

CHAPTER 2
LITERARY RESEARCH

2.0 LITERARY RESEARCH

Title: Review of ancient literature on mindful awareness according to the *yoga* scriptures and its relevance to sportsperson

2.1 AIM

To study the concept of mindful awareness as mentioned in the *yoga* scriptures and its relevance to sportsperson.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of mindful awareness as mentioned in the *yoga* scriptures of *Bhagavadgītā*, *Yogaśūtra* and *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*.
2. To bring out the interconnectedness of the overlapping ideas presented in these three *yoga* scriptures.
3. To expound the concept of mindful awareness as a means to transcend *citta*, embarking on the practice of *pratyāhāra*.
4. To understand the concept of mind beyond the unitary dimension that is commonly used in clinical interventions.
5. To elucidate mindful awareness as a practicable mode of being for a sportsperson.

2.3 INTRODUCTION

Every performance of a sportsperson is attributed with goodness and badness. Such evaluations perpetuates the process of thinking and self-conscious performance. As a consequence of negative evaluation, muscles tighten and the player becomes less fluid on the field. Along with agility, strength and power, the cutting down of the background noise of the mind becomes equally crucial in creating a state of flow for any sportsperson (Gallwey, 2008).

To fathom this state of flow or a state of the mindful awareness, one needs to first understand what mind is. Is mind - matter, energy, a field or an emotional state? When was it exactly created? Or who created it? Is it timeless? The answers are beyond our ken. Most of the scientific literature, particularly conventional psychology consider the mind as an epiphenomenon of the brain. The seat of the mind being the brain, often, the term consciousness and mind are considered synonymous. However, in the

Indian system, there is a co-existence between the stream of philosophy and psychology. Mind and consciousness are fundamentally distinct (Rao, 2005).

The earliest of the philosophy to have emerged from the *vedic* corpus through logical reasoning is Sage Kapila's *Sāṅkhya*. *Sāṅkhya* philosophy has outlined a systematic structure of creation, comprising of twenty-five *tattvās* or evolutes (Saraswati, 2009). It propounds that the phenomenal universe is of a dynamic order and is an eternal process of unfolding/enfolding, without a beginning or an end. The consciousness principle coupled with existence becomes *puruṣa* (the conscious spiritual-energy principle) and the existence principle, without consciousness becomes *prakṛti* (the nonconscious material-energy principle). These are the two eternally co-existent principles that are beyond time, space and thought, they are without difference, attribute and form (Bharati, 1986). *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* constitute the transcendental level or source of evolution. The subjective field are the ten *indriyās* (five *karmendriya*/capacities for action along with five *jñānendriyās*/capacities for perception), *manas* (analytical process), *ahaṅkāra* (cosmic ego) and *mahat/buddhi* (cosmic intelligence). The objective field are the five *tanmātrās* (subtle elements) and the five *mahabhūtās* (gross elements). The process of evolution occurs at two levels - the inner and the outer (Saraswati, 2009). *Puruṣa* is pure *cit* or consciousness. *Antaḥkarṇa* (consisting of the trio - *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *manas* wherein, Sage Patañjali adds the component of *citta* to this) is due to the reflection of the *ātman* in *prakṛti*, which is composed of three *guṇās* (constituents): *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (insensibility). According to *Sāṅkhya*, out of *prakṛti* emerges *mahat* or *buddhi*; from *buddhi* emerges *ahaṅkāra*; from *ahaṅkāra* emerges the *manas* and ten organs of sense and action. Thus, the *antaḥkarṇa chatuṣṭaya* i.e., *buddhi* (*niścayātmikam* - intellect that decides), *ahaṅkāra* (that which identifies everything with itself), *manas* (*saṅkalpa vikalpātmikam* - mind that thinks), and *citta* (*dhāraṇātmikam* - that which remembers the past) are the functional modes of the mind. The mind is used for all these four aspects. *Citta*, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra* operates either simultaneously or in succession. They also divide the mind into understanding, feeling and willing. They operate with the assistance of ten *indriyās*.

Manas is regarded as both an organ of sense and an organ of action, for the reason that it directs the activities of both kinds of organs (Eliade, 2009). *Manas* moving out of its resting place (place of residence) through the five senses to take the form of an object/thought creates a panorama of the world around us that we react to. An unsteady *citta* alienates us from seeking that ultimate truth

(Srinivasan, 2011). To still the unsteady *citta* beyond the building blocks of our core conditioning with its multitudinous nature, is the goal of *yoga*. Mindful awareness is both a state of *citta* and a practice to negotiate with its wandering tendencies. Ancient *yogic* scriptures illustrate means to accomplish this.

2.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study was done by thoroughly reviewing the English translated versions of *Bhagavadgītā*, *Yogaśūtra* and *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, research journals on *yoga* as well as PubMed and Google Scholar databases. Based on the collected information, logical interpretation is carried out to understand the concept of mindful awareness.

