

A Retrospective Correlational study  
of the Effect of Vipassana Meditation and  
Personality Traits of the Vipassana practitioners at  
Govind Milk & Milk Products Pvt. Ltd. (Govind Dairy),  
Phaltan, Satara

## **A Research Report**

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## GOVIND MILK & MILK PRODUCTS PVT. LTD.

Ganeshsheri, Pandharpur Road, Kolki, Phaltan, Dist. Satara. Pin - 415 523


To,  
Neelam Oswal

June 3, 2010

Dear Madam,

We are very glad to receive your letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Honorable Chairman has accepted your request to go ahead with the research of Vipassana meditators in our organisation from this month. The time schedule will be as per our discussion held with you.

Thanking you,  
Yours faithfully,

  
Dhumat G.M.  
Managing Director

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Neelam Oswal

Phaltan

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## **The Story of 'Vipassana Movement' at Govind Dairy, Phaltan**

As narrated by G. M. Dhumal, the Managing Director

Govind Milk & Milk Products private Limited has started functioning in Phaltan since 1996. The management has started sending its employees for Vipassana retreats since 2000. The Managing Director of the organization has attended few Vipassana retreats even before that. On the basis of his prior exposure to Vipassana, he had thought that Vipassana retreats would be useful to deal with problems like indiscipline among his employees.

He started experimenting by sending few persons for a Vipassana retreat initially. After observing the noticeable changes among these persons, he got convinced about its utility and started sending all the employees to a retreat one by one. His experience has been that a person may not understand the technique of Vipassana properly in the first or second retreat, which is why he keeps asking his employees to attend retreats again after a certain time gap. Some of the employees themselves ask for being sent to a retreat once in a while.

At present the total staff of the Dairy is around 300. If the number of people associated to the Dairy like farmers supplying milk, distributors and marketing personnel are added, this number becomes around 500. Of these 500, around half of the persons have attended Vipassana retreats so far. The number of Vipassana retreats attended by each person in the Dairy range from 1 to 8.

Even now, every month a group of new and old meditators (new meditators are the persons who attend a Vipassana retreat for the first time; whereas old meditator is a person who has attended a retreat before) is sent for a retreat at the Vipassana centers either in Pune or Kolhapur. The Management has also created a space for group meditation, which is close to the Dairy in Phaltan. A group meditation is conducted there for one hour on every Sunday, attending which is voluntary in nature.

The major benefits of the 'Vipassana movement' for the organization as reported by the Management are:

1. A trust is built up between the Management and the employees. Most of the employees could easily approach the Management after a Vipassana retreat.
2. There have been fewer fights among the employees.
3. Employees have taken more responsibility of the work, which has improved the quality of their work.

Individual interviews with few employees also support the outcomes of Vipassana reported by the Management. Employees mentioned improved abilities like decision-making, problem solving and planning. They also reported change in individual characteristics like persistence, energy and concentration of mind. These changes are reported to be useful for taking more responsibility in work as well as better relationships with superiors as well as colleagues.

The major categories of the outcomes of a Vipassana retreat as reported by the present sample group are as follows:

- Health
  - Reduced physical and psychiatric problems
  - Improved resilience
- Emotion related outcomes
  - Being able to arrest negative thinking
  - Being able to control and manage anger
- Improved work place behavior
- Improved inter-personal relationship

Thus, Vipassana movement has been very much beneficial for Govind Milk & Milk Products private Limited. Vipassana has helped even an ordinary intelligent person in the Dairy to contribute towards the excellence of the organization. Attending a Vipassana retreat has created many positive changes like honesty, assertiveness, risk taking at individual level. These changes have reflected in the improvement of the organizational environment, once several employees have attended Vipassana retreats.

However, the Managing Director cautions against using Vipassana as a universal remedy for indiscipline related problems in any organization. He suggests that

Management personnel should be the first one to attend a Vipassana retreat. If only employees are sent for a Vipassana retreat, which teaches a philosophy of non-reactivity in broad terms, there might be a feeling of resentment among them.

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Vipassana movement is not only limited at Govind Dairy. Vipassana retreats are conducted at different centers all over the world. They are being attended by many people. These people do appreciate and get benefited by the ancient technique of Vipassana Meditation. Still, all of them are not equally benefited by these retreats. In fact some do drop out from a retreat.

Now, the question is why people have different benefits from the same technique! In order to answer this question, the present research project was carried out at Govind Dairy, Phaltan. 53 persons who had attended various number of Vipassana retreats were selected randomly from all the employees who had attended such retreats in the Dairy. It was thought that benefits of Vipassana might be related to personality characteristics of these people.

A personality test 16PF was used to assess the personality of these people. The two indicators of Effect of Vipassana in the present study are Mindfulness as assessed by Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire and Perceived changes in life as reported on a self designed questionnaire, Vipassana Parinam Prasnavali.

Few persons (n = 15) of the total sample (n = 53) were selected and interviewed individually in order to explore their individual learning and therapeutic process in a Vipassana retreat.

The results showed that Mindfulness is significantly correlated with two global dimensions of personality, namely, Anxiety and Super-ego/Control as assessed by the personality test, 16PF used in the present study.

It was also observed that the therapeutic factors perceived in a retreat by persons with high Mindfulness are different from the ones perceived by persons with low Mindfulness.



A major contribution of the present study is the empirical data to support the hypothesized relation between effect of Vipassana and Personality traits, though a further study with experimental design is necessary to confirm these findings.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Conception and Rationale of the present project:***

The present project has been carried out among the persons, who have attended various number of Vipassana retreats, in an organization producing dairy products in a suburban part of Western Maharashtra. This project has been intended to be a preliminary one for exploring the hypothesized relation between personality traits of Vipassana practitioners and the effect of Vipassana, especially Mindfulness (Sati). Vipassana, an ancient Indian technique of meditation taught by the Buddha, aims to liberate human beings from suffering and to attain mental purity. It is possible with the thorough understanding of the impermanence and insubstantiality of phenomena within and around. Developing Mindfulness is the first step towards this goal. Mindfulness, a kind of non-elaborative, non-judgmental and present centered form of awareness is described to be an outcome of Vipassana Meditation.

The idea of such scientific exploration of this ancient technique has been conceived during the 10 day Vipassana retreat of the present Researcher at Dhamma-Giri, Igatpuri. Vipassana courses in their present form have been started in India and abroad since 1969 by Shree. S.N. Goenka, who has been a student of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, an ardent Vipassana Meditator and Teacher from Myanmar(VRI, 1992). Many people are getting benefited by this technique since then. The positive effect of Vipassana meditation on various physical and mental indicators is also being studied since 1970s (Parihar, 2004).

Still, a general observation shows that there are few people who do drop out from a Vipassana course, an observation which has also been confirmed by a Vipassana Teacher (Dr. Nikhil Mehata, Pune, Personal communication, January 2010). The question ‘Why do some persons drop out from a Vipassana retreat, when many anecdotal and research report suggest the beneficial effects of Vipassana?’ has been the motivating one for the present project. It has been hypothesized that the individual

personality traits of the practitioners might be mediating the effects of Vipassana. The possible role of the personality characteristics of Vipassana meditators in the differential benefits of Vipassana has been thought to be an important next step in the scientific exploration of Vipassana Meditation, which has already been started by some researchers assessing the effect of Vipassana through scientific methodology.

Such an exploration would be important for extending the benefits of Vipassana for special population like persons with mental illness. Besides, it would also give important insights for spreading this ancient method of liberation from suffering to the people who need such a technique, but do not appreciate Vipassana retreats at present, though they are very less in number.

As said in the discourses by S. N. Goenka (1987) Buddha himself was against being content only with ‘received’ or ‘intellectual’ wisdom. Hence trying to answer any doubt like why the technique of Vipassana is not beneficial for some people, though very little in number, through scientific methods would be very much in the spirit of Buddhism. The differentiation among religion, philosophy and psychology as put forth by Lama Angarika Govinda (1991), one of the interpreters, thinkers and meditation masters in the field of modern Buddhism, has been useful to underscore the spirit of scientific enquiry generated in the mind of the present researcher during the 10 day Vipassana retreat.

According to the Lama Govinda (1991) “...*the religious side of Buddhism is the one which has been established by experience, just as a path is formed by the process of walking. Philosophy is the definition of its direction and psychology is the analysis of the forces and conditions that favor or hinder the progress on that way*”.

This contention delineates and also establishes the role of psychology for the widespread utility of any distress relieving technique borne in the framework of religion.

### ***The technique of Vipassana:***

The word ‘Vipassana’ literally means looking within. The Noble Eight-fold path for liberation from suffering as taught by the Buddha has three aspects: *sīla* or morality, *Samādhi* or developing mastery over one’s mind and *Panna* or wisdom. *Sila* consisting of purity of vocal and physical action and right livelihood are the rules of behavior.

*Samadhi* involves right effort to train mind, right awareness of the reality of the present moment, and sustaining this awareness continuously from moment to moment. *Panna* involves right understanding of the cause of suffering and right thoughts or intentions (Goenka, 1987).

A person learns the technique of Vipassana Meditation in a 10 day retreat at present. There are follow-up retreats of one or three days. Prolonged retreats of 20, 30 or 45 days are also designed for advanced meditators. Observing the rules of morality or *Sila* sets the framework of a Vipassana retreat. In a Vipassana retreat a person is taught three techniques, *Anapana* or observing bare breath, *Vipassana* or observing the sensations throughout the body and *Metta* or meditation of loving-kindness.

A student, the person who attends a retreat, has to follow Noble silence for all the days except for the last day of the retreat. Noble silence means not to communicate with fellow meditators in any way. Students can speak to the teachers only for clarifying any doubts related to the technique in a stipulated time. They also can speak to *Dhamma Sevak/Sevikas*, the volunteers for the retreat, in case of any practical problems. A student is supposed to sit straight with spine erect for Vipassana Meditation. The daily schedule consists of 10 hours of meditation, spread over six sessions of either 1 or 2 hours, and 1 hour of discourse. The student is asked to complete his/her chores in the scheduled breaks in between.

