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Rajyoga Meditation and Psychological Well-Being Among Adult Women: A Review of Its Role in Self-Awareness, Emotional Regulation and Self-Esteem

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Abstract
Rajyoga meditation is the special form of meditation implying the expansion of the self or self-awareness or rather the spiritual being and positive interaction with the self and higher powers. Meditation became popular because of its numerous benefits, for instance, psychological stability, increased emotional control, reduced level of stress, and improved self-esteem. Adult women, in particular, have many responsibilities for their social life, work, parents, children, marriage, and love which may lead to negative emotions and decreased self-esteem. Therefore, it is essential to improve self-awareness, achieve positive thinking, and regain control of the psyche. The present paper aims to demonstrate the relationship between Rajyoga meditation and psychological wellbeing with a specific focus on self-awareness, regulation of emotions, positive thinking, spiritual awareness, and self-esteem. For that purpose, Rosenberg's concept of self-esteem will be used in order to explain the necessity of improving the self-image through Rajyoga meditation and to prove that psychological wellbeing can be increased. The reviewed articles revealed that meditation helps to increase positive emotions and reduce stress. The articles also showed that Rajyoga meditation, in particular, and meditation and yoga, in general, are associated with various psychological benefits, including improved selfesteem with minor differences between results. However, it should be noted that the research base on Rajyoga meditation is not so vast, and more prominent studies demonstrated that mindfulness meditation is more beneficial for psychological wellbeing than Rajyoga meditation. Therefore, Rajyoga meditation should be regarded as a tool which can be used as an additional method for the treatment of various psychological conditions.
The review established that Rajyoga meditation could improve psychological wellbeing of females by increasing self-awareness, managing emotions, developing positive thinking, and enhancing spiritual awareness. Further experimental and longitudinal studies need to be conducted to establish the effect of the Rajyoga meditation on the wellbeing of adult women in the community.

Keywords: Rajyoga meditation, adult women, self-esteem, self-awareness, emotional regulation, psychological wellbeing, spiritual awareness, and positive thinking.

1. Introduction
Psychological well-being is one of the components of healthy and happy life. It is the ability to realize one's potential and maintain a state suitable for functioning as a whole personality that can adapt to all conditions, satisfy one's needs, manage relationships, regulate emotions, and deal with problems. Moreover, it is the ability to find a place in society, find a career, and other activities that are pleasant and beneficial to you, feel joy, enthusiasm, self-confidence, and other positive emotions. It seems that women's psychological well-being is influenced by many factors associated with their roles as daughters, wives, mothers, caregivers, workers, and members of society, as well as the constant struggle for their self-realization. All these roles require a lot of effort and time, which leads to psychological trauma, and women have less time and energy for themselves.

Self-esteem is one of the essential components of psychological wellbeing that reflects the global self-perception and self-assessment. Rosenberg developed the concept of self-esteem to understand people's experiences of either positive or negative attitudes toward their selves. The Rosenberg Self-

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Esteem Scale, created by Rosenberg, was constructed of 10 items measuring the global self-worth of the subjects. This scale was one of the first attempts to assess global self-esteem; consequently, it became a well-validated instrument used in psychological studies.

While facing criticism, comparisons, overprotection, parent pressure, overbearing responsibilities, and perception of inadequacy, a female can depreciate her selfperception. However, if a person sufficiently understands themselves, it will enable them to positively confront a challenging situation. Therefore, meditation is subjected to scientific research to prove its ability to let a person comprehend their inner world.

The Rajyoga meditation is beneficial due to its focus on the awareness of the self. Instead of trying to relax the body, Rajyoga calls upon a person to bring forth their truest self, thoughts, emotions, and connection to the Supreme and through the practice, one learns to improve their thought processes. One is to learn positivity, observe their thoughts, and gain strength of character, peace, love, purity, tolerance, and other desired qualities.
The connection between meditation and self-esteem lies in that a person's ability to judge themselves depends on how they see their experiences and thoughts. Thus, if meditation helps to prevent negative thought patterns, it might help to improve selfesteem.

Research on meditation in general has produced positive results. For example, in a 2024 randomized online experiment, it was shown that an interveiw in the form of mindfulness meditation can reduce the damaging effects of exposure to images of idealized bodies on self-esteem, mood, and body appreciation among women. Another study conducted among women treated for breast cancer demonstrated that a
combined mindfulness-based meditation and yoga intervention can improve selfesteem and body image.