2.4.1 MINDFUL AWARENESS ACCORDING TO THE *YOGASŪTRA* OF SAGE PATAÑJALI

Kapila's *Sāṅkhya* is the metaphysics and Patañjali's *yoga* is the method (*sādhana*) (Saraswati, 2009). In his work on the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, Georg Feuerstein says that, Patañjali is visible proof for the fact that mysticism can be approached rationally and that, equally importantly, contemplative interests and intellectual pursuits can be fruitfully combined in one person (Feuerstein, 1989). In this chapter, the fifth step of *yoga*, namely *pratyāhāra* is referred to as leading to mindful awareness as discussed below.

Focusing on the aspect of mindful awareness according to *Yogasūtra*, what shines forth is Sage Patañjali's design of embarking on the fundamental aspect of familiarising us, to the primary obstacles/*antarāyāḥ*, in order to help us leap beyond these hurdles (of the *citta*) with an awareness of their existence. As mentioned, the text spell out that, in the course of progress there could be certain impediments that invariably hinder and disturb *citta* (*citta vikṣepa*), and they are:

व्याधिस्त्यानसंशयप्रमादालस्याविरतिभ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्धभूमिकत्वानवस्थितत्वानिचित्तविक्षेपास्तेऽन्तरायाः ॥१.३०॥

vyādhistyānasamśayapramādālasya viratibhrāntidarśanālabdhabhūmikatvānavasthitatvāni

cittavikṣepāste'ntarāyāḥ ||PYS. 1.30||

Sickness, incompetence, doubt, delusion, mental and physical fatigue, inability to withdraw from the sense cravings, false visions, inability to reach the goal and inability to retain it all throw our citta outward. These distractions are the impediment (Aranya, 1963).

The nine obstacles can be classified into four categories – physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual. *Vyādhi* and *styāna* are physical obstacles; *samśaya*, *pramāda*, *ālasya* and *avirati* are mental obstacles; *bhrāntidarśana* is an intellectual obstacle; while *ālabdhabhūmikatva* and *anavasthitatva* are spiritual in nature (Iyengar, 1993). Most times these hindrances occur subsequently, with varying degrees. Even the finest practitioners/*sādhakās* encounter one/many of these obstacles, at some point in time. On the other hand, these primary obstacles also lead us to four other debilitating conditions -

दुःखदौर्मनस्याङ्गमेजयत्वश्वासप्रश्वासाविक्षेपसहभुवः ॥ १.३१ ॥

duḥkhadaurmanasyāṅgamejayatvaśvāsapraśvāsāvikṣepasahabhuvah || PYS. 1.31 ||

Pain, mental agitation, unsteadiness or trembling of limbs, irregular breathing patterns further disturb the citta (Tigunait, 2014). In the process of defending these obstacles that upset our body and *citta*, considerable amounts of resources collapse that could otherwise be channelized towards a higher purpose. Beyond these barriers, Sage Patañjali indicates a group of five more obstacles – *kleśās*.

अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः ॥ २.३ ॥

avidyāsmītārāgadveṣābhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ ||PYS. 2.3||

Misapprehension about the real nature of things, egoism, attachment, aversion and fear of death are the five afflictions or *kleśās*. The breeding ground for all obstacles or modifications is *avidya* (ignorance) and the rest of the *kleśās* follow it. *Kleśās* are either *prasupti* (dormant that awakens with an appropriate stimulus), *tanu* (attenuated or one that is thinned by *Kriyā yoga*), *vicchinna* (interrupted/suppressed by other *kleśās*) or *udāra* (active) (Aranya, 1963). As the burnt seed doesn't sprout again, so does the *kleśās* weaken with the practice of concentration (*eka tattva abhyāsa*). The dark and heavy qualities of *tamas* and the agitated *citta* of the *rajas* will also get nullified in the process facilitating further progress. With this understanding of the afflictions, here is a glance upon

certain practices in mindful awareness (to tackle the modifications of the *citta*) that are referred to in the *Yogaūtra*.

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्॥१.३३॥

maitrīkaruṇāmuditopekṣāṇāṃ sukhaduḥkhaṇyāpūṇyaviṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaścittaprasādanam

||PYS. 1.33||

In the worldly relationships, the *citta* becomes subtler and subtler by cultivating of right attitude of friendliness towards those who are happy, compassion for those who are suffering, goodwill towards those who are virtuous, and indifference or neutrality towards those we perceive as wicked or evil (Bharati, 1986).

Sailing through life, we encounter four types of people – those who are happy, those who are miserable, those who are virtuous and also those who are vicious. However, by adopting a sublime attitude towards them, as indicated in this *sūtra*, one remains dynamic while interacting with this material world. Nonetheless, the burden of past tendency is the greatest impediment.

वितर्कबाधनेप्रतिपक्षभावनम्॥२.३३॥

vitarkabādhanepratipakṣabhāvanam || PYS. 2.33||

When *citta* is disturbed by old habits and unethical tendencies, one should ponder over their opposites (Saraswati, 2013).

