

Effect of Meditation on Self Confidence of Student- Teachers in Relation to Gender and Religion

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Abstract

The aim of present study was to find out effect of *Shaktipat* meditation on self-confidence of student-teachers. An experiment was conducted on 152 student-teachers of B. Ed. Course on the basis of non-randomized control group pre-test post-test design. Self Confidence Inventory (1987) developed by Rekha Agnihotry, Raven's Standard Progressive matrices (2000 ed.) were used for data collection. Analysis by ANCOVA showed that *Shaktipat* Meditation was an effective practice to improve self-confidence. Further, gender was found to be significantly effect self confidence whereas religion not. Both male and female (gender); and both Hindu and Sikhs (religion) student- teachers have equally benefited from meditation when pre- self confidence and general intelligence were statistically controlled.

Key Words: Shaktipat meditation, Self Confidence, Student-teachers

Introduction

Literally meaning of *Shaktipat* is “establishing power or energy in its actual place. It is fluctuating energy level, which is responsible for varying physical and mental states. The body's energy centers are called *Chakras*. There are seven major *Chakras* which reside along the spine and the head i.e. *Mooladhara, Swadishtan, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddh, Ajna and Shahasrara*. Energy flows from the bottom to the top through the inter-mediate *Chakras*. Due to gravitational pull of the earth, flow of energy in most of human beings is downward. Spiritual teacher helps to change the flow of energy, from downward to upward, (by deep breathing techniques) which brings positive cognitive and affective changes in personality of meditator.

Effective classroom teaching depends upon mainly three C's i.e. content mastery, communication effectiveness and confidence on self.

The self is a composite of a person's thoughts and feelings, strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his views of what he is, what he has been, what he might become, and his attitudes pertaining to his worth. Self-confidence is a positive attitude of oneself towards one's self-concept. It is an attribute of perceived self. Self-confidence refers to a person's perceived ability to tackle situations successfully without leaning on others and to have a positive self-evaluation. In the words of *Basavanna (1975)* “self confidence refers to an individual's perceived ability to act effectively in a situation to overcome obstacles and to get things go all right”.

Regarding effect of meditation *Aron et al. (1981)* found that participation in transcendental meditation classes produced significant increases on intelligence and increased social self-confidence, sociability, general psychological health, and social maturity. *Brown et al. (1993)* reported that students who meditated or who meditated and exercised had significantly greater inner-directedness than did those who only

exercised or who did neither. *Rozman (1994)* revealed that teaching children to meditate can improve their decision making. *Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal (1999)* reported efficiency of yoga practices on memory, creativity, self-esteem, self-discipline and self-confidence in 702 children. *Lesko (2000)* reported the mental and emotional changes resulting from Zen meditation practice. *Kritzell (2000)* showed that for the group of participants, who were primarily white, middle-class and married, meditation did significantly improve the participants' self-esteem and overall psychological functioning. *Shah et al. (2001)* found that there is a positive and significant effect of *Saral* meditation on intelligence, performance and confidence. *Gaur et al. (2003)* revealed that who practiced the *Preksha* Meditation for 25 days increased their ego strength, confidence self assurance, spontaneity and they become emotionally more stable, calm and able to face their reality and reduced their jealousy. *Singh et al. (2007)* revealed that *Shaktipat* Meditation was an effective practice to improve emotional maturity. Both sexes, all the socio-economic classes, above, below and average (intelligent) and both rural and urban students were found to be equally benefited from meditation

Sleeper et al. (1987) found overall, sex-of-subject differences in self-confidence are less powerful than the effects yielded by the sex of others in achievement settings. *Hall (1990)* found that self-confidence of females is not lower than that of males. *Isralowitz (1994)* found that moderate risk-takers displayed greater self-confidence regarding romantic relationships than low risk-takers. *Greenberg (1994)* found that the use of paradoxical symptom prescription can be effective in decreasing cognitive and somatic state anxiety, and increasing self-

