CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

In the present days, the life of an individual has become more complex. The complexities are the results of modern technology. The modern technologies such as communication and transportation systems have made world even smaller. The life of individual become fast paced because of these advancements towards technology. The individuals are unable to have a relaxed, peaceful state of mind and enjoy life. Instead they are facing negative consequences like stress, blood pressure, anxiety, depression, emotional imbalances and unable to manage the relationships in family and workplace, and suffer from various psychological problems. To come out of these negative consequences and to find out a peaceful and satisfied life they are searching various methods.

In ancient cultures there were a number of methods to improve psychological health and wellbeing. The important among those methods were yoga, meditation, breathing exercises and music. These practices helped the Individual to control his mind and thereby maintain physical and psychological health. Recently Psychologists as well as humanities are showing more interest towards conducting research on Meditation and its benefits on various positive aspects of life.

In meditation an individual learns to concentrate more and more upon less and less. Meditation helps an individual gain a better focus. It makes an individual capable of maintain his attention in whichever he desires. This focusing of the mind pulls the energies of the mind from distracting things to whatever the individual wants to focus. Its main aim is to discover the causes and cures for suffering within ourselves. Meditation is the only thing, which helps us to transform within ourselves. Meditation makes an
individual accept oneself and maintain wellbeing. Mediation is a process of focusing one’s attention for a prolonged period on an object or a mental or bodily state hence it is Psychological process. This makes the individual experiences expanded awareness that brings an unbiased knowledge. Meditation not only brings focused attention and Psychological wellbeing but it is been proven that it brings spiritual experiences across traditions.

Krishnamurthy (1948) said that life is complex and painful, a series of inner and outer conflicts. There must be an awareness of the mental and emotional attitudes which cause outward and physical disturbances. To understand them we must have time for quiet reflection; to be aware of our psychological states there must be periods of quiet solitude, a withdrawal from the noise and bustle of daily life and its routine. This active stillness is essential not only for the well-being of the mind-heart but also for the discovery of the reality without which physical or moral well-being is of little significance.

MEDITATION

Meditation is a technique which provides an individual to develop conscious attention non-analytical, non-discursive way. Meditation can be followed by everyone irrespective of the religion. In the 1970s research on meditation began in earnest and has since increased significantly. The transplantation of meditation into Western study occurred, however, within a traditional behavioural framework emphasizing symptom reduction and alleviation with little attention to development, enhancement, growth and cultivation of positive psychological qualities and experiences. The main goal of meditation is to bring positive emotions and to increase our internal potential of healing.
There are different kinds of meditation the most important among them are Transcendental meditation, Zen meditation. These are been divided in to concentrative meditation and mindfulness meditation. In concentrative meditation, there is an attempt to restrict awareness by focusing attention on a single object. The practitioner attempts to ignore other stimuli in the environment and focus completely on the object of meditation. Here the attention is focused.

In mindfulness meditation an object either internal or external is selected to focus and the completed attention of an individual is focused on that object is a non-analytical and unemotional way to experience the meditation. For example, the breath, a mantra, a single word (such as oohm) or any specific sounds. Mindfulness meditation is also called as opening up meditation. For example, an individual may focus on breathing (Zen and Vipassana meditation) or on mantra.

Meditation training is different from relaxation training. Meditation helps an individual develop a greater understanding by helping him develop an insight whereas relaxation training helps to achieve low autonomic arousals. Individual becomes relaxed in meditation. Relaxation is a technique; meditation is a way of being. Meditation makes the individual non-judgmental in what he feels and experiences. The formal mediation practice seeps into daily life, bringing greater non-judgmental consciousness to everything that an individual does, feel and experiences. Maslow, A. (1968) stated “what we call ‘normal’ in psychology is really a psycho-pathology of the average, so unromantic and so widely spread that we don’t even notice it ordinarily. Meditation teaches an individual that mind is untrained and usually unconscious; it does not allow reaching the full potential. Meditation goal is to bring the individual into a state of consciousness.
Walsh (1983) a pioneer in the field of meditation research, identified the ultimate aims of meditation practice as the development of deep insight into the nature of mental processes, consciousness, identity, and reality, and the development of optimal states of psychological well-being and consciousness. Meditation helps on individual to recognize and provides a new understanding toward new ways of seeing and being as individuals experience deep insights into the nature of mind and the path toward optimal health. Meditation’s main goal is to help develop and train the mind toward optimal states of empathy, joy, compassion, awareness and insight, with the ultimate intention of total liberation. Not many researches have been done to measure the deeper levels of meditation’s original goal but instead they have focused on traditional psychological variables.

**MEDITATION RESEARCH**

Researches on meditation are examining the psychological and physiological effects of meditation. Meditation is used as a part of treatment in health settings. Research have shown that meditation is an effective intervention for cardiovascular disease; chronic pain; anxiety and panic disorder; substance abuse; dermatological disorders; prevention of relapse of MDD and, reduction of anxiety and depressive symptoms in non-clinical populations.

Meditation is used as a self-liberation strategy to enhance positive psychological qualities. There are a number of positive psychological health effects of meditation. Meditation may bring an improvement in intelligence, school grades, learning ability, and short- and long-term recall. There also is evidence that these improvements in memory and academic performance associated with meditation apply across the lifespan. Meditation can cultivate creativity, meditation increases concentration and attention. It improves relationship, life satisfaction. In individuals, meditation increase quality of life,
happiness and positive affect optimism, self-compassion and empathy, and moral maturity and spirituality. Meditation may help human beings identify and actualize their potential strengths. The positive psychology brings lots of new opportunities and methodologies to understand meditation. Meditation promotes positive health in medicine, business, and education. Meditation offers paths to exceptional states of mental well-being and attention control. Exploration of future researches on meditation will still bring out the vast of positive effects of meditation.

