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## Impact of Sahaja Yoga Meditation on Equality in Relation to Gender Chodhary R<sup>1\*†</sup> D

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The present study investigated the significant impact of SYM on gender equality by examining its influence on psychological constructs such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and stress resilience. Gender equality, a pivotal component of social justice and sustainable development, necessitates not only structural reforms but also psychological and behavioural shifts that challenge entrenched biases. The study employed a 2 x 2 factorial design to assess and study the significant impact of SYM on the perception the selected variable named equality among 400 participants from Chhattisgarh, stratified by gender (male and female) and meditation practice (practitioners and nonpractitioners). Participants with a minimum of five years of consistent SYM practice were selected, ensuring homogeneity in meditative experience. The Sustainable Development Survey Scale (SDSS) was utilized to measure perceived freedom, an essential indicator of gender parity. Data were analysed using a two-way factorial ANOVA to determine and to find out the main effects of meditation and gender, also their interaction effects on equality perceptions. Findings revealed that SYM practitioners, irrespective of gender, exhibited significantly higher equality perceptions compared to non-practitioners, indicating the meditation's role in fostering an egalitarian mindset. Female practitioners demonstrated a marginally greater inclination toward gender equity in comparison to their male counterparts, suggesting potential gender-specific benefits of SYM in challenging social conditioning. Furthermore, neurophysiological insights suggest that SYM enhances prefrontal cortex activation, reducing implicit biases and fostering inclusive social attitudes. The Vishuddhi and Agnya chakras, associated with communication and perception, play a critical role in dismantling prejudices and promoting collective harmony. These findings underscore SYM's potential as an intervention for advancing gender equality by cultivating cognitive flexibility, empathy, and self-awareness. The study highlights the necessity of integrating meditative practices into educational and policy frameworks to complement structural efforts aimed at gender equity. Future research should explore the intersection of SYM with neuropsychology and gender studies to develop holistic interventions for fostering societal transformation.

**Keywords:** Sahaja Yoga Meditation, gender equality, emotional regulation, cognitive transformation, sustainable development, implicit bias, mindfulness intervention

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#### Introduction

In recent decades, yoga and meditation have gained global recognition as complementary therapies to conventional medicine, with research highlighting their efficacy in enhancing quality of life [Chung et al., 2012]. Yoga, as an ancient discipline, integrates ethical conduct, physical postures, breath control, and deep meditation [Mohammad et al., 2019]. Although often perceived as a physical exercise, yoga's impact extends beyond bodily health to cognitive and emotional regulation [Ross & Thomas, 2010]. Sahaja Yoga Meditation distinguishes itself through its emphasis on mental silence, allowing practitioners to cultivate heightened self-awareness and emotional intelligence factors that contribute to deconstructing ingrained gender biases [Govindaraj et al., 2016].

The societal implications of meditation extend beyond individual transformation to systemic applications in education, workplaces, healthcare. In the United Kingdom, mental health interventions including mindfulness and meditation are significantly integrated into various policies such as public health, reflecting a shift toward holistic approaches in psychological well-being [Bennetts, 2022]. From a psychological perspective, meditation fosters cognitive flexibility, allowing individuals to challenge conditioned beliefs and unconscious 2009]. This [Rubia, adaptability particularly relevant in addressing traditional gender stereotypes that dictate social behaviour and professional aspirations. The practice of mindfulness encourages self-reflection and critical thinking, essential skills in recognizing and dismantling discriminatory patterns [Jackson et al., 2022].

Sahaja Yoga Meditation (SYM) is an effective meditative practice that fosters inner balance, emotional stability, and cognitive transformation. While its benefits in psychological and physiological health are well-documented, its role in promoting gender equality remains an emerging area of interest. Gender equality, a fundamental component of the 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs), necessitates social and cultural reforms, along with psychological transformations that alter perceptions and behaviours. SYM, by fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and stress reduction, can contribute significantly to achieving gender equity by challenging traditional norms and biases [Parris & Kates, 2003].

