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Impact of Preksha Meditation on Academic Anxiety of Female Teenagers

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Abstract**—**The pressure of scoring higher marks to be able to get admission in a higher ranked institution has become a social stigma for school students. It leads to various social and academic pressures on them, causing psychological anxiety. This undue stress on students sometimes may even steer to aggressive behavior or suicidal tendencies. Human mind is always surrounded by the some desires, emotions and passions, which usually disturbs our mental peace. In such a scenario, we look for a solution that helps in removing all the obstacles of mind and make us mentally peaceful and strong enough to be able to deal with all kind of pressure. Preksha meditation is one such technique which aims at bringing the positive changes for overall transformation of personality. Hence, the present study was undertaken to assess the impact of Preksha Meditation on the academic anxiety on female teenagers. The study was conducted on 120 high school students from the capital city of India. All students were in the age group of 13-15 years. They also belonged to similar social as well as economic status. The sample was equally divided into two groups i.e. experimental group (N = 60) and control group (N = 60). Subjects of the experimental group were given the intervention of Preksha Meditation practice by the trained instructor for one hour per day, six days a week, for three months for the first experimental stage and another three months for the second experimental stage. The subjects of the control group were not assigned any specific type of activity rather they continued doing their normal official activities as usual. The Academic Anxiety Scale was used to collect data during multi-level stages i.e. pre-experimental stage, post-experimental stage phase-I, and post-experimental stage phase-II. The data were statistically analyzed by computing the two-tailed-'t' test for inter group comparison and Sandler's 'A' test with alpha = or $p < 0.05$ for intra-group comparisons. The study concluded that the practice for longer duration of Preksha Meditation practice brings about very significant and beneficial changes in the pattern of academic anxiety.

Keywords**—**Academic anxiety, academic pressure, Preksha, meditation.

I. Introduction

IN adolescence children experience storm and stress; these are the time when the individual is emotionally unstable and unpredictable. This period of life is between puberty and maturity and this is the same time when personality development is established. This is the time when an individual needs to make new adjustments with him and surroundings [11]. The period is identified with intense changes in the physical body, along with person's psychology and academic career developments. In metropolises, children in school are involved in too many activities same as adults. They are overburden and involved in inevitable hyper-parenting web. Parents believe that enrolling children in too many activities is good for their future. Children are overloaded with extracurricular activities. They need time to read, write, think, draw, dream, build, play, create fantasize and explore special interests but unfortunately the limitation of time does not allow them to do the same very easily. Thus they become failure in achieving their targeted goal [12]. This creates frustration, depression and other mental disorders. As the contact of children with educational institutes is closest for over the longest period of time, unfavourable environment of the institutes contributes greatly to delinquent behaviour than family or friend. It was also found that unfavourable school conditions including harsh and unsympathetic treatment contribute to delinquency. One or more of these factors are the causes of stress in teenagers: academic exams, cut throat competition, college and professional admissions, high expectation from parents, late night culture, monetary status. The problems associated with their lifestyle like lack of space and excessive use of television or mobile phone etc. leads to wastage of time and energy which could have resulted in positive outcomes, if the children were engaged in physical activities. Pressure of studies and to perform well in a cut throat competitive environment can stress out a child, s/he may lose appetite, find it difficult to sleep and even turn aggressive or morbid in the wake of criticism for his/her poor performance in the exams due to being compared. Pressure from parents, teachers and the peer group add to their woes [8]-[10].

Meditation is the process of refinement of mind. The manifestation of all meditation technique is peace, harmony, happiness and prosperity. It has become an alternative therapy to attain psychological calmness and physical relaxation by adjusting the stream of thoughts that normally occupy the mind. Normally performed once or twice a day for approximately 20 min at a time meditation is used to regulate stress, maintain hormone levels, and lift one's mood. Meditation is a technique of balance utilizing focus, directed attention or awareness in duration. It is the act of relaxing the body and directing one's mind on a specific target. Meditation is a tool for focusing the mind to moderate or eliminate conscious thought, to bring the mind to calm state of stillness or rest [3], [4].

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II. Procedure

A. Sample

The study was conducted on 120 high school students from the capital city of India. All the girl students were in the age group of 13-15 years. They also belonged to similar social as well as economic status. The sample was equally divided into two groups i.e. experimental group (N = 60) and control group (N = 60).

B. Experimental Protocol

The data collected at multi-level stages i.e. pre-experimental stage, post-experimental stage phase- I, and post-experimental stage phase-II. A multi-group, multi-level pre and post with control group research design was applied. Prior to starting the experiment i.e. Preksha Meditation training, an introductory orientation program conducted for students after taking permissions from authorities of the desired schools. The research subjects of program were made aware of the purpose, total period, timings and a need of their commitment to be regular participant for the training and allowing themselves to be tested with aforesaid psychological tests. Subjects of the experimental group were given the intervention of Preksha Meditation practice by the trained instructor for one hour per day, 6 days a week, for three months for the first experimental stage and another three months for the second experimental stage.

