To Study the Effects of Yoga Nidra on Reduction of Stress, Increase in Concentration, Changes in Behaviour and Increase in Happiness among School Going Students

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Under the Guidance of Contemporary Mystic Master

Abstract: The study aims at finding out the effects of Yoga Nidra on reduction level of stress, increase in concentration level, changes in behavioural patterns and increase in happiness level among school going students. The study was conducted at Holy Child Public School, Rewari (Haryana). Students were selected from 11th and 12th classes. The results show remarkable changes in the students as they attended Yoga Nidra classes continuously for one and half years inschool premises and didd seldom at home. Yoga Nidra proved to be a helpful technique in the reduction of stress level, increase in concentration level, changes in behavioural patterns and increase in happiness level among the school going students.

Keywords: Yoga Nidra, Stress, Concentration, Behavioural Pattern, Happiness

1. Introduction

Yoga Nidra is an ancient tantric method which can open latest potentiality of the mind. It is a powerful technique in which you learn to relax consciously. Yoga Nidra comes from two Sanskrit words –Yoga and Nidra, where Yoga means Union or Focused awareness and Nidra means Sleep. Therefore, Yoga Nidra means Yoga Sleep, a union of both wakeful awareness and sleeping states. It is a kind of deep sleep in which you don’t lose consciousness. In the modern scenario, human life has become very fast, hectic and demanding. The present lifestyle demands adjustment on the part of the individual. When we fail to make a proper adjustment according to the demands, a state of negative stress develops in our personality, which gives rise to many problems. Millions of people suffer from depression and anxiety, making antidepressants the third most commonly prescribed drug with continued increasing use over the past 20 years. Yoga Nidra, as a technique of pratyahara, not only provides relaxation but also has a number of benefits. Yoga Nidra is a form of meditation and exercise that connects the mind and the body in a self-guided healing process. The use of Yoga Nidra has increased over the past 10 years. In Yoga Nidra, you don’t have to concentrate or focus; rather you move your consciousness from one part of the body to another with effortless ease, as concentration will rather create destruction. Studies have found the benefits of Yoga Nidra for decreasing depression and anxiety. It is a systematic method of inducing complete physical, mental and emotional relaxation. Yoga Nidra is a state of magnetism. In the state of Yoga Nidra the whole body is magnetized and it becomes full of electromagnetic pulsation, vibration and concentration. With these phenomena, the body becomes painless, respiration becomes occasional, and the heart rate slows down. Yoga Nidra offers an opportunity to understand the mind and cut through its blind conditionings. Normally, people carry their frustrations, conflicts, pain and hence their sleep never goes deep. The practice of Yoga Nidra not only relaxes but restructures and reforms whole personality from within. It burns away old sanskaras, habits and tendencies paving way to be born a new. Yoga Nidra has its widespread application as a preventive measure, to be practiced by healthy active people as a means of relieving accumulated tensions, increasing stress resistance and overall of psychosomatic disease. It not only rejuvenates your mind but also adds vigor to the body. It’s a good idea to end your daily yoga practice with Yoga Nidra or yogic sleep. Simply described as an effortless relaxation, Yoga Nidra is an essential end to any yoga pose sequence. While yoga poses warm up the body, Yoga Nidra cools it down. This closing yoga asana involves consciously taking your attention to different parts of the body and relaxing them. Yoga practices increase the energy levels in the body. Yoga Nidra helps to conserve and consolidate this energy and relax the entire system. We have got an opportunity to learn how to do Yoga Nidra from most Respected Contemporary Mystic Master Anandmurti Gurumaa Ji from Rishi Chaitanya Ashram, Ganaur.