**VIPASSANA MEDITATION (MINDFULNESS MEDITATION)**

The major objective of meditation is relaxation to realization. It means realization of one’s inner self; it also provides an individual a spiritual dimension. It brings a feeling of oneness with a higher source of life which may be termed as supreme truth or God from which peace, wisdom and strengths comes to us. It’s another goal is to provide a deep state of peace to understand the basic truths of life, separate oneself from the illusion, to remove illusionary ideas, acquire a clear understanding of reality and finally find meaning for one’s existence. By developing clarity of mind, cultivating a sense of right and wrong the individual finally realizes the meaning of life which helps him to have a good quality of life and find life satisfaction. The concentration meditation, transcendental meditation, Zen meditation all these meditation methods are based upon the processes of Vippasana meditation. The Vipassana is India's most ancient meditation technique. Long lost to humanity, it was discovered by Gautama Buddha. The Vipassana meditation is also called as awareness or insight or mindfulness meditation.

In mindfulness meditation, the individual does not focus more or a single object but focus on the breath in the early stages. An individual pays more emphasis on the present moment maintains an alert and aware state. He develops the ability to observe the content of the conscious experience rather than the past and future. Mindful meditation
aims at developing a deeper awareness of one’s own mind patterns without emotional reactivity. Meditation, mindfulness meditation all these are considered as ‘altered states of consciousnesses in modern psychology.

Vipassana seeks self-transformation through self-observation where the meditator focuses attention to the sensations that continuously interact with the outer world. The Vipassana technique is to train one’s awareness of psychological experiences as it arises from sensations from all parts of the body and thoughts related to feelings of good will, love, and compassion.

Chandiramani (2007) opines that it is a method of awareness and introspection which involves a conscious attempt to focus attention intensely on the present moment, noting thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images and sensations without judging them, participating in them or acting on them. It is an observation of the contents of our mind as they appear and disappear without reacting to them. Every thought and emotion dies its natural death if not fuelled by the judgments and emotional reactions of the individual experiencing them.

Chandiramani (2001) also opined that, the typical reactions that arise are those of craving for, or aversion to, things. Detached observation, with suspended evaluations and mental reactions, does not encourage the suppression or expression of emotions, but sees with impartiality, making it possible for individuals to deal with these emotional reactions appropriately. It enables clients to become aware of experiences without being attached to them. Vipassana is an important contribution to the area of mental health which derives from its psychological actions. Vipassana brings changes at the basic level and biology of the meditator’s physical as well as psychological aspects. So, it has drastic effects at the
psychological level. Vipassana is also value-based education. It incorporates a cognitive-behavioral psychology that encourages active practice of ideal ways of solving problems, interacting with others, or participating in society. It is an environmental psychology that stresses the feedback loop of harmony. It is a path to *nibbana* the transcendence of the material world.

A number of studies have reported on the effect of Vipassana meditation on many psychological variables. Anderson (2000) says that the meditation releases the tensions developed in everyday life and opens the knots tied by the old habit of reacting in an unbalanced way to pleasant and unpleasant situations. It develops positive creative energy for the betterment of the individual and society. Usha (2000) reported on effect of Vipassana meditation on physical and psychological aspects of college students. Chandramani et al. (1995) revealed that Vipassana meditation brought positive changes in behavior of jail inmates. Khurana and Dhar (2002) say Vipassana meditation has a positive impact in improving mental health and personality. As a whole the level of satisfaction with life should be a key consideration for an individual contemplating the benefits of Vipassana Meditation. All the above studies reported positive effects of Vipassana meditation on adult individuals. In the light of the above studies, applying the meditation techniques on college students, it is assumed that the similar results of positive effects may be observed in academic settings also.

Mindfulness is a feeling of getting involved. It is an active state mind it makes us not to focus on distractions. To overcome mindlessness we should learn to become more mindful. To become more mindful we should change the mode of thinking about ourselves and the world. Mindfulness as a present-centered attention focused on the "here and now" of our experience. That is, seeing clearly what is actually going on in our lives when our perception is uncluttered by wishes, desires, and needs. Mindfulness
meditation is a means of increasing the clarity of perception by observing and learning about the self. Meditation is aimed at increasing the accuracy of our self-understanding and providing a basis for self-improvement and enhanced quality of life.

Mindfulness meditation has been most extensively investigated as a therapeutic practice for people dealing with a variety of mental and physical disorders, particularly those caused by high levels of stress. Although some have criticized this research for its lack of rigor (Bishop 2002) other literature has established the value of mindfulness meditation in improving the lives of people coping with diverse problems (Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). Such problems include psychosomatic and cardiovascular disorders, asthma, hypertension, chronic pain, cancer, panic attacks, anxiety, phobias, and eating disorders. The most well-known clinical intervention program based on mindfulness was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society (CFM) at The University of Massachusetts Medical School. The CFM website provides many informative resources.

However, it is only recently that psychologists have begun to define and measure mindfulness, and assess its effects on well-being in non-clinical settings and populations (Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). The bottom-line assumption of this work is that mindfulness may be an important vehicle for self-change and improved well-being (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2009).

More than one author has commented that it is easier to describe the absence of mindfulness than its presence. The opposite of mindfulness is mindlessness, captured by phrases such as “the lights are on, but nobody is home” and “going through the motions, but my heart's not in it.” Mindlessness, here, does not mean being crazy or reckless, although not paying attention to what is in front of you can certainly get you into trouble. Mindlessness refers to a state of consciousness marked by little awareness of what is
going on in the present moment, It is a state “government rule and routine” (Langer, 2002) rather than by what is happening “right now” All of us are familiar with mindless states, We may read a book or talk with another person, but our minds are absorbed in our own thoughts, emotions, worries, concerns, and anxieties about the future, or ruminations about the past.