However, one cannot apply the results of these studies to Rajyoga, as this system has its own distinct principles and philosophy; therefore, research on Rajyoga meditation should also be conducted.

2. Understanding Rajyoga Meditation

Rajyoga, which may also be spelled as Raja Yoga, is essentially an ancient science of achieving mastery over the mind. Modern-day Rajyoga meditation focuses heavily on the realisation that one's self is not defined by the physical body, but rather the spiritual entity within said body. The meditative practices of Rajyoga call for the redirection of one's consciousness inwards, onto the self. The most basic difference from other types of meditation, especially the one described by Rajyoga, is awareness. A person can sit comfortably, fix (or not fix) their gaze, and think happy thoughts. The point is not to drive the mind to nothingness but to have control over it.

The simplest form of Rajyoga meditation could include thinking about such thoughts as:

"I am a peaceful soul,"
"I am aware of myself,"
"I am calm and serene,"
"I am a valuable human being,"
"I can respond to a stimulus in a wise way"

Statements like these may create positive affirmations and help in shifting the mind into another pattern, however, what is mentioned above should by no means be considered an actual treatment or an ultimate solution to any psychological disorder, psychiatric problem, or a mental illness. Rajyoga meditation can be practiced individually or in a group of people. With that being said, it is important to mention that it is essential to develop a habit of practicing them, as meditation ultimately is all about cultivating a habit. Furthermore, it should be spread throughout your daily life and not only happen on a meditation cushion.

3. Rajyoga Meditation and Self-Awareness

Self-awareness means ability or awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, motives, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses among others. It is the basic foundation of emotional and psychological development. Most people tend to be quick on the trigger when faced with certain behaviors. For instance, if one person criticizes you, most individuals usually respond in anger or sadness or even depression. A self-aware person would at least have a choice of identifying his or her emotions

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before getting angry. This difference is extremely crucial to self-esteem. One who bases the self-conception solely on transient matters tends to depreciate oneself. Failing the examination, for instance, may lead to the thought of being a failure. In contrast, the self-awareness may prompt a more realistic appraisal of the situation: I have failed the test, but it defines me no less than the passing would have.

It is from this point that Rajyoga's focus on self-recognition may be seen as a bridge to meditation through the establishment of a healthier self-esteem. One who perceives himself to be defined by his looks, job, wealth, or even success and thus bases his self-conception on these ever-changing aspects of his life is bound to depreciate himself when any of these fails or when he encounters a more prosperous peer. However, through the understanding of spiritual self, such a person may realize that he is so much more than his physical body and social possessions and that true selfworth stems from within and is eternal.

For adult women, this could be especially empowering. A woman's identity is often inextricably linked to her social role: she is expected to be a mother, daughter, wife, employee, caregiver – the list goes on. While these roles are undeniably fulfilling and rewarding, they only constitute a part of who she is. Rajyoga teaches you to be aware of your deeper self – the one that is not defined by external circumstances and rules. Therefore, the self-awareness process is the mechanism by which meditation has its positive effect on self-esteem.

4. Rajyoga Meditation and Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the ability to perceive, comprehend, control, and express emotions. It does not mean that people should hide their feelings. Effective emotional regulation allows them to manage and balance their emotional state adequately. Many adult women can lose emotional control due to various circumstances in their lives. They often face difficulties associated with family, social, professional, economic, and interpersonal problems. All these stressors require more attention and proper emotional regulation. Otherwise, they lead to emotional disorders and affect self-esteem.

Meditation Practice for Enhancing Emotional Awareness

Meditation can improve a person's emotional awareness. This is because he/she will start focusing on his/her emotions and not act out on them immediately, thus improving his/her control over them. This effect has been observed in the case of Rajyoga. A research study performed on healthcare workers showed that Rajyoga meditation had a beneficial effect on depression, anxiety, and stress, as compared to stress-management counselling. The meditation was practiced for three months. Another work evaluated the easy type of Raja Yoga as an intervention for patients with spinal cord injury. After one-month intervention, the experimental group showed a decrease in stress levels, anxiety, depression, pain, and an increase in the quality of life and functional performance as compared to the control group. However, the authors note the need for further intervention studies using stronger designs to confirm the results.

