

Anantshayi Technique of Meditation for Strategic Decision-making

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ABSTRACT: Millions of people are practicing the various forms of Yoga and Meditation and quite similar exercise regimes worldwide. Previous studies show that Yoga and Meditation is helpful not only in enriching the quality of personal lives but also of professional lives of masses by entailing a range of physiological and psychological benefits. Yet, there is a definitive gap in the availability and applicability of some ultra-modern Meditation technique that can help Working Professionals in taking care of their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and situational needs as well as their over-all well-being. Such Yoga and Meditation practice should also be helpful in material discharge of their duties and responsibilities at their work-place. A certain mind-relaxation and body-control technique is actually needed in contemporary times that can help the new-age Entrepreneurs and Business Professionals in their Strategic Decision-making process at work. It was realized that there is a great need of an easy, flexible yet powerful Yoga practice and a simple yet innovative Meditation technique that can be exercised anywhere comfortably, especially at people's workplace where they spend their major time of the day and life both. Hence, the researcher came up with the novel concept of 'Anantshayi Yoga', which was derived from the twin classical philosophies of: 1) Yoga-Nidrā, as rooted in the philosophy of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, and 2) Trikāl Darshan. A pragmatic approach to this Yoga philosophy was development of 'Anantshayi Technique of Meditation' (ATM) which can facilitate the Strategic Decision-making (SDM) process of modern managers, who work in strategic profiles, in any organization, sector or industry. This research basically deploys the Mixed-modal research design and is Conceptual-cum-Descriptive in nature. In first part, a Qualitative Analysis was done through a textual analysis of the legends of Lord Vishnu and His Dashavataar, as illustrated in the Holy Book of 'Shrimad Bhagawat Mahapuran' as composed by Sage Ved Vyas ji and the basic premises and procedure of the 'Anantshayi Technique of Meditation' (ATM) was explained in brief. While in the second part, a Quantitative Analysis was done on a Cohort of 32 Participants of a 6-week non-residential Anantshayi Yoga and Meditation Program. The sample comprised of Entrepreneurs, Founders, Co-founders, Strategic Leaders and Consultants, Top and Middle-level Business Managers of the two Pharmaceutical Companies operating in Varanasi. The Pre-Test and Post-Test observations were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale Feedback-Form that focused on assessing the Physical, Psychological, Societal and Situational - level 'Self-Awareness' of the Program Participants. They were also assessed on their 'Self-Concept' about their Strategic Decision Making (SDM) capabilities as well as their opinion on the Significance of Yoga and Meditation in life, together with the Significance and Efficacy of the 'Anantshayi Technique of Meditation' (ATM) Intervention. Results were arrived at by computing the Mean of the Statistical Means of all seven dimensions of the study, together with a 'Paired Sample t-test' on the Pre-test and Post-test Means of the two data-sets collected before and after the Intervention. Null Hypothesis got rejected and it was inferred that the 'Anantshayi Technique of Meditation' is definitely useful in improving the Self-awareness and Self-concept levels of the new-age Entrepreneurs and Business Managers and significantly improves their Strategic Decision-making capabilities, in turn.

KEY-WORDS: Management, Entrepreneurs, Yoga, Meditation, Strategic Decision-making, Business Managers, Strategic Management, Anantshayi Yoga, Lord Vishnu, Innovative Skill.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Millions of people are practicing the various forms of Yoga and Meditation, and quite similar exercise regimes worldwide. In last one century, hundreds of researches and studies on Yoga and its various forms have proved that it entails a range of physiological and psychological benefits. In several clinical as well as non-clinical studies, it was clearly shown that the regular practice of Yoga and Meditation was definitely helpful; not

only for the normal healthy people but also for the patients of various chronic diseases. Yoga and Meditation is beneficial not only in enriching the quality of personal lives but also of professional lives of millions.

Yoga: “Yogaś-Citta-Vṛtti-Nirodhaḥ” - **Yoga Sutra 1.2**

As per Maharshi Patanjali, Yoga is restraining (nirodah) mind (chitta) from taking various forms (vritti) (Singh, 2016). The word ‘Yoga’ describes a method or means of uniting the body to the mind, and then together joining them to the Soul (Self). It means a union between the individual self and the transcendental self (Garfinkel and Schumacher, 2000). Yoga is a set of physical, mental, and spiritual practices. It is one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophical traditions, originated in ancient India. It includes breath control, meditation, and specific body postures, significant for health and spirituality. Yoga is an exercise for awakened consciousness and human-values. Presently, masses consider Yoga to be mainly an exercise regime, although it is not so. Rather, Yoga is a way-of-life that incorporates its own epistemology, metaphysics, ethical practices, systematic exercises and self-development techniques for body, mind and spirit. Yoga imparts physiological and psychological balance to the body by awakening self-consciousness (Singh, 2016). Khalsa (2007) described Yoga as a therapeutic intervention, and Sengupta (2012) reviewed the positive impacts of Yoga and Pranayama on health. Yoga, however, is meant to be practiced in the larger context of conscious spiritual discipline.

Meditation: It is a technique of focusing mind on a particular thought or object, for achieving a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. It is preparing the body and the nervous system for stillness. If practiced regularly, meditation is thought to help people develop habitual, unconscious micro-behaviors that can potentially produce widespread positive effects on physical and psychological functioning. It can be effective in stress reduction. It differs from relaxation techniques, as it involves achieving a state of ‘thoughtless awareness’ in which the excessive stress-producing activity of the mind is neutralized without reducing alertness and effectiveness. The theoretical explanation for the effects of meditation and relaxation techniques is that the release of catecholamines and other stress-hormones are reduced and the parasympathetic activity is increased (Manocha, 2000).

