

## UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST MEDITATION FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Meditation is one of the well-known practices which increase attention and deep internal relaxation. There are different techniques of meditation to practice. Anapanasati meditation is one of the meditation techniques discussed in Theravada school of Buddhism. It is an initial part of vipassana (psycho –physiological) meditation. It is a meditation in which one obtains mastery over ones unruly mind through objective observation of ones own natural and normal breath.

Interest in the Buddhist concept of mindfulness has burgeoned over the last few decades as a result of its application as a therapeutic strategy in mind-body medicine, psychotherapy, psychiatry, education, leadership and management, and a wide range of other theoretical and practical domains.

**Aim:** The Systematic Review Aims to Asses to Find Out The Effect Of Mindfulness And Buddhist Meditation For Health.

**Materials and Method:** In accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, the electronic databases Medline (PubMed), Google Scholar, Cochrane and Scopus were searched over a period of time frame. All studies identified for inclusion and published in English. Articles were searched by using the keyword “Applications of Mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for health, Yoga and mindfulness, Mindfulness for health, Buddhism, Health and Buddhist meditation, Anapanasati, Vipasana, Buddhist meditation.

**Result:** All included studies shows positive effect of Mindfulness meditation (Buddhist Meditation) on health. Mindfulness meditation is helpful in psychological problems. Mindfulness meditation helpful for migraine, stress and many mental disorders. However, in the spiritual tradition, meditation is perceived as a tool for spiritual development, growth of inner peace,

concentration, positive emotions such as selfless love and compassion, and reduction of negative emotions, such as fear and anger.

**CONCLUSION:** Mindfulness meditation plays an important role in psychiatric treatment. As well as positive psychological effects. Mindfulness meditation can be effective in reducing ADHD symptoms, depression and substance use and addiction. Mindfulness meditation is helpful in Migraine, and improve stress coping and stress reactivity. mindfulness works beneficially on changing self-experiencing and self-understanding.

**Key Words:** Mindfulness, Buddhist meditation, Health, Wellbeing, Yoga

## **INTRODUCTION**

Meditation is one of the well-known practices which increase attention and deep internal relaxation. There are different techniques of meditation to practice. Since 1960s several researches have been performed to observe the effect of meditation in practitioners. Anapanasati meditation is one of the meditation techniques discussed in Theravada school of Buddhism. It is an initial part of vipassana (psycho –physiological) meditation. It is a meditation in which one obtains mastery over ones unruly mind through objective observation of ones own natural and normal breath. In Pali literature, it is known as “Anapanasati.” It means awareness of one’s own respiration. This practice of anapanasati meditation helps to sharpen the mind and to induce peace of mind to participants for the next step of Vipasana meditation. Vipasana means to observe things as they really are in their natural and true characteristics of impermanence. Anapanasati meditation comes under the focused meditation category. In focused attention or concentrative styles of meditation, voluntary sustained attention is maintained on a given object and attention is brought back to the object of attention when the mind wanders.

### **Buddhist Meditation**

Buddhism has demonstrated the capacity to reinvent itself through a principle called ‘skillfull means’ (Upayakauçalya) as expounded in a sutra. It is thus possible to perceive Buddhism as an evolving practice. t traditions use a term for meditation that correlates with the Saàskåta term bhåvanå, literally, ‘causing to become’. In the Tibetan tradition, the usual translation for bhåvanåis gôm (sgom), which roughly means ‘to become habituated to’ or ‘to become familiar with’.(Deo et al., 2016)

The English word mindfulness is often used to translate a Pali term found in the early Buddhist teachings, sati. In fact, the Buddha gave a set of instructions for meditation that became known as the Satipatthana Sutta, or “Discourse on the Establishing of Mindfulness.” And “right mindfulness” is one of the steps of the noble eightfold path, the path of practice taught by the Buddha, that would lead to awakening.

### **Application of Mindfulness and Buddhist Meditation**

Interest in the Buddhist concept of mindfulness has burgeoned over the last few decades as a result of its application as a therapeutic strategy in mind-body medicine, psychotherapy, psychiatry, education, leadership and management, and a wide range of other theoretical and practical domains (Hyland, 2011). In recent times, there has been a growing worldwide interest in Buddhism and it has been one of the fastest growing religious philosophies in the West. As per recent estimates, the religion is practiced by 535 million people, constituting 7%–8% of the world population. (Cox & Harvey, 1992)

The Systematic Review Aims to Assess to Find Out The Effect Of Mindfulness And Buddhist Meditation For Health.

