
Emotional Intelligence Competencies Developed Through Raja Yoga Meditation: A Study of Women in National Capital Region of India

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Abstract

Brahma Kumaris Sahaj Raja Yoga Meditation is a simple yet practical technique to bring the mental peace and inner harmony in today's chaotic times. The research on the practices of such techniques has shown that, they are great help in the stress management and in the prevention of many of the psychosomatic diseases. Raj Yoga is the highest yoga that empowers the self to rule the mind, sense-organs and the body. It is based on the Prajapati Brahma Kumari's school of thought. There are several psychological benefits incurred by Raja yoga which have not been highlighted due to scarcity of scientific studies. The present study examined the effect of Raja Yoga Meditation practice on emotional intelligence of women whose emotional and behavioural responses varied on the basis of Biopsychosocial factors. Especially in Indian society women's mental health is affected mainly due to male chauvinism culture. A large no of women population is still not open for their emotional expression which is not a true definition of 'women empowerment' in contemporary times. Mere legislative governance will not help in this, women need to feel freedom at core level. The paper is based on primary data collected through field survey of 600 women from NCR region of India. Results suggest that the group practicing Raja Yoga had significantly less emotional disturbance and able to manage their emotions well in comparison to the group not practicing Raja Yoga Meditation.

Key words: Raj Yoga Meditation, Brahma Kumaris , Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Introduction:

Emotions have important role to play for overall functioning of mental wellbeing. It is closely related to cognitive functions of mind that are learning, memory retention and decision making. "India is the most depressed country in the world, according to the World Health Organisation, followed by China and the USA. India, China and the USA are the most affected countries by anxiety, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder" (WHO, 2018). Psychotherapists are of the view that depression is more likely and continuous in women than men. The reason that are found to be associated with anxiety, high rates of depression, and other psychosomatic symptoms that are related to issues such as gender-biasness and stress factors arise from unpleasant negative life experiences. Women in that matter are more victimized just because "a demanding life, act of balancing work and

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domestic pressures, inadequate physical exercise and taking resort in unhealthy food habits are a few reasons. Our society puts this gender under extra pressure to manage everything with equal efficiency. This could be a reason for more than 40 percent of women in Delhi-NCR suffering from depression, anxiety and regular stress over issues ranging from professional, financial, domestic to even social aspects. It is unfortunate that women falling for unhealthy habits are mostly urban, educated and working women. It is about time they realise that taking control of their health is in their hands and that should be high up on their priority list. Bringing in little bit of physical activity, healthy eating, maintaining a discipline of meaningful and mindful recreation will go a long way in maintaining a healthy and balanced life.”

It became pertinent to look for lasting ways in order to regulate emotions as without this, a distorted mind, driven by chaotic thought pattern would only leads to volatile words and actions, creating lots of disturbance to the self, family and whole society. The concept of emotional intelligence act as an umbrella that embraces broad range of individual skills and temperaments generally treated as life skills, soft skills or intra-personal and interpersonal skills that separates from old-style pattern of general intelligence inclusive of general technical and professional skills, Ravi (2001). Emotionally intelligent people use their intellect to understand and manage their as well as others’ emotions rather than being managed by them. In this volatile and unpredictable time, it is wise to be mindful. In general, mindfulness can be defined as “moment-by-moment awareness” (Germer et al., 2005). Meditation is such technique that brings mindfulness and offers safe refuge, just like a shelter below the firing light of scorching sun. Enthusiasm for meditation has spread around the world and across all sectors and faiths. Regular practice of meditation develops mindfulness that in turn helps and allows individuals to effectively use their emotions for productive means. One can easily inspect one’s own emotions, both negative and positive and focus on a task that can fruitfully perform while avoiding certain task that cannot deliver better results under the influence of such emotions (Averill, chon & Hahn, 2001).