Sage Patañjali brings awareness to the fact that the way out of negative thoughts is not through suppression. Instead, when *citta* is entertained with thoughts of negative sentiments, one needs to detach from the thought, substitute a positive thought and then bring about a sublimation of the negative thought in succession - *pratipakṣa bhāvanam* (Nanda, 1978). Constant adherence and vigilance are crucial in preventing slipping back to the natural tendencies. Further, Sage Patañjali also presents us with practical methods of conscious re-alignment of the *citta* by moving beyond the mundane to a higher value of *vairāgya*.

दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णस्य वशीकारसंज्ञा वैराग्यम् ॥ १.१५ ॥

dṛṣṭānuśravikaviṣayavitr̥ṣṇasya vaśīkārasamjñā vairāgyam || PYS. 1.15||

When the *citta* loses desire even for objects seen or described in a tradition or in scriptures, it acquires a state of utter desirelessness (*vaśīkāra*), that is called non-attachment (*vairāgya*). *Vairāgya*, is not merely, turning away from a craving or becoming indifferent, rather a total mastery and control (Bharati, 1986). *Vairāgya* as a practice also focuses on clearing the *citta* of *vāsanās* or strong habits. This practice decolorizes *citta* and brings it to a state where the *citta* remains unaffected by thoughts, deeds and action (Tigunait, 2014). *Vaśīkāra* or the desirelessness is attained by the discriminatory knowledge (*vivekakyāti*) and reflection (*nidhidhyāsana*) over the demerits of the objects of the world. A careful distinction between the indispensable and the dispensable, the essential and the trivial, is the principle of *vivekakyāti*, which in turn internalises the practice of *vaśīkāra*.

योगाङ्गानुष्ठानादशुद्धिक्षयेज्ज्ञानदीप्तिराविवेकख्यातेः ॥ २.२८ ॥

yogāṅgānuṣṭhānādaśuddhikṣayejñānadīptirāvivekakhyaṭeḥ || PYS. 2.28||

By constant practice the impurities of the *citta* get destroyed with the light of knowledge that grows until intuitive knowledge is attained (Nanda, 1978).

Though *yoga* is a union, here, Sage Patañjali also injects us with the idea that, it is as much a union as it is a disunion or *viyoga*. A disunion from all the afflictions that create shades of modifications in the *citta*. As he puts it, the impurities/obstacles/afflictions can be shattered solely by diligent practice. With the afflictions being addressed, the further ascent to the state of mindful awareness remains in the core practice of *indriyānigraha* or withdrawal of the *indriyās*/sense perception.

स्वविषयासंप्रयोगे चित्तस्वरूपानुकारइवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः ॥ २.५४ ॥

svaviṣayāsamprayoge cittasvarūpānukāraivendriyāṅām pratyāhārah || PYS. 2.54||

The mental organs of senses and actions (*indriyās*) cease to be engaged with the corresponding objects in their mental realm, and assimilate or turn back into the mind-field from which they arose is called *pratyāhāra*, and is the fifth step (in the eight-limbed/*aṣṭāṅga yoga*) (Saraswati, 2013).

Sensory activities are withdrawn from the objects and the senses begin to imitate the *citta*. The senses imitate the nature of the *citta*, when the *citta* pause so do the senses. Thus, the state of mindful awareness is created by the suspension of activities of the *citta* while retracting the senses. *Pratyāhāra*, is thus, fundamental in the path of renunciation (Iyengar, 1993). Since, at every level the things that need to be renounced are in a perpetual flux, the practice of *pratyāhāra* is being in a ceaseless process of perpetual vigilance, of the senses and its objects. As guided by the succeeding aphorism -

ततः परमा वश्यतेन्द्रियाणाम्॥२.५५॥

tataḥ paramā vaśyatendriyaṅām ||PYS. 2.55||

Through that turning inward of the organs of senses and actions (*indriyās*) also comes a supreme ability, controllability, or mastery over those senses inclining to go outward towards the objects. *Pratyāhāra* is the sublimation of the *citta* and the senses (Iyengar, 1993). Consciousness becomes far more sensitive when it detaches from the senses. The practices of *pratyāhāra* free our conscious awareness from old patterns and habitual thinking. The senses follow the *citta* like bees follow the queen bee, explains *Vyāsa* in his commentary on the *Yogaśūtra* (Bharati, 1986).

Weighing the appropriate and inappropriate, real and unreal, employing the intuitive forces, withdrawing the *citta* from the clutches of the sense experience and channelizing the organs of perception to an object at will, is the mastery over mindful awareness through the practice of *pratyāhāra*. With this recalibration one can expect a smooth sail through the hustle of the mechanical life. Though compact and cryptic, the *sūtrās* cited above resonate the fact that they have immense practical utility in disciplining the *citta* which always focus on mastering the external world. Sage Patañjali, with his finesse, enchants us with his mode of mastering the *citta* to gain access not to the external world but to tap that immense ocean of dynamic intelligence, happiness and freedom within.

