

# A Study on Awareness of Mindfulness and its Impact on the Mental Health of Citizens of Nashik District

Thete AS<sup>1\*</sup> and Khairnar TD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Professor MVP'S KBTCOE, Nashik

<sup>2</sup>Professor & Head of Department of MBA, MVP'S KBTCOE, Nashik

\*Corresponding author: Thete AS, Asst. Professor MVP'S KBTCOE, Nashik

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## Abstract

Mindfulness is a very ancient technique that originates from the Eastern culture and has roots in Buddhism. It is said to be older than 2500 years. Many have been inspired by Mindfulness. In the Western world, this concept was introduced by Jon Kabat-Zinn and his colleagues at the University of Massachusetts. In today's world where technology and life seem to be moving at a much faster pace, we can see that humans are getting entangled with stress, anxiety, work pressure, peer pressure, loss of focus, and many other issues. Due to all these factors, we see that there is a hike in heart attacks and neurological diseases. Mindfulness can play a vital role in tackling all these issues. The irony here is that most people think that mindfulness can be achieved only through meditation or yoga, and that too has to be practiced at a particular time and in a suitable environment. Whereas mindfulness can be achieved by practicing it in every moment. So, it can be said that Mindfulness is not an activity that needs to be done once a day, rather it is a way of living in every moment. This lifestyle needs to be practiced and that can have a good impact on the mental health of the citizens. There are many techniques by which this can be achieved and there is the necessity of teaching these techniques to the world. This study is about understanding the level of awareness that the citizens of Nashik have about Mindfulness and the impact that mindfulness has on their mental health.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness, Mental Health, Stress Management, Mindfulness-Based Intervention (MBI), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Work Pressure, Anxiety, Peer Pressure

## Introduction

Mindfulness is all about living in the present moment and not being judgmental towards the things that happen to you or the situations that you are in and accepting them as they are. A focused mind can perform well only when it is active in the present tense. Thinking too much of the past or worrying about the future causes you to lose your mindfulness. Jon Kabat-Zinn after taking professional training from the Buddhist meditation teachers Philip Kapleau and Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn Haengwon, also took further training from Soto and Rinzai Zen traditions, Chögyam Trungpa's "Meditation in Action", Thich Nhat Hanh's "The Miracle of Mindfulness", and the yogic traditions. Basically, Jon Kabat-Zinn had found his answers and decided to bring them to the front of the world. He decided to blend the Eastern technique with the Western mind. So he replaced the cultural ideologies and religious sentiments associated with Buddhism and blended them with the "Western mind" and culture. This gave rise to the genesis of the first formalized mindfulness-based intervention (MBI), called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

(MBSR). Mindfulness can be practiced in a formal way as well as an informal way. The formal way is more inclined towards having dedicated time allocated to practicing mindfulness. It involves meditation, focusing on self-movements, and practicing to be present and non-judgmentally getting aware of oneself. On the other hand, the informal way of practicing mindfulness is in each and every moment you live or every activity you do. The concept over here is practicing to be aware in each activity that we do like walking, eating, doing household chores, talking to others, driving, and so on. It trains our brain to bring attention back to the work that we are doing in the present to get it done in a more efficient and focused way. The mindfulness has many techniques and the sources can be any like books, websites, friends, workshops, seminars, webinars, and so on. The awareness of this concept in the people is to be studied in this pilot study.

The different types of techniques by which mindfulness can be practiced are meditation, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy,

mindfulness-based stress reduction, guided imagery, diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, tai-chi, walking meditation, transcendental meditation, qigong, journaling, samatha-vipassana, and many more.

### Objective of the Study

1. To Explore the Concept of Mindfulness.
2. To Assess the Current State of Mindfulness Awareness.
3. To identify the mechanisms through which mindfulness impacts the mental health of Citizens.

