ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 5| May 2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 ||SJIF Impact Factor 2026: 8.753 || ISI Value: 1.188

IMPACT OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTES, WORKPLACE, MILITARY AND PRISON REHABILITATION: A BRIEF REVIEW

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra27887
DOI No: 10.36713/epra27887

ABSTRACT
Meditation techniques from different traditions have been getting a lot of scientific attention in the recent years. This brief review examines the effectiveness of one such technique, Transcendental Meditation, across diverse populations.. The objective of this paper is to review the impact of Transcendental Meditation in Academic Institutes, Workplace, Military and Prison Rehabilitation. The paper suggests that this technique of meditation has wide ranging benefits and can be used as a scientific intervention in order to improve the wellbeing of individuals in different settings.

KEYWORDS : *Transcendental Meditation, Military, Rehabilitation, Academic.*

I. INTRODUCTION
Meditation has been used for centuries to help people achieve better self-awareness, mental calmness, and a profound understanding of life in general. Contentment, satisfaction, and well-being are currently being explored intensively as essential requirements for a successful life. Different types of meditation have been used by many cultures to fulfil these essential demands. In the contemporary age, scientists have shown a keen interest in quantifying the advantages of meditation in order to support it with scientific evidence. Scientists have studied the most intricate aspects of life, in an effort to understand the deeper realms of existence. In recent years, one such topic that has been evaluated and examined in great detail is consciousness.

The practice of meditation has often been linked to mystical encounters, out-of-body experiences, and altered states of consciousness. In recent years scientists worldwide have been trying to unravel the workings of these traditional meditation practices. There are classifications that accurately and scientifically separate various techniques and their mechanics. In his study on organizing meditations from Vedic, Buddhist, and Chinese traditions, Dr. Jonathan Shear goes into details of various meditation categories (1). The list consists of

- Zen Buddhism
- Taoism
- Transcendental Meditation
- Yoga
- Theravada Buddhism
- Tibetan Buddhist Tsonghakapa
- Integral Yoga
- Sufism
- Christian Centering Prayer

It can be concluded after careful consideration that these techniques are distinct from one another either in terms of their mechanics or their effects on physiology. A great deal of research is currently being done to determine how these meditation practices impact the brain, body, and behaviour.

II. TRANSCENDING
Transcending is often considered in terms of 'going beyond'. The value of transcendence has been discussed in great profundity by several scholars. It has been argued that a systematic practice for experiencing transcendence may be fundamental for "unfreezing" development so that post conventional levels can be attained" (2). With respect to meditation, it refers to experiencing finer levels of mind. Practitioners of Transcendental Meditation claim that through its practice, the mind settles completely to experience the most settled state of mind, also referred to as "pure" consciousness. In his book Super Mind, Dr. Norman. E. Rosenthal, a world renowned researcher and psychiatrist, records the experiences of meditators transcending, these experiences are often associated with bliss, stillness, peace, unity, etc.

It is crucial to draw attention to the physiological variations brought by various forms of meditation. In the categorization of meditation techniques, there are three primary categories: Focused Attention, Open Monitoring, and Automatic Self-Transcending. Each category employs distinct methods and approaches to achieve meditative states. Focused Attention involves concentrating on a specific object, such as an image or a profound emotion, to anchor one's awareness and attention. Open Monitoring, on the other hand, encourages non-reactive awareness of the present moment, allowing one to observe thoughts, feelings, and sensations without attachment or judgment. Techniques like Buddhist-style mindfulness (Vipassana) fall under this category. Automatic Self-Transcending involves effortlessly transcending the active thinking mind to access deeper states of consciousness. A prominent example of this category is Transcendental Meditation, where practitioners use a mantra—a specific sound—to effortlessly move beyond surface-level thoughts. Each category corresponds to distinct EEG wavelengths: Focused Attention is associated with Gamma waves (20-50 cycles per second), Open Monitoring with Theta 2 waves (6-8 cycles per second), and Automatic Self-Transcending with Alpha 1 waves

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(8-10 cycles per second)(3). These categorizations provide a framework for understanding and classifying various meditation practices based on their underlying techniques and neurological effects.

This study focuses on the Transcendental Meditation technique because it has been the subject of extensive scientific investigation over the past five decades. Research has explored how this meditation practice influences practitioners' physical health, mental well-being, social, and behavioral patterns across diverse populations worldwide. These research studies also provide a foundation for understanding the technique's profound impacts on human functioning.

Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental meditation is a scientific technique of meditation with its roots in ancient Vedic tradition. It was introduced to the world in1950s by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It is done sitting comfortably for 15-20 minutes twice daily and is often referred to as a "simple" and "effortless" practice. It has been taught for over six decades, and there are over 700 research studies recording its benefits in different spheres of life. The teaching of Transcendental Meditation has known to be uniform to ensure maximum effectiveness with more than ten million practitioners all over the world.

III. PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

The research on TM has been going on since 1970's and one of its most significant effects has been recorded in the field of health. This technique of meditation provides the body with deep rest resulting in reduced stress and better functioning of the body. The research studies indicate that the regular practice leads to reduced anxiety (4), improvement in conditions like hypertension (5) as well as better cardiovascular health(6). There are evident physiological changes seen in people practicing Transcendental Meditation. TM has also been associated with enhanced brain functioning (7). Multiple studies indicate that individuals suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder show improvement with the practice of Transcendental Meditation technique. Research also suggests that the practice of this meditation technique may lead to reduction of cortisol (8). In fact, there has been a long term study indicating reduction in Medical expenditure of people practicing TM technique (9).