In a typical day many of our behaviors are habitual and automatic, requiring little, if any conscious attention (like driving a car). Bargh and Chartrand (1999) describe the implications of this fact of life as the “unbearable automaticity of being.” They believe the value of automatic, unconsciously controlled behavior, great, but it is “unbearable” because it contradicts both psychologists, and lay-persons, belief in conscious, volitional control through self-directed actions. Bargh and Chartrand argue that the benefits of automaticity include releasing us from the burden of continual effortful control and providing a non-conscious and “truer” expression of our preferences than is revealed in the consciously stated reasons people give for their behavior. Despite its value automaticity is negatively regarded because it contradicts people's view that they “know” why they do things.

Proponents of mindfulness acknowledge the efficiency of well-learned, automatic behaviors and their value in conserving conscious self-control resources. However, they point out that people can easily become victims of their own unconscious habits and knee-jerk emotional reactions. Ask any smoker who wants to quit or any dieter who wants to stop overeating. An undesirable habit that is automatically triggered by many external and internal cues, like a morning cup of coffee, an after-dinner drink, stress, or boredom, is difficult to break. From the perspective of mindfulness, awareness of when and why you smoke or overeat is necessary to control the habit.
At a more general level, Brown and Ryan (2003) note that the potential value of mindfulness to improving well-being is suggested by substantial research on the importance of attention in the self-regulation of behavior. Successful goal pursuit requires some degree of continuous attention (mindfulness) so that goal progress is monitored, necessary adjustments made, and efforts remain focused on, rather than distracted from, goal achievement. In addition, mindfulness may contribute to more self-determined and autonomous actions. Personal goals that are freely chosen are likely to be personally expressive and therefore more satisfying than goals imposed by circumstances or by others. And therefore, may also limit freely-chosen, intentional action.

In such cases self-change would first seem to require conscious recognition that past behaviors have been controlled by factors of which one was largely unaware. A mindful state focused on the here-and-now opens the possibility that we can consciously override automatic behaviors that might occur if we lapse into a state of mindlessness. (For a review of supporting evidence, see Brown & Ryan, 2004; also see a recent study by Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2007). Mindfulness is a potential avenue to greater autonomy because it expands our awareness of choices by disengaging us from reflexive thought patterns and habitual/automatic responses. When more options are available, we are more likely to make freely-chosen, personally expressive decisions that enhance our well-being.

Weston (1999) describes consciousness as the interrelation of awareness and attention. Awareness describes all the things that are presently on our minds. Awareness involves continual monitoring of the internal and external environment. At any given moment, we may be conscious of our immediate circumstances and activities (external) and a rich array of associated thoughts, feelings, and experiences (internal). Attention focuses our conscious awareness on a more limited set of experiences. Take vision as an
example. We may be conscious of events occurring in both our peripheral vision (awareness) and at the focal point of our visual field (attention), we can be aware of things without responding to them or having them as the center of our attention. Awareness and attention are intimately connected such that attention continually pulls figures, out of the ground, of awareness, holding them focally for varying lengths of time (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

As Brown and Ryan (2003) note, a central feature of mindfulness is an open and receptive, present centered attention and awareness that is pre-reflexive and non-judgmental. Mindfulness means focusing on the here-and-now, rather than ruminating about the past, or entertaining anxieties and wishful thinking about the future. This means living in the present not for the present. Mindfulness does not mean living for the moment without regard for the future. In this respect, mindfulness is similar to the present-centered awareness and activity-focused attention described by Csikszentmihalyi as flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Secondly, while mindfulness may be a vehicle for self-analysis, it is oriented toward simply observing, rather than evaluating the self. In this regard, increasing mindfulness is analogous to increasing the sensitivity of a radar system that is not programmed to look for anything in particular. More objects are “seen,” but what is seen is not constrained or biased by attention to some objects and not others. A radar operator can decide what is and what is not worth paying attention to. But the main advantage is the ability to “see” more of what is actually out there. It is this “seeing more” that makes mindfulness a potential antidote for the blunted awareness stemming from hectic lives, defensiveness in self-examination of faults, and unexamined. Cultural assumptions about how we should live. Instead of relying on habitual reactions and ways of thinking that fit current reality into pre-established boxes, mindfulness provides an opening for understanding “the way things are” before we judge, analyze, and evaluate.
This may seem like some idealized state of omnipotent knowing, but all of us have had times of great clarity and epiphany when we finally see what is really going on and what is really important. For many people such epiphanies result from dramatic events that force a rethinking of assumptions about the self and life. Death, loss, and tragedy, lead many people to see themselves and life more clearly. Before considering mindfulness meditation as a gentler and more gradual approach to many of these same ends, we will review some recent studies related to posttraumatic growth (PTG) and the changes in life values that may result from confrontations with death.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND FOR MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness practice in the form of meditation and zazen (sitting) has a long tradition as one vehicle for enhancing clarity and well-being. An informative discussion of Buddhism and the psychology of well-being are provided by recent articles in American Psychologist by Walsh and Shapiro (2006) and by Walia and Shapiro (2006). Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life, offers a highly accessible understanding of the purpose, value, and specific techniques of mindfulness practice. We will rely heavily on Kabat-Zinn's work in our review of mindfulness meditation. According to Walsh and Shapiro (2006) despite the diversity of Eastern meditative traditions, they share a common focus on attention and awareness. The term meditation refers to a family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well-being and development and or specific capacities such as calm, clarity and concentration. It is important to point out that even though mindfulness meditation training-is an integral part of Eastern philosophies and religions; it is not in itself a religion, particularly as translated into Western psychology and culture. As Speca, Carlson, Goodey, and Angen (2002) put it, Derived from what were originally
and primarily religious or spiritual practices, meditation has been adapted for secular purposes. It does not require you to believe in anything except perhaps yourself. In its secular form, mindfulness is a means of self-change through self-discovery, but its purpose is not to convert people to a particular set of doctrines. People from a variety of religious traditions practice mindfulness. Kabat-Zinn (1990) points out that mindfulness are not a mystical or spiritual activity and it is not the 'answer' to all life's problems. Rather it is that all life's problems can be seen more clearly through a clear mind.

