



Peer Reviewed Refereed
and UGC Listed Journal



AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY
HALF YEARLY RESEARCH JOURNAL

GENIUS

Volume - VI, Issue - II, FEBRUARY - JULY - 2018

ISSN - 2279 - 0489

Impact Factor - 4.954 (www.sjifactor.com)

PART - II

AJANTA PRAKASHAN

ISSN 2279 - 0489
AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY
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Journal No. 47100



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

**IMPACT FACTOR / INDEXING
2017 - 4.954
www.sjifactor.com**

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Ajanta Prakashan
Aurangabad. (M.S.)



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Yoga & Bhagavadgeeta: The Correct Way to Deal with Stress

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Introduction

Today's modern age is techno-savy. In this age almost all work is done with the help of machines. Intelligence's work is also done by computers. Artificial intelligence is now a days working in the field of sophisticated technology. Though our capacity to work is highly increased due to the use of machines; it does not mean that man gets free time and leisure for the personal life and spiritual development. On the contrary man seems to be surrounded by tensions, conflicts and stress. The presence of stress and tension is increasing in his life. Rather man's life is caught into clutches of machines on one hand and stress on other hand and become pitiable day by day. Besides stress at workplace ,family responsibilities, children's education, deaths, health issues and other problems in family and relationships, illness, socio-political conflicts are some common reasons of stress due to which man faces stressful situation for quite a long period.

There is no age limit for stress. In early ages it was thought stress disturbs human life when he starts working and taking family responsibilities but that is only half truth. Students of primary, secondary school, colleges also fall a prey to stress. Modern research in this regards proves that children going to kindergarten classes also face stress and its effects as well as a new born child is also welcomed by stress immediately after birth. It clearly shows that right from new born to bed ridden old person, nobody is free from stress and live a stress free life.

Causes of Stress

The rapid change in modern working style, our life is associated with increasing demand of learning new skills, need to adopt new type of work pressure, higher productivity, time pressure, quality of work, hectic jobs etc. All these factors increase stress in work force, consequently in this age of highly dynamic and competitive world man is exposed to all kind of stresses that affects him in all realms of life- his health ,work performance, social life,

family relations etc. Stress is a silent killer and prolong exposure to stress may exert harmful effects on physical, psychological and behavioral wellness of an individual. Although all material comforts are today at our fingertips, our lifestyles are fraught with stress. According to survey of World Health Organization, millions of people around globe suffer from ill effects of stress. It creates havoc in our life. Due to stress heart ailments, diabetes, back and neck pain, acidity, asthma, anxiety, ulcer, irritability, insomnia, blood pressure are some of the psycho-somatic problems we are facing today. Stress has become epidemic problem for us.

Definition of Stress

Havoc creating stress is defined in many ways. One definition states stress as body's emergency response to imagined danger. It is body's burst action to fight the threat. Stress sometimes compels body to totally exhaust its power against fighting stressful situation. Traditionally stress is conceptualized to be result of unmanageable external situation a person faces. Stress is a resultant feature of imbalance between demand and resources, expectations and their translations, our pursuit and our failure in them.

Stresses are classified in 1) Acute Stresses and 2) Chronic stress. Acute stress is most common form of stress, common among human beings world - wide. It deals with pressure of near future or recent past. It is short term stress and does not have enough time to make damage. Chronic stress continues over a long period of time due to which very serious health problems are likely to emerge. In chronic stress the chances of developing mental issues are more. Better understanding of situation and correct response is one way of coping. Relaxation technique is another while defense mechanism is third way of coping with stress but all of them have temporary effect.

Social and behavioral psychology is the proper field to deal with matter related to stress. Hundreds of scholars and researchers in western European countries and America have undertaken scientific research and established some remedies how to resolve problems arising out of stressful situation. Several models of stress management have been employed with distinctive explanation of mechanism for controlling stress. They are all useful and providing better solutions to ill effects of stress.

Stress Management in Corporate World

Stress management and relaxation techniques are now- a -days invariably used in corporate world, industries, business, sports, medical institutions, health organization etc. for their employees, executives and directors. Employers provide stress management programs at work place for their wellness. Individual coping strategies also play predominant role in renovating ill effects of stress and thereby enhancing wellness of employees. Many techniques developed by research scholars are directed towards minimize or eliminate ill effects of stress and focus on understanding palliative care of affected person. But all of them seem to be curative measures. There is hardly any preventive measure so far chalked out which will not allow to arise stress at all. There is a well known prescription in the field of health management and wellness of mankind that "Prevention is the best remedy than cure" and in so far as stress management is concerned; it is well dealt by Yogasastra and Bhagavadgeeta.