### Literature Review

The author Sarwate Rucha is her research paper named “Effects of Mindfulness Training Programme on Early Adolescents Mindfulness Skills Emotional Competence and Adjustment” states that Mindfulness-based interventions are increasingly being incorporated in school settings to promote the well-being of school children. In the present quasi-experimental study, a Pre-post -follow-up design with a waitlist control group was employed to assess the effects of a mindfulness- training program on early adolescents' mindfulness skills, emotional competence, and adjustment. Descriptive analysis and Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on post-assessment scores and follow-up scores were used to compare group differences. Pre-scores were used as co- variate. Along with the quantitative data, qualitative data was analyzed using percentages and by finding out commonalities and specific responses by participants. Results suggested that there was a significant increase in the mindfulness skills, emotional competence and adjustment of the experimental group as compared to the control group at the post as well as follow-up assessments. This study also explored the questions regarding acceptability and feasibility of the mindfulness-based training program from the - perspective of participants. Qualitative analysis of participants' experiences suggested that the mindfulness-based training program was perceived to be relevant and helpful by the students.

In a research paper titled “Cognitive Monitoring Role of Personality and Mindfulness”, the author Thakur Kalpana, states that many scientists have It can be safely concluded that big personality traits and dispositional mindfulness have significant linear correlation with cognitive monitoring and that dispositional mindfulness has significant moderation effect on the association between personality traits and indicators of cognitive monitoring.

Jon Kabat-Zinn (1982) made the first attempt to define mindfulness without reference to a religious backdrop and this definition still stands out to be the most famous and prominent. Kabat-Zinn defined it as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose in the present moment and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.”

### Research Methodology

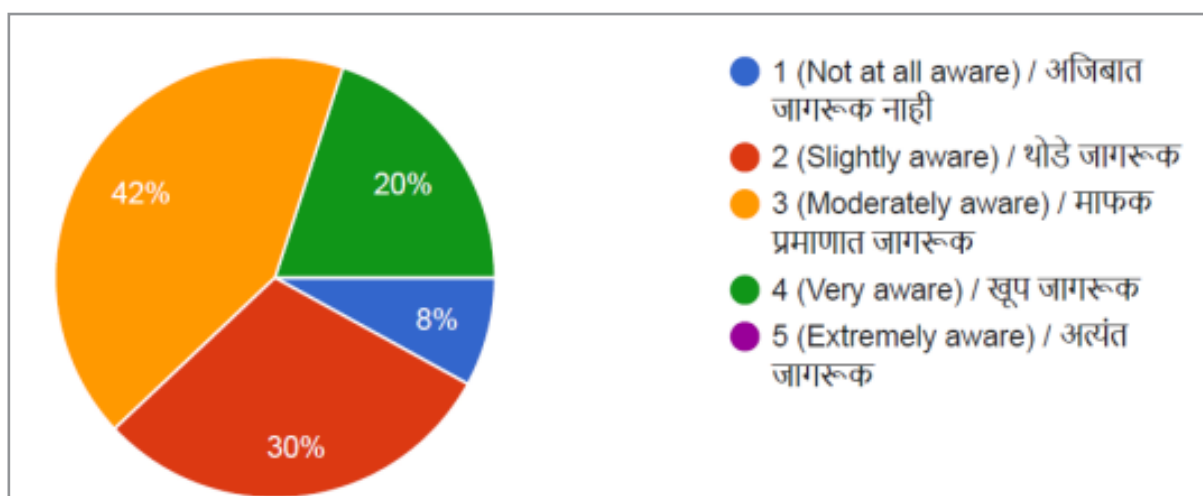
This research involves a study of the concept of Mindfulness and the awareness among the citizens of the Nashik District and the impact that various mindfulness techniques would have on the mental health of the citizens. For this study, the researcher has taken a sample of 100 citizens of different ages, education, gender, and profession. The data was collected by way of a questionnaire in two languages English and Marathi.

