

Impact of Preksha Meditation on Mental Health of Female Executives of Metro City

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Abstract

The present investigation has been undertaken to evaluate the impact of Preksha Meditation on Mental Health of female employees of an organization of Metro City. A pre-and post- with control group, research design was adopted for this study.

A purposive sample of 20 subjects was selected from Select Vacations Pvt. Ltd., Cannought Place, New Delhi, and divided in two groups each of 10 subjects one was taken as an experimental group while another served as control. The subjects of both groups were homogenous in terms of age (average age 30 years), education, occupational and socio-economic status. The subjects of experimental group initiated to Preksha Meditation practice and they practiced it regularly for 30 minutes daily for one month. The subjects of the control group not assigned any specific task rather they remained busy in their daily routine work.

The subjects of both the groups were administered on Employees Mental Health Inventory (E.M.H.I.) of Dr. A.K. Srivastava, prior to commencement of their respective interventions. The subjects were re-administrated on the same test after one month practice of Preksha Meditation and daily routine activities. The data analyzed in two manners i.e., Intra-group comparison and Inter-group comparison. Sandler's 'A' test used for intra-group comparison while, 't' test for inter-group comparison with significance criterion of $\alpha = 0.05$.

At the initial stage of the experiment the subjects of both the groups were found homogeneous on their Mental Health. After one month of their respective treatments, the subjects of experimental group differed significantly on their Mental Health ($p < 0.01$) in comparison to those of control group. As compared to their pre-experimental stage, the subjects of the experimental group improved their Mental Health significantly ($p < 0.005$). The result shows that one month Preksha Meditation practice is beneficial in improving mental health of employees of the organization that may lead them to happy personal and work life.

Key words: Preksha Meditation, Mental Health

Introduction

Mental health is an important aspect of human personality. It is defined in different terms by psychologist, psychiatrists and sociologists. Like health, the concept of mental health has both positive and negative connotation. Most of research studies in the field of psychology, psychiatry and sociology approaches concept of Mental Health either on a health-illness continuum, or normal to abnormal, adjustment to maladjustment, or integration to disintegration (Barnes, 1981).

According to P. Kumar (1991), Mental Health is an index, which shows the extent to which the person has been able to meet his environmental demands- social, emotional or physical. However, when he finds himself trapped in a situation he does not have matching coping strategies to deal with effectively, he gets him-self mentally strained. This mental strain is generally reflected in symptoms like anxiety, tension, restlessness or hopelessness among others. If the person feels it for too long and too extensively, these symptoms

may take a definite form (or get syndromized), representing a given illness. Mental Health, therefore, should not be confused with mental illness; it is a study of pre-illness mental condition of the person.

Bhatia (1982) considers mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. It means ability to face and accept the realities of life.

Mental health, when defined in negative connotation (Insel and Roth, 1996 p. 21) "it focuses attention on the most serious illness and people in great need of help. It tends to avoid valuable judgment about which of the many ways we can lead our life the best." However, when mental health is defined in positive connotation (as presence of wellness), "it means to be healthy and to strive to develop one full potential. It tries to make us aware of human potential to develop and freedom from mental disorder is only a factor in mental health."

Kornhauseur (1965) described mental health of workers as "those behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, and feelings that determine a worker's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person. Barnes, B.L., (1981, p. 68), in his study on Detroit's industrial workers, brought out positive correlation between job satisfaction and mental health. The higher occupational categories had better mental health than that of lower level jobs.

According to Srivastava (1990, p. 34), "The growth of science, technology and materialistic predominance, hazards and complexities of social life have caused a marked deterioration in mental health of the people in modern society".

The original and powerful basis of **Preksha Meditation** is found in Jain Canonical texts like 'Acharanga', 'Sthanang', Uttaradhyana etc. (Acharya Tulsi, 1994). Though, it is one of ancient meditation techniques practiced since the time of Lord Mahavira, yet, it is renewed to current form by late H. H. Acharya Mahaprajna.

Research studies conducted in India reported that people who practiced Meditation regularly improved their psychological state including greater clarity of thinking, increased harmony in social relations, and increased tranquility of mind and decreased physical and mental tensions. Gaur and his associates explored out many beneficial effects of various meditation techniques like Transcendental Meditation (T.M.) and Preksha Meditation (P.M.) on various aspects of human behavior. Joshi, Gaur and Singh (1984) found high level of self-actualization in the Transcendental Meditation practitioners. Gaur, Rudola, Seikh and Pathak (1985) attested the positive effects of T.M. on mental health and personality variables of prisoners. Gaur (1994) concluded increase in ego, super ego, self concept formation capacity, self-realization and reduction in ergic-tension of the practitioners who practiced T.M. He also observed significantly better reactions to frustration and better CNS and ANS function of prisoners who practiced T.M. Gaur and Sharma (2001) observed better mental health, increased their ego, super-ego strength and spontaneity, decreased in ergic-tension and frustration in the prisoners who practiced P.M. Gaur and Saini (2002) found reduction in mental stress, anxiety and hassles of prisoners who practiced P.M. Gaur and Jain (2006) observed significant improvement in mental health and anxiety of married female college going students who practiced P.M. Gaur and Malliprajna