The objectives were to set to fulfil the aim as planned to carry out the review. They were : to know the depth knowledge of Mindfulness and Buddhist meditation; to see the effect of Mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for health; to understand that how mindfulness can help in psychological disorders ; to understand Anapanasati meditation, Kayanupassana and Vipassana meditation.

To understand the application of Mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for health. In this systematic review last 10 years article concluded in one systematic manner. Moreover, it was thought that it would be helpful to understand for the readers to gain knowledge and guide other's Properly.

### **SCIENTIFIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Analysis of Meditation and Dhyana in the context of Buddhism, in this review describe that If one practices meditation regularly, one may achieve a state of intuitive, self-absorptive consciousness with serenity and presence of mind, which could lead to Samadhi or enlightenment. (Deo et al., 2016). Mindfulness in Mental Health: A Critical Reflection, It is concluded that MBIs have the potential to play an important role in psychiatric treatment settings as well as in applied psychological settings more generally. (Mitchell et al., 2015).

Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: a review of empirical studies, we conclude that mindfulness brings about various positive psychological effects, including increased subjective well-being, reduced psychological symptoms and emotional reactivity, and improved behavioural regulation. (Keng et al., 2011). A translational neuroscience perspective on mindfulness meditation as a preventive strategy, Analysis Evidences how's that mindfulness meditation interventions can be effective in reducing ADHD symptoms, depression, and substance use and addiction. (Tang & Leve, 2016) Mindfulness Meditation Training for Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder in Adulthood: Current Empirical Support, Treatment Overview, and Future Directions , Mindfulness is a feasible and well-accepted intervention in ADHD samples, and provides promising preliminary support for its efficacy. (Kudesia & Nyima, 2015). Mindfulness-based treatment of addiction: current state of the field and envisioning the next wave of research, Randomised controlled trials , MBIs may ultimately provide a skillful means of liberating the individual from the push and pull of hedonic dysregulation underlying addiction. (Garland & Howard, 2018). Mindfulness in Migraine, Randomised controlled trials, changed perception of pain with a decreased affective pain experience; improved emotional and cognitive coping with the anticipation of migraine attacks and perception of migraine attacks; increased interoceptive body awareness and resulting earlier headache treatment and less cognitive and affective reactivity; increased strength of brain pathways decreased inflammatory responses; improved stress coping and stress reactivity. (Wells et al., 2020a)

About the Anapanasati as a core meditation practice in Theravada, Tiantai, and Chán/Zen traditions of Buddhism, as well as a part of many modern Western mindfulness-based programs. The ancient tradition of yoga and meditation began in Indian prehistory as a system of mental, physical and spiritual exercises. In the paper we present compiled review of literary research about dhyana described in ancient Indian and Buddhist classical texts. The study find that by practicing meditation regularly, one may achieve a state of intuitive, self absorptive consciousness with serenity and presence of mind, which could lead to Samadhi or enlightenment. Mindfulness derives from Buddhist practice and is fundamentally concerned with the development of present moment awareness.

Mindfulness brings about various positive psychological effects, including increased subjective well-being, reduced psychological symptoms and emotional reactivity, and improved behavioral

regulation. The paper studies about research that address Mindfulness-based interventions widely used for a variety of conditions, including stress, anxiety, depression, and well-being. We focused on psychological outcomes such as behavioral, cognitive, and emotional functioning. It also looks into the neuroscience literature on mindfulness meditation which has grown in recent years.

**Summary Of Literature Review**

S. No	Title	Author	Year	Sample	Research Method	Conclusion
1	Analysis of Meditation and Dhyāna in the context of Buddhism	(Deo et al., 2016)	2017		Review	If one practices meditation regularly, one may achieve a state of intuitive, self absorptive consciousness with serenity and presence of mind, which could lead to Samādhi or enlightenment.
2	Mindfulness in Mental Health: A Critical Reflection	(Kudesia & Nyima, 2015)	2015	20	Critical reflection	It is concluded that MBIs have the potential to play an important role in psychiatric treatment settings as well as in applied psychological settings more generally.
3	Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies	(Keng et al., 2011)	2011		Theoretical Review	We conclude that mindfulness brings about various positive psychological effects, including .We conclude that mindfulness brings about various positive

						psychological effects, including increased subjective well-being, reduced psychological symptoms and emotional reactivity, and improved behavioural regulation.
4	A translational neuroscience perspective on mindfulness meditation as a preventive strategy	(Tang & Leve, 2016)	2015		Analysis	Evidences how's that mindfulness meditation interventions can be effective in reducing ADHD symptoms, depression, and substance use and addiction.
5	Mindfulness Meditation Training for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Adulthood: Current Empirical Support, Treatment Overview, and Future Directions	(Mitchell et al., 2015)	2015	39	Overvie w	Mindfulness is a feasible and well-accepted intervention in ADHD samples, and provides promising preliminary support for its efficacy.

