

Wisdom of Yoga and Meditation: A Tight Rope to Walk

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Abstract

This paper focuses on studying and analyzing different aspects of yoga and meditation in one's life. For gaining the competitive advantage, these days yoga and meditation are being used as one of the key element in one's personal growth as well as professional life. In this cutthroat competition, everyone is so busy in their lives that it is tough and tight for an individual to spare time for yoga and meditation. This paper highlights some myths and parameters regarding yoga and meditation, which are essential to be safe from dreadful diseases and necessary from the point of view of healthcare. Most of the studies performed in the developed and developing countries reflecting that an individual is becoming more and more health conscious and therefore prefers to have different asana and exercises of yoga and meditation that are manageable and healthy for the individuals. Human being has examined the fact in order to meet the normal workouts it is necessary to concentrate on physical and mental functioning of the body. Studies and research have proved the fact that by following the principles of yoga and meditation-peaceful mind, alertness and concentration can improve. This paper goes on to highlight how one can benefit immensely by practicing the various concepts of yoga and meditation to come out of the changing paradigms in a way not known before also would acquaint to about the myths, whys, difference, benefits and mechanism of yoga and meditation.

Keywords: *Yoga and meditation, Competitive Advantage, Personal Growth, Health Conscious, Physical and Mental Functioning.*

Introduction

In terms of corporate advancement, the concept of yoga and meditation are often mistaken for employee well-being which neither do full justice nor present a comprehensive picture. Previously, workplace yoga and meditation were not given their due with regard to the overall well being of the employees as well as his job satisfaction index. However, of late, companies have come to realize that they cannot make themselves count without acknowledging the increasing role of yoga and meditation which could be found at every level in an organization and in every employee no matter what is her/his say in the organization.

It is but obvious that employees, while coming to make their contribution to their organization, also bring their set of sentiments such as admiration, dissatisfaction, insecurity, passion, and the similar concepts of the same ilk. Here, yoga and meditation play a crucial role in the happenings, to convert his/her overall temperament to the workplace to increase credibility of an organization by converting from negatives to positives.

Yoga and meditation count because they are the driving force to gauge an individual's performance and contribution towards the advancement of the organization. Without paying heed to the same, the organization cannot expect to grow exponentially unless they have some mechanism in place to

handle the situations, both positive as well as negative, arising due to sentimental needs of the employees.

Yoga and meditation mostly influence the tasks which an employee is performing as well as other employees around him which is nothing but the reflection of the sentiments which he undergoes on a day-to-day basis. Thus, it can be safely said that employee yoga and meditation are of paramount significance for any organization and no organization can afford to ignore the effects.

Literature Review

The current paper is based on inputs given by various thinkers, authors and experts of wisdom, meditation, emotional well-being, socialism, religion, ethics, values, human existence, etc. Through the course of this research paper, the readers would be exposed to various thought processes as and when they evolved in the history of mankind. Such has been the emphasis put on yoga and meditation along with spiritual well-being that the same has been acknowledged by the western world as much as it has been in the eastern hemisphere.

Mate (2015) has expressed views on the outcome of excessive stress, be it professional and personal and how the same plays havoc with the well-being of an individual. Maslach (1982) as an author opined that 'burnout', an outcome of excessive stress (negative one) could have unintended outcomes which might harm the natural growth of an individual. In this regard, meditation could prove to be an effective remedy.

Corroborating with Maslach, Zapf research study (2002) has presented views on emotional and psychological well-being by emphasizing on how the two could make a human being better in the true sense. The author is also of the view that these two concepts could very well explain the enhanced performance of an individual who is blessed by them.

Disselkamp (2013) also suggested about how work force management at the workplace could reap dividends for the management. This is so because the positive energy channelized due to the effective and efficient handling of the issues which perturb the employees of an organization. Basu (1998) has been equivocal in this regard as well. He is of the opinion that the management of an organization draws heavily from the emotional well being of its employees. The author has been critical of those organizations that don't pay much heed to the above-said trait on the grounds that stressed employees are more of a liability than an asset.