In a 10 day retreat, the first three and half days are spent achieving concentration of mind through the practice of **Anapana or observation of breath**. If a person is not able to feel his/her breath, he/she is asked to take a deep breath once in a while in order to facilitate the observation of bare breath. Otherwise the technique does not involve any kind of breath manipulation. Imagery or any object other than breath is not involved for the purpose of concentration. After achieving stable level of concentration, the meditator gradually starts **observing bodily sensations** at the present moment. The sensations may be of any kind like pleasant or unpleasant, subtle or gross. The **Metta Meditation** is taught on the last day of a retreat. It involves generating in mind love, friendliness and kindness for all the beings around.

It is suggested that the participants practice meditation regularly for two hours (one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening) after a retreat for the continuing benefits of Vipassana. The one hour meditation at home is supposed to start with observing breath or *Anapana*. But a meditator spends maximum time of this time observing sensations. A meditation sessions ends with five minutes of Metta meditation.

According to Goenka (1987), the importance of morality (*sila*) or concentration (*samadhi*) for eradicating human suffering was known even before the time of the Buddha. It was commonly accepted that mental defilements (negative emotions like anger, fear, hatred or mental stress) are the source of suffering, that craving and aversion must be eliminated in order to purify mind and attain liberation. **The unique contribution of the Buddha lies in his understanding of the importance of sensation as a missing link between the external object and human reaction to it.** Our negative reactions like aversion are actually a reaction to the unpleasant sensations generated by an external object and so are the positive reactions.

The technique of Vipassana asserts that if the sensations are observed with equanimity, despite their nature, it would lead to a path of wisdom on which one starts getting liberated from suffering. The main objective of Vipassana meditation is to develop a moment to moment awareness of sensations and equanimity towards them. It is intended to facilitate experiential understanding of the impermanent nature of reality through developing an insight into physical and mental contents at every moment (Goenka, 1987).

### ***The differential benefits of Vipassana Retreat:***

Although Vipassana Retreat proposes to teach a universal path for eradication of suffering (Goenka, 1987), the benefits of Vipassana are not equal for everybody. Many people do not want to enroll for a Vipassana retreat, because of one of its striking feature namely the Noble Silence. People who dropped out of Vipassana retreat, whom the researcher met by chance, gave reasons like food not being of their preference, physical pain, or fear of being converted to Buddhism, for not completing the Vipassana retreat. One person had completed the course, but had complaints about the philosophy of non-

reactivity. Thus variable appreciation of Vipassana retreat might influence the decision of attending or completing a Vipassana retreat or accepting the philosophy of Vipassana and practicing the technique in post-retreat period.

Ayyar (1990) a practicing psychiatrist, who is convinced about the therapeutic potential of Vipassana, suggests attending a Vipassana retreat to his patients. Though most of them are benefited by that, he notes a resistance among some of his patients for attending a Vipassana retreat. The reasons for this resistance identified by him are perception of Vipassana as a Buddhist technique, unrealistic expectations from a retreat (e.g. three techniques in ten days are too less), not being prepared for going to a helping agency other than their own psychiatrist. Ayyar further suggests that scientific study of individual developmental experiences and mental make-up of the drop-outs from a Vipassana retreat would throw light on the differential benefits of Vipassana.

The casual observation that some individuals do not want to attend Vipassana retreat because of the rule of Noble Silence leads to a speculation that personal preferences of extraversion or introversion might be related to variable appreciation of Vipassana.

As per the theory of psychological types, proposed by C.G. Jung, "...though introverts are interested in the external world, their main concern is with the effect the object has upon them. On the contrary, in an extravertive person mental activity proceeds from object to subject. Such a person is hardly aware of himself if there is no external form of attention.." (Bennet, 1961). Thus, a predominant concern for an introvert person is his/her own thoughts and feelings rather than the outside world and social interaction, which is the main concern for an extravert person.

In a Vipassana retreat a person is asked to concentrate only on bare breath. Attaching any mantra or counting breaths or labeling sensation is strictly avoided. A person is asked to follow Noble silence to facilitate the looking within, as any communication starts ripples of sensations and thoughts. As per the theory of psychological types, complete absence of an external object in a Vipassana retreat might be making it difficult for a completely extraverted person to follow the technique of *Vipassana*.

Nonetheless, personality research has progressed quite a lot since the conception of psychological types by Jung. There is a consensus among personality researchers at present that it is better to place a personality factor on a continuum of the trait rather

than on a dichotomous personality type (McCrae & Costa, 1989). For example, a person can have more or less extraversion and cannot be completely introvert or extravert. There is also an agreement that most of the personality characteristics can be classified in one of the five factors of the Big Five model of personality, namely, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to change, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness.

Thus, the hypothesis that **personality traits of Vipassana meditators might be related to the effects of Vipassana** has been generated by following three things:

- by listening to the experiences of the people who have not attended or dropped out of a Vipassana retreat.
- by reading reports of mental health professionals who have tried to utilize the technique of Vipassana for their clients, and
- by reviewing the history and trends in personality research at present.

The Buddha has proclaimed that anybody and everybody whoever learns and follows this technique regularly would attain liberation from mental impurities and suffering one day or the other. Nonetheless, the above-mentioned hypothesis suggests that individual personality characteristics might be reflecting in the decision of attending or not attending a Vipassana retreat, completing a retreat once enrolled and finally continuing the practice regularly.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***A. Vipassana and Personality:***

So far, Vipassana researchers have used change in personality characteristics as one of the outcomes of Vipassana. For example, in the empirical study of Tihar Jail inmates who have attended a Vipassana retreat (N = 120), Chandiramani, Verma and Dhar (1995) assessed the effect of Vipassana on personality characteristics at 3 and 6 months' interval after attending Vipassana retreat, along with other variables like anomie, hostility, helplessness, and psychiatric illness. They had used 18 item Indian adaptation of Eysenck's PEN inventory for assessing personality. The results showed that of the three personality types (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Psychoticism) measured by PEN inventory, Psychoticism showed initial reduction after Vipassana which was not maintained. Neuroticism reduced immediately after the retreat, but the follow-up at 3

and 6 months showed that the scores of Neuroticism were unstable. There was no significant difference in the scores of Extraversion after a Vipassana retreat.

In a second study by the same team of researchers in Tihar Jail, a control group of convicts who have not attended Vipassana retreat (N = 65) was involved. The Personality Trait Inventory based on MMPI, which was used in this study, assessed activity, dominance, paranoid tendency, depressive tendency, emotional stability, introversion, social desirability and cyclothymia. The results showed that the experimental group (EG) had significantly reduced scores of activity after a Vipassana retreat, but not the Control group (CG). EG also had reduced scores of Super-ego 3 months after the retreat, whereas CG had improved Super-ego scores immediately after the retreat period. There was no significant difference in any other personality traits measured by this inventory.

The results about super-ego are quite confusing in this study. The researchers have explained the result of no change in any other trait saying that the basic personality structure is generally more resistant to changes. In short, these studies are not conclusive about the role of personality in the effect of Vipassana Meditation.

**Unlike the above-mentioned studies, the present study is based on a hunch that changes in personality might not happen after a Vipassana retreat, but the unique personality organization of each individual might be related to the outcomes of Vipassana meditation in some other ways.**

In the present project, 16PF, a personality test based on the hierarchical theory of personality by R. B. Cattell has been used (IPAT, 1969). It is a multilevel assessment of personality traits and gives scores of 16 primary personality traits and five secondary personality traits. Each score describes the relative position of a person on a continuum of the personality trait in consideration, on a scale of 1 to 10. The primary traits give the most basic definition of individual personality differences; whereas the secondary traits have been identified by the factor analytic studies of the primary traits. The secondary traits measured by 16 PF are Extraversion, Anxiety, Tough-poise, Independence, and Super-ego/control.

**The reasons for choosing 16PF for the present project is similarity of the secondary traits described by 16 PF to the traits described by the latest model of personality which is Big Five model.**

## ***B. Outcomes of Vipassana:***

### **(I) Mindfulness**

Anecdotal as well as research reports so far highlight many positive outcomes of attending a Vipassana retreat among general people as well as in specific populations like persons with mental illness and convicted criminals (Parihar, 2004). Among the latter two categories the general aim of any intervention would be to help the person improve his/her deteriorated psychosocial functioning; and so is of the people who conducted Vipassana retreat for these special populations. In the former category are generally the people who attend a retreat voluntarily. Vipassana retreat helps them for betterment/excellence in psychosocial functioning through mental purification.

Reported global outcomes of Vipassana Retreat at individual level are emotional stability (Sinha, Prasad & Sharma, 1976), general pattern of positive mental health (Chokhani, 1986), quality of life, and subjective feeling of well-being (Parihar, 2004). More specific reported outcomes are **cognitive** ones like increased concentration, better decision making, and improved memory; or **interpersonal** like better communication skills, increased tolerance; or **occupation related** like improved efficiency, reduced boredom (Parihar, 2004). Various **physiological indicators** have shown that a person is more stable and restful after a Vipassana retreat (Udupa, Singh, Dwivedi, Pandey & Rai, 1975). In the present project, Mindfulness and perceived changes in daily life are measures of outcome of Vipassana meditation. The reasoning for this preference has been explained below.

In the last two decades various therapeutic modalities based on the technique of Vipassana Meditation like Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction/ MBSR (Kabat-Zinn, 2003), Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy-MBCT (Teasedale, Segal, Williams, 1995), Dialectical Behavior therapy (Linehan, Heard & Armstrong, 1993), Acceptance and Commitment therapy (Mace, 2007) are developed. This development has led to a continuing analysis of the process as well as outcomes of Vipassana. All these



researchers agree that Vipassana meditation develops a characteristic nonjudgmental awareness of sensation, thoughts and feelings in the present moment and have termed it as Mindfulness which has been called as Sati in the Vipassana related Pali literature.