2.4.2 MINDFUL AWARENESS ACCORDING TO TO THE *BHAGAVADGĪTĀ*

The song of the God is veritably the most beloved scripture of India. The comprehensive dialogue between the *Bhagavān* and his preceptor, with its 700 verses, is endeared for being as much philosophical as it is psychological in its spirit. Though being a tiny part of *Mahabhārata*, this *Smṛti*

text, is revered on par with *Upaniṣad*. While all other philosophies were given either in a forest, temple or a cave, the *Bhagavān* chooses the tumultuous battlefield of *Kurukṣetra* to expound his universal message on the science and art of human possibilities. In his work - The essence of the *Bhagavadgītā*, Swami Kriyananda says, This body is a battlefield. Allegorically, the opposing armies here represent the opposition within every unenlightened human being, between his upward tendencies (good qualities) and downward tendencies (evil tendencies) (Kriyananda, 2006).

Self-preservation is the very basic instinct of life. As reflected in the *Gītā* of the *Bhagavān*, the conflict of this life at its deepest core is not of ambition, it is for the accomplishment of righteousness. A greater triumph of good over evil, within! Then, how does one leap beyond the opposing forces and the dualities that frequent the *citta*? How does one gain victory over the five senses (*Pāṇdavās*) as opposed to the hundred varied desires (*Kauravās*) that cloud the *citta* incessantly? The desire or sense inclinations are steadily backed by the blinded sense of the *citta* (as in *Dhrtarāṣṭra*, the father of the *Kauravās*). As each person fights his/her own battle with their senses and the *citta*, the *Bhagavān* rescues us repeatedly with his words of wisdom. Here, discussed are a few verses by the *Bhagavān* himself, that one can behold to, dwelled upon and practiced every moment to find *samatvam*/balance/equilibrium/a state of mindful awareness.

A *citta* that gets identified with sense sensation is unable to differentiate between its own happiness and the pleasures of its senses. With the practice of *pratyāhāra*, *citta* concentrates on its own real joy, then the pleasures of the senses seem repugnant (Yogananda, 2011).

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२.५८॥

Yadā saṁharate cāyaṁ kūrmo'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ |

indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyastasya prajāṇā pratiṣṭhitā || B.G. 2.58||

When the *yogi*, like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, can fully retire his senses from the objects of perception, his wisdom manifests steadiness (Yogananda, 2011).

This capacity of an individual to withdraw his senses at will from the fields-of-objects is called in *yoga śāstra* as *pratyāhāra* which the *yogin* accomplishes through *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath) (Chinmayananda, 2016). Restraint of the sense organs is called *dama* while the restraint of the internal organ, as in the *citta* is called *sama*. Restraining the organs of the senses and action (*jñānendriya* and *karmendriya*) by employing *citta*'s capacity for reasoning is called *pratyāhāra*.

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ २-५९ ॥

viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ |

rasavarjaṁ raso'pyasya paraṁ dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate || B.G. 2.59||

The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness (Prabhupāda, 2013).

Craving creates new challenges and new temptations all the time. Only with the uprooting of the cravings, the knowledge of one's own nature as the infinite *ātman* gets revealed (Ranganathananda, 2000). In order to be on guard from the predatory senses, a physical renunciation must go hand in hand with the mental renunciation. Else, the mounting desires obstruct, agitate and delude the *citta*. If both cause and consequences are actions (*karma*) then one has to move towards unburdening the merits and the demerits of its outcome that continually bind.

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी।

नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ ५-१३ ॥

sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī |

navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvanna kārayan ||B.G. 5.13||

The embodied soul, controller of senses, having mentally relinquished all activities, remains blissfully in the bodily city of nine gates - neither performing actions itself nor making others (the senses) to perform actions (Yogananda, 2011).

In other words, total withdrawal of the senses is achieved by one who practices *pratyāhāra*. It is not simply the controlling or subjugating the senses; the senses may still see, hear, feel etc., the external objects, however, there is nullification of participation and one becomes observer of the events of the world through changes in *guṇās* resulting in the state of *pratyāhāra*.

As far as the *citta* is active, it must attach to something. Therefore, detachment from the false can be successful only when we attach ourselves to the real (Chinmayananda, 2016). To detach from the sensory system is the fundamental step towards unravelling the inherent potentialities of the *citta*. The process of mindful awareness commences with this practice. With the practice of *pratyāhāra* one can master the sensory perceptions and with the practice of *karma yoga* one can fine tune the actions of the inner and the outer world by surrendering it to a higher source of consciousness. That way, both these practices need to be integrated such that one finds the highest state of equanimity. Passing through the phases of life, with the changing seasons, what we are to the world outside of us is but a reflection of what we are within ourselves.

An ordinary man has no peace as his shallow mental reservoir is constantly roiled by the inrush of sensory stimulation. But, for a *yogi*, the streams of desire do not affect him as he is absorbed within the changeless oceanic Self; hence, has no ripple effect, yet it keeps him overflowing with energy, contentment and peace that never oscillate (Yogananda, 2011). As a result of a heightened awareness, an individual finds immense joy everywhere. In order to reach that state, one has to fashion their inner world with calmness, such that they become open and receptive to the happiness to flow in aplenty. Nevertheless, for this to manifest, one need not have to isolate oneself from the varied stimulus of the external world. The honing of the practice lies in being here and now.