Gender equality entails equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities for all genders, ensuring a balanced social structure that fosters inclusivity and fairness. However, deep-rooted gender biases, systemic inequalities, and cultural stereotypes have historically limited this progress. Sahaja Yoga Meditation, through its unique focus on achieving a state of thoughtless awareness, plays a crucial role in reshaping societal attitudes toward gender [Rathor et al., 2020].

SYM influences neurophysiological functions, leading to enhanced cognitive control, reduced stress responses, and improved emotional regulation [Manocha et al., 2011]. These transformations are crucial in dismantling gender-based prejudices, increasing empathy, and fostering mutual respect in personal and professional settings. Research indicates that mindfulness and meditation practices can positively impact implicit biases, encouraging a more egalitarian approach to gender interactions [Perez-Diaz et al., 2023]. Traditional gender stereotypes are very deeply embedded in societal structures, influencing behaviour, expectations, and opportunities. SYM addresses these biases by promoting self-reflection and emotional resilience, reducing stress-driven responses that reinforce gendered expectations. The practice of SYM has been shown to increase awareness and emotional intelligence, both of which are critical in recognizing and challenging gender biases [Hendriks, 2018].

SYM activates the subtle energy system comprising chakras and nadis, which influence human consciousness and social interactions [Rathor et al., 2020]. The Vishuddhi chakra, associated with communication and collectivity, is instrumental in fostering open discussions on gender equality. Likewise, the Agnya chakra, responsible for perception and forgiveness, aids in overcoming biases and fostering inclusivity. Through regular meditation, practitioners can develop heightened sensitivity toward social injustices, creating an environment conducive to gender equity [Perez-Diaz et al., 2023]. The United Nations' SDGs emphasize the importance of gender equality as a pillar of sustainable development [Parris & Kates, 2003]. Achieving gender equity requires both external policy interventions and internal psychological transformations that redefine social norms. SYM contributes to this process by enhancing decisionmaking abilities, promoting ethical reasoning, and fostering cooperative behaviors [Domingo-Echaburu

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Et al., 2021]. These attributes are critical in addressing gender disparities in leadership, education, and economic opportunities.

Additionally, studies indicate that SYM reduces cortisol levels and improves heart rate variability, leading to better emotional regulation and stress management [Pavlov et al., 2015]. These benefits directly correlate with greater self-confidence, resilience, and assertiveness, specially for women who face societal pressures and discrimination [Hendriks, 2018]. By fostering self-awareness and inner peace, SYM can empower individuals to challenge gender-based inequalities effectively.

The impact of Sahaja Yoga Meditation on gender equality extends beyond personal well-being, offering a transformative approach to societal change. By promoting thoughtless awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation, SYM provides individuals with the cognitive emotional tools necessary to challenge gender biases and advocate for equality [Manocha et al., 2011]. As gender equality remains a cornerstone of sustainable development, integrating SYM into education, workplaces, and policy frameworks could offer innovative solutions to persistent disparities. Future research should explore the intersection of SYM, neuropsychology, and gender studies to develop comprehensive interventions that support gender equity and long-term societal progress [Domingo-Echaburu et al., 2021].

#### Objective

The study aimed to examine the influence of Sahaja Yoga Meditation on Equality, assess the effect of gender on Equality, and analyze the interaction between the nature of practice and gender concerning equality.

#### Methodology

#### Subjects:

A total of four hundred (N=400) participants were randomly chosen from Chhattisgarh State by using sampling technique named stratified random sampling based on gender and Sahaja Yoga practice. The sample of the present study was

Divided into 4 strata: male practitioners, female practitioners, male non-practitioners, and female non-practitioners, with 100 individuals chosen from each group. The participants' ages ranged from 17 to 27 years. Only those with

A minimum of five years of experience in Sahaja Yoga Meditation were included, and all selected participants had comparable educational backgrounds.

#### **Questionnaire Used:**

Equality was chosen as the study variable and it was assessed using the Sustainable Development Survey Scale (SDSS), developed by Shepherd, kuskova, and patzelt (2009).

#### **Design of the Study:**

The study employed a 2  $\times$  2 factorial designs as described by Clarke, D. H., and Clarke, H. H. (1984). This design included two IV (Independent Variables): the practice of Sahaja Yoga (practitioners and non-practitioners) and gender (male and female), forming a 2  $\times$  2 factorial structure. Data collection was conducted as a one-time process.