Right Mindfulness or Samma Sati is one of the constituents of the noble eight-fold path for eradication of suffering taught by the Buddha. As contended in the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, Sati or mindfulness can be established through the observation of the body (Kayanupassana), of sensations (Vedananupassana), of mind (Chittanupassana) and of the mental objects (Dhammanupassana) (Lay, 2002). Establishing Mindfulness leads to right understanding of the nature of reality characterized by unsatisfactoriness, impermanence and insubstantiality.

On the basis of the theory of cause-effect relationship narrated by the Buddha (Goenka, 1987), it can be proposed that the positive benefits of a Vipassana retreat, are mostly because of Mindfulness (Sati) which is a mental state of awareness and equanimity to internal and external events developed by practicing the technique of Vipassana Meditation. Mindfulness can be a mediating factor for all other positive benefits of Vipassana meditation, researched so far. Assessing Mindfulness of Vipassana practitioners is the unique feature of the present study which has been made possible due to the independent development of questionnaires assessing Mindfulness as a mental state.

Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Kreitemeyer & Toney (2006) have identified five facets of mindfulness through factor analysis of the combined pool of items of then available five mindfulness questionnaire. They are The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003), The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Buchheld, Grossman & Walach, 2001), Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer, Smith, Allen, 2004), Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS; Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, & Greenson, 2004) and The Mindfulness Questionnaire (MQ; Chadwick, Hember, Mead, Lilly, Dangan, 2005; the last two references as observed in Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Kreitemeyer & Toney, 2006).

The identified factors of Mindfulness are Observing (**Obs**), Acting with awareness (**AAW**), Describing/ labeling with words (**Des**), being Non-judgmental about self and

others (**NJ**) and Non-reactivity to internal experience (**NR**). They have named the combined questionnaire as Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). The AAW and Obs seem to be related to the awareness aspect Vipassana meditation; whereas NJ and NR seem to be related the equanimity aspect of Vipassana meditation.

Of the five factors suggested by Baer et al.,(2006), the factor, Describing or Labeling is not encouraged in Vipassana Meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka. Still the original questionnaire measuring all the five facets of Mindfulness has been used in the present project for the dearth of other comprehensive and validated instrument measuring and giving independent scores of each of the four factors.

## **(II): Changes in daily life:**

The Buddha had taught the technique of Vipassana Meditation as a way of relieving human distress. Hence it is but natural to expect the positive changes in daily life after a Vipassana retreat in which a person has learnt the technique successfully. The first person accounts of persons who have attended Vipassana retreats do support this expectation (VRI, 1987). It is supported by independent research that the positive changes in cognition, emotion and physiological functioning (discussed above) result in positive changes in life and improves the Quality of Life (Parihar, 2004).

For assessing the changes in daily life after Vipassana perceived by the person him/herself, a self report questionnaire, based on the questionnaire ‘Impact of Vipassana Meditation index’ developed by Vipassana Research Institute (Parihar, 2004) has been used. The original questionnaire has six factors namely, perceived potential of Vipassana based on their experience, improvement of self awareness by Vipassana, Application of Vipassana in Government for improvement of systems, benefits of Vipassana in improving mental health by reducing anger, stress, tension, anxiety, intolerance, irritation etc, benefits of Vipassana in family life and interpersonal relationships, benefits in maintaining mental equilibrium and optimism, even in adverse situations.

This questionnaire has been adapted for the present purpose. The revised questionnaire has four main factors, namely, Mental health (reduced mental defilements and

improved resilience, **MH**), Relationships (**R**), General attitude (**GA**) and work (**W**). The items in the original questionnaire about Government functioning which would have been irrelevant in the present context are omitted in the adapted one. Four negative statements are added as a check to a tendency to answer in only one direction.

Thus the important variables in the present study are:

- Personality traits
- Mindfulness
- Perceived changes in life after Vipassana

The latter two variables, Mindfulness and Perceived changes in life can be grouped together as **Effect of Vipassana** for convenience.

The main objective of the present study is to explore the primary and secondary personality factors which are significantly correlated with the Effect of Vipassana. The relation between Mindfulness and Perceived Changes in life after Vipassana will also be analyzed. Since this is a retrospective study and the participants have attended variable number of retreats, the relation of Mindfulness with variables related to Vipassana retreats like number of retreats attended, time since first retreat and the frequency of practice of meditation in post retreat period will be investigated.

### ***C. The differential processes during a Vipassana Retreat:***

As the first part of the present study explores personality factors related to the effect of Vipassana, the latter part intends to explore **how the significantly correlated personality factor influences the effect**. No previous research has been found for this part of the study. However, it is presumed that the psychological process that every individual experiences in a Vipassana retreat would be unique and needs to be explored for understanding the reasons of differential benefits of Vipassana.

The two main individual processes in a retreat are learning and therapeutic process. The learning process involves learning and practicing the technique, the outcome of which is proper understanding of the technique and the theory of Vipassana meditation. Therapeutic process is the one through which negative habits, feelings, attitudes are transformed for better. Like any other psychotherapeutic process, the outcome of this

process would be relief of distress in general, although that may not be the apparent motivation of attending the retreat for some of the participants.

The main objective of the second part is to understand through qualitative methods whether the individual learning and therapeutic processes of the persons, who are on the extreme ends of the continuum of a personality trait, which has been found as significantly correlated with the Effect of Vipassana in the former part, are different. The main basis of this part is a presumption that dominant personality traits might be influencing the individual learning and therapeutic process in a Vipassana retreat.

#### ***D. Vipassana practitioners in a single organization:***

The present project has been carried out in an organization processing dairy products in suburban part of Western Maharashtra. The principal reason of choosing this organization for the present project is the availability of a group of people who have attended Vipassana retreats. The Managing Director of the Dairy (Dhumal, personal communication, February, 2010), himself being a Vipassana meditator has motivated most of his staff members to attend at least one and mostly more than one Vipassana retreats. In a personal communication he has reported that staff attending a Vipassana retreat and their doing regular practice of Vipassana has contributed towards positive changes at the individual level and also improved their efficiency and responsibility at work place.

The effect of employees' attending Vipassana retreats on individuals themselves and on the organization has been assessed at various places like Police Academy (Arya, 2001), in private sector (Shah, 1994; Gupta, 1997; as read in Parihar 2004) and on Government officials (Parihar, 2004). In all these organizations including the present one, the management has encouraged its employees to attend Vipassana retreats with the underlying assumption that positive changes at individual level would reflect at organizational level.

Looking at the positive changes at individual level Arya (2001) and Parihar (2004) suggest Vipassana as useful for training of Police and Government officials respectively. The effect of employees' practicing Vipassana, at organizational level

reported by Shah are shift from authority rule to consensus decision making, from one-up-man-ship to team spirit and from insecurity to self -motivation in the work force. All these changes have ultimately resulted in enhanced industrial productivity (Shah, 1994; Gupta, 1997).

During the research process, the participants in the present project have shared changes in their work perceived by themselves after a Vipassana retreat and has been dealt briefly in section ‘Results and Discussion’ in the present report. However, assessing the effect of employee’s attending Vipassana retreats on organization is not intended to be the main objective of the present project.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### ***Objectives:***

- To explore the relation between personality traits and the effect of Vipassana meditation.
- To assess the relation between Mindfulness and Perceived Changes in life after a Vipassana retreat.
- To assess the relationship of Mindfulness with Vipassana related variables like number of Vipassana retreats attended, time since the first retreat and frequency of meditation in post retreat period.
- To understand the learning as well as therapeutic process during a Vipassana retreat.

### ***The Variables:***

1. Personality trait: A behavioral or mental characteristic distinguishing an individual. It is assessed through a personality test 16 PF (IPAT, 1969 edition) in the present project.
  
2. Mindfulness\*: It is a kind of non-elaborative, non-judgmental and present centered form of awareness in which all the thoughts, feelings and sensations in the field of attention are acknowledged and accepted. Mindfulness

is measured using Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Kreitemeyer, Toney, 2006) in the present project.

3. Perceived Changes in life after Vipassana: It is the perception of a person, who has attended a Vipassana retreat, about how various aspects of his own life have been affected in the post-retreat period due to Vipassana meditation. Perceived changes in life have been assessed using Vipassana Parinam Prasnavali in the present project.

(\*The two outcome variables, Mindfulness and Perceived changes in life, together have been named as Effect of Vipassana in the present project.)

4. Vipassana retreat: It is a 10 day residential course, conducted at various Vipassana centers all over the world, teaching the technique of Vipassana Meditation in a standard way. A person who has attended one Vipassana retreat is allowed to attend the second course only after a minimum period of six months. The participants are supposed to do meditation everyday for better understanding of the technique.

5. The learning process: The individual process of learning the Vipassana technique in a retreat. It involves the person's motivation, initial difficulties, understanding the technique and transfer of training.

6. The therapeutic process: The individual process during a Vipassana retreat through which negative habits, feelings and attitudes are transformed for better.

### ***The Hypotheses:***

1. There is no significant relationship between the Effect of Vipassana and any of the Personality traits\*.
2. Mindfulness and Perceived Changes in Life after Vipassana retreat would be positively related to each other.
3. The Effect of Vipassana is positively related to the number of Vipassana retreats attended and frequency of practice of Vipassana.

4. The effect of Vipassana is negatively related to the time since the first retreat unless practiced regularly.

(\*Since the research on the association between personality traits and effect of Vipassana is still in preliminary stage, a null hypothesis is formulated in order to explore the relation between the two.)

### ***The Design of the study:***

The present study has two main parts.