confidence in competitive athletes. *Fleming (1994)* reported that increasing field work experience (effects of reentry status) will improve the self-confidence of the program's participants. *Kalaian et al. (1994)* reported gender differences among secondary teacher candidates across three categories of criterion measures i.e. self-confidence in teaching, anticipated sources of professional knowledge, and educational orientations and beliefs. *Ross (1994)* found that technical expertise was the most important of those variables related to self-confidence. *Alsup (1995)* found that the mathematics instruction based on constructivism was effective in helping them overcome their mathematics anxiety, and in strengthening their confidence in teaching mathematics. *Einarson et al. (1996)* found gender and ethnic differences in academic self-confidence, academic self-efficacy. *Salinas et al. (1999)* suggested a positive effect of the teaching orientation for international teaching assistants (ITAS) on their perceived level of self-confidence about their ability to teach in English. *Ziegler et al. (2000)* indicated that girls already expressed significantly lower levels of self-confidence regarding chemistry than did boys. *Wilson (2000)* found that the perceived importance of various sources of sport-confidence differed between and within gender. *Huang et al. (2001)* reported that perceived respect from professors as the strongest determinant of female academic self-confidence whereas the perceived quality of teaching is the strongest predictor among male students. *Velazquez-Zamora (2001)* indicated that the variable gender was independent with regard to computer anxiety and computer confidence. *Purwar (2002)* reported that self confidence was found to be positively correlated with intelligence at .05 level of significance under uncontrolled conditions

only, but under controlled conditions the correlation coefficient was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. *Cheng et al. (2002)* revealed that Personality traits, self-confidence, friendship, and school grades were all significantly oppositely correlated with happiness and loneliness.

As discussed above there are seven *chakras* (energy centers) in human body. These major *chakras* emits along the spine and the head. There are two heart *chakras* called lower *anahat* and upper *anahat*. Lower *anahat* is disturbed by emotional hurt causing, loss of interest in life and upper *anahat* is affected by lack of confidence. This theoretical base compels the investigator to test the effect of meditation on these *charkas* by the measure of self-confidence.

Objectives

1. To study the effect of *Shaktipat* Meditation on self-confidence of student teachers.
2. To study the effect of meditation, gender and their interaction on self-confidence by taking pre- self-confidence as covariate.
3. To study the interaction effect of meditation and gender on self-confidence by taking pre-self-confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates.
4. To study the effect of meditation, religion and their interaction on self-confidence by taking pre- self-confidence as covariate.
5. To study the interaction effect of meditation and religion on self-confidence by taking pre-self-confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant effect of *Shaktipat* Meditation on self-confidence.
2. There will be no significant effect of meditation, gender & their interaction on self-confidence by taking pre- self-confidence as covariate.
3. There will be no significant interaction effect of meditation and gender on self-confidence by taking pre-self-confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates.
4. There will be no significant effect of meditation, religion and their interaction on self- confidence by taking pre- self-confidence as covariate.
5. There will be no significant interaction effect of meditation and religion on self-confidence by taking pre-self-confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates.

Material and Methods

B.Ed. students from Lovely Institute of Education, Phagwara, Govt. College of Education, Jalandhar and G.N. College of Education Kapurthala, were selected on voluntary basis during the academic session 2005-2006. In Govt. College and G.N. College of Education only hostlers were approachable for meditation. Age range of students was between 20 to 32 years. A total of 152 subjects participated in the present study out of which 92 were in Experimental and 60 in Control group. The sample description is given in table 1

Table 1: Structure of Sample (Gender and Religion Wise)

		Control	Experimental	Total
		N	N	N
Male	Sikh	6	20	26
	Hindu	11	19	30
	Christian	1		1
Group Total		18	39	57
Female	Sikh	10	29	39
	Hindu	32	24	56
	Group Total	42	53	85
Table Total		60	92	152

Thus, 152 subjects participated in the present study out of which 92 were in Experimental and 60 in Control group; 57 were male and 95 were female; and 65 Sikh, 86 Hindu and one Christian.

The present study was experimental in nature and its design was based on the lines of non-randomized Control group pre-test post-test design

The following tools were used

1. *Self Confidence Inventory (1987)* in Hindi developed by the Rekha Agnihotry was used. It contains 56 items. Reliability coefficient by spilt half method is 0.95, by K-R formula is 0.94 and by test retests method 0.88. Validity coefficient of this test is 0.82.

Note: The lower the score, the higher is the level of self confidence and vice-versa.

