



Exploring the Benefits of Smriti Meditation Technique-Wellness Practice Based on Indian Knowledge Systems

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Abstract: The aim of the study is to explore the benefits of Smriti Meditation practice as a relaxation measure. Meditation is widely recognized as an effective practice for stress reduction and promoting mental well-being. Tracing its roots back to several millennia, meditation has evolved into numerous types and the users have adopted diverse techniques based on personal preference. Smriti Meditation Technique is a novel approach to meditation grounded in the principles of Ayurveda and Yoga, delivering a guided to self-directed interactive technique. This qualitative study explored the perceived benefits of Smriti Meditation Technique (SMT) as a relaxation measure. Data was collected using a validated semi structured questionnaire via telephonic interviews. The participants included six Indian working professionals (one male participant and five female participants) between the ages of 30 and 40 years. Individuals with a history of psychiatric or neurocognitive comorbidities were excluded from the study. Common themes were identified and thematic analysis was done revealing self-realization, emotional regulation as key benefits of Smriti Meditation Technique. The study provides preliminary insights into the perceived benefits of SMT as a relaxation measure. The findings highlight the potential of SMT to position as an effective stress reduction method, underscoring the relevance of wellness practices rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

Keywords: *Meditation, Indian Knowledge System, Mental Wellness, Smriti Meditation Technique, Relaxation Measure*

1. Introduction

Meditation is one of the most widely used relaxation techniques to combat stress in the contemporary society. The word meditation, derived from Latin word *meditari*, meant to ponder, reflect upon, etc. Numerous theoretical and empirical studies have cited meditation as an effective relaxation method for stress management. According to according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, United States (2017), there has been a substantial increase in meditation users across the globe, with percentage of users rising from 4.1 percentage in 2012 to 14.2 percentage in 2017.

From the perspective of yoga, meditation is closely related to the stage *dhyana*, one of the eight limbs of *Ashtanga yoga*, propounded by *Sage Patanjali* (Wang et al .,2022). Literature provided evidence of numerous types of meditation currently practiced, like *Vipasana*, *Heartfulness*, *Silva* and *Osho* meditation.

Practitioners often describe meditation as an experiential state that defies precise verbal definition. Many have considered meditation as an expansion of awareness while others regard it as an altered state of consciousness. Matko and Sedlmeier (2019) argue that meditation is not purely cognitive but rather represents an embodied process resonating with dimensions of embodied cognition.

Although studies are limited to the origin and descent of the practice of meditation, (Wang et al., 2022) have cited references of meditation practices since *Vedic* literature. According to Indian philosophy, *vedas* are considered the origin of knowledge, and though most of the spiritual knowledge dissemination happened through oral teachings, few imprints of documentation can be related to the practice of meditation. Another reference that underscores the emergence of meditation practice is through the *Bhagavad Gita*, part of the Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. Comparative analyses have drawn parallels between Indian meditation practices and early *Taoism* scriptures indicating the existence of meditation not confined to the Indian subcontinent.

Smrithi Meditation Technique (SMT) is a novel interactive meditation technique utilized in lines of a psychotherapeutic tool grounded on principles of *Yoga* and *Ayurveda*. Anecdotal

evidence reveals numerous benefits of SMT practice, ranging from management of symptoms to personal improvement, eliciting its scope of application across diverse settings.

Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine, has documented three modalities of treatment from the scriptures, namely, *Daivavyapasraya*, *Yuktivyapasraya*, and *Satvavajaya* (psychotherapy). The word *satva* denotes mental faculty and the modality *Satvavajaya* caters to psychological components of the individual, bringing about harmony in the mental faculties. SMT is an essential therapeutic tool utilized in the domain of *Satvavajaya*, targeting emotional wellbeing, which in turn has proven effective in physical symptom management, revealing the holistic concept of an individual.

SMT is based on the principles of this treatment modality, which has evolved as a practical tool that is now being practiced in Ayurveda outpatient settings. The modality includes meditation sessions as a psychotherapy measure which is goal oriented to address a problem of concern of the meditator and the guide scaffolds the meditator to traverse through guided imagery techniques to address the issues and aids them to find solutions (Dilipkumar, 2019).

