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The Healing Power of Mantras: A Study on Mental Health Transformation

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Abstract

The possible advantages of mantra meditation for both physical and mental well-being are investigated in this study. It has been proposed that mantras, which are repeated sounds or words employed in a variety of spiritual and contemplative disciplines, might enhance mental peace and general well-being. The purpose of this study is to explore how frequent mantra practice affects mental clarity, stress reduction, and health issue prevention. Through an extensive analysis of literature on mantra meditation, this study aims to establish a relationship between the practice of mantra meditation and enhancements in mental health indicators, such as decreased levels of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, this study will look at physiological markers including heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels.

Keywords: **Anxiety, Depression, Chanting OM, Mantra Meditation, Mental Health, Stress**

JEL Classification Code: I12, D91, Z12, I31, I18

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1. Introduction

It is believed that numerous saints are still alive in the hilly regions of Northern India and Kailas (also known as Kailasa Giri) by chanting Sanjivani and other mantras. It is believed that even today, these saints survive on air and water. Puranas suggest that during the period of satyayug, a boy named Markandeya had gained the blessing of the almighty, Lord Shiva in winning his life back from the Lord of Death (Yamaraja). Many Hindus believe that there are seven other Chiranjeevis. With reference to the above statements and citations, this paper aims to showcase the power of mantra recitations in enhancing mental health benefits and reduction of nervousness and anxiety.

The Bija Mantra "AUM" is first mentioned in the Upanishads and is believed to be from lord Brahma. It is believed that chanting develops a positive vibe around the Phraser. The other mantras also reduce stress and anxiety. There is much research that has been undertaken to provide proof of how chanting mantras or cultivating mantra meditation daily helps overcome anxiety, reduces stress levels as well as provides health benefits. There are several mantras like the Vittala mantra, the Hare Krishna Mantra, and Gayatri Mantra.

2.Literature Review

Goyal *et al.* (2014): The researchers have attempted to study the effectiveness of meditation programs in improving stress-related outcomes. To evaluate the outcome, researchers have made a meta-analysis from various sources and found that mindfulness meditation programs had a moderate level of impact on stress-related issues, while very minimal evidence was generated to showcase the effects of meditation in enhancing positive mood, mental attention, eating habits, and sleep patterns. The researchers disclaim that the results obtained

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are subjective and may not be generalized across all populations. They also recommend more robust tests to determine the efficacy of meditation in improving the mental health of participants.

Yadav *et al.* (2024): This research has attempted to study how chanting Gayatri Mantra and silence help improve quality of life. The researcher has undertaken the study by considering 120 participants, which includes 60 higher-level students. The study found a significant positive difference among the experimental student group who practised chanting the Gayatri Mantra for 30-45 minutes for 60 days.

Pundir *et al.* (2023) opine that chanting the core mantra AUM enhances immune function. The research data is collected using academic journals, books, and other literature sources using several parameters like EEG recording, fMRI scan, cognitive function tests, heart rate variability, etc. Chanting the AUM mantra also improves sleep quality, and quality of life, and enhances emotional well-being.

Dudeja (2017): The author emphasizes the influence of coherent thinking through the practice of meditation on a healthy body, mind, and soul. The common method like meditation based on mantras, especially choosing the ideal mantra sound frequency for a certain person, and adding trust to one's practice of the meditation method can have remarkable results.

3. Objective of the Study

From a comprehensive literature review, this study aims to explore how regular adoption of Mantra-based meditation helps reduce mental stress, anxiety, and depression; and how it also helps maintain a constant mindset and concentration.

4. Key Findings and Discussions

This research is on the positive effects of regular mantra meditation on the physical and mental well-being of a person. Mantra meditation is not only for reducing stress and anxiety, it also gives a positive mindset and relief from mental and physical stress.

1. An extensive review of the literature indicates that chanting the OM mantra has a beneficial effect on mental health and can improve psychological well-being. The study by Anubha Pundir and her fellow found that reciting OM aloud regularly assisted individuals in reducing tension, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. According to available research, chanting OM can be an effective supplemental tool for managing good mental health, nevertheless, further research is needed to fill the gap in scientific understanding of this practice. Chanting OM has a positive impact on a wide range of mental health issues. One 12-minute rhythmic OM chanting, for instance, has been demonstrated to dramatically lower stress and enhance mental well-being. Another study revealed similar results, indicating that chanting OM can be a useful intervention for lowering anxiety and depression symptoms.

2. The work done by Jai Dudeja uses a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Participants (N=100) were randomly assigned to either a mantra meditation group or a control group. The meditation group practiced mantra meditation for 30 min, twice a day, for 12 weeks. Pre- and post-intervention measures included surveys, cognitive function tests, and physiological assessments. The benefits of mantra-based meditation on one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being are supported by empirical evidence in this study. According to the research, practicing mantra meditation regularly can significantly enhance stress reduction, cognitive performance, and general quality of life. There is compelling evidence that practicing MM helps manage hypertension and relieve stress. Further high-quality research in the field of immunity and anxiety is advised to be necessary to come to a more certain conclusion. Before definitive results can be made, larger samples, better designed (*e.g.*, guidelines for chanting or meditation periods), more electronic instrumental measures (*e.g.*, ECG, EEG, EMG, and fMRI), and fewer self-reporting surveys are required.

Conclusion

The practice of chanting OM and engaging in Mantra Meditation (MM) appears to hold significant benefits for mental health and general well-being. With multiple studies demonstrating reductions in anxiety, depression, stress, and even improvements in cognitive performance and quality of life, OM chanting is found as a viable tool for mental health management. The research further shows how regular OM chanting aids in alleviating psychological distress. Empirical studies at the University of Southern California and the University of Nevada's research further highlight that chanting OM reduces stress and anxiety. The mixed-method study on mantra-based meditation illustrates notable stress reduction and cognitive enhancements among participants engaged in mantra meditation. Although the connection between MM and physical health markers like immunity and hypertension is promising, studies indicate the evidence remains less definitive in areas such as immunity enhancement, warranting more comprehensive research. Additionally, research on the effects of meditation on oxygen saturation suggests further exploration into breathing patterns and their impacts on health. This review advocates for further, well-designed studies with larger sample sizes, standardized protocols, and objective measures like EEG and fMRI to better understand and substantiate these benefits, ultimately enhancing one's comprehension of meditation and chanting and its scope in mental and physical health applications.

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