Anandmurti Gurumaa Ji is an awakened being and an exquisite synthesis of love and wisdom. Out of sheer compassion she has been bestowing upon people the greatest gift ever viz, guiding them from dark bondages of ignorance to the effulgence of liberating wisdom. She has devised a vast array of meditation methods to delve within and one such wonderful technique of her ideepsleptechiniquecalled -YogaNidra. We are visiting Rishi Chaitanya Ashram, Ganaur (Sonipat) from last one and half years and there we learnt this life changing technique, Yoga Nidra. It is an Ashram where techniques are given not any lectures, where opportunity is given to know who we are in reality where we exploreour self. Many sessions of Yoga Nidra are also conducted time to time by Gurumaa Ji, as she wants everyone to live a peaceful and happy life. Yoga Nidra is a very effective form of complete psychic, physiological rest and rejuvenation. Without knowing what stress is and how it may strain our health, we will not be able to recognize it. Awareness is of primary importance to learn to manage stress effectively. By listening the name of meditation for the first time, the thought that come into our mind is that it is
only for saints or yogis, but to understand its true meaning and advantages, it should be practiced sincerely. Then only one will understand that it is for the ordinary people as well and even most beneficial to the school going young students. In Yoga Nidra, the most effective means of training the mind is found in Sankalpa (Resolution). The mind is completely relaxed with heightened receptivity and hence it is easy to introduce the resolve. Anything in life can fail you but not your sankalpa, your resolve. When conscious mind and body is in deep relaxation, at that time whatever sankalpa you will make, it will get fulfilled. Describing the Yoga Nidra is a bit like giving a description of honey before you have ever tasted honey. The actual taste experienced is beyond words. Nevertheless, undertaking how Yoga Nidra works, helps the mind to relax and allows a much deeper experience! There are total 5 stages in the practice of Yoga Nidra –

Stage 1 - Rotation of awareness through the body-The primary objective in this stage is to isolate the mind. The mind is focused, alert and separated from external stimuli. When separated from the body, senses and from the need for attention, we create Pratyahara, command and control over sensory mechanisms of the physical body. Pratyahara opens the gate to the contents of the subconscious and unconscious level of mind. The science behind this stage is simply to make use of the principle of homunculus or the walking sensation through the cerebral cortex.

Stage 2 - Awareness of Prana- The objective here is not to enhance our ability to be aware and connected to our emotional responses, but also to work with subtle body. In this we experience the frantic tide of breath without judgment. Through breathing techniques, we continue withdrawal from the external body and continue momentum of the internal journey.

Stage 3 - Awareness of feeling and emotions- Our aim at this stage is to use the interaction polarized emotional experience through a type of word association. We want to dissolve our attachment to emotional and conditional awareness in the subconscious mind.

Stage 4 – Visualization- At this stage we access and work with contents of the unconscious mind and sanskaras which are our mental and emotional patterns, individual impressions, ideas and actions. We clean and heal the mind field of deep rooted conditioning.

Stage 5 – The final step- We revisit our intention and plant it into the field of the unconscious mind. We then return awareness back to the body.