The word *Smrithi* is derived from Sanskrit literature and means memory. Authors opine that *Sage Patanjali*, the propounder of *Ashtanga yoga*, has considered *smrithi* as a recollection of memory of sensory experiences. *Charaka Samhita*, a treatise in *Ayurveda*, has also described *smrithi* as a recollection of seen, heard, and experienced entities.

According to Indian scriptures, there are three mental states, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, collectively called *trigunas*. All these are retained in an equilibrium to sustain the well-being of an individual; any upset in balance amounts to deviation from the path of well-being. The *satva* is the ideal component, contemplating positive thoughts, emotions, and behavior. *rajas* and *tamas* attributes accommodate various etiological factors for negative thoughts, emotions, and behavior—the susceptibility to various forms of psychological or cognitive distortions. Hence, Indian Sciences have advocated many measures to enhance the *satva* component. They consist of *Ashtanga yoga* at the *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* level as well as other therapeutic techniques that are referenced in *Charaka Samhita* (Jadhav, Desai, & Kokatnur, 2020).

Meditation is an age-old practice that originated in spirituality and is used as a therapy to improve one's own well-being, according to Bhardwaj (2023). The basic idea of various forms of meditation is also defined by the author as the origin of the relaxation response. Meditation maintains the body's ideal physiological state by balancing the sympathetic and parasympathetic

reactions. In their randomized control study, Fan et al., (2024) found that short-term integrative body-mind training and mindfulness meditation have improved homeostasis in response to acute stress. The study reveals the generation of a hormonal mechanism in response to acute stress and how the employed meditation technique modulates the effect.

Matko, Sedlmeier, and Bringmann (2022), in their experimental case study with differential effects of meditation and other mind-body practices, revealed increased interoception, self-processing, and embodied processing. According to research by Magan and Yadav (2022), meditation practice has neural correlates. According to the study, the prefrontal cortex (PFC) served as a functional connectome, where psycho-neuro-immune components of meditation functioned to better regulate emotional and cognitive behaviour.

Anu et al. (2023) found that Smriti Meditation Technique (SMT) significantly improved the management of generalized anxiety disorder in a single group pretest-posttest study that lasted three to five sessions. The qualitative aspect of the study that shows improvements in the ten subjects' quality of life is also highlighted. In a clinical observational study, SMT significantly decreased the symptoms of several psychosomatic conditions (Dilipkumar, 2016). The study underlined how crucial memory research is to treating the psychological components of illnesses. Several other case studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of SMT as an adjuvant therapy for situations like ptosis (Edavalath et al., 2021), schizophrenia (M & K, 2022), etc. Consequently, a number of studies have illustrated the benefits of SMT, a form of meditation that could be suggested as a useful tactic to enhance emotional well-being.

The literature review revealed that there aren't many published studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of SMT. However, anecdotal evidence is cited among practitioners and meditators. Additionally, it has been noted that few studies have qualitatively examined the subjective advantages of SMT. Additionally, textual references state that SMT has presented the opportunity to broaden its application and impact users' overall well-being, a topic that has not received much attention.

1.1 Research Gaps

There have been many encouraging comments about the use of SMT as a relaxation technique. Nevertheless, there aren't many published studies that conduct a thorough scientific investigation into the intervention's effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence and patient feedback from multiple clinical settings reveal positive impacts of SMT on their total health, especially in

addressing psychosomatic symptoms. A measurement of the subjectively perceived level of relaxation and a methodical examination of the connection between SMT and stress are therefore desperately needed. Furthermore, SMT's influence on a person's personal well-being highlights the therapeutic model's many advantages, which expands its range of use outside of clinical settings.

2. Method

2.1 Study Design

The present study is a qualitative study exploring the benefits perceived by meditators of the Smriti Meditation Technique as a relaxation measure. Six participants used the Smriti Meditation Technique as a relaxation technique in this semi-structured interview study, which was conducted in Malayalam. The participants included one male participant and five female participants, all of whom were Indian citizens and working professionals in their 30s to 40s and had completed at least three Smriti Meditation Technique sessions. Purposive sampling was utilized to include six participants with no present or past history of psychiatric medication usage.

2.2 Data Collection

The informed consent was taken through Google form. A semi-structured interview was prepared through a set of 13 questions to answer the research questions validated by five domain experts were utilized. Using the Zoom platform's audio-only feature and meeting recording, the interview was done in Malayalam. The participants were also encouraged to respond to the questions as they were mostly open ended. The average duration of interview ranged from 6 min to 16 min.