#### Statistical Analysis:

The study aimed to examine the impact of Sahaja Yoga Meditation on Sustainable Development, assess the influence of Gender on Sustainable Development, and analyze the interaction between the nature of practice and gender concerning Sustainable Development. To achieve this, a two-way factorial ANOVA, as described by Vincent, W. J. (1999), was utilized. Additionally, the effect size was calculated.

#### **Findings**

#### **Testing Normality Related to Equality**

#### Table- 1

Descriptive Measures of "Equality" of Male Sahaja Yoga Practitioners

Мє	ea	SE	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	SD	Mi	Ма	Ran	Sk	SE	Ku	SE
n	1	М	of Mean	of Mean		n.	X,	ge		s		K
17.	.4	.30	16.81	18.00	3.0	10	21	11	6	.24	6	.47
1					0				4		0	

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for equality among male Sahaja Yoga practitioners. The mean score is 17.41, with a standard error of the

Mean (SEM) of 0.30, indicating minimal scatteredness in the sample mean. Another measure standard deviation (SD) is 3.00, reflecting a moderate spread in responses. The scores range from a minimum of 10 to a maximum

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Of 21, resulting in a range (X max. - X min.) of 11. The skewness (Sk) value of -0.64 suggests very slight skew, indicates that more participants scored toward the higher end. The kurtosis (Ku) value of -0.60 signifies that the distribution is somewhat flatter than a normal distribution.

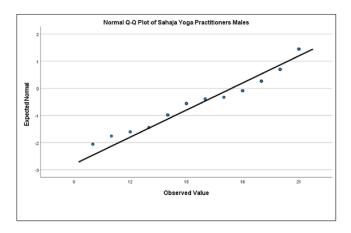


Figure-1: Q-Q plot showing the normal distribution of "Equality" of Male Sahaja Yoga Practitioners

Figure 1 presents a Q-Q plot illustrating the normality of equality scores among male Sahaja Yoga practitioners. The data points closely follow the reference line, indicating a normal distribution with minor deviations.

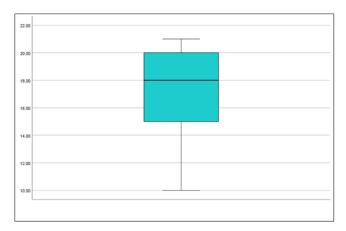


Figure- 2: Q-Q plot showing the box plot of "Equality" of Male Sahaja Yoga Practitioners

Figure 2 illustrates the box plot, depicting the distribution of equality scores. The median is centrally positioned, and the interquartile range (IQR) is relatively narrow, indicating that the majority of data points are clustered and located around the median. The whiskers extend symmetrically, with no significant outliers detected.

Table- 2

Descriptive Measures of "Equality" of Female Sahaja Yoga Practitioners

Меа	SE	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	SD	Mi	Ма	Ran	Sk	SE	Ku	SE
n	М	of Mean	of Mean		n.	X.	ge		s		к
17.8	.28	17.23	18.36	2.8	11	21	10	5	.24	-1.	.47
0				4				2		01	

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for female Sahaja Yoga practitioners. The mean score is 17.80, which is slightly higher than that of male practitioners, with a standard error of the mean (SEM) of 0.28, indicating low variability in the sample mean. The standard deviation (SD) of 2.84 suggests a relatively consistent distribution of responses. The scores range from a minimum of 11 to a maximum of 21, yielding a range (X max. - X min.) of 10. The skewness (Sk) value of -0.52, this indicates very slight leftward skew, while the kurtosis (Ku) value of -1.01 suggests a distribution that is flatter than normal.

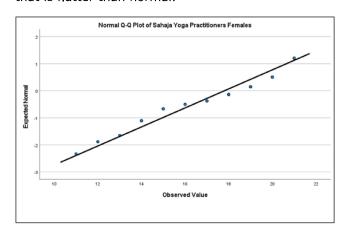
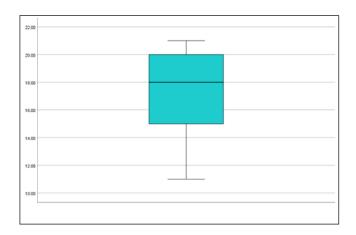


Figure 3: Q-Q plot showing the normal distribution of "Equality" of Female Sahaja Yoga Practitioners

Figure 3 depicts a Q-Q plot evaluating the normality of equality scores among female Sahaja Yoga practitioners. The data points closely follow the reference line, suggesting a distribution that is approximately normal.