Various studies have been done in different parts of the world for observing the effects of Yoga Nidra as in an important study it has been observed that it significantly lowered the Cholesterol level in cardiac patients. One of the study states that, the future role of Yoga Nidra in coronary care and management regimes appears to be a major one. Another study demonstrates that the drop in blood pressure induced by daily Yoga Nidra practice has a far reaching effect extending throughout the day and isn’t merely a transient effect coincident with the practice session. Another study found that a reduction in blood pressure and anxiety level in hypertensive patients continued for 12 months after Yoga Nidra training. Technique of Yoga Nidra has preventive, promotive and curative value. In one of the studies, there was psi-missing with the preliminary test session. At this time it was felt that this was due to the students doing too many preliminary tests, so that they were too rushed and confused by the time the experimental test occurred. Therefore, this year the students did less preliminary testing, so the class was less rushed and they were more at ease with the procedure. This resulted in improved overall scoring. The relaxation session gives a consistent score over both years. The meditation session compares favorably with the score from previous year which was in the psi-missing range but not significantly so, as does the Yoga Nidra which compares very favorably with the psi-missing of the previous year. This suggests that the lessons learnt from the first year are resulting in the environment, which is more conducive for psi-testing. Researchers are keen to know the effect of Yoga Nidra in various directions. Thus it is the right time to go deep into the search of the impact of Yoga Nidra to assess the effect of Yoga Nidra on stress level of the students, concentration level, behavioural patterns and happiness level among students. The regular practice of Yoga Nidra includes a number of benefits such as deep relaxation of body and mind, reduces stress, anxiety, fear, anger and depression, resolves trauma, improves sleep, solve personal and interpersonal problems, decreases inflammation and reduces pain, boosts immune system, helps with pre- and post- surgical conditions, can be used to control physical body functions such as breathing and heart rate, blood pressure, metabolism, body temperature, brain waves and much more. At the core, Yoga Nidra is not a dogma, but rather a system that blends with many universal principles that are concerned with knowing one thing- Who truly we are. If someone is falling asleep during Yoga Nidra or we can say that if anyone is not able to complete it, it doesn’t mean that the meditation exercise has been wasted which the person did. During this sleep, we get deep sleep and our body gets relaxed. Yoga Nidra is a specific practice of Yoga used to mentally scan the body to explore physical sensations and emotions, thus helping the person to become aware of symptoms that may be associated with good or ill feelings. At the minimum, Yoga Nidra will lead you to experience profound relaxation, the release of chronic stress, restful sleep, and a greater sense of harmony in your daily life. At the ultimate-Yoga Nidra points to your True Nature- a peaceful steadiness that is available to you, to every person, right now.Yoga Nidra is for all those who wish to experience higher state of consciousness plus best of health. Anandmurti Gurumaa Ji has presented this ancient method of Vinayasa and Yoga, which is not less than any elixir for all human beings and how it depends on us how we use this elixir and make our life and other one’s life joyful!

Yoga Nidra as an antidote to Stress and Hypertension:- Stress is a medical term that can be understood as tension- a state of mental or emotional strain. The word stress means tighten or narrow which reflects the internal feelings of tightness and constriction of the muscles and breathing. Being aware of the several factors that could lead to high blood pressure and hypertension, one could take appropriate efforts in preventing the non-genetic risks. Fortunately, help is in our hands in the form of wonderful technique called Yoga Nidra. It not only acts as a powerful stress buster; it also heals the body right at the cellular level. Modern lifestyle and the stress mostly related to it, keeps our mind in
a constant state of arousal, which results in mental and bodily tensions. With the help of Yoga Nidra we can first bypass that negative information to find consciously a deeper resting space within. Body and mind will follow and will come to a state of deep rest. A pilot study was done at National Institute of Nutrition ICMR, Hyderabad and was sponsored by Rishi Chaitanya Ashram; Ganaur (Sonipat) and the result was that there was a significant reduction of blood pressure level, improvement in mental status and significant lowering of harmful chemicals in the people who practiced Yoga Nidra regularly. A study at Stanford University School of Medicine (USA) demonstrates that the drop in blood pressure induced by daily Yoga Nidra practice has a far reaching effect and is not merely a transient effect. In Yoga Nidra, the body is progressively relaxed, which in turn, release the accumulated muscular tensions. Yoga Nidra can be considered as a highly effective practice for reducing blood pressure of hypertensive patients on the basis of the present study as Yoga Nidra reduces the pulse rate, respiration rate and also releases the stress, fear and anger of the hypertensive people. Through the body mind relationship, relaxation of body relaxes the entire nervous system. It is crucial in today's world to learn how to effectively manage the stress. Through Yoga Nidra, you can access a realm of consciousness that exists between waking and sleeping, combining an alert awareness of the mind with total relaxation of the body. It is a practice where science and spirit meet—working together to relieve the tension and stress that can keep us up at night, while often improving the quality of your sleep. Through the relaxation of central nervous system in Yoga Nidra, relaxation in autonomic nervous system takes place, as it reduces the whole physical and mental activities. Especially in rotation of consciousness and breath awareness, the mind is relaxed thereby releasing the mental tensions. In this way, tensions at the physical, emotional and mental level can be minimized. The “Sankalpa” taken in each session of Yoga Nidra is the most effective technique for training of mind. When the awareness is rotated on different body parts, it is not only induces physical relaxation but also clears the nerves pathways and hence relaxes the mind. A 41 minutes practice of Yoga Nidra is as restful as four hours of conventional sleep.