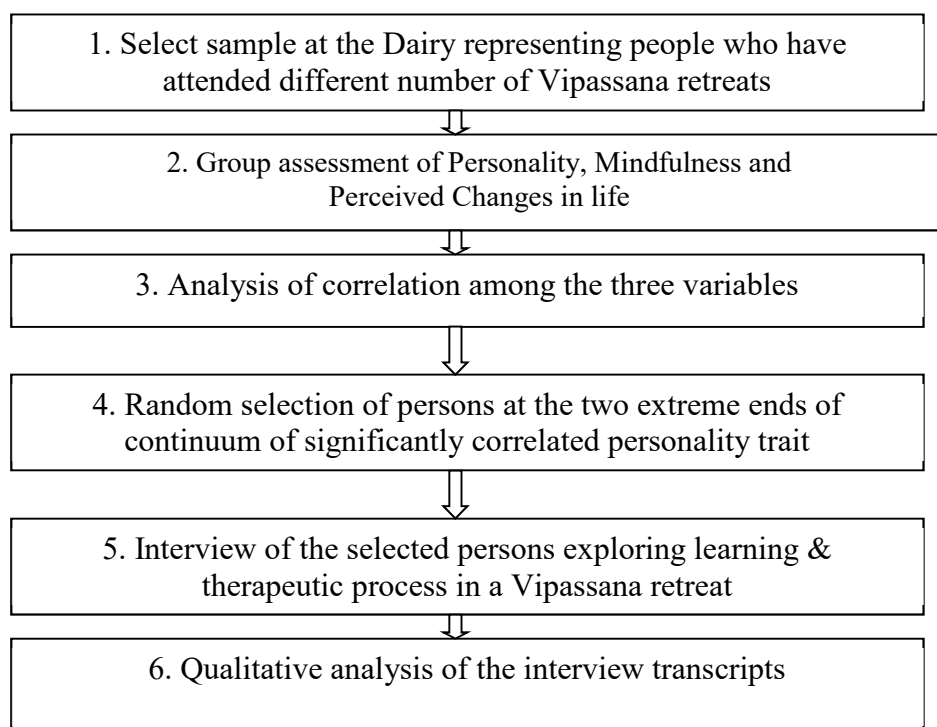
The first part of the study is a correlational one exploring the association between following pairs of variables:

- i) Effect of Vipassana and Personality traits
- ii) Mindfulness and Perceived Changes in life
- iii) Effect of Vipassana and Vipassana related variables like number of retreats attended, time since first retreat, frequency of meditation

The second part of the study consists of qualitative assessment of the learning process and the therapeutic process in a Vipassana retreat.

The individual steps in the present study are explained in the following flow-chart.

### **Figure 1: Flow chart of the research process**



### ***Research tools:***

- Vipassana Parinam prasnavali-Marathi (VPPr): (Appendix III)

This questionnaire has been developed by adapting the Impact of Vipassana Meditation Index used by Parihar (2004) for Government officials. The present 18 item questionnaire has four factors namely, General attitude (GA), Mental health (MH), Relationships (R) and Work (W). A total score of Perceived change (PC) is also given. A person has to answer on a three point scale namely, Yes, Uncertain and No. The answers can be translated in scores of 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive items and 1, 2 and 3 respectively for negative items.

- The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire –FFMQ (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Kreitemeyer, Toney, 2006) (Appendix IV)

FFMQ, a 39 items questionnaire, assesses five factors of mindfulness namely Observing (Obs), Acting with awareness (AAW), Describing (Des), Non-Judgmental-ness (NJ) and Non-Reactivity (NR). A total mindfulness score (MF) can be obtained by summing up scores on individual facets. The original English



questionnaire has been translated into Marathi through the process of translation and back-translation for the present project. After a pilot testing the original five point scale of this questionnaire has been converted to a three point scale in order to be suitable for the present sample. These three points are 1 = never true, 2 = sometimes true and 3 = always true. The scoring is reversed for the items which intend to measure Mindfulness in indirect way.

- The Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire (16PF) form C:

(IPAT, 1969 edition):

The form C of 16PF has 105 items and each item has three options to answer. The test taker has to tick on the answer-sheet, on the number of the option appropriate for the item, according to him/herself.

The test has scales to measure 16 primary factors of personality, as conceptualized originally by Cattell & Mead (2008). It also gives scores of 5 global scales namely, Extraversion (E), Anxiety (A), Tough-mindedness (T), Independence (I) and Super-ego/control (SC).

The original English questionnaire has been translated into Marathi for the present sample. A template is used to score the answer-sheet. The score for each of the personality factors is given on a scale of 10. The scores of 5 or 6 are considered as average. The scores 8, 9, and 10 represent the persons at the highest end of the personality trait in consideration. The scores 1, 2, and 3 represent the persons at the lowest end of the personality trait in consideration.

- A semi-structured questionnaire as a support to the individual interviews

(Appendix V): This questionnaire intends to explore the motivation, the learning process, the transfer of learning, and the therapeutic process of individual meditators.

### ***The place of the research:***

Present project has been conducted in an organization processing dairy products in a suburban area of Western Maharashtra. The organization has started functioning in 1996 and Vipassana has been introduced in the organization 10 years ago (at around the year 2000). Almost half of the total employees (around 500) of the organization in

consideration have attended Vipassana retreats. (A detail note on the Vipassana Movement in this organization in Appendix I)

### ***The Sample:***

The participants in the present project (N = 53) are from various sections in the organization and represent supervisors, laborers and marketing personnel. They have attended various number of Vipassana retreats. The average duration of service in the organization of the persons in the sample group is 8.6 years. The demographic details of the sample group are presented in Table 1. The Vipassana related features of the sample group are presented in Table 2.

**Table 1: Sample group in the present study**

Category	Frequency
Total persons (N)	53
Males (M)	46
Females (F)	07
Education:	till SSC
Till graduation	13
Post-graduation	37
Nature of work:	Supervisor
Laborer	31
Marketing	17
Age: (in years)	Average:
Min:	36
Max:	21
	55

**Table 2: Vipassana related characteristics of the sample group**

Number of Vipassana retreats attended:	
New Meditators (1/2 retreat)	27
Old Meditators (3 to 5 retreats)	18
Old-old meditators (more than 5 retreats)	08
Frequency of practice of Vipassana:	
Everyday	10
Most of the days	06
Sometimes	37
Never	00

Time since the first retreat in years	
Minimum	01
	12
Maximum	5.6
Average	

The sample group for personal interviews:

Of the 15 persons who were selected for personal interviews, 11 were selected on the basis of their scores on secondary personality factors, Anxiety or Super-ego/Control or on their scores of Mindfulness.

Four persons were suggested by the Management of the organization for the unique effect of Vipassana observed in these people.

***The procedure:***

The participants were administered the questionnaires and the personality test in a small group of 8 to 10 persons. After signing the consent form, the participants were presented the questionnaires one by one, beginning with a short demographic form which requested their age, education, nature of work, the month and year of the first Vipassana retreat, motive for attending the Vipassana retreat, number of retreats attended and frequency of practice of Vipassana meditation.

The standard sequence of administering the questionnaire was VPPr, FFMQ and 16PF in each session. Although the instructions of each questionnaire were self explanatory, they were read out loudly and doubts, if any, were satisfied. The method of answering the questions was explained on a blackboard in each session.

In the second phase of the study, each person was interviewed in an individual session. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

***Data analysis:***

The relation of FFMQ as well as VPPr scores with the variables, the scores of primary and secondary Personality traits, Number of Vipassana Retreats attended, Time since

the first Retreat, Frequency of Meditation, Education and Years of service in the organization respectively was assessed using Pearson's Product moment correlation with the help of SPSS (statistical package for Social Sciences).

The interview transcripts have been analyzed qualitatively to explore the therapeutic and learning process that occurs in a Vipassana retreat.

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## **RESULTS and DISCUSSION**

The statistical and qualitative findings in the present study have been discussed here under five major headings:

- I. The outcomes at organizational level
- II. The indicators of Effect of Vipassana and their inter-relation
- III. Personality factors related to the Effect of Vipassana
- IV. Vipassana related variables and Effect of Vipassana
- V. Learning and therapeutic process in a Vipassana retreat

### ***I. The outcomes at organizational level***

The present project has been carried out in an organization producing dairy related products, in suburban part of Western Maharashtra. Availability of a number of persons who have attended variable number of Vipassana retreats was the main reason for choosing this place for the present preliminary project. The Management of the organization had intended to improve the organizational environment while sending their employees one by one to Vipassana retreats. The outcomes of Vipassana retreats reported by the Management at individual level are reduced fear and inter personal conflicts, increased dedication to work, sense of responsibility and assertiveness. These outcomes have further improved interpersonal relationships and the quality of work of the organization.

Individual interviews with few employees also support the outcomes of Vipassana reported by the Management. Employees mentioned improved abilities like decision-making, problem solving and planning. They also reported change in individual characteristics like persistence, energy and concentration of mind. These changes are

reported to be useful for taking more responsibility in work as well as better relationships with superiors as well as colleagues.

The outcomes reported by the interviewees are mostly the same as the ones exemplified in Vipassana Parinam Prasnavali used in the present project. The major categories of the outcomes of a Vipassana retreat as reported by the present sample group are as follows:

- Health
  - Reduced physical and psychiatric problems
  - Improved resilience
- Emotion related outcomes
  - Being able to arrest negative thinking
  - Being able to control and manage anger
- Improved work place behavior
- Improved inter-personal relationship

However the report by two persons of the 15, who were interviewed personally, that the main reason of their attending, completing and doing their best in a Vipassana Retreat was the material rewards in the organization makes one cautious before concluding about the success of Vipassana Meditation to improve organizational environment. Narrations by the interviewed persons about their faith in the Superior who has asked them to attend a Vipassana retreat do suggest the possibility of Hawthorne effect (The possibility that the reported improvement in performance of workers is not due to the intervention but due to the feeling of being under concerned supervision). Nonetheless assessing the effect of Vipassana on organizational level has not been intended in the scope of the present study and hence the possibility of Hawthorne effect has not been explored further.