### Data Collection and Analysis

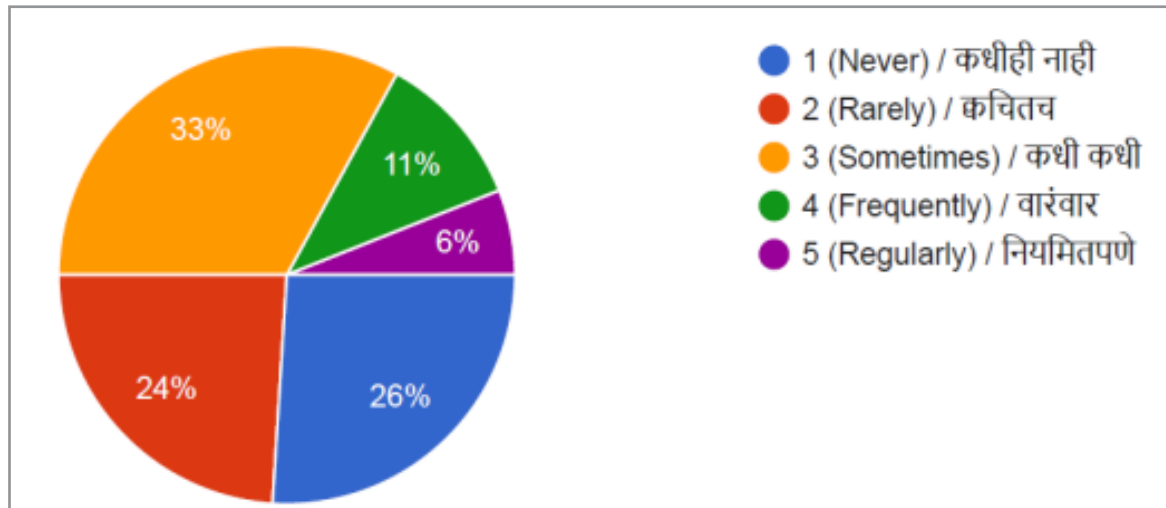
A structured Questionnaire is circulated among the citizens of Nashik city and data is collected on the following Parameters. The sample size contains 34% female and 66% male respondents out of which 34.3% are from the 18-30 years age group, 30.3% belong to the 30-40 age group, 14.1% belong to the 40-50 age group, 19.2% are from 50-60 age group and 2.1% belongs to 60 & above age group. The educational segmentation analysis states that from the above 39% are postgraduate, 43% are graduate, 15% are HSC passed and 3% are SSC passed. Their work status shows that 45% are from the service sector, 25% are students, 15% have businesses, 7% are housewives and 8% belong to other occupations.

The respondents responded to the questionnaire as below:

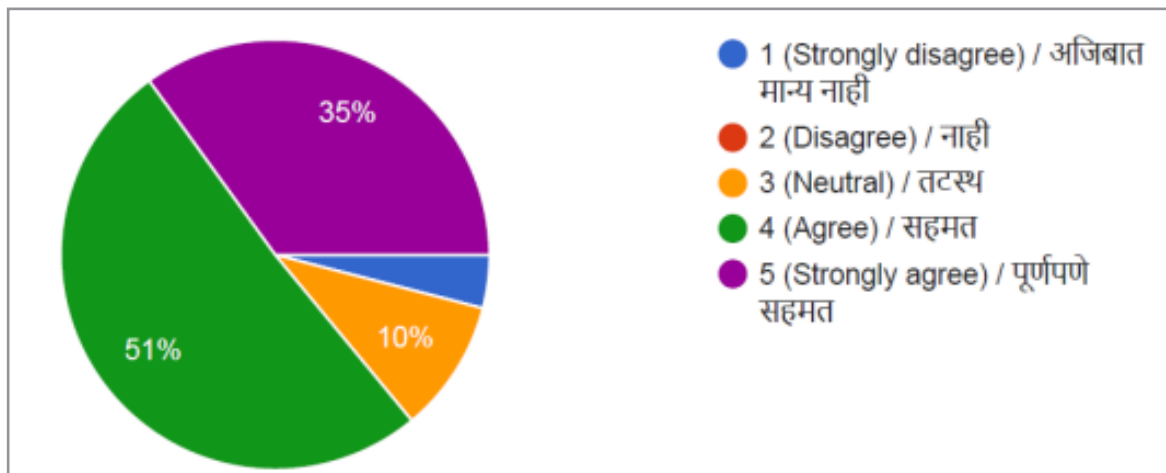
1. How aware are you of the concept of mindfulness? / माइंडफुलनेसच्या संकल्पनेबद्दल तुम्ही किती जागरूक आहात?