Brahma Kumarie’s School of Thought:

Raja yoga, a meditation technique of Brahma Kumaries, which is a reference point of the study stands strong on same principal. It is a practical and easy way of living spiritual lifestyle. The aim of the Raja yoga meditation is to be in meditative states while performing worldly task of everyday life (Ramsay, Tamasin ,2010). Like a lotus, whose roots are there in the mud but still it stays away and blossom beautifully up above without a single trace of mud, even offered to worship deities for this quality only. This indicates, how a person like a detached observer, can live with serenity without negative traits while living in the world of vices. In simpler words, it is a connection of the Mind (Inner consciousness) with the God (Supreme consciousness), an advanced level of meditation that induce conscious efforts to remember God. “Rāja Yoga seeks to discipline and calm one's body and thoughts so that their true spiritual nature will shine forth. By learning to control the universe of one's own mind, it is said that a yogi (practitioner of yoga) can attain spiritual liberation (enlightenment)”. ‘Raja’ means ‘king’, the sovereign or the supreme. Rājameans "chief, best of its kind" or "king". Rāja yoga thus refers to "chief, best of yoga" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raja_yoga. ‘Raja’ word is symbolic that suggest its highest and royal stage of yoga amongst all available yoga

types. Another reason for calling it ‘Raja’ is that it is associated mainly with mind and mind is considered as the ‘King’ that rules the sense-organs of body. The word ‘Yoga’ means ‘to unite’; Yoga is, therefore a connection of inner consciousness (mind) with supreme consciousness (God) by bringing attention on him as an incorporeal point-of-light and thinking of nothing but his divine qualities. Raja yoga, is the royal path of meditation. As a king maintains control over his kingdom, so can we maintain control over our own “kingdom”—the vast territory of the mind. In Raja Yoga we use our mental powers to realize the Atman through the process of psychological control.

Brahma Kumaries *Raja Yoga* Meditation is such a technique that brings harmony at personal as well as social level by developing Spiritual Quotient. Practice of Brahma Kumaries brings ‘Self-awareness’ among practitioners and develop their own virtues and good qualities to create ‘Self-esteem’. It also provides a vision to see the same in others as well. Inner joy, happiness, peace and most important hope, these all has become exorbitant words in current era. Erikson (2000) said “hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired. Raja Yoga adopts a holistic approach that brings the awareness to check our faulty manner in thoughts, words and action and get accuracy in that. This helps a person to create empathy and generate wisdom in difficult situations which develops harmony with self and other people around. In other words, Practice of Raja Yoga Meditation helps to create ‘emotional intelligence’ (EI) and transform humans in to ‘Dignified Humans’.

Raja Yoga Meditation, which is referral point for study, means to have a loving relationship between true self and the supreme source of universal energy - ‘GOD’ through steady remembrance. Meditation is originated from Latin word- “Mederi” which means ‘to heal’. Brahma Kumaries meditation is done with open eyes. It helps to decimate identity crisis by unfolding many answers to longstanding questions pertaining to self-identity and opens up true pathway that leads to inner peace of mind and natural state of long-lasting happiness. Some of main benefits of Raja Yoga Meditation are self- awareness, deep sense of self-worth and self-esteem, higher level of concentration, relaxation to mind and body both, peace of mind, clarity of purpose in life, emotional stability, enhanced empathetic behaviour, improved personal integrity, harmonious inter-personal relationships, positive attitudes and responses to life challenges etc.

Raja Yoga Meditation is the way to realize the self-worth and empowering it by receiving powers from Almighty. It includes four steps that are:

- 1. Relaxation:** Sitting comfortably while relaxing all body parts and driving all attention towards the center of forehead. Now realizing one’s true identity that is metaphysical self as ‘point of light’ and staying in this state and observing body as detached observer.
- 2. Contemplation:** Bringing full control over thoughts and feeding self with positive affirmation (positive statements that are repeated often as per the desired goal, in order to leave an impression on the subconscious mind). The act of echoing the affirmations, motivates and inspires the mind to programs it accordingly. The repeated thoughts could be such as ‘I’m Master Almighty (Child of God), a divine pure, subtle, imperishable light’, etc.

3. Concentration: Being stable at original stage, putting all attention on Supreme Being as ‘highest divine light’ and making conscious efforts to create divine connection with him while thinking of his Divine attributes. By focusing mind on desired aim, one creates subtle images on the surface of conscious mind. It then programmed in accordance with the aim that one desire. This process is kind of a creative visualization.

4. Realization: Having deep realization of divine qualities in self by receiving all powers and virtues of Almighty (Supreme divine light) such as Love, Peace, Happiness, Bliss and Divine Powers. By using this process intently and with conscious efforts, one influence its subconscious mind and transforms old pattern in behaviour, habits, attitude, and reactions, and that begin to create positive responses and bring desired external/social changes in life.