## ***II The indicators of Effect of Vipassana and their inter-relation***

Mindfulness consisting of five facets namely Observing, Describing, Acting with awareness, Non-judgemental-ness, Non-reactive-ness, and Perceived changes in life involving changes in General attitude, Mental health, Relationships and Work have been assessed as indicators of the Effect of Vipassana in the present project. As per the

statistical analysis, these two outcome variables, **Mindfulness and Perceived changes in life have significant positive correlation with each other,  $r(51)=0.50, p = 0.001$ .**

Mindfulness has significant correlation with all the four aspects of Perceived changes. Similarly, Perceived changes in life have significant positive correlation with all the facets of Mindfulness except for the Non-judgmental-ness. Table 3 gives the means and Standard deviations (SD) of the two main indicators of the Effect of Vipassana and their respective factors and Table 4 presents the inter-relation among them.

**Table 3: Mean and SDs of the indicators of the Effect of Vipassana**

Factors of VPPr	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Factors of Mindfulness	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
General Attitude (GA)	11.00	1.40	53	Observing (Obs)	18.77	2.68
Mental Health (MH)	13.92	1.58	53	Describing (Des)	17.38	3.56
Relationships ®	10.36	1.58	53	Acti Awareness (AAW)	17.89	4.05
Work (W)	13.96	1.45	53	Non-judging (NJ)	13.55	2.91
Total score of VPPr (PC)	49.25	4.94	53	Non-reactivity (NR)	16.96	2.47
			53	Total Mindfulness (MF)	84.55	9.16

**Table 4: Inter-relation between Mindfulness and Perceived changes after Vipassana**

	MINDFULNESS						
		Obs	Des	AAW	NJ	NR	MF
CH-	GA	0.36**	0.24	.33*	-0.10	0.46**	0.44**
AN-	MH	0.46**	0.27	0.14	-0.09	0.48**	0.40**
GES	R	0.32*	0.19	0.29*	-0.16	0.35*	0.34*
IN	W	0.48**	0.33*	0.17	0.00	0.44	0.46**
LIFE	PC	0.49**	0.31*	0.28*	-0.11	0.52**	0.50**

(\*significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level)

In a further analysis using the statistical technique ANOVA, it was observed that the mean scores of the facets of Mindfulness in this group are significantly different from

each other,  $F(4,260) = 20.81, p = 0.001$ . The post-hoc analysis of significance of the mean difference of each pair of facets, using Tukey's HSD, shows that

**Non-judgmental-ness was the least developed facet of Mindfulness in the present sample.**

Vipassana Meditation has two objectives: one, to develop an awareness of bodily and mental contents; and two, to develop equanimity towards them. Equanimity has attitudinal and behavioral aspects. Attitudinal aspect of equanimity means accepting your thoughts, feelings and sensations irrespective of their nature, which has been reflected in the facet Non-judgmental-ness in FFMQ. The behavioral aspect of equanimity is about not reacting to negative thoughts or feelings, which is reflected in the facet, Non-reactiveness in FFMQ.

The statistical analysis of the scores of Mindfulness and its facets in the present sample suggests that the behavioral aspect of equanimity (or being non-reactive) might be developing earlier than the attitudinal one (or being non-judgmental). The qualitative findings also support this result. For example, though people reported reduced fights and anger after a Vipassana retreat, the disapproval of oneself over various things like getting angry at times or not being able to continue Vipassana regularly, still persisted.

### ***III. Personality factors related to the Effect of Vipassana:***

The personality test, 16PF, used in the present project gives scores of five global dimensions of an individual's personality namely, Extraversion, Super-ego/Control, Anxiety, Tough-poise and Independence. Mindfulness has been observed as significantly negatively correlated with Anxiety (A) and positively with Super-ego/Control (SC). Perceived Changes after Vipassana have significant positive correlation with Extraversion and Independence. The correlation coefficients of five global dimensions of Personality with Mindfulness and Perceived changes respectively are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Second order personality factors and the Effect of Vipassana**

	N	Secondary personality factors	Mindfulness	Perceived changes
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1	53	Extraversion (E)	0.224	0.483**
2	53	Anxiety(A)	-0.339*	-0.236
3	53	Tough-poise (T)	0.027	0.009
4	53	Independence (I)	0.191	0.311*
5	53	Super-ego/Control (SC)	0.379**	0.175

\* significant at 0.05 level, \*\* significant at 0.01 level

## A. Personality factors and Mindfulness:

### Anxiety:

The global factor Anxiety is negatively correlated with Mindfulness (See Table 5). People who score at the higher end on this personality factor have less Mindfulness and vice versa. The description of individuals who score high Anxiety given in the test manual suggests that anxiety can be either situational or neurotic. The high Anxiety people are dissatisfied with the degree to which they are able to meet the demands of life and to achieve what they desire (IPAT, 1969). On the contrary the people who score less on Anxiety, have generally satisfying lives and are able to achieve what they want. People with high dissatisfaction and anxiety being low on Mindfulness or an ability to accept oneself with equanimity is but natural.

The secondary personality factor, Anxiety is consisted of a combination of 6 primary traits, namely, Emotional stability (Factor C), Shy-venturesome (Factor H), Trusting-suspiciousness (factor L), Guilt-proneness (Factor O), Self-concept control or Perfectionism (Factor Q3) and Tension (Factor Q4). The constituent primary traits of Anxiety with which Mindfulness has significant correlation are Factor C, Factor O and Factor Q3. Its relationship with other constituent primary factors is not significant. Table 6 shows inter-relation between facets of Mindfulness and secondary as well as primary personality factors.

**Table 6: Inter-correlations between facets of Mindfulness and personality factors**

		Significantly related PERSONALITY FACTORS						
		Primary					Secondary	
		C	G	O	Q1	Q3	A	SC



MI	Obs	0.09	0.15	-0.07	0.26	0.24	0.04	0.21
ND	Des	0.18	0.17	0.013	0.29*	0.14	-0.08	0.20
FU	AAW	0.38**	0.16	-0.23	0.30*	0.38**	-0.34*	0.30*
L-	NJ	0.34**	0.21	-0.30**	0.19	0.08	-0.35*	0.14
NE	NR	0.32*	0.25	-0.27	0.36**	0.24	-0.21	0.23
SS	MF	0.45**	0.31*	-0.281*	0.48**	0.39**	-0.34**	0.38**

However Anxiety does not have significant relationship with all the facets of Mindfulness. It is negatively correlated only with Act-aware (AAW) and Non-judgmental-ness (NJ). These two facets are associated with the awareness and equanimity respectively, which are the aims of Vipassana Meditation.

The results are partially in alignment with the results of Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Kreitemeyer & Toney (2006). This group has found negative correlation between Mindfulness as assessed by FFMQ and Neuroticism as measured by NEO personality inventory, a parallel for the global dimension Anxiety in Big Five model. However, unlike the present study they have found that Neuroticism, has significant negative relation with all the facets of Mindfulness except for Observe (Obs). Of course, the participants in the study by Baer et al., had not learned Vipassana Meditation as in the present study.

Interview with a person, who has higher score on Anxiety (A) suggests the possibility of co-existence of Anxiety as a trait and clinical level of anxiety. *Anapana* and observing sensations had helped this person for calming down his mind during earlier retreats (n=3). However he could not get insights into his chronic conflict with his mother despite the three retreats. The conflicts were reported to be the main reason for his present disturbing situation characterized by anger explosion, irrational behavior, intolerance, confused state of mind and guilt over all these things. He is aware that Vipassana would be useful to relax him again, but could not sit for a retreat due to his increased BP.

Narration by this person suggests that Vipassana would be perceived as a method of relaxation by some persons high on Anxiety. But the effects of Vipassana would not be

long-lasting, unless insight is developed in the mental content, which is one of the aims of Vipassana Meditation.

### **Super-ego/Control (SC):**

The global personality factor Superego/Control (SC) is positively correlated with Mindfulness (See Table 5 & 6). People with high SC have internalized the rules of the milieu in which they function. Hence they conform to the expectations by self or others and are perceived as reliable. People with low SC do not act according to other's values or out of a sense of duty, but they follow their own impulses. They may not be as self-disciplined as some situations may require and may be perceived as unreliable at times. Mindfulness is significantly correlated with both of its constituent primary traits, which are Superego strength (factor G) and self concept control (Factor Q3).

Super-ego/Control has significant positive correlation with only one facet of Mindfulness, namely Acting with awareness (AAW). Super-ego/control does not seem to be related to any of the facet of Mindfulness which represents the equanimity aspect of Vipassana meditation, namely NJ or NR.

Two persons with low Super-ego/Control were included in the sample group of the latter part of the present study. A commonality between their narrations was that both of them have mentioned a part of life which could not be benefited after Vipassana retreat. One of them narrates that the technique of non-reactivity was useful in order to deal with her alcoholic husband. However, the same technique would not be useful, if her son commits a mistake. Another person reports that though he started remaining quiet after Vipassana retreat, the conflict between his wife and mother persisted. He had to move out of the joint family due to these conflicts and it makes him very sad.

The narrations by both these cases suggest that their understanding of Vipassana mainly involves not having to react to undesirable events. The other aspect of Vipassana, namely awareness of bodily sensations and mental contents in any kind of situation either pleasant or unpleasant seem to have eluded both these persons with low SC.

Another interesting finding is that both these personality factors, A ( $M = 5.98$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ) and SC ( $M = 6.06$ ,  $SD = 1.99$ ) are negatively correlated with each other,  $r(51) = -.44$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . However, the present correlational findings do not indicate anything about the direction of influence between the combination of these personality traits and Mindfulness. Besides, it also does not clarify whether state (situational) or trait (characteristic) level of anxiety is more related to Mindfulness. Considering that changes in the clinical level of anxiety have been reported by many researchers studying positive effects of Vipassana Meditation (Dhar & Khurana, 2002; Khosala, 1989, Miller et al., 1995; Nathavat et al. 1989), this further differentiation between state and trait anxiety would prove useful for the therapeutic utility of Vipassana Meditation.