2.4.3 MINDFUL AWARENESS ACCORDING TO *YOGA VĀSIṢṬHA*

In the *Bhagavadgītā* (a conversation from *dvāparayuga*) Arjuna is a seeker, the *Bhagavān* is his guru whereas, in *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* (a conversation from *tretāyuga*) the *Bhagavān* himself is a seeker, *Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha* is his guru. Being one of the earliest and vivid scripture on the *Vedānta*, *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* is a conversation between Lord Rāma and *Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha* in the form of 32000 couplets whose writership is attributed to *Ṛṣi Vālmiki*, the author of *Rāmāyaṇa* (Aiyer, 1914). However, this colossal work was summarized as *Laghu Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* into 4829 couplets by Gauda Abhinanda (Feuerstein, 2002).

Analysing the mind, its notions and its reasoning, *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* is a user's manual that elucidate the timeless truth in a *purāṇic* way of storytelling to dispel the sorrow of Lord Rāma.

Here, discussed are the verses on *pratyāhāra*, *ātmavicāra*, renunciation of *vāsanās* and control of *prāṇa* to fathom mindful awareness, from this revered and extensive text.

वासना प्राणसप्रोधत् अनिमेषंमनःकुरु

यत्रनाभ्युदितंचित्तं तद्वेसुखं अनुत्तमम् ॥२३.६॥

Vāsanā prāṇasamrodhat animeṣammanah kuru

yatra nābhyuditaṁcittaṁ tadvesukhaṁ anuttamam ||Y.V.23.6||

By complete restraint of mental impressions (knowledge derived from memory) and *prāṇa*/vital air/bio-energy, make *manas* steadfastly fixed. Where *citta* (the seat of memory) does not oscillate, that indeed is unsurpassed happiness (Bharathi, 2013).

For everlasting peace and eternal bliss, nullification of *vāsanās* (deep imprinted mental impressions) and *ahaṅkāra* (ego) is pivotal. Endowing oneself with - *śānti* (quiescence of mind), *santoṣa* (contentment), *satsaṅga* (association with sages) and *vicāra* (self-enquiry) as suggested by Sage *Vasiṣṭha*, one becomes crucial in aligning towards perfection. Thus, mindful awareness is a ramification of such a state of cognizance. In order to reach such a state, the practice of *pratyāhāra* should be synchronous to self-enquiry or *ātmavicāra*.

वासनां विविधांशाखाः फलन्त्योविविधंफलम् ॥१.८॥

शाखाविलवनंगौणं मुख्यंमुलविकर्तनम्

स्वात्मतत्त्वविचारो हि चित्तबीजस्यनशकः ॥१.९॥

vāsanām vividhāṁśākhāḥ phalantyovividhāṁphalam|| Y.V.1.8||

śākhāvilavanaṅgaṇaṁ mukhyaṁmulavikartanam |

svātmatatvavicāro hi cittabījasyanaśakaḥ || Y.V.1.9||

The mental impressions are various branches yielding diverse fruits. Just cutting off the branches is subordinate (or indirect). The foremost (requisite) is the cutting off the roots. The investigation (or inquiry) into the nature of one's own Self is alone destructive of the seed of the *citta* (Bharathi, 2013).

An inner dialogue or introspection brings us closer to the various functions of *antaḥkaraṇa* (*manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *citta*). Thereby, it assists us in resolving conflicts that arise when the seeker is under the clutches of the old habit patterns that are gruelling to *citta*. Collaborating with *vicāra* helps us weigh sense pleasures and calm the roaming tendency of *citta* with utmost wisdom. With practice, it also unravels the transient nature of existence. By embracing ceaseless process of self-enquiry, one unravels eclipsed *vāsanās* and its mysterious ways that frequently surfaces to deceive the human mind. Thus, it becomes necessary to abandon something transient to attain that which is eternal.

तामसीःवासनाः पुर्वं त्यक्त्वा विषयवासिताः।

मैत्रयादिभावनानाम्निःग्रहाणामलवासनाः॥ Y.V.१०.६१॥

tāmasīḥvāsanāḥ purvaṁ tyaktvā viṣayavāsītāḥ |

maitrayādibhāvanānāmniḥgrhāṇāmalavāsanāḥ || Y.V.10.61||

Having abandoned first the *tāmasīc* mental impressions (i.e., those of the nature of inertia, ignorance and darkness) steeped in the objects of the senses, take hold of the stainless mental impressions called the feeling (or attitude) of friendship and the like (Bharathi, 2013).