2.3 Data Analysis

Audio recordings of the interview conducted via the Zoom meeting platform were made, and manually translated transcripts were produced. Reporting frequencies were recorded along with the emerging themes. The subjective responses are qualitatively interpreted through descriptive analysis of the themes.

3. Results and Discussion

Smriti Meditation Technique (SMT), essentially grounded on the Indian knowledge system—*Ayurveda* and *Yoga*—has thus found fruitful implications in the domain of healthcare.

As psychosomatic conditions are those disorders having psychological and physical dimensions, a holistic approach is paramount to address such concerns. SMT, effectively practiced in these lines, has yielded empirical results as cited in the previous sections.

The present study, being qualitative, delivers a subjective perspective of SMT and its impact on stress management. Based on interviews, several themes have emerged that answer the research questions stated before.

The themes and corresponding frequencies identified from the interview are as follows:

Table 1: Theme 1: Characteristics of Stressors

S. No	Themes	Description	Frequency
1	Health related concerns	PCOS	1
		Dyslipidaemia	1
		Asthma	1
2	Family and interpersonal issues	Conflict with spouse	2
		Unable to handle tantrums of child/children, child's health issues	2
		Anger outbursts	3
3	Personal conflicts	Disorganized routine	2
		Disruption in career	4
		Work-life imbalance	1

From *Table 1*, the participants had different natures of stressors—health-related and family-centered. The health-related issues included complaints pertaining to polycystic ovarian syndrome and dyslipidaemia. One participant has asthma as a constant health issue. Family and interrelationship stressors included conflict with a spouse, reported by two participants; tantrums of children, reported by two participants; and personal stressors, such as being disorganized, reported by two participants, and being unable to accomplish career goals, as reported by four participants, thus revealing it as a major cause of stress.

Table 2: Theme-2- Symptoms of Stress

S. No	Symptoms typology	Description	Frequency
1	Physical symptoms	Fatigue, inertia and tiredness	3

		Sleep issues	3
		constipation	1
		Aches and pains	1
2	Psychological symptoms	Anger outbursts	3
		Guilt	1
		Low self-esteem, lack of confidence	2
		Concentration difficulties	2

From *Table 2*, it is revealed that most of the participants had a combination of physical and psychological symptoms in response to stress, fatigue, and tiredness, with anger management issues outnumbering the rest.

Table 3. *Theme 3: Effect of SMT As Coping Mechanism*

S. No	Effect and description	Frequency
1	Self-realization meditators could realise their cause of stress	6
2	Emotional regulation—regulation—participants reported better regulation of their emotions at the onset of stress	5
3	Resolution of physical symptoms—many physical symptoms also reduced with SMT	3
4	Improved decision making ability and boost confidence—meditators reported be able to overcome challenges and take decisions with clarity	4
5	Enhanced interpersonal relationships, better conflict resolution families and better communication facilitated better relationships	5

Table 3 reveals that most of the participants have identified Smriti Meditation Technique (SMT) as an effective coping mechanism, with self-realization as the most frequently quoted benefit, followed by emotional regulation and improved interpersonal relationships. Several participants also reported that SMT has significantly contributed to enhanced quality of life.

Additional coping strategies mentioned included mantra meditation, yoga, pranic healing, and adoption of a healthy diet and exercise practice.

The evaluative feedback was largely positive, though one participant noted time consumption as a limitation. Five out of six participants reported to have experienced a transformative impact on their lives as a result of practicing SMT.

4. Conclusion

The study revealed a subjective perspective of Smriti Meditation Technique (SMT) and has identified multiple potential benefits of SMT. The findings reveal that SMT benefits are not confined to the healthcare domain and leverages the scope of its application across diverse settings.

The study revealed SMT having a positive impact on the total health of the individual, which is supported by the scriptures and describes how psychological factors influence physical well-being and vice versa. The Indian scriptures have quotes substantiating the role of mind in maintaining the total health of the individual. Charaka Samhita references point out that mind is an inherent component of an individual, having a prominent role in information processing. The present study also supports the application of SMT in stress management and can be incorporated in the interventional strategy of psychosomatic conditions, aligning to its current application.

Future scope of research

Further quantitative and large sample studies can be employed to evaluate SMT across domains.

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