Heinz and Harold (2008) have further talked in this regard by highlighting a global perspective on how to keep employees motivated and engaged thereby leading their happiness as well as improved productivity. This could be made possible with the help of meditation as well as other soothing techniques such as yoga which help them in building a superior concentration level.

Ashkanasy et al. (2011) have demonstrated their own perspective as far as the role of emotions is concerned in the perspective of an organization. They have their reasoning based on various aspects, which they have duly highlighted during the course of their work, which play an instrumental role in the growth of an organization. Emotions have been identified as a prime reason in this regard. Explaining this aspect, the authors have highlighted how an emotionally stable employee is much more productive than an employee who is strained.

Indian authors like Chakraborty (1987) and Gogate (2012) have given their own take on the issues which characterize the emotional well-being of an employee at a workplace. They are all for work-life balance and cite it as a major mantra for successful organizations. They also talk about the ethics and values which should be synonymous with the workplace and cite Indian contexts in this regard as well. They present a much-needed Indian perspective to the chain of thoughts as propounded

by their western counterparts.

Bierhoff (2001) has been a staunch advocate of psychological perspective to living in a human environment which, in turn, means psychological well-being. The author talks about how having a pro-social behavior works wonders for the successful climb in the society and helps the person in terms of realizing their true potential. Further, Bierhoff says that an individual who is psychologically sound could very well add value to the fabric of the society.

Goleman (1995), one of the foremost authorities on the topic, has presented his extensive views on the topic of emotional intelligence. He advocates the precedence of emotional intelligence over academic intelligence (EQ more than IQ) on the pretext that an individual who is emotionally balanced and satiated would have a much better perspective than a plain-intelligent person who is found lacking in the department of emotions. In the Indian context, Singh (2006) has propounded the concept of emotional intelligence in the context of workplace and cites examples from work when it has played a crucial role in the growth and development of the individual as well as the organization.

Sivananda (1998) wrote a pioneering book in which he talked about the Holy Bhagavad Gita could be interpreted to benefit those who live a busy life. Many a times, those who complain that they don't get enough time for themselves don't live a happy life for the want of time. It is in this regard that Sivananda has quoted texts from the Holy Scripture which talk about the preferences which we set in our lives and how they drive us. In case we don't prioritize our work correctly, they are high chances that we would crib our lives going topsy-turvy. The author also highlights the role which meditation and yoga ought to play in our lives in terms of bringing that much-needed calm, stability, content and sense of fulfillment in our lives.

Another worthy interpretation of The Bhagavad Gita has been done by Sir Arnold (2012) who, in his work, has outlined the Holy Scripture, giving an interesting and considerate perspective on it. The author, during the course of his work, has been quite clear about the way the Scripture should be interpreted in the modern context and how it could prove to be one of the literature which could add much meaning to the way in which we conduct our day-to-day affairs.

The authors have built upon the thought processes of various thinkers as mentioned above and developed their own perspective with regard to the role played by the twin concepts of yoga and meditation. They are of the firm belief that the modern life style of ours could benefit immensely if we follow these two practices with much devotion and dedication. In the process, they would bust various myths as one normally associates with the two concepts and how the facts related to them are much different. It only takes a proper understanding of them to appreciate what enormous role they could play

Myths of Yoga and Meditation

Myth 1: Meditation is a spiritual practice.

Fact: It is a fact that meditation and yoga existence is from primitive era and associated with certain religions and culture but there is no bar on any religion. Trungpa(2002), contributed that anyone with his free will can adopt this practice. Moreover, it will benefit to bring religions, nations and faith together. Just like the sun shines for everyone, and the wind blows for everyone, meditation benefits everyone

Myth 2: Meditation is time taking job and requires years to become master in Yoga.

Fact: Actually it requires strong determination and to be focused Ricoeur (1980) observed that need not to sit for hours and hours, if one wants to achieve peace of mind, he can achieve within few

minutes but for that, one has to become centered and present. However, as it is gradually practiced more, it becomes more helpful for the person to improve quality of life. Obviously, “Practice makes perfect”.

Myth 3: You have to chant to meditate.