Mindful practices undoubtedly have an important role to play that can contribute aptly to the society at large. The wisdom about the inner being and the inner world is the missing link. Inner silence provides us the clear vision which can bring positive transformation keeping our focal point from outside world to inner one. Raja Yoga enjoys numerous social norms that helps in developing feeling of universal brotherhood in the Yoga aspirants. Practice of Raja yoga Meditation takes one into a state of absorption where all the divine virtues are attained through elevated thinking. Regular practice of it helps in maintaining ‘ekras stage’ i.e. being continually in a stage of inner peace and ultimate happiness.

Review of Literature:

Caruso and Salovey (1995) believe that emotions should be felt and expressed in carefully control ways. They further stated that emotion is not just important but absolutely necessary for us to make good decisions, take action to solve problems, cope with change and succeed. Ciarrochi et.al. (1984) have discussed the applications of emotional intelligence to everyday life. Emotions are important part of being human and they affect our actions and motivations for behaviour and practices (Stanley and Burrows, 2005). Myer et.al. (2002) have identified a significant relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitments. Allen and Meyer (1990) have defined affective commitment as the emotional attachment to and identification with an organization, making the employees loyal and attach to the organization. Emotional intelligence is a relatively new and growing area of behavioural research. Most widely accepted scientific definition of emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions (Salovey and Mayer (1990). Mayer has distinguished between mental ability models, focusing on aptitude for processing affecting information, and mixed models that conceptualized emotional intelligence as a diverse construct, including aspects of personality. Emotional intelligence is claimed to affect a wide array of work behaviours, including employee commitment, team work, development of talent, innovation, quality of service, and customer loyalty. According to Cooper (1997) high levels of emotional intelligence experience more career success, built stronger personal relationship, lead more effectively and enjoy better health than those with low emotional intelligence. Every individual has feelings and emotions which conveys valuable information about one’s behaviour, attitude and relationships with self and others. Emotion is a natural impulse, a state of mind that originates from current and past circumstances. The pioneer Williams James once wrote that emotions live in the “aesthetic sphere of mind, its longings,

its pleasures, its pains”(James, 1884). Our feelings that arise differently on varied occasions and situations, influence our emotions. Emotions results from the outcome of the evaluation of environmental stimuli when attended to a set of responses that involve behavioural physiological and experiential systems(John & Gross, 2004; Lang, 1994). Emotion is a complex psycho physiological experience; It enables an individual to enjoy his life to the fullest and has a crucial role in interpersonal, intrapersonal communication functions and is necessary in decision making (Ekman, 1992; Oatley & Johan-Laird, 1995). Conversely, Emotional Intelligence is another aptitude to identify and understand thoughts, feelings and emotions, and drive them in to right direction. Emotional intelligence thus provides learning, to manage feelings and emotions intelligently in order to take to take right decisions, solving problems, managing self and leading others. Emotional intelligence pertains to how a person deals with emotions. For example, a person, who, during an audition for a music theatre, would recognize his emotions of anxiety and stress and attune them in order to give the best performance (Pringle et. al, 2007).Ending of 20th century saw a huge surge of scientific studies on understanding emotions, regulating emotions and emotional intelligence. There was time when intellectual quotient was considered to be the major factor of success in life, but last two decades that has witnessed much of emotional instability among people causing fear, hatred, stress, tension and depression. The American psychologist Daniel Goleman has supported that emotional intelligence, is more important than intellectual quotient. Over thinking or wasteful thinking has become inevitable action which is only harnessing the mind of modern man. That is why more and more psychosomatic diseases are taking place. “Depression is a common mental disorder. Globally, more than 300 million people of all ages suffer from depression. Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds” (WHO, 2018). Just to get the temporary relief from depression, sufferer opts for heavy medications/drugs and also gets indulged in negative habits such as alcohol, smoking and drug addictions. In extreme cases, people are left with no options and commit suicide too. “There are many different mental disorders, with different presentations. They are generally characterized by a combination of abnormal thoughts, perceptions, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. Mental disorders include: depression, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia and other psychoses, dementia, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders including autism” (WHO 2018). As per the most recent studies that demonstrate that in comparison to men, women are more prone to develop prevailing cognitive dysfunctions, such as anxiety and depression. Women in general are more likely to experience trauma, may be often due to sexual harassment or other forms of abuse in household and at workplace, and this is because women tend to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder), as per the World Health Organisation (WHO). Recent researches have specified that 20 percent of Indian mothers are likely to be victimised with postpartum depression. In order to have control over one’s thoughts, feelings and emotions and to do things with ease, one firstly, requires special kind of “consciousness-training” that soothes the ruffles of his mind and gives him an easy self-control. It is time for women to empower themselves mentally and prove their true worth to stand equally and play instrumental role in shaping the future and nurturing the world. Aptly as said in *ShrimavadBhagwad Gita* that “for those who have conquered the mind, it is their friend. For those who have failed to do so,