Yet, there is a definitive gap in the availability and applicability of some ultra-modern Meditation technique that can help Working Professionals not only in taking care in taking care of their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and situational needs as well as their over-all well-being. Such Yoga and Meditation practice should also be helpful in material discharge of their duties and responsibilities at their work-place. A certain mind-relaxation and body-control technique is actually needed in contemporary times that can help the new-age Entrepreneurs and Business Professionals in their Strategic Decision-making process at work. It was realized that there is a great need of an easy, flexible yet powerful Yoga practice and a simple yet innovative Meditation technique that can be exercised anywhere comfortably, especially at people’s workplace where they spend their major time of the day and life, both.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To understand the issue better, a systematic review of literature was conducted extensively, under the following subheads. Background of the study is discussed and presented as below:

2.1 Yoga & Meditation for Professionals:

Delving deeper into the field of Yoga, it was found that, more than ten ancient and twenty modern forms of Yoga and Meditation practices are currently popular worldwide. However, none of them seem to suffice the Physical, Mental, Emotional, Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural as well as Situational needs of the busy Professionals working in various Sectors and Industries, all over. Adhia, Nagendra and Mahadevan (2010) studied the Impact of adoption of Yoga as a way-of-life on the Emotional Intelligence of managers. Ganpat and Nagendra (2011) studied the role of Yoga Therapy in developing Emotional Intelligence in mid-life managers. While Harris et al. (2016) deliberated on feasibility and efficacy of a school-based Yoga and Mindfulness intervention in promoting Stress Management and Well-being in educators.

2.2 Popular Yoga and Meditation Techniques and their role in well-being:

- 1) **Aṣṭāṅga Yoga:** Aṣṭāṅga Yoga involves multiple steps or exercise of restraining the human body and mind, and further uniting the self (soul) with the ultimate truth (super-soul). The ‘Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali’ are a collection of 196 sutras or aphorisms on the theory and practice of Yoga. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is the practice of: Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyahara, Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. It takes years of practice to master this form. Benavides and Caballero (2009) found the positive implications of Ashtanga Yoga for children and adolescents for their weight management and psychological well-being, in an uncontrolled open pilot study.
- 2) **Surya Namaskār:** It is a series of twelve powerful yoga poses, done in salutation to the Sun-god, facing the Sun, followed by standing and floor postures. They are a complete body workout and form an incredible

- link between the warming-up poses and the intense Yoga Āsanas. **Omkar (2012)** comprehensively reviewed Surya Namaskaar for holistic well being.
- 3) **Hatha Yoga:** The word 'Hatha' can be divided into two parts: ha (sun) and tha (moon). The common interpretation of Hatha Yoga is the 'union of the pairs of opposites'. Hatha Yoga addresses the body and the mind and requires great discipline and effort. The 'Hatha Yoga Pradipika' is considered to be the classic manual on Hatha Yoga. The practice involves holding a pose for quite a long time. It focuses on a lot of Meditation, correct breathing and postures, along with some essential relaxation techniques. **Heilbronn (1992)** studied the use of Hatha Yoga as a strategy for coping with Stress in Management Development. **Raub (2002)** reviewed the psycho-physiologic effects of Hatha Yoga on musculoskeletal and cardiopulmonary functions. **Ripoll and Mahowald (2002)** found Hatha Yoga therapy useful in the management of Urologic disorders. **Harinath et al. (2004)** found the positive effects of Hatha Yoga and Omkar meditation on Cardio-respiratory performance, Psychologic profile, and in Melatonin secretion.
 - 4) **Rāj Yoga:** Ancient Sanskrit texts describe Rāj Yoga as being the ultimate goal of sustained Yoga practice and meditation, the state of peace and contentment. Once the level of Raja Yoga is reached, the Yogi enters the state of consciousness or enlightenment known as Samādhi, highest level of the eight-fold path of Ashtanga Yoga. It is said to be a royal way to reintegrate 'Self' with the Universal 'Self' (Brahman). The term became a modern when in the 19th-century Swami Vivekananda equated Rāj Yoga with the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali. The Brahma Kumaris, a new religious movement, teaches a form of meditation it calls 'Rāj Yoga' that has hardly anything to do with either the Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras or the Hatha Yoga precepts. **Misra et al. (2013)** studied the effects of Raj Yoga meditation on affective & cognitive functions of the body and the brain.
 - 5) **Kriyā Yoga:** Kriyā Yoga is a meditation technique of controlling breaths through Pranayama which speeds up the spiritual process. In 1861, the practice of Kriyā Yoga was revived by Mahavatar Babaji and passed through his disciple, Shri Lahiri Mahasaya. Kriyā Yoga was much famous after the publication of Shri Paramahansa Yogananda's book 'Autobiography of a Yogi', from 1920s. **Schmidt et al. (1997)** studied the changes in cardio-vascular risk factors and hormones secretion during a comprehensive residential three-month Kriya Yoga training and vegetarian nutrition program.
 - 6) **Vipassanā:** Vipassanā is a way of self-transformation through self-observation. It is this observation-based, self-exploratory journey to the common root of mind and body that dissolves mental impurity, resulting in a balanced mind full of love and compassion. Vipassanā or Vipāśyanā, means prajñā - 'an insight into the true nature of reality', which means to see the things as they really are. It was taught by Lord Gautama Buddha as a universal remedy for universal ills and aims for the total eradication of mental impurities and the resultant highest happiness of full liberation. **Sharma (2002)** discussed Vipassna Meditation as the art and science of Mindfulness.
 - 7) **Sahaj Yoga:** Sahaja Yoga is a unique method of meditation introduced in 1970 by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi by which Self-realization (Kundalini-awakening) is achieved. It is a technique to awaken the Kundalini Shakti which lies in the sleeping state at the base of the spine (sacrum bone) of each human being. When this Kundalini rises, it creates a state of thoughtless awareness (Nirvichar Samadhi) and a state of complete silence. **Panjwani et al. (1995)** discussed the positive effects of Sahaja Yoga practice on Stress Management amongst the patients of Epilepsy. **Manocha et al. (2002)** revealed the role and efficacy of Sahaja Yoga in the management of moderate to severe Asthma through randomised controlled trials. **Sharma et al. (2005)** checked the effects of Sahaj Yoga on depressive disorders, and further checked the impact of Sahaj Yoga on neuro-cognitive functions in patients suffering from major depression (**Sharma et al., 2006**).
 - 8) **Kundalini Yoga:** Kundalini Yoga is one of those mysterious Yoga practices that is not only physically demanding and mentally challenging, but also involves a lot of meditation, chanting, mudras and breathing exercises. The whole point is to release the Kundalini energy that is coiled in the lower spine. Kuṇḍalinī Yoga is a school of Yoga that is influenced by Shaktism and Tantrism. One has to practice a lot of fast moving postures with periods of relaxation and is taught to pay attention to the internal sensations and the flow of divine energy so that it can be tapped into the Kundalini-shakti. When released, this energy moves from the base of the spine through the seven chakras (or energy centers) in the spine to the top. Originally known as Laya Yoga, the practice was brought to the West in 1969 by Yogi Bajan, the founder of 3HO (Happy, Healthy, Holy Organization) where specific meditation and breathing techniques were used to tap the Kundalini energy, known as Laya Yoga founded by Sage Gorakshnath. **Arambula et al. (2001)** studied the physiological correlates of Kundalini Yoga meditation and suggested that a shift in breathing patterns may contribute to the development of alpha EEG.
 - 9) **Iyengar Yoga:** Iyengar Yoga is a type of Hatha Yoga. Founded by B.K.S. Iyengar in 1936, this form of Yoga is good for them who want relief from injuries and joint problems. It focuses on correct alignment of the body and precise moves, while holding the breath. Many times, the perfect pose is achieved with the