Fact: It is not necessary that to meditate one has to chant the shlokas or mantras. Terwiel (1976) mentioned that meditation includes only successful practice and full concentration. Can adopt a tool; thinking of chanting or repeating an affirmation such as feeling “I am at peace”, repeating these words in mind may help the person to keep stray thoughts at bay. Even simpler, just simply breathe.

Myth 4: Yoga comes from Hinduism and meant for Old People

Fact: Rao et al. (2008) observed that yoga and meditation is not casteism-based and does not relate to those people who are free from professional and personal responsibilities. Basically it is a universal accepted phenomenon which adds values to every aspect of people and all age groups. Khalsa et al. (2012) mentioned that in the schools the students of age of 7-8 years starts mediating and attend classes of Yoga in order to keep the mind and body focused and stress free. Presently it is considered as a technology, anybody whosoever interested can make a use of it. The yogic science marked as Hindu by few people as science and technology developed and give rise in this culture, naturally it has be linked with the Hindu way of life.

Myth 5: Yoga and Meditation are daily routine exercises

Fact: Schure et al. (2008), mentioned that Yoga and meditation have many dimensions attached to it. It is not necessary that the individual is to be physical fit and have six-pack abs that can attempt Yoga or meditation. It totally depends upon his

willingness and zeal towards achievement his goal. Many of the life situations can be controlled through yoga and not always one has to follow it as following the time-table or schedule to do on daily/routine basis. During the hectic hours, yoga and meditation play a major role to release stress even at workplace.

Myth 6: Meditation is difficult.

Fact: It has been observed by Crosby (1999) many a times that people feel difficult to attempt yoga and meditation thinking of it as an esoteric practice. It is not only reserved for saints, holy men and spiritual adepts but also can be practiced by any of the nonprofessionals. Why it is found difficult as it hard to concentrate or we want output too soon, whether we are doing it right and sometimes feel mandatory to have experienced trainer. The best way is to ensure that the mechanism and process is soothing, enjoyable and easy and liked by the person to make the person involved and attached with it. Automatically, a feeling of attachment with yoga and meditation will arouse.

Myth 7: Quiet mind is required to have successful yoga and meditation practice.

Fact: Its not that the empty mind is the basic requirement for having successful meditation and yoga. In order to achieve and benefited for immediate and long-term benefits one has to fill “the gap”. Actually the gap is the space created or developed by our pre-conceived notions. To reduce this gap what is required is to reduce the space that has occurred between our thoughts. Individuals with pure consciousness, pure silence, pure peace and open mind-set will help to reduce frustration and stress level and turn into “a quiet person” Castillo (1990).

Yoga and Meditation Affecting at Workplace

Aspects related to Yoga and meditation at workplace are put under some headings which are to be understood in their differing perspectives

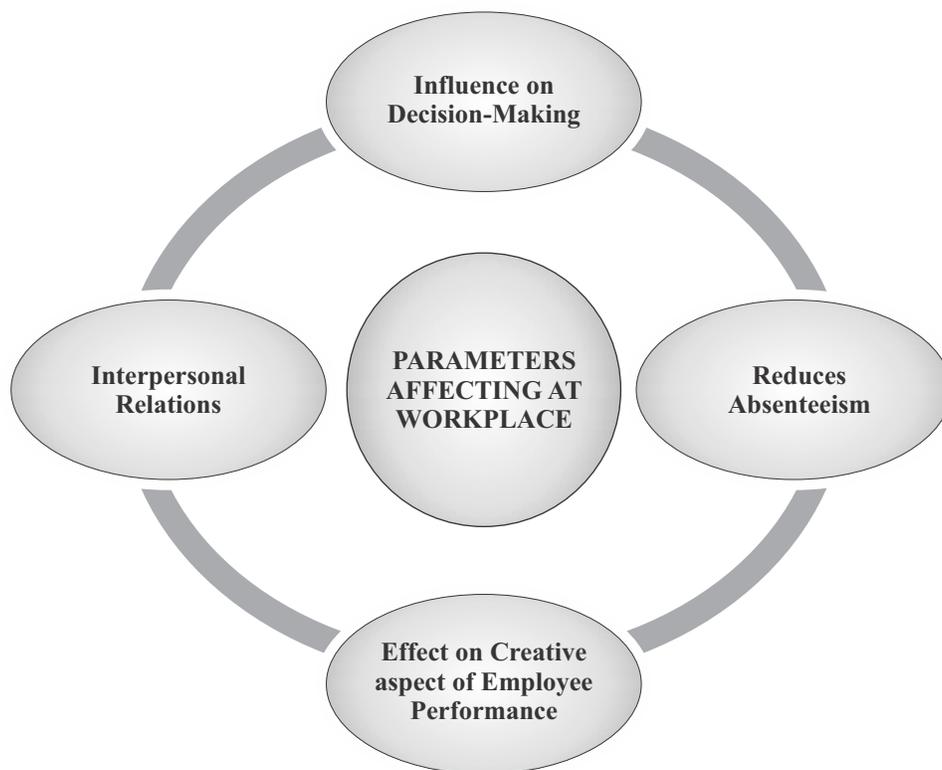
keeping in mind the fact that the yoga and meditation and their handling is something without which an organization can achieve much:

a) Influence on Decision-Making:

Shapiro et al. (2012) have suggested that yoga and meditation leads to improved decision making. Studies have found that contrary to popular belief, yoga and meditation, on certain occasions, facilitate better ethical decision-making ability as compared to having negative emotions under same conditions. Fineman (1999) has also contributed the same. Yoga and meditation, by their virtue, may lead to deep, focused and better processing of the problem at hand. It has been observed that employees when given the independence to take

decisions along with responsibility towards the outcome of the same, tend to behave in a better way. The yoga and meditation not only form an inseparable part of the work life but at the same time play an important role in ensuring decision making skills effective. However, mostly yoga and meditation have constructive effects. Further, Giluk (2010) explained that positive yoga and meditation increases creativity, encourage facilitating behavior, cooperating tendencies and reduce aggression both against the organization and against co-workers which further makes decision making effective. The accuracy and quality of positive people's output is better than the work carried out by those who keep complaining about one thing or the other which is nothing but obvious keeping in mind the realities one would normally associate with such flickering of emotions.

Figure I: Theoretical Framework



b) Reduces Absenteeism:

Goodman (2013) has propounded that the positive mood is associated with reduced absence and lesser inclination towards quitting the job while negative mood increases absenteeism, intention towards leaving the job, and eventually actual turnover. Some of the best organizations in the world are also the best in terms of retaining as the employees by adapting yoga and meditation which improve the quality of the employees' wellbeing and further leads to reduce absenteeism. Adhia et al. (2010), have highlighted that the adoption of yoga and meditation being one of the systematic method reduce the job burnout of manager and feel connected among themselves due to which it reduced absenteeism in the organization.

c) Effect on Creative aspect of Employee Performance:

Positive yoga and meditation influence the creative aspect of employee performance clearly as they provide a platform where the employees can live with a stable outlook which, in turn, is receptive to all sort of ideas. It also leads to a flexible approach whereby the employees can contribute in developing a better outlook for the organization. Luthar (2003) has added that the ideal organizations are those which provide their employees with sufficient opportunities to show the creative aspect of their personas along with their professional obligations. People often perform better if their creativity is taken care of in a proper way by the organization.

d) Interpersonal Relations:

Positive feelings induce helping behavior while feelings of jealousy or hatred, because of negative yoga and meditation, lead to poor relations with colleagues. Du Vernet (2016) has suggested that organizations where bonhomie and camaraderie are to be found are less susceptible to the vagaries of frailty of yoga and meditation. On the other hand, such organizations where the interpersonal traits

are amiss can never boast of such an emotional stability on the part of the employees even if it provides them with all the materialistic desires and amenities.

Handling Yoga and Meditation

Yoga and meditation and their proper handling are something which can make or mar one's professional life. Dealing with yoga and meditation is of paramount importance. Being at the forefront and handling such front desk jobs like customer care, stewardship in flights require displaying the highest level with regard to managing their yoga and meditation. It is really something which needs to be worked upon. Yim (2014) affirms that emotional labor or work is something which is related to the framework in which workers need to display a set of yoga and meditation as a part of their job profile as well as to realize the company's objectives. Such a concept is pretty common especially in the services industry where the employees need to be in touch with the clients for long hours and, most often than not, on a one-to-one basis. Such employees have to abide by emotional labor prerequisites when they interact with their customers, coworkers, suppliers, creditors, and the likes.