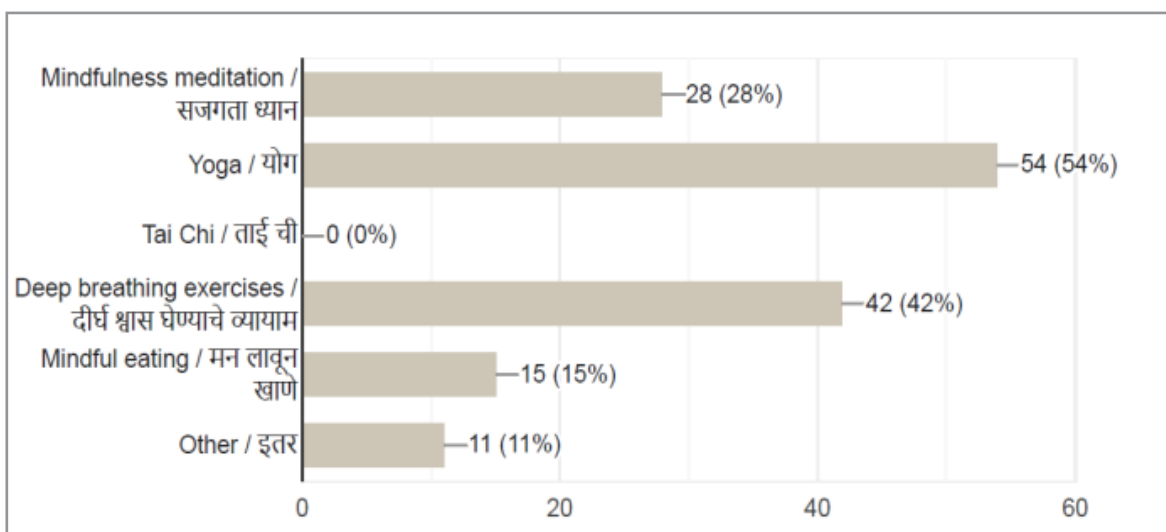
2. Have you ever practiced mindfulness, meditation, or any related techniques? / तुम्ही कधी माइंडफुलनेस, ध्यानधारणा किंवा संबंधित तंत्रांचा सराव केला आहे का?



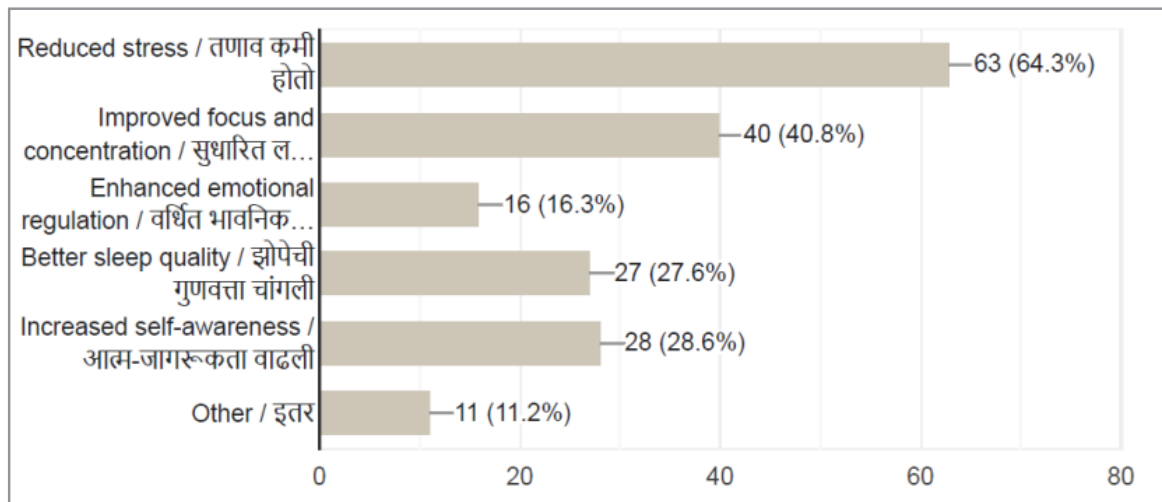
3. Do you believe mindfulness can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being? / तुमचा विश्वास आहे की सजगतेचा मानसिक आरोग्यावर आणि आरोग्यावर सकारात्मक परिणाम होऊ शकतो ?