2. Raven's Standard Progressive matrices developed by *Raven and Court (revised 2000)*. It represents an attempt to measure intellectual functioning within the context of Spearman's concept of 'g'. The matrices consisted of sixty designs, which require completion. The testee has to choose from multiple-choice options, the design or the design part, which best fits. Numerous reliability coefficient quoted by Raven

vary from 0.80 to 0.90. Validity of the test varied from 0.50 to 0.86.

Students, who voluntarily offered themselves to practice meditation, were divided (randomly) into two groups i.e. Experimental and Control groups, from each College. Before the start of the experiment, Self Confidence Inventory and Revan's standard progressive Matrices test were administered to collect Pre- Self Confidence and Intelligence scores. The experimental group students were practiced *Shaktipat* Meditation for three months (105 sittings i.e. first five days 4 sittings and rest days one sittings daily) at the rate of one hour per sitting under the supervision, direction & guidance of the expert (Mata Yog Amrit Ji from Amritdham Meditation Center, Hoshiarpur). In all Colleges Meditation was practiced through *Shaktipat Vidhi* only. At the end of the treatment the Self Confidence Inventory was administered separately to the students of both experimental and control groups. Scoring of all the tools were done as directed in their respective manuals.

Statistical Techniques

-First Hypothesis was tested with the help of ANCOVA.

-Interaction hypotheses were tested with the help of 2x2 and 2x3 factorial design of ANCOVA.

Results and Discussion

Table 2: Self confidence (Mean score) of Males and Females of Control and Experimental group

	Control		Experimental	
	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test
Male	19.72	19.22	25.67	18.72
Female	26.10	26.64	30.11	23.25

Table 3 reveals that the adjusted F value for meditation is 10.46, which is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that

adjusted mean score of self confidence of experimental group and control group differ significantly when pre self confidence was taken as covariate. In the light of this null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of *Shaktipat* Meditation on self confidence, is rejected. It reflects that meditation practiced to experimental group was found to be significantly effective in improving self confidence level of student teachers when both group matched with respect to pre self confidence as covariate.

Table 3: Summary of 2x2, and 2x3 factorial design of ANCOVA for self confidence by taking pre self confidence as covariate

Source	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Meditation	801.40	1	801.40	10.46	0.00
Gender	603.41	1	603.41	8.20	0.00
Meditation x Gender	58.58	1	58.58	0.80	0.37
Religion	7.80	2	3.90	0.05	0.95
Meditation x Religion	39.57	1	39.57	0.51	0.48

The adjusted F value for gender is 8.20, which is significant at 0.01 level. In this context null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of gender on self confidence by taking pre- self confidence as covariate, is rejected.

The adjusted F value for interaction between meditation and gender is 0.80, which is not significant at 0.01 level. In the light of this null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of interaction between meditation and gender on self confidence by taking pre- self confidence as covariate is not rejected.

The adjusted F value for Religion is 0.05, which is not significant at 0.01 level. In this context null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of religion on

self confidence by taking pre- self confidence as covariate, is not rejected.

The adjusted F value for interaction between meditation and religion is 0.51, which is not significant at 0.01 level. In the light of this null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of interaction between meditation and religion on self confidence by taking pre- self confidence as covariate is not rejected.

Table 4: Summary of 2x2, and 2x3 factorial design of ANCOVA for self confidence by taking pre self confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Meditation x Gender	64.49	1	64.49	0.88	0.35
Meditation x Religion	34.41	2	34.41	0.45	0.50

Table 4 shows that adjusted F value for interaction between meditation and gender is 0.88, which is not significant at 0.01 level. In the light of this null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of interaction between meditation and gender on self confidence by taking pre- self confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates, is accepted.

The adjusted F value for interaction between meditation and religion is 0.45, which is not significant at 0.01 level. In the light of this null hypothesis that there will be no significant effect of interaction between meditation and religion on self confidence by taking pre- self confidence and pre general intelligence as covariates, is not rejected.

Findings

1. *Shaktipat* Meditation was found to be an effective technique to improve self confidence of student-teachers.