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### Figure-4: Q-Q plot showing the box plot of "Equality" of Female Sahaja Yoga Practitioners

Figure 4 presents the box plot, indicating that the median is slightly higher compared to male practitioners, with a relatively narrow spread of scores. The whiskers extend symmetrically, and no significant outliers are observed.

Table- 3

Descriptive Measures of "Equality" of Male Non- Practitioners

Меа	SE	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	SD	Mi	Ма	Ran	Sk	SE	Ku	SE
n	М	of Mean	of Mean		n.	Хı	ge		s		К
13.9	<b>.</b> 43	13.04	14.77	4.3	3	21	18	1	.24	4	.47
1				8				3		8	

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for equality among male non-practitioners. The mean score is 13.91, notably lower than that of male Sahaja Yoga practitioners, indicating that non-practicing males tend to perceive lower levels of equality. The standard error of the mean (SEM) is 0.43, reflecting greater variability in the sample mean. The standard deviation (SD) of 4.38 suggests a wider distribution of responses. Scores range from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 21, yielding a range of 18. The skewness (Sk) value of -0.13 indicates near symmetry, while the kurtosis (Ku) value of -0.48 suggests a slightly flatter distribution.

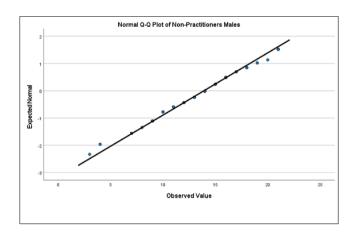


Figure-5: Q-Q plot showing the normal distribution of "Equality" of MaleNon-Practitioners

Figure 5 illustrates a Q-Q plot assessing the normality of equality scores among male non-practitioners. The data points exhibit some deviation from the reference line, suggesting a slight departure from normality.

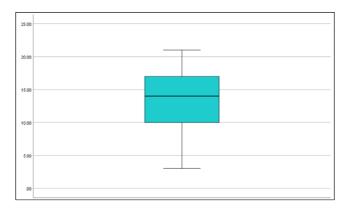


Figure-6: Q-Q plot showing the box plot of "Equality" of Male Non- Practitioners

Figure 6 presents the box plot, indicating that the median is lower compared to male practitioners. The longer whiskers reflect greater variability in responses, and a few data points near the lower bound suggest the presence of potential outliers.

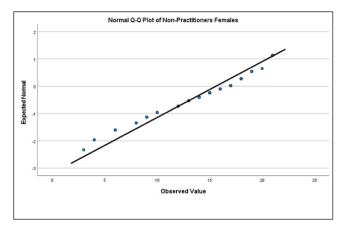
Table- 4

Descriptive Measures of "Equality" of Female Non- Practitioners

Mea	SE	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	SD	Mi	Ма	Ran	Sk	SE	Ku	SE
n	М	of Mean	of Mean		n.	X.	ge		s		K
15.5	.48	14.62	16.55	4.8	3	21	18	7	.24	4	.47
9				8				0		0	

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for equality among female non-practitioners. The mean score is 15.59, which is higher than that

Of male non-practitioners but lower than female practitioners. The standard error of the mean (SEM) is 0.48, indicating moderate variability in the sample mean. The standard deviation (SD) of 4.88 reflects a broader distribution of responses. Scores range from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 21, resulting in a range of 18. The skewness (Sk) value of -0.70 indicates a mild leftward skew, while the kurtosis (Ku) value of -0.40 suggests a distribution that is slightly flatter than normal.



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# Figure-7: Q-Q plot showing the normal distribution of "Equality" of Female Non-Practitioners

Figure 7 displays a Q-Q plot assessing the normality of equality scores among female non-practitioners. Minor deviations from the reference line are observed, indicating a slight skewness in the distribution of responses.

