

A STUDY OF AN EFFECTIVENESS OF ĀNĀPĀNA (VIPASSANA MEDITATION TECHNIQUE) ON LEARNING SKILLS OF NEWLY ADMITTED FIRST BAMS STUDENTS

Dr .Rajesh Shivajirao Kolarkar

Professor and Head, Department of Ayurved Samhita,

P.G. Co-ordinator, Y.M.T. Ayurvedic Medical College,

Institutional Area, Kharghar Navi Mumbai.

Mobile No. 09822420782

Abstract

Concentration of mind is a big problem now a day especially in newly admitted First year BAMS students due to various causes. Homesickness, Urban exposure (in certain students of rural areas), Peer pressure, delayed admission process due to technical difficulties are common every year. They get short duration span in First year academic year to cope up with professional subjects. Change in environmental these are the big problems of newly admitted first BAMS students.

Whether Ānāpāna (Vipassana – Ancient Meditation Technique) is effective towards enhancement of the learning skills for first level of professional subjects in newly admitted first B.A.M.S. students and whether concentration of mind is the first step towards successful achievement of desired goal taking these research question we conducted the study. Ānāpāna sati is a Pāli word which means Anā = incoming breath Apana = outgoing breath Sati= awareness or awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath.

The present study consists with 100 subjects. The subjects were divided into two groups viz. i) Study Group (50 Subjects)ii) Control Group (50 Subjects). The study group subjects were exposed to (Ānāpāna) Technique of Vipassana meditation for 15 minutes prior to begin their

daily schedule. The control group was deal with conventional methods of teaching. The pre and posttest validation was done by concentration and focus scale test. The duration of the study was being of three months. Concentration of mind was pre and post tasted by concentration and focus scale test. Present study shows that Ānāpāna technique is effective towards the enhancement of concentration of mind.

Key words- Ānāpāna sati (awareness or awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath), Vipassana – AncientMeditation Technique, I BAMS newly admitted students, sammāsamādhi– concentration of mind.

INTRODUCTION

Ānāpāna sati is a Pali word which means Ana = incoming breath Apana = outgoing breath Sati= awareness or awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath.

When we observe the breath coming in and going out without allowing any other thoughts Usually when pleasant thoughts come in the mind we want something and with unpleasant thoughts there is dislike but when we are simply observe the breath even for a few moments there are no negatives polluting the mind. As these movements of purity become longer the mind gradually becomes cleaner it is initially at the surface level but this prepares you to later practice vipassana meditation which will clean down to the root.

Ānāpāna technique

Keep your eyes gently closed, keep your mouth closed, focus all your attention on the entrance of the nostrils, remain aware of the natural breath as it comes in, as it goes out, don't try to control or count the breath, don't add any word or imagination of any kind, when mind wanders away bring it gently back to the awareness of your breath, try to remain aware of each and every breath that comes in and goes out.

If the mind is fixed upon any object, it will become absorbed in meditation, it will become still, it will achieve one-pointed concentration, but mere concentration of mind is not *sammā samādhi* (right concentration). For *sammā samādhi*, it is necessary for the mind to be wholesome, it is necessary for the mind to be untainted. Only the one-pointedness of a wholesome mind can be called *kusalacittakaggatā samādhi*—*samādhi* free from defilements.

Samādhi means that the mind is established in equanimity. A mind that is focused upon an external object cannot attain equanimity; it will only disturb the balance of the mind. That is why only the concentration of a wholesome mind should be regarded as *sammāsamādhi*. A mind filled with craving is not wholesome, a mind filled with aversion is not wholesome, and a mind filled with ignorance is not wholesome. When the mind is concentrated with the help of an object of craving, aversion or ignorance, it will achieve concentration, but it will be neither balanced nor equanimous. Such concentration of the mind is not proper, not pure, not conducive to happiness. Concentration that is dependent upon craving, aversion or ignorance is the absorption of an unbalanced mind—how can it be beneficial?