These results are indeed valuable and should be considered as significant contributions to the subject under investigation, although they should not be generalized to suggest that Rajyoga will necessarily produce equally positive results in all populations. The results presented are, however, helpful in suggesting further lines of research that may help identify a possible mechanism by which Rajyoga practice may lead to the observed benefits for the mental health of the participants.

5. Rajyoga Meditation and Positive Thinking

Thoughts shape emotions. The negative thoughts that can be trapped in a person include: "I'm not good enough", "I can't do it", "They are better than me" etc. Such thoughts and many other similar ones usually result in decreased self-esteem. The Rajyoga Meditation technique teaches to replace them with positive and healthy thoughts. It does not mean that you have to ignore the real world, but instead, see the other side of the medal and understand that you can control your emotions.

For example, if a negative thought says: "I can't cope with this situation", you should reply: "This is a challenging moment, but I will keep a cool head and do the right thing".

ISSN: 3139-0854

In other words, positive thinking would help to build the right mindset, which would influence your emotions and behavior. Secondly, positive thoughts would improve your self-esteem since your brain would generate happy hormones due to thoughts of peace, harmony, honor, compassion, and self-love. However, positive thinking should not be conflated with unrealistic optimism; effective coping requires realistic optimism, acknowledgment of negative emotions, and responsible action. Rajyoga meditation may well be successfully practiced in conjunction with positive thinking, but it should also be used with realistic optimism, acceptance of emotions, and appropriate action.

6. Rajyoga Meditation and Spiritual Awareness

One thing that differentiates Rajyoga from many secular forms of meditation is that it has a spiritual slant to it. Spiritual orientation may take many forms but most commonly it involves the understanding of the self and often the ultimate goal of life, one's values and principles, and one's relationship with God or the supreme soul. According to Rajyoga, the self is understood to be the soul - a conscious principle inhabiting the human body. I believe this approach to meditation has an immense power to enhance self-esteem. Physical appearance, age, profession, financial situation, social status, and many other external factors may change throughout life. These changes should not affect a person's self-esteem if one's sense of worth is based on something bigger than their physical presence in this world.

For adult women, this concept might be particularly relevant. In their lives, they face transitions which alter their status in the family, job, appearance, or social role. These changes often affect their sense of self. The ability to maintain a stable psychological image of who one is might be crucial in such situations so that they are not overwhelmed by the changing roles and responsibilities. Their self-esteem should be based on a solid internal core regardless of these transitions. This statement, however, cannot be supported as either scientific or philosophical truth because there is no sufficient data to assess its validity. It is a hypothetical and unproven assertion that could be scientifically examined using the research methods described in this module.

7. Self-Esteem: Conceptual Understanding

Self-evaluation is the global extent to which an individual views himself or herself to be worthy or an adequate person. It consists of the degree to which a person has positive attitudes toward himself or herself and views himself or herself to be competent and deserving of respect from others.

Rosenberg (1965) proposed a 10-item measure of global self-esteem to evaluate the extent to which a person holds positive or negative attitudes about himself or herself. The scale contains positively and negatively worded statements and is designed to measure self-esteem holistically. Self-esteem should not be confused with arrogance or narcissism; it does not mean that a person has too good an opinion of himself in comparison with others. Correct self-esteem is a positive but realistic estimate of oneself and recognition of the value of others.

Feelings of worthlessness, excessive self-criticism, negativity, inferiority, competitiveness, and a lack of recognition of one's own merits are some of the symptoms of deficient self-esteem. Self-confidence, self-respect, acceptance of others and yourself, and a realistic but positive attitude about your abilities are some of the manifestations of self-esteem. According to Rajyoga, to develop self-esteem, it is necessary to become aware of the transition from external to internal criticism.

8. How Rajyoga May Influence Self-Esteem

The possible relationship between Rajyoga meditation and self-esteem can be identified in various ways.

8.1 Self-awareness

Regular meditation may increase awareness of thoughts and emotions. Greater awareness can help individuals identify negative self-talk and question unhelpful beliefs.

8.2 Emotional regulation

When individuals learn to pause before reacting, emotional experiences may become less overwhelming. Better emotional regulation can contribute to greater confidence in one's ability to handle difficult situations.