Mindfulness meditation is actually quite practical and, at one level. It is not an all-encompassing activity that requires major changes in your everyday life routine. It is more like taking a walk every day. Sitting aside time to pray if you are religious or taking time to step out of the hectic pace of life.

The basic idea of mindfulness meditation begins with awareness that most of our waking consciousness is dominated by a steady stream of unexamined thoughts and feelings. The constant mental chatter of one thought after another consumes our mental energies and may distract us from what is actually taking place in the moment. Even though we live in the present, our minds frequently drift off to the past, or to anxieties about the future. Mentally removed from the here and now, people often permeate their thoughts with a sense of reality that they don't deserve—or perhaps more correctly, they fail to separate their thoughts from what is truly happening in the present. In its more extreme forms, this confusion of thoughts with reality is the basis for many kinds of pathology and many irrational fears, in which people's internal beliefs distort their perceptions in ways that are personally distressing. To a less extreme degree, living in our thoughts rather than in the present is a common part of everyday experience. Langer (2002) argues that mindfulness involves an understanding that "events do not come with evaluations; we impose them on our experiences, and in so doing create our experience of the event. The
point of mindfulness is to see the world before we judge, evaluate, and stuff it into preconceived categories and boxes.

The sunset experience described by Kabat-Zinn can be contrasted with the experience of an accomplished photographer or landscape artist who “sees” keenly what is actually there and finds ways to capture it. Famous nature photographers like Adams (1985) have the ability to capture the subtleties and nuances of light, shadow, reflections, and human feelings that put the snapshots of the untrained eye to shame. Seasoned photographers may spend days waiting for the right combination of conditions, and may spend hours positioning themselves to get the right perspective and “feel” for a scene before shooting a photograph.

The point of these examples is twofold. First, mindfulness is not foreign to people’s experience. We have all had experiences of living in the moment and probably each of us has an area of expertise or knowledge that makes us more attentive and aware than others in observing some aspect of life. Secondly, at one level, the purpose of mindfulness meditation is to extend the context of limited mindful experiences, like the ones described above, to develop a generalized ability to see life more clearly, in all its moment-to-moment richness and subtlety. Mindfulness as a personal quality is first cultivated gradually in the limited context of meditation, and then begins to transfer to other aspects of life. This is analogous to the common experience of immersing yourself in an intensive study and observation of a particular activity and finding that you can’t help thinking of other life domains in new ways as a result of what you have learned.
ATTRIBUTES OF MINDFUL AWARENESS

Becoming more mindful through meditation involves setting aside a piece of time, and a place to quiet the mind down and gain some insight into how thoughts control our experience. Although there are many forms of mindfulness practice, sitting and following your breath is perhaps the most common. Kabat-Zinn (1994) provides one of the more straightforward descriptions of mindfulness practice for a western audience. You might sit on a cushion or pillow, with legs crossed in front and hands on your knees, or in a straight-backed chair. You should be comfortable and a bit relaxed, but the head, back, and neck should align vertically so that you are alert to good posture. Then you focus your attention on your breathing, following your breath in and out without trying to control or change it, but just experiencing its ebb and flow. When your attention wanders away to something else, just note the occurrence and bring your attention back to your breathing. Beginning meditators often discover how difficult this seemingly simple task can be. The mind wells up an endless stream of distracting thought-discomfort, boredom, fantasies, memories from the past, plans for the future, thinking about your spouse, boss, work, vacation, what you need to do after this, and so forth. Our thoughts seem to have life of their own, coming in an endless stream that is difficult to shut off, even for a few brief moments. Kabat-Zinn (1990) tells his beginning meditation practitioners, whatever your mind brings to your attention, just acknowledge it and let it go. Don’t judge or evaluate, just accept and return to your breath. The idea is to watch your thoughts rather than trying to suppress them.

As Shapiro and her colleagues argue “All meditation techniques are founded on the cultivation of attention. Attention by itself, however, is not enough” (Shapiro et al., 2002). Kabat-Zinn (1990) describes seven interrelated attitudes that are important in understanding the purpose of mindful meditation. The purpose of mindfulness is to
cultivate these seven qualities. By practicing them in small doses they begin to carry over into everyday life, increasing a person’s general level of mindfulness.

1. **Non-Judging**

   The basic idea of non-judging is to recognize that we continually evaluate things in our lives as “good” or “bad” when, in fact, most things, events, and people we encounter are not inherently so. Langer (2002) has pointed out that “things out there are not self-evidently good or bad,” and that “the prevalence of value judgments in our lives reveals nothing about the world, but much about our minds”. It is the lack of awareness of this fact that represents one important difference between mindlessness and mindful awareness. The point of mindfulness practice is not to stop our constant evaluation of the world, but to be aware that we are doing it. That is, it would be counter-productive to “judge the judging and make matters even more complicated for you” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

   The value of non-judgment is that we see the world more clearly by recognizing that much of what we like and dislike is nor literally true of the world.