the mind works like an enemy.” Many researches support positive relation between meditation practice and mindfulness. Mindfulness is a state wherein individuals bring their “attention to the experiences occurring in the present moment, in a non-judgmental or accepting way” Baer et al., (2006), Brown & Ryan, (2003). Reaching on to the stage of emotional intelligence is like dream or a mirage in a dessert without being mindful about their own emotions. Though many psychotherapists has provided great help to people facing depression through counselling and cognitive behaviour therapy but it is helpful to an extent. Perpetual and easy-going solution need to be identified and adopted. Charoensukmongkol (2014) identifies that “regular practice of mindfulness meditation can enhance our ability to understand our own emotions”. Meditation and mindfulness increase empathetic responses in individuals (Shapiro et al, 2008). Hence, it could prove to be strong influence to improve emotional intelligence among meditation practitioners.

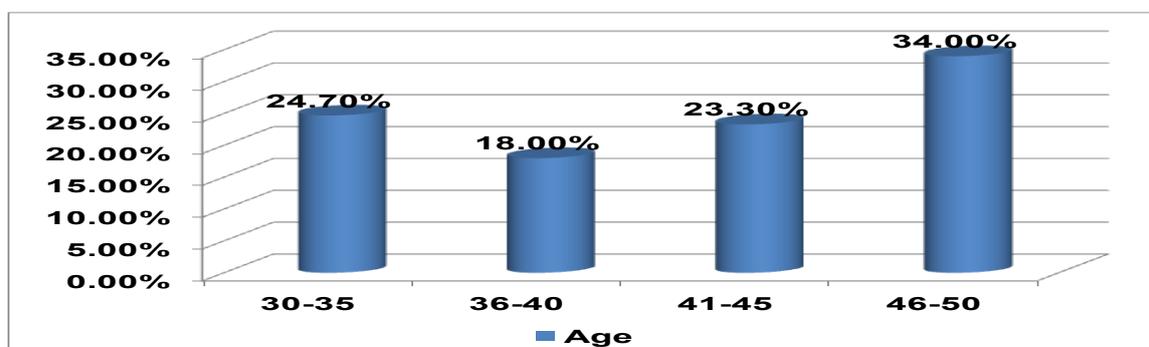
Objective and Methods:

Present paper purports to examine the profile of the practitioners of Raj Yoga Meditation of Brahma Kumaries. It also aims at examining the effect of Raj Yoga Meditation on the level of emotional intelligence among women. The paper is based on primary data collected through field survey in National Capital region of India , covering Delhi, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, Noida, and Faridabad. The sample comprises of 600 women including followers of Brahma Kumaries and non Brahma Kumaries followers. The survey was conducted with the help of structured interview schedule. The data has been presented in graphical form .

Discussion of Results:

More than one third respondents were from the age group of 46-50 years while slightly less than one fourth respondents were from the age group of 30-35 years (Chart 1). Thus, about two fifth respondents were from the middle age group (35- 45 years).

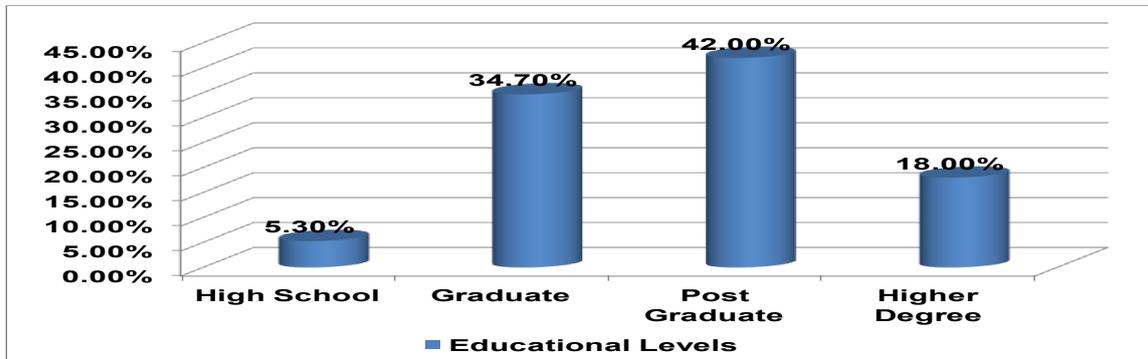
Chart 1: Age of Respondents



Educational level of respondents is shown in chart 2. More than three fourth respondents were post graduates and graduates while about 18 percent respondents were

having higher degree such as M. Phil. or Ph. D. The proportion of post graduate respondents was recorded high in Gurugram (68.8 percent) followed by Noida (60 percent).