Astin (1997) explored the various consequences for the workplace stress and explained stress related practices. There are two ways by which employees can manage their yoga and meditation at the workplace. First is known as surface acting which is nothing but superficial acting. In this sort of emotional display, the employees are supposed to exhibit such yoga and meditation which they might not be undergoing through or which they might not be feeling. A case in point is the situation when the employee had a bad experience while coming to the office and he is supposed to make a presentation at the office. In such a scenario, he is needed to fake his actual yoga and meditation with superficial yoga and meditation. However, the demerit of faking yoga and meditation is that it leads to a discrepancy between what the employee

displays and what is actually going through his mind. The effect of such a mismatch is a n inclination towards discontent, grudging, dissatisfaction and unhappiness. This invariably leads to a sort of dissonance in terms of yoga and meditation. It is, most of the times, accompanied by a sort of stress, exhaustion, poor commitment towards organization. Thus, one can understand easily that for the organizational growth in the long run such sort of emotional pattern is not desirable.

Deshpande (2012) contributed that Yoga and Meditation is considered as an antidote for handling workplace stress. However, when we talk about the other aspect of emotional behavior, namely deep acting, the pattern is pretty much consistent whether we talk about the inner expressions or the outer ones. There is no faking of yoga and meditation. Such a situation is very much conducive for the long-term prosperity of the organization. It is indeed the importance of deep acting which gives the right platform to the employees to exhibit their true yoga and meditation. It is to be understood that it is not an easy task to provide the platform to the employees where they can express their yoga and meditation freely as sometimes they may result in adverse situations for the organization. This method leads to dealing better with the employee thus leading contentment. Moreover, unpleasant yoga and meditation, when contained, lead to decreased job satisfaction and increase the intent of quitting the job on the part of the employee.

Such concepts like customer service, attracting qualified and equally talented workforce is the need of the hour. Customer service can be ensured when the employees can connect with the cause of the organization in a better way. This is important because to ensure repeat business it is very significant to take care of customers in the right way.

Further, the organization needs to be adroit enough in today's challenging times and there is no better way to ensure that other than taking care of

employee yoga and meditation in a better way. The productivity of the employees is invariably linked to the handling of their yoga and meditation.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, one can conclude that by creating a conducive environment the overall output of the organization can be significantly increased. Thus, the management needs to see how yoga and meditation play an instrumental role in the upliftment of the overall outlook of the organization.

The management needs to understand that taking care of the emotional requirements of the employees would lead to enhanced competency of the employees. Negative yoga and meditation on the part of the employees can do more harm than what meets the eyes. Just think of a person who has been wrongly implicated in an official scam and has been handed over the pink slip. He would be leaving the organization with a feeling of bitterness, anger, betrayal and what not in terms of negativity! What sort of a damage one could expect if he joins the rival company? Such is the power of negative yoga and meditation and the significance which it commands over other things. This is not to say that positive yoga and meditation are not important. In fact, they are always given priority over negative ones.

Management needs to relate with the employees in such a way that the employees become more than willing to work for the organization. This is important because employees might not be looking for financial gains in many cases. Rather they are looking to be part of something bigger, something with which they can identify in a better way. The employees need to be treated as being of primal importance, or in other words indispensable, to the company.

The organization needs to provide such an encouraging environment to its employees that they should feel enriched from within and should

feel that they have been of vital importance in achieving the overall objective of the firm. Contentment on the part of the employees is very significant for the growth of the company. Only when the employee is happy can he go back home in an state of emotional bliss and spend quality time with his family thereby leading a balanced life. But all depends on how the employee is treated on the professional front because ultimately he has to justify himself in the organization in long run. Thus, the success of any organization could be sustained by keeping in perspective the yoga and meditation which employees undergo, day in and day out.

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