   That would be foolish and impossible. Rather, non-judging makes us aware that our immediate responses are likely to be limited by our preferences. Langer’s (1989) work has been devoted to showing that a significant benefit of mindfulness is opening people up to novel ways of thinking and dealing with life’s problems. This opening-up occurs when we become aware that we frequently put the world into our little, preferential boxes. To use the popular catch phrase, mindfulness allows us to “think outside the box” of our own established patterns of thinking.
2. **Patience**

   Patience means allowing events to unfold in their own time rather than always pushing, wishing, or working to make things happen according to our present desires. Kabat-Zinn gives the example of a child who opens a butterfly’s cocoon hoping to help it emerge earlier. Of course, this is not good for the butterfly that is not yet fully formed or ready to emerge. Patience extends to oneself, others, and the present moment. Its value lies in making us more open to what is going on right now, in the present moment, and encouraging us to take comfort in the idea that things will develop in their own time—rushing ahead usually causes difficulties.

3. **Beginner's Mind**

   Beginner's mind means an open mind that “is willing to see everything for the first time” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). A drawback of knowledge and familiarity is that we may begin to take things and activities for granted because we have seen them, done them, and think we understand them. What we “know” may deaden our sensitivity to seeing old things in new ways, or to appreciating how things change. This may happen with people, places, activities, and aspects of our environment. Perhaps you have passed an object such as a tree, building, or particular landscape every day without really looking; then one day you’ve noticed something unusual or interesting about it. This would be an example of seeing something very familiar as if for the first time. The value of an open beginner's mind is to see the world in its present richness and not just through our past experiences and understandings. Beginner’s mind is an antidote for boredom and our seemingly insatiable need to see and do “new” things. Newness is always here. We just need to become aware of it.
4. Trust

Trust is captured in Shakespeare’s familiar dictum, “To think own self be true.” Trust means taking responsibility for being you; some psychologists describe this as authenticity (Harrer, 2002). Imitating others, trying to be someone other than who you are, and relying too much on others’ ideas would all indicate a lack of trust in self. Trust is important because even if you make mistakes in the course of following your own intuitions and feelings, at least they are your mistakes. Learning about the self requires, first of all, that we try to be ourselves.

5. Non-striving

Non-striving is a slippery concept because it is often taken to mean a lack of desire and purpose, as if the goal of meditation is to eliminate desires, or to see them as trivial, or as roadblocks to some “higher” state of awareness. Kabat-Zinn focuses on non-striving the practice of mindful meditation. By this, he only means that people should take up mindfulness meditation without preconceived ideas regarding what will or should happen. Striving to achieve a particular result of meditation sets us up to make ongoing comparisons of what is happening against what we want or expect to happen. This distorts and forecloses the processes of discovering what actually does happen. Not to expect end not to strive creates a more receptive attitude to what mindfulness means for each individual.

6. Acceptance

Acceptance means being yourself rather than denying who you are, wishing you were different, or feeling bad because you aren’t the person you would like to be. Acceptance does not mean passive resignation or losing the desire to change respects of yourself and your life. It means letting go of some of the tension caused by the constant
comparison of who you are now and who you would like to be. Perhaps having some compassion for you is another way to put it. The value of acceptance is that “you are much more likely to know what to do and have an inner conviction to act when you have a clearer picture of what is actually happening than when your vision is clouded by your mind’s self-serving judgments and desires or its fear and prejudices” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). In other words, acceptance is a basis for action—not an impediment.

7. **Letting Go**

Like non-striving and acceptance, letting go can easily be misinterpreted as giving up on, or renouncing life goals. In mindfulness meditation, “letting go” refers to practicing non-attachment to prominent thoughts and feelings. In meditation, people find that certain thoughts, feelings, and experiences occur more frequently or with greater emotional intensity. That is, there are certain things that “the mind seems to want to hold on to” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). People may hold onto some thoughts because they are pleasant or try to avoid others because they are upsetting. In meditation practice, such thoughts are simply noted and then let go, as attention returns to the breath. Letting go within meditation may set the stage for acceptance and more detached consideration of why certain thoughts, fantasies or experiences have such prominence in our mental life. It is useful to ask ourselves why we are so obsessed with a particular thought or past experience. This, in turn, may be a valuable source of self-insight.

In analyzing the Kabat-Zinn (2003) research work we can see extract the benefits of meditation on different aspect of life. On physiological aspect, it helps to increase efficient use of oxygen by reducing the sweating level, to normalize blood pressure by slowing down the heart rate and breathing, to slower rate of mind aging and increase in function of immune system, in conclusion it has positive effect on the whole body. Further it adapting the habit of regular meditation will help in overcome the unhealthy
life-damaging habits, like smoking, drinking and drugs and in controlling pain and asthmatic conditions. On psychological aspect, meditation has great impact in reducing psychopathological problems like stress, anxiety and depression. Indeed, in reducing irritability and moodiness and in increasing self-esteem, emotional control and alertness. They also pointed that by practicing Vipassana meditation as part of everyday life in enhancing positive psychological factors such as creativity, intelligence, morality and memory. Over the researcher described that the Vipassana meditation is helping an individual in solving the unhealthy conditions of body and mind to feel good and calm.

Overall, mindfulness practice is a way to observe the processes of your own mind from a perspective akin to that of an outside, non-judgment observer. This is quite a different experience than our usual state of conscious awareness, in which we often get caught up in our thoughts, feelings, and actions without much awareness of these mental preoccupations. Kabat-Zinn argues that the most dramatic effect of mindfulness meditation among his practitioners is the realization that they are not their thoughts. “It is remarkable how liberating it feels to be able to see that your thoughts are just thoughts that they are not ‘you’ or ‘reality’ (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). This realization allows people to consciously choose how they respond or do not respond to their thoughts about themselves and the world they live in. Mindfulness helps us distinguish between reality and illusion—that is, between the world as experienced through our self-generate’ thoughts, and the world as it is.

