



ISSN: 2456-4419

Impact Factor: (RJIF): 5.88

Yoga 2025; 10(2): 514-516

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www.theyogicjournal.com

Received: 08-09-2025

Accepted: 12-10-2025

Dr. Shantanu Mistri

Assistant Professor,

Department of Physical

Education, Banipur Mahila

Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal,

India

Role of Patanjali Yoga Sutra in pain catastrophe management

Shantanu Mistri

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/yogic.2025.v10.i2g.1828>

Abstract

Pain Catastrophizing may be defined as a negative emotional tendency to exaggerate the threat or seriousness of actual or anticipated pain. In India more than 37% people of age more than 45 years suffered from different types of pain. We recognize these pains when they appear in physical level (Vyadhi), but they are linked with psychological imbalance (Aadhi). When disorders due to psychological and emotional imbalance mix up with different types of pains, it generates the tendency of pain catastrophizing. As per the aphorisms of Patanjali Yoga Sutra avidya, asmita, raga, dvesha, and abhinivesha are the five causes of all pains and miseries. In the shlokas many ways are also given to be devoid of those pains and miseries by restraining our mind-stuff (Chitta) catching the web of thought from the external world.

Keywords: Pain catastrophe, Patanjali Yoga Sutra

Introduction

Pain Catastrophizing may be defined as a negative emotional tendency to exaggerate the threat or seriousness of actual or anticipated pain ^[5]. Pain catastrophizing is associated with pain-related worry, fear and inability to divert the mind away from the pain. American psychologist and psychotherapist Albert Ellis coined the term 'catastrophizing' formally for the first time ^[3]. Later, Aaron Beck adapted the term to describe the mal-adaptive cognitive behavior of anxiety and depressive disorder patients. ^[4]. Many instruments have been developed to assess the pain catastrophizing tendency of people but the questionnaires (Pain Catastrophizing Scale) developed by Sullivan *et al.* is the most popular and reliable tool to evaluate the pain catastrophizing tendency. The Pain Catastrophizing Scale assesses three types of factors-Magnification, Rumination and Helplessness which are believed to comprise much of the pain catastrophizing tendency.

In India more than 37% people of age more than 45 years suffered from different types of pain. Most of them are knee pains, followed by lower back pain and headache. The joint and muscle pain is the most common pain in India ^[7].

In today's high pace life people are bounded with different material needs. Many of them are external and many of them are internally created due to the liking and disliking followed by expectations and desires of material things. This perpetual growth of desires creates imbalance in psychological level called 'Aadhi' and gradually it percolates externally to physical level, called 'Vyadhi' ^[8]. Disparity between demand and individual capacity to meet those needs creates stress. Fear of achieving desires or fulfilling those needs creates anxiety. Eventually these stress, anxiety bring the feeling of sadness and loss of interest in life, Depression is grown. When these disorders due to psychological and emotional imbalance i.e. stress, anxiety, depression mix up with different types of pains, it generates the tendency of pain catastrophizing.

Most of these pains are treated with medication and surgery, which are expensive and associated with many side effects. Even long-term improvement is also not found. So, an alternate means of treatment which is cost effective, side effect free and long lasting is the need of the time.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Shantanu Mistri

Assistant Professor,

Department of Physical

Education, Banipur Mahila

Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal,

India

Methods

The theoretical research adopted a comprehensive literature review approach to find the linkage between the Patanjali Yoga Sutra and pain catastrophe management. This methodology started with a thorough review of current literature from different search engines, scholarly journals, and books. Then the basic text of the Patanjali Yoga Sutra was studied in detail to find specific aphorisms those provides teachings pertaining to pain and pain catastrophe management. A comparative analysis of the insight acquired from different literature review and contemporary technique of pain catastrophe management was done keeping in view the thorough comprehension of teaching from the 'shlokas' of Patanjali Yoga Sutra. The technique applied in this research article established a solid foundation for examining the practical consequences and future possibilities of applying Patanjali's teachings for pain catastrophe management.

Discussion of Pain Catastrophizing in Respect of Patanjali Yoga Sutra

According to the Patanjali Yoga Sutra aphorism-

“अविद्यस्मितरगद्वेषविनिवेशः पञ्चक्लेशः” (PYS 2/3)

Avidya (Ignorance), Asmita (Egoism), Raga (Attachment), Dvesha (Aversion), and Abhinivesha (Clinging to life) are the five causes of pains. These five folds of pains are cause of all our misery. The nature of our eternal soul is always blissful but avidya (Ignorance) creates delusion and gives us pain and make us sorrowful.