**Yoga Nidra and Improvement in Concentration level:**
The technique of Yoga Nidra can be used as an educational tool for some dull children, where the knowledge is transmitted directly into the sub-conscious mind. The technique of Yoga Nidra is helpful in increasing learning and memory capacity. When Yoga Nidra is used in education, both hemispheres of the student’s brain are involved in learning the subject, whereas in classroom teaching the left hemisphere functions more. In this way, the practice of Yoga Nidra involves the total mind in learning. Flak (1978) reported that techniques such as rotation of awareness and visualization heighten the capacity for relaxation and interest among school students. In several countries, Yoga Nidra is being used to augment the capacities of receptivity and attention and to awaken the Joy of learning in their young students. In Yoga Nidra, the sankalpa trains the sub-conscious mind, and then the ordinary mind follows that mind automatically. It helps in training the mind because it is planted when the mind is relaxed and ready to absorb and accept it. The resolve taken in Yoga Nidra always brings results, if taken sincerely. It is rightly said that “the sankalpa taken at the beginning of Yoga Nidra is like sowing a seed and the sankalpa at the end is like irrigating it”. The regular practice of Yoga Nidra helps in making a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind. Slowly one becomes tuned with the unconscious working and then the power of creativity automatically awakens. In this way the practice of Yoga Nidra awakens creativity among the school students. Memory can be sharpened and utilized of its maximum portion. Also, one can easily retrieve the matter from the stored memory by the practice of Yoga Nidra. By the practice of visualization one can strengthen his imagination and creative faculties. The practice of Yoga Nidra needs constant attention and awareness, so by the regular practice of it, one can definitely increase his/her level of attention and concentration. The mind as well as the body is rejuvenated by Yoga Nidra as it is given a rest from its daily barrage of external stimulation. Furthermore, Yoga Nidra, like meditation trains the mind to be more focused. This overflows into daily life, reducing energy loss through constant undisciplined thinking. Besides all this Yoga Nidra aims to take the mind through each and every brainwave pattern that would occur in a healthy night’s sleep, i.e. Beta waves- conscious mind having fast brain waves and stressed & busy mind, Alpha waves- Super conscious mind with slow brain waves and relaxation, Theta waves- Subconscious mind with super slow brain waves and the Delta Waves- unconscious mind which have “totally gone state”. Hence, scientifically it is proven that Yoga Nidra helps in increasing the concentration level of school going students.

