

Corporate Yoga and Its Implications

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Abstract— Yoga is being practiced as a complete means of total health and human excellence for time immemorial. So attraction towards Yoga has been highly increased in corporate world, especially in developed countries. Merely US invests \$ 5.7 billion dollar per year for yoga classes and products [1]. Large corporations of the world like MICROSOFT, IBM, HBO, The White House, New York Police Dept., PepsiCo, United Airlines, and Nike etc have incorporated yoga to fulfill health criteria of performance excellence. Research at Stress Reduction Clinic at University of Massachusetts Medical Center has also proclaimed that yoga in conjunction with meditation can indeed lower stress and improve work performance. Distress has been found as a causative factor of nearly 90% of doctor visits and illness among US employees [2]. Hence, researcher was inspired to conduct an experiment entitled distress management of corporate personnel through yogic intervention as a pilot study to get more clues about implications of corporate yoga. The yogic intervention was comprised of selected yogic postures, breathing mechanics (Pranayama), gestures, psychic locks, concentrations, and meditations was given for one month among 50 corporate personnel (25 male and 25 female) from Indian Telephone Industry, Raebrali, India. It was randomized control trial with 50 participants and 50 controls containing same number of males and females with age range 25-55(51±5.1) years. The result met showed significant effect of the yogic intervention to manage distress and enhance work performance at $p < 0.01$. This study favored the efficacy of corporate yoga to boost health, harmony, morale, work motivation, commitment, performance and productivity at individual and organizational levels. Consequently, researcher thought of developing corporate yoga capsules and their scientific validation simultaneously at large.

Keywords— Corporate Yoga, Distress, Yogic Intervention, Work performance, Implication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Prevalent of health and financial distress has been a buzz word at corporate workplaces due to unnatural life-style and inner disharmony among employees. On contrary, to achieve material prosperity and enjoy the life is the basic tenet of the corporate world. Across the globe, in any industry, stress and illness level increases as we climb up

the corporate ladder to meet or beat the respective deadlines. Various factors like sitting postures, multi tasking, long working hours on computer, talking on phone while typing, irregular eating habits, rigorous travel, night shifts/odd working hours, poor psychosocial environment etc bring lot of health and financial hazards. Prevalent of varieties of corporate health promotion programs has been found more but they lack holistic approach and the area still demands some sort of innovative and holistic approach. So the basic purpose of corporate world has been heavily hammered due to exclusion of smart tips of life management as suggested by yoga and spirituality. Nature of work may differ as per technical, conceptual, emotional and human skills acquired but way of life management is eternal and almost same for all human beings as all have same primal origin. Frequency of programs at national and international level to develop the policies, models, tools and rules and prescribe effective interventions to induce healthy workplace is more. However, the problem is still extensive and needs more focus and study. For this, yoga may be one of the best alternatives because its integral concern to body, mind, spirit and surrounding environment has been substantiated successful for health promotion, diseases cure and cultivating good habits among corporate employees.

There is intimate- hierarchical relationship between health and wealth. Good workers lead productivity at work, productivity at work lead business competitiveness, business competitiveness lead economic development and prosperity, economic prosperity lead to social well-being and wealth and social-well being and wealth helps to maintain good employee health[3]. Ill-health and occupational accidents disturbs victim, family and friends, colleagues, company and society at tangible and non-tangible level [4]. 70% of the workers reported that job stress caused health problems that led to decreased productivity [5]. Close to one million employees are absent daily due to stress related conditions [6]. An estimated 90% of medical patients have stress symptoms; subsequent stress-related health care costs US industries US \$ 69 billion annually [7]. Direct medical costs of stress-related conditions are estimated to be between US \$ 150 and US \$

300 billion annually [8]. According to the UK Labor Force Survey of 2004/2005, 13 million working days were lost due to work-related stress in the year; the second highest cause after musculoskeletal disorders. Within National Health Service (NHS), stress is believed to account for one-third of sickness absence, costing the NHS £300-400 million per annum [9].

