

# Effects of *Vipassanā* Meditation on Lay Practitioners' Life

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## Abstract

*Vipassanā is an ancient meditation technique discovered by Buddha during his enlightenment. S. N. Goenka learned Vipassanā from Sayagyi U Ba Khin of Myanmar and introduced the technique from Myanmar to India, Nepal and many other countries. Largely based on a descriptive framework and mixed methods, the study evaluates the effects of Vipassanā practice on personal and professional lives of lay meditators. In addition to secondary data, primary data were collected through structured questionnaire from 215 old Vipassanā students who had participated in at least one Vipassanā course as taught by S. N. Goenka and continued their practice. Empirical analysis demonstrated that Vipassanā practice brings positive impacts on personal and professional life of lay meditators. On a personal level, by purifying meditators' minds, Vipassanā practice helps them develop a positive and optimistic attitude, reduce anger, stress and anxiety, improve personal and social relation, and enhance the quality of self-realization. These personal attributes further contribute to professional development as well. By improving concentration, Vipassanā practice can transform individuals from within, ultimately benefiting their professional lives. Gradually, a Vipassanā meditator can improve relationships with colleagues and subordinates, motivate others at work, enhance planning and decision-making abilities, and demonstrate improved efficiency and productivity in their organization. Regardless of gender, age, marital status, profession, educational background, the study found significant positive effects of Vipassanā practice on the personal and professional life of lay meditators. In most clusters, frequency analysis data were supported by chi-square test results at a five percent level of significance.*

**Keywords:** *Ānāpāna, Effects, Lay Practitioners, Meditation, Vipassanā*

## 1. Introduction

*Vipassanā* (in Pali) and *Vipasyanā* (in Sanskrit) literally means special seeing which could be interpreted in three dimensions: (i) *visesato passatiti Vipassanā* (observing or seeing in a special manner) (ii) *aniccā divasena vividhena ākārena passati ti Vipassanā* (seeing from different angles as they are impermanent) (iii) *yathā bhūta nāna dassanam* (seeing thing as they really are, not as they appear to be (VRI “The Importance of Vedana” 63). In his first discourses on ‘the four-noble truth’ the Buddha recommended *Vipassanā* meditation as a right way to cease suffering (Bodhi SN 1848). S.N. Goenka emphasized that *Vipasyanā* is a scientific, universal, non-sectarian and practical meditation technique (*The Great Buddha* 239). H. Gunaratana defined *Vipassanā* as a set of mental activities of aimed specifically at experiencing a state of uninterrupted mindfulness (143). The practical aspects of *Vipasanā* meditation are clearly defined in *Mahāsatipatthāna sutta*, where the Buddha himself defined *satipatthāna* as “the one and only way, (*ekaayaano...maggo*) for the purification of being, for overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the extinguishing of suffering and grief, for walking on the path of truth, for the realization of *Nibbāna*” (Manandhar, *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* 2).

S. N. Goenka, learned *Vipasanā* from Sayagyi U Ba Khin of Myanmar and later he customized 10-days residential *Vipasanā* course for lay practitioners which is easily available without discriminating gender, religions, race, educational background and sectarian barriers. Goenka conducted the first 10 day *Vipassanā* course at Kathmandu in 1981 (Manandhar, “Dharmaki Chaya may” 127). Since then hundred thousand of people of Nepal are participating 10 day *Vipasanā* courses in 16 *Vipasanā* Centers<sup>1</sup> across the country, improving their personal and professional well-being. Despite the widespread popularity *Vipasanā* among lay meditators in Nepal, a realistic assessment of the effects of *Vipasanā* practices has not been made. Some studies have been conducted in an international context, focusing on the historical aspects of *Vipassanā* (Braun 150; Houtman 22; Jordt 15; and Vimala 13). Others have emphasized the practical aspects of *Vipassanā* like a guideline of practice (Analayo 259; Hart 133; and Kornfield 2). A few studies have attempted to explore the effects of meditation practice, but these were narrow in scope and difference from Nepalese context (Al-Hussaini et al. 87; Bhatnagar 498; Pagis 309; Perlman et al. 176). Some studies have focused on the negative aspects (Rahmani 629; and Adhikari 274). In contrast to these

1 Personal communication with S. Saha, Course Managing Volunteer, Nepal Vipassana Center, 10 Jan.2025.

previous studies, this study focuses on the Nepalese cultural context and evaluates the effects of *Vipassanā* meditation among lay meditators from various professions, based on their experiences after practicing *Vipassanā*.

## 2. Review of literature

As P. Santina emphasized, after the Buddha's *Mahaparinibbana* and until the Third Council, the followers of Buddha divided themselves into 18 groups and established their own rules for meditation (155). After Emperor Ashoka's regime, the *Vipassanā* practice lost its purity, became confined within monastic institutions, and gradually disappeared among lay practitioners. However, it continued to be practiced with pristine purity among a few monks in Myanmar (Goenka, "From Opening Talk" 5). Again, after the 1950s, the *Vipassanā