A cat with a fully concentrated mind has its full attention on a mouse-hole; it is fully engrossed in its object. A heron standing on one leg on the bank of a lake in search of fish, focusing its full attention on the water, has a completely concentrated mind. It is not aware of anything else. This is the concentration of a mind filled with craving for the mouse or fish; it is not *sammāsamādhi*. Such a *samādhi* is not proper, not pure.

A person who is in a stupor after taking an intoxicating substance becomes absorbed in intoxication and attains concentration of the mind. He is insensate like a person in a deep sleep. He is not aware of any external or internal event. Similarly, a person making use of chemicals, such as LSD, experiences hallucinations and becomes completely absorbed in them. In both these conditions, he loses the equanimity of his mind; he loses the balance of his mind. Concentration based upon an unbalanced mind, distorted by ignorance, is not meditation, is not proper *samādhi*, is not pure *samādhi*.

After all, why do we practice concentration of the mind? We practice so that the concentrated mind will become so subtle and sharp that it can pierce and tear the veils that have concealed the ultimate truth of liberation. Therefore, the more natural the object of concentration, the better are the chances that we shall avoid wandering in blind alleys and instead, become established on the straight and high road of Dhamma.

Another reason for adopting natural incoming and outgoing breath as the object of concentration is that the rhythm of our respiration has an intimate natural connection with the negativities of the mind. When the mind is polluted and overpowered by any harmful negativity such as anger, fear, lust, envy or any other negativity, we see that the rhythm of our respiration naturally becomes rapid and gross. When these negativities stop polluting the mind, the rhythm of respiration becomes slow and subtle. After developing *samādhi*,

the next step is to enter the field of (Wisdom) *paññā*, where we learn to become free from the bondage of the negativities of our own mind. Therefore, the observation of the reality of the incoming and outgoing natural breath is of great help in the next step of meditation.

As we continue to observe our gross breath, the mind becomes more and more concentrated, and the breath becomes more and more subtle. Sometimes the breath will become extremely subtle, like a fine strand of hair, and as soon as it goes out, it seems to turn back inside. Sometimes it reaches a state of *kumbhaka*—a state where the process of respiration stops completely. Thus it is clear that our chosen object of concentration takes us from gross to subtle states. The unknown and unseen regions that we are likely to witness in the future are even subtler than this state, therefore, even from this point of view, the object of respiration is proper and meaningful. We have to experience the ocean of infinite waves surging within, the river of inner sensations flowing within, the eternal dance of the countless vibrations within every atom of the body. We have to witness our continuously changing nature. All of this is happening at an extremely subtle level. To reach this state, we have to first start observing the gross but ceaseless flow of respiration.

Whatever is happening within is happening effortlessly. This is the self-regulated uninterrupted flow of body and mind. To be able to observe this involuntary dynamic state of creation and destruction in the inner world, we need an object that is both a voluntary and an involuntary process, so that after observing and understanding its voluntary activity, we can start observing its involuntary activity. Respiration is the only process in the body that can be regulated, that can be made fast or slow voluntarily, but which otherwise is an involuntary, effortless process. In the journey from the voluntary to the involuntary, from the known to the unknown, from the familiar bank of the river to the unfamiliar bank, breath can act as a bridge. For this reason too, it is useful as the object of concentration.

This path of (Ethics) *sīla*, (Concentration of mind) *samādhi*, *paññā* (Wisdom) and (Emancipation) *nibbāna*, on which we have started walking, takes us to those depths in the field of meditation where we can naturally realize the ultimate truth. To walk on this path, we do not have to start with the observation of the actual, experiential truth because the ultimate truth is the truth of this moment, not of the moments that have passed, nor of the moments that are yet to come. The moments that have passed can only be remembered; the moments that are yet to come can only be imagined or desired. Only the present moment can be experienced, neither the moments of the past nor the moments of the future. Thus, for the realization of the ultimate truth, we will have to attentively observe the gross

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experiential truth of the present moment. Only then will subtler truths be unveiled and transcending the subtlest state, the ultimate truth of this moment will be realized. For this, the straight royal road of our entire meditation is the practice of being able to live in the tiniest moment of the present. For the practice of living in this moment, we should learn to remain alert to the gross events occurring in the body at this moment, awareness of the incoming breath or the outgoing breath.