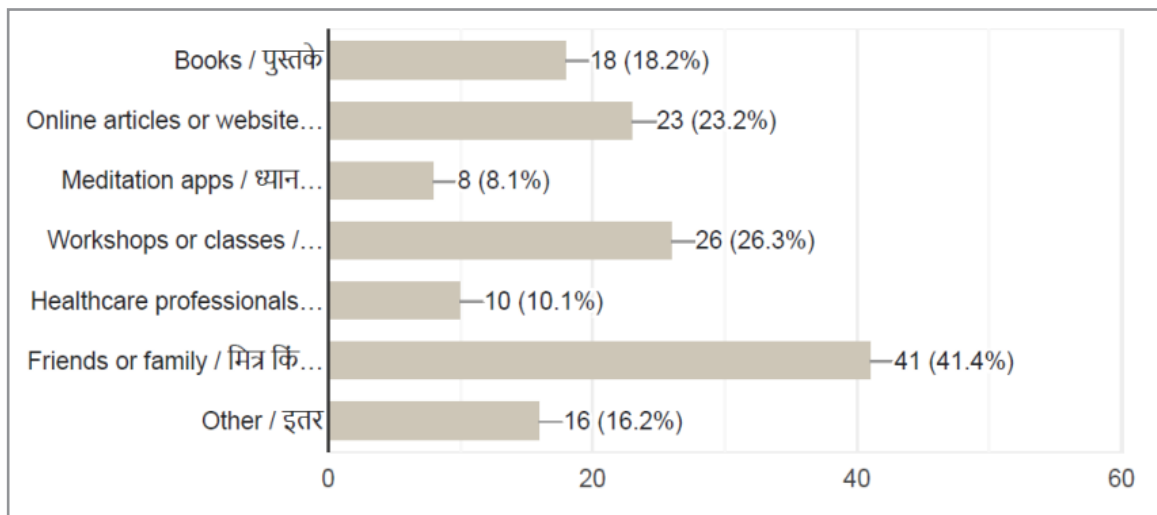
4. Are you familiar with any mindfulness techniques? / तुम्ही कोणत्याही माइंडफुलनेस तंत्राशी परिचित आहात का?



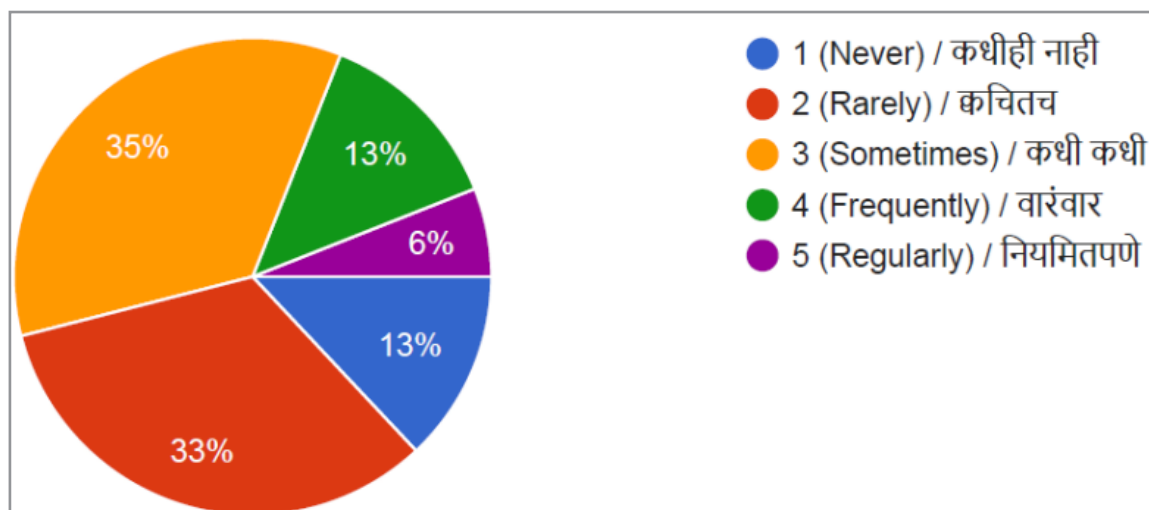
5. If you have practiced mindfulness, what benefits have you experienced? / जर तुम्ही माइंडफुलनेसचा सराव केला असेल, तर तुम्हाला कोणते फायदे अनुभवले आहेत?



6. Where have you learned about mindfulness or mindfulness practices? / तुम्ही माइंडफुलनेस किंवा माइंडफुलनेस पद्धतीबद्दल कुठे शिकलात?



7. How often do you consciously practice mindfulness in your daily life? / तुम्ही तुमच्या दैनंदिन जीवनात किती वेळा जाणीवपूर्वक माइंडफुलनेसचा सराव करता?