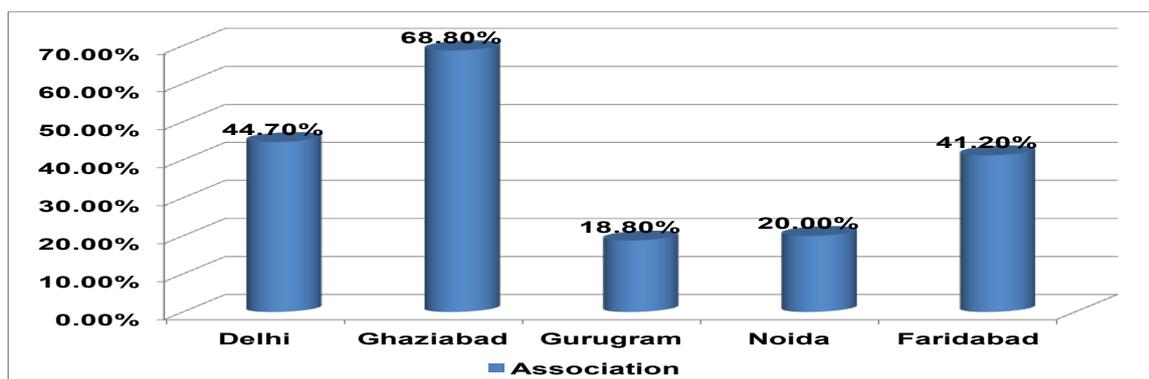
Chart 2: Educational Levels of Respondents



About three fourth respondents were married while about 19 percent respondents were unmarried . Slightly less than three fourth respondents were working while about 26 percent respondents were non- working . The proportion of working respondents was recorded high in Noida (93.3 percent) followed by Delhi (84.2 percent) , Faridabad (82.4 percent) and Gurugram (75 percent). About 36 percent respondents reported that their monthly family income is more than Rs. 100,000/ while 46 percent respondents had family income of less than Rs. 75, 000/ per month. Majority of respondents were from nuclear family.

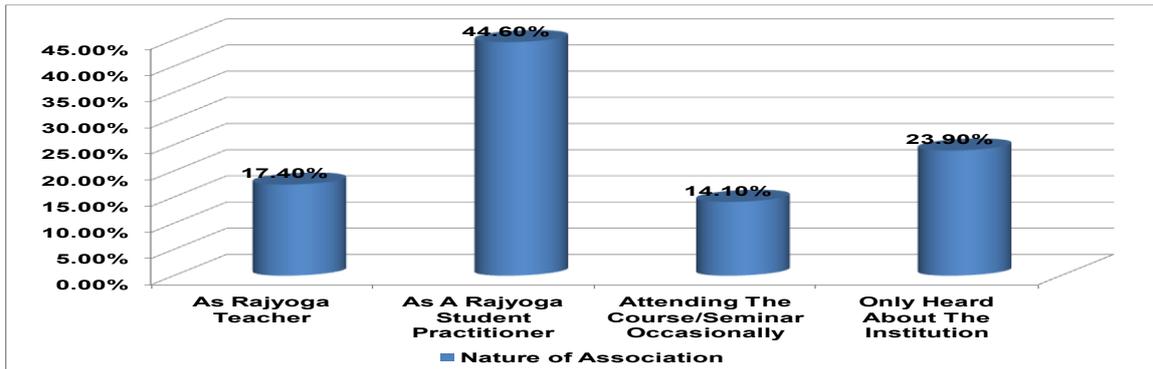
The association of women respondents with Brahma Kumaries institutions is shown in char 3. About half of the respondents were found associated with BrahmaKumaries Institutions. It was found more pronouncing in Ghaziabad (68 .8 percent) .

