



Effect of transcendental meditation on classroom management in Maharishi organisation with special reference to Maharishi Vidya Mandir Schools.

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Abstract

In the 21st century, classroom management in the school set up has become a major challenge for teachers. It is so because of the increasing level of hyperactivity and restlessness in the children due to which achieving the teaching-learning objectives inside the classroom has become quite challenging. This paper tries to focus on the significance of Transcendental Meditation on human physiology in general and its impact on students' psychology in particular, thereby making a greater impact on overall classroom management.

Keywords: Transcendental Meditation, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, hyperactivity, classroom management.

1. Introduction

This paper makes an attempt to focus on meditation, classroom management and the interface between the two, laying stress on the impact of meditation on overall classroom management. In the present millennia with the advent of everything fast like fast communication, faster gadgets, fast food etc., it has also resulted in decrease of the attention span in students. It has been found that in an average child of around 12 years has come down to 3-4 minutes from a staggering 15-17 minutes two decades back. Due to exposure to everything volatile around, students have become more unstable in their behaviour leading to increasing cases of attention deficit. Earlier 'attention deficit' which was regarded as a special case in few have become a common occurrence in the present decade. This hyperactivity of students in the classroom environment has severely affected the teaching learning process in the class. Teachers as of today are finding it more challenging to achieve the goals of teaching- learning process given the spurt in attention

activity of students inside classroom.

It need not be probed that students nowadays know much more than what students of same age group knew around two decades back, thanks to the rapid increase and exposure to means of mass communication like television, cellular connectivity and internet. The advantages and disadvantages of such progress are indeed debatable but undoubtedly it can be stated that children of today's world are being stuffed with information of diverse genre. In a child's development there exist a natural hierarchy or chronology. It's a natural fact that creation should be slow and steady or else chaos sets in. This is exactly what is happening in today's society. In a mad race to showcase a child's talent and achievement to the society or to fulfil parents' unfinished dreams, they are pushing their child to extreme limits and exposing kids to such arena which robs a child of his/her innocence at a tender age where the child should have been enjoying the bliss of childhood.

Hence, due to all the issues stated above, children

of today are not only more hyper and volatile, it has pushed them to the domain of hypertension, juvenile diabetes, suicidal tendency, aggressive attitude, violent outburst & vulnerability to stroke. Isn't it a matter of grave concern that we have pushed our children to such life threatening consequences at a tender age where learning should have been fun, enriching and enlightening.

So the big question is how can we provide such a stress free and captivating learning environment for our children where learning becomes more or less spontaneous with minimal friction? There may be multiple answers to this question but one of the best solution to this problem lies in our own backyard, i.e., in our vedic texts which have been brought forward by His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Ji in the form of Transcendental Meditation.

This paper makes an effort in shedding some light on the following questions pertaining to the title of the paper :

- What is Transcendental Meditation?
- What is the relationship between Transcendental Meditation and body physiology?
- What effect does Transcendental Meditation have on a student's psychic domain?
- How transcendental meditation can be used as an effective tool in classroom management?

2. What is transcendental meditation?

Transcendental Meditation is a unique form of meditation developed and brought to the public domain by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Ji. It is a mantra based meditation which helps the mind to drift or transcend into the greater levels of consciousness. It is quite different from other forms of meditation where a person has to concentrate or focus on something. However, in transcendental meditation it's all about slowly closing one's eyes and allow the thoughts to flow in. Thoughts are bound to flow into our mind as we close our eyes, because the huge storage of our brain is filled with all information which we have perceived from our birth through the different sense organs. However, most of such stored information is useless and reduces the speed and depth of processing of our brain. As the thoughts flow into our thought domain we need to utter the mantra which is a Sanskrit word just once, in our mind. As soon as this is repeated, on uttering the mantra, the mind goes blank but very soon the duration of blankness increases and we can feel the body and mind transcending into the domain of higher levels of consciousness.

The seven levels of consciousness as described in the transcendence hierarchy are-

- Wakeful Consciousness
- Sleeping Consciousness
- Dreaming Consciousness
- Transcendental Consciousness
- Cosmic Consciousness
- God Consciousness
- Unity Consciousness

We are fully aware of the the first three levels of consciousness as we experience it in our day to day life. However it is through Transcendental Meditation that we can transcend to higher levels of consciousness.

3. What is the relationship between transcendental meditation and body physiology?

Body physiology is the functioning of the different organ systems and their coordination in our body. If we take a simple example we can understand the relationship between the mind and the body. When we see something fearful neural signals travel from the eyes to the brain where the feel of fright is created and hypothalamus gets stimulated. The hypothalamus, which after getting excited through thoughts from brain secretes releasing factors and these factors excites or stimulates pituitary, which then releases ACTH (Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone). The ACTH then stimulates the adrenal cortex to secrete adrenaline hormone which increases heart beat and blood supply to our skeletal muscles, thereby preparing our body to meet the emergency situation.

Hence, we find that the entire physical functioning is intricately related with the thought process of our body. It is an established fact that too much tension or stress is one of the main reasons for hyperglycemia. So, upon realizing the interface between our thoughts and our bodily functions we must know how transcendental meditation helps in maintaining a condition of homeostasis in our body and mind (Maclean C.R. *et al.*, 1997).

