

Religious Prayers, Meditation, And Mindfulness: A Study During Covid 19 In India

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Abstract

Covid 19 disease in March 2019 forced to lock down everything in India and around the world, people at home faced many challenges during the lockdown, this study was undertaken during the lockdown period to know the ritual practices done by the people during covid 19. Mental Health is most important, this study tried to find out the outlook of people's mindfulness practice and to know the various practices used by people to maintain good mental health. The study was conducted online mode through google form a total of 200 participants 64% Female and 34% of females participated in this study through their self-concern by answering the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (Brown, Ryan, 2003). This scale is used to understand mindfulness and awareness of a current situation or a present moment. This scale is based on the understanding that all humanity has internal and external which is called awareness. The researcher studied the various practices used by people for happiness. The study results indicate that maximum people perform religious prayer followed by meditation and very few practice mindfulness in their daily routine. The mindfulness survey result found that 40% of people do their tasks in automatic mode rather than being aware in the moment, and half of the participants experience emotions at a later stage without consciousness. 31% are not able to stay focused in the present moment. Results conclude that mindfulness is lacking in day-to-day experiences, especially during the period of lockdown. Mindfulness needs to be practiced for our Mental Health.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Mental Health, Rituals & Covid-19.

Introduction

We all have experienced the health crisis in India and around the world due to Covid 19 pandemic in March 2019. In India it was 23 March 2019 which made all institutions everything was forced to lock down and isolated to be at home, people were at home and faced many challenges, there was fear, uncertainty, and economic challenges which have raised health issues in the form on physical and mental health. People were expecting to be back in their routine but later it was realized that this pandemic has forced us to change many aspects of life from face-to-face meetings to online and slowly everyone start accepting the changes that work from home, all household work by own that is cooking, washing, cleaning everything. We were acclimatizing to the situation but still, the biggest challenge was related to health and most important mental and emotional health. This study was undertaken during the lockdown period to know the ritual and practices done by the people during

covid 19. Mental Health was the most important during that period, this study tried to find out the outlook of people's mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness and Meditation

In recent times, mindfulness and meditation have become a necessity for individual wellbeing. These words are more google during the pandemics people learn and practice mindfulness and meditation in their day-to-day life. The research has shown the various benefits of mindfulness and meditation practice in overall health and wellbeing. Mindfulness means just being aware of the present moment. Mindfulness is an act of paying attention, on purpose to all the elements of our experiences with an open acceptance, non-judgment, and compassion. Meditation is one of the main limbs of Ashtanga Yoga. In Eastern and India Dhyana was practiced from ancient and elaborated about Dhyana in various Indian Scriptures. It is said that Meditation is the essence

of Yoga. Meditation is spread to western countries and all over the world because of its benefits to human society. Meditation word originated from the Latin word Mederi which means “to heal”. Meditation is a simple practice to be aware of the present moment. There are various types of practice done by people. Meditation is a tool to achieve a mindfulness state, which is a broader concept. Formal meditation practices include mindfulness of breathing, compassion or loving kindness-focused meditation, and the use of mantras or phrases as the focus of meditation.

Studies of people who have meditated over the long-term show changes in areas of the brain concerned with stress and anxiety (Afonso *et al.* 2020). The prefrontal cortex, the cingulate cortex, and the hippocampus show increased activity, and the amygdala shows decreased activity consistent with improved emotional regulation. Other studies have shown that evidence-based therapies such as MBSR also show similar brain changes to those with traditional meditation practice (Gotink *et al.* 2016). The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has made us realize the importance of health and has shown that change is the only constant. Meditation and mindfulness can strengthen the overall well-being and live with this constant change. Both learning and having regular meditation practice can only benefit us to overcome the situation in a better manner. Meditation and mindfulness are useful skills that can help us to sit with our fears and our circumstances and to observe our thoughts.

Objectives

1. To study the Religious Prayers, Meditation, and Mindfulness practices used during Covid 19.
2. To study the awareness of mindfulness practice during the covid 19.

Design of the Study

A small survey was taken during the study. The sample was recorded in the online method more reliability of data can be done through the interview method. The sample size was very wide it can be specific for further study. For future studies, we recommend the experimental and control group for mindful practices. Pre and post-study can be conducted on the same sample size for understanding the effect of covid 19.

A total of 200 participants 64.7% female and 34.8% male participated in this survey study. 20% of participants are from the government service sector 29 % are from the private service sector

50.5% of participants belong to other occupations. The age of the participants was between 23 years to 55 years.

Tools

The questionnaire was prepared in the form of a google form with demographic details of the participants Names, ages, and occupations. Participants consent was taken for using the data for a research study. The questionnaire was prepared with reference to the **Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)** by Brown and Ryan 2003. The researcher used 11 questions that were found relevant to study mindfulness. The researcher has also asked questions related to rituals prayers and meditation.