In a recent review Shapiro et al. (2002) notes that considerable research has been devoted to examining the well-being benefits of mindfulness meditation of the sort described by Kabat-Zinn. Despite concerns about the scientific rigor and datedness of early studies, Shapiro and her colleagues believe they represent a hopeful beginning that supports the value of mindfulness in improving positive health and well-being. In
addition to emotional and physical health benefits (such as relaxation and more effective coping with illness, stress, and pain), studies have also connected mindfulness meditation to increased self-actualization; a positive sense of control; emotional maturity and autonomy; and heightened alertness, concentration, and attention. More directly related to the goals of positive psychology, Shapiro and her colleagues note studies showing that even brief mindfulness meditation training (1 to 6 weeks) was found to be associated with increased self-esteem, happiness, daily positive effect, and personality growth, as assessed by the Big Five personality factors.

Specifically, researchers have found increases in extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, emotional stability, self-esteem, happiness, and daily positive affect. Mindfulness has also been related to enhance interpersonal behaviors such as empathy and trust, and to greater receptivity to spiritual concerns and experiences. These researchers concluded that “meditation appears to enhance physiological, psychological and transpersonal well-being. Specific enhancements observed include physiological rest and increased happiness, acceptance, sense of coherence, stress hardiness, empathy and self-regulation. Thus meditation may help human beings identify and actualize their potentials” (Shapiro et al., 2002). However, they also note the need for more systematic and well-controlled explorations of the mechanisms linking mindfulness to enhanced well-being.

Recent studies by Brown and Ryan (2004) may exemplify the kind of research needed in order to address the limitations of previous studies. As noted in our previous discussion of mindfulness as an antidote to mindlessness, Brown and Ryan approach mindfulness from the perspective of self-determination theory, specifically the ability of mindfulness to facilitate autonomous and self-regulated actions. Using well-established measures, these researchers have defined mindfulness clearly, operationalized and
validated its measurement and shown, in well-controlled studies, a relationship between mindfulness and improved well-being. Mindfulness is defined as “an open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present moment” (Brown & Ryan, 2004).

Brown and Ryan (2004) have taken an individual differences approach to mindfulness on the assumption that people vary in their characteristic levels of “present-centered” awareness. That is, some people are more mindful than others, whether or not they have had any kind of mindfulness training. In a series of studies, these researchers developed and validated a Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS).

In its most general form, Mindfulness might be considered a foundation for the many well-being enhancement interventions that are built on increased self-understanding. What many interventions may share is their ability to cultivate a mindful awareness that leads people to become more self-aware, more focused on the present, more conscious of the conditions of their lives, and how consciously-chosen actions might improve well-being. For example, when people are asked to practice gratitude, forgive others, write about meaningful goals, or engage in intentional activities that are personally expressive, they presumably “discover” something important about themselves and what makes them happy and healthy. Mindfulness may cultivate a kind of consciousness that is more receptive to these “discoveries.”
LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction is the way how an individual perceives his or her life and how it has been. Life satisfaction is measured through the different aspects which the individual has gained in the different spheres of life. It includes the cognitive acquisition, the social interaction, the interpersonal relationships, educational qualification, the experience, economic stability, the place of living etc. All these factors determine the satisfaction of an individual towards the life.

CONCEPT OF LIFE SATISFACTION

Satisfaction is a state of mind. It is an evaluative appraisal of something. The term refers to both ‘contentment’ and ‘enjoyment’. As such it covers cognitive- as well as affective-appraisals. Satisfaction can be both evanescent and stable through time.

Life-satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads?

Synonyms for life satisfaction are: ‘happiness’ and ‘subjective well-being’. One advantage of using the term life-satisfaction rather than the word ‘happiness’ is that it emphasises the subjective character of the concept. The word happiness is also used to refer to an objective good; especially by philosophers. Further, the term life-satisfaction has the advantage over the label of ‘subjective well-being’ is that life-satisfaction refers to an overall evaluation of life rather than to current feelings or to specific psychosomatic symptoms.

The concept of life-satisfaction denotes an overall evaluation of life. So the appraisal that life is ‘exciting’ does not necessarily mean that it is ‘satisfying’. There may be too much excitement in life, and too few other qualities. An overall evaluation of life involves all relevant criteria in the mind of the individual: for example, how good one
feels, how well expectations are likely to be met and how desirable various factors are deemed to be, etc.

Variable aspects Evaluations of life may differ in several respects. One difference is in their certainty; some people are fairly certain about how they appraise life, whereas others are plagued by doubts. Another difference is in how well formed various judgments are: some people judge rather intuitively, while others engage in elaborate contemplation. A related difference is the stability of the judgments. Some people keep the same evaluation over time, whereas others facilitate. Uncertain and unstable judgments are clearly less valuable as an indicator of quality of life. Still such judgments denote life-satisfaction. Furthermore, appraisals of life are probably not always equally appropriate. Like any perception they can be distorted in various ways, such as through miss-attribution and self-deceit. This is commonly referred to as ‘false happiness’. Distorted judgments of life are clearly less valuable as an indicator of apparent quality of life. Nevertheless, inappropriate life-satisfaction is still life-satisfaction. The concept of life satisfaction is not limited to judgments which are considered to be correct by others, but in essence relies on the person’s own judgments.

