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Digital Well-Being and Mental Health: Role of Indian Spiritual Practices

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Abstract:

As technology developing faster in present time and human life become more affected by its use. Technology interacts almost in every field of society. In present times, we have many studies that advocates for further investigation into mental health of those persons who have grown up and so familiar with computers and internet at global level. The issue of Mental Health in digital era is to discuss the main aim of this study. For the study the sample comprised of 170 secondary school students of govt. schools and 80 students of education colleges. Data collected by using qualitative method conducted focus group discussion and interaction sessions. The study describes meaning of digital well-being by explanation of mental health and spiritual Indian practices. The paper also explains important seven pillars of digital well-being including activities to be practice. In this paper, relationship between digital well-being and mental health is also explained & highlights important techniques to boost mental health. Furthermore, the article also explains Gauranga Das Prabhu's Five Pronged Approach to Spirituality. This paper describes major mental health challenges in digital era. The aim of this article is to explore the role of Indian spiritual practices in promoting mental health. As a result by practicing of these spiritual practices, we can see improving change in the people's health especially mental health.

Key Words: Technology, digital era, mental health, seven pillars, digital well-being, spiritual Indian practices

Introduction

We are living in the advent of digital era. In present times, technology is not just a fact of modern existence but become a fundamental base of our daily lives. The digital landscape has existence of every aspect of human interaction, reshaping the communication patterns, work and entertains ourselves. Social media acts not just a virtual gathering place but become a lifeline to the outside world. There is also rising an important concern about the consequences of such continuous screen exposure on mental well-being. To the maintenance of physical health as well as social effectiveness the mental health contributes as a basic factor. A well adjusted person has good physical health and desirable social & moral values; his mental health is likely to be good. Good mental health depends on the balance state of body and mind and soul. Happiness, healthful, hopefulness and harmonious personality are the indicators of such persons' good mental health. Spirituality gives us meaningful lives and guides to evolve ourselves. It includes expressions like meditation, interaction with nature, mantra chanting, prayer etc. Adopting these activities providing us a better connection with soul, God and helpful to tackle challengeable inner and outer health conditions.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate comprehensively about the impact on the mental health of secondary level students' digital habits in Distt. Nawanshahr of Punjab state. The study aims to provide the relationship of digital well-being and mental health. The study also highlights the facing mental health challenges in present time. It also explores the importance of Indian spiritual practices to promote mental health can be improved.

Method

In this research article, qualitative approach to comprehensively understand the link between digital well-being, mental health and spiritual practices was adopted. I collected primary data by focuses group discussion sessions and interviews. Secondary data collected from secondary sources newspapers, research articles, magazines & books. While collecting data, conducting interviews and focuses group discussions ethical considerations were kept in mind.

Sample

For this study, I collected primary data from 170 secondary school level students of govt. secondary schools located urban area in Distt. Nawanshahr of Punjab state. I also contacted with 80 college students of education colleges in Nawanshahr Distt. Selected sample population discussed mental well-being, relationship between digital well-being and mental health, important techniques to boost mental health, major mental health challenges & role of Indian spiritual practices in promoting mental health

Procedures

On the selected sample, focus on activities to be practice under seven pillars of digital well-being, relationship between digital well-being and mental health and along with focuses group discussion conducted for collection data about the role of Indian spiritual practices for promoting mental health of people discussed in detail. To get relevant facts on the issue data collection procedure adopted ethically, ensures informed consent and confidential. For this study, adopted protocols culturally appropriate also kept in mind. For result drawn the collected information must record in written and descriptive way and also considered national and international reports.

Measures

Concept of Digital Well-being, Mental Health & Spirituality

Digital Well-being is the practice of using technology in a way that promotes healthy lifestyles. It also refers to the impact of technology on people's mental, physical and social health.

Mental health is a condition or a state of harmonious functioning of human personality. It is a state of one's peace of mind, satisfaction, happiness, effectiveness, and harmony brought out by one's level of adjustment with his self and world at large.

Spirituality refers to spirit, mind, higher faculties, soul and highly refined feeling. Spirituality is about seeking a meaningful connection with something bigger than you, which can result in positive emotions, such as peace, contentment, gratitude and acceptance.

Definitions of Digital Well-being, Mental Health & Spirituality

According to UNESCO, "Digital well-being is the enhancement and improvement of human well-being, in the intermediate and long term through the use of digital media."

According to World Health Organisation, "Mental health is a state of mental wellness that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well & work well and contribute to their community."

According to Mario Beauregard and others, "Spirituality means any experience that is thought to bring the experiencer into contact with the divine."