6	Mindfulness-based treatment of addiction: current state of the field and envisioning the next wave of research	(Garland & Howard, 2018)	2018	50	Randomised controlled trials	MBIs may ultimately provide a skillful means of liberating the individual from the push and pull of hedonic dysregulation underlying addiction.
7	Mindfulness in Migraine. A narrative review	(Wells et al., 2020b)	2020	71	Randomised controlled trials	Changed perception of pain with a decreased affective pain experience; improved emotional and cognitive coping with the anticipation of migraine attacks and perception of migraine attacks; increased interoceptive body awareness and resulting earlier headache treatment and less cognitive and affective reactivity; increased strength of



						brain pathways decreased inflammatory responses; improved stress coping and stress reactivity.
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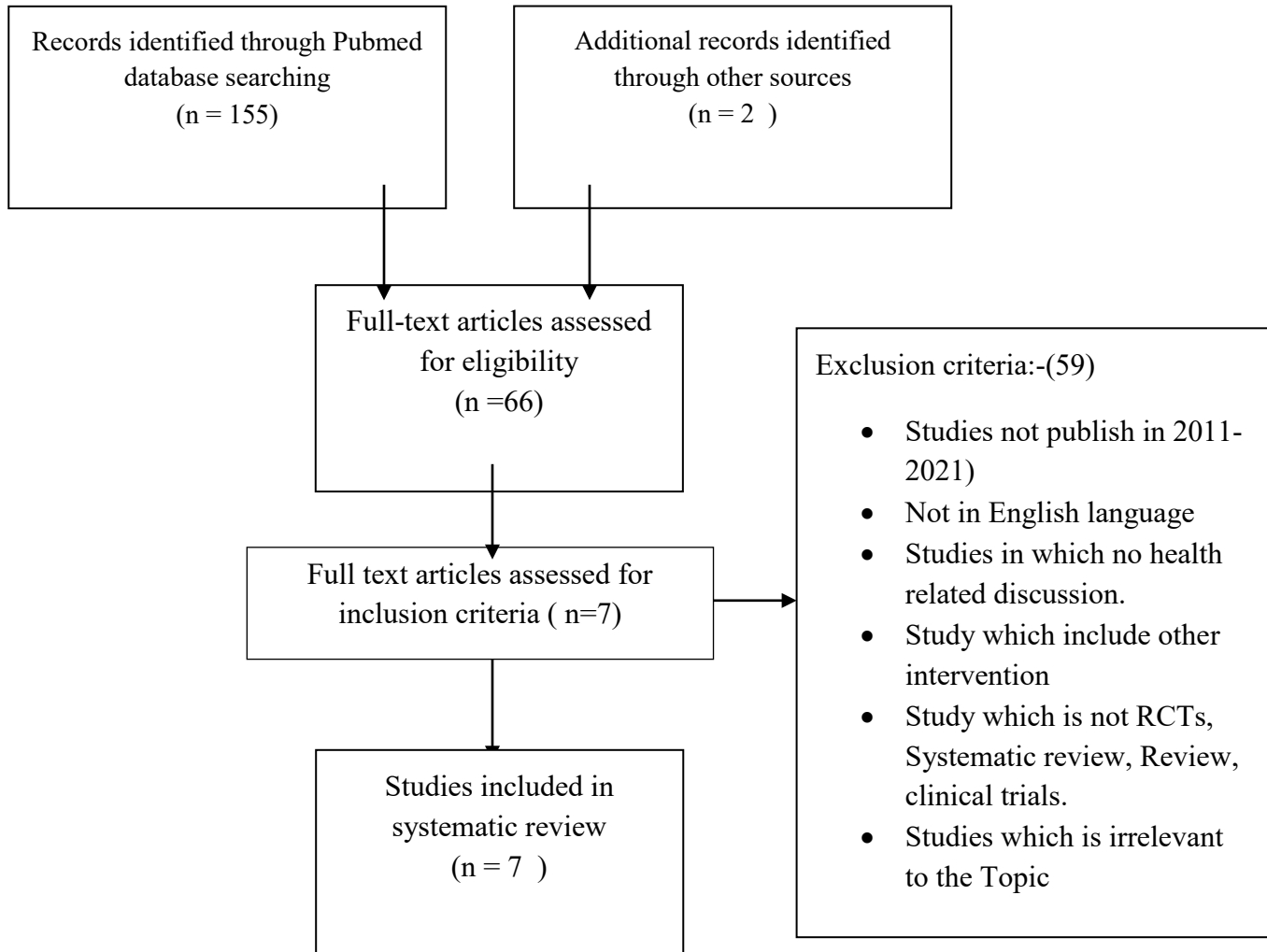
**Materials and Method**

In accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, the electronic databases PubMed, Google Scholar, Cochrane, Scopus, Springer, Google and wave of science were searched over a period of time frame. All studies identified for inclusion and published in English. Articles were searched by using the keyword “Applications of Mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for health, Yoga and mindfulness, Mindfulness for health, Buddhism, Health and Buddhist meditation, Anapanasati, Vipasana, Buddhist meditation.

There were some inclusion criteria set as: study’s included Randomized control trials, Clinical trials, peerreview article’s, Pilot studies with human subjects; published in English; full length paper; use of Mindfulness meditation; paper published in year. 2011To 2021 and Use of Buddhist meditation.

The applied exclusion criteria were: studies which include other interventions like naturopathic, Ayurveda, and homeopathy; duplicate articles; undefined interventions; paper which is not published in English; papers which is not published in year 2011-2021 and studies which does not use Buddhist meditation or mindfulness meditation.

### Detailed Study Flow Chart



## RESULTS

Summarizes the articles included in the review. Table shows Title, Author, Year, Sample size, research method and conclusion. All included studies show a positive effect of Mindfulness meditation (Buddhist Meditation) on health. Mindfulness meditation is helpful in psychological problems. Mindfulness meditation is helpful for migraine, ADHD, stress. However, in the spiritual tradition, meditation is perceived as a tool for spiritual development, growth of inner peace, concentration, positive emotions such as selfless love and compassion, and reduction of negative emotions, such as fear and anger.

## **DISCUSSION**

Buddhist psychology is largely focused on analyzing and understanding the nature of the self, and many positive effects of meditative practice based on Buddhist psychology have been documented by researchers interested in self-processes. In modern Western psychology, the self is constructed as a definable knowable entity with particular characteristics, universal needs, and somewhat predictable developmental thrust.(Donner, 2010) For most people, the self refers to the things immediately connected to their body, and more importantly to their mind. In effect, neither theoretical position should be favored over the other: overemphasizing the approach of Buddhist psychology may bring about an impairment of an individual's self-conception, while focusing disproportionately on self-entity could lead to the formation and fantasy of self-stability.

Over the past two decades, an increasing number of researchers in the West have recognized that Buddhist doctrines (especially those concerning meditation practice), as well as the Chan (Zen) form of Chinese Buddhism, offer profound observations and effective methods with which to enlighten the experiencing self. Numerous studies have suggested, for example, that mindfulness meditation offers significant positive effects in reducing various physical and mental symptoms, enhancing self-functioning(Rigby et al., 2014)facilitating self-integration.(Rubin, 1996)and altering the perspective of self-observation. The present study further contends that, consistent with the traditional aims of meditation in Eastern cultures, where it has been practiced for 1000s of years, the principal cause or mechanism underlying all these positive changes of self-attained through Western scientific mindfulness practice or intervention is the reconstruction of a mindful self-view and attitude. In other words, we argue that positive changes such as these result from the integration and internalization of the mindful or meditative self-view and attitude which encompass notions of the non-self, impermanence, non-attachment, and equanimity. Therefore, we propose a new concept—the “mindful self”—to describe the mindfulness-enlightened self-view and attitude as these are explored in the present study. The paper describes the connotations of this concept and its psychological functioning as a new self-construct in the context of adult self-development.

### **Mindfulness in Buddhism and Psychology**

Buddhist psychology is an in-depth examination of the self that aims to lead humans to a flourishing life, while mindfulness meditation is a central factor in helping one to live such a life

(Edge, 2013). Buddhist psychology affirms that there is no such thing as a permanent, unchanging self (Olendzki, 2010), and further contends that suffering pervades human existence and is chiefly caused by one's greed, hatred, and delusion concerning what is felt and seen, as well as an illusory belief in the notion that there is an independent, permanent self. According to the Buddha, the only way to eradicate human anguish or suffering is to remove the attachment (upadana) or craving (trnsa) of our mind toward various things or concepts to which we are attached. Mindfulness meditation is one of the most important elements of the Buddha's "noble eightfold path" to end suffering and instill wisdom. Principally, mindfulness in Buddhist teaching is viewed as a fundamental pathway through which to become aware of the causes and sources of suffering and to attain enlightenment or an awakening, thereby enabling the individual to be less egoistical and obtain insight into the state of "no self." According to Buddhism and its Chan School, when an individual has truly acquired complete enlightenment or insight into the "non-self," they will have achieved full freedom of the mind.