The happiness, contentment which an individual gains will provide for good psychological health and intern keeps the individual away from any kind of mental problems. Hence the importance of life satisfaction needs to be studied. An individual who finds satisfaction in life is able to progress towards his desired goals. It provides an all-round capacity for an individual to enjoy his family, work, and other aspects of his life. Life satisfaction improves the self-confidence and makes him stronger from inside. Life satisfaction can be assessed through two approaches i.e. from the external approach which focuses upon the external behavior of an individual and looks at his success and
competency. The second approach is from the individual’s internal reference where he evaluates about his past and present life, his mental health and satisfaction towards life. Diener and Suh (2000) found that satisfaction with life is an indicator of well-being. Satisfaction is cognitive judgment about fulfillment of one’s life. Harleen (2004) opines that a person can be happy only when he has realistic appraisal of his abilities and potential to develop realistic aspirations and expectations.

Life satisfaction has been defined as a “global evaluation by the person of his or her life” (Pavot, Diener, Colvin, and Sandvik, 1991). Although, hundreds of studies on life satisfaction of adults have been conducted (Diener, 1994). Life satisfaction in childhood has recently become the focus of empirical work. Recent investigations have demonstrated the incremental importance of the life satisfaction in understanding children and adolescent’s psychological well-being. Life satisfaction reports have been differentiated from other well-being constructs such as self-esteem (Huebner, Gilman, and Laughlin, 1999), depression (Lewinsohn, Redner, and Seely, 1991) and positive effect (Lucas et al., 1996).

Reis and Gable (2003) reported that, most of the people possess interpersonal relationship with lovers, family and good friends which provides powerful source of well-being and life satisfaction. Apart from the fact that religiosity and prayer are related to higher hope (Snyder, 2004). Gainful employment is also important source of happiness (Argyle, 2001). Further, Argyle (2001) reveled that leisure activities can also bring pleasure. Yet another important route to attaining a sense of contentment is through here-and-now contemplation of one’s external and internal environment. Indeed, a common thread in Eastern thought is that, immense pleasure is to be attained through being or experiencing. However, in Western societies, meditation upon internal experiences or thoughts has gained many followers (Shapiro, Schwartz, and Santer, 2002). Meditation
has been defined as “a family of techniques which have in common a conscious attempt to focus attention in a non-analytic way and an attempt not to dwell on discursive, ruminating thought” (Shapiro, 1980). For example, Vipassana (Mindfulness) meditation (Langer, 2002) involves a nonjudgmental attention that allows a sense of peacefulness, serenity, and pleasure. Kabat-Zinn (1990) has posed the following seven qualities of Vipassana (Mindfulness) meditation: non-judging, acceptance, openness, non-striving, patience, trust, and letting to. Likewise in concentrative meditation, awareness is restricted by focusing on a single thought or object such as a personal mantra, breath, word (Benson and Proctor, 1984), or even a sound (Carrington, 1998). Therefore, in the present study, Vipassana meditation is used to enhance the satisfaction of life.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The term ‘quality of life’ denotes two meanings: 1) the presence of conditions deemed necessary for a good life, and 2) the practice of good living as such. When used at the societal level, only the former meaning applies. When we say that the quality of life of the people in a country is poor, we mean that essential conditions are lacking, such as sufficient food, housing and health care. In other words: the country is not ‘liveable’ for its inhabitants. At the individual level, the term quality of life can take on both meanings. When we say that somebody doesn't have a good life, we may mean that he/she lacks things deemed indispensable and/or that this person does not thrive. These conditions may coincide, but this is not necessarily the case. A person can be rich, powerful and popular, but still be troubled. On the other hand, someone who is poor, powerless and isolated, may nevertheless be thriving both mentally and physically.
Quality of life is concerned with the overall wellbeing of an individual in the society. It aims to enable the people to achieve their goals and choose their ideal off styles. It focuses upon the available material resources of an individual. It refers to the individual’s life situations, his conditions and perceptions, the economic and social situations are very important in the quality of life of an individual.

Quality of life is a multidimensional aspect; it is concerned with several life domains which contribute to the quality of life. It can be measured both objectively and subjectively. Quality of life gives a description and evaluation of individual’s conditions of life and its nature. It is mostly determined by the external factors with reference to the social groups, institutions of the society, technology, Infrastructure, natural environment and various other factors. It is also affected by the internal factors like the values of an individual and his interaction with the society.

Quality of life is a term that generally includes sense of subjective well-being, happiness and satisfaction with the life. World Health Organization (1998) has defined Quality of life as individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, standards, expectations and concerns.

It is a broad ranging concept, affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, and level of independence, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment. The tem Quality of life does not directly refer to “health status” or “lifestyle”, “life satisfaction”, “mental state” or “well-being”. It does not provide to measure the symptoms, diseases, or conditions, but it measures the effects of diseases and health interventions on Quality of life.
According to Costanza (2008) Quality of Life (QOL) has long been an explicit or implicit policy goal, adequate definition and measurement has been elusive. Diverse “objective” and “subjective” indicators across a range of disciplines and scales, and recent work on Subjective Well-Being (SWB) surveys and the psychology of happiness have spurred renewed interest. Quality Of Life (QOL) is used to evaluate the general well-being of individuals and societies. The term is used in a wide range of contexts, including the fields of international development, healthcare, and politics. Quality of life should not be confused with the concept of standard of living, which is based primarily on income. Gregory et al. (2009) said that, instead, standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment, but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation during leisure time, and social belonging.