Important Seven Pillars of Digital Well-being: Positive and negative impacts on people's mental health due to use of digital media. A high increase in mental health disorders since widespread use of smart phone shows according to literature reviews. Fear, anxiety, depression and lack of emotional regular skills are the cause of digital use. Here are important seven pillars of well-being with explanation of the activities to be practice as under:

Sr. No.	Pillar Name	Activities to be Practices
1.	Physical Health	Protect eyes and sleep, build cognition, promote physical activity, avoid digital distractions.
2.	Mental Health	Prioritise self-worth, build resilience, commit to positivity
3.	Spiritual Health	Align engagement with values, cultivate and purpose and peace, commit to digital citizenship
4.	Social Health	Strengthen our relationship with ourselves, engage meaningful social connections, share authentically
5.	Emotional Health	Practicing mindfulness & relaxation techniques, engaging in hobbies,
6.	Privacy and Safety	Minimize impact of dangerous online content, protect personal data
7.	Intellectual Health	Enrich the learning experience, expand knowledge, pursue focused work, shape creativity

Relationship between Digital Well-being & Mental Health

Digital well-being has a significant impact on mental health with excessive screen time, digital distractions and exposure to harmful online content often leading to negative mental health outcomes. While practicing good digital habits can contribute to improved mental well-being by reducing stress, promoting better sleep and fostering healthier connections, essentially managing digital usage is a key to maintaining good mental health. Here, some **key points** about the relationships between digital well-being and mental health as under:

- 1. Negative Effects of Excessive Digital Use:** Excessive time spent on digital services can lead to increased anxiety, depression, feeling of isolation, low self-esteem and disrupted sleep patterns all impacting mental health negatively.
- 2. Cyber bullying and 'Online Negativity':** Exposure to cyber bullying or negative online content can significantly harm mental well-being, especially among vulnerable individuals.
- 3. Social Comparison:** Feelings of inadequacy and social comparison, impacting the self-esteem due to constant exposure into others' curated lives on social media.
- 4. Positive Aspects of Digital Technology:** When used responsibly, digital technology can also positively impact mental health by providing the access to support networks, mental health resources & opportunities for making social connection.
- 5. Digital Detox:** Taking breaks from technology or practicing "Digital Detox" can contribute to reduce stress, improved mood and better sleep quality.

Important Techniques to Boost Mental Health

- Start your day with positive attitude towards yourself and others.
- Staying Positive & have feeling of gratefulness.

- Focus on the taking care of physical health.
- A sense of purpose in life, coping skills & connect with others need to develop.
- Practice mindfulness, meditation and forgiveness.
- Practice relaxation techniques.
- Take time for yourself, work on your strengths and express yourself.
- We just need to focus on take the first step of whole staircase.
- Experimentation or adopting creative Expression.
- Accept life with joy, smile, smile and once more smile.
- Do something with your friends and family.
- Do 30 min. to go for a walk in nature.
- Do your best to enjoy 15 min. of sunshine.

Gauranga Das Prabhu's Five Pronged Approach to Spirituality

Spiritual leader Gauranga Das Prabhu strongly advocates for spirituality with a structured approach into daily life for mental well-being. Here are **some practical steps** for individuals to enhance their mental health.

Connect with Divine Power: Gauranga das encourages that an individual feel himself or herself as servant of God by connecting with the mission of serving others. Individuals are more likely to act compassionately and perform their duties with this mind set.

Care with Humanity: He advocates without sympathy human interaction can give any fruitful outcome. He quotes the famous Indian poet Narsinha Mehta and emphasize that the true spiritual individuals interact with others' pain empathetically and help without letting any pride to take over.

Communicate with Clarity: Clear communication, driven by guidance from spiritual leaders helps the individuals to stay focused on their spiritual journey and purpose in life.

Cope with Diversity: In Universe, cope with diversity is the key of spiritual belief. The idea of the entire world is one family reflected in the ancient Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Conquer with Flexibility: He emphasized the importance of being flexible for people in facing challenges, adapting to situations and helping others to realise their potential. Flexibility engagement fosters strength and resilience in dealing with diversity.

Facing Major Mental Health Challenges in Achieving Digital Well-being

In the digital era, major mental health challenges include increased social comparison leading to low self-esteem due to curated online profiles, cyber bullying, information overload, digital addiction, disrupted sleep patterns from screen time feelings of isolation despite being "connected" online and a heightened risk of anxiety and depression, particularly among young people due to constant online social pressure and comparison to

others. Following are the **major mental health challenges** in the way of digital well-being discussing.

