

MANAGEMENT OF STRESS BY YOGA AND MEDITATION: A STUDY

Dr. Sumita Sharda*

ABSTRACT

Stress is an important aspect of working life. No one is immune to stress. Some of it occurs because we make efforts to work very much in the time available and face some of difficulties with interpersonal relationships either at home or at work. Stress can be either temporary or long lasting. Due to heavy stress that affects various psychological and physical aspects of the human being, one should think positively and adopt the right ways of resolving the stress-related problems. Stress management reduces stress by helping people understand the responses of stress; recognize various factors causing stress and different coping techniques to minimize the negative effect of stress. Meditation, yoga, pranayama, physical exercises, physical relaxations etc. are the important techniques that are to be followed to manage stress. Yoga helps a man in different ways by performing his duties and responsibilities in a peaceful manner with the laws of nature and the society. Meditation helps psychophysical control of the human organs and maintenance of steadiness and strength. It helps to reduce physical, mental and emotional tension.

KEYWORDS: *Stress, Management, Meditation, Pranayamas, Yoga, Physical Exercises, Relaxation.*

Introduction

Stress is currently defined in at least two different ways. In one way it refers to various external situations that are not pleasant or may be harmful or dangerous and other way various internal feelings, decisions, emotional state of mind, physiological processes that are result of stressful stimuli. Stress is a type of force that is created when one of our body part or our whole body pulls, pushes or presses against, or tends to condense or constricts, bend another body part or whole body. It is a state of psychological or emotional anxiety or pressure results from gap between situational demand and person's capability to fulfill those desires and demands. It is perceived as a challenge or frightening to an individual's well being.

Stress creates abundant physical and psychological symptoms which changes in respect of person's situational factors. People are stressed from overwork, job insecurity, information overload, time deadlines, downsizing, mergers, marital disharmony etc. Stress is positive when the circumstances offer a chance to a person to achieve something. It acts as a booster for a person to hit the highest performance. It is negative when a person deals with problems related to society, health issues, psychological and mental problems. It is neither intrinsically bad nor critical. It can be managed to reduce its intensity.

Causes of Stress

- **Career Related Causes of Stress:** If an employee feels that there are not many possibilities for self development and -growth, feels that he is lacking behind in the company's ladder, then he may face stress.
- **Absence of Role Clarity:** It occurs when the person tasks and responsibilities are not clear. He is not sure what he is expected to do and this results in stress.
- **Fluctuating Work Shifts:** sometimes Stress may results in those individuals who have rotating working shifts and due to this he faces personal and family life disturbances.

* Assistant Professor, Department of BADM, MCCA, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

- **Demands of Occupations:** Some jobs are comparatively more demanding and expecting than others and involves huge amount of risk and danger are considered to be more stressful.
- **Lack of Employee's Participation in DECISION-Making:** In many cases, the superiors do not involve the concerned employees while taking any decisions. This creates the feeling of being ignored and avoidance which causes stress.
- **Inappropriate Working Conditions:** Employees may be provided with unsuitable working environment which include improper lighting and ventilation, presence of fumes, unhygienic sanitation facilities, extreme noise, and dust, , inadequate safety measures etc. also causes stress.
- **Overburdened Work:** extreme workload faced by employee creates stressful situations as it puts a person under huge pressure.
- **Work Under Loaded:** sometimes very simple or too little work is expected on the part of the employee. Doing little work or repetitive work creates boredom and dullness and it causes stress.
- **Absence of Group Cohesiveness:** Every group is characterized by amount of cohesiveness present in the group. Individuals faces stressful situations when there is lack of unity among members of the group
- **Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict:** These conflicts take place due to differences between members in perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs between two or more individuals and groups. Such conflicts can be a source of stress for group members.
- **Lack of Social Support:** When individuals feel that others are very friendly and supportive, then their ability to cope up with the circumstances of stress increases. If this support is lacking, then an employee faces more stress.
- **Organizational Changes:** When changes occur in organization people generally resist changes and they have to adapt to those changes, and this may cause stress.

Various other factors which are outside the scope of an organization also cause stress such as increase in financial burden, shifting towards new home, loss of job, death of some family member, divorce, chronic diseases, emotional problems such as when a person comes under depression, guilty of something, anger, low self-esteem, taking care of sick family members etc.

Consequences of Stress

Just as stress is perceived differently by each of us, stress affects us all in ways that are unique to us.