help of props like ropes, traps, blocks, belts, and blankets. It includes more than 200 Asanas and 14 types of Pranayama. **Kolasinski et al. (2005)** conducted a pilot study on Iyengar Yoga for treating symptoms of osteo-arthritis of the knees.

- 10) **Sudarshan Kriya Yoga:** Sudarshan Kriya is a three-part yogic breathing practice designed to eliminate fatigue and negative emotions, thereby improving overall physical and mental health. This Kriya was developed by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and was patented by his 'Art of Living' Foundation. Published research shows that SKY significantly reduces stress, depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and significantly increases well-being both mentally and physically. **Sulekha et al. (2006)** evaluated the sleep architecture in the practitioners of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga and Vipassana meditation.
- 11) **Vinyāsa Yoga:** Vinyāsa means 'to place in a special way' and due to its yoga postures it is the most athletic yoga style. Vinyāsa was adapted from Ashtanga Yoga in the 1980s. In this, the movement is coordinated with breath and movement to flow from one pose to another. This Yoga aligns a deliberate sequence of poses with the breath to achieve a continuous flow. Inhalation is usually connected to upward, open movements, while exhalation is often tied to downward movements or twists. **Uebelacker et al. (2010)** conducted open trial of Vinyasa Yoga for persistently depressed individuals giving evidence of feasibility and acceptability.
- 12) **Bikram Yoga:** It is a sequence of set poses to be conducted in a sauna-like room. Created by Yoga Guru Bikram Choudhury, the key feature of this practice is to do a set of poses in a room heated to 41 degrees centigrade and at 40 percent humidity. In a 90-minute sequence, there are 26 basic postures that are done twice and two breathing exercises. The heat makes one sweat excessively thereby getting the body rid of toxins, while the postures flex every part of the body and bring oxygenated blood to all internal organs. Practitioners, then, drink plenty of fluids to rehydrate. **Hewett (2011)** conducted an examination of the effectiveness of an 8-weeks Bikram Yoga program on mindfulness, perceived stress, and physical fitness.
- 13) **Hot Yoga:** The hot yoga style is very similar to that of Bikram Yoga. Here too, postures are held in a heated room, however, it is not restricted to the 26-pose sequence. **Hunter et al. (2016)** studied the impact of Hot Yoga on arterial stiffness and quality of life in overweight/obese adults and found positive results.
- 14) **Kripalu Yoga:** In Kripalu Yoga, the focus is less on hectic ā sanas but more on self-reflection, prāṇāyāma, deep relaxation, and meditation. The aim is to de-stress the mind and body for better health and self-awareness. Not as rigid as the other practices, this one requires modifying poses according to body's needs. **Braun, Park and Conboy (2012)** studied the psychological well-being, health behaviors, and weight loss among participants in a residential, Kripalu Yoga based Weight-loss program
- 15) **Yin Yoga:** Yin yoga is a slow-paced style that lets one hold poses for a longer time- from 45 seconds to two minutes. There are also a lot of seated postures and a focus on spirituality, inner peace and relaxation. By holding poses for a longer time, a practitioner stretches their connective tissues in the body and makes them more elastic. It also improves blood circulation and the Qi energy in the body. Props help one to relax into the postures instead of keeping their muscles flexed and taut. This style is often practiced in a heated room to help muscles become more elastic. **Hylander et al. (2017)** studied Yin yoga and Mindfulness. They conducted a five week randomized controlled trials evaluating the effects of the YOMI program on stress and worry.
- 16) **Restorative Yoga:** If one is in a stressful job, then this Yoga practice is for them. As the name suggests, Restorative Yoga postures are meant to relax and rejuvenate. Many of the classic yoga poses have been modified so that they are easier to do and are more relaxing. **Cohen et al. (2007)** studied the feasibility and acceptability of Restorative Yoga for treatment of Hot Flushes through a pilot trial.
- 17) **Prenatal Yoga:** It is a workout that pregnant women can safely practice in all trimesters without putting the foetus at risk. This kind of Yoga works on pelvic floor muscles and teaches breathing exercises that eases labour and delivery. **Sun et al. (2010)** studied the effects of a Prenatal Yoga programme on easing the discomforts of pregnancy and self-efficacy in the maternal childbirth in Taiwan.
- 18) **Anusara Yoga:** In this version of Hatha Yoga, the mind-body-heart connection is the key and the practitioner is encouraged to uplift himself, find inner peace and the 'light within the self'. Here too, postures are as used in a Vinyasa practice and there is a lot of focus on alignment. This style too uses props to help reach the perfect pose. **Jain (2012)** studied the three cases of branding Yoga regimes as the Iyengar Yoga, the Siddha Yoga and the Anusara Yoga and how they are approached differently.
- 19) **Therapeutic Yoga:** This is another broad term for a style of Yoga which aims to heal the practitioner in various ways. The desired effect can be for body and mind. Also commonly called Yoga Therapy, this style focuses on easing pain or discomfort while helping restore balance and wellness. **Geyer et al. (2011)** studied the feasibility and the positive effects of Therapeutic Yoga on quality of life of children hospitalized and being treated for Cancer.
- 20) **Yoga Nidra:** Yoga Nidra in Sanskrit means 'Yogic sleep'. It is a deep relaxation technique and a form of meditation. Yoga Nidra involves practicing 'Pranayama' (breathing techniques), requires