**Yoga Nidra has positive effects on Behavioural Patterns:**
Yoga Nidra is a proven, effective, simple and inexpensive tool for treating all kinds of behavioural problems. It allows one to alter deeply held unconscious beliefs which help us change entrenched emotional responses and long standing limiting beliefs and behaviours. The work done in Yoga Nidra with a sankalpa (an intention or positive affirmation) can facilitate life altering changes in one’s thought patterns, relationships and achievements. It is a tool that the yogis have been using for many years to achieve great feats. It builds resilience and helps to build internal resources for coping with life stress. Yoga Nidra has been found to be a powerful tool to treat PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) as well. It can be used to visualize new habits and positive healthy behaviours. It allows one to become emotionally responsive and less reactive. Mental healing can be done through the technique of visualization. This results in the activation of dormant mental power i.e. power of the unconscious to heal the infected part. We know that behaviour is an important factor to develop the interpersonal relationship in the society and in the family. By the practice of Sankalpa in Yoga Nidra, one can induce positive traits in his/her personality and correct the behaviour. Self-control is one of the main aspects of our personality and behaviour. It is the key to success in life. By the practice of Yoga Nidra, one could easily develop the control over Prana (vital force), mind, emotions and over one’s own nature and behaviour. Personality can be nourished by inducing positive traits and eliminating negative ones. The different dimensions of
personality including physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual can be constructed and uplifted by the regular practice of Yoga Nidra. Besides, the work efficiency of most of the bodily organs can be enhanced by the practice of Yoga Nidra. The difference between deep sleep and Yoga Nidra is that you stay awake during the final phase. With such deep relaxation and awareness, you can access your subconscious memory and process past experiences in the present moment. Repressed experiences can be digested and the open, flexible state of the brain can help you change unwanted behaviours. When we are awake, we constantly seek to position ourselves in a state of control. We make decisions, sometimes we make efforts. As soon as an uncontrollable event occurs, impatience and, sometimes, anger become established. During the Yoga Nidra session, we are no longer trying to control what is going on. Also the sankalpa helps in building the will power. A fact has been supported by the study of Simonton (1972) who found that a specific form of Yoga Nidra significantly increased the life span of people and has a specific role in changing the behavioural patterns of people.Here, what has been attempted is aimed at giving a bird’s-eye-view of the large extensive sphere of the potentiality of Yoga Nidra! It is appropriately framed for the improvement of physical, mental, social, behavioural and spiritual levels. The technique is simple but the effect it produces to improve the Quality of life is Spectacular!

Yoga Nidra enhances the level of Happiness among the Students:

