



EFFECT OF CYCLIC MEDITATION ON JOB RELATED STRESS IN IT PROFESSIONALS

Pammi Sesha Srinivas

Research Scholar, S-VYASA University, Bangalore

Sony Kumari

Associate Professor, S-VYASA University, Bangalore

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Abstract

Information Technology industry in India resulted in increase of job stress and its management by professionals would impact their employability as well as personal lives. Yoga is an ancient science which can give comfort to body/mind complex of human being in any context of life with a disciplined practice. Present study was design to assess the effect of yoga technique- cyclic meditation on job stress on Indian information technology professionals. A qualitative research method was used to collect data and results are worth pursuing.

Keywords: Yoga, Meditation, Job stress, Cyclic meditation, Stress management & IT professionals

Global Competitive markets demand IT professionals to be innovative, cost effective as well as deliver “customer liked” products on time, all the time. It all boils down to “do more with less every time on time”. This creates lot of stressful situations for IT Professionals like ever changing customer expectations, squeezed project schedules, availability of skilled professionals, availability of talented leadership pool etc. As Robbins (2001) mentioned, an individual goes through stressful condition when he/she needs to deliver on any opportunity. Research has also shown Indian IT professionals are more prone to Job stress related complication due to the nature of the job they have to perform. Job stress is mainly governed by work-overload, role conflict and role ambiguity any professional’s ability to withstand job related stress also depends on physical well-being, psychological wellbeing and personal life well-being. An individual who can withstand job related stress can also turn areas of problems in the organization/industry into areas of opportunity for success. Yoga based practices are gaining popularity in India and abroad among IT professionals. The present study investigates the effects of cyclic meditation on Indian IT professionals using Qualitative method.

Intervention-Cyclic Meditation: C.M is inspired by a verse from Mandukya Upanishad (Sanjib Patra, Shirley Tells.2009). C.M. is a set of stimulation and relaxation poses. There are two principles of this practice- depth of perception and expansion of awareness. The complete cycle of this practice consists of 35 minutes. Cyclic meditation was developed by SVYASA (Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samstahana), Bangalore, India. Cyclic Meditation could be shortly referred as C.M here after.

Material and Methods: In this study qualitative methodology was used. Qualitative methodologies could be considered to be used in cases where large range of unknown variables effects an area (Creswell, 1998). Key advantage with qualitative case study is that it helps to get deeper insight

into participant experiences without any prior hypothesis (Patton, 1990). **Subjects-**Participants were selected from Bengaluru, India office from one of the leading Multinational European Company (MNC). Sixty days intervention was administered to 45 employees of the selected company participated in the study. All the participants were not having any serious illness or were not under medical treatment during the intervention period. The age range of employees varied from 24 years to 42 years. Participants were requested to provide their experience in a written format honestly without any bias or apprehension. The written format provided, has guiding questions like “describe the impact of cyclic meditation at physical level.

Data Analysis: As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explain, data analysis begins after collecting the data from the participants in qualitative research. Written data provided by volunteered participants, was grouped into four major categories of information. First one was effect of Cyclic Meditation (C.M.) on physical well-being, second one was effect of C.M. on psychological well-being, and third one was effect of C.M. on personal life and the last one being effect of C.M. on work place. As part of last category of effect on workplace, responses from participants were also carefully examined to see the effect of C.M on job stress for IT professionals.

On physical well-being: Regular use of mouse and key board with the computer, IT professionals are more prone to wrist pains, shoulder joint pain, obesity issues as well body laziness issues. As IT professionals work under cool air conditions constantly, IT professionals might also get exposed to breathing issue, sleep issues as there is a possibility of imbalance in effort done between body and mind in a day.

On psychological well-being: Challenging projects and ambitious targets also add to impact the psychological well-being. Psychological well-being can be felt by self-awareness, self-confidence and listening capabilities. Below are experiences



as expressed by some of the participants.

On personal life: I.T professionals are spending much more time at workplace than at home. As quality time spent at home for professionals is decreasing day by day, any disturbance at home/family would disturb the work efficiency of professionals and make those professional more prone to job stress situation. Below are experiences as expressed by some of the participants.

At workplace:I.T professionals may have challenging times in handling work related discussions/risk management/schedules which can potentially impact work efficiency, resulting in job related stress. Support from sub-ordinates/peers as well as supervisors, is also crucial for performing assigned tasks efficiently. Responses from Participant experience sharing document were also examined to assess the impact of Cyclic Meditation at the workplace. Below are experiences as expressed by some of the participants.

On Job related stress management: Participants' responses were also carefully examined to assess the effect of C.M. in handling job related stressful situations. Ability to work with cool mindedness is key in stressful job situations. It is also important to respond appropriately for work place discussions else it would have negative spiral effect on Job stress. Ability to complete tasks even under stressful situations is key for professional's success. Below are experiences as expressed by some of the participants. Below are experiences as expressed by some of the participants.

"I am able to focus on work with greater intensity and am able to manage work schedules more effectively."

"I feel effectiveness in my way of approach in handling discussions which helped to increase my productivity."

"It helped to reduce tensions at work place and I feel relaxed in taking decisions compared to before."

"Usually, I do not get proper sleep in the night. Also if I sleep longer hours by chance, I use to feel tired and sleepy all the time following wakeup. C.M. sessions helped me to get proper and continuous sleep for 6 hours, which is good enough for the body to relax."

"I use to have back pain on daily basis. When I use to get up in the morning, I use to feel the pain a lot. After I practice cyclic meditation, I have no more back pain and feeling relaxed."

"I have become aware of my thoughts and body movements post Cyclic Meditation practice."

"I am able to take decisions well after analysing all the pre & post actions of decisions post Cyclic Meditation practice"

"Cyclic Meditation practice has obviously increased the patience and it helped to handle the situations and relations effectively with family and friends."

"Also I must say, I am able to spend quality time with my family every evening."

"Earlier due to more stress, sometimes I tend to react to situations hastily. With a relaxed body and mind, I am able to appropriately respond to situations at work place."

"Last few months, my workplace environment had turned from bad to worst. I had to cope with schedule challenges, not so supportive management during this time. This affected me both physically and emotionally. Because of these changes, I used to get angry with my kids/wife even for a small mistake and also couldn't get sleep well in the night. After started practicing cyclic meditation, I am more relaxed both physically and mentally. It definitely helped me to let out my stress. This in turn helped me in finding a new career opportunity as well."

Results&Discussion

Participants experienced positive effects at physical well-being as well as psychological well-being after practicing Cyclic Meditation. Participants reported more of self-awareness, self-confidence, decision making capability as well as on listening capability as expressed by few participants. Participants also experienced ability to respond appropriately in work related situations, positive effect in personal lives in terms of handling situations and relations effectively. Most of the participants experienced positive effect at work place in terms handling discussions, risk forecasting and in adopting systematic problem solving. In addition to a quality time spent in personal time helps to tackle work related issues as well as job stress effectively.

Limitations: Adding more I.T, M.N.C companies would give more promising outcomes which might support existing findings more robustly or modify some of the findings. To enrich this study, future research can also consider women specific job stress as well as, study on IT enabling sector like B.P.O industry

Conclusions

Cyclic Meditation practice helped IT professionals for enhancing their physical and psychological well-being including ability to manage work related tasks effectively. Organization and environment plays significant role in impacting job stress for Indian IT professionals. Cyclic Meditation practice would help to reduce job stress and it also enables the IT professional to perform efficiently at work place despite of stressful work conditions.

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