

A Literature Review on Meditation, Emotional Intelligence and Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract- Human encounters an array of emotions from happiness to sadness and extreme joy to depression. Each of these emotions creates a different reaction within the body and secretes different types of hormones which affect both physical and mental well-being. “Good” changes can be just as stressful as “bad” changes. In general, the body responds to the ways of one’s thinking, feeling and acting which is often called as neural connectivity within mind and body. When the human beings are stressed, anxious or upset the body tries to indicate that something isn’t right through body ailment. Poor emotional health can weaken the body’s immune system. First it is important to recognize the cause of emotions and understanding the reasons for such emotions, for which self awareness plays a crucial role. To create awareness on emotional well-being, meditation is the right choice. And the researcher also felt human beings, find difficult to cope with emotions and life satisfaction. Hence the researcher has reviewed literature pertaining to meditation, emotional intelligence and subjective well-being to assess the relationship between the study variables.

Index Terms: Meditation, Emotions, Emotional well-being, Emotional Intelligence and Subjective Well -Being.

I. INTRODUCTION

Meditation is a mental discipline which brings awareness to one’s mind and body. It induces a mode of consciousness to realize benefits for mankind. It enables one to focus attention on a specific point like on breath, on body or on mantra. It is considered as the most valuable tool for the stress relief, improved mental clarity and pain reduction. It has its code of discipline to practice, a cross-legged seating posture (Lotus Pose), with eyes closed and the spine straight which encourage the circulation of ‘vital breath’, ‘the life force’ and ‘spiritual energy’. It is an experience of different people in a different way. People meditate while they walk, write and eat. There are various types of meditation practices followed by the practitioners. But the core objective of all types of meditation is to ensure ‘no thought’ attitude and to attain a permanent inner peace or ‘nirvana’.

Meditation has its ancient history from the Shamanic Hunter-Gatherer Culture. Shamans South Indian tribes have been using it for approximately 15,000 years ago to understand the conscious mind, which was considered as the starting point for the history of meditation. But a structural practice of meditation began 5,000 years before in Indian sub - continent. The world’s oldest religion Hinduism was the pioneer to practice meditation in order to realize ones atman i.e. oneself and Brahman the God. The concept of meditation was very much popularized by the two Indian icons and legends Siddharatha Gautama Buddha and Mahavira through their spiritual and ethical principles. Primarily, it was developed and practiced in the religious context. The differences appear to lie with the goals, purposes and style. Over the years, millions of people considered meditation to be the powerful remedy and preventive measure for health and well-being. Meditation gradually extended its wing from East to West in the mid-20th century. In 1960’s and 1970’s Western meditators experienced numerous benefits after meditation. Ever since, meditation continued to grow more rapidly all over the world.

In our daily life, every one of us is brimmed with numerous emotions. They are a natural part of every life form. Emotions are feeling of both pleasant and unpleasant states. The pleasant emotions comprise of happiness and life satisfaction (subjective well-being) and unpleasant emotions comprise of anxiety, depression, anger and hostility. Emotion emerges as the result of internal thinking processes which are

triggered by the external events and internal memories. They are partly thought process and partly chemical process within the brain and body. Emotions were the first to form within the brain. The strong emotions bring many physiological changes such as increased heartbeat, rise in blood pressure, and dilation of pupil. The non verbal changes include sweating, blushing, distinctive facial expression and posture. In order to overcome the issues and to handle emotions efficiently, a thorough knowledge of emotional awareness plays a crucial role. Therefore awareness based on emotions i.e emotional intelligence is considered vital for the smooth flow of life.

The concept of emotional intelligence was first evolved in 1985 by Wayne Leon Payne, in his doctoral dissertation title. In 1990 American University Professors, John Mayer and Peter Salovey published a journal article entitled 'Emotional Intelligence' (EI) and defined it as a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own emotions and respect other people's emotions and use this information to guide one's thinking and action. In 1995 New York writer and consultant Daniel Goleman came out with the book "Emotional Intelligence - Why it can matter more than IQ". He made further publications on similar theme that reinforce use of the term. He framed five components of emotional intelligence which include: self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Studies proved that there is a huge correlation between emotional intelligence and success. It is then considered as a single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence. In fact, research proves that when tested with 33 other important work place skills, EI emerged as the strongest i.e 58 percent of success in all types of jobs. It influences almost everything that we do each day. It was found that 90 percent of the top performers are high in emotional intelligence. On the other hand, research has also shown that poorly performing leaders have relatively low levels of emotional intelligence. It can be measured through self-reported measures and performance Measures. There are three Emotional Intelligence models developed by the famous psychologists and models are named after them which include Mayor- Salovey Model, Daniel Goleman's Model and Bar-On Model of Emotional- Social Intelligence. For the purpose of research, the researcher considered third model Bar-On's Model of Emotional - Social Intelligence measured by Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) for assessing individual meditators emotional and social competencies.