### **Mindfulness and the Self**

In modern Western society, mindfulness is practiced, cultivated, and applied in far more diverse contexts than in the East, involving self-exploration, self-experience, and self-transformation). Correspondingly, there are large numbers of studies concerning mindfulness and the self, linking it to self-compassion, self-acceptance), self-perspective change(Hölzel et al., 2011), self-consciousness), self-concept (Crescentini & Capurso, 2015), self-deconstruction and reconstruction (Dahl et al., 2015), self-referential processing(Tang & Leve, 2016), and so on. Growing numbers of studies and reports of clinical practice have suggested that mindfulness meditation practices bring about positive significant effects in reducing physical and psychological symptoms, and in improving active growth and well-being, as well as changing self-knowledge and the mode of self-referential processing. In this paper, we argue that the practices of mindfulness meditation lead to positive changes in the social-psychological functioning of the self at both a quantitative and a qualitative level, and that these quantitative and qualitative changes interact.

In addition, mindfulness can change the mode of self-focused attention; (Campbell et al., 2012). It has been suggested that mindfulness meditation makes one to be fully but impartially aware, and attentive to what is occurring without judgment, investment, or antipathy for what appears,

which leads to clarity and accuracy in people's perceptions and judgment (Ryan & Rigby, 2015). Within this enhanced clarity, the process of a repeatedly arising sense of self becomes observable to the meditator and facilitates a detachment from identification with the static sense of self, which has been termed "decentering" or "reperceiving". It has been postulated that paying attention and awareness to the transitory nature of this sense of self leads to the "positive deconstruction of the self"

Within this framework, mindfulness is described as reducing a distorted or biased sense of self and one's relation to others and the external world through specific forms of mindfulness practices that develop a meta-awareness of self (self-awareness), an ability to effectively manage or alter one's responses and impulses (self-regulation), and the development of a positive relationship between the self and others that transcends self-focused needs and increases prosocial characteristics (self-transcendence). Overall, S-ART sets out to show that mindfulness meditation practice is an effective and complex process that reduces suffering and creates a sustainably healthy mind in individual subjects.

In all, these findings suggest that mindfulness practices moderate implicit self-concepts and perspectives on the self and encourage positive functions of the self with a shift toward more healthy profiles (Crescentini & Capurso, 2015).

The above studies suggest that mindfulness works beneficially on changing self-experiencing and self-understanding, softening one's "centered" and "substantialized" self and, instead, internalizing and integrating the essence of Buddhist psychology (e.g., the non-self, and impermanence) into one's self-system or self-concept. To describe such a changed and mindful self, which underlies mindfulness practices as well as dispositional mindfulness, we propose a new concept: the "mindful self (MS)." Further to a series of empirical and theoretical studies of mindfulness and the self, we define MS as a mindfulness-enlightened self-view that involves an embodied integration and internalization of the essence of the non-self in the process of mindfulness meditation practices or intervention. Here, being mindful means becoming aware or paying attention to everything. It means letting nothing occur without one's conscious being aware of it, while "self-view" refers to self-understanding and self-attitude.

### **Strength of the Study**

The strengths of the study are: in this systematic review it is found that Mindfulness meditation practice is very useful for health; after the review study it was also evident that Mindfulness meditation can be helpful for Migraine; in this systematic review it is found that Mindfulness meditation can be useful for ADHD; mindfulness meditation can improve stress coping and stress reactivity and history of Buddhist meditation presented well in the present study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were some limitations in the current study. They were: due to strict selection criteria and the only possible way to use electronic databases for the research; the studies included in this review has its limitations; there can be a possibility of missing studies relevant to the applications of mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for health.

### **Suggestions For Future Research**

The following suggestions may be applied for conducting further research.

There should be created an awareness about mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for health; the study should be done for longer duration so that we can find the detailed effect of Mindfulness meditation; there should be attached few flow chart so that we can understand very easily; there should be add more tabular format information so that reader can understand properly; randomized control trial and control group needed to see efficiency of Mindfulness meditation on health; needed to work in Hindi language in this format so it will be helpful to easily understand for Hindi medium students.

### **CONCLUSION**

Thus, mindfulness meditation plays an important role in psychiatric treatment. As well as positive psychological effects. Mindfulness meditation can be effective in reducing ADHD symptoms, depression and substance use and addiction. Mindfulness meditation is helpful in Migraine, and improve stress coping and stress reactivity. mindfulness works beneficially on changing self-experiencing and self-understanding.

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