ISSN: 3139-0854

8.3 Positive self-perception

Repeated reflection on positive qualities may encourage a more balanced view of oneself. Instead of focusing only on weaknesses, individuals may recognize strengths and possibilities for growth.

8.4 Reduced dependence on external evaluation

A person who is excessively reliant on praise, appearance, rank, or reputation may find themselves with fragile self-esteem. A concentration on inner identity, as taught by Rajyoga, could help such a person to gain a more lasting sense of self-worth.

8.5 Spiritual identity

The notion of the self as a spiritual entity could be helpful in establishing a sound basis for identity. It could ground one's inner convictions in something deeper, more lasting, and less susceptible to the pressures of the physical world.

8.6 Positive relationships

Being less emotional and reactive can help people in their relationships. Having better relationships can then lead to higher self-esteem. Therefore, the causal link is not that straight forward:



This conceptual pathway can be useful for future empirical research.

9. Rajyoga Meditation and Women's Psychological Well-Being

Women are highly diverse in terms of their socio-economic, cultural, educational, and family background, which is why the impact of meditation may have different effects on them. However, meditation may create an opportunity for each woman to take a pause from her everyday life and reflect, which will undoubtedly be helpful for many women in terms of their psychological wellbeing. Such an opportunity may be extremely important for women who put a lot of effort into caring for others.

The effectiveness of meditation techniques on the psychological function of female patients was supported by scientific research, which carried out an experiment on women who have recently undergone breast cancer surgery and found that an eightweek program of meditation and yoga significantly improved their self-esteem and body image and reduced anxiety. Similarly, a study conducted among postmenopausal women demonstrated that participation in a mindfulness-based educational intervention was linked to increased self-esteem and marital intimacy relative to the control group.

Findings from trials investigating the effectiveness of yoga as a means of improving self-esteem among middle-aged women have been inconsistent. Results from a randomized controlled trial, which included 164 previously inactive middle-aged women, revealed that walking or yoga had no effect on global or physical self-esteem; however, an improvement was noted in some self-esteem domains.

This mixed evidence is critical, which implies that the impact of meditation and yoga on enhancing self-esteem cannot be generalized. The influence could be depending on the type of intervention, length, the population, measure, adherence, and design.

10. Evidence from Meditation Research

Although the studies specific to the effects of Rajyoga are limited, the research on other forms of meditation is also worth noting. A 2024 experiment with female young adults used a randomized design to evaluate how training in brief mindfulness meditation could reduce the negative effects of viewing idealized social-media images and demonstrated decreases in psychological distress. Another study tested the effect of six-week yoga and meditation modules with medical students and found decreases in perceived stress and increases in mindfulness, tranquility, and vigor.

These studies suggest that meditative interventions can influence the relevant psychological processes

ISSN: 3139-0854

associated with self-esteem. However, it should be noted that the data should be interpreted in the context of the type of meditation used.

Rajyoga differs from mindfulness meditation in both philosophical foundations and content. As such, the evidence presented for mindfulness meditation is only contextual background data for Rajyoga, which is what is being reviewed in this paper. This consideration is particularly relevant to this review paper, as it is designed to present the data in an organized fashion, and as such, the author should make a clear distinction between findings related to

1. Rajyoga,
2. other types of meditation and
3. theoretical foundations and evidence related to why Rajyoga may be considered to have an effect on self-esteem processes.

This nuance is particularly relevant for the scientific integrity of the review.

11. Relevance of Rajyoga for Adult Women in Community Settings

Community based Rajyoga practice can be considered appropriate because this kind of practice does not include any specific equipment or complicated techniques. Meditation can be realized individually or in a group and can be incorporated into the daily routine. Since the availability of psychological services is limited in the semi-urban community, a community-based approach can be considered as an alternative way of improving the psychological state of women. However, in case of having critical psychological or physical conditions, it is necessary to address the problem through the use of appropriate medical resources.

The study conducted among the female population of Gaindakot Municipality can be considered an opportunity to improve the health of the local community. Since the majority of the studies were conducted among the female population residing in different countries, the results of the study conducted in Nepal are needed to reveal whether the Rajyoga technique would be applicable in the local community to improve the quality of life and integrate it into the daily routine.

