Abstract

Yoga nidra or "yogic sleep" is a state of consciousness between waking and sleeping, like the "going-to-sleep" stage. It is a state in which the body is completely relaxed, and the practitioner becomes systematically and increasingly aware of the inner world by following a set of (audio) instructions. This state of consciousness (yoga nidra) is different from meditation in which concentration on a single focus is required. In yoga nidra the practitioner remains in a state of light pratyahara with four of his senses internalised (withdrawn) and only the hearing still connects to the instructions. The yogic goal of paths, deep relaxation (yoga nidra) and meditation are the same, a state called samadhi. Yoga nidra, lucid sleep, is among the deepest possible states of relaxation while still maintaining full consciousness. In lucid dreaming, one is only (or mainly) cognizant of the dream environment, and has little or no awareness of one's actual environment. The practice of yoga relaxation has been found to reduce tension and anxiety. The autonomic symptoms of high anxiety such as headache, giddiness, chest pain, palpitations, sweating and abdominal pain respond well. It has been used to help soldiers from war cope with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Yoga nidra refers to the conscious awareness of the deep sleep state, referred to as prajna in Mandukya Upanishad.
I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of yoga nidra is very ancient in Indian traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Krishna is often associated with yoga nidra in the epic Mahabharata. Similarly, many yogis and rishis are supposed to have experienced yoga nidra throughout their life. In modern times, yoga nidra was experienced by Satyananda Saraswati when he was living with his guru Sivananda Saraswati in Rishikesh. He began studying the tantric scriptures and, after practice, constructed a system of relaxation, which he began popularizing in the mid-20th century. He explained yoga nidra as a state of mind between wakefulness and sleep that opened deep phases of the mind, suggesting a connection with the ancient tantric practice called nyasa, whereby Sanskrit mantras are mentally placed within specific body parts, while meditating on each part (of the body - mind). The form of practice taught by Satyananda includes eight stages (internalisation, sankalpa, rotation of consciousness, breath awareness, and manifestation of opposites, creative visualization, sankalpa and externalisation). Satyananda used this technique, along with suggestion, on the child who was to become his successor, Niranjanananda Saraswati, from the age of four. He claims to have taught him several languages by this method. Anandmurti Gurumaa (1966) defines yoga nidra as a state of conscious deep sleep. One appears to be sleeping but the unconscious mind is functioning at a deeper level: it is sleep with a trace of deep awareness. In normal sleep, we lose track of our self but in yoga nidra, while consciousness of the world is dim and relaxation is deep, there remains an inward consciousness, and experiences may be absorbed to be recalled later. Since yoga nidra involves an aimless and effortless relaxation it is often held to be best practised with an experienced yoga teacher who verbally delivers instructions. Anandmurti Gurumaa taught two techniques based on creative visualization. Yoga nidra as Yoga of Clear Light is proposed as a spiritual path (sadhana) in its own right, held to prepare and refine a seeker (sadhaka) spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically for consciousness and awareness. The yogi may work through the consequences of deeds (karma), cleansing the store consciousness and purifying the unconscious mind. The state may lead to realisation (samādhi) and being-awareness-bliss (satchitananda). The yogi is held to be in communion with the divine. A tantrika engaged in this sadhana may become aware of past or future lives or experience the astral planes.

- **Happiness:** Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being defined by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy.

- **Test Anxiety:** Test anxiety is a combination of physiological over-arousal, tension and somatic symptoms, along with worry, dread, fear of failure, and catastrophizing, that occur before or during test situations.