'Pratyahara' (withdrawal of the senses), and 'Dharana' (Concentration), which are the fourth, fifth and sixth limbs of Ashtanga Yoga. Yoga Nidra expands the individual's self-awareness, as the practitioners enter their alpha state and focus shifts to the third-eye (sahasrara) chakra. It also stimulates the hormones in the Pineal gland, which releases Melatonin- a hormone that reduces stress, boosts the immune system and helps prevent illness. Regular practice helps harmonize the brain hemispheres, promoting better mental performance. **Kumar (2008)** studied the impact of Yoga Nidra on Stress and Anxiety. **Dwivedi and Singh (2016)** discussed the significance of Yoga Nidra as a Stress Management Intervention Strategy. **Li et al. (2019)** used Yoga Nidra recordings for Pain management in patients undergoing colonoscopy.

Then there is Jivamukti Yoga, Dharma Yoga, Rocket Yoga, Mysore Style Yoga, Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Yoga, Acro Yoga, Power Yoga, etc. You name it and there is an exercise or Yoga for the same. Moreover, there are still some popular terms like Bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, and/ or Karma Yoga, which are not the physical exercise based practices but are more emotions and actions oriented.

2.3 Observed Benefits of Yoga and Meditation:

Yoga is a holistic approach to health that not only increases flexibility, strength, and stamina but also fosters self-awareness, emotional stability, and peace of mind. (**Garfinkel and Schumacher, 2000**)

Patel and North (1975) took a positive bio-feedback of Yoga in management of Hypertension through randomised controlled trials. **Vijayalakshmi et al. (1988)** conducted a preliminary study to reveal the combined effect of Yoga and Psychotherapy in management of Asthma. **Nespor (1991)** found Yoga helpful in Pain Management. **Latha and Kaliappan (1992)** checked the efficacy of Yoga therapy in the management of headaches. **Kröner-Herwig et al. (1995)** found that Yoga is helpful in the management of chronic Tinnitus by the way of comparison of cognitive- behavioural group training. **Vedanthan et al. (1998)** did clinical and controlled study of yoga techniques in university students suffering from Asthma and found it beneficial.

As per **Garfinkel and Schumacher (2000)**, Therapeutic Yoga is the performance of postures for treating medical disorders. **Parshad (2004)** discussed the role of Yoga in Stress Management. Stress produces a state of physical and mental tension. In Yoga, physical postures and breathing exercises improve muscle strength, flexibility, blood circulation and oxygen uptake as well as hormone functions. In addition, the relaxation induced by meditation helps to stabilize the autonomic nervous system with a tendency towards parasympathetic dominance. Physiological benefits which follow help yoga practitioners become more resilient to stressful conditions and reduce a variety of important risk factors for various diseases, especially cardio-respiratory diseases. **Yogendra et al. (2004)** illustrated the beneficial effects of Yogic lifestyle on reversibility of Ischaemic heart disease. **Narendran et al. (2005)** found the efficacy of Yoga on Pregnancy and its outcomes. **Duraiswamy et al. (2007)** proved Yoga therapy to be quite helpful as an add-on treatment in the management of patients with Schizophrenia, through randomized controlled trials. **Alexander et al. (2008)** contextualized the effects of Yoga therapy on Diabetes Management through a review of the social determinants of physical activity. **Sorosky, Stilp and Akuthota (2008)** found Yoga beneficial in the management of lower back pain. **Vempati, Bijlani and Deepak (2009)** checked the efficacy of a comprehensive lifestyle modification programme based on Yoga in the management of Bronchial Asthma through randomized controlled trials. **Aljasir, Bryson and Al-shehri (2010)** systematic reviewed the effects of Yoga practice in the management of Type II Diabetes Mellitus in adults.

