

THE IMPACT OF YOGA AND MEDITATION ON GENERAL WELL-BEING OF WORKING PROFESSIONALS: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The General Well-being of working professionals is an imperative issue considered by organizational research. In today's stressful and competitive business realm working professionals face a variety of challenges which can impact their job satisfaction and overall well-being. To sustain competitive advantage it is important for an organization to employ the social interventions to improve the overall well-being of the working professionals to keep them retained, satisfied and productive. The general well-being of working professionals is a multifaceted concept which refers to the harmonious functioning of the physical as well as psychological aspects of the personality, giving satisfaction to the self and benefit to the organization and society. Yoga and meditation are practices that have been around for centuries and are known for their numerous physical, mental, and emotional benefits. While they have roots in ancient spiritual and philosophical traditions, they are widely embraced today for promoting overall well-being. Yoga and meditation can significantly contribute to the improvement of the general well-being of employees in various ways. In the context of the workplace, implementing these practices can lead to a healthier and more productive work environment. This paper aims at reviewing the impact of yoga and meditation on general well-being of working professionals.

Keywords - Yoga and Meditation, General Well-being, Working Professionals

1. INTRODUCTION

General Well Being

The meaning of General Well-being is "the state of being healthy and feeling well". The term "General Well-being" cannot be defined unanimously and adequately but there is a general consensus that General well being is a complex combination of physical, mental and emotional health. General well-being goes beyond the absence of illness and includes several factors such as positive emotions, life satisfaction, engagement in meaningful activities, development of one's potential, and a sense of connectedness to others. The complex construct of General Well being broadly integrates Physical health and Mental and Psychological Wellbeing rather than financial well being. The first dimension of General Well-being is positive Physical health which means normal functioning of the body and absence of any serious disease. However, the modern medicine has expanded this viewpoint beyond the scope of disease and illness. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The another dimension of General Well-being is Mental Health which is more than the absence of mental disorders and also refers to a person's emotional and psychological Well-being. It includes mental health, emotional resilience, and the ability to cope with stress and challenges. It involves a positive mindset, self-awareness, and effective stress management. It is the state of mental, emotional, psychological and intellectual well being in which a person realizes his or her own abilities and can work productively. The General Well-being of working professionals can be linked to success at not only professional domain but also at personal and interpersonal levels. The working professionals with high general well-being experiences greater effectiveness and productivity at work place, increased creativity and learning, positive relationships and ability to manage stress.

Yoga and Meditation

Yoga is a commonly known generic term for physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines which originated in ancient India. Yoga is a holistic and mindful practice that includes physical movements (asana), breathing (pranayama), meditation (Dhyana) and relaxation (Savasana). Yoga is a holistic science of universal applicability and adaptability. Although originated in India, Yoga and meditation are being practiced throughout the world.

The rather consistent and wide range benefits and applications of yoga and meditation led numerous multi-disciplinary researchers to conduct research in these areas.

Yoga and meditation is known to work on all aspects of a person: the physical, vital, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual. Yoga and breathing exercises provide complete harmony of the body and mind and helps in reducing the

stress and anxiety. Thus, these yoga practices in combination with meditation and relaxation techniques may be of immense benefit for working professionals to maintain high General Well-being.

The present study aims at reviewing the impact of yoga and meditation mainly on the two dimensions of General Well-being i.e Physical health and Mental and Psychological Well being of working professionals.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON GENERAL WELL-BEING

William Tov (2018) in his paper “Well being Concepts and Components” reviewed various conceptions of general well -being and how the different components of multifaceted well -being had been studied and measured .They concluded that single intervention might improve some aspects of well being but not others. It is important for policy makers to understand that the causes and consequences of different constructs of well- being depends on how it is defined and measured.

Kai Ruggeri, Eduardo Garcia-Garzon, Áine Maguire, Sandra Matz and Felicia A. Huppert (2020) conducted a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries to develop a robust measurement of General Well-being both as a composite construct and at the level of its fundamental dimensions which can be used by researchers and policy makers to measure well being. They concluded that both the individual dimensions and the composite measure can advantageous in measuring and analyzing the General Well -being.

Anil Kumar, Prof. Aashish A Gadgil, Dr. KDV Prasad, Dr. Naveen Kumar M., Dr. Veena Prasad Vemuri (2023) in the paper “Supporting Mental Well being in the Work place –A Study” concluded that positive and supporting practices at work place can help to improve their overall well-being of employees enhancing their morale and productivity. It is the responsibility of both the employer and employee to enhance their well- being which leads to the development of knowledgeable leaders for the future of the nation.