2. There was significant effect of gender on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate.
3. There was no significant effect of interaction between meditation and gender on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate.
4. There was no significant effect of interaction between meditation and gender on self confidence when pre-self confidence and pre general intelligence are taken as covariates.
5. There was no significant effect of religion on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate
6. There was no significant effect of interaction between meditation and religion on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate
7. There was no significant effect of interaction between meditation and religion on self confidence when pre-self confidence and pre general intelligence are taken as covariates.

Discussion

Meditation, in the present study, means 'silence of mind' which brings positive cognitive and affective changes in the personality. Other techniques of meditation also reported their effectiveness for psychological functioning like self-esteem (Kritzell, 2000; Lesko, 2000), concentration, decision making power (Rozman, 1994), intelligence (Aron et al., 1981; Shah et al., 2001), memory (Miskimum, 1973). It helps to remove negative emotions (Gaur et al., 2003), anxiety, complexes (inferiority or superiority) as it makes the mind silent. This change help to increase trust in the abilities and good qualities of the self i.e. self confidence. Previous studies supported

this finding as Aron et al. (1981) found that participation in transcendental meditation classes produced significant increase in intelligence and increased social self-confidence. Brown et al. (1993) confirmed that students who meditated, or who meditated and exercised had significantly greater inner-directedness than did those who only exercised or who did neither. Shah et al. (2001) found that there is a positive and significant effect of Saral meditation on confidence. Gaur et al. (2003) revealed that who practiced the *preksha* Meditation for 25 days increased their ego strength and confidence self assurance.

There was significant effect of gender on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate. Further, the mean score of males on self confidence is less than that of females (Table-2). It reflects that male student teachers were more self confident than female counterparts. Ziegler et al. (2000) also reported that girls expressed significantly lower levels of self-confidence regarding chemistry than boys. Similarly Kalaian et al. (1994) reported gender differences among secondary teacher candidates across three categories of criterion measures i.e. self-confidence in teaching, anticipated sources of professional knowledge, and educational orientations and beliefs. Einarson et al. (1996) found gender and ethnic differences in academic self-confidence and academic self-efficacy. Wilson (2000) found that the perceived importance of various sources of sport-confidence differed between and within gender. Sleeper et al. (1987) revealed that overall, sex-of-subject differences in self-confidence are less powerful than the effects wielded by the sex of others in achievement settings. Whereas Velazquez-Zamora (2001) indicated that the variable

gender was independent with regard to computer anxiety and computer confidence among the secondary teachers. But, *Hall (1990)* found that self-confidence of females is not lower than that of males. *Huang et al. (2001)* reported that perceived respect from professors as the strongest determinant of female academic self-confidence whereas the perceived quality of teaching is the strongest predictor among male students.

There was no significant effect of religion on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate. It means that both Hindu and Sikhs student- teachers have equal level of self-confidence. No study was found which examined the relationship of religion and self confidence.

There was no significant effect of interaction between meditation and gender; and meditation and religion on self confidence when pre self confidence was taken as covariate. It means that male and female (gender); and both Hindu and Sikhs (religion) student- teachers have equally benefited from meditation. Same results regarding interaction between meditation and gender; and meditation and religion on self confidence were found, when pre- self confidence and pre general intelligence were taken as covariates. It means that male and female (gender); and both Hindu and Sikhs (religion) student- teachers have equally benefited from meditation when pre- self confidence and general intelligence were controlled. *Purwar (2002)* reported that self confidence was found to be positively correlated with intelligence at under uncontrolled conditions only, but under controlled conditions the correlation coefficient was not significant. *Singh et al. (2007)* revealed that both male and female (sex); and above, below and average

(intelligent) students were found to be equally benefited from *Shaktipat* meditation. In general the results of the present study are in agreement with *Kritzell (2000)* who also showed that meditation did significantly improve the participants' overall psychological functioning.

Educational Implications

Present study revealed that *Shaktipat* Meditation was an effective practice to improve self-confidence of student- teachers. Self confidence is essential trait for successes and achievements in teaching learning field. Therefore practice of meditation should be given due place in the educational institutes. Morning assembly may be replaced by the meditation practice. Results of the study compel the investigator to suggest that meditation practice should be included in curriculum of teacher education. As all student- teachers (both male and female and both Hindu and Sikhs) were equally benefited from meditation, its application is beyond the limits of religion and gender.

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