According to Sage Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*, the four attitude of *maitrī* (friendship for all), *karuṇa* (compassion for those in misery), *muditā* (joy at other's happiness) and *upekṣa* (indifference towards the wicked), pacify the *citta*. Gliding through the pace of our society, we tend to be desensitized to others feelings and also to our own. Hence, these four traits of friendship, compassion, joy and indifference, hold the secret key to restore balance in our day to day life (Bharathi, 2013). Whatever are the pains or impediments to progress that arise in the *citta*, one can keep oneself firmly grounded by being the observer of the thoughts that arise and by bringing in awareness into the present moment, keeps one firmly grounded. While *prāṇa* is grosser than the *citta*, it is subtler than the body. Manifesting itself as mental power, it can only be controlled by mental means. Wherever there is

prāṇa, there is *citta* also. Hence, along with the rejection of the mental impressions one has to resort to disciplining the *prāṇa*.

प्राणाधीनपरिस्पन्दं चित्तम्आहुःमनीषिणः।

तस्मिन्सरोधितेनूनं उपशान्तं भवेत्मनः॥४५॥

prāṇādhīnaparispandam cittamāhuḥmanīṣiṇaḥ |

tasmīnsamrodhitenūnam upasāntam bhavetmanah || Y.V.45 ||

Wise men call *citta* as having the movement dependent on *prāṇa* (or vital air). When the *prāṇa* is controlled, the *citta* certainly becomes tranquil (Bharathi, 2013).

Prāṇa is the core and the essence of life and it flows through everything that exists and permeates the entire universe. The breath is truly a vehicle for *prāṇa*.

वासना संपसित्यागसंप्राणनिरोधनम्॥१९. ४१॥

Vāsanā sampasityāgasampṛāṇanīrodhanam || Y.V.19.41 ||

The restraint of *prāṇa* is equal (in effect) to the renunciation of mental impressions (Bharathi, 2013). As *prāṇa* leaves the body it collects and takes with it all the *vāsanās* of the individual Self. So, it becomes crucial to understand and even out all these intense tendencies of the *citta* here and now. A *citta* filled with *vāsanās* with impure tendency (affinity to objects) leads to bondage, whereas a *citta* drained of *vāsanās* leans towards freedom.

The four means for controlling the *citta* are - the cognition of the supreme, the association with the wise, the renunciation of the painful *vāsanās* and the control of the fluctuation of *prāṇa*. Persons who resort to other means than these to control the *citta*, are like those who, having turned their face from the light, try to dispel darkness through darkness itself (Aiyer, 1914).

2.5 SUMMARY

2.5.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF MINDFUL AWARENESS FOR SPORTSPERSONS

A clouded *citta* is a serious threat in establishing the present moment awareness. The mind plays a double (*dvandva*) role. Its role is to connect the ten organs (*indriyās*) on the one hand, and, on the other, to connect the intelligence, consciousness and core. This dual role affects the *citta* so that it plays a double game. Thus, *pratyāhāra*, is a practice of *indriyajaya* – mastery over the senses. *Pratyāhāra* commences with the quieting of the *citta* and withdrawing of the senses. More often it is an undisciplined *citta* which is a victim of the messages brought to it by the senses (Iyengar, 2012). As humans we sometimes reflect with a purpose and other times completely goalless. Sometimes we are rational and other times utterly irrational; sometimes compelling and other times totally vague. Sometimes the thoughts are guided by love and at other times, hugely by hatred. This rolling mental movement creates impressions (*saṃskārās*) that are so potent that it dictates the individual's *citta*. The *vṛtti saṃskārā cakra* or the wheel of thoughts with the subtle impressions that it creates has been spinning since the origin of the human mind (Tigunait, 2014). The ancient scriptures, as explained above, expounds that in order to attain mastery over this wheel of thoughts the practice of *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses) can be a fundamental tool.

As illustrated above, the excerpts from the *Bhagavadgītā*, *Yogasūtra* and *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, lucidly show that the mode of being with mindful awareness can be embedded into the everyday living with the practice of: stabilising the *citta*, reaching a state of equanimity, through self-inquiry, by renouncing of mental impressions, renouncing the fruits of the one's own action, by the control of *prāṇa* and fundamentally by the most dynamic technique of *pratyāhāra* (tuning inward). These practices are incredibly interconnected. Incorporating just one of these methods means to align oneself to the mode of being in mindful awareness (Figure 1).