Yoga is a scientific discipline that offers practical and definitive results while addressing tension in both the body and the mind. In addition, yoga is known to eradicate fatigue and generate energy, all of which lead to increased productivity and morale - perfect for the corporate environment. Therefore, designing and validating of effective yogic model comprised of postures, breathing mechanics, psychic locks, gestures, concentration, meditation and spiritual counseling accompanied with yogic discipline may positively affect organizational health and performance. Hence extensive research work on corporate yoga is warranted in contemporary scenario. However, to get clue on positive implications of corporate yoga as aforementioned, researcher has conducted a pilot study to observe its efficacy on distress which is supposed a key factor of violating employee wellness and organizational excellence.

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD OF PILOT STUDY

The sampled subjects for this pilot study had mean age of 50 years and were selected from a single Telephone Industry of Rabareli, India having approx six thousand workers. 50 controls and 50 participants were generated by the process of randomization. Each experimental and control group was comprised of 25 males and 25 females. They gave written consent to be part of the study as participants and controls. The study was approved by ethical committee of the organization. Before random assignment of the sampled subjects as participants and controls, they were reported to conduct one month yogic intervention for experimental group and same intervention for controls after one month. The subjects who were capable and keenly interested to attend the yogic intervention were included whereas having more medical complaints and complexes and unfit for the practice of prescribed intervention were excluded for the study. There was no drop out of the participants during the yogic intervention. Participants were too passionate to go through the yoga program.

Baseline distress was measured by administering Cornell Medical Index Health Questionnaire (CMIHQ-Hindi

Versions for males and females) taking cross-section of the study population and only having distress score more than 10 were screened for the study. They were randomly assigned to yoga group and non-yoga group. The CMIHQ was comprised of 196 dichotomous questions related to physical distress (somatic health), emotional distress (emotional health) and general distress (general health). Yogic Intervention as discussed under was intervened one hour per day (6:30-7:30 am except Sunday) for one month and post data for participants and controls were taken. CMIHQ was composed of three major sections- somatic distress, emotional distress and general distress with 12 sub-factors (associated to eyes and ear; respiratory system, cardiovascular system, digestive tract, musculo-skeleton system, skin, nervous system, genitourinary system, fatigability, frequency of illness, miscellaneous diseases and habits), 6 factors (inadequacy, depression, anxiety, sensitivity, anger, and tension) and 18 factors altogether respectively. Each question was framed to have dichotomous answers- yes or no. Each yes responses were scored 1 and no was scored 0. Self-completion of questionnaire by each subject took 20-30 minutes. It was possible to generate the data on sub-factor level and to make fine analysis accordingly unless researcher only focused on data related to general distress to trace the direction of yogic effect because of being pilot study. The correlation coefficient between original version (English version) and Hindi version of CMIHQ was found in range of 0.77 to 0.87. Hindi version of the CMIHQ was culturally adjusted in Indian context.

Practice of yogic intervention got started by simultaneous chanting of Gayatri Mantra by yoga expert and participants- "*Om Bhurbhuvah Svah Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Ddevasya Dhimahi Dhio Yo Nah Pracodayat*". Then participants were guided by yoga expert to practice following sequence of yogic practices for one hour as time allotted under each sub-head of the yoga session.

Asanas: Pawanmukta Asana Part

I, Tadasana, Tiryakatadasana, Katichakrasana, Tirikabhujngasana, Udarakarshna, Chakrapadasana, Naukasana, Suptapawanamuktasana, Chakichlanasana, Kastatkshyanasana, Vajrasana, Shashankabhujngasana, Dhanurasana, Mandukasana, Surya Namsakar (2 rounds), Ardhamatsyendrasana, Vipreetkarni, Makarasan [10,11]

30 minutes

Kriya: Kapalabhati 5 minutes

Pranayama: Yogic Breathing, Nadishodhan, and Bhramari 5 minutes (5 minutes for each) [12]

Mediation: Inner Renewal Meditation preceded by OM chanting 10 minutes [13]