Well-Being is a positive outcome of life. It is subjective only to pleasure. Whereas Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people experience their quality of lives in relation to emotional reaction and cognitive judgment. According to an American Psychologist, Ed Diener, Subjective well-being is a multidimensional which includes both positive and negative emotions, global satisfaction, and satisfaction with different aspects of one's life. People always have the tendency to evaluate their lives in terms of a global judgment with various domains of their lives such as marriage, work etc. and also base their own well being in relation to their environment and the life of others around them. It is subject to how one feels other people in their environment perceive them, whether positively or negatively. The quality of life of an individual and a society is dependent on the amount of happiness and pleasure they experience, as well as their relationship to human health. It is usually self-reported by the individual, and measured through survey questions. Many alternatives to classical survey method also exists Experience Sampling Method (ESM) or Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA), in which participants are prompted at irregular intervals to record the current circumstances and feeling in real-time. There are two components of SWB. One is Affect Balance and other is Life Satisfaction. An individual's score on the two measures are summed to produce a total SWB score. Among the various scales developed by the psychologists the scales developed by Ed Diener et al. was considered for the presentation research which include Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) and Flourishing Scale. Therefore it is clear that both emotion intelligence and subjective well being are mind and body related. To become emotionally intelligent and to ensure well-being, meditation remains as a back bone. Thus this research has taken an initiative to study the relationship between meditation on emotional intelligence and subjective well-being among the meditators irrespective of age, gender, educational qualification, place and techniques of meditation followed.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

STUDIES RELATED TO MEDITATION

Davidson and Kabat-Zinn^[1] assessed the effectiveness of meditation on brain and immune function of mindfulness meditators. A randomized and controlled study was undertaken among healthy employees. Participants of the study were divided into two groups i.e. meditation group (N=25) and a wait-list control group (N=16). Meditation group alone underwent eight weeks of clinical training programme in mindfulness meditation. Study measured brain electrical activity before and immediately after training programme. At the end of the 8-week period, both groups were vaccinated with influenza vaccine. It was found that there was a significant increase in left-sided anterior activation, a pattern previously associated with positive affect, of the meditators compared with the non meditators.

Nielsen and Kaszniak^[2] assessed whether meditation could enhance emotional awareness. The study was conducted among 11 long-term meditators (9 female, 2 male) in the Buddhist tradition and 17 non-meditators (15 female, 2 male). The participants viewed pleasant, neutral and unpleasant pictures with biologically salient content in both masked and unmasked conditions. It was found from the analysis of ANOVA that there were significant difference between long and short term meditators and the long-term meditators reported greater emotional clarity, possessed less emotional arousal and they would alter the quality of experiences through changes in motivation and attention than the non-meditators.

Chambers et al.^[3] evaluated the impact of an intensive period of mindfulness meditation training on cognition and affective function. A study was conducted among a non-clinical group of 20 novice meditator before and after participation in a 10-day intensive mindfulness meditation programme. They were evaluated with self-report scales measuring mindfulness, rumination and affect, as well as performance tasks assessing working memory, sustained attention, and attention switching. It was found from the analysis that those completed the mindfulness training demonstrated significant improvements in self-reported mindfulness, depressive symptoms, rumination, and performance measures of working memory and sustained attention in comparison with non – meditators.

Orzech et al.^[4] examined the role of intensive mindfulness meditation training and its relative changes on cognition and emotional experience. The study was conducted among 69 community adults of both male and female. It undertook both pre testing and post testing of the training programme. It analyzed its effectiveness by using quasi experimental method and longitudinal method and it was found that intensive mindfulness meditation decreased anxiety and increase subjective well-being and self- compassion from pre testing. It also showed a positive impact on mindfulness and acceptance among the trainees.

Tanner et al.^[5] investigated the effectiveness of Transcendental meditation on mindfulness. To test the hypothesis, a sample of 295 students from universities of Washington, DC was chosen randomly. Participants were measured by Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Scale (KIMS) a 39-item self report questionnaire with four subscales: observe, describe, act with awareness and accept without judgment. It was found from the analysis of correlation that all KIMS subscales correlate with meditators at higher level than waitlist group.