We learn to observe this natural phenomenon of the body merely as a witness. Becoming free from the bondages of the past and future, gaining release from the constraints of craving and aversion, we make our first effort to live in the present moment. This effort, similar to that of an infant trying to learn to walk on unsteady feet, and its ceaseless application in this direction, will, one day, make us worthy of completing our journey with firm, strong and steadfast steps.

Without strong *sammā samādhi*, we cannot enter the depth of this moment; we cannot set foot in the field of *paññā*. To strengthen *samādhi* in the right way, let us give the mind a natural, imagination-free, faultless object of this moment, which is the awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath. On the basis of this awareness, let us learn to live in the present moment. Let us develop the concentration of a wholesome mind free from craving, free from aversion, free from ignorance. Let us develop our ability to avoid unwholesome physical or vocal actions. By becoming strong in *paññā* and eradicating impure mental defilements, let us develop our ability to avoid unwholesome actions at the mental level.

Pure *samādhi* developed in this way gives happiness. Come; let us develop *samādhi* by practising awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath. By strengthening *samādhi*, *sīla* will be strengthened and by strengthening *samādhi* and *sīla*, *paññā* will be strengthened. In the strengthening of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, lies the way to liberation: liberation from mental defilements, liberation from sorrow, liberation from delusion and ignorance.

Indeed, the path of *samādhi* is the path of well-being, the path of good fortune, the path of peace, the path of liberation.

Method

1. The present study consists with sample size of 100 subjects.

2. The subjects were selected by random sampling method from newly admitted first year B.A.M.S. subjects at Y.M.T. Ayurved Mahavidyalaya and Research Institute, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, irrespective of gender and age range 17 to 19 years of ages.
3. The subjects was divided into two groups viz.
 - I) Study Group (50 Subjects)
 - ii) Control Group (50 Subjects)
4. The study group subjects were exposed to (Ānāpāna) Technique of Vipassana meditation for 15 minutes prior to begin their daily schedule.
5. The control group was deal by traditional and conventional methods of teaching.
6. The pre and post test validation was done by concentration and focus scale test.
7. The duration of the study was being of three months.
8. The evaluation of examinations was conducted by other senior faculty, not involved in the project to nullify the bias.
9. The feedback of closed end questionnaires was taken.
10. The written consent was obtained from all the subjects prior to the study.
11. Permission from the institutional ethical committee as well as Vipassana Research Institute was obtained prior to begin with the project.
12. After the completion of project the control group students were also exposed for the similar Ānāpāna Technique for next four months to gain the benefits of the same in their learning process.

Evaluation

There was two groups group A and group B randomly selected the students.

Group A was given short term meditation daily for 3 months. Every day they practiced of short term meditation for 10 to 15 minutes.

Group B was control group which was conventional and traditional.

CRF was prepared. Monthly follow up taken.

Concentration of mind was pre and post tasted by concentration and focus scale test.

100 newly admitted first year BAMS students from Y.M.T.Ayurvedic medical college were participated in this study as volunteer and informed consent was taken from students.

Demographic data collected from enrolled students.

Randomized control trial used for study.

Students initials created and id no. generated by open EPI software. Ānāpāna and control group created with open EPI.

Vital signs and physical examination were recorded by post graduate students for enrolled volunteer.

Concentration focus scale was taken from enrolled students

Descriptive Statistics								
Parameter	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
BCFSTTL	41	56.6341	5.76956	44.00	65.00	54.0000	57.0000	60.5000
W4CFSTTL	41	56.2927	6.84560	39.00	68.00	51.5000	56.0000	61.5000
W8CFSTTL	41	56.3659	5.56218	42.00	66.00	52.0000	57.0000	59.5000
W12CFSTTL	41	54.8293	6.16402	43.00	68.00	50.0000	55.0000	58.5000

(Source: Primary Data)

Mann-Whitney U Test:

Ranks				
Parameter	GROUP	N	Mean	
			Rank	Sum of Ranks
BCFSTTL	1	41	43.82	1796.50
	2	39	37.01	1443.50
	Total	80		
W4CFSTTL	1	41	40.07	1643.00
	2	39	40.95	1597.00
	Total	80		
W8CFSTTL	1	41	39.90	1636.00
	2	39	41.13	1604.00
	Total	80		
W12CFSTTL	1	41	24.34	998.00
	2	39	57.49	2242.00
	Total	80		

(Source: Primary Data)

Test Statistics^a				
Parameter	BCFSTTL	W4CFSTT		W12CFSTTL
		L	W8CFSTTL	
Mann-Whitney U	663.500	782.000	775.000	137.000
Wilcoxon W	1443.500	1643.000	1636.000	998.000
Z	-1.313	-.169	-.236	-6.385
Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	.189	.866	.813	.000
a. Grouping Variable: GROUP				

(Source: Primary Data)

From the above , It is seen that all the parameters are significant.

Table 1			
		GROUP	
	Statistical Parameters	1	2
BCFSTL	Count	41	39
	Minimum	44.00	38.00
	Maximum	65.00	77.00
	Mean	56.63	55.15
	Median	57.00	55.00
	Mode	64.00	55.00
	Percentile 05	47.00	43.00
	Percentile 25	54.00	51.00
	Percentile 75	60.00	59.00
	Percentile 95	64.00	72.00
	Percentile 99	65.00	77.00

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2			
		GROUP	
	Statistical Parameters	1	2
W4CFSTL	Count	41	39
	Minimum	39.00	43.00
	Maximum	68.00	78.00
	Mean	56.29	57.15
	Median	56.00	56.00
	Mode	54.00	58.00
	Percentile 05	46.00	43.00
	Percentile 25	52.00	51.00
	Percentile 75	61.00	63.00
		Percentile 95	67.00

Table 2			
		GROUP	
	Statistical Parameters	1	2
W4CFSTL	Count	41	39
	Minimum	39.00	43.00
	Maximum	68.00	78.00
	Mean	56.29	57.15
	Median	56.00	56.00
	Mode	54.00	58.00
	Percentile 05	46.00	43.00
	Percentile 25	52.00	51.00
	Percentile 75	61.00	63.00
	Percentile 95	67.00	74.00
	Percentile 99	68.00	78.00

	Table 3	GROUP	
	Statistical parameter	1	2
W8CFSTTL	Count	41	39
	Minimum	42.00	41.00
	Maximum	66.00	75.00
	Mean	56.37	57.28
	Median	57.00	57.00
	Mode	58.00	51.00
	Percentile 05	48.00	44.00
	Percentile 25	52.00	51.00

	Percentile 75	59.00	62.00
	Percentile 95	64.00	71.00
	Percentile 99	66.00	75.00

Monthly follow up taken

1. Focus and concentration scale
2. Vitals and physical examination
3. Ānāpāna compliance
4. Adverse event monitored and Project completed in stipulated time. We observed significance improvement in Concentration at the end of the intervals 12 week those

Table 1

		GROUP	
		1	2
W12CFSTTL	Count	41	39
	Minimum	43.00	50.00
	Maximum	68.00	88.00
	Mean	54.83	69.69
	Median	55.00	70.00
	Mode	50.00	76.00
	Percentile 05	45.00	55.00
	Percentile 25	50.00	64.00
	Percentil75	58.00	76.00
	Percentile 95	65.00	84.00
	Percentile 99	68.00	88.00

practiced Ānāpāna technique regularly. Concentration scale score of experimental group was less than control group at baseline time and it was same during week four and week eight. At the end of the study concentration focus score scale increased significantly.

If it practiced daily regularly it will be more effective and benefited.

CONCLUSION

Ānāpāna technique is effective for the concentration of mind.

Self confidence, control over mind, design power, memory, awareness, alertness increased and fear, agitation, tension, nervousness reduced in the students who practiced Ānāpāna technique.

Virtues (Purity) can be increased and impurities (Evils) can be eradicated with the help of meditation. It is helping to the increase of competency of the student.

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