- **Social Media Impact:** Social media often impacts on the people's lives, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth. The anonymity of online platforms can facilitate cyber bullying, cause of psychological distress. Constant exposure to others' social activities can trigger anxiety about being left out.
- **Information Overload:** The constant influx of news and information including negative content become reason of strongly feelings of stress and anxiety. The tendency to continuously scroll through negative news, further exacerbating negative emotions.
- **Digital Addiction:** The problems of disrupting sleeping patterns reduce physical activity and contribute to feelings of isolation develop by spending excessive hours on digital devices. The urge to constantly check social media notifications can become addictive and interfere with daily life.
- **Privacy Concerns:** The potential of personal data breaches on online platforms can cause anxiety and disrupt. Concerns about monitored online can impact mental well-being.
- **Impact on Social Skills:** Overreliance on digital communication can lead to decreased social skills and difficulty in real-life interactions. While connected online individuals may experience feeling of loneliness due to lack of meaningful in-person connections.

Role of Indian Spiritual Practices in Promoting Mental Health

Indian spiritual practices like Meditation, Yoga, Mantra Chanting, Kirtan, Hawan Yajna, Prayer and Worshiping and Devotion, Charity Service, Pilgrimage and Spend Time with Nature etc. are prominent to explain their role in promoting mental health of people.

- **Meditation:** Meditation is an ancient Indian spiritual practice. It helps to control our mind and consequently our own life and discover ourselves. Mantra, Japa, Dhayan, Pranayama, Yam and Niyama are different forms of meditation. Meditation helps us to maintain healthy of both mind & body and control our mind and thoughts. This ultimately helps us to concentrate on higher levels, improves memory & decision making and quality of life.
- **Yoga:** Yoga enhances self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect. It is an actually a systematic and properly regulated way of life. Yoga recharges the body with universal energy; provide the attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony. Yogic practices promotes self-healing, helps in improving attention, focus & concentration, reduces stress and tensions physically, emotionally & mentally. Yoga practices helpful in maintaining our mental health.

- **Mantra Chanting:** Mantra chanting helps to redirect attention away from distracting thoughts, allowing for increased focus and mental clarity & it can manage at lower levels of stress hormones like cortisol that leading to a calmer state of mind. Regular mantra chanting can effectively manage anxiety symptoms by promoting a sense of peace. Its positive vibrations can contribute to an uplifted mood and increased feelings of well-being. It can be a form of mindfulness meditation, enabling individuals to become more present in the moment and may also influence brainwave patterns, promoting alpha waves associated with relaxation.
- **Kirtan:** Kirtan is devotional singing practice that can induce a sense of focus on concentration and connect with self and social belonging. Its significant role in mental well-being by providing a tool to reduce stress, anxiety, depression symptoms, promote emotional well-being, increase mindfulness and rhythmic nature and focus on positive emotions essentially acts as a form of meditation that can help and centred state of mind.
- **Hawan Yajna:** It is believed that Havan Yajna is a Hindu ritual has an important role in mental health by promoting relaxation, reducing stress, enhancing focus, fostering sense of peace of tranquillity and creating a connection to the divine through the meditative practice of chanting. This spiritual practice is often associated with the concept of cleansing negative energy and promoting positive vibrations which could contribute to an improved mood and mental outlook.
- **Prayer and Worshiping:** Regular prayer provides a unique opportunity to present our fears and challenges to God, allowing us to unburden our minds and receive divine guidance and it helps in reduce stress, enhance emotional resilience and even lead to a more optimistic outlook about life. Worshiping lifts our spirits and shifts our focus from problems to the sovereignty and love of God. Involving in worship engagements allows us to transcend our immediate circumstances. Integrating prayer and worshiping into our lives doesn't just enhance our spiritual health; it profoundly impacts our mental well-being. These practices offer a foundation of peace, purpose and joy that can sustain us through the challenges of life.
- **Devotion:** Devotion providing a sense of purpose, connecting to the community and provides comfort which can helps to individuals' stress management, anxiety & depression. It can lead to improved coping mechanisms and overall mental well-being. It also impact positively including providing a sense of existential comfort, potentially leading to reduced anxiety, depression and stress levels.
- **Charity Services:** Charity services play a vital role in mental well-being care by providing support filling gap in services. They often develop innovative care practices more accessible and better meet the needs of specific communities.

- **Pilgrimage:** Pilgrimage can positively impact on mental health by fostering a sense of community, providing a space for self-reflection, promoting spiritual connection, leading to feeling of renewal, increased resilience and more a positive look on life.
- **Spending time in Nature:** Stress and anxiety can reduce by spending time in nature. Nature can generate positive emotions like joy, calmness and creativity, improve concentrate and attention. Daily exposure to natural light can help regulate sleep and socialize with friends and family. People who are more connected with nature have a lower risk of depression.

Results and Discussion

Spirituality can be central in enabling mental health. Mental health is very explicitly included in universal goal and is prioritized across various countries. After analysing the collected data there are findings of that digital well-being is a major issue of people. But this issue can address through implementing the different spiritual Indian practices like meditation, yoga, mantra chanting, kirtan, havan yajna, prayer and worshiping and devotion, charity service, pilgrimage and spend time with nature etc. Hence, it is the need of the hour to empower people toward these humanitarian practices and improve mental health.

