CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CONCRETISATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF

YOGA

SMET

SELF MANAGEMENT OF EXCESSIVE TENSION

A SPECIAL COURSE FOR EXECUTIVES

SOURCE: SMET MODULE, S-VYASA UNIVERSITY
INTRODUCTION

“A good manager is a man who isn't worried about his own career but rather the careers of those who work for him”

H S M Burns

Background

Is the modern life of manager possible without stress? Stress certainly seems to be an inescapable element of the modern life of a manager. Most managers do not know that stress at work often stems from personal responses rather than just the work situation.\[1\]

It is in a manager's best interest to keep stress levels in the workplace at a minimum. For most managers, a little stress can be a good thing. When the pressure is on, they tend to do their work with great efficiency. However, when demands are increasing with no clear end in sight, even those who thrive on stress can be at risk for burnout. Thus, modern lifestyle of today’s managers intensifies the stress leading to “excessive tension”. The necessity and importance of a stress management program for managers was reported by McCarroll JE et al. and Jones JW et al.\[2],[3]\ emphasizing that managers should be prepared for concrete tasks they may perform through technical training. Managers can act as positive role models, especially in times of high stress, by adopting a Yoga way of life. If a respected manager can remain calm and thereby objective in stressful work situations it is much easier for his or her employees to also remain calm.
The present age of speed and competition has increased the stresses and strains resulting in an increasing prevalence of life style-related health problems and specifically managers’ lives have become a never-ending race against time, technology, and targets. This race creates tension, which leads to dissatisfaction and frustration and eventually manifests itself as psychological and physiological stress with mental and emotional drain. This modern lifestyle intensifies the stress leading to “excessive tension” and consequent deterioration in managerial effectiveness. One of the increasingly popular tools to overcome this new challenge is physical activity. There is growing evidence that has established the benefits of physical exercises in preventing life style-related diseases such as primary prevention of diabetes, prevention of cardiac diseases through control over major risk factors such as smoking, lipids, obesity and stress, better quality of life of cancer patients, positive health in normal persons through better physical fitness and stress reduction. Yoga which is considered to be a tool for both physical and mental development of an individual is being recognized around the globe only in the last century although it has been practiced in India over several centuries to promote positive health and well being. It gives solace for the restless mind and can give great relief to the sick. It has become quite fashionable even for the common man to keep fit. With growing scientific evidence, Yoga is emerging as an important health behavior-modifying practice to achieve states of health, both at physical and mental levels. Several studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of Yoga on health behavior in many life style-related somatic problems such as hypertension, bronchial asthma, diabetes including some psychiatric conditions such as anxiety neurosis.
and depressive illness\textsuperscript{[19]} etc. Yoga does have the potential to provide physical, mental and emotional health benefits for those who practice it with proper guidance.\textsuperscript{[20]}

**Self Management of Excessive Tension (SMET) and Managerial Effectiveness (ME)**

A holistic and integrated stress management program called Self Management of Excessive Tension (SMET) also popularly known as Cyclic Meditation (CM) has been investigated extensively at Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA) University, Bangalore to combat this modern lifestyle problem and thereby one can lead a holistic way of living in health, harmony and happiness. \textsuperscript{[5]}

One of the important preoccupations of top management is the improvement of the managerial effectiveness. \textsuperscript{[1],[3],[5]} The popular perception that a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is not necessarily a good predictor of professional and personal success has led to a growing interest in understanding the role of Brain Wave Coherence (BWC), Emotional Quotient (EQ), General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and Personality (Guna) Inventory (PI) in improving the Managerial Effectiveness (ME). \textsuperscript{[4],[10],[14]} Over the last several decades management researchers have developed constructs to identify the factors that influence ME, and have sought to provide a framework to explain performance. \textsuperscript{[1],[2]} In this context, there is a popular perception that individuals of seemingly average or ideally good Delta BWC, EQ, GHQ and Sattva PI often do well in their professional and personal lives, whereas people with high IQ often struggle with life’s challenges. \textsuperscript{[4],[5],[13],[14],[20]} Therefore, it would be appropriate to use BWC, EQ, GHQ and PI as a sufficiently good predictor for assessing ME.
Earlier researchers have suggested that other attributes may be better determinants.\textsuperscript{[21],[22],[23],[24]} There is a vast repository of knowledge and accumulated experience in India on the role of Yoga in enabling individuals to lead successful and satisfied lives.\textsuperscript{[25],[26]} More specifically, the Bhagvad Gita, which explicates on Yoga, sees that Yoga begets high efficiency in work opening up possibilities of connections with ME.\textsuperscript{[27]}

Previous work on stress management educational program, reported significant improvement in the subjective well being inventory (SUBI) scores of the 77 subjects within a period of 10 days as compared to controls. These observations suggest that a short lifestyle modification and stress management educational program can make an appreciable contribution to primary prevention as well as management of lifestyle diseases.\textsuperscript{[28]} It was demonstrated that SMET decreases occupational stress levels and baseline autonomic arousal in managers, suggesting significant reduction in sympathetic activity \textsuperscript{[29]} and development of better emotional well-being in them.\textsuperscript{[30]} Persons with high EQ may strike a balance between emotion and reason, are aware of their own feelings, show empathy and compassion for others, and have high self-esteem which may be instrumental in many situations in the workplace and can help achieve ME.\textsuperscript{[31]} Recent research has shown a positive relationship between EQ and workplace success.\textsuperscript{[32]} Previous study on Yoga reported enhanced EQ as a result of the practice of Yoga way of life. The results indicate the importance of Yoga as an integral element in improving ME in organizations.\textsuperscript{[33]}
This thesis builds on the thread suggested above; and explores the SMET program as a potential tool to influence the pattern of brain waves, emotional intelligence, general health components and personality traits of individuals in a study conducted with managers of a large organization. Although the SMET program was used regularly and the observations were encouraging, to the best of our knowledge there has been no previous attempt to investigate and document systematically the efficacy of SMET program (in a residential set-up) on psychophysiological variables in managers. Hence this study was planned to systematically document the effect of SMET program for ME using BWC, EQ, GHQ and PI.

The thesis is organized as follows: In the next section we introduce the concept of SMET according to Yoga texts and scientific literature in detail through review of literature. The details of the empirical work carried out as part of this study, and the results, key findings, and their implications are discussed in the later sections.

“SMET PROGRAM GIVES GREATER BENEFITS IF WE WORK TOGETHER THROUGH A GROUP”

- NAGENDRA AND NAGARATHNA