- **Teacher Trainee:** Teacher trainee or B.Ed student is a person undertaking an undergraduate professional degree which prepares students for work as a teacher in schools, though in some countries additional work must be done in order for the student to be fully qualified to teach.
II. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH
Teaching jobs are really more stressful than those of people in other professions. Based on research conducted by Johnson et al (2006), teaching is one of the most stressful occupations of the 26 professions he studied. Many B.Ed students experience their first year in the training as stressful. Solving their psychological problem during their initial stage of training is much better than counselling them after they become teachers. B.Ed students may underestimate the amount of time it takes to complete reading and writing assignments, to print out copies of their work, or to travel to the schools. Missing deadlines, regardless of the reason, is stressful, especially because missing work leads to falling behind. Even well-prepared students experience stress, especially if they spend a lot of time on assignments but do not receive the grade they expect.

One possible approach to helping them is through contemplative practices such as meditation (Miller, 1994). Yoga and meditation create a great impact on efficiency level of teachers. It helps human beings to lead a happy, prosperous and peaceful life in this global village. The reason for using meditation is that it can be a form of self-learning. Another reason for engaging in contemplation is that it allows students to deal with the stresses in their lives. Research indicates that meditation is an effective tool in enhancing physical and mental well being (Benson, 1976; Walsh, 1983). Finally, meditation is important to how we approach teaching. If teaching is ego-based it can become a frustrating series of mini-battles with students. The classroom becomes focused around the issue of control. The purpose of this study is to investigate if meditation (specifically yoga nidra meditation) is an effective strategy for addressing the anxiety and well being of student teachers.

III. RESEARCH PROBLEM
Does training in yoga nidra meditation increase happiness and decrease anxiety in teacher trainees?

IV. RESEARCH PROCEDURE
1) Methodology: Purposive sampling was used and the sample was drawn from two B.Ed colleges in Chengalpet and Chennai. The experimental and control groups comprised 35 students each.

2) Sample characteristic: There were totally 70 women students of whom 35 were in the experimental group and 35 in the control group. The age range was between 21 years to 23 years. The mean age of the experimental group was 21.83 years (SD = 0.86). The mean age of the control group was 21.89 years (SD =0.83). All students had completed under graduation. The socioeconomic status of the family was mostly middle class.

3) Tool used for data collection
The following tools were used for the present study.
   i.) The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ; Hills & Argyle, 2002).
ii.) Westside Test Anxiety Questionnaire (Driscoll, Holt, & Hunter, 2005)

4) Plan of the study

Phase 1: Development of a Meditation programme
The investigator developed the meditation training module after consultation with an experienced yoga instructor. The investigator attended classes with her and received training about the theory and practices of yoga nidra and was trained to administer and teach it to others.

Phase 2: Sample selection and pre-assessment
The study was experimental in nature and students were selected purposively based on inclusion criteria. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. Before implementation of the meditation program, the investigator conducted the pre-assessment (4 psychological tests) for both the experimental and control groups.

Phase 3: Implementation of meditation programme
The meditation program was administered to the experimental group and yoga nidra training and practice was given for 45 minutes on alternate days for 20 days in the months of February and March 2016.

Phase 4: Administration of post-test
After the implementation of the meditation programme, post-assessment was carried out. The 4 psychological tests were administered to both the group after 2 weeks.

5) Intervention
The yoga nidra intervention module was developed and consisted of 20 sessions. There were three sessions per week, each session lasting for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The sessions were held in the afternoon an hour after they had had lunch. The instructions for the meditation were given by the investigator and she was assisted by a faculty of the college.

6) Statistical analysis
- Independent t test was used for comparison of the experimental and control group on the dependent variables. Paired t test was used to compare within group pre and post scores.
- The relationship between the dependent variables was computed using Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient.