Conclusion

According to Christopher Robin, “Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.”

Spirituality plays an important role in promoting our mental health. It encourages the individuals about self-awareness, emotional regulation and a deeper sense of purpose but also helps them to manage stressed life. Through spiritual practices like meditation, yoga and prayers individuals reconnect with their inner selves and find peace among life's challenges. Mental health care and well-being can be achieved through spiritual integration holistic approach. Spirituality help in nurturing our mind, body and soul in a balance way and it also serves as a very important pathway to mental resilience and fulfilment.

Implications

By practicing, the above mentioned various spiritual practices help the youth to manage the challenges associated with mental health issues effectively. Adopting techniques to boost mental health can be useful for every individual to cope with this issue. Digital well-being status can be achieved by implemented health improving practices.

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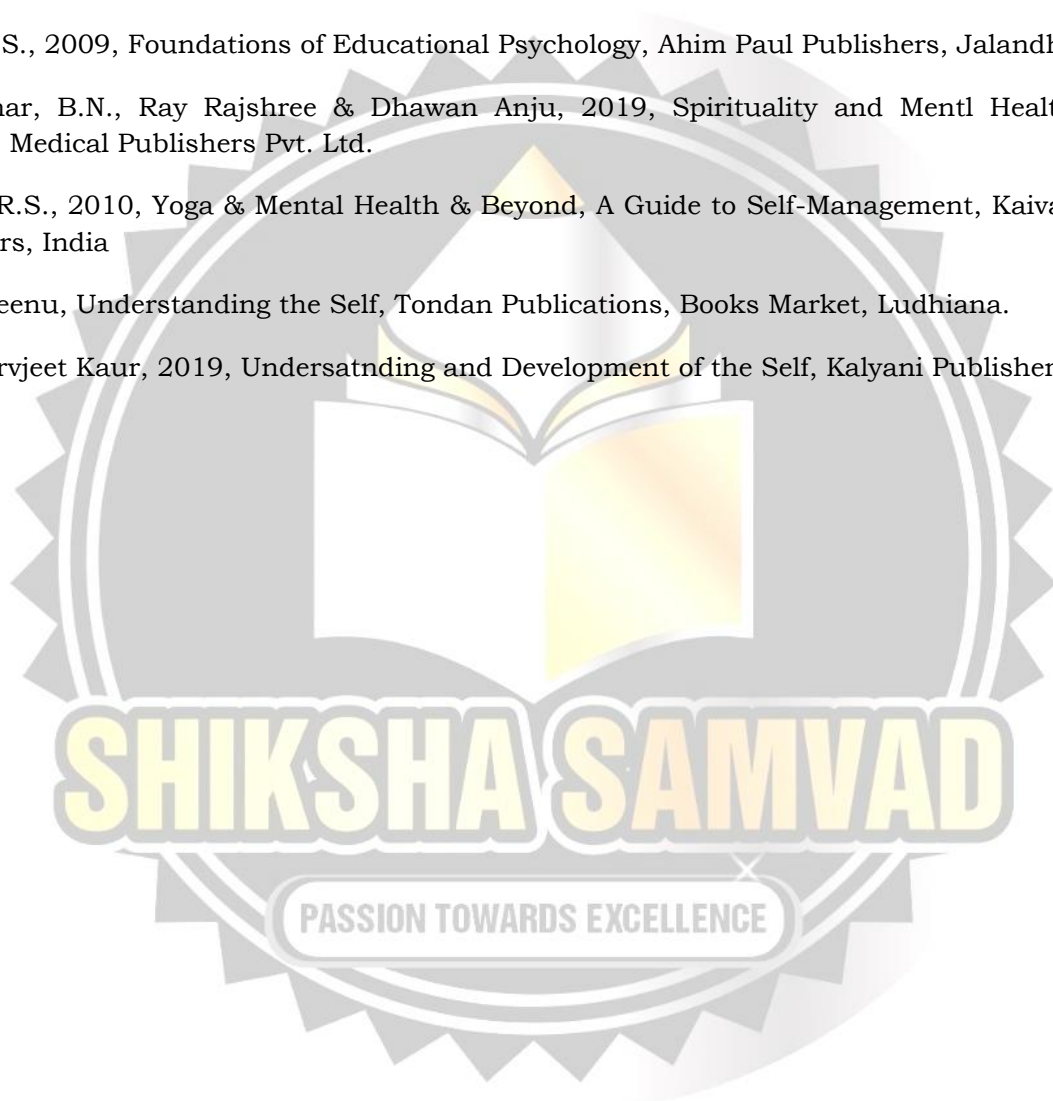
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