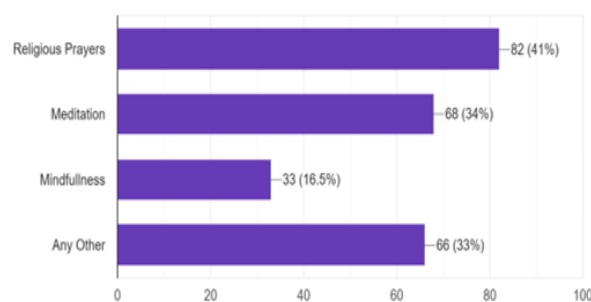
Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale MAAS – 11 items were used in the form of a statement and each statement was answered by the participants on a 7-point Likert scale Absolutely Untrue, Mostly Untrue, Somewhat Untrue, Can't Say, somewhat true, mostly true, absolutely true. Higher Score reflects a higher level of dispositional mindfulness

Procedure

The data was collected through an online survey through a google form. The link was circulated on social media through what's up, Facebook and Instagram. All the details were mentioned in the google form and participants' consent were taken to use this data for research purpose. The data was collected during the period from 16 April to 24 May 2021

Statistical Analysis and Interpretations of the Data

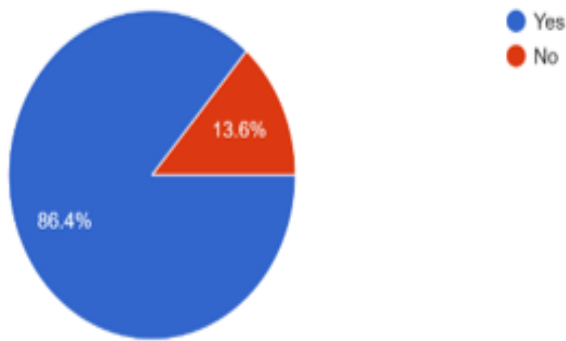
Graph1. Shows the rituals and Routine for Happiness



The above graph shows that 41% of participants use religious prayers, 34% do meditation and 16.5 % practice Mindfulness, and 33% of participants

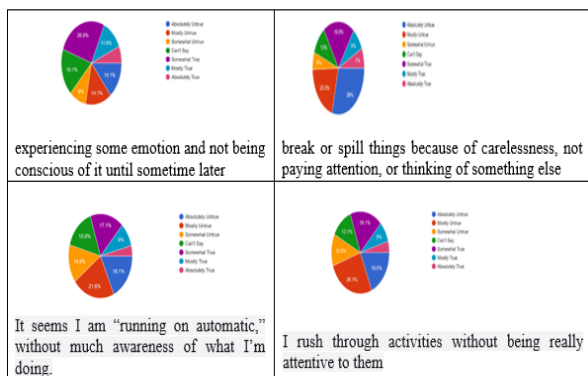
use some other routine or rituals for happiness. Results indicate that there is a lack of mindfulness in day-to-day life.

Graph2. Shows the Mind fullness practices will transform the current situation of this pandemic



During this study, 86.4% of participants said that regular mindfulness practice can transform the current situation of a pandemic. The results show the positive side of understanding Mindfulness. Graph 1 and 2 shows that around 86.4 % believe that mindfulness can transform the situation or gives more strength to face sudden outbreaks in life but still, only 16 % are practicing mindfulness and 34 % doing meditation. A maximum of 41% of participants do regular prayers in their day-to-day life.

Graph 2.Shows the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale MAAS Score



Graph 2 shows the Mindfulness Attention Aware survey, which indicates that 40% of people do their task in Automatic mode rather than being aware in the moment, 36% experience emotions at a later stage without consciousness and 18% say there are not aware of that their experiences. 31% are not able to stay focused in the present situation 47 % of people say they listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time

Table2. Shows the Sample Paired Statistics of Mindfulness Attention Awareness Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Experiencing Emotions not conscious	3.88	198	1.797	.128
	Break or spill things due to carelessness	3.21	198	2.019	.143
Pair 2	Running on automatic	3.35	198	1.773	.126
	Rush through activities	3.26	198	1.800	.128
Pair 3	Do jobs or tasks automatically	2.74	197	1.685	.120
	Listening and Doing something Else	3.80	197	1.823	.130

Table 2 shows The mean,Std Deviation, and Std Error mean of MAAS Questions in a paired sample. The mean is 3.88 for Experiencing emotions but not continuous 3.21 for breaking or spilling things. There paired sample mean for Running on automatic is 3.35 and rush through the activities is 3.26. Another pair show the mean of 2.74 for Doing the task automatically and 3.80 for listening and doing something else.

Discussion on Findings

Mindfulness survey results found that 40% of people do their tasks in automatic mode rather than being aware in the moment, and half of the participants experience emotions at a later stage without consciousness. 31% are not able to stay focused in the present moment. Results conclude that mindfulness is lacking in day-to-day experiences, especially during the period of Lockdown. Mindfulness needs to be practiced for our Mental Health.

Interpretations

The study found that more and more people do religious practices and meditation but still they are not mindful during the day today scene of life. Mindfulness and meditation need to be explored simply so that people can practice. It was found that maximum people know that mindfulness can transform the crisis in life but somewhere they are lacking in practice.

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