IV. BEHAVIOUR AND TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

Behaviour is a fundamental aspects of human life and is often shaped by one's state of physiology and psychology. It is also deeply influenced by the social, economic, and spiritual states of individuals. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of TM in his book, 'The Science of Being and Art of Living states "How to behave has become a concern of society today, because the qualities of heart and mind are not given a fair chance to evolve." He further explains how "the root of the art of behaviour lies in a polished state of mind. This refined state of mind depends upon the conscious mind being brought into communion with the bliss of absolute Being"(10). As per Maharishi "experience shows that Being is bliss consciousness, the source of all thinking, of all existing creation".

Many behavioural issues on a personal and professional level arise from stress. Anger issues, domestic abuse, auto accidents, many such problems stem from stress. Higher stress levels are linked to a larger likelihood of certain behavioural difficulties in day-to-day living. Transcendental Meditation (TM) has been extensively studied as an intervention in the field of behavioural research, and the empirical evidence demonstrates its efficacy in ameliorating behavioural issues at both individual and community levels. Numerous studies have investigated the application of TM as a stress-reduction technique, and the findings suggest that regular practice of this meditation technique can lead to significant improvements in stress-related behavioural disorders, thereby fostering a more balanced and harmonious existence.

a) In workplaces

Stress has been a big factor impacting performance of the work force in every field. The value of meditation in the workplace is gaining ground everywhere in the world. Meditation can offer significant value in the workplace by enhancing employee well-being, productivity, and overall organizational performance. Researchers have been closely looking at factors influencing performance, productivity, efficiency of employees and whether practice of meditation influence these factors in any way. In a study done in South Africa, TM has been found to be quite effective in reducing worksite stress, showing significant reduction in psychological stress(11. Another study states that " Transcendental Meditation tech-nique appears to improve employee health, well-being, job satisfaction, efficiency and productivity, in turn influencing organizational climate, absenteeism, and financial performance" (12). Research done on two occupational settings has proven that regular practice of TM resulted in decreased trait anxiety, insomnia, job tension and fatigue. Greater employee effectiveness as well as enhanced job satisfaction have also been recorded (13). These studies indicate that TM can serve as a valuable tool for organizations to increase efficiency, productivity, and improve employee behaviour, thereby fostering a more positive and conducive work environment. Implementing TM programs in the workplace could potentially yield significant benefits for both employees and employers, leading to improved overall organizational performance and success.

b) In Academic institutes

For the holistic growth of students, it is essential that they lead a life that is free from stress. Due to increase in academic pressure, students and teaching staff suffer from stress, anxiety as well as burn out. There is a prevalent issue of negative school behaviours; students engage in fights, there is verbal and physical aggression along with absenteeism and suspension. There have been various studies done on students practicing TM. A study done reported that students practising TM experienced lower anxiety and higher resilience (14). It has been seen that that the practice of Transcendental meditation by students leads to increased graduation rate and also showed reduction in dropout rates (15). It is vital to give due importance to the emotional well-being of students. There is a significant

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impact of the practice of TM on the emotional/social wellbeing of students. Another research reported decrease in stress, anxiety, anger, fatigue, depression and improvement in self esteem in students who were practicing the TM technique (16). A pilot study done on students in UK and Ireland showed improved working memory and executive functioning (17).TM has been found useful in improving negative school behaviours in adolescents. African American adolescents showed less absenteeism along with reduced suspension days in those who were practicing TM (18).

c) In prisons

Offenders are more prone to difficulties like health issues, family problems, work related challenges, etc. (19) Transcendental Meditation has been implemented in prison to see its impact and usefulness in prison rehabilitation. Research indicates that TM has been effective in reducing recidivism. With the practice of TM, incarcerated offenders show positive changes in risk factors associated with criminal behaviour including reduced hostility, anxiety, aggression and substance abuse, and increased moral judgement. (20)

d) In military

Due to the rising number of military service members who have PTSD and anxiety disorders as a result of combat trauma and multiple deployments, the necessity of efficient, evidence – based interventions has emerged as a central theme in the military behavioural health community (21). In a randomized controlled study done at the military college of Vermont, Norwich University, a significant decrease in self-reported depression, stress, state anxiety along with increase in resilience, behavioural and emotional coping was seen in practitioners of TM (22). Additionally, there are studies done on war veterans that show improvement in their PTSD symptoms (23, 24). The TM technique has also shown to be effective in improving the quality of life and mindfulness, of war veterans (25).

Approximately 300 independent experimental samples from meta-analyses evaluating various methods of meditation and relaxation have revealed that Transcendental Meditation practice, when compared to other methods of stress reduction, is associated with greater reductions in physiological arousal, trait anxiety, drug abuse, smoking and blood pressure as well as with greater improvements in psychological health (26). Therefore it is essential to integrate and utilize such interventions in order to enhance performance and holistic wellbeing of individuals all across. More qualitative and quantitative research is needed in order to investigate the effects of Transcendental Meditation on specific mental and physical health conditions in India.

V. CONCLUSION

The brief review indicates that Transcendental Meditation is an effective and versatile intervention that has shown positive impacts on a number of populations and institutional settings, such as educational institutions, workplaces, military settings, and prison rehabilitation programs,. The results imply that Transcendental Meditation enhances psychological and behavioural well-being and could be a scientifically proven method for improving personal functioning and general quality of life in a variety of settings.

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