trial for early adolescents (9-13 years) in selected parameters. Subjects were randomly assigned to a standardized three month protocol of *Yoga Nidra* classes. Treatment assignments were placed in opaque, sequentially numbered envelopes prepared by a biostatistician who had no contact with participants. All concern approval were taken accordingly.

Study participants

A total of 150 subjects (aged 9 to 13 years) from village background were taken. The current study was conducted by Applying the Pre- test and Posttest Technique. The Yog Nidra Training was given to Experimental Group. And the Physiological and Psychological parameters, as described in the following sections, were measured before starting and after finishing the Yog Nidra Training sessions. The Control group was asked to be relaxed for the same time period as of Yoga Training.

Before starting the actual Yog Nidra sessions on students, they were trained for proper procedure of Yog Nidra. The Yog Nidra Training classes lasted for one week. Once after the complete training for exact procedure of the Yog Nidra, the real experimental work was done which lasted for 3 months. The Yog

Nidra sessions were taken for 30 minutes (in morning time) for five days in a week for 12 weeks.

For the Control group, subjects were just asked to be relaxed for 30 minutes, the same time period as of Yog Nidra for Experimental Group. However, no special or any other technique was given to control group. The time for the session was fixed between 7:30 A.M. to 9.30 A.M.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOG NIDRA

This particular technique of Progressive Yog Nidra Training scripts can be used in a recorded tape/CD or one can use to read this technique while reading. It is best to record your tape in a quiet room, reading the script slowly and carefully or you can use pre-recorded CD. Use a warm and encouraging voice and include pauses between each sentence and paragraph of the script. Dim the light and loosen any tight clothing so you can breathe deeply and relax completely. When you are ready to use your tape, remember that these techniques will work best if you are in a comfortable position in a place where you won't be disturbed. The basic features for progressive relaxation training are; find a quiet room/place where you can work undisturbed. To learn progressive Yog Nidra training all parts of your body must be comfortably placed. One should wear loose clothing. Designate about fifteen minutes daily. Try to schedule a fixed time every day so you won't forget to do your progressive relaxation. Try to focus on the particular sensations that come from letting go of tension. The basic idea is to systematically train tensing and relaxing groups of muscles.

In the current study also, the prerecorded instructions were used. Subjects were asked to listen the prerecorded instructions carefully and were asked to feel free, if they have any query to follow the instructions. The subjects were asked to lie in a comfortable position. Researcher asked them to relax various parts of their body in the sequence and how to do it. Following script was used in the current study.

RESULTS:

The Anxiety was assessed through Generalized Anxiety Scale for Children (SACS) developed by Dr. Anil kumar, National Psychological Corporation, Agra.

20 Word Recall Memory test technique originally developed by by Schmitt, Jorissen, Sobczok, Bostel, Deutz and Riedel (1998) used to assess Memory level.

Hb was measured by standardized techniques.

The study was conducted on 150 students of 6th to 9th Class. They were belonged to rural low economic background. A parallel group of 40 students of same

age group and same background was also taken as Control Group. The pre and Post Test Technique was used to assess the impact of Yog Nidra. Hence, the testing of Anxiety, Memory and Hb were done before starting the Yog Nidra sessions and same testing was done after completion of the Yog Nidra sessions. The sessions were conducted for three months. These sessions were given to subjects for 5 days in a week.

After completion of the YogNidra sessions, the scores of all four parameters, i.e. Anxiety, Memory and Hb were statistically analyzed. The Mean and Standard Deviation, Standard Error, "t-test" and F test were calculated. The obtained 't-test' value was compared with the tabulated significant value at 0.05 level of confidence with 95 degree of freedom.

Table 5: The table shows the statistical analysis of the scores of GAS (children) in Pre and Post –test conditions of Experimental Group in compare to Control Group as the impact of Yog Nidra

GAS (children)	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
Mean	25.94	24.31	26.025	24.9
Median @ 50 th Percentile	26	24	27	25
Std deviation	4.686	2.690	4.111	2.994
Std Error	0.3826	0.2196	0.6499	0.4734
N	150		40	
P value	< 0.0001		0.1657	
t value	3.687		1.399	
F value	3.035		1.885	

As mentioned above the comparison of median value clearly indicates that Anxiety level of subject's shifts towards optimal level due to practice of Yog Nidra. The SD value clearly proves the fact. In the Pretest SD value is 4.686 which is decreased up to 2.69 due to Yog Nidra. The low value of SD indicates here lack of variation in the Raw scores, whereas higher SD indicates higher variation in the raw scores. The continue exercise of Yog Nidra controlled the anxiety level of subjects and the trend of the raw scores were shifted toward optimal level i.e. 24. Here, decreasing trend of SD value indicates that anxiety level of subjects turned from higher and lower to middle level. It means, the subject whole anxiety level was too low, or we can say, the careless subjects became

conscious towards their goal. Similarly the subjects with higher anxiety level became relaxed and more focused towards their goal. Further, in the table, t value shows a significant difference between the two Pre and Posttest of conditions and of course the difference is due to Yog Nidra. It means that Yog Nidra impacts positively. The Median score has already confirmed the same. Though there is also the positive impact of giving Relaxation to subjects in Control Group, but the level of significance is higher in experimental group.

Hence, on the bases of interpretation of the values Means, SDs, Standard Error and mean differentials (t-value) between pre-test scores and post-test scores on control and experimental condition, it can be concluded that Yog Nidra has a positive impact on Generalized Anxiety Level.

Table 6: The statistical analysis of the Memory scores (20 Word Recall Test) in Pre and Post –test conditions of Experimental Group in compare to Control Group as the impact of Yog Nidra

Memory	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
Mean	5.167	5.513	5.3	5.475
Median @ 50 th Percentile	5	6	5	6
Std deviation	1.814	1.345	1.698	1.281
Std Error	0.1486	0.1098	0.2684	0.2025
N	150		40	
P value	<0.0001		0.0823	
t value	1.872		0.5205	
F value	1.819		1.757	

In over all it can be concluded, that Yog Nidra has the positive impact on Memorization process of early adolescent students.

Table 9: The statistical analysis of the HB in Pre and Post –test conditions of Experimental Group in compare to Control Group as the impact of Yog Nidra

HB	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
Mean	11.35	11.68	11.305	11.425
Median @ 50 th Percentile	11.5	11.8	11.5	11.35
Std deviation	1.357	1.285	0.9943	0.9331
Std Error	0.1108	0.1049	0.1572	0.1475
N	150		40	
P value	0.0335		0.5794	
t- value	2.136		0.5566	
F value	1.116		1.136	

After revealing the result table no 9, it may be concluded that Yog Nidra and Relaxation both may be helpful in increasing the Hemoglobin (Hb) of human being but comparison of mean values of both Control and experimental groups indicate the same. In the control group the Hb level increased from 11.305 to 11.425 and in Experimental group Hb level increased from 11.35 to 11.68 (increment of 0.33). The t- value 20136 is significant, in experimental group, also confirms that Yog Nidra had the positive impact in maintaining the Hb level of subjects.

In last it can be concluded that Yog nidra has Positive impact on anxiety, memory and Hb.

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