

CHAPTER 8

APPRAISAL

8.0 APPRAISAL

A literary survey into the efficacy of meditation reveals that meditation has been one of the *yogic* practices of ancient wisdom and that these *yogic* practices have been highly effective and useful for the wellness of humanity in all aspects of life. These practices underwent hectic investigations and had proven results. These are mainly *yogāsanas*, *prānāyāma* and *dhyāna* and these terms are in *Sānskrit*. Of them, the meditation technique that is “*dhyāna*” in *Sānskrit* has therapeutic values to redress emotional imbalances like stress, anxiety, anger, depression, etc. Of the meditation practices, more importantly, *Ānāpānasati* Meditation practiced by Gautama Buddha is found more effective and is simple and an easy system to practice. Hence, there is a good scope for further research to investigate the efficacy of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation on anxiety, verbal aggression, and depression in healthy people.

In the present study, we have investigated the effect of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation on anxiety, verbal aggression, and depression. There were many mindful meditation techniques developed for psychological well-being in the past. *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is an ancient technique developed by Gautama Buddha, but there was no research done on the effectiveness of the technique on psychological well-being. We have taken up this study to investigate the potential of the meditation technique in controlling anxiety, verbal aggression, and depression. The results have shown that after six months of the *Ānāpānasati* Meditation STAI, VAS and BDI scores have reduced significantly compared to the participants who have not practiced. The results were closely matched with the results of previous studies and proving to be an effective technique in reducing the levels of anxiety, verbal aggression and depression.

8.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

To summarise the research work undertaken to study and investigate into effect of the *Ānāpānasati* Meditation technique on verbal aggression, anxiety, and depression in individuals, the present study finds that the results have been very encouraging and the meditation technique

namely *Ānāpānasati* is found to be highly beneficial and deserves to be brought into a regular stream of those practices normally looked into for restoring emotional and mental health.

In the present study, one observes a reduction in the VAS score with *Ānāpānasati* Meditation. The results suggest that *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is effective in all groups. Anxiety levels at the end of the six months in the experimental group have reduced significantly. Correspondingly the aim to investigate its effect on depression and the BDI score in the present study has reduced from moderate to low in meditators compared to non-meditators. The results of the first study are promising.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that after six months of intervention, the subjects who practiced *Ānāpānasati* Meditation had a decrease in their VAS, STAI and BDI scores when compared to the control group who did not practice meditation. All the above results have shown that the practice of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation has brought out positive results in all those who practiced this technique and there was not much of an improvement in the case of persons who did not practice this technique. This not only reduces anxiety and consequent depression levels but will also make them more energetic and positive in their approach.

8.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is sure to have a high impact on understanding the effectiveness of meditation in addressing the emotional and stressful hazards of life. The positive results on verbal aggression, anxiety, and depression revealed in the present study bring up *Ānāpānasati* Meditation in the frontline of remedial measures of stress and distress in people. The merit of the *Ānāpānasati* Meditation technique is unique as there is no application hazard in practice and follow up. Observation of inhaling and exhaling is only vital in this system of meditation and there are no other obstructive issues encountered. It is simply mindful breathing.

Focussing on the breathing system paves the way of calming down the mind, the seat of the power that culminates into higher awareness with a regulated quality lifestyle. Analogous is the position with depression in people at times of crisis. The severity of depression has come down undoubtedly with this clear and evidential experimental study.

This study will also generate a lot of scopes for further research and to lay their hands to discover aspects where the anxiety level has gone up in people up to 40 years of age by going into other factors that need to be considered.

8.4 APPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

We believe that the application of this study has brighter prospects of going wide enough in the direction of a further study for implementable aspects. This is the first time that we considered an *Ānāpānasati* Meditation technique for study on its efficacy and the results are very promising to be useful in preventing the health hazards of anxiety, verbal aggression and depression.

Of all meditation practices so far known, *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is the one that is easy and simple to understand, follow, and practice. The procedure is not complex. It does not involve any strict or tough postures. No pre or post-procedural restrictions are to follow. No specific stipulations on the place or the time for practice. It is simply witnessing one's own breathing process.

Given the easy and simple method of practice that is accessible to all sections of the society, no matter what of one's status, it stands a good scope to reach the society in the application for reaping the meditative benefits.

On the therapy side of various ailments, out of stress, anxiety, verbal aggression, depression, etc., *Ānāpānasati* Meditation assumes a highly useful therapeutic role. Apart from the simplicity in the procedure, it is mainly economical, since no kind of expenses is necessary. It

is a self-disciplined practice with no imposing hindrances. And the curative properties of this practice make it most sought after and useful for society.

More applications are possible with *Ānāpānasati* Meditation as a remedial measure concerning other health issues not alone for emotional imbalances.

8.5 STRENGTH OF THE STUDY

The study on the efficacies of *Ānāpānasati* on verbal aggression, anxiety, and depression gained strength given the intervention of 6 months. Further, *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is very simple and easy to learn and practice. It is the mere observations of inhaling and exhaling. It is merely mindfulness of breathing in and out. Mindful breathing enables the mind to gain intuitive insights of complete awareness for application in daily routines.

8.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This present study has a few limitations which we need to address in future studies.

(1) There is no record of the socioeconomic status of the participants as part of this study as participants were unwilling to share the socio-economic status.

(2) The effect of subjective socioeconomic status on aggression is well understood and due to the lack of such information generalization of the results of the present study to a wider population is difficult.

(3) The study lacks the strength in assessing the therapeutic benefits of the intervention, general anthropometric, and in collecting clinical parameters such as height, weight; blood pressure, pulse rate, etc.

8.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES.

A further study of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation to find variable effects under demographic, socio-economic, pathologic, environmental, and other specific parameters, which we have not taken into account in the current study, is necessary. The *Ānāpānasati* Meditation technique is justifiable for more applications to redress other kinds of psychosomatic or somatic disorders also.