Chart3: Association With Brahma Kumrie’ s Institutions



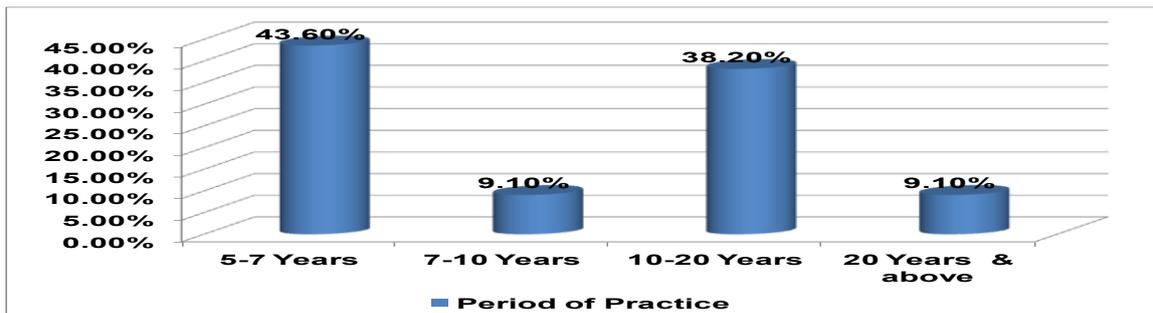
The nature of association with Brahma Kumaries institutions is shown in chart 4. More than two fifth respondents were associated with Brahma Kumaries institutions as Rajyoga student practitioners while about one fourth respondents only heard about such institution. About 17 percent respondents were Raj Yoga teachers while 14 percent women reported that they occasionally attend the course / seminar on Raj Yoga meditation .

Chart 4: Nature of Association With BrahmaKumaries Institution



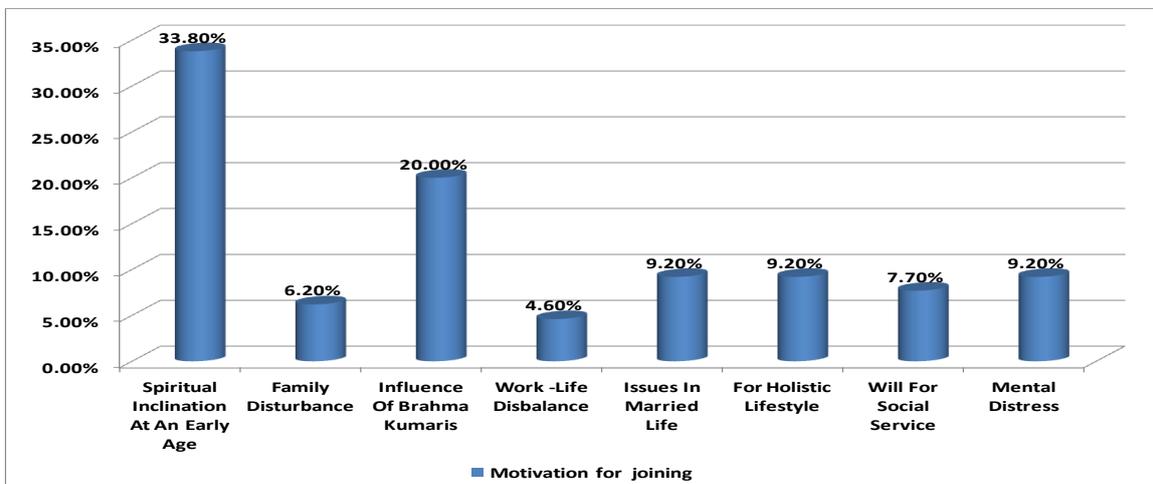
About two fifth respondents reported that they practice Raj Yoga meditation of Brahma Kumaries on regular basis. It was found more pronouncing in Ghaziabad (62.5 percent) followed by Faridabad (35.3 percent) . The period of practice of Raj Yoga meditation was reported 5-7 years by about two fifth respondents while less than half of the respondents are practicing it for more than 10 years (Chart 5) .