Gopinathan, Dhiman and Manjusha (2012) conducted a clinical study to evaluate the efficacy of Trataka Yoga Kriya and Eye exercises (non-pharmacological methods) in the management of Timira (Ammetropia and Presbyopia). **Bernstein et al. (2014)** found Yoga beneficial in the management of Weight: in cases of overweight and obesity. **Rogers and MacDonald (2015)** found Therapeutic Yoga helpful in the symptom management for Multiple Sclerosis. **Desveaux et al. (2015)** found Yoga beneficial in the management of chronic diseases. **Khalsa et al. (2015)** made a pilot study to reveal the effects of Yoga-enhanced Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Y-CBT) in Anxiety Management. **Harris (2016)** checked the feasibility and efficacy of a school-based Yoga and Mindfulness intervention in Stress Management and Promoting Well-being in educators. **Agarwal and Maroko-Afek (2016)** reviewed with research evidence the role and effectiveness of Integrated Yoga in Cancer Pain Management. **Gowda et al. (2017)** presented a case report of Integrated Yoga and Naturopathy module in the management of Metabolic Syndrome. **Roche et al. (2017)** revealed the efficacy of Yoga and Self-regulation in management of essential Arterial Hypertension and associated Emotional Symptomatology by the way of randomized controlled trials. **Ward et al. (2018)** conducted a pilot randomized controlled trial for checking the effectiveness of Yoga in the management of pain and sleep in Rheumatoid Arthritis. **Porter et al. (2019)** conducted a randomized pilot study to find out the feasibility of a mindful Yoga program for women with metastatic breast cancer.

2.4 International Recognition of Yoga

June 21 was declared as the 'International Day of Yoga' by the United Nations General Assembly by passing a resolution on December 11, 2014 upon ratification of 192 countries. The first ever International Yoga Day was celebrated in 177 countries across the globe on 21st June 2015. Our Union Government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi organized this day in a big way, by soliciting all the schools, colleges and government institutions to voluntarily organize and participate in various Yoga events/ practices all across the nation. Common people should also promote 'goodness of yoga' in their daily lives without getting into any controversies underlining religious connotations. One must understand that Yoga as a philosophy is not religious (Hindu) but universal one, to be propagated without any socio-religious affiliations or restraints. (Singh, 2016)

III. RESEARCH GAP ANALYSIS AND THE PROBLEM-STATEMENT

Above discussion reveals that, the Yoga helps in managing stress and anxiety. The relaxation induced by Yoga lowers the levels of the stress hormone Cortisol, blood pressure and heart rate. It also improves digestion and the immune system. Yoga helps in sleeping better and treating insomnia. Studies have shown that Yoga relieves chronic pain in people suffering from cancer, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune diseases, arthritis and joint pains. Yoga provides a full workout to all the muscles of the body, tones them, and extends more strength and stamina, over time. It gives more flexibility and mobility to the body. Such physical activity also detoxifies the internal organs. Deep yogic breathing improves lungs function, while the sweat rids the body of toxins. Yoga teaches us how to breathe in the correct manner by making us aware of our breaths. It helps us identify our breathing patterns and shows us how our emotions affect it. Taming our breathing can help calm us down. Deep yogic breathing is also very good for health and studies have shown that it is beneficial for the heart, brain, digestion and immune system. It also gives one inner peace. It also helps in Weight Management: lose weight and maintain it in the long run, by burning calories. It also gives one inner peace. Hence, Yoga and Meditation has definitely got innumerable physiological as well as psychological benefits.

However, there still remains a scope of introduction of an ultra-modern Yoga and Meditation technique that can be recommended to the Working Professionals and works best with their super busy schedules. Such technique should be potent enough to yield not only the physical and psychological benefits over time, but should also be helpful to its practitioners in providing them with mindful solutions to their personal and professional queries of strategic nature.

Hence, this study was undertaken which not only describes a novel technique of Yoga and Meditation for Strategic Leaders, Entrepreneurs and Business Managers but also evaluates its significance and efficacy of its application in real-life settings, especially in the field of Management and Strategic Decision-making. Thus, this study came into being as: '**Anantshayi Technique of Meditation for Strategic Decision-making**'

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The primary objectives of this research are:

- 4.1 To introduce and describe an ultra-modern technique of Meditation, herein christened as 'Anantshayi Technique of Meditation' (ATM), a procedure developed under the novel concept of 'Anantshayi Yoga', and
- 4.2 To observe the significance and impact of the ATM Intervention on the personal and professional self-help goals of its practitioners.

V. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

- 5.1 Research Design:** This research employs a Mixed-modal Research Design which involves the both Qualitative as well as Quantitative study. The study is Conceptual-cum-Descriptive in nature. While, the Conceptual Framework has been laid to explain the Meditation Technique deployed in the study; Descriptive Statistics has been used to describe the characteristics of the variables under study and the results thereof.
- 5.2 Area of Study:** The Sample was selected from two Pharmaceutical Companies operating in Varanasi district viz. 1) Bridge Formulation Pvt. Ltd. and 2) Shashwat Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd.
- 5.3 Sample Design:** The Target Population comprised of Entrepreneurs, Board of Directors, Consultants, CEO, CFO, (Strategic Leaders) and Regional Managers, Zonal Managers, Territory Managers, HR Managers, Trainers, etc. (Top and Middle-level Business Managers) handling strategic profiles in both the Pharma-companies.

A sample of 32 interested individuals was taken from the Target Population of the given two companies of Pharmaceutical Sector. They were asked to participate in the 6-weeks Anantshayi Yoga (ATM) Program voluntarily. The ATM technique was demonstrated to them first and then they were contacted for their

Feedback/ Opinion twice, both at the Pre and the Post Intervention stage, so as to gauge the efficacy of the ATM Intervention program.