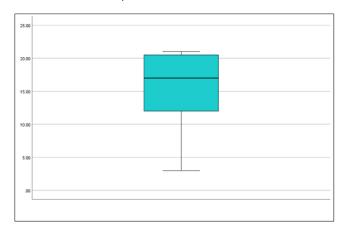


Figure-8: Q-Q plot showing the box plot of "Equality" of Female Non- Practitioners

Figure 8 presents a box

Plot depicting the distribution of equality scores. The median is slightly higher than that of male non-practitioners but lower than that of female practitioners. The whiskers extend over a broad range, indicating greater variability in scores, while a few data points near the lower end suggest the presence of mild outliers.

#### Analysis of Data Related to "Equality"

#### Table-5

Two-Way Analysis of Variance Results of "Equality"

(To compare Equality between Two groups (Practitioners of Sahaja Yoga and Non-Practitioners), between Gers (males and Females and their interaction)

Source	Sum of	Degree	Value of	F-	Signific	Value of Partial
	Square	of	Mean	Val	ance	Eta Squared
	s	Freedom	Square (MS)	ue	value	(PES)
Groups	815.10	1	815.10	54.1	.00	.12
				8		
Gender	107.12	1	107.12	7.12	.00	.01
Groups	41.60	1	41.60	2.76	.09	.00
*						
Gender						
Error	5956.57	396	15.04			

Table 5 displays the findings of a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), which evaluates the impact of Sahaja Yoga practice, gender, and their interaction on equality scores. The main effect of practice (practitioners vs. non-practitioners) is statistically significant, with an F-value of 54.189 and a p-value below 0.01. This result of the present study indicates that subjects who practice Sahaja Yoga report significantly higher equality scores compared to non-practitioners. The partial eta squared (PES) value of 0.120 signifies a moderate effect size, suggesting a substantial influence of Sahaja Yoga practice on equality.

Similarly, the main effect of gender (male vs. female) is significant, with an F-value of 7.122 and a p-value of 0.008, implying that females report higher equality scores than males. However, the PES value of 0.018 suggests a small ES (Effect Size), indicating that while the gender difference exists, its impact is not very strong.

The interaction effect between practice and gender is not statistically significant,

With an F-value of 2.766 and a p-value of 0.097. The PES value of 0.007 reflects a minimal effect size, suggesting that Sahaja Yoga practice influences equality perceptions similarly across genders, with no significant interaction between the two variables.

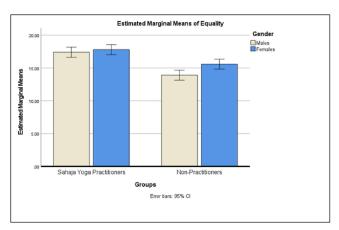


Figure-9: Graphical representation to compare "Equality" between Two groups (Practitioners of Sahaja Yoga and Non-Practitioners

Figure 9 provides a visual comparison of equality scores between Sahaja Yoga practitioners and non-practitioners. The graph distinctly illustrates that practitioners exhibit significantly higher perceptions of equality than non-practitioners. Furthermore, female participants tend to score higher in comparison to their male counterparts. However,

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The absence of a significant interaction between group and gender indicates that the effect of Sahaja Yoga on equality perceptions remains consistent across both genders.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of present study suggest that Sahaja Yoga Meditation (SYM) significantly contributes to enhancing perceptions of gender equality. Statistical analysis revealed that practitioners of SYM reported higher levels of perceived equality compared to non-practitioners, aligning with previously conducted research that highlights the role of meditation in fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation (Manocha et al., 2011). These psychological attributes play a significant role in challenging deeply ingrained societal biases

And fostering more egalitarian attitudes (Parris & Kates, 2003).

The main finding of present study was the significant effect of gender on equality perception. Female participants reported higher equality scores in comparison to their male counterparts, irrespective of their meditation practice. This aligns with earlier conducted studies indicating that women, due to historical social constraints, often benefit more from meditation in terms of self-confidence, emotional regulation, and assertiveness (Pavlov et al., 2015). Meditation enhances these qualities by improving self-reflection and stress management, which are crucial in navigating gender disparities (Hendriks, 2018).