In psychology, happiness is a mental or emotional state of well being which can be defined by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense Joy! Happy mental states may reflect judgments by a person about their overall well being. People use all sort of ways and tricks to find solace in the rush of their everyday life. The Yoga Nidra helps one to seek the beautiful moments of peace and serenity. The practice of Yoga Nidra has some pretty powerful psychological benefits as well. It can assist in healing psychological wounds and assists those dealing with depression and dependency. It brings a profound sense of joy and well-being to the practitioner. It helps to connect with your spiritual side. Other than this, it helps your senses to turn more aware with increasing time. It will help you to get peace, happiness and stability in life. During the practice of Yoga Nidra, the instructor asks the practitioner to visualize certain symbols and images with a witnessing attitude. This practice of visualization brings the unconscious repressed desires, experiences, conflicts and frustrations to the conscious level and then cuts off the personal identification with those experiences. As a result, the unconscious is cleared up and hence the person can be happier & enlightened! The interface between life and death is especially critical. It is seen as being a time when momentous awakenings of consciousness can arise. In Yoga Nidra you are surfing the interface between sleeping and waking consciousness. You may fall asleep several times during the practice. This movement in and out of sleep can bring wonderful inner experiences which leave you feeling deeply refreshed, like a child awakening from a magic dream. By the practice of Yoga Nidra, one may bring the balance among the personality traits – Id, Ego and Superego which are the basic forces for the mental activities. Id works on pleasurable principle and demands for immediate gratification of needs, whereas Ego works on Reality Principle. Students having a proper balance among these will be more satisfied and happy in their lives. Practice of Yoga Nidra can help you sail off into the land of nod quite effortlessly! Yoga Nidra is also a way to connect with your deeper, spiritual self. It restores the body, senses, and mind to their natural function and awakens a subconscious awareness that allows you to feel no separation. Oneness, wholeness, tranquilities, and well-being are experienced on a Universal level. In the inward journey the mind begins to connect with deeper levels of knowing and being. As a consequence, in your daily life activities you become more fully who you are instead of being a passive victim of external conditioning and tensions. Your intuition is sharpened and your self-esteem and capacity for love is deepened. Yoga nidra offers a space to explore what you need in the moment, as well as an opportunity to work on releasing long-held emotions. During Yoga Nidra you are able to experience an emotion and come “face to face” with what you want to overcome, without “diving into it” completely—meaning without feeling the emotion so completely that you become overwhelmed. Over time you continue to experience the emotion and associated feelings, moving deeper into the practice. One who practice Yoga Nidra regularly found that the sleep patterns become more consistent and feel more refreshed when wake up in the morning. Studies indicated that more we practice Yoga Nidra, the better we feel about ourselves! Because, we are consciously taking time out of the day to nurture our well being on the inside and out. This sends a really strong and positive message to our heart and mind that we care about ourselves and that we deserve to Feel Good! Hence, Yoga Nidra surely has a positive effect on the Happiness level and well-being of the people who practice it regularly, especially the school going young children.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted on 21 students of Holy Child Public School, Rewari to know the effects of Yoga Nidra on the reduction of stress level, increase in concentration level, changes in behavioural patterns and increase in happiness level among these students. They were taught how to do Yoga Nidra properly and were instructed to do it regularly for about one and half years in school premises and seldom at home. A specific psychology group of these 21 students was made who frequently visited Rishi Chaitanya Ashram, Ganaur. They all were joined together on a whatsapp group where they received many lectures of Gurudev and many of her inspirational thoughts. All these things together changed their attitude towards life and made them more satisfied and happier in their lives. All the four parameters were recorded through Self-Made Questionnaire, Observation Method and Interview Method. A comparative study was done to know the conditions of the students before and after doing Yoga Nidra. According to the recorded data – Earlier, all the students were suffering from stress and Anxiety. But after practicing Yoga Nidra, 20 students showed a great reduction in their stress level. Now they are living their lives and are satisfied. Considering the Concentration level, earlier 20 students used to have low
In the modern lifestyle, where stress, poor concentration, bad behaviour pattern and lack of happiness are on the rise in every student's life, the technique of Yoga Nidra is serving as a real boon for them. The current study was planned to assess the effect of Yoga Nidra on different problems faced by the students and we found very optimistic results in the students after practicing Yoga Nidra. There was a 95.2% reduction in the stress level of the students who practiced Yoga Nidra wisely. On the other hand, their concentration level also improved by 95% due to which they are now able to concentrate more on their studies and scored very good marks. Students showed 100% improvement in their behaviour patterns. Now they are able to control their emotions and there is a dynamic change in their personality which makes them wiser than before. And the last one which is of the utmost importance in every student's life is the level of Happiness, where the students showed 100% improvement. After doing Yoga Nidra, students started remaining calm and happy in all situations and face all the problems of their lives without being scared. Now they are able to deal effectively with all the new coming situations.

### Comparative Study on effects of Yoga Nidra on these Parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>No. of students before doing Yoga Nidra</th>
<th>No. of students after doing Yoga Nidra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low concentration level</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad behaviour</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Happiness level</td>
<td>17</td>
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### Result and Discussion

In the modern lifestyle, where stress, poor concentration, bad behaviour pattern and lack of happiness are on the rise in every student's life, the technique of Yoga Nidra is

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calmed down, so much so that you reach the mental state of meditation. As Yoga Nidra relaxes physically, emotionally and mentally which makes students conscious about what they are doing in their lives. Yoga Nidra proves to be a real magic bullet for students as it helped students to reduce their stress level, increasing their level of concentration, improving their behavioural patterns and by increasing their happiness level by a very good percentage. Yoga nidra is an accessible meditation practice that focuses on cultivating multiple levels of well-being. Practiced with consistency and awareness, you may likely discover that you can find a good amount of peace in a short period of time. Yoga Nidra works really well but it only works if we DO it! Yoga Nidra proves to be a highly effective practice not only for students but for all age groups and it depends upon us how we use this technique given by Our Master Anandmurti Gurumaa Ji and make our life full of internal happiness which is the main aim of Yoga Nidra!

“Explore Yourself to Find Real You”
Is one of the best things that we can say about Yoga Nidra!

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