C. Collection of Data

Prior to starting the experiment i.e. Preksha Meditation training, an introductory orientation program conducted for students with eminent authorities of the institution. The Head of the Institution as well as the students of the research were made aware of the purpose, total period, timings and a need of their commitment to be regular participant for the training and allowing themselves to be tested with afore said psychological tests. The total period of the investigation was six months which was conducted in following manner

The data were collected by administering the Academic Anxiety Scale for Children developed by A.K. Singh and A. Sen Gupta. The data were collected at multi-level stages i.e. pre-experimental stage, post- experimental stage phase-I, and post-experimental stage phase-II.

The capsule of Preksha Meditation technique, consisting of following components with assigned time, was given as an intervention to the subjects of experimental group was presented in Table I.

D. Statistical Analysis

The data were statistically analyzed by computing the two-tailed-'t' test for inter group comparison and Sandler's 'A' test with alpha = or $p < 0.05$ for intra-group comparisons.

III. Findings of the Study

In Table II and Fig. 1 present that both the groups were homogeneous and there was no significant difference between both groups at the beginning of the study. After three months of their respective treatment (post-experimental stage-I) significantly difference were found ($p < .0005$) in their academic anxiety. The subjects of experimental group are found significantly with less academic anxiety at this stage in comparison to the subjects of control group and after six month practice of P.M. (post-experimental stage –II), the subjects of experimental group will reduce their academic anxiety significantly higher than post stage – I.

TABLE I
Capsule of Preksha Meditation Technique

Step	Exercise	Duration
I.	Mahapran Dhvani	03 minutes
II.	Determination	02 minutes
III.	Pranayam	03 minutes
IV.	Anulom vilom	06 minutes
V.	Kayotsarg	08 minutes
VI.	Perception of colour	05 minutes
VII.	Contemplation of modesty	10 minutes
VIII.	Mahapran Dhwani	03 minutes
	Total Time	**40 Minutes**

TABLE II
Mean, S.D. and 't' Values of Academic Anxiety of Experimental and Control Groups at Different Stages

Experimental Stages	Experimental Mean	Groups S. D.	Control Mean	S. D.	't'
Pre- stage	11.20	2.80	10.71	3.22	1.547#
Post-stage-I	9.70	3.36	10.88	3.32	**3.536***
Post-stage –II	8.35	2.56	10.76	3.32	**7.698***

*$p < 0.0005$, #Not Significant

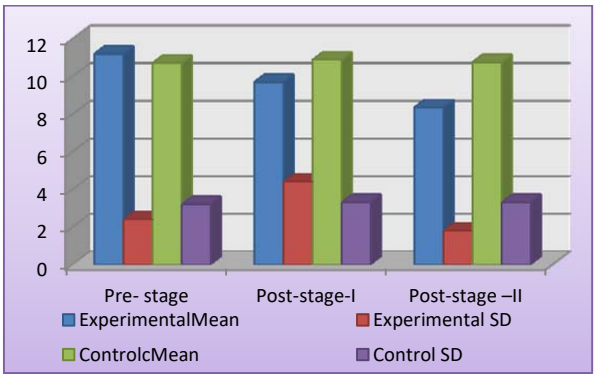


Fig. 1 Mean, S.D. and 't' values of Academic Anxiety of Experimental and Control groups at different stages

TABLE III
Mean, S.D. and Sandler's 'A' Values of Academic Anxiety of Control Group at Different Stages

Experimental Stages	Mean	Std. Deviation	'A'
Pre stage	10.71	3.22	0.7 NS
Post stage-I	10.88	3.32	
Post stage-I	10.88	3.32	1.07 NS
Post stage –II	10.76	3.32	
Pre stage	10.71	3.22	1.063 NS
Post stage –II	10.71	3.32	

NS = Not significant

Table III and Fig. 2 present the mean scores, standard deviation and Sandler's 'A' values of academic anxiety of the control group derived at three stages of this investigation. The

analysis of data clearly show that there was no significant changes in the academic anxiety of the students in control group from pre stage to post stage II.

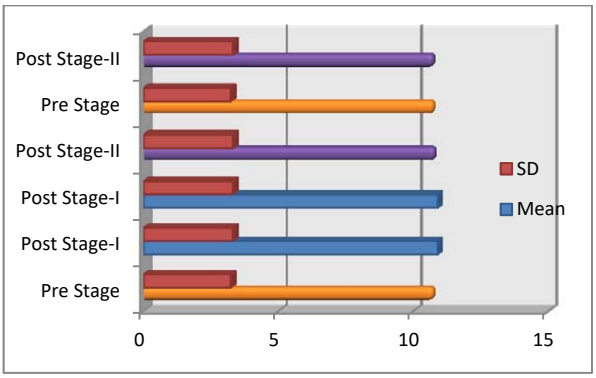


Fig. 2 Mean, S.D. and Sandler's 'A' values of Academic Anxiety of Control Group at Different Stages