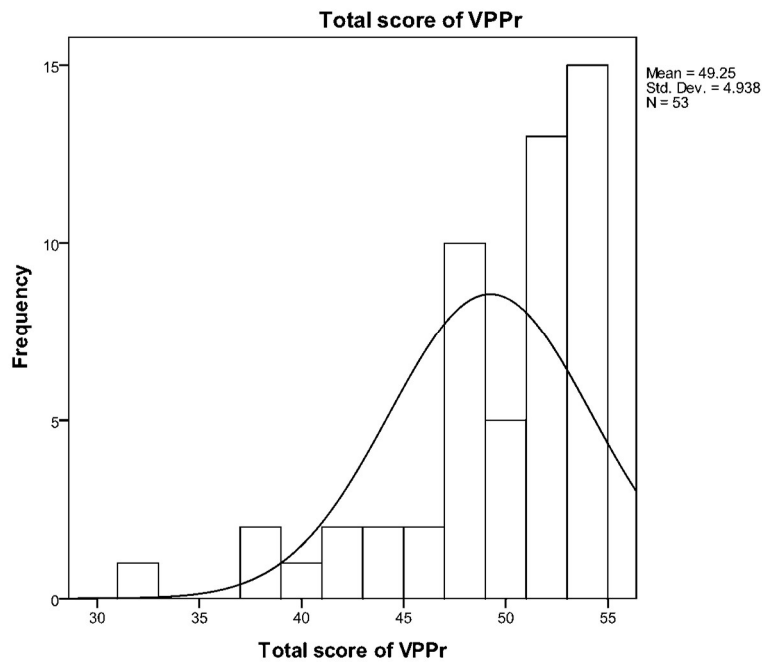
### **B. Personality factors and Perceived changes in life after Vipassana:**

The significant positive relationship between Perceived changes after Vipassana and Extraversion (Table 5) is interesting considering that Extraversion is unrelated to Mindfulness in the present study, a finding which is in alignment with previous studies by Baer et al. (2006). The personality factor Extraversion was found not to be affected by Vipassana even by Chandiramani, Verma & Dhar (1995) who assessed change in personality as an outcome of Vipassana with Indian adaptation of PEN inventory by Eyesenck.

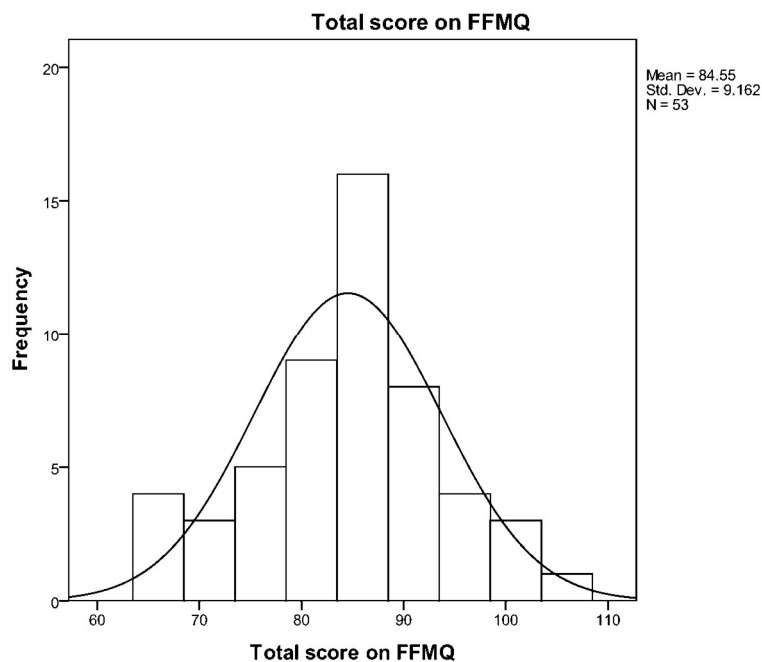
The finding is even contradictory to our initial observation and hunch as explained in the Introduction that extrovert people would less likely to appreciate Vipassana retreat due to its striking feature of Noble silence. A possible explanation for this contradiction might be that even a small change after Vipassana would be reported as significant more often by Extraverts as compared to Introverts, if a compulsion is made for them to attend a Vipassana retreat. It is also possible that the factor Extraversion is related with the decision of enrolling or not enrolling in a Vipassana retreat, but not with Mindfulness. It would be interesting to note relative percentage of Extraverts and Introverts among the people who enroll for a Vipassana retreat and among the ones who either drop out or complete the course.

Comparison of the frequency distribution of FFMQ scores and VPPr scores in the present samples suggest one more and important possibility as an explanation for this discrepancy in the personality factors related to Mindfulness and Perceived changes.

**Figure 2: Frequency distribution of scores of VPPr**



**Figure 3: Frequency distribution of scores of FFMQ**



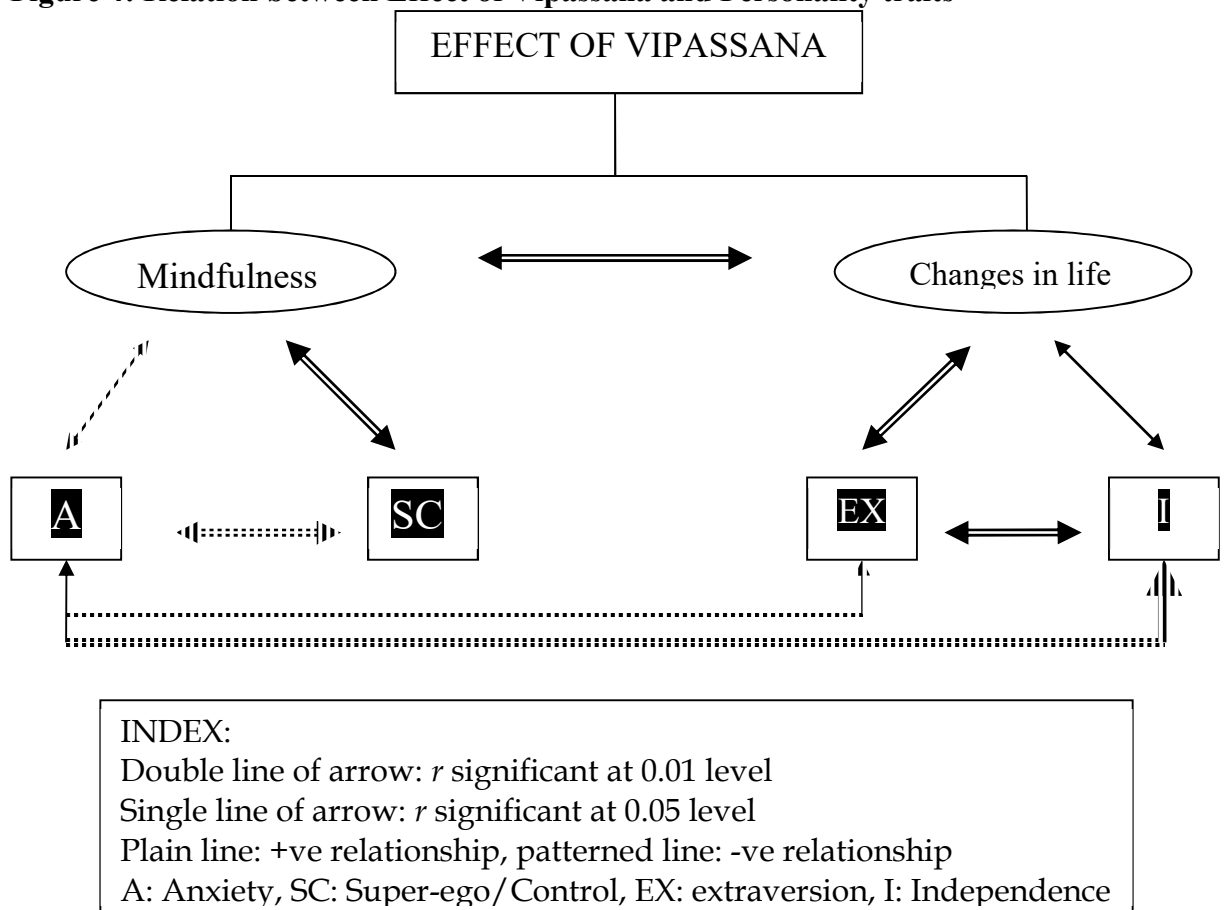
The negatively skewed graph of VPPr scores (Figure 2) versus normal graph of FFMQ (Figure 3) scores suggest that the number of people who have reported higher changes in life after Vipassana are more compared to the ones who have developed higher Mindfulness. The fact that most of the persons have attended at least the first Vipassana retreat on suggestion by the management of the employing organization, and Vipassana

Parinam Prasnavali asking directly for any changes in life because of Vipassana leave a lot of scope for social desirability effect.

Hence the results about the relation between personality factors and Perceived changes are not analyzed further. A more sensitive tool to assess the changes in life after Vipassana retreat or confirming the present findings in a group of people who have attended Vipassana retreat on their own is necessary in future studies.

Still, Figure 4 summarizes the relation between Mindfulness (FFMQ scores), Perceived Changes in life (VPPr scores) and global dimensions of personality as observed in the present study.

**Figure 4: Relation between Effect of Vipassana and Personality traits**



### **Problems in the assessment of personality traits:**

There may be a discrepancy between self reporting of a personality trait and observation by others. This was observed in the case of a person who was selected for personal interviews as representative of low anxiety. The people in management in the organization had an impression of him as a very anxious person. The person himself mentions that he used to be so tensed before attending Vipassana Retreats (n =3) that he would have symptoms like headache and vomiting, if he was stressed during the day. But these psychosomatic symptoms are reduced after Vipassana retreats, though he is still perfectionistic in his work. He might have given answers reflecting less of anxiety in order to underscore the change perceived as produced after attending a Vipassana retreat in him. The observed discrepancy suggests the necessity of a tool for personality assessment which would involve both, self report as well as observation by others in further studies.

