

LITERARY REVIEW OF STRESS MANAGEMENT THROUGH *YOGIC* SCIENCEHarshal S. Sabale¹, Abhijit Joshi²¹Ph.D. Scholar at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India²Ph. D. Guide, Dean, Faculty of Ayurveda, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India
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ABSTRACT

In a medical science, stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress is a feeling that people have when they are struggling to cope with challenges related to finances, work, relationships, environment, and other situations. People often use the word stress interchangeably with anxiety, feeling anxious, fearful, nervous, overwhelmed, panic, or stressed-out. There are three different types of stress, acute stress, episodic acute stress and chronic stress. These types have their own characteristics, symptoms, duration, and treatment approaches. *Yoga* is to control the functioning of the mind. Individuals have their thoughts, emotions, feelings and conditionings in the mind. It is very difficult to control. *Yoga* is the technique to control all these functions of the mind. The *Hatha-Yoga* includes, *Yogasana* (*Yoga* positions), Six *shat-karmas* (physical and mental detox techniques), *Mudras* and *Bandhas* (psycho-physiological energy release techniques), *Pranayama* (control and extension of the *Prana* or vital energy or bio energy). *Bhujangasana*, *Balasana*, *Sarvangasana*, *Sukhasana*, *Uttanasana*, *Paschimottanasana*, *Sirasana*, *Shavasana* evidenced importance in relaxing mind, body, soul and thereby relieving the stress. *Pranayama* brings calmness to the mind, increased concentration and stability of mind. *Pranayama* is good for physical, mental and spiritual happiness. *Pranayama* stimulates autonomic nervous system, sympathetic nervous system and parasympathetic nervous systems. It helps to ease stress, anxiety and tension. It also eases depression, dullness and lethargy. *Yogic* science including various *asanas*

and *pranayama* has key importance in stabilizing the mind, body and soul. Thus, *Yogic* science has prime importance in the management of stress.

Keywords: Stress, anxiety, *Yoga*, *Asanas*, *Pranayam*, *Shat-karmas*, *Mudras*, *Bandhas*, mind etc.

INTRODUCTION

There are four prime goals of the life i.e. *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. To achieve all these things, one needs a healthy and calm life. Whole ancient society tried to achieve all four prime goals of life, so that they had a smooth, sound, safe, assured, steady and healthy lifestyle. On the other hand, today everyone trying to gain good financial status and to fulfill all the physical desires. Therefore, nowadays, major population of society is facing unsteady, weakened, hard and stressful life.

In a medical or biological context stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress is a feeling that people have when they are struggling to cope with challenges related to finances, work, relationships, environment, and other situations. Moreover, stress is felt when an individual perceives a real or imagined challenge or threat to their well-being. People often use the word stress interchangeably with anxiety, feeling anxious, fearful, nervous, overwhelmed, panic, or stressed-out. Stress is the body's natural defense against real or imagined danger. It flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger. This is known as the "fight-or-flight or freeze" response.

The body is an intelligent operating system, but the body cannot determine the difference between life threatening external threat from imagined or perceived non-life-threatening stressors. The body react the same either way. The body produces significantly greater quantities of the chemical's cortisol, adrenaline, and nor-adrenaline. The Neurobiology of stress is a complex operating mechanism.

Types of stress:

According to American Psychological Association (APA), there are 3 different types stress,

- 1) Acute stress,
- 2) Episodic acute stress and
- 3) Chronic stress.

These 3 types have their own characteristics, symptoms, duration, and treatment approaches.

Acute Stress:

Acute stress is usually brief. It is the most common and frequent presentation. Acute stress is most often caused by reactive thinking. Negative thoughts predominate about situations or events that have recently occurred or upcoming situations, events, or demands in the near future. For example, if anyone recently has been involved in an argument, may have acute stress related to negative thoughts that are repetitive about the argument. Or anyone may have acute stress that is about an upcoming work deadline, again the stress is thought induced. However, most often when the thinking induced stress is reduced or removed, the stress will subside too.

The most common signs and symptoms are,

1. Transient Emotional distress: Some combination of anger or irritability, anxiety and depression.
2. Transient Muscular distress: Tension, headache, back pain, neck pain, jaw pain, and other muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendons and ligament problems.
3. Transient stomach, gut and bowel problems, heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation.
4. Transient hyper arousal: Elevated blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, rapid pulse, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath, sleep problems, and chest pain.

Episodic Acute Stress:

People who frequently experience acute stress, or whose lives present with frequent triggers of stress, have episodic acute stress. The individuals who frequently suffer acute stress often live a life of chaos and crisis. They are always in a rush or feel pressured. They take on many responsibilities, and usually can-

not stay organized with so many times demands. These individuals are perpetually in the grips of acute stress overload.