Aditipal^[6] examined the effectiveness of meditation on well-being of nursing students. The study was conducted among 60 nursing students. The experimental group (N=30) were exposed to concentration meditation half an hour daily for 21 days whereas the control groups (N=30) did not. Data was collected using socio-demographic data sheet, modified subjective inventory, checklist for meditation technique and opinionnaire on meditation. It was found from the t-test that there was no significant association among experimental and control group in premeditation phase and there was significant difference between pre-test and post-test phase among experimental group but there was no significant difference between pre-test and post-test phase among control group.

Sivaramakrishnan^[7] underwent a comprehensive review on various types of meditation, the methodology and the application of meditation for the welfare of the human entity. To analyze the study identified three meditation techniques which are most commonly used by the practitioners namely Transcendental meditation (TM), Mindfulness Meditation (MM) and Sahaja Yoga Meditation (SYM). It was found that the heart rate and the respiratory dynamics were found to be extremely identical for all the three meditation during the processes of segmented breathing and relaxation response

Charoensukmonkol^[8] examined mindfulness meditation on emotional intelligence (EQ), self-efficacy and perceived stress. To test the hypothesis the data was collected among 317 regular practitioners of mindfulness meditation in Thailand. The Wong and Law EQ Scale, General efficacy scale and Perceived stress scale were used to assess the respondents. It was found from the analysis of t-test and regression analysis that regular practitioners of mindfulness meditation were tend to be a good predictor of EQ, perceived less stress and higher general self-efficacy indirectly through EQ.

Deepeshwar et al.^[9] aimed at measuring mindfulness and anxiety of OM meditators and non meditators. For the purpose of study a sample of sixty seven meditators from Vivekannada Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, Yoga University, Bangalore were chosen and they were assessed through State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) scale and Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) scale. The scores were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test and it was found that the meditation group showed significantly lower state of anxiety as compared to the non-meditation group. 'Om' meditation practice was positively correlated to mindfulness and negatively correlated to total anxiety.

Tolahunase et. al.^[10] explored the impact of Yoga and Meditation based Lifestyle Intervention (YMLI) on cellular aging in apparently healthy individuals. The study was conducted among 96 individuals enrolled to receive YMLI for 12 weeks. It was found from the analysis of paired-sample t-test that YMLI significantly reduced the rate of cellular aging in apparently healthy population. The study concluded that by making Yoga and Meditation an integral part of our lifestyle will delay aging or aging gracefully, prevent onset of multifactorial complex lifestyle diseases, promotemental, physical, and reproductive health, and prolong youthful healthy life.

STUDIES RELATED TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Showry^[11] explored various quotients of emotional intelligence like self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management in significance with managerial excellence. It was found that emotional intelligence ensures managers to make strategic planning, make efficient decision with improved thinking and balanced thoughts, creates self-awareness to work in a team more efficiently, enables to manage their stress and sustain with enthusiasm, resolve conflicts in a more cordial manner, reduce attrition and also enhance customer relationship for professional success.

Adeyemo^[12] examined University student's academic self-efficacy and achievements are influenced by emotional intelligence. The study was conducted among 300 first year students (male N=140, female N=160) of University of Ibadan, Nigeria using an ex-post factor research type. To test the hypothesis structured questionnaire on Schettel Self report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and academic confidence scale developed by Sander & Sander (2003) were used. Tools used for analysis were descriptive statistics, correlation and hierarchical regression. It was found from the correlation analysis that there is a significant relationship between academic achievement, emotional intelligence and academic self efficacy. The hierarchical regression found that the interaction term was significant and so emotional intelligence play a mediating role in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and achievement. The study concluded that as emotional intelligence is a teachable construct, conscious efforts should be made to integrate emotional intelligence into curriculum.

Malekar and Mohanty^[13] identified the important determinant of EI. Bar-on Emotional Intelligence questionnaire was used as a tool to assess emotional intelligence. The data was collected from 948 students in the metro city of Mumbai. The collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression. The result showed that among the factors considered for the study adaptability, interpersonal and intrapersonal ability were the important factors affecting EI. Adaptability and interpersonal ability was found to be highly significant with EQ. Intrapersonal ability, general mood and stress management were found to be moderately significant with EQ. The study concluded that EQ of the students can be enhanced if the four factors (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability) identified are strengthened with the help of inputs and training imparted to students.