### ***IV. Effect of Vipassana and Vipassana related variables:***

#### Time since the first retreat:

In the present sample, as the time since first retreat (  $M = 5.60$  years,  $SD = 3.02$ ,  $N = 49$ ) increases, Mindfulness significantly reduces,  $r(47) = -0.35$ ,  $p = 0.015$ .

Perceived changes in life after Vipassana ( $M = 49.25$ ,  $SD 4.94$ ) also reduce along with the time since the first retreat, but not significantly,  $r(47) = -0.02$ ,  $p = 0.87$ .

#### Number of retreats:

The individuals in the present sample are categorized in 3 groups as per the number of retreats attended by them, namely New Meditators, Old meditators and Old-old meditators. The mean scores of Mindfulness and Perceived changes of each of this group are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Effect of Vipassana among new and old meditators**

Category name	N	Mindfulness		Perceived changes in life	
		M	SD	M	SD
New meditators	27	85.96	10.93	49.11	5.27
Old meditators	18	83.61	6.42	48.56	5.13
Old-old meditators	08	81.88	7.85	51.25	2.92

Total	53	84.55	9.16	49.25	4.94
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No significant difference in the mindfulness score of these three groups was observed,  $F(2,50) = 0.749, p = 0.48$ . Similarly no significant difference in the scores of perceived changes of these three groups was observed,  $F(2,50) = 0.850, p = 0.438$

Frequency of practice of meditation:

The frequency of practice of Vipassana meditators ( $M = 2.49, SD = 0.80, N = 53$ ) does not have any significant correlation with FFMQ score,  $r(51) = 0.24, p = 0.08$  or any of the facets of Mindfulness. However, it is significantly related with total score of VPPr,  $r(51) = 0.30, p = 0.03$ , and its factors, General attitude  $r(51) = 0.28, p = 0.05$  and Relationships  $r(51) = 0.31, p = 0.02$

These findings together suggest that Mindfulness developed after attending a Vipassana retreat reduce along with the time, unless a person does meditation regularly. Qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts in the present sample show that most of the persons in this group have considered attending a retreat at regular intervals as a substitute for regular practice of Vipassana Meditation. However the findings clearly indicate that only regular practicing of Vipassana Meditation and not number of retreats is strongly correlated with the effect of Vipassana.

***V. The Learning and Therapeutic process in a Vipassana retreat:***

The interview transcripts were analyzed qualitatively in order to understand the learning and therapeutic process during a Vipassana retreat. The persons interviewed individually were either the ones with high FFMQ or low FFMQ scores, or at the highest or lowest end of the secondary personality factors, namely, A and SC with which Mindfulness was significantly correlated. The interview transcripts were read and classified in four main categories, Motivation to attend the retreat, Initial difficulties in learning, Outcomes and transfer of learning, and Therapeutic factors and process.

### **a. Motivation to attend a Vipassana retreat:**

The motivation of individuals to attend a Vipassana retreat in the present sample can be categorized as either **external or internal**.

Persons who have attended Vipassana Retreat only because it was a compulsory part of being in the organization, or for the anticipated benefits in the organization after a retreat, or for the faith or fear of the superior who had suggested this were classified as having External Motivation.

All the persons in this organization were asked to attend Vipassana Retreat at least for the first retreat. In spite of that, the persons who have attended the retreat with a curiosity, or to have a remedy for their weaknesses, to reduce their vices or to improve concentration were classified as having Internal Motivation. This expectation of these people was based on some information about Vipassana that they had received from other sources or by observing the positive changes in others who have attended Vipassana before in the organization.

#### The motive for attending the latter retreats:

The first retreat had introduced these persons to the possible positive outcomes of Vipassana. So some of the persons who had external motivation to attend the first retreat had opted to attend the second retreat after a gap on their own, when they observed that their earlier weaknesses like low energy level, boredom or procrastination had started growing again.

Some of the persons had external motivation even for attending the second retreat. For example, some were told by others about the waning positive outcomes after the first retreat. A few of them attended the second retreat also as a part of compulsory thing. Many persons who felt that Vipassana would be beneficial for them after the first retreat, considered number of retreats at regular interval as a substitute for daily practice of Vipassana.

### **b. The initial difficulties in a Vipassana retreat:**

Most of the persons have faced difficulties initially in getting adjusted to the strict regimen of long sitting hours, daily schedule of getting up early and following Noble silence. Homesickness, feeling of being bound was reported by some persons. Guilt



over not being able to follow the rules like Noble silence or restlessness over not getting adjusted had further perpetuated their difficulties. One person has reported fear of being converted to Buddhism.

Some persons got habituated to the strict regimen within 3-4 days and the initial difficulties reduced in intensity. A few talked to the assistant teacher about these difficulties and sought his/her guidance. Prior mental preparation to face any difficulty in a retreat, a resolution to learn the new technique, a sense of wonder about fellow meditators who seem to be following the regimen are some of the factors which were reported as useful to overcome the initial difficulties.

It has been observed that in general, **persons with internal motivation were less disturbed despite initial bodily pain due to sitting for long hours, or changes in food or daily schedule.**

### **c. The process of learning Vipassana:**

For many of the persons, experiences while following the teaching instructions during meditation hours, supported by the discourses have led to the learning of the Vipassana. A few have reported an initial period of understanding the theory intellectually without any experiential learning, which was followed by a sudden moment of realization of technique. The discourses have been a main source of learning for a small group of persons. The discussion with other meditators on the last day had helped a person to confirm his learning and experiences in the ten days of the retreat.

Some of the persons among the interviewed ones compared the technique of Vipassana with other similar techniques they have learnt so far. Two of them reported that Vipassana is more scientific, as in Vipassana bodily sensations are observed as they are and not generated as they had seen in some other course. Another person said that he has understood the true meaning of the religion he was following so far (*Haripath*) through Vipassana.

Following steps of learning were reported by persons who have understood the technique completely:

- After closing eyes, not attending to breath, instead getting engrossed in thoughts, which was followed by gradual concentration on breath
- Awareness of gross and subtle sensations
- Realization that many different things can be called as sensations
- Observing the breath and its touch when sensations were not apparent
- Initial happiness over being able to observe sensations, later concentration on the fact that every sensation is vanishing
- Arising of many thoughts during the moments of not being able to observe sensations, which reduces gradually with practice.
- Observing sensation equanimously irrespective of their nature, pleasant or unpleasant.

A few among the interviewed persons have associated Vipassana only with its noticeable aspects like Noble silence or following virtues etc. A major group could associate Vipassana with ‘concentration of mind’. Very few have perceived Vipassana to ‘observing sensations without reacting to them’. **In the present sample individuals who have perceived Vipassana as a technique of ‘observing sensations without reacting to them’ were benefited much more than the ones who perceived Vipassana as ‘a technique for concentration’ of mind or equated it with ‘Noble silence’.**

#### **d. Therapeutic factors:**

The main aim of Vipassana meditation is to make a person experience impermanence (anicca) or egolessness (anattā), which is supposed to liberate him/her from suffering. However people have reported many factors along with the experience of impermanence as responsible for the perceived changes in their life after Vipassana. These factors can be classified as the ones related to the nature of the retreat, related to the technique and related to the process during meditation. Examples of each of these categories as reported by the interviewed persons are listed in Table 8. Each individual has reported a combination of therapeutic factors and not related only to any one category.

#### **Table 8: Therapeutic factors perceived in a Vipassana Retreat**

Retreat related factors	Technique related factors	The process during Vipassana Meditation
Being away from day-to-day worries for 10 days.	Reduced number of thoughts	Analysis of self behavior
Faith in <i>Guruji</i> , the Vipassana teacher	Concentration of mind.	Realization of self mistakes
Discourses about virtues	Realization of the impermanent nature of pleasure and distress.	Past reminiscence while observing sensations
Sense of achievement over completion of a tough retreat	A possibly altered state of consciousness*.	A symbolic outlet of repressed feelings during meditation

\*A term used for the description like ‘absence of a sense of self’, ‘A state of deep level of concentration’, ‘sudden feeling of having energy’.

Although theory of Vipassana emphasizes experience of reality as it is, as a way for relieving distress, some new meditators did report that the principal Vipassana teacher, S. N. Goenka (the *Guruji*) may have healing power. For example, one person narrated that when he met with a life threatening accident, he was sure that he would be recovered as he was given *Metta* (loving-kindness meditation) by the *Guruji*. One person got convinced about the healing power of Vipassana as the stone in his gall-bladder reduced in size unbelievably after a Vipassana retreat and there was no necessity to operate anymore.

One person has reported his inability to be benefited in the first retreat he attended, as he was not able to follow the Noble silence in this retreat. In his second retreat, he strictly followed all the rules of the retreat. The sense of achievement over the completion of the tough retreat had facilitated many positive outcomes in the post-retreat period.

The variety of therapeutic factors as reported by participants in the present study suggest that the therapeutic process in a retreat may be facilitated either through the devotion to the teachers, or through following the rules, regulations and the process in a retreat, or through critical analysis of the theory of Vipassana. A possible explanation for this variety might be that people have **a predisposition to understand any distress relieving technique either through analysis of the technique, or through devotion to the persons teaching the technique or by following it in a ritualistic way.**

Parallels for this threefold pre-disposition can be found in the concept of Jnana Marg (Cognitive domain), Bhakti Marg (Affective domain) and Karma Marg (Conative Domain) in Indian Psychology. At present there is no evidence for the existence of such a predisposition, though a possibility has been suggested by the present findings.