Julia Aubouin et al. (2023) in their paper emphasized that there is adeterioration in the psychological health of working professionals in the Post Covid -19 era and managers need to rethink organizational and HR strategies to improve the Well-being and health of employees.

They suggested that Virtuous Organizational Practices (VPO) aiming at enhancing employee well-being can both improve the physical, mental and psychological health and performance of employees.

Jake Young (2023) in his survey report highlights the employee views on health and well -being. As per report the employees have mixed feelings on how work affects their well- being. The two opposite type of feelings experienced by employees are enthusiasm and high energy on one side whereas feeling of exhaustion on the other side.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW ON YOGA AND MEDITATION

Arndt et al. (2012) in their report summarizes the effect of yoga and meditation on various components of physical and mental health.

They concluded that yoga may be beneficial supportive treatment for self care behavioral treatment, enhances self confidence and self efficacy and mitigates various physical and mental disorders but not yet as a proven standalone curative treatment. More rigorous research methodical techniques need to be encouraged.

L. M. Puerto Valencia et al. (2019) examined the effectiveness of yoga programme at work by conducting Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) on health professionals, military personnel and other working professionals in USA, UK, India, China, Sweden and Taiwan.. The findings of the study suggest that yoga and meditation effects positively on the physical and mental health of working professionals.

Natalie L Trent, et al. (2019) examined the changes in psychological and occupational wellbeing in education professionals who attended a 3-day yoga based RISE(resilience, integration, self-awareness, engagement) program. The results suggest that the yoga program is effective in improving contentment, self-compassion, work engagement, mindfulness, empowerment, stress alleviation, resilience and overall psychological and occupational wellbeing.

Padmavathi R. et al. (2023) in their research paper on Role of managing stress at work place emphasized that Major Depressive Disorder (MBD) is one of the leading cause of disability among millions of working professionals leading to global burden of disease.

They suggested that yoga is an ideal complementary therapy for mental disorders by alleviating stress.

Dr. R. Balasubramanian (2023) suggested in his review paper that integration of yoga and meditation at work place can be a promising strategy by influencing the physical and mental health of working professionals.

These wellness initiatives of an organization can foster such work place culture which reaps the benefit of more satisfied and productive workforce.

Objectives

- 1) To study the impact of yoga and meditation on the physical health and fitness of the working professionals.
- 2) To study the impact of yoga and meditation on the mental and psychological well-being of the working professionals.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Desk Research : The methodology used in the this review paper is mainly desk research analyzing the secondary data .The secondary data for the study was sourced from books, publications in leading research journals, conference proceedings, research reports by prominent bodies and reports in leading newspapers, industry magazines and publications and internet .

5. FINDINGS

The following findings can be compiled based on the empirical studies and theoretical arguments given by the different research papers.

1) Improvement in physical health:

Regular practice of yoga can alleviate physical tension, enhance immunity, improve posture, and reduce the risk of musculoskeletal issues that may arise from prolonged periods of sitting or repetitive tasks common in office environments.

2) Improvement in mental health:

Meditation, in particular, has been linked to improved mental health. Regular practice can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, enhance mood, and promote overall emotional well-being. Yoga, with its emphasis on breath control and mindfulness, also contributes to mental health benefits.

3) Stress reduction:

Both yoga and meditation are known for their stress-reducing effects. They help activate the body's relaxation response, reducing the production of stress hormones and promoting a sense of calmness. This is particularly beneficial for working professionals who may face high-pressure situations at the work place.

4) Enhanced focus and concentration:

The mindfulness aspects of yoga and meditation encourage present-moment awareness and concentration. This can translate to improved focus and productivity in the workplace, as professionals become better able to manage distractions and stay engaged in tasks.

5) Increased energy levels:

Regular yoga practice can boost energy levels by improving circulation, reducing tension, and promoting a sense of vitality. This can be particularly beneficial for professionals who may experience fatigue or burnout due to demanding work schedules.

6. CONCLUSION

As shown by the studies the regular practice of yoga asanas have positive effect on physical flexibility, strength, immunity and overall fitness except curing serious diseases. The meditation practice lead to improvement in stress alleviation, self awareness, enhanced focus and concentration.

Thus, Yoga and meditation can have profound positive effects on the general well-being of working professionals. In the context of a busy and often stressful work environment, incorporating these practices into one's routine can offer a range of physical, mental, and emotional benefits. Organizations that prioritize a holistic approach to employee well-being can employ yoga and meditation interventions reaping the benefits of more satisfied and productive working professionals.

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