A number of studies have reported on the effect of Vipassana meditation on many psychological variables. A few important studies are discussed here. The Results of research work conducted by Usha (1993) showed that the student, who practiced Vipassana meditation regularly, reported that their concentration, memory and comprehension of the material they read and listen have improved remarkably. In addition, she reported that in achieving purification of mind, as it is the central aspect of the Vipassana meditation, meditator also obtain the benefits at psychological and physical level of the mind and body. Further Vipassana as a cleaning process, illness are mechanically cured as a by-product.

Chandiramani et al. (1995) researcher tried Vipassana meditation training on jail inmates in trying to bring positive changes in their behavior, in this process of bringing positive change, he emphasized the analysis of morality and deeper psychological areas to bring consciousness in changing the life style, by altering the basic way of content and the processes of mind.
Khurana and Dhar (2002) from the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi conducted research into inmates at Tihar Prison. Their study is titled “The Effect of Vipassana Meditation on Quality of Life, Subjective Well-Being and Criminal Propensity among Inmates of Tihar Jail, Delhi”. Further many studies conducted in which he used different experimental designs, the results revealed that the adapting and practicing regular Vipassana meditation techniques signifies in; reducing hostility and anger and increasing positive behavior, increasing cooperation with in jail staff, decreasing in symptoms of psychopathological conditions and reducing recidivism. Easterlin and Cardena (1999) evaluated effects of Vipassana meditation in the daily lives of beginning and advanced meditators. Relative to the beginners, the advanced meditators reported greater awareness, positive mood, acceptance, lower anxiety levels, lower stress, and a healthier sense of control.

Life is complex and painful, a series of inner and outer conflicts. There must be an awareness of the mental and emotional attitudes which cause outward and physical disturbances. To understand them you must have time for quiet reflection; to be aware of your psychological states there must be periods of quiet solitude, a withdrawal from the noise and bustle of daily life and its routine. This active stillness is essential not only for the well-being of the mind-heart but for the discovery of the Real without which physical or moral well-being is of little significance.

The present day education system squares within four walls of classroom, where the learning experience restricted to study table only. The education system should focus on holistic development of students, which includes physical, psychological, psychosocial and spiritual development of individual who is going to be the productive citizen and responsible person of the society.
Present society expecting its generation to be the leaders, in doing so, it is an urgent need to extend education to provide those experiences, which guarantee in improvement of their quality of life and life satisfaction that ensure individual growth, to achieve better social and sustainable development. Further it is also important to make life better on the basement of humanistic dimension, introspection and self-analysis in finding purpose of life. In achieving these higher goals of life, the Vipassana as a meditational technique to fulfill this achievement. Obtained strong belief Vipassana played a significant role in transforming socio-cultural misbehavior in student’s life. The techniques of the meditation help in deeper psychological introspection in turns helps in positive behavioral changes, at this point it worth to explore and experiment to asses these changes in a scientific manner.

With this background the present study was planned to enhance the Life Satisfaction and Quality of Life of college students by using the Vipassana meditation technique as an intervention program.

**RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Vipassana meditation is unique in many ways. It is an ancient, free, nonprofessional, nonsectarian, ethical, universal, psychology of spiritual development. It is based upon methodical, continuous, objective observation of oneself at the level of sensations. This special form of observation catalyzes a multilevel systems development throughout the strata of one’s personality. Part of Vipassana unique contribution to mental health derives from its constellation of psychological actions. Vipassana induces changes at the molecular level and biology of the meditator’s body. It has a drastic effect at the psychological level. Vipassana is also value-based education. It incorporates a cognitive-behavioral psychology that encourages active practice of ideal ways of solving problems, interacting with others, or participating in society. It is an environmental
psychology that stresses the feedback loop of harmony. It is a path to nibbana, the transcendence of the material world. Finally, it is a unique tool of human growth, transformative from microstructure to illimitable expanse (Fleischman, 2005).

A number of studies have reported on the effect of Vipassana meditation on many psychological variables. Usha (2000) studied on effect of Vipassana meditation on physical and psychological aspects of college students. Chandramani (1995) revealed that Vipassana meditation brought positive changes in behavior of jail inmates. Khurana and Dhar (2002) saw an effect of Vipassana meditation on Quality of life among inmates of Tihar jail both the studies conducted on jail inmates. However, these studies have focused only on psychological variables such as personality, anxiety, depression, stress and maladjustment. The researchers conducted on these clinical variables focuses on negative or pathological aspects mental health. But no studies have focused positive psychological variables such as happiness, wellbeing, altruism and optimism. Therefore, the present study focuses on positive variables and normal adult students.

The products of benefits from the Vipassana meditation on various aspects of psycho- physical health of individuals has been reported in the above studies and it was assumed that similar results would come in the case of students. The satisfaction level with life should be a key consideration for an individual contemplating the benefits of Vipassana Meditation.

The present day educational system is not providing all round developmental experiences for the students. Present society expecting its generation to be the leaders, in doing so, it is an urgent need to extend education to provide those experiences, which guarantee in improvement of their quality of life and life satisfaction that ensure individual growth, to achieve better social and sustainable development. Further it is also important to make life better on the basement of humanistic dimension, introspection and
self-analysis in finding purpose of life. In achieving these higher goals of life, the Vipassana as a meditational technique to fulfill this achievement. Obtained strong belief that Vipassana played a significant role in transforming socio-cultural misbehavior in student’s life. The techniques of the meditation help in deeper psychological introspection in turns helps in positive behavioral changes, at this point it worth to explore and experiment to assess these changes in a scientific manner.

Since Vipassana is believed to be a technique that facilitates deeper psychological introspection and to bring about lasting behavioral changes, it was considered worthwhile to assess some of these changes in a scientific manner. Hence, keeping in the view of existing literature, the present research study is undertaken to aim at introducing Vipassana meditation to enhance Life satisfaction and Quality of life among college students.