**e. Comparison of persons with high and low Mindfulness:**

The main objective of the qualitative analysis was to compare the learning and therapeutic process of the persons who are at extreme ends of the personality factors which are significantly correlated with Mindfulness, namely, Anxiety and Superego/control. The present analysis has shown that similar learning and therapeutic processes could be observed among persons with high and low Anxiety or high and low Superego/control. However, these processes of the persons who have scored higher or lower Mindfulness were different at least in some respects in the present sample. The differences are summarized in Table 9 and discussed after that.

**Table 9: Learning and Therapeutic process of persons with higher and lower Mindfulness**

		Persons with high Mindfulness	Persons with low Mindfulness
1	Motivation	Internal	External
2	Perception of Vipassana	Learning equanimity to sensations in any situation	Following virtues, not reacting in a conflict, concentration of mind
3	Therapeutic factors	Technique or process related	Retreat related

Persons with high Mindfulness have understood Vipassana as learning equanimity to sensations in any situation, whereas persons with low Mindfulness have associated Vipassana only with following virtues or not reacting in a conflict. The therapeutic factors in a retreat responsible for the benefits of Vipassana in the post-retreat period in case of high Mindfulness persons were either related to the technique or the process; whereas persons with low Mindfulness reported retreat related factors as responsible for the benefits of Vipassana. Most of the persons with high Mindfulness report internal motivation and experiential understanding of Vipassana and not just intellectual understanding of the technique.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study has been a significant preliminary step to explore the hypothesized role of personality factors in the effect of Vipassana Meditation. A major outcome of this study is an empirical evidence to support this hypothesis, though much more research is required before concluding unequivocally about the role of personality traits in the effect of Vipassana.

After completing this project, it can be concluded that Mindfulness or Sati, an outcome of Vipassana Meditation is significantly correlated with two global dimensions of personality, negatively with Anxiety and positively with Superego/Control, which have significant negative correlation with each other. Anxiety has two aspects, state anxiety and trait anxiety. It would be interesting to explore which aspect of Anxiety is more related to Mindfulness.

The direction of causation between personality factors and Mindfulness is not clear from the present correlational study. It is also not clear whether persons with the above mentioned personality traits enroll for Vipassana retreats more often, or learn the technique faster than others or are more benefited. A further research with experimental design (A 'before-after with control' design) is necessary for this purpose.

The qualitative analysis in the present study has underscored the importance of exploring the individual psychological process in a Vipassana retreat. It was observed that each individual's process of learning the technique of Vipassana and therapeutic

factors perceived in a Vipassana retreat by each individual were unique and were related to the level of Mindfulness.

In the latter part of the present retrospective study, most of the respondents could share only important happenings of the process in a retreat. Along with the passing time since the last retreat, the details of the process were forgotten. To avoid this bias in narration due to forgetting, a qualitative study has to be conducted before and immediately after a retreat to understand the therapeutic and learning process in a retreat.

This retrospective project has been carried out in an organization where attending a Vipassana retreat was suggested by the management and very few people attended a retreat with internal motivation. To confirm the present findings it is necessary to carry out a similar project involving persons who have attended Vipassana retreats on their own.

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## **APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form**



विपश्यना परिणाम प्रकल्प: संयती पत्र

गोविंद डेअरी, फलटण येथे येण्यात येणाऱ्या 'विपश्यना परिणाम प्रकल्प' या संशोधनात्मक कामाची मला पूर्ण माहिती देण्यात आली आहे. मला कल्पना आहे की या प्रकल्पात विचारल्या गेलेल्या माहितीचा उपयोग फक्त संशोधनासाठी केला जाणार आहे, व अन्य कुठल्याही कामासाठी तिचा वापर केला जाणार नाही. माझी या प्रकल्पात सहभागी होऊन आवश्यक ते सर्व सहकार्य करण्याची पूर्ण तयारी आहे.

धन्यवाद.

नाव:

दिनांक:

स्त्री/ पुरुष.....

जन्मतारीख: .....

शिक्षण:

कामाचे स्वरूप:.....

पहिल्या विपश्यना शिबिराचे वर्ष व माहिती:

विपश्यना शिबिराला जाण्याचा हेतू:

केलेली एकूण विपश्यना शिबिरे:

विपश्यनेचा सगव:

अ. दसरोज

ब. बऱ्याच वेळांस

क. अथून मधून

ड. अनिवात नाही

## Appendix II: Vipassana Parinam Prashnavali

### विपश्यना परिणाम प्रश्नावली

दिनांक:.....

नाव:.....

तुमच्यापैकी प्रत्येक जण विपश्यना शिबिराला एकदा तरी जाऊन आलेले आढात. एखाद्या विपश्यना शिबिरानंतर ईर्नदिन जीवनात बदल घडतात असे अनेकांना आढळलेले आहे. विपश्यनेचा अनुभवाच्या विविध घटकांवर होऊ शकणारा परिणाम सांगणारी काही विधाने खाली दिलेली आहेत.

विपश्यनेनंतरचे तुमचे अनुभव पहाता, खालीलपैकी प्रत्येक विधान तुमच्यासाठी खरे आहे किंवा नाही व किती प्रमाणात माचे परीक्षण तुम्हाला करायचे आहे. प्रत्येक विधानापुढे 'हो', 'अनिश्चित' व 'नाही' असे तीन पर्याय दिलेले आहेत.

दिलेले विधान तुमच्यासाठी पूर्णपणे खरे असेल तर तुम्ही 'हो' पर्यायाधोवती गोल करून तुमचे उत्तर लिहावयाचे आहे. दिलेले विधान तुमच्यासाठी अजिबात खरे नसेल तर तुम्ही 'नाही' धोवती गोल करून उत्तर लिहा. जर दिलेले विधान तुमच्यासाठी काही प्रमाणातच खरे असले, किंवा तुम्हाला त्याबाबत खात्री नसली तर तुम्ही 'अनिश्चित' या पर्यायाधोवती गोल करायचा आहे.

विपर्ययना शिबिरानुषंगे:

१	माझ्या आयुष्यात कोहीच फॅरळ पडलेला नाही.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
२	मला एवढे सज्जत आले की, आयुष्यातून जना बदलण्यासाठी आधी मला स्वतःमध्ये बदल करणे पाहिजे.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
३	माझ्यात बदल करण्यासाठी उपयुक्त असे शास्त्रगुरू उभे मला मिळाले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
४	माझ्या नातेरचनेचा (कुटुंब, नातेवाइक इ.) कोहीच उपयुक्त झालेला नाही.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
५	जवळच्या लाकीप्रता मा आघेई साईथू (सहनेहाल) बनला.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
६	माझी कुटुंबीक आयुष्य आघेई सुखा व समाधाना झाले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
७	माझ्या मनाला दुर्बत करणाऱ्या गोष्टी माझ्या सज्जत आल्या.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
८	माझ्यात सकारात्मक व आशावादा दृष्टीने निर्माण झाले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
९	मला जायबपारा त्रास केला झाले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१०	माझ्या जीमाबाबतच्या चुकी माझ्या सज्जत आल्या, व त्रास बदल करत येऊ लागले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
११	माझ्या जीवशुभता व उत्पादकता वाढली.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१२	मला जलद व योग्य निर्णय घेता येऊ लागले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१३	माझा त्रास-तणाव व त्रिंता वाढली.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१४	प्रातःकाल पारंप्रता अकरताना सुखा माझ्या नीतेक मूल्य तिंकेवत परण मला शक्य झाले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१५	मला एखाद्याचा राग आला अकरतानाही न तिंकेता आवक्यक ती गोष्ट योग्यदृष्टीने त्याच्यापरत पोहीधयता येऊ लागली	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१६	प्रातःकाल पारंप्रतात मनाचा समतोल ठेवू न टणे मला शक्य झाले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१७	नवीन जीमाधी यजना आकरण व अमलबजावणी करण मा आघेई अकराहीने केऊ लागले.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही
१८	मी जरीच अकरलीया जीमोतवीन जीमाया गुणयकीं जीहीच जीरळ पडला नाही.	हो	आनी/अंतर	नाही

## Appendix III: The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)

### 5-FACET M QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Write the number in the blank that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.

1	2	3	4	5
never or very rarely true	Rarely True	sometimes true	often true	very often or always true

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I am easily distracted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars

passing.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it because I can't find the right words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I notice the smells and aromas of things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad, depending what the thought/image is about.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I find myself doing things without paying attention.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.

## Appendix IV: The questionnaire for individual interviews

### Questions:

1. How did you decide to attend a Vipassana Retreat?  
Where did you get to know about Vipassana?  
What was the motivating factor? Personal difficulties?  
Influence of Friends? Superiors? etc.
2. How did you like the 10 day Vipassana retreat?  
Which aspects of the retreat did you appreciate the most? Why?  
Which aspects of the retreat did you appreciate the least? Why?
3. How did you appreciate the discipline of Noble silence?  
Were you able to follow it?  
Did you ever feel the necessity to break the silence?  
Did you find it absurd?
4. What is the chief meaning of Vipassana according to you?
5. Did you ever have doubts about the technique during the retreat?  
How was the doubt overcome?  
When did you realize that this is a useful technique?
6. Were you able to concentrate on breath and feel your sensations as instructed?  
What were obstacles in doing so?  
How did you overcome them?
7. In a one hour session of meditation what were your thoughts most occupied with?  
Bodily pain  
The bell indicating the end of the session  
The record with the Teacher's chanting  
Other meditators' sneezing, coughing or their sitting capacity etc.  
Past memories and future aspirations
8. Was there any change in your mental pre-occupation along with the days in the retreat?
9. Were your own deep rooted memories coming to consciousness as the Teacher said?
10. Were you able to look at those memories with equanimity without your usual reaction?
11. Did you realize any of your mistakes or faulty thinking pattern as a result of Vipassana? How?

12. Has Vipassana retreat been useful for you in light of your reasons for attending it?
13. How has Vipassana been useful to you in the post retreat period?
14. Do you practice Vipassana meditation regularly after the retreat? Why?
15. Do you feel that any change in any of the aspect of the retreat or the technique would have been more useful for you?