

Effect Of Cyclic Meditation On Triguna Personality Assessment

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Jaipur,Rajasthan.**Abstract**

Objective: This study aimed to evaluate the effects of cyclic meditation practices on influence of triguna personality. **Materials and Methods:** The study was a two group pre-post study. The dependent variables were assessed prior to the intervention program and at the end of the training program. The study was conducted at an Army Establishment in Delhi Cantt, 100 subjects were selected out of 50 in experimental and 50 in control yoga group. Ages ranged from 25 to 40 years. The experimental group underwent fifteen days of cyclic meditation training and control group followed as usual routine schedule. The variables measured were guna personality - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. **Results:** Significant pre-post changes were found in improvement in triguna personality score. **Conclusion:** This suggests that improving guna personality might help in the professional area of work.

Key Words: Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, Triguna, Army, Combat.

Introduction

Army soldiers face many challenges starting from personal life to environmental, social and psychological. These challenges put them into more stressful situations. One of the most obvious causes of emotional stress in military settings is not just the threat of becoming injured, but the lengthy deployments and repeated combat tours, due to which soldiers have to stay away from their families for longer periods. The longer the soldiers are deployed, the more likely they are to experience stressful events which will result in emotional or behavioral problems (MHAT-5,2008). Longer deployments have also been shown to be associated with increased depression as well as decreased physical and psychological wellbeing among both American and non American soldiers (Adler et.al.2005).

Individual differences also contribute to emotional stress. Meta analytical studies evidence suggest that lack of social support from family and coworkers is the largest factor in the emotional stress development (Brewin et.al.,2000). Most common work stressors that lead to emotional stress in military are change in work responsibilities, change in work hours and

trouble with seniors. This suggests that emotional stress in military stems from more subtle aspects of military culture that fosters work stress (Pflanz, & Sonnek, S.,2002).

Combat related negative experiences affect not only the service members but also their families who also undergo emotional stress (Polusny et.al.,2008). These factors include repeated relocation, frequent separation and reunion. Furthermore, military families cope up with these stressors in a structured environment that pressures families to behave in a certain way. That is, military spouses and children informally carry the rank of their spouse or parent, which includes guidelines for behavior and pressure to conform. It is widely believed that service members carrier advancements can adversely affect the behavior of their family members (Albano, 2002). Officers' inability to handle their family problems could be generalized to their ability to handle difficulties with in their unit. Children suffer the most as during their growing years; they miss their father's presence badly which has a negative impact on their mental health. Also the fear of losing older friends and making new friends with every new posting of their fathers is a reason towards emotional stress in children of soldiers.

According to Indian Philosophy, there are three levels of human existence in which mind is always in a dynamic equilibrium between three types of response patterns or attributes called Gunas. The concept of gunas dates back to Atharva Veda and later to Bhagwad Gita and Samkhya Darshan. Trigunas are psychological attributes responsible for the exhibition and behavior of traits and types of human personality consisting of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These are the building blocks of nature. These trigunas are common representation of human behavior. Every action that a person does can be classified as being a representation of one of the three gunas. These gunas interact with the environment and are expressed as personality traits. There is a dynamic transformation of energy among them. An individual's mood at every moment is a manifestation of the guna, each of which embodies a different way of internal feeling and outwardly relation with the world (Wilberg, P., 2007).

The term Sattva has been taken from 'Sat' which means being. It means lightness, illumination, intelligence. Sattva quality has been described as being free from attachment and absolutely unruffled in success and failure. Rajas is taken from 'Raj' which means intense, charmed, excited, passionate, dynamic. Tamas is associated with dull nature, inertia and mass. Tamas overcomes illumination of knowledge and leads to many errors. It is a product of ignorance, blinds and binds the individuals down with sleep, carelessness and mental imbalance (Dasgupta, S.,1961). The complexity of personality has been very well explained by the triguna concept.

All behavior appear to implicate interplay of the gunas. In an ideal state of perfect health, an individual has the freedom to use any of these patterns or responses. Limited health occurs if Rajas or Tamas become dominant. Generally, Yoga aims to transfer a person from *tamas* to *rajas*, *rajas* to *sattva*.

Army soldiers, have been seen to be *Rajas* dominant as their nature of job requires them to be dynamic and passion driven. However, due to excessive physical and emotional stress, this trait of their personality changes into *Tamas* from *Rajas*. Research has shown a relationship between Triguna theory and wellbeing indicators (Khanna, P., et.al.,2013). Yoga as a mindfulness practice, tries to correct the basic limitations of the mind by improving self awareness, self control and self esteem (Nagendra,H.R.,1996). The stress management program (SMET) which is a key practice of Yoga has been found to be suitable in managing the excessive stress, improve mental health (Ganpat & Nagendra, 2011) and emotional stability (Ganpat, Nagendra, & Muralidhar, 2011) and hence enhancing executive efficiency.