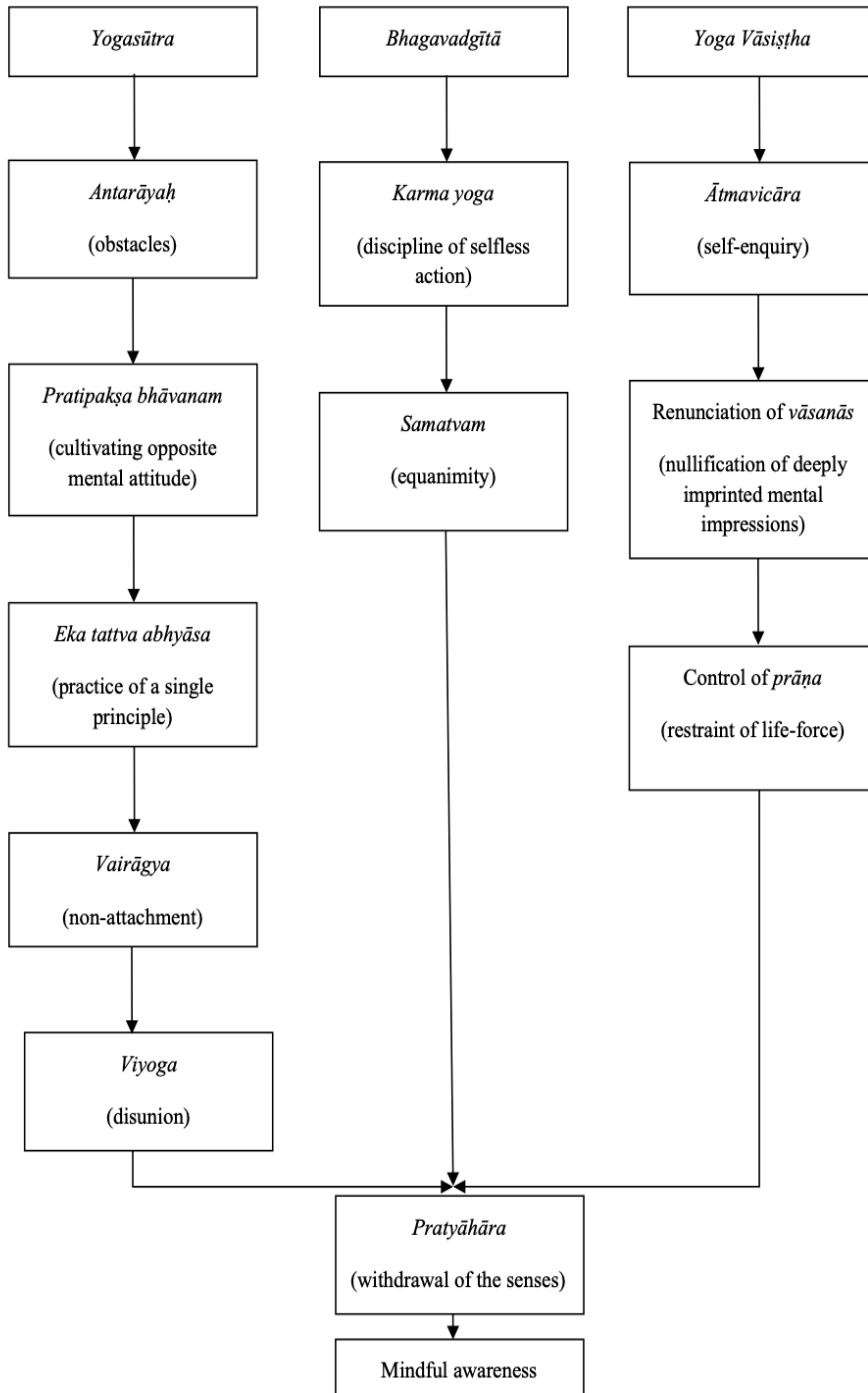


Figure 1: Flow diagram depicting confluence of the each path towards mindful awareness

Just like any other human, a sportsperson also has the experience of success and defeat at various junctures in life. However, it is only the success that is welcomed and celebrated by the world around and within (Gallwey, 2008). The vicious circle of such innate subtle impressions that gets heavily ingrained, agitate the *citta* in response to anything less than success. An agitated mind lacks clarity and concentration, influencing the performance of a sportsperson. Restoring and refining the inner luminosity by shattering the mental fabrications that pose a barrier, is the goal of the *yogic* practices (Tigunait, 2014). By incorporating *yogic* technique of *pratyāhāra* as a way of life, a sportsperson can possibly put to rest the elements of disturbance, distraction and distortion of the perception of reality.

2.5.2 MINDFUL AWARENESS FROM ANCIENT TEXTS

As discussed above, our ancient scriptures elucidate mindful awareness as a practicable mode of being. The natural tendency of the senses is to lead *citta* to the objects of the outer world (Bharati, 1986). In such a scenario, the practice of *pratyāhāra*, becomes fundamental in training and taming the *citta* towards a state of mindful awareness. The secret of the practice lies not in physical isolation but in an emotional sphere (Rama, 2008). A distinctive clarity in exercising our awareness between *sat* (real/eternal) and *asat* (unreal/transitory) can be attained with the practice of *pratyāhāra*. Persistently seeking the former, the latter gradually gets dissolved (Aranya, 1963).