Sample Unit: Entrepreneurs, Founders, Co-founders, Strategic Leaders, Top-level Consultants, Top-level and Middle-level Business Managers working who were handling strategic profiles and key decision-making positions in those in/ for those two companies/ organizations were selected as an Individual participant/respondent for this study.

Sampling Technique: Both Convenience and Judgmental Sampling was used in the selection of the participants/ respondents of the ‘Anantshayi Yoga and Meditation Workshop’.

5.4 Data Collection: Primary Data was collected in the form of Opinion Survey of Entrepreneurs and Strategic-level Business Managers of both the companies, using a structured Questionnaire that administered during the Feedback-session of the ‘Anantshayi Yoga and Meditation Workshop’ conducted in both the organizations. Anantshayi Yoga and Meditation Workshop was conducted in the First week of April 2018 in the given companies and the 16 Delegates from each organization (total 32 participants) were chosen for further follow-up, on the basis of their displayed interest in learning and adopting the new technique called ‘Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) for Strategic Decision Making (SDM)’. The Feedback was solicited from them on a 5-point Likert scale Questionnaire containing 30 items and their opinion was recorded as **Pre-Test Response**.

Then after, these 32 Participants were followed-up weekly on their daily practice of the new technique. After 6 weeks time, the same set of 32 respondents were again approached for their responses and the new observations were recorded on the same set of statements in Questionnaire as **Post –Test Response**, during the second week of May 2018.

5.5 Scale and Measurement:

Data was collected both as Pre-Test and Post-Test on a 30 items 5-point Likert scale Structured Questionnaire and was focused majorly on measuring the Demographic characteristics and Respondents’ Self-Awareness and Self-Concept on several parameters along with the Significance and Efficacy of the implementation of the Intervention, viz. the Anantshayi Technique of Management (ATM).

Reliability of the Questionnaire was evaluated on whole, and **Cronbach Alpha** was found to be **.843** (good reliability score) and hence the study was deemed reliable.

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

5.1 Qualitative Analysis and Discussion on the Findings (for the Objective 4.1)

The ‘Anantshayi Yoga’ is philosophically a by-product of the theory and practice of **Aṣṭāṅga Yoga** and **Yoga-Nidrā**, which has been derived from the legends of Lord Shri Hari Vishnu. Most of the Theological accounts, like ‘Vishnu Purana’ or ‘Shrimad Bhagavat Mahapurān’, accredit Lord Vishnu’s ‘Anantshayanam’ posture of ‘Yogic Sleep’ as the phase of ‘Sleepy Wakefulness’ during the time of so-called ‘Cosmic Hibernation’. The basic premises and procedure of the ‘Anantshayi Technique of Meditation’ (ATM) is explained in brief.

Herein, a Qualitative Analysis was done by the way of a Textual analysis of the legends of Lord Vishnu and His Dashavataar, as illustrated in the selected scripture of ‘Shrimad Bhagavat Mahapurān’ composed by Sage Ved Vyas ji.

It is said that Lord Vishnu remains in ‘Yoga-Nidra’ reclined on the seat of Serpent-god Anantsheshaag, which means His Awareness constantly oscillates between the two states of pure-consciousnesses and sub-consciousness while he seems to be asleep, iconographically.

Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) is derived from a new guided practice of Anantshayi Yoga whose principles are based on the twin classical philosophies of:

- 1) **Yoga-Nidrā** (Regulating Conscious and Sub-conscious States of Mind) as rooted in the **Aṣṭāṅga Yoga** (Eight Fold Yoga Path), and
- 2) **Trikāl Darshan** (Visualizing Past, Present and Future times).

Here, we shall be discussing only the novel concept of ‘Anantshayi Yoga’, which is derived from the twin classical philosophies of Yoga-Nidrā and Trikaal Darshan. A pragmatic approach to this Yoga philosophy was development of ‘Anantshayi Technique of Meditation’ (ATM) which can facilitate the Strategic Decision-making (SDM) process of modern managers, who work in strategic profiles in any organization, sector or

industry. (Note: The subject matter of these premises is part of another Research-paper, which in turn is part of a much larger work done by the Researcher during her Doctoral Research, and hence is not discussed here.)

The Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) is a unique method of body and mind control for Managers. It is specifically meant for the Strategic Decision-making (SDM) by the hence equipped Strategic Leaders, Entrepreneurs, and Top or Middle-level Business Managers. The process includes following 7 steps which have been described as under:

Figure 1. The Step-by-Step Process of Anantshayi Meditation Technique (ATM) for Strategic Decision Making (SDM)



This is the conceptual model of the ‘Anantshayi Technique of Meditation’ (ATM) that was introduced during the ‘Yoga and Meditation Workshop’ before the Participants. It was fully demonstrated to them and they were asked to repeat it several times during the sessions, so that they get well-versed in its practice. This ATM Intervention was used for a Pre-Test and Post-Test Research during a 6 weeks non-residential program. After 6-weeks same set of participants were again contacted for their Post-test Feedback.

Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) offers amazing health benefits. It calms the mind; relaxes and rejuvenates the body; soothes the nervous system; reduces fatigue; lowers high cholesterol and blood pressure levels; strengthens immunity; improves quality of sleep; treats depression; reduces pain; boosts concentration level; supports brain function and boosts creativity.