12. Conceptual Framework

The relationship between Rajyoga meditation and self-esteem can be represented through the following conceptual model:



The model is based on the assumption that Rajyoga practice influences self-esteem both directly and indirectly. First of all, a person who practices meditation regularly is calmer, so he or she may have fewer negative emotions, engage in less negative thinking, and have clearer thinking overall. As a result, an individual with good emotional and mental health can view himself or herself positively and develop high self-esteem. Secondly, meditation helps people become spiritually conscious. Consequently, the level of spiritual awareness increases, which positively affects an individual's self-perception.

The model can also be developed by introducing such variables as age, level of education, marital and social status, employment, length and regularity of Rajyoga practice, and social support.

13. Rajyoga Meditation as a Potential Intervention

Rajyoga meditation can potentially be studied through a structured intervention program.

For research purposes, an intervention might include:

- introduction to Rajyoga meditation;
- understanding of the self;
- awareness of thoughts;
- positive thinking;
- emotional stability;
- management of negative thoughts;
- developing inner peace;
- spiritual awareness;
- self-respect and self-worth;
- meditation practice and reflection.

ISSN: 3139-0854

A structured program may be conducted over several weeks, with regular practice sessions and encouragement for participants to practice independently.

For a research study, it is important to document the intervention clearly. The researcher should specify:

- duration of each session;
- frequency of sessions;
- total intervention period;
- content of each session;
- method of meditation instruction;
- participant attendance;
- home practice;
- trainer qualifications;
- method used to assess outcomes.

Such standardization increases the reproducibility and methodological quality of the study.

14. Measurement of Self-Esteem

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is particularly relevant for research examining global self-esteem. The original scale consists of 10 items assessing positive and negative feelings about the self.

For a research project, the researcher should use a properly documented version of the instrument and follow the scoring procedure appropriate to that version. Translation into Nepali should be handled carefully if the original validated language version is not being used.

A proper translation process may include:

1. translation into Nepali;
2. review by language and subject experts;
3. back-translation;
4. pilot testing;
5. assessment of clarity;
6. reliability testing;
7. finalization of the instrument.

This process is important because a scale should not simply be translated word-for-word without considering linguistic and cultural meaning.

15. Research Gap

Although meditation has been studied extensively, there are still some limitations. First, compared to the mindfulness-based and yoga meditation literature, research on rajyoga meditation is limited. Second, the stress, anxiety, depression, and quality of life outcomes have been studied more than global self-esteem. Third, most of the studies are not focused on the adult female population. Fourth, there is a need to assess whether the duration and intensity of the practice influence self-esteem. Fifth, there has been a lack of research on female meditators who reside in semi-urban Nepalese communities.

These limitations can be a sound justification for conducting the proposed study. A study on adult females who practice Rajyoga meditation in Gaindakot Municipality can fill this gap in the scientific literature by providing insight into the association between a specific type of meditation practice and self-esteem.

16. Implications for Research and Practice

The possible relationship between Rajyoga meditation and self-esteem has implications for:

- individuals
- families
- communities
- researchers
- school and
- future intervention studies.

For individuals, regular meditation may be an opportunity to gain insight, develop positive coping mechanisms, and acquire healthy habits.

For families, women who are more emotionally stable may have better interpersonal skills to deal with family issues.

For communities, the meditation program offers an opportunity to foster well-being among community members.

For researchers,
further investigation is needed to explore the potential link between meditation and self-esteem, including the possible role of self-awareness, coping, and spiritual development in the process.

For school, the meditation program may be considered as an extracurricular activity, if found to be beneficial through scientific studies.

ISSN: 3139-0854

For future intervention studies, a randomized or quasi-experimental design may be used to assess self-esteem before and after the intervention.

17. Limitations of the Existing Literature

The study has various limitations:

First, the study utilizes different meditation techniques.
Second, the sample size of the study is relatively small.
Third, some of the studies were based on self-report measures.
Fourth, the intervention period varied.
Fifth, different studies used different measures and definitions of psychological constructs and self-esteem.
Sixth, the evidence on the effectiveness of Rajyoga is limited.
Seventh, positive results do not necessarily mean causation.
Therefore, the future research should include larger samples, use control groups, utilize the same intervention, include various outcome measures, and longer follow-up periods.