Chart 5: Period of Practice of Raj Yoga Meditation of Brahma Kumaries



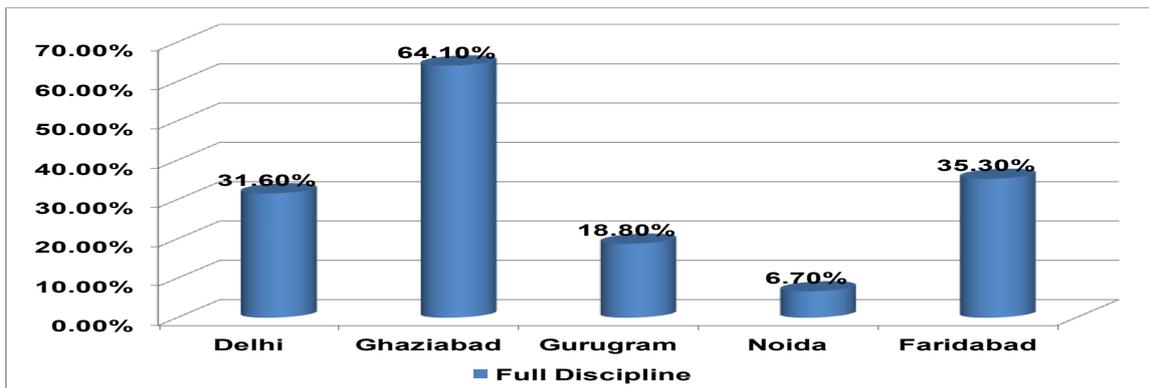
The main motivating factors for joining BrahmaKumaries institutions were spiritual inclination at an early age , influence of Brahma Kumaries , willing for social life, holistic life style, issues in married life , family disturbance and work life disturbance (Chart 6).

Chart 6: Motivation for joining the Brahma Kumaris



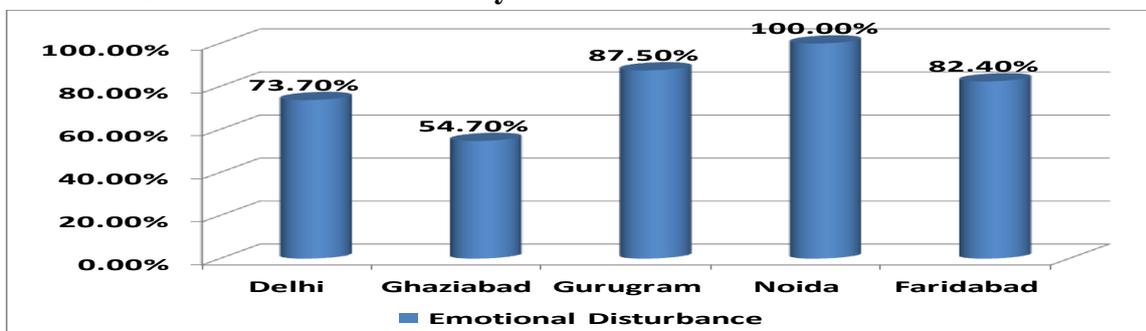
About one third respondents revealed that they visit Brahma Kumaries headquarter at Mount Abu . It was found more pronouncing in Ghaziabad (51.6 percent) followed by Faridabad (34.7 percent). More than two third respondents further reported that they visit Mount Abu once in a year . However, About one third respondents from Guru gram reported that they visit Mount abu once in six months. About two fifth respondents revealed that they follow full discipline of Brahma Kumaries . It was found more pronouncing in Ghaziabad (64.1 percent) followed by Faridabad (35.3 percent) and Delhi (31.6 percent) as shown in chart 7 .

Chart 7: Whether You Follow Full Discipline of Brahma Kumaries Institution



Facing of any sort of emotional disturbance at times by women is shown in chart 8. About 71 percent respondents reported that they face emotional disturbance at times. It was found more pronouncing in Noida (100 percent) followed by Gurugram (87.5 percent) , Faridabad (82.4 percent) and Delhi (73.7 percent) . The emotional disturbance was recorded comparatively higher among the women respondents not associated with Brahma Kumaries institutions (84.2 percent) than the respondents associated with Brahma Kumaries institutions (56.8 percent) . The level of emotional disturbance was reported high among the respondents from middle age group as compared to high and low age group of respondents. Again , it was found more pronouncing among the post graduated and graduate respondents . The emotional disturbance was reported significantly high among the working women (74.8 percent) as compared to non working women (59.0 percent).

Chart 8: Whether Face Any Sort of Emotional Disturbance At Times



The source of emotional disturbances is shown in table 1. These are mainly future worries, unpleasant past incidents, disturbed relationships, financial crisis, loss of dear one, and male dominance .

