

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Modern life, beset with tensions and anxiety, continues to crush the affected people with an increasing number of deaths and a deteriorating quality of life.

Despite technological advancement and enhanced material standards of living, the real standard of living in terms of love, happiness and peace has yet to find its roots (Nagendra, 2001). As science and technology are progressing, on one hand, new types of diseases are erupting thus paving way for deteriorating quality of life. Present technological advancement has been highly noteworthy, facilitating society to a greater level of the comfort zone and a luxurious lifestyle. However, at the same pace or even higher, there is quite an alarming rise of emotional imbalances, hypersensitivity, aggression, frustration, disharmony, etc., in society. Violence has crept in unduly disrupting normalcy in one's life. Aggressiveness has been the cause of unrest, anxiety, depressive symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorders, suicides and remains one of the greatest public health threats to youth (Stauder, Adrienne, Kovács & Mónika, 2003).

Anxiety is nervousness due to the lack of certainty, panic at unexpected events befalling. Symptoms of anxiety are normally restlessness, a sense of dread, feeling constantly "on the edge", difficulty in concentrating, irritability, etc. Some of the physical symptoms are dizziness, tiredness, a noticeably strong, fast, or irregular heartbeat, muscle aches and tension, trembling or shaking, dry mouth, excessive sweating shortness of breath, stomach ache, etc.

Physical or verbal aggressiveness is an attack on an individual's self-concept to inflict psychological pain. This can either be physical, verbal, mental, or emotional. Assaults, abuses, ill-will and emotional excess are the outcomes (Infante & Wigley, 1986). This also leads to anxiety when coupled with any untoward incidents, events, or happenings that attack self-concepts. A previous study on the verbal aggressiveness of a coach on athletes showed a negative correlation between intrinsic motivation and identified regulation (Bekiari, Perkos, and Gerodimo, 2015)

Depression affects mental feelings and causes disinterest in all kinds of activities. It leads to sadness and dissatisfaction that decreases a person's ability at work. Some of the symptoms of depression are general unhappiness, indecisiveness, disappointment, feeling miserable and sad. This sort of weakness in the mind caused by depression is said to be a deterrent in pursuing philosophical progress. Events such as the loss of family members, loss of business, and many more such mishaps also push people to depression. The state of one's mind is distorted and makes one virtually inactive and ineffective. This kind of deterioration of quality and values of life cripples and upsets the so-called progress on one hand and the other hand erodes the harmony and peace in the society.

The prevalence of emotional hypersensitivity is increasing in modern society, leading to the deterioration of one's health (Nagendra & Nagarathna, 1997).

The role of *Yoga* and mindfulness in treating mental illnesses has been reviewed recently, and researchers have emphasized the importance of these two interventions in improving mental health disorders (Sathyanarayanan, Vengadavaradan & Bharadwaj, 2019).

1.1 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this scenario of erosion, dislocation and deterioration of health and happiness in society, *Yoga* is undoubtedly an essential tool to mitigate such disorders and disgust in life. *Yoga* is an ancient science that evolved in India thousands of years ago. It is helpful to maintain the physical and mental balances of a person. People across the world recognize *Yoga* for promoting positive health and one's wellbeing. It gives solace to the restless mind (Harold, Bloomfield, Michael Peter Cain, Dennis. Jaffe, Robert & Kory, 984). There is a lot of literature on spiritual science or *yogic science*. The spiritual aspirants are fully aware and practice *Yoga* every day. Ancient Indian scriptures as *Patañjali Yoga Sūtrās* and *Bhagavadgīta*, have defined *Yoga*. Sage *Patañjali* in his *Aśtāṅga Yoga*, has clearly described *Yoga*. Elimination of mind modifications is called *Yoga* (*Samādhipāda 2 of Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrās*). When the practitioner

practices all the eight limbs of *Yoga* (*yama, niyama, āsana, prānāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇa, dhyāna and samādhi*) as prescribed by the sage *Patañjali*, one can reach the final state of super consciousness viz., *samādhi* by which one can realize freedom, health and happiness.

In the spiritual lore, one can find that the root cause of ill-health is being vulnerable to all emotional imbalances that lead to many miseries. Emotional excesses rule over the body and mind. The mind becomes weak and susceptible to low thinking and poor intelligence with every kind of distraction. By mastering the mind, one can gain control over one's thoughts and think sparingly and wisely. It will help acquire instant wisdom and be free from all negative and unwise thinking. When one is free from thought, a peaceful mind is gained as per the aphorism, *nirvicāra-vaiśāradye ādhyātmaprasādaḥ*" (*Patañjali Yoga Sūtrās, Samādhipāda, 47*).