There are 2 main personality types that frequently present with Episodic Acute Stress: 1) “Type A” personality 2) The “Worrier”

“Type A” personality: Type A personality have an excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience, abrupt, and a sense of time urgency. In addition, Type A personality presents as reactive with hostility, and almost always a deep-seated insecurity about performance. These personality traits create frequent episodes of acute stress for the Type A individual. The cardiologists, Friedman and Rosenman found Type A’s to be significantly likely to develop coronary heart disease.

The “Worrier”: The Worrier presents with almost persistent negative thoughts causing episodic acute stress on physical and mental health. They have core beliefs that the world is a dangerous, unrewarding, punitive place where something awful is always about to happen. These negative binge thinkers also tend to be over aroused and tense but are more anxious and depressed than angry and hostile. Their thoughts are frequently filled with “What if...” statements that are with projected negative outcomes.

Episodic Effects of Acute Stress:

The most common signs and symptoms are similar to acute stress, but due to the extended frequent over arousal or extended hyperarousal there is ongoing damage and suffering.

- ❖ Emotional distress —anger or irritability, anxiety and depression, short-tempered, impatient, tense.
- ❖ Cognitive distress: compromised attention/concentration compromised processing speed, compromised new learning and new learning memory consolidation and retrieval, and mental fatigue.
- ❖ Interpersonal relationships deteriorate; the workplace becomes a very stressful place for them.
- ❖ Muscular distress—tension, headache, back pain, jaw pain, pulled muscles, tendons, and ligament problems.

- ❖ Stomach, gut, bowel problems, heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

- ❖ High blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath, insomnia, chest pain, and heart disease.

- ❖ Immune System Compromise: frequent colds/flu, allergies, asthma, and other immune system compromise illnesses.

- ❖ Episodic acute stress leads to more pronounced health issues such as, high blood pressure and heart disease and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Chronic Stress

Chronic stress is the most harmful type of stress. If chronic stress is left untreated over a long period of time, it can significantly and often irreversibly damage your physical health and deteriorate your mental health.

Long term poverty, repeated abuse in any form, unemployment, dysfunctional family, poor work environment, substance abuse, or an unhappy marriage can cause significant chronic stress. Chronic stress can also set in when an individual feels hopeless, does not see an escape from the cause of stress, and gives up on seeking solutions. Chronic stress can be caused by a aversive experiences in childhood or traumatic experiences later in life.

People with chronic stress have the list of signs and symptoms previously mentioned, but the signs and symptoms are chronic and can result in a physical and mental breakdown that can lead to suicide, violent actions, homicide, psychosis, heart attacks, and strokes.

Yoga:

Ashtanga yoga - in *yoga sutras*, *acharya Patanjali* defines *yoga* as “*yogahchittavrittinirodhah*” - *chitt* – mind, *vritti*– functioning of mind, *nirodha* –control; *yoga* is to control the functioning of the mind. We have our thoughts, emotions, feelings and conditionings in the mind. It is very difficult to control. *Yoga* is the technique to control all these functions of the mind.

In *Bhagavad gita*, Lord Krishna defines *yoga* as “*Samatvam Yoga Uchyate*” – *Samatva* – balanced state, *Uchyate* – said to be. *Yoga* is a balanced state. *Yoga* is a balanced state of the body and mind. *Yoga* is a balanced state of emotions. *Yoga* is a balanced state of thoughts and intellect. *Yoga* is a balanced state of behavior. Individuals are excited in the situation of pleasure and Individuals become sad when it is a negative situation. *Yoga* is to maintain equilibrium of the mind in any situation. This equanimity of mind is the ultimate objective of *yoga*.

Yogic Techniques:

The techniques described in *Hatha-Yoga* harmonise and purify the body systems and focus the mind. The *Hatha Yoga* system includes,

1. *Yogasana* (*Yoga* positions)
2. *Shatkarmas* (physical and mental detox techniques)
3. *Mudras* and *Bandhas* (psycho-physiological energy release techniques)
4. *Pranayama* (control and extension of the *Prana* or vital energy or bio energy)

1. Bhujangasana

This *asana* improves menstrual irregularities, elevates mood firms and tones the buttocks. Stimulates the heart and organs in the abdomen, like the kidneys. This *yoga* also relieves stress and fatigue thus, helps in opening the chest to clear the passages of the heart and lungs.

2. Balasana:

Balasana stretches and strengthens the muscle of hips, thighs and ankles. The *asana* helps in alleviating stress and fatigue by increasing blood circulation.