(2007) attested significant improvement on personality variables viz. ego-strength, super-ego strength, self-concept formation capacity, while reduction in ergic-tension of college going girls due to four months practice of Preksha Meditation. Gaur and Dayama (2008) concluded that sportsmen who practiced four months of P.M. significantly improved the 14 personality factors out of 16. Gaur and Gusain (2009) found positive effects of one month P.M. intervention on psychosomatic health of male executives. Gaur and Jain (2006) investigated the positive influence of P.M. on mental health of college going women. Gaur, Gusain and Suresh (2009) investigated role of Meditation on Mental Health and found that it as an effective tool not only for managing the poor mental health (anxiety disorder, mood disorder/depression, habit disorder, psychosomatic disorders etc.) but also for attainment and development of qualities of positive mental health. Sharma M. (2009) found significant reduction in anxiety level and hassles of housewives in five areas i.e. health, family, social, occupation etc due to practice of two months P.M. Gaur and Bhardwaj (2009) found significant reduction in social and financial stress of adolescent boys after a six months practice of Preksha Meditation technique.

Significance of The Study

There are some studies reflecting the beneficial effects of some meditation techniques on mental health and various aspects of human being but no research study is available related to meditation and mental health of female executives of metro city. Hence the present study has its significance in evaluating the effect of P.M. on mental health of these females.

Table. 1

S. No.	Groups/ I.V	Experimental (Pre) / D.V.	Stages-	Experimental (Post)/ D.V.	Stages-
1.	Experimental Group (P.M.)	Measurement of Mental health	of	Measurement of Mental health	

Objective of Study

Study of mental Health of the employees has been a subject of interest for various experts like management trainers, psychologists, and Yoga experts etc. Most of these experts, including Yoga experts, claim that their respective fields of specialization and expertise can improve the level of mental health of employees. More specifically, the current study focuses

1. To assess the level of mental health of female employees of aforesaid organization.
2. To evaluate effects of P.M. practice on total mental health of employees of aforesaid organization.
3. To present obtained data and results scientifically and statistically in quantitative forms.

Problem

What is impact of Preksha Meditation on Mental Health of employees of an organization? More specifically does P.M. practice lead to significant improvement in Mental Health of female employees?

Preksha Meditation is here meant by the practice of relaxation (Kayotsarga), internal trip (Antaryatra), perception of breath (Swas Preksha) and perception of center of enlightenment (Jyoti Kendra Preksha).

Methodology

Research Design: A pre-post-experimental design with control group is adopted for this study as illustrated as follow-

2	Control Group (Normal activity)	-do-	-do-
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Control over Variance

Here Preksha Meditation and Normal Activity are Independent Variables while Mental Health is Dependent Variable. Adequate attempts were made to control over extraneous and relevant variables, i.e., subject relevant, situation relevant and sequence relevant by adopting a sound strategy.

Sample

For the current study, population of middle management staff working in Select Vacations Pvt. Ltd., C-07, Cannought Place, New Delhi, was selected. A sample of 20 personnel from operation department of the organization was chosen for the study. All the 20 subjects were females, between the ages of 30 to 40 years, graduates and working in operation department of the company. All of them fall between designations of Junior Executive to Assistant Manager. The total sample divided in to two groups one served as control while second one as experimental.

Test used

The Employees Mental Health Inventory (E.M.H.I.) by Dr. A.K. Srivastava, (2001) was taken for measuring mental health of the employees. The test is standardized with high reliability and validity.

Procedure

The Employees Mental Health Inventory (E.M.H.I.) was individually administered on all the subjects of both the groups prior to commencement of P.M. training (baseline). The training was imparted to the subjects of the experimental group by

the trained instructor of P.M. Each subject of the experimental group practiced P.M. regularly in the evening, for 30 minutes for 30 days. The subjects of the control group were not given any treatment or other type of meditation techniques for this period rather they were continued with their normal routine activity. After one month, the test was re-administered on the subjects of both the groups.

Result And Discussion

The scores obtained from the Employees Mental Health Inventory (E.M.H.I.) were analyzed and are presented in table 1 to 3. The obtained data were analyzed in two ways- (I) Inter-group comparison, and (II) Intra-group comparison.

For inter- group comparison, i.e. comparison of subjects of experimental group v/s control group, the statistical 't' test was applied. For the intra-group comparison Sandler's 'A' test was used to compare the subjects of the same groups (within the group) between their baseline (pre-experimental stage) and after one month of their respective treatments.

Inter-group comparison (Experimental vs. Control Group): Pre-experimental status (baseline)

It is observed by the obtained result that the subjects of both the groups are homogenous in their Mental Health at the pre-experimental stage. At this stage no significant difference is observed (table 2), i.e., the mental health status of the subjects of both the groups is similar at the baseline.