The ancient text, *Yogavaśiṣṭa* has portrayed the essence of *Yoga* as "*manah praśamanopāyaḥ Yoga ityabhidhīyate*" (मनः प्रशमनोपायःयोग इत्यभिधीयते) that *Yoga* is a skillful method to calm the mind (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2015). Liberating the mind from thoughts is the technique that triggers wisdom. So, *Yoga* helps a person to control one's mind, make it calm and become wiser through its skillful and subtle methods of meditation (*Yoga*).

Sri Aurobindo, an enlightened saint from Pondicherry has defined *Yoga* as a technique for achieving an all-round development of the personality of an individual at the physical, mental, intellectual and emotional levels.

Swami Vivekananda has classified *Yoga* into four streams viz., *Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jñāna Yoga and Raja Yoga*. *Yoga* is truly a comprehensive subject and an essential ingredient of everyone's happy life.

Karma Yoga is a performance or an action done without an expectation of the result of that action (*Bhagavadgīta* Ch.V-11). Another dictum from *Bhagavadgīta* "*Samatvam Yoga Ucyate*" means acting with an attitude of equanimity, without minding the fruits of action

(*Bhagavadgīta*, Ch.II-48). Meditation has the requisite potentials to work on the mind to turn it around towards the spiritual way of life where all sorts of mental weaknesses such as stress, anxiety, aggression and depression are minimized (*Bhagavadgētā*. Ch.II-63).

Bhakti Yoga is the Science of Emotion of culture. It cultures the mind by reducing negative emotions and increasing positive emotions. It helps to reduce wants and desires, thus elevating a person from selfishness to selflessness.

Jñāna Yoga is the path of Wisdom. It helps to get the knowledge of the creator and creation.

Rāja Yoga is also called as *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* (prescribed by Sage *Patañjali*). It has eight limbs divided into two parts - *Bahirāṅga Yoga* (*yama, niyama, āsana, prānāyama, pratyāhāra*) and *Antarāṅga Yoga* (*dhāraṇa, dhyāna, samādhi*). The main goal of this *Yoga* is to control the mind and reach the state of *Samādhi* that is the end of *Raja Yoga*, but the beginning of a spiritual journey.

Since *Yoga* has a comprehensive meaning and extended application with various limbs of practices, such as *yogāsanās, prānāyama, meditation, kriyās, bandhās, etc.*, there is a need to have specific knowledge of each such practice and its usefulness and it is in this context, it was felt necessary to examine, study and find their invariable aspects and the benefits of the particular practice of meditation, *Yogāsanās, etc.* However, there are various methods in meditation again, such as Transcendental Meditation (TM), Integrated Amrita Meditation (IAM), *Vipassana*, Mindful Meditation, *Ānāpānasati* Meditation, Tao Meditation, etc. One needs to know the efficacy of each kind of meditation separately.

Gautama Buddha, a great spiritual leader, practiced *Ānāpānasati* Meditation. It is very simple and easy to practice, even for a common man. *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is essentially quieting the mind with inhaling and exhaling and deals specifically with the development of mindfulness of breathing, whereas Mindfulness Meditation deals with paying attention to the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). In *Ānāpānasati* Meditation, mindful breathing alone is

vital for observation and this derives the power of intuitive insight. Other kinds of mindfulness meditations dwell on objective concentrations. Earlier, the effect of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation on electron photonic imaging (EPI) parameters was investigated and the authors reported a significant reduction in the activation coefficient as measured by EPI parameters (Deo, Itagi R, Thaiyar M & Kuldeep, 2015). As the results of the earlier studies were positive with *Ānāpānasati* Meditation, the scope of the current study is to investigate the effect of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation on anxiety, verbal aggression and depression.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

In the scientific field, these *yogic* practices are again effectively employed for reducing levels of stress, anxiety and depressive illness under the lens of investigation and evidential parameters.

Researchers have amply shown that meditation, an important part of *Yoga*, as an intervention helps to improve the emotional equanimity of an individual. Researchers found *Yoga* to be effective in decreasing anxiety, confusion, tension and depression (Deshpande, 2008; Mortamais, Abdennour, Bergua, & Tzourio, 2018; Sharma, Barrett, Cucchiara, Gooneratne & Thase, 2017). People found similar results in psychiatric patients with a reduction in negative emotions in their profile of mood states including tension-anxiety, depression-dejection, anger-hostility, fatigue-inertia and confusion-bewilderment after the continuous practice of *Yoga*.