## Findings

The survey showed that 20% of the respondents are very aware, 40% are moderately aware, 30% are slightly aware and 8% are not at all aware about the concept. We conclude that most of the people are aware of the mindfulness concept.

35% of the respondents strongly agreed and 51% of the respondents agreed that the practice of mindfulness does have an impact on the mental health of the citizen. Whereas 10% chose to be neutral, while 4% of them strongly disagreed with the statement. More than 75% agreed that there is a significant impact on the mental health of citizens.

Further, the study shows that due to practicing mindfulness 63% of people are able to notice that there has been a reduction in their stress level, 40% of people have achieved better focus and concentration, 16% of people have seen an enhancement in regulating their emotions, 27% people have gained a better sleep quality and 28% of them have been able to increase their self-awareness.

## Discussion

Mindfulness, rooted in Eastern contemplative traditions, has gained significant attention in Western psychology and health-care settings over the past few decades. Its theoretical and practical implications extend across various domains, from mental health and well-being to cognitive functioning and interpersonal relationships.

### Theoretical Implications

#### Attention and Awareness

**Enhanced Cognitive Functioning:** Mindfulness theories posit that regular practice cultivates heightened attention and awareness. This heightened state can lead to improved cognitive functions such as concentration, memory, and decision-making.

#### Emotional Regulation

**Emotion Regulation:** Mindfulness practices often emphasize non-judgmental awareness of emotions. Theoretically, this can lead to improved emotional regulation and resilience. Individuals may become better equipped to respond to challenging situations with greater emotional balance.

#### Neuroplasticity

**Impact on Brain Structure:** Theoretical implications suggest that mindfulness can induce neuroplastic changes in the brain. Studies propose that regular practice might lead to alterations in the structure and function of certain brain regions associated with self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation.

#### Mind-Body Connection

**Holistic Well-being:** Mindfulness is often linked to the mind-body connection. Theoretical perspectives propose that the practice fosters a holistic approach to well-being by acknowledging the interdependence of mental and physical health.

#### Spiritual and Existential Dimensions

**Connection to Existential Well-being:** Some theoretical perspectives connect mindfulness to existential well-being, suggesting that it can provide individuals with a sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to the present moment.

## Practical Implications

### Mental Health

**Stress Reduction:** Mindfulness-based interventions have demonstrated practical effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety. Incorporating mindfulness into therapeutic practices can offer individuals practical tools for managing their mental health.

### Clinical Applications

**Treatment for Mental Disorders:** Mindfulness-based interventions, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), have been integrated into clinical settings to treat various mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety disorders.

### Workplace Productivity

**Enhanced Focus and Productivity:** In practical terms, mindfulness in the workplace has been associated with increased focus, better decision-making, and improved overall productivity. Companies are incorporating mindfulness programs to support employee well-being.

### Education

**Improved Learning Environment:** In education, incorporating mindfulness practices has shown promise in creating a positive learning environment. Students and teachers may experience reduced stress and improved attention, potentially enhancing the educational experience.

### Interpersonal Relationships

**Enhanced Interpersonal Skills:** Mindfulness practices often emphasize empathy and non-reactive communication. Practically, this can lead to improved interpersonal relationships, both personally and professionally.

In conclusion, the theoretical foundations of mindfulness underscore its potential to impact various aspects of human experience, from cognitive functioning to emotional well-being. The practical applications of mindfulness, as evidenced in diverse settings, highlight its adaptability and potential to enhance individual and collective flourishing. However, ongoing research is essential to deepen our understanding of its mechanisms and refine its practical implementation in diverse contexts.

## Conclusion

Mindfulness is a boon to humankind and it's very necessary in today's world that we understand the importance of these techniques and start practicing them as the lifestyle that we are in, nowadays has many side effects on our mind, body, and health. To tackle them one must be self-aware and focused to live in the present without being judgmental about anything and accepting the things as they are. The survey showed that the respondents did have an idea about the mindfulness concept and many have also experienced the impact these mindfulness practices have on the mental health of the citizens of Nashik District. It was observed that through practicing mindfulness one can get various benefits like a reduction in stress level and anxiety, better sleep quality, enhanced emotional regulation, increase in focus and concentration. In future, there are certain areas that researchers can explore like working on a single technique and noting the impact that they have on humans.

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