Table 2: Mean, S.D. and 't' values for Experimental & Control Group at Pre-experimental Stage (N=10 for each group)

Experimental Group		Control Group		't' (one tailed)	p<
Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
19.30	1.734	19.10	1.445	0.354	NS

NS = Non-significant

Post-experimental status (after one month) : After one month of their respective treatments, the subjects of both the groups differed significantly at .01 level of confidence (table 3). The mean scores of subjects of experimental group (EG)

increased significantly in comparison to those of control group (CG) which is an indication of improvement in mental health of the subjects of EG. Here the first hypothesis, proposed earlier, is corroborated by the finding.

Table 3: Mean, S.D. and 't' values for Experimental and Control Group at Post-Experimental Stage (N=10 for each group)

Experimental Group		Control Group		't' (one tailed)	p<
Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
20.80	2.181	19.40	1.428	2.330	0.01*

*p < 0.01

Intra-group Comparison: Experimental Group & Control Groups

Mean and Sandler's A value of pre- post-experimental stages of both the groups-experimental group as well as control group, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean, and Sandler's 'A' values of Mental Health of Experimental and Control Groups at

Pre-and Post-experimental stages for (N=10 for each group)

Groups	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Sandler's 'A'	P<
Experimental	19.30	20.80	1.173	0.005*
Control	19.10	19.40	1.666	NS

* < 0.005 NS=Non-significant

The obtained result indicate that Mental Health of subjects of experimental group improved significantly (p<0.005) after one month practice of P.M. The mean score of the subject of this group increased from 19.30 to 20.80 which is significant at .005 (table 3). The earlier proposed hypothesis second is corroborated by the finding.

Control Group

The subjects of control group did not show any significant difference (table 3) between their pre and post experimental stage. Their mean scores did not differ significantly. This shows that the normal activity could not improved the mental health of the subjects of control group.

Discussion

The results reveal that the subjects of experimental group improved their psychological well being and sleep quality and decreased their anxiety, stresses, and other psychological problems. These findings are corroborated by other findings of research on T.M. and P.M. The results of the study, conducted by Gaur, Rudola, Seikh and Pathak (1985) on “The effect of T.M. on mental health and personality variables of prisoners” supports this study. Gaur (1994) concluded increase in ego, super ego, self concept formation capacity, self-realization and reduction in ergic-tension of the practitioners who practiced T.M., this also corroborates the present study. Gaur and Sharma (2001) observed better mental health in the prisoners due to practicing of P.M. It also supports the present study. Some other studies of Gaur and Sharma (2001), Gaur and Saini (2002), Gaur and Malliprajna (2007), Gaur and Dayama (2008), Sharma M. (2009), Gaur and Bhardwaj (2009) also demonstrate similar results as observed in this study. Gaur and Gusain (2009) concluded positive effect of one month P.M. intervention on psychosomatic health of male executives and result of this study is also very close to the present study.

The function of each rightly practiced meditation technique is to purify the nervous system and to refine the mental activities. Meditation gives rest to mind and body which is cause of better and right activities. It also develops insight and conscious level which provides better understanding with the environment, surroundings and situations in which the person acts. The correct practice of meditation gives emotional stability, and develops harmony, peace and content in the practioner and resulted to better mental health. Here the mechanism of Preksha Meditation gave better understanding (to the subjects practicing P.M.) with the

environment, surroundings and situations in which they act, hence they reduced their mental and emotional disquiet and accumulated lesser stresses than the subjects of control group doing the normal activities. Further the P.M. increased emotional stability, and developed harmony, peace and content in the practioner of P.M. which resulted to better mental health and therefore they found better in managing their stress and hassles. The subjects of control group did not practice any meditation or other methods of reducing stress hence they could not improve their mental health.

Conclusion

The overall picture emerged from the findings leads to following conclusions:

The subjects of both the groups are found homogenous in their mental health level at the pre-experimental stage of the experiment.

After two months both groups differed significantly on their mental health level significantly ($p < .01$). As compared to their pre-experimental stage the subjects of experimental group improved their mental health significantly at $p < .005$ of confidence after one month practice of P.M.

The improvement in mental health in the subjects is due to regular practice of P.M. In fact the P.M. improved insight and understanding with the environment, surroundings and situations in which they act. The P.M. reduced their mental and emotional anxiety and hence the subjects accumulated lesser stresses

The P.M. increased inner harmony, peace and content in the subjects of P.M. group which resulted to better mental health and therefore they managed their things properly.

The subjects of control group did not practice any meditation or other methods of reducing stress rather they were indulged in their daily routine work hence they could not improve their mental health.

Results reveal that one month regular practice of P.M. leads to better mental health. Like other techniques of meditation the Preksha Meditation is also an effective meditation method that helps to improve Mental Health and enhance qualities of positive mental health. It also helps to alleviate symptoms of poor mental health. The result implies that one month regular practice of P.M. has potentiality to improve the mental health up to some extent.

Recommendations / Suggestions

Since the current study is a pilot study conducted for a short period and with small sample on middle management personnel working in a traveling

organization. It is, therefore, suggested that such type of study may be conducted further at wide range or long term period using large sample.

The current test i.e. Employee Mental Health Inventory (EMHI) is applicable to assess general and total mental health of employee but it does not specify the areas of mental health. Hence it is suggested for further investigation on impact of Preksha Meditation on various aspects of Mental Health using some other tests.

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