Our brain is filled with a greater percentage of irrelevant information. The accumulation of irrelevant information in our brain can be understood by a simple example. When we are looking at a person his/her face gets focussed on the yellow spot of the retina, however the other objects in and around the person doesn't become invisible. Such irrelevant images are formed in the other portion of the retina and thus, get stored as irrelevant information in our brain, very similar

to trash deletable data which gets stored automatically in our smart phones with the usage of different apps. Such information overloads our brain and slows down the overall functioning of our body. We start feeling lethargic, demotivated, lack innovativeness and slowly our physiological functions gets affected to such an extent that it starts taking the form of different lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obesity etc.

Regular practise of Transcendental Meditation helps us delete such negative and irrelevant thoughts from our brain. Once the brain is free from such irrelevant information, it starts to function optimally and all the neural signals which stimulate hormonal signals subsequently, are produced in a much more synchronised and orderly way, leading to perfect physiological functioning of the body.

4. What effect does transcendental meditation have on a student's psychic domain?

In the present century, with the advent of technological advancements, the rate at which the information is gushing into a child's brain is beyond our imagination. The huge flow of information into a child's brain whether through social media, wide array of cable channels or through early introduction to school system has lead to a situation where the brain ends up becoming more and more saturated within a short duration of time. In the earlier century, when technology didn't made so much foray into our lives, the rate of acquiring knowledge was gradual and due to a better slope in the ascent of gathering knowledge, the friction was bearable for the child. However, in today's world, where a mad race for achievement at an young age has set in mainly due to parental pressure, the rate of acquiring knowledge has increased multiple folds, and so the gradient of learning has become much steeper leading to excess friction in the path of learning. It is something like filling water in an earthen pitcher before it dries; obviously it is bound to collapse.

The same phenomenon we can observe happening to children of present generation. Today's children have been exposed to so much unnecessary competition and achievement pressure that counsellors are having field day. The children are showing signs of stress and fatigue right from primary classes. It's a kind of very silent super volcano which can erupt at any moment. It has resulted in varied problems ranging from small ones like attention deficit, disinterest in academics or any other task assigned, erratic behaviour, emotional outburst to extreme steps taken like suicide attempt, running away from homes, drug

abuse etc.

When a child is taught and made to practise Transcendental Meditation, as discussed above, it slowly works towards eradicating the unwanted thoughts and information which had blocked the natural and optimal flow of essential neural signals from brain to the pituitary and brings the physiology of the child to a more stable state. Apart from this direct effect of meditation on the bodily functions, when the brain gets rid of unwanted thoughts, the essential information becomes more synchronised among themselves and the fluidity, coherence and streamlining of thoughts occurs. This has been proved by various researches on diagnostic medical scale (Tomljenovi H, Begi D, Magtrovi Z., 2016). As the inner thoughts become more streamlined, the friction with external unnecessary thoughts reduces. This results in greater efficiency in any task undertaken by the child. A brain which is free from negativity is in a state of perpetual bliss thereby it has a great impact on the psychology of the child and gets expressed in the form of holistic development of the child, as it is rightly said a healthy mind resides in a healthy body.

5. How transcendental meditation can be used as an effective tool in classroom management?

Whatever may be the technology used in classroom, no matter how qualified a teacher is, even with world class infrastructure at disposal, classroom teaching-learning can never achieve the set goals and objectives if the psychological state of the learner is not of a receptive and responsive type. Effective classroom management has become a challenge for teachers. With corporal punishment being strictly banned legally, a present day teacher needs to have innovative ways of managing the class. However, the extent to which the children have become hyper in present world, even the best innovative ways fails to hold on to the attention of children. It is so because the hyper-activity of the children is an internal change which has occurred due to a complex exposure to everything hyper around them, be it hyper animations, hyper(fast) food, hyper mass media. Such a complex change which occurs in the formative stages of a child's growth and formative stage exposures causes more of a permanent change, hence only external innovative ways of classroom management is not enough. The change has to come from within, the individual system needs to be cleansed.

Through transcendental meditation which has been discussed above, when the thought process of a child becomes crystal clear; free from all unnecessary thoughts and information and more coherence is achieved it automatically leads to a classroom environment where the students are more disciplined, receptive and responsive. Such behaviour is a direct outcome of regular practise of transcendental meditation, because when the thoughts are clear; free from all encumbrances and obstacles it gets reflected in the form of refined physical behaviour. Once such a state can be reached, classroom management not only becomes easier but also teaching-learning objectives can be achieved in true earnest.

A small survey carried out in regard to response of teachers of Maharishi Vidya Mandir Schools of

Assam, India, regarding children who meditate and children who do not meditate, has revealed that meditating children are not only much more disciplined but also are more attentive, responsive and receptive compared to the ones who do not meditate. The attention span of children have also been found to significantly increase with regular practise of Transcendental meditation.

6. Conclusion

Thus, we find that in the modern technological world where the children are under extreme stress and pressure to perform and yield results, Transcendental Meditation can go a long way in providing a congenial environment towards effective, stressfree and productive learning environment inside the classroom and well as outside it.

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