- **Physical:** Regular colds or flu, headaches, trouble sleeping, high blood pressure, diabetes, muscle tension, skin problems, trouble with digestion, heart disease, obesity etc
- **Mental:** Weak concentration, forgetfulness, learning problems, numerous negative thoughts, speech problems
- **Emotional:** Depression, anxiety, confused, anger, mood swings , irritability, feelings of helplessness, lack of purpose, relationship troubles
- **Behavioral:** Reduction in diet, careless and rash driving, consuming alcohol or drugs, showing aggressive behavior.

Stress Management

Stress management involves control and reduces the tension that is observed due to stressful circumstances by making changes in behavior pattern and several mental, physical and emotional changes. Managing stress is about how to make changes in your thoughts, how you control your emotions, how you changes your routine, how you deal with environment, how you tackle with problems. The main aim of stress management is to live balanced life, time management for all type of work, maintaining relationships, enjoyment, relaxation, develop capacity to handle critical situations and faces challenges.

Yoga and Meditation

There is a therapy which is completely natural and is considered to be the best weapon against stress and that is - YOGA . Yoga is the ancient mantra for sound health and also to retain juvenility to a great extent. It has been practiced by several Rishi-Munis in ancient India and now has become a major concern among the modern genre too.

The practice of yoga involves forming various body postures, slow stretching movements, breathing exercises that can at times lead to progressive relaxation, imagery and meditation. All these specific techniques are meant for a specific purpose and they culminate into a higher awareness of what is happening to oneself during stress – emotionally, physically, mentally and energetically. The practice includes paying attention to each and every part and therefore ensures a holistic therapy. Various techniques in yoga help in stress management. These techniques work at an individual level and also at a collective level to ensure that there is significant relief from the condition of extreme stress. They help in relieving the physical as well as the psychological adverse effects of the problem by ensuring a healthy and productive response to the stress stimuli.

Pranayama is another step in the systematic study of yoga. It is the method of deep breathing by which one can absorb larger quantities of atmospheric energy by expanding the lungs to one's capacity. It is necessary to do exercises regularly to balance the body functions, strengthen the body parts and to regularize the functioning of all 'systems'. Exercises strengthen the muscles and normalize the activities of the endocrine glands. Rest and relaxation helps to prevent heart trouble and brings down blood-pressure. It also reduces mental stress and tension and body becomes energized. Meditation is also effective in managing stress, help in controlling a variety of internal body processes and functions such as brain waves, muscle tension, blood pressure, stomach acidity etc.

Conclusion

The path of Yoga is not a simple or linear Rather, it is a composite or difficult method which involves a drastic change in the way we experience the whole world and visualize the process of knowing better ourselves. Yoga does not state that "if you do this and that will surely happen." But it gives assurance towards path of self-discovery. Yoga and meditation keeps our nervous system fit and strong and help in maintaining heartbeat and balancing our blood pressure which ultimately reduces our body demand for oxygen. Yoga boosts our immunity, improves digestive system, help in removal of toxic wastes from our body and increases capacity of our lungs. Regular practicing of yoga and meditation reduces the chances of stress culminating due to depression and anxiety.

References

- ✘ Aldwin, Carolyn M. "Stress coping and development – An Integrative Perspective", The Guilford Press.2007.
- ✘ Cooper C, Balamurali TB, Selwood A, Livingston G. ' A systematic review of intervention studies about anxiety of people with dementia' . INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRY-2006 Sept.
- ✘ Eric, Feeble. " *Guide to Stress Management*", Butler and Tanner Ltd.London.1998.
- ✘ Malathi A. Damodaran. 'Stress Due To Exams in Medical Students -role of yoga'. Indian Journal of PHYSIOLOGY AND PHARMACOLOGY. 1999 Apr; 43(2):218-24.
- ✘ Palmer, S, Cooper, C, Thomas, K. " *Creating a balance: Managing Stress*", London British Library. 2003.
- ✘ Parshad O, "Role of Yoga In Stress Management". West Indian Medical Journal 2004 June; 53(3);191-4
- ✘ Pizer A, "The Eight Limbs of Yoga", June 7 2006, Available at <http://yoga.about.com>,
- ✘ Scott E, "Stress Management", May 10 2006, Available at <http://stress.about.com>,
- ✘ Subramaniam, S K. " *Stress – Causes Prevention and Cure*", Abhishek Publications. 2002
- ✘ Waelde LC, Thompson L, Gallagher-Thompson D., A Pilot Study of a Yoga and Meditation Intervention for Dementia Caregiver Stress'. Journal of Clinical Psychology.2004 Jun; 60(6):677-87.
- ✘ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stress_management.
- ✘ <http://stress.about.com/od/generaltechniques/qt/qtjournal.htm>