TABLE IV
MEAN, S.D. AND SANDLER'S 'A' VALUES OF ACADEMIC ANXIETY OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AT DIFFERENT STAGES

Experimental Stages	Mean	Std. Deviation	'A'
Pre stage	11.91	2.80	**0.0541****
Post stage-I	9.70	3.36	
Post stage-I	9.70	3.36	**0.1251***
Post stage –II	8.35	2.56	
Pre stage	11.91	2.80	**0.0257****
Post stage –II	8.35	2.56	

**Significant at 0.0005 level, *Significant at 0.005 level

Table IV and Fig. 3 show mean scores, standard deviation and Sandler's 'A' values of academic anxiety of the experimental group derived at three stages of this investigation. The analysis of data in among experimental group showed that there was significant difference between in the academic anxiety of the students from post stage I and post stage II.

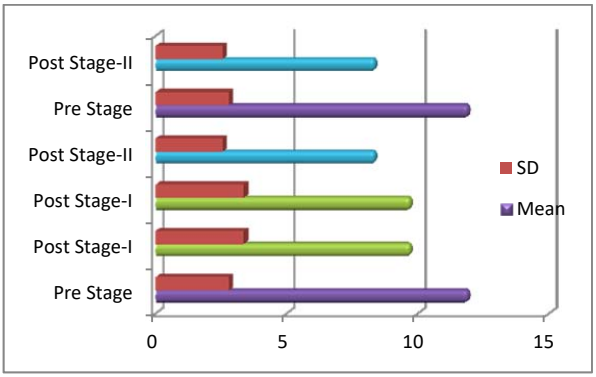


Fig. 3 Mean, S.D. and Sandler's 'A' values of Academic Anxiety of Experimental Group at Different Stages

On the basis of finding of the study it is clear that Preksha meditation technique significantly reduces the anxiety level among the school going students. The properties of any meditation are to relax and to give a deep rest to the subjects practicing the meditation. The same properties were led by the Preksha meditation. The practice of any meditation increases insight and perception about any stimulus to understand and analyze in a better way so that the person can resolve his problem with minimum stress. The P.M. provided better insight and perception to the teenagers so that they could understand their problems properly and sorted them at their own levels.

All the referred studies on Preksha meditation reveal the beneficial effects on psychological parameters on people who practice [1], [5], [6]. The studies reputed the P.M. for improving the components of mental health. All the referred studies support the results of present study [2]-[4].

It is also clear that regular meditation reduces the unwanted deep rooted tensions, stresses and thoughts that affect our mental health. But these results could be achieved and maintained only if it is practiced regularly. Hence we can say that practice of preksha meditation help in maintaining better mental health [7].

IV. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the finding, we can clearly state that the level of academic anxiety can be regulated or reduced by practicing Preksha meditation among school-going students. The basic reason for anxiety among students is the level of expectations kept on them by their family and sometimes by their peer group. Mostly, family knowing and unknowing put pressures on students to achieve best heights in their academic performance whereas, in terms of peer-group the anxiety is related to meet their day-to-day demands made in the school or any educational institution. To fulfill everyone's expectations, we require a higher level of effectiveness and hard work. On the other hand, many are not able to achieve their goals what they anticipated. Such a state of mind builds up certain psychological pressure within the students. This creates disturbance in psycho physiological parameters. Such drastic change slowly builds up in disorder and later it becomes a part of behavior. We call it stress, anxiety, dizziness, butterfly in the stomach etc. Practicing Preksha meditation can help the students to regulate, control, eradicate or remove such anxiety state. When such anxiety is directly related or caused by academy we call it as academic anxiety. Preksha meditation itself is to look within a self without knowing it. It is a method of gently look within our self and is to identify the area with stress is present which are basically called as 'stress house' a place where stress gets bundle inside anything to generate disturbances. One can easily identify such areas in the body by practicing Preksha meditation. Understanding and removing such forms of stress will definitely bring changes in the present state of the psychophysiological state of body. Stable and controlled stress zones are very much important to reduce academic anxiety among school-going students.

The overall picture emerged from the results show that the subjects practicing the Preksha Meditation reduced their academic anxiety significantly after four month of Preksha meditation practice (post–experimental stage-I). This reduction was carried over further after six month of P.M.

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practice. But no any significant change in Academic anxiety of the subjects of Control group after four and six months was observed.

The Preksha meditation reduced the nature of worrying about the things around them and about their class and home work. They are significantly less worried about predictions of failure, self-degrading thoughts, or preoccupation with the consequences of doing poorly as compared to the subjects of control group [9]. The subjects of experimental group have also reduced their biological symptoms of anxiety like fast heart-beat, sweaty palms and muscle tension. Thus we can conclude that subjects of experimental group reduced their Academic anxiety significantly in comparison to their pre-experimental stage and to the subjects of control group.

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