Nelis et. al.^[14] investigated the possibility of increasing emotional Intelligence. To test the hypothesis, a sample of 37 psychology students were chosen (19 in training group and 18 in control group) using controlled experimental design. Respondents were assessed through Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEI Que), Emotion Regulation Profile Questionnaire (EPR-Q), Emotional Management Abilities test (EMA) and Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU). It was found from the analysis of t-test and ANOVA that there were significant increases in emotion identification and emotion management abilities of experienced group and no significant changes were observed with the control group.

Pahuja and Sahi^[15] examined the bank employee's perception towards emotional quotient. The data was collected using non probability judgment sampling. The tools used for analysis include factor analysis, sample t test, Likert scale ratings, percentage method, mean and standard deviation. It was found that majorities of the respondents were aware of the concept of emotional intelligence and they were not emotionally intelligent and thereby it affects their performance. Hence, the study had recommended that emotional intelligence is a matter of concern for the bank authorities as it affects their performance, initiatives have to be taken to enhance emotional intelligence.

Batool^[16] examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership. A well designed questionnaire (EQ-I scale) was used among 50 respondents heading different institutions and managers in public organization of Pakistan using random sampling techniques. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage). It was found from the analysis that there exist significant relationship between emotional intelligence factors and effective leadership.

Sampath^[17] investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on work-family conflict. The study was conducted among 325 (female N=200, male N= 125) teacher from Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts, Sri Lanka using convenience sampling method. The data collected were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The result showed that the level of emotional intelligence had a significant negative relationship with work-family conflict. The teachers who had high emotional intelligence showed less work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. It was concluded that the possession of high emotional intelligence is more important to balance work-family responsibilities.

Rupal et.al.^[18] analyzed the enhancement in student's emotional intelligence through the practice of Raj Yoga Meditation. A study was conducted among fifty voluntary students of J & J College of Science, Nadiad to measure their emotional level before and after practicing Raj Yoga meditation The data collected were analyzed using non-parametric Wilcoxon's Signed Rank Test and Mc Nemar's Test and it was found that after practicing Raj yoga meditation, the students could increase the concentration power, control the negative emotion and increase the positive attitude, increase patience, self-confidence, level of benevolence, compromise level and decreases depression when experiencing down time among students.

Sachin^[19] studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and work life balance of employees in the information technology industry. The data was collected from IT employees using standard questionnaires of Emotional Intelligence scale, quality of life scale and subjective happiness scale. The collected data was

analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was found that there was a positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Quality of Work Life (QWL) implies that people with higher EI enjoys better QWL as compared to those with lower EI and there was also positive relationship between EI and happiness. The study recommended that human resources team of IT organizations to take up the initiative for enhancing EI skills of the employees which will lead to high quality service delivery.

Pretrides^[20] stated that EI seems obvious that it can be taught to children and adults provided that the individual must be willing to devote considerable time and energy to the change effort, secondly the teacher or trainer must have a high degree of skills, particularly in the social and emotional domains, to be helpful. Lastly, the social environment needs to provide support and encouragement of various kinds. He further added with respect to trait 40% of its variance can be attributed to generic factors. But that trait EI are amenable to change after a few weeks of training and are maintained for at least one year subsequently.

STUDIES RELATED TO SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Diener and Seligman^[21] examined the factors that influence high happiness and compared happier people with average and very unhappy people on the variables considered i.e. social relationship, personality, psychopathology, religion and exercise. It was found from the analysis that happier people maintain good social relationships than average and less happy groups. No variable was found sufficient for happiness, except good social relations. It was concluded that members of the happiest group experienced positive feelings most of the time and they reported occasional negative moods. They do have a functioning of emotion system but can react appropriately to life events.

Randy and Michael^[22] assessed Ed Diener's contribution towards science of subjective well-being. Diener and his colleagues created reliable and valid measure called Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) which became the standard measure of life satisfaction. Empirically tested, the predictions were derived from theories about subjective well-being. Scientific methods applied to subjective well-being gives tremendous new insight and depth to the concept. His cross-cultural research on subjective well-being showed international difference in subjective well-being which are positively correlated with income, individualism, human rights and societal equality.

Arnold and Wido^[23] examined high level of job satisfaction would coincide with high levels of job performance or something more is needed than job satisfaction. To test the hypothesis, the study used circumplex model of affect as a theoretical framework to distinguish between positive and negative types of work related well-being. Positive indicators of subjective well-being included work engagement, happiness at work and job satisfaction. Negative indicators were workaholics and burnout. It was found that besides job satisfaction the other factors like high level of work engagement and high happiness are required for high level of job performance. However it was also stated that emotional rather than cognitive, forms of job satisfaction are positively related to job performance.

