

## **CHAPTER 2. OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESIS AND METHODS**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Scientific data on the integrated aspects of three disparate subjects such as sexuality, spirituality and *Yoga* are poorly understood in social science literature. I undertook an in-depth academic analysis to explore the Hindu concepts of sacred marriage beneficial aptitudes for Western marriage liaison of *Yoga* practitioners and spiritual seekers. I also analysed whether or not these concepts can transform the Western marriage status from a civil contract scenario to a sacred union leading to harmony and eternal happiness.

I have reviewed the literature extensively to understand how *Yoga* improves sexual health and well-being on a physical level; how it builds intimacy and connection on an emotional level; how it develops skills of being present; and finally how it advances awareness and connection to something beyond the Self on a spiritual level. Based on a broad and rational literature review, I synthesised the prospects of long-lasting monogamous rapport among couples with mutual love, respect, trust, loyalty and support to form the basis for reaching the four major values in life with a focus of the ultimate enlightenment as the highest goal of *Yoga*.

### **2.2. HYPOTHESIS**

The working hypothesis of the study is based on the notion that *Yoga* transforms sexual connection in couples from mundane physical outlook to spiritual prospect derived from the following predictions:

- (i) The hypothesis predicts that by improving sexual health and well-being among couples through yoga on physical level, enrichment in building intimacy and connection on emotional level, developing skills of being present, developing awareness and connection to something beyond self on spiritual level will happen in the end.
- (ii) The hypothesis predicts that by transcending to intimate connection through yoga, sexual problems among couples can be neutralized, which will in due course prevent infidelity, emotional breakup and divorce.
- (iii) The hypothesis predicts that by practicing yoga, couples can establish long-lasting monogamous rapport based on love, compassion, respect, trust, intimacy, loyalty, cooperation and support to ultimately achieve the four goals in life and enlightenment as the highest goal of Yoga.

### **2.3. METHODS**

The hypothesis has been tested against the existing scientific literature in social science and ancient Hindu religious scriptural documents to validate and derive claims highlighted in the above delineated predictions. I have used primarily scientific databases such as the Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar to search, synthesize and catalogue information for this scoping review. Web of Science and Scopus are considered as the two leading and most widely used databases for bibliometric analyses (Singh et al., 2021). In addition, I used secondary sources of information by referring to classical Hindu scriptural texts, *Yoga* and *Tantra Sastras*, reference books and open data available from online materials manually for their relevance.

As the theme of the scientific literature review includes diverse perspectives, I have used various keywords and their combinations to optimize the online search that included, in the order of their relevance: *Yoga*, *Tantra*, *Hinduism*, *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *purusharthas*, *spirituality*, *sacred*, *sexuality*, *sex*, *enlightenment*, *marriage*, *divorce* and *infidelity*. The search results were manually scrutinized and interpreted for shaping up the review concisely. In addition, I have visited established libraries such as Anna Centenary Library at Chennai and Annamalai University Library at Chidambaram to study the ancient palm-leaf manuscripts in Sanskrit and Tamil languages related to *Yoga* Sutra and *Tantra* Sastra literature.

#### **2.4. ANALYSIS**

By means of the intensive literature review, I have identified the existing scriptural wisdom and scientific knowledge base on a precise topic of spirituality and sexuality. I have given special focus on *Yoga* and couple bond, to critically evaluate the existing research expertise on the subjects, identify gaps in knowledge, comprehend the present state of research in the particular fields of subjects and topics, and identify strengths and weaknesses of different research reports and studies. While carrying out the comprehensive literature review, I searched for and collected all the appropriate research papers, books, reports, thesis, monographs and other sources on diverse subjects related to my research priorities.

I have methodically evaluated and analysed the scientific rationality, academic quality and relevance/reliability of resources, and finally synthesized scientific information they contain to provide an overview of the present state of knowledge and wisdom on the topic. Subsequently, I have deliberated the research findings to investigate whether they fit or not to the tested hypothesis and scrutinized the results accordingly and adequately. As I have carried out a

retrospective literature survey-oriented theoretical research work, no ethical issues related to human data collection were done during the course of the study. But, I have obtained appropriate permissions from respective institutions to access key data during my study.