2.5.3 ASPECT OF MINDFULNESS IN SPORTS

The results so far on mindfulness practices based on the adaptation of specific Buddhist techniques have proven to have activated the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and that long-term meditation practice is associated with an enhancement of cerebral areas related to attention (Chiesa, & Serretti, 2010). The practices have also facilitated dispositional mindfulness that is related to more flow (Hamilton et al., 2016; Briegel et al., 2013), self-regulation/negative emotion regulation, less rumination (Coffey et al., 2010), cognitive, emotional and behavioural flexibility (Carmody, 2009). With the introduction of mindfulness based interventions in the sports arena, several studies have assessed the effect of Mindfulness-Acceptance and Commitment approach (MAC) (Gardner, & Moore, 2004), Mindfulness Sport Enhancement Program (MSPE) (Kaufman et al., 2009) and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR) (Aherne et al., 2011) on athletes. Mindfulness practices on athletes have consistently and beneficially shown to have modulated the mindfulness scores (Goodman et al., 2014; Cathcart et al., 2014). Further mindfulness studies with *yoga* intervention have also proven to have a positive outcome. A study based on the impact of *yoga*

practices on five facets of mindfulness of observe, describe, act with awareness, non-judging and non-reactivity among male cricket players has shown to have enhanced the likelihood to maintain the state of mindfulness (Rao et al., 2020).

2.5.4 YOGA AND MINDFULNESS

Earlier studies have noted that the mind-body connection can be realised through emphasis on breathing technique while being relaxed and centred in an *āsana* (posture), exposing a whole new dimension for the players to stay focused during challenging times. Through taming the breath, players seem to learn to relax their mind and muscles with absolute awareness (Anurag, 2016). The balancing postures help players to centre their awareness of the body, breath and the mind thereby, enhancing their moment to moment awareness that aids in agility, fluidity and maneuverability, while on the field. *Yoga* as an awareness practice in motion can form the foundation of a psychological developmental progression directed inwardly toward a cognitive refinement (Salmon et al., 2009). The practice of *yoga* has shown to have facilitated self-regulation via an ethically motivated monitoring and control process. This involves initiation and maintenance of behavioural change and inhibiting undesired output by both higher-level and lower-level brain networks in the face of stress-related physical or emotional challenges. *Pratyāhāra* as a practice is conceptualised as reducing autonomic reactivity and habitual tendencies to respond to external and internal experience in maladaptive ways by contributing to cognitive factors of selective attention and response inhibitions (Gard et al., 2014). Thus, the previous mindfulness studies have explored both the benefits of *āsana*, *prāṇayāma* (Büssing et al., 2012) and varied mindfulness based interventions (Briegel et al., 2013; Gardner, & Moore, 2012; Gardner, & Moore, 2004).

2.5.5 CONCEPT OF MIND AWARENESS FROM YOGIC TRADITION IN COMPARISON TO MINDFULNESS FROM BUDDHIST TRADITION

The previous clinical interventions on mindfulness have incorporated the concept of mindfulness from the Buddhist meditation traditions that emphasize on the awareness of the present moment, nonjudgmentally, so that the experiences unfold moment by moment (Zinn, 2003). A study comparing mindfulness and *yoga* has shown how these two traditions suffer the partial adoption of the traditional practices in contemporary society (Shreekumar et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the basic fabric of the previous mindfulness based clinical interventions consider engaging the mind by being in the present moment and paying attention to the purpose. However, this study enunciates that primarily, the mind

has four functional modes to it (*citta*, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahankāra*) that operates either simultaneously or in succession with the assistance of the ten *indriyās* and secondly the aspect of mind called *citta* which is an impediment for developing mindful awareness has to be dealt with by transcending it with the practice of *pratyāhāra*. A closer examination into the scriptural references made earlier substantiates to the fact that, in order to calm down the modifications of the *citta*, activity of *manas* which is still in the relativistic plane and to make *buddhi* quiescent, one has to develop not just an awareness but also aim at transcending the *citta* (mind). By underlining these fact from the native *yogic* textual references, this study thus, proposes, that if withdrawal from these *indriyās* (*pratyāhāra*) facilitate *samatvam* (equanimity) then it might possibly help a sportsperson to be grounded, be it success or defeat. By being vigilant of the senses, a sportsperson can be rooted in reality about their perception about their own self - *ātmavicāra* (self-inquiry). Understanding the intricacies of *vairāgya* (renouncing mental impressions) might help a player to refrain from carrying the actions of the previous game into the next one. The method of giving up the fruits of one's own action - *karma yoga* may help the players in playing a game at the best of one's capacity without any anticipation. Control of *prāṇa* (restraint of the life-force) that occurs due to being in a comfortable inner environment may enhance clarity of thought and thereby, the action on field.

2.6 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The concepts proposed in this study intends to encourage future research in contemplative sciences to perceive mind not just as an umbrella term that consolidates multiple traditions and meanings. Moving beyond the unitary dimension can provide a broader framework to design and examine specific models for each dimension of the mind independently. Also, the effect of each of the above mentioned paths towards *pratyāhāra* on mindful awareness can be further explored.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The current study suggests that, for a sportsperson who is constantly grappling with the deeply ingrained fear of defeat, doubt and uncertainty, integrating the practice of *pratyāhāra* into the competitive world of sports is particularly relevant for cultivating a comprehensive mindful awareness.