Functioning of Parasympathetic and Sympathetic Nervous System

The nervous system is working in two ways. The Parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS) works on the body when a person is normal, consequently his respiration, heart rate, blood pressure, are also normal. On the other hand Sympathetic nervous system (SNS) takes charge of the body when a person faces danger, emergency or stressful situation, consequently, respiration rate, heart beat and blood pressure increases. In such situation, adrenal gland releases extra adrenalin which gives extra power to combat stressful situation. When a person comes out of stressful situation, SNS transfers its governance to PSNS, So that bodily functions return to normalcy. The constant state of hyper -vigilance results into repeated firing of SNS that releases adrenalin cortisol and other hormones which disturbs the functioning of system and a person falls prey of diseases like obesity, diabetes, depression, autoimmune disorders, cardio vascular disorders and what not.

Increased sympathetic activation and release of stress hormones leads to increase in heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, body temperature, and muscle tension. In contrast relaxation response as an antidote to stress, decrease heart rate, breathing, body temperature, blood pressure and muscle tension and thus leads to state of stress freeness. Therefore stress management means an urgent need of transfer of functioning of SNS to PSNS.

Yoga on Stress management

Yoga as an ancient discipline designed to bring balance between physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional dimensions of health of an individual spread over eight aspects or yogic limbs. Although all of them are equally important, Aasanas and Pranayama are especially important in stress management. Pranayama, the regulatory system of respiration controls the supply of oxygen to respiratory organs and heart rate come down. Some bodily postures i.e. Asanas supplement this process and both Aasanas and Pranayama help SNS to transfer control of working of body to PSNS dominance and thereby cooling down the system. Thus Yoga has been shown to have immediate psychological effects: decreasing anxiety and increasing feeling of emotional, social and spiritual wellness. Several research evidences and reviews conducted to examine the impact of Yoga on cardio-vascular diseases metabolic syndromes diabetes, cancer, anxiety, depression have shown positive results on psycho- physical states of patients affected by stress. Many research experiments have established that Yoga has both immediate as well as long term good effects on anxiety reduction and if practiced regularly Yoga based relaxation techniques eliminate anxiety once for all. Most of the people who practiced yoga regularly experienced improvement in their physical, mental and spiritual well- being. Their quality of life improves due to good sleep, digestion, circulation, respiration excretion etc. It improves stamina, immunity & mood. Regular practice of Yoga also improves lifestyles disorders.

Yoga is the answer to healing stress among working men and women having all-in-one formula that acts as a soothing agent serves as a reviver of mind, body and soul, enhances energy of a person and helps to develop positive attitude. It is complete all-in-one holistic formula and i.e. Yoga for stress management.

Bhagavadgeeta on stress management

Bhagavadgeeta, the most important text of Hinduism deals very beautifully the problem of stress management. Going to the root cause of stress, Bhagavadgeeta advocates that there are mind, body, chitta and self in the body and first three substances give rise to stress and stressful situation. Bhagavadgeeta therefore advocates to practice Atmasanyamyoga as a solution on stressful life. Atmasanyamyoga means yoga of self-restraint. It means to control the mind, senses and emotions to cultivate equanimity. In this Yoga body is purified; senses are firmly restrained and mind is totally withdrawn from its

subjects by self-discipline. Thus Atmasanyam yoga works threefold - First, it is to overcome desire ridden actions. Secondly, it is to detach mind and chitta from worldly things and thirdly it is to integrate mind and body with self as well as physical self with spiritual self. By removing impurities like attachment, aversion, attraction, dualities, delusion, egoism, hatred etc which are the causes of stress. Man puts forward first step towards self-discipline and self-restraint. Bhagavadgeeta gives full emphasis on self-discipline and self-restraint. Bhagavadgeeta advocates discipline at the root of this Yoga because without discipline neither senses nor mind can be controlled because disturbed and unstable mind is the root cause of stressful life.

The practice of self-discipline and self-restraint i.e. Atmasanyamyoga develops desirelessness, celibacy, contentment which are pre conditions of calm and quiet state of mind which further helps to avert stresses in human beings. Therefore the Bhagavadgeeta vehemently advocates that the discipline and restraint alone are the foundations of Aatmasanyamyoga and therefore the foundation of stress free life.

The Bhagavadgeeta further emphatically pronounces that stressfree life can be lived by a person who is stable mind or Sthitpradnya. Bhagavadgeeta in 2/ 55-56 describes Sthitpradnya is such a person who thoroughly dismisses all cravings, whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, whose thirst of pleasure is come to an end and who is free from passions, fear and anger. Such a person can live totally a stress free life. Thus Bhagvadgeeta contends that stress management for stress free life lies in cultivating equanimity by controlling mind, body and senses, by practicing self-discipline, self-restraint and detachment from things in mundane world.

Conclusion

Remedies suggested by the scientific experiments and research carried out by scholars from Western European and American countries are good enough for stress management in so far as they show the positive effects on stress affected persons. Yogic practice of Aasanas, pranayama, Yama-Niyamas and Pratyahar i.e. Bahyayoga is a better solution on stress management as seen from its results on toning down bodily functions and relief from stresses. Its ever-growing popularity through-out the globe is evident enough to believe it. But the solution suggested by Bhagavadgeeta - Aatmasanyamyoga is the best one as preventive

measure on stress management, though very difficult to practice but not impossible one in so far as better livelihood and wellness of mankind is concerned.

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