As per the shloka-

“अविद्या क्षेत्रमुतरेषन्ग प्रसुप्ततनुविच्छिन्नोदराणां” (PYS 2/4)

Avidya (Ignorance) also cause the rest four folds of pains i.e. Asmita (Egoism), Raga (Attachment), Dvesha (Aversion), and Abhinivesha (Clinging to life). They may be in different state such as dormant, attenuated, overpowered or expanded. The yoga philosophy says whenever our Chitta (Mind-stuff) is destructed we succumb in the misery. The 30th aphorism of Samadhipada in Patanjali Yoga Sutra it is said-

“व्यधिस्त्यन्सङ्गश्च

प्रमदल्स्याविरतिभ्रन्तिदर्शनलब्ध

भूमिक्त्वन्नबस्थितत्त्वनि चित्तविक्षेपोस्तेहन्तरयः” (PYS 1/30)

It means disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyment, false perception, lack of concentration, falling away from the state of obtained concentration are the mind distracting obstruction.

According to the aphorism

“दुःखदौर्मनस्यन्गमेजयत्वश्चास्पृश्वस्विकशेषसहभुवः” (PYS 1/31)

whenever destruction of Chitta occurred, it is associated with grief, mental distress, physical tremor and irregular breathing. Avidya (Ignorance) brings delusion and we become attracted and attached to the material things influenced by our indriyas

(Senses). Chittabikshepkar antarayas breaks the 'Sthirata' (Inner peace) of Chitta and bring grief, mental distress, irregular breathing which devoid us to be 'Ekagra' (Concentrated). As a result, stress, anxiety, depressions are developed, followed by pain and pain catastrophizing tendency. But there are lots of remedies mentioned in the aphorism of Patanjali Yoga Sutra, which can help us to find the way to be free from pain catastrophizing tendency. The aphorism no-32 of Samadhipada says-

“तत्प्रतिशेधार्थमेकतत्त्व्याभ्यासः” (PYS 1/32),

which means taking the form of one object for some time may eradicate all the antarayas (Obstacles).

As per the shloka-

“प्रच्छेदने-विधर्षणं वा प्राणस्य” (PYS 1/34)

throwing out and restraining the prana will help us to bring 'Sthirata' (Calmness) in our chitta.

In another aphorism

“विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती” (PYS 1/36)

it is advised to meditate on any matter of effulgent light to bring concentration of chitta and be beyond all sorrows.

In our daily lives we face many situations where our mind-stuff or chitta get irritated and be restless. The remedies are mentioned in the shloka-

“मैत्री-करुणा-मुदितोपेक्षणं

सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयानां भवनातश्चित्तप्रसदनम्” (PYS 1/33)

It says we should sow friendship, mercy, gladness and indifference attitudes to the subjects happy, misery, good and evil respectively to quieten our chitta.

In the shloka-

“हेयं दुःखमनागतम्” (PYS 2/16)

it is said that we should avoid the misery which is not yet come. This is an advice to work on the aspect that we can control without being stressed and anxious about the matter yet not come.

Aphorism no 26 of Sadhanapada says

“बिबेकख्यातिरविप्लवा हानोपायः” (PYS 2/26)

It means the way of demolishing ignorance is the practice of continuous discrimination between real and unreal. Then we will realize that our inner 'Purusha' is neither nature nor matter or mind. It is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. In the shloka

“वितर्कबाधने प्रतिपक्षभावनम्” (PYS 2/33)

It is advised to bring contrary thought against any harmful thought comes in our mind.

Many aphorisms are described here which give us different way out to keep our chitta (Mind-stuff) in control (Atmaniyant) and get rid of pain catastrophizing tendency. Swami Vivekananda in Raja Yoga said that one practice may not suit everyone, various methods are mentioned there, and everyone should find the method suits him most by actual experience.

The mechanism of being ever blissful devoid of all sorrows are described in the second and third aphorism of Samadhipada-

“योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः” (PYS 1/2)

It means yoga is preventing the mind-stuff (Chitta) from its deviation or adopting various forms called Vrittis. As per Raja Yoga of Swami Vivekananda we are the only sentient being. Our ‘Indriys’(External and internal sense organs), ‘Manas’(Mind), ‘Buddhi’ (Determining faculty), ‘Ahamkara’ (Egoism) form together the ‘Antakarana’. These are various processes in the mind-stuff called Chitta. Chitta takes various wave of thought from the external world called Vrittis. Mind is the instrument through which we connect with the external world.

“तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेहस्थनम्” (PYS 1/3)

means if we can restrain the Chitta catching anyssssssss web of thought from the external world, then our real ‘I’ the seer can rest in our own state which is ever pleasant.

Conclusion

In terms of discussion of pain catastrophizing in respect of Patanjali Yoga Sutra it is observed that

- There are many aphorisms in Patanjali Yoga Sutra which clearly stated the causes of pain and pain catastrophizing (Klesha) and the way to get recovered from them.
- Analysis of the aphorism of Patanjali Yoga Sutra revealed many ways of liberation from pain and pain catastrophizing. The suffered person can choose any of the method out of many by actual experience as per the advice of Swamiji.
- Aphorisms of Patanjali Yoga Sutra may also be followed as a preventive measure of pain and pain catastrophizing.
- The aphorism may help us to realize the philosophy of yoga and attain the ever-blissful state i.e. ‘Anandamay’ Swarupa Abastha’.

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