Although both gender and meditation practice independently influenced perceptions of equality, their interaction effect (SYM & Genders) was not statistically significant. This suggests that while SYM fosters equality perception across genders, its impact remains consistent for both genders (male and female). This finding supports the notion that meditation enhances fundamental cognitive and emotional processes that transcend gender-based differences (Perez-Diaz et al., 2023). However, cultural and environmental factors may still moderate the extent to which individuals internalize gender-equal attitudes (Domingo-Echaburu et al., 2021).

The neurophysiological impact of SYM on gender equality perception can be attributed to its activation of chakras associated with communication, perception, and emotional balance.

The Vishuddhi chakra, linked to expression and collectivity, fosters open discussions on gender roles, while the Agnya chakra, responsible for perception and forgiveness, aids in overcoming internalized biases (Rathor et al., 2020). This aligns with several studies demonstrating that meditation enhances brain regions associated with selfawareness and emotional processing, leading to more egalitarian interactions (Barrós-Loscertales et al., 2021).

From a sustainable development perspective, these findings reinforce the potential of SYM in promoting gender equality, an essential goal of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is not only a social imperative but this is also a psychological

Transformation that requires internal shifts in cognition and emotion regulation. SYM contributes to this by fostering cooperative behaviors, ethical reasoning, and inclusive decision-making, which are fundamental to reducing gender disparities in leadership and economic participation (Holden et al., 2014).

Additionally, the physiological benefits of SYM, such as reduced cortisol levels and enhanced heart rate variability, play a very crucial role in building resilience against gender-based stressors. This is in particular for women, those who often face greater societal pressures and discrimination. The ability to manage stress effectively allows individuals to assert themselves confidently, thereby promoting gender equity in both personal and professional spheres (Galli et al., 2020).

The broader implications of present research also suggest that integrating meditation practices like SYM into educational and professional settings could facilitate gender equality at a systemic level. By encouraging mindfulness and self-awareness, organizations and institutions can create suitable environments that are more inclusive and supportive of gender equity (Perez-Diaz et al., 2023). Future studies should explore the long-term impact of SYM on gender-related attitudes and behaviors, incorporating cross-cultural perspectives for the development of comprehensive strategies for SGE (Sustainable Gender Equality) (Domingo-Echaburu et al., 2021).

#### Conclusion

The results of present study significantly indicate that Sahaja Yoga meditation

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Showed a significant impact on equality perception, with practitioners scoring higher than non-practitioners. Additionally, females generally perceive higher levels of equality than males. However, the interaction effect between group and gender is not significant, meaning that the benefits of Sahaja Yoga practice on equality are experienced similarly by both males and females. Findings of this study suggest that incorporating meditation practices like Sahaja Yoga may contribute to

Enhancing the perception of equality, supporting sustainable development in relation to gender balance and fairness.

The results of present study underscore the significant role of the practice of Sahaja Yoga Meditation in enhancing perceptions of gender equality. By fostering self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and stress regulation, SYM contributes to breaking down societal biases and promoting more inclusive interactions. The findings demonstrate that meditation practitioners report higher equality scores than non-practitioners, indicating the profound impact of the practice of meditation on personal and social transformation.

Moreover, while differences of gender in equality perception were observed, with females showed higher scores than males, the benefits of SYM remained consistent across genders. Results suggests that the practice is universally effective in cultivating attitudes that align with gender equity. Given the importance of gender equality as a fundamental aspect of sustainable development, these insights highlight the potential for integrating meditation-based interventions in education, workplaces, and policymaking to foster a more equitable society.

The neurophysiological and psychological mechanisms underlying the effects of SYM on gender perceptions provide a foundation for future research. Further studies should explore the long-term impact of meditation on gender-related attitudes and behaviors across diverse populations. Additionally, incorporating SYM into broader social development programs may yield promising results in reducing gender disparities and fostering a culture of equality.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on meditation and social transformation, reinforcing the relevance

Of SYM in achieving sustainable gender equity. As meditation continues to gain recognition as a tool for personal and societal well-being, its application in addressing gender disparities should be further explored and implemented at various levels of social development.

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