Table 1. Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) for Strategic Decision-making (SDM)		
Step-by-step Procedure	Description	Response Time (25 to 45 minutes)
1. Recline and Relax	Recline comfortably in a recliner, chair or couch, on your backside, where head is slightly higher in position (45 to 90 degrees above) the rest of the body-level. Lie still for some time, close your eyes and let the body relax itself from head to toe.	Body control (for initial 2-5 minutes)
2. Remember the Past	Now, think of any past memory, any immediate or distant pleasant moment that made you happy. Think of any person, place or thing that you like the most and reminisce with positive feelings.	Mind work (for next 2-5 minutes)
3. Focus on Present	Take a deep breath and keep an awareness of its slow repeated movements. Inhale & exhale slowly and steadily, focusing on each and every body-part of yours, starting from tip of toe and going up to the top of the head. Repeat it for 4-5 times.	Mind and Body Control (for 3-5 minutes)
4. Visualize the Future	Think of any future situation, develop any Vision or take a	Mind work

	stance in any problem, query or dilemma. Now, imagine various scenarios and chose the one with which you seem to be in tandem with. Choose a view-point you are most comfortable with. Give a deep thought on the each of the seven determinants of Strategic Decision(s) to be made while undertaking that Solution as a Project. Think of its - 1) its Purpose , 2) your Principle(s) , 3) Resource(s) that are available or are to be arranged, 4) Time required, 5) Process or the manner of undertaking the project, 6) Value or cost of the project, and the 7) Risk(s) associated.	(for minutes) 8-15
5. Converse with Conscience	Now, call upon your Godly-figure/ Guru or alternatively speak to your Conscience about your future position or situation that complements your current situation. Discuss your query or stance, till you arrive at a suitable answer.	Decision making (for 5-7 minutes)
6. Repeat till Resolution	Repeat the Step 4 and 5 till you are not able to resolute or find answers to your question. Once done with, reiterate your decided stance twice and take up the resolution in mind.	Decision making (for 2-3 minutes)
7. Retreat and Rise	Now, empty the mind of all ongoing emotions and thoughts and keep lying still in a relaxed position for a while, again focusing on one's breath. Open the eyes and wake up slowly, feeling relaxed and refreshed!	Mind control (for 2-3 minutes) Relieve (in last 1-2 minutes)

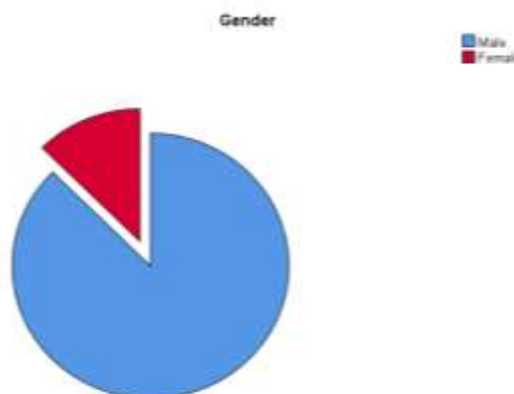
5.2 Quantitative Analysis and Discussion on the Results (for the Objective 4.2)

Herein, a Quantitative Analysis was done on a Cohort of 32 Participants of a 6-week non-residential Anantshayi Yoga and Meditation Program. The sample comprised of Entrepreneurs, Founders, Co-founders, Strategic Leaders and Consultants, Top and Middle-level Business Managers of the two Pharmaceutical Companies operating in Varanasi. The Pre-Test and Post-Test observations were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale Feedback-form that focused on assessing the Physical, Psychological, Societal and Situational level Self-Awareness of the Program Participants. They were also assessed on their Self-Concept about their Strategic Decision Making (SDM) capabilities as well as their opinion on the Significance of Yoga and Meditation, together with the Significance and Efficacy of the Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) Intervention. Results were arrived at using the Combined Mean of the Statistical Means of all seven Dimensions of the study, together with a 'Paired Sample t-test' on the Pres-test and Post-test Means of the two data-sets collected before and after the Intervention.

Table 2 below shows the Gender Distribution of the Sample studied:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	28	87.5	87.5	87.5
	Female	4	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Figure 2. Pie-chart Representation of the Gender Composition of Respondents to Anantshayi Yoga Intervention (both Pre & Post Test)



Mean Value: Seven pre-identified constructs were measured for Pre-test and Post-test Means of each Dimension, by computing the statistical means of the data of each related item. The two data-sets of Pre-Test

and Post-test observations were collected. Items in Questionnaire were 30, while the sample size was of 32 participants.

Table 3. Comparison of the Resultant Means of Pre-Test and Post-Test observations during the Intervention Program of Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) (for N = 32)

Dimensions (Computed Variables)	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	No. of Items considered for the computation of the Statistical Mean Value
1. Level of Self Awareness-Physical Factors	3.9063	4.0469	2
2. Level of Self Awareness-Psychological Factors	3.9167	3.9792	6
3. Level of Self Awareness-Societal Factors	4.0521	4.1458	6
4. Level of Self Awareness-Situational Factors	3.8438	3.8906	2
5. Level of Self-Concept-Strategic Decision-making Capability	3.7031	3.7969	2
6. Significance of Yoga and Meditation	3.6563	3.7969	2
7. Significance and Efficacy of Anantshayi Technique of Meditation	4.1031	4.1594	10
Combined Mean (of the Statistical Means of all Computed Variables)	3.8830	3.9737	30 Items

As we already know that the these observations for a group of 32 respondents (of Strategic Leaders, Entrepreneurs and Business Managers of two Pharmaceutical Companies) were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale through an administration of a Structured Questionnaire by conducting an Opinion Survey at a Feedback session of a Yoga and Meditation Workshop. Scores were recorded on a scale data. Comparing the means of data from two related samples, i.e. observations made before and after the Anantshayi Yoga Intervention on the same set of participants, it can be clearly inferred that the ATM Intervention was quite useful in improving the Self-awareness and Self-concept levels of the practitioners. Table 3 that compares the Pre-test and Post-test means and clearly indicates that the ATM Intervention was significant and effective as each construct/ variable shows a statistical rise in mean values.