18. Recommendations for Future Research

The future researchers can explore the following areas.
Firstly, the study should consider undertaking the longitudinal analysis of self-esteem and Rajyoga practice.
Secondly, the future study can be designed as randomized controlled trial to evaluate the impact of Rajyoga meditation on the experimental group comparing with the active control group.
Thirdly, it is essential to assess the potential mediation role of self-awareness and emotion regulation in the association between Rajyoga and self-esteem.
Fourthly, the future researchers can explore the women's experience of Rajyoga meditation in depth.
Fifthly, the role of age, education, marital status, employment, and social support in the relationship between Rajyoga and self-esteem should be evaluated.
Sixthly, the future study can be designed to explore the differences between the participants who practice Rajyoga from the begging and those who are new in the practice.
Lastly, the future researchers should consider not only the Western culture but also the Nepalese context and community.

19. Discussion

The reviewed literature offers limited support for the investigation of the connection between Rajyoga meditation and levels of self-esteem as it highlights the potential limitations of meditation. The Rajyoga meditation practice focuses on developing inner awareness, positive attitude and speech, emotional stability, and spiritual intelligence. These areas are interconnected with the improvement of a person's psychological condition and selfesteem level. The studies conducted on the treatment of stress, depression, anxiety, and quality of life among participants using Rajyoga meditation confirm this connection. In addition, meditation in general was found to have a positive effect on self-esteem, body image, mood, and stress reduction in several reviewed studies.
However, it should be noted that not all yoga or meditation interventions have positive effects on global self-esteem. One randomized trial in a middle-aged female population showed that yoga had significant positive effects on certain self-esteem domains while having no effect on global self-esteem. Thus, concluding that simply practicing Rajyoga raises self-esteem would be incorrect. Instead, Rajyoga can be considered a beneficial practice which may improve an individual's mental state via multiple mechanisms. The suggested link between Rajyoga and self-esteem can be seen in the following diagram.



This model provides a useful foundation for empirical research.

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20. Conclusion

I think that Rajyoga meditation is a great method of balancing the psyche by focusing on such points as self-recognition, managing emotions, developing a positive mental attitude, and cultivating spiritual wisdom. The main strength of this technique is that it helps people to see beyond their physical and social selves and view themselves as spiritual entities. This meditation practice is very engaging for female students since, for women, social recognition and acceptance are even more important than for men and they often have to adjust their behavior depending on the people around them. Therefore, by learning to recognize themselves outside of the social mask, women can better maintain their self-esteem in different social settings.

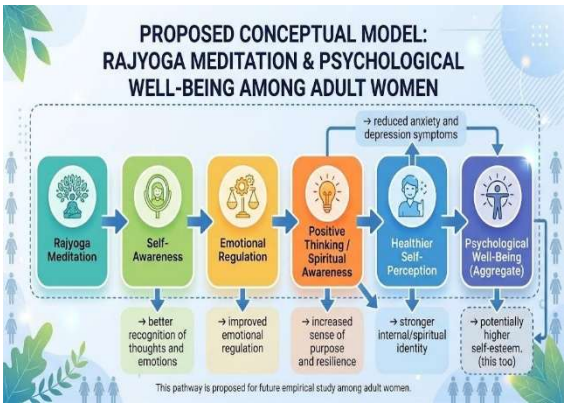
Existing research on Rajyoga and meditation in general can provide some support for stress reduction, improving psychological state, and even self-esteem. However, at this time, there is not enough research to prove beyond reasonable doubt that Rajyoga meditation actually improves self-esteem. There were several studies done with varying results, populations, interventions, and time frames.

Therefore, there is a need for systematic research among adult women. The study conducted among Nepalese communities could fill this gap. For instance, the study could be carried out among adult women who practice Rajyoga meditation in Gaindakot Municipality. This is because the research would answer the question of whether Rajyoga practice influences self-esteem or not. Also, the research would establish whether self-esteem levels are dependent on the duration and frequency of the practice. In general, Rajyoga meditation should be regarded as a future psychological intervention, not as a guaranteed remedy. This is because it empowers individuals to look within themselves, to develop desirable cognitive behavior, and to free themselves from negative thoughts and emotions that could affect their self-esteem.

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*** Conceptual model for the research**



This model fits particularly well with a research study examining **adult women practicing Rajyoga meditation in Gaindakot Municipality** and can be developed further into your **conceptual framework, research objectives, hypotheses, and methodology**.