V. Results
Table 1: Represents the pre intervention means and SDs of the dependent variables of the experimental and control groups and the t values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean &amp; SD</th>
<th>Independent t values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>Control group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>81.51 (26.69)</td>
<td>80.86 (26.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Anxiety</td>
<td>28.54 (10.33)</td>
<td>30.94 (9.181)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS-Not Significant
Table 2: Represents the post intervention means and SDs of the dependent variables of the experimental and control groups and the t values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean &amp; SD</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Independent t values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>90.54 (24.97)</td>
<td>81.26 (26.08)</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Anxiety</td>
<td>21.60 (8.718)</td>
<td>31.20 (8.953)</td>
<td>4.545**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**significant at p < 0.01 level

Table 3: Represents the pre and post intervention means and SDs of the dependent variables of the experimental group and the t values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean &amp; SD</th>
<th>Pre-intervention</th>
<th>Post-intervention</th>
<th>Paired t values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>81.51 (26.69)</td>
<td>90.54 (24.97)</td>
<td>5.49**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Anxiety</td>
<td>28.54 (10.33)</td>
<td>21.60 (8.71)</td>
<td>4.41**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**significant at p < 0.01 level

Table 4: Represents the correlation coefficients between the dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Happiness</th>
<th>Test anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test anxiety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS-Not Significant

VI. DISCUSSION

In the present modern lifestyle, where psychological and psychosomatic problems are on the rise, the technique of yoga nidra may serve as a real boon for mankind.

Most surprisingly, school teachers have been considered to be anxiety and also undergoing the process of burnout. There exists a substantial body of literature describing teaching as stressful occupation and suggesting that teacher’s anxiety and happiness appears to be an increasing problem.

Therefore, the current study was planned to assess if the anxiety faced by teachers could be remediated by offering meditation training to teacher trainees. This, it is hoped, will equip them to manage later anxiety. In this study, table 1 showing the result of the independent t tests indicates that the students in not yoga nidra mediation were not significantly differ in their level of happiness and test anxiety. The equivalence of the two groups prior to the intervention was established.

Table 2 showing the result of the independent t tests indicates that the students in yoga nidra meditation differ significantly in their level of anxiety and happiness. It could be inferred that there was a significant difference between experimental group and control group at p<0.01 level on test anxiety. Test anxiety is a combination of physiological over-arousal, tension and somatic symptoms, along with worry, dread, fear
of failure, and catastrophizing, that occur before or during test situations. Weibel (2007) found that effect of meditation on anxiety and stress shows a significant decrease in the anxiety level of the students. However, there was a no significant difference in the happiness.

Table 3 represents the mean and standard deviations of pre and post analysis of yoga nidra meditation on happiness and test anxiety within the experiment using the paired t test. Significant differences were observed between the pre and post scores on happiness and test anxiety in the experimental group. Significant increase in happiness and decreases in test anxiety. Corcoran (2007) found that the practice of meditation leads to changes in emotional states which include reductions in anger, anxiety, fear, helplessness, emotional pain, and judgments. There are also increases in happiness, well-being, and compassion.

With reference to scores on happiness, there was no significant difference in pre intervention means scores between the experimental and control groups. However, within group analysis indicates that there was a significant increase in happiness following intervention showing the effectiveness of the intervention. Earlier studies mentioned (Rani, Tiwari and Agrawal (2013)) also revealed significant difference in anxiety and perceived stress. However, there was no significant difference in self regulation.

Table 4 represents the correlation coefficient assessing the relationship between the dependent variables - happiness and test anxiety. There was a no significant relationship between happiness and test anxiety. No research study has been carried out assessing the relationship between happiness and test anxiety. These findings supported by past research studies, suggest that Yoga nidra meditation has an influence on teacher qualities in empirical pedagogical research.

VII. CONCLUSION

From the present study it can be concluded that

- Yoga nidra meditation significantly reduced test anxiety in teacher trainees who underwent the intervention compared to a control group.
- There was a significant increase in happiness and decreases in test anxiety in the intervention group following yoga nidra intervention.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- In depth longitudinal studies could be conducted to understand the yoga nidra meditation in different age groups and Gender difference could also be studied.
- The different psycho-social factors which contribute to the process of meditation formation in the Indian context could be studied.

IX. REFERENCES

Shalini Lakshmipathy, Dr. Veena Easvaradoss: Impact of Yoga Nidra Meditation on Happiness and Test Anxiety in Teacher Trainees

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