Hence degree of positive health can be measured by a tool that can grade these three patterns of behavior. No previous study has evaluated the effect of cyclic meditation on gunas in army soldiers. Hence this study was undertaken.

Materials and Methods

Subjects comprised 100 army soldiers volunteers (male and female, aged 25-40 years) attending fifteen days, cyclic meditation training program in an Army Establishment in Delhi Cantonment. Inclusion criteria: Male army soldiers who can read and understand English well and are willing to give consent to participate in the program. Exclusion criteria: Male army soldiers who were not proficient in English language. Design: Subjects were assessed in a two groups before and after the fifteen days of training program.

Intervention: CYCLIC MEDITATION (CM)

Throughout the Cyclic Meditation practice, subjects should keep their eyes closed and follow the instructions from a pre-recorded audio CD that was played during the session. The instructions emphasized carrying out the practice slowly with awareness and relaxation. The practice begins by repeating a verse (40 secs) from the yoga text, the Mandukya Upanishad (Chinmayanand, 1984); followed by isometric contraction of the muscles of the body ending with supine rest (1 min); slowly coming up from the left side and standing at ease (called Tadasana) and balancing

the weight on both feet, called Centring (2 mins); then the first actual posture, bending to the right Ardhakatichakrasana, 1 min 20 secs); a gap of 1 min 10 secs in Tadasana with instructions about relaxation and awareness; bending to the left (Ardhakatichakrasana, 1 min 20 secs); a gap as before (1 min 10 secs); forward bending (Padahasthasana, 1 min 20 secs); another gap (1 min 10 secs); backward bending (Ardhachakrasana, 1 min 20 secs); and slowly coming down in the supine posture with instructions to relax different parts of the body in sequence (10 mins). The postures are practiced slowly, with awareness of all the sensations that are felt. The total duration of the practice is 22:30 mins (Telles, Reddy and Nagendra, 2000). The control group followed as usual routine schedule.

Assessments

The Vedic Personality Inventory (VPI): In 1998, Wolf developed an inventory to assess three personality constructs (*gunas*) based on their description in the most ancient Indian scriptures called Vedas. Hence, this inventory was named the VPI and it measures the three *gunas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. It has 15 items for the *Sattva* guna, 19 for rajoguna and 22 for tamoguna. VPI has good internal consistency and reliability with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.850 for *Sattva*, 0.915 for *Rajas* and 0.699 for *Tamas*. In terms of discriminant validity, all but one facet had significant differences (Wolf, 1999).

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS-10. The paired t test was used to differentiate the changes.

Result:

The effect of cyclic meditation showed significant improvement in *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in experimental group after training program whereas in control group, significant increase in *tamas* score and decrease in *rajas* and *sattva* scores was found shown in [Table 1].

Table 1: changes in Guna score

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	Experimental Group (n=50)				Control Group(n=50)			
	Mean	SD	% change	P vales	Mean	SD	% change	P vales
Sattve	64.50	9.877	4.899	<0.001	62.46	9.392	2.658	<0.001

Before								
Sattve	67.66	9.293			60.80	9.158		
After								
Rajas	66.14	9.873	8.013	<0.001	65.54	9.320	3.540	<0.001
Before								
Rajas	71.44	10.098			63.22	8.981		
After								
Tamas	68.80	9.643	5.494	<0.001	66.66	8.677	2.850	<0.001
Before								
Tamas	65.02	10.007			68.56	9.685		
After								

Discussion

The percentages were higher in change in cyclic meditation as compared to control group. In Triguna personality also, similar trend on improvement in GUNA personality introducing long term yoga intervention in adult age group of college and university student population (Deshpande, et al., 2008; Khemka, et al., 2011; Tikhe, Nagendra, & Tripathi, 2012) was observed. the result of the present study aligns with previous findings.

The possible mechanisms may thought of as the the previous study showd many psycho-physiological positive influcence humanbody and mind. Effect of Cyclic meditation immediately after a single session found reduction in oxygen consumption (Sarang & Telles, 2006), increase high frequency component of HRV (Patra & Telles, 2010); improve the cognition domains measured by memory (Subramanya & Telles, 2009), attention task (Sarang & Telles, 2007), P300 auditory oddball task (Sarang & Telles, 2006). Further quality of sleep was enhanced in subsequent night on day practice day of CM (Patra & Telles, 2009). This suggests that CM which is a key practice of SMET practice could bring about change not only at the level of gross level but also at the tissue level. Apart from that the SMET program demonstrated to reduce anxiety score (Singh, Pradhan, & Nagendra, 2013), and physiological responses (Sarang & Telles, 2006).

Conclusion

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