Table1: Source of Emotional Disturbance

Place	Unpleasant Past Incidents	Future Worries	Disturbed Relationships	Loss Of Dear One	Male Dominance	Financial Crisis	Total
Delhi	20	48	24	8	12	0	112
	17.9%	42.9%	21.4%	7.1%	10.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Ghaziabad	28	48	40	0	4	24	144
	19.4%	33.3%	27.8%	0.0%	2.8%	16.7%	100.0%
Gurugram	28	16	0	4	0	8	56
	50.0%	28.6%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	14.3%	100.0%
Noida	24	16	20	0	0	0	60
	40.0%	26.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Faridabad	32	8	12	4	0	0	56
	57.1%	14.3%	21.4%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	132	136	96	16	16	32	428
	30.8%	31.8%	22.4%	3.7%	3.7%	7.5%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

The respondents were asked that whether they feel pleasure for giving comfort to people in discomfort. A higher proportion of respondents associated with Brahma Kumaries were found agreed and strongly agreed on the view point as compared to the respondents who were not associated with Brahma Kumaries institutions(Table 2).

Table 2: Feeling of Pleasure For Giving Comfort To People In Discomfort.

Associated with Brahma Kumries Institution	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree	Total
Associated With Brahma Kumaries	0	20	32	120	124	296
	0.0%	6.8%	10.8%	40.5%	41.9%	100.0%
Not Associated With Brachma Kumaris	16	48	60	144	36	304
	5.3%	15.8%	19.7%	47.4%	11.8%	100.0%
Total	16	68	92	264	160	600

	2.7%	11.3%	15.3%	44.0%	26.7%	100.0%
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Source: Field Survey

Similarly, a higher proportion of respondents associated with Brahma Kumaries were found agreed and strongly agreed on the view point that they are getting advantage of social media in sharing relevant information to feel positive among the family and friends as compared to the respondents who were not associated with Brahma Kumaries institutions (Table 3).

Table3: Getting Advantage of Social Media In Sharing Relevant Information To Feel Positive Among Family and Friends

Associated with Brahma Kumaries Institution	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree	Total
Associated With Brahma Kumaries	8	8	56	124	100	296
	2.7%	2.7%	18.9%	41.9%	33.8%	100.0%
Not Associated With Brahma Kumaries	24	72	84	104	20	304
	7.9%	23.7%	27.6%	34.2%	6.6%	100.0%
Total	32	80	140	228	120	600
	5.3%	13.3%	23.3%	38.0%	20.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

A higher proportion of respondents associated with Brahma Kumaries were found agreed and strongly agreed on the view point that they listen well, seek mutual understanding and share information as compared to the respondents who were not associated with Brahma Kumaries institutions. Thus, the women belonging to Brahma Kumasi's school of thought are more emotionally mature and have higher level of emotional intelligence as compared to women who are not associated with the institution (Table 4) . .

Table 4: Listening Well, Seek Mutual Understanding and Sharing of Information

Associated with Brahma Kumaries Institution	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree	Total
Associated With Brahma Kumaries	0	24	16	128	128	296
	0.0%	8.1%	5.4%	43.2%	43.2%	100.0%

Not Associated With Brahma Kumaris	52	28	44	132	48	304
	17.1%	9.2%	14.5%	43.4%	15.8%	100.0%
Total	52	52	60	260	176	600
	8.7%	8.7%	10.0%	43.3%	29.3%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

Conclusion:

Meditation has direct bearing on thinking and human behaviour. It benefits both physical and emotional wellbeing. Like any skill, meditation also requires incessant practice to achieve the positive and fruitful results. By doing a little every day, it soon becomes a natural and easy habit, which generously rewards you in many ways in your day to day life. Meditation energizes your awareness, bringing both peace and wisdom to a busy mind. It expands one's capacity to love selflessly and develops resilience to overcome adversities in life. It also dissolves many fears, replacing them with lightness and freedom from anxiety. The practice of Raja Yoga meditation bestows many powers that strengthen the soul to fight against many adversities that life throws untimely and unforeseen. The analysis also shows that there has been higher level of emotional disturbance among the non-followers of Raja Yoga meditation while strict followers of Brahma Kumaris are comparatively more empathetic towards the emotional wellbeing of self, their family, friends and people they meet. The acceptance towards the odds is more on higher side as well as positive outlook and proactive approach create a holistic environment that keep their relationships more satisfying and in harmony.

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