The research shows that anxiety is closely associated with chronic allergies such as asthma, cognitive impairment, dementia and many other chronic diseases such as rheumatology (Mortamais, Abdennour, Bergua & Tzourio, 2018). In one of the studies, the authors suggested that listening to Tibetan music helps in managing the pre-operative levels of anxiety (Moscatelli et al. 2018) in the patients waiting for surgery. The quality of life of people with chronic illness varies with co-morbid anxiety that emphasizes the importance of reducing the anxiety levels (Sherbourne, Wells, Meredith, Jackson & Camp, 1996). Of scales developed for

measuring anxiety levels, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale-Anxiety (HADS-A) are more useful in assessing the anxiety levels in research and clinical studies (Julian LJ, 2014). Aggression, either hostile or instrumental, is a behaviour in which an individual intentionally harms another person. In its extreme form, aggression becomes violence (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) which may have a long-lasting psychological impact on people, especially children. A previous study on the verbal aggressiveness of a coach on athletes showed a negative correlation between intrinsic motivation and identified regulation (Bekiari, Perkos & Gerodimos, 2015).

Research suggests that increased mindfulness improves psychological well-being and reduces aggressive behaviour (Gérard Biau, Luc Devroye & Gábor Lugosi, 2008).

Recently, there has been an increase in the research and clinical interest in developing and implementing mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) in treating a range of psychological disorders, such as anxiety, depression and verbal aggression (Greeson et al. 2015; Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt & Oh, 2010; Jong, Desbordes & Ph, 2018; Khoury et al. 2013; Piet & Zachariae, 2012; Rosenkranz, Dunne & Davidson, 2018). In the context of verbal aggression, Singh et al. studied the effectiveness of the meditation on the Soles of the Feet (SOF) to control physical and verbal aggression and the results of independent studies on adolescents with Prader-Willi syndrome (Singh et al. 2016) adolescents with autism (Singh et al. 2011) individuals with mild intellectual disabilities (N. N. Singh & Lancioni, 2013) and individuals with mental illness (Lancioni, Adkins & Wahler, 2007) and suggested that both the physical and verbal aggression are reduced with SOF. Milani et al. studied the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) in reducing the aggression of people in a juvenile correction and rehabilitation center and they reported that MBCT was associated with a significant reduction in physical aggression but not in verbal aggression (Milani, Nikmanesh & Farnam, 2013).

In the recent past, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the therapeutic benefits of meditation for psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression and according to recent studies; meditation has shown significant positive results in psychological disorders. In another study, authors have reported that self-rated mental health has improved with meditation, though there were no significant changes in nearly all cognitive functions or physiologic measures (Oken, Wahbeh, Goodrich, Klee, Memmott and Fu, 2018).

Along similar lines, the preliminary results of automatic self-transcending meditation on late-life depression are positive and encouraging (Vasudev et al. 2016).

There are various meditation techniques such as *Yoga*, Tai Chi, Qigong, Jewish Hassidic and Kabalistic dillug and Tzeruf, Islamic Sufism's Zikr but the Mindfulness and Transcendental meditation techniques have gained much research interest (Walsh and Shapiro, 2006). Earlier studies have considered different meditation techniques mentioned above, but there were no studies done with *Ānāpānasati* Meditation, a form of mindfulness of breathing. In the *Pāli* language '*Āna*' means 'inhaling', '*Apāna*' means 'exhaling', and '*Sati*' means 'being with'. *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is the name of the meditation practice adopted by Gautama Buddha and it is the mere watching of one's breathing process. Given the simplicity and easiness in this practice of meditation, namely *Ānāpānasati* Meditation, it has been considered for the investigation to check its efficacy in reducing anxiety, aggressiveness and depression in people.

1.3 *ĀNĀPĀNASATI* MEDITATION

While *Yoga* has been the choice in many quarters for the reversal of abnormal health conditions in people, meditation practice has gained more importance in wiping out mental imbalances, mental turbulence and tension. Meditation is a practice known to reduce tension by calming down the mind. Of the various meditation techniques, the meditation adopted by Gautama Buddha is known for its simplicity and effectiveness. It is mainly witnessing one's breathing in and breathing out which is called 'mindful breathing' (Thanissaro Bhikku, 2013). There are

several studies on the effect of *Yoga* on emotional states, but there are hardly any studies on the effects of '*Ānāpānasati*' Meditation on emotional states. There are no randomized controlled trials (RCTs) on the effect of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation. Since *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is very simple and easy to practice, besides being more effective in reducing the levels of emotional balances and other mental distractions, there arises the scope for a detailed study. Hence, we designed the present study to test the effect of '*Ānāpānasati*' Meditation on emotions such as anxiety, depression and verbal aggressiveness in adults.

We employed the prescribed questionnaires such as the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Verbal Aggressiveness Scale and Beck Depression Inventory-II to study the effect of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation on anxiety, verbal aggression and depression. The details of the inventory are given in the methodology section.