Paired Sample t-Test: Paired t-test is used to compare the means of the two set of responses from the same sample population, i.e. two samples of a related data. The Paired t-test compares the mean difference of the values to zero.

Formulated Hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis- H₀: There is **no statistical difference** between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores of the Anantshayi Yoga Intervention.

Alternative Hypothesis- H₁: There is a statistical difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean scores of the Anantshayi Yoga Intervention.

After conducting the Paired Sample t-test on the data, following results were retrieved:

Table 4. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PosTMean	3.9737	32	.35081	.06202
	PreTMean	3.8830	32	.40288	.07122

Table 5. Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PosTMean & PreTMean	32	.876	.000

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	PostMean - PreMean	.09062	.19404	.03430	.02067	.16058	2.642	31	.013

Results: Above is the Sample Summary Data retrieved. From those we observed the t-statistics, **t= 2.642**, and **p= 0.013** that there is very small probability of this occurring by chance, under the null hypothesis of no statistical difference. Hence, the **null hypothesis is rejected**, since $p < 0.05$ (in fact $p=0.013$).

Interpretation: There is **strong evidence** ($t= 2.642$, and $p= 0.013$ at 95% confidence level) that the ‘Anantshayi Yoga’ Intervention enhances the self-help goals of the Practitioners by boosting their Self-awareness and Self-concept levels and also improves their Strategic Decision-making capabilities.

VII. SCOPE, SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Scope of the Research: The scope of the Research is currently limited to Entrepreneurs, Strategic Leaders and Top and Middle-level Managers of Pharmaceutical Industry, that too only from Varanasi district. However, this Research can be extended to other Professionals, Sectors, Industries and Places as well, with bigger sample size, which forms its **Scope of further study** too.

Significance of the Research: This study develops a conceptual framework and advises its application for the benefit of Working Professionals. The suggested Yoga and Meditation Technique adds a significant value to the existing literature and practices framed on the theories of Yoga and Meditation as well as Strategic Management. Moreover, this research can be used to design the specific Training Modules that can demonstrate the significance of application of a novel ‘Anantshayi Yoga’ and its Meditation technique for Professionals working at Strategic-levels in various Organizations or Industries.

Limitations of the Research: Research has been done both qualitatively and quantitatively, yet may suffer from their inherent biases and errors. Though, utmost care has been taken to conduct a proper research, still some systematic errors in data-collection or analysis may creep in. Researcher’s personal bias may unintentionally creep in too. Main limitation of this Research-paper is the truncated representation of a huge work which was a part and product of the Doctoral Research of the Researcher that employed several qualitative and quantitative techniques for triangulation of the data-analysis. Researcher has not been able to present all relevant facts and figures due to constraints of space and time.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Yoga and Meditation helps unifying the mind, body and spirit of the practitioner. It helps aligning the ideas and emotions of the individual, so that they can contribute more or make positive changes in the material world outside. A certain mind-relaxation and body-control technique is actually needed in contemporary times that can help the new-age Business Professionals and Entrepreneurs in their Strategic Decision-making at work. It was realized that there is a great need of an easy, flexible yet powerful Yoga practice and a simple yet innovative Meditation technique that can be exercised anywhere comfortably, especially at people’s workplace where they spend major time of their day and life, both. Hence, the researcher came up with the novel concept of ‘Anantshayi Yoga’, which is derived from the twin classical philosophies of : 1) Yoga-Nidrā, as rooted in the philosophy of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga , and 2) Trikāl Darshan . A pragmatic approach to this Yoga philosophy was development of ‘Anantshayi Technique of Meditation’ (ATM) which can facilitate the Strategic Decision-making (SDM) process of modern managers, who work in strategic profiles in any organization, sector or industry. This research basically deploys the Mixed-modal research design and is Conceptual-cum-Descriptive in nature. In first part, a Qualitative Analysis was done by the way of Textual analysis of the legends of Lord Vishnu and His Dashavataar, as illustrated in the selected scripture of ‘Shrimad Bhagavat Mahapuran’ composed by Sage Ved Vyas ji. The basic premises and procedure of the ‘Anantshayi Technique of Meditation’ (ATM) was explained in brief. While in the second part, a Quantitative Analysis was done on a Cohort of 32 Participants of a 6-week non-residential Anantshayi Yoga and Meditation Program. The sample comprised of Entrepreneurs, Founders, Co-founders, Strategic Leaders and Consultants, Top and Middle-level Business Managers of the two Pharmaceutical Companies operating in Varanasi. The Pre-Test and Post-Test observations were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale Feedback-form that focused on assessing the Physical, Psychological, Societal and Situational level Self-Awareness of the Program Participants. They were also assessed on their Self-Concept about their Strategic Decision Making (SDM) capabilities as well as their opinion on the

Significance of Yoga and Meditation, together with the Significance and Efficacy of the Anantshayi Technique of Meditation (ATM) Intervention. Results were arrived at using the Computed Mean of the Statistical Means of all seven Dimensions of the study, together with a 'Paired Sample t-test', on the Pre-test and Post-test Means of the two data-sets collected before and after the Intervention. Null Hypothesis got rejected and it was inferred that the Anantshayi Technique of Meditation is definitely useful in improving the Self-awareness and Self-concept levels of the new-age Entrepreneurs and Business Managers and significantly improves their Strategic Decision-making capabilities, in turn. It surely helps Business-managers in coping up with the stress at their work place and in improving their productivity.

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