3. Sarvangasana:

This *asana* prevents thyroid problems and also ensures smooth blood flow to the heart without any strain by force of gravity. Thus, *Sarvangasana* is good for the proper functioning of the heart and also prevents palpitations.

4. Sukhasana:

This is the most basic *yogaasana* which broadens the collarbones and chest. It calms the mind, enhances the condition of peacefulness and serenity. Thus, it kicks out anxiety, stress, and mental tiredness.

5. Uttanasana

It improves digestion and helps relieve the symptoms of menopause. This *yoga* also reduces fatigue and anxiety by providing relief from insomnia, asthma, high blood pressure, infertility, osteoporosis, and sinusitis.

6. Paschimottanasana

This *asana* calms the mind and also relieves mild depression and stress. Menopause and menstrual discomfort can be combated with this *asana*. The kidneys, liver, uterus, and ovaries are activated by practicing this *asana* regularly

7. Sirsasana

The brain is the controlling centre of the body that helps to function the physical and mental aspects of the body efficiently and effectively. The headstand *yoga* pose allows revitalizing the entire brain with the supply of blood to the brain cells. As a result of which the billions of cells receive more nourishment.

8. Shavasana

With this *asana*, the body relaxes and goes into a deep meditative state, which in turn helps repair the cells and tissues and releases stress. As the body relaxes and calms down, the blood pressure also drops, and this provides relaxation to the heart.

Pranayam:

"*Pranayama* is control of Breath". "*Prana*" is Breath or vital energy in the body. On subtle levels *prana* represents the *pranic* energy responsible for life or life force, and "*ayama*" means control. So, *Pranayama* is "Control of Breath".

One can control the rhythms of *pranic* energy with *pranayama* and achieve healthy body and mind. *Patanjali* in his text of *YogaSutras* mentioned *pranayama* as means of attaining higher states of awareness, he mentions the holding of breath as important practice of reaching *Samadhi*.

Types of Pranayama

1. *Bhastrika Pranayama*
2. *Kapalbhati Pranayama*
3. *Bahya pranayama*
4. *Anulom Vilom Pranayama and NadiShodhan*
5. *Bharmari Pranayama*
6. *Udgeeth Pranayama*

7. *Pranav Pranayama*

Benefits of breathing exercise i.e. *Pranayama*:

1. *Pranayama* control ageing.
2. *Pranayama* makes oxygen circulation smooth, helps in weight regulation by melting fat as more oxygen burns more fat.
3. *Pranayama* is the key of Intelligence.
4. It provides lightness to the body; acts as diseases destructor, brings vigour and power.
5. *Pranayama* helps in lungs expansion thereby improves its efficiency and makes it healthy.
6. It also helps in contending blood pressure and heart diseases; makes digestion smooth.
7. It cures the phlegm, mucus and tonsillitis problems. Makes your gums and teeth healthy.
8. *Pranayama* brings stillness and calmness to the mind, increased concentration and stability of mind. *Pranayama* is good for physical, mental and spiritual happiness.
9. *Brahmari* is very useful for removing mental and emotional tension, anxiety and hysteria.
10. *Bhastrika* and *kapalbhati* are essential for revitalizing the exhausted and depressed nervous systems. *Bhastrika* revitalizes the sympathetic nervous system, while *kapalbhati* tones up the parasympathetic nervous system.
11. While practicing *ujjayi pranayama*, a slight pressure is exerted on the carotid sinuses. In a stress condition, the blood pressure rises as the heart beats faster. The pressure on the carotid bodies brought about in *ujjayi pranayama* helps to slow down.
12. *Pranayama* helps to ease stress, anxiety and tension. It also eases depression, dullness and lethargy.

DISCUSSION

In a medical science, stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress is a feeling that people have when they are struggling to cope with challenges related to finances, work, relationships, environment, and other situations.

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There are three different types of stress, Acute stress, Episodic acute stress and Chronic stress. These types have their own characteristics, symptoms, duration, and treatment approaches.

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The *Hatha-Yoga* includes, *Yogasana* (*Yoga* positions), Six - *shatkarmas* (physical and mental detox techniques), *Mudras* and *Bandhas* (psycho-physiological energy release techniques), *Pranayama* (control and extension of the *Prana* or vital energy or bio energy).

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Pranayama brings calmness to the mind, increased concentration and stability of mind. *Pranayama* is good for physical, mental and spiritual happiness.

Pranamaya stimulates autonomic nervous system, sympathetic nervous system and parasympathetic nervous systems. It helps to ease stress, anxiety and tension. It also eases depression, dullness and lethargy.

CONCLUSION

Yogic science including various *asanas* and *pranayama* has key magnitude in stabilizing the mind, body and soul. Thus, *Yogic* science has prime significance in the management of stress.

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