Rekha and Ashok^[24] examined the overall well-being of individuals on the functioning of social, past and future influences in their lives. The study was conducted in two phases (qualitative and quantitative). It used the combination of snowball and convenient stratified random sampling for qualitative phase and stratified random sampling for quantitative phase to arrive at the sample size respectively. It was found from the regression analysis that overall well-being of individual depends largely on the function of social and past influences in their lives. Study recommended future work to be on influence of well-being.

Diener and Micaela^[25] assessed the contribution of subjective well-being towards health and longevity. They survived illness population and reviewed literature on subjective wellbeing (such as life satisfaction, absence of negative emotions, optimism, and positive emotions) that would cause better health and longevity. It was found from the studies that SWB especially positive affect is found to be associated with health and longevity. Study concluded that positive feelings predict longevity and health beyond negative feelings. However, intensely aroused positive affect could be detrimental to health.

Leontopouiou and Triliva^[26] examined two positive psychology concepts such as Subjective Well-being and Character Strength by both conceptually and empirically. It was found from the reviews that character strength would contribute towards well-being. To prove empirically, study was conducted among 312 students of two Greek University. A well designed questionnaire was used for the purpose of study. It was found from the correlation analysis that the factors of character strengths such as wisdom, courage, transcendence, personal growth, human love and self acceptance seemed to positively correlate with wellbeing subscales of environmental mastery, purpose in life and self- acceptance.

Desmet and Pohlmeier^[27] examined positive design of pleasure, personal significance and virtue would contribute to the happiness of individuals. It was found that people who flourish are those who live their life to the fullest potential i.e more sociable, energetic, charitable, co-operative and open-minded, more liked by others and have richer networks of friends and social support and act in the best interests of society.

Alatartseva and Barysheva^[28] explored well-being: subjective and objective aspects. The purpose of this research is to create a multi-component model to ensure continued well- being for modern men. It was found from the study that the subjective aspect is by all means determined by objective aspects and subjective aspects remains as principle foundation for the formation of the objective aspect of well-being and vice versa. Thus, the study concluded that it is possible to provide well-being of human and society only by a radical re-assessment and alteration of moral bias.

Karaca et al.^[29] compared subjective well-being and positive future expectations between working (420) and non-working (482) adolescents in Turkey. A demographic questionnaire, adolescent's subjective well-being (ASWS) and positive future expectations scale (PFES) were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, spearman correlation analysis and Maan-Whitney U test. It was found from the analysis that a positive relationship was found between working adolescent subjective well-being and positive future expectations. The non- working adolescents scored higher on the dimensions of 'family relations' and 'relations with significant others' of subjective well-being compared to those dimensions in working adolescents.

Garcia et.al.^[30] examined the difference in subjective well-being and psychological well-being between Italian and Swedish adolescents, relationship between three constructs of subjective well-being (i.e. satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect) and psychological well-being moderated by the adolescents' nationality. The study was conducted among Italian (n=255) and Swedish (n=277) adolescents. The scales such as Satisfaction With Life Scale, Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale and Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-Being was administered. The collected data were analyzed using MANOVA and Structural Equation Modelling. It was found that Italian adolescents scored significantly higher in satisfaction with life than Swedish adolescents, across countries girls scored significantly higher in negative affect than boys. In both countries, all three constructs of subjective well-being were significantly associated to adolescents' psychological well-being. Thus, the study concluded that that there are larger variations between these two cultures in the cognitive construct of subjective well-being than in the affective construct.

III. RESEARCH GAP AND CONCLUSION

It is evident from the above reviews that many researchers had showed their eagerness and enthusiasm to carryout research on meditation, emotional intelligence and subjective well-being. They have disclosed many useful facts and information about the area of study. Most of the past studies of meditation were related to mental health, physical and emotional aspects. Studies on emotional intelligence were linked with personal and professional life success. Studies on subjective well-being examined its relationship with job satisfaction, job performance, cross country comparison, income, health and national progress. A very few Indian reviews was on the subject area and there was no comprehensive study to realize the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence and subjective well-being of meditators irrespective of their age, gender, present status, meditation techniques followed, etc. The earlier researchers have established the reality that the techniques of increasing emotional intelligence should be taught and trained to ensure success in personal and professional life and there was also a direct or indirect emphasis for meditation

training so as to ensure global life satisfaction of general population. It is found from the literature review there is a need to undertake study on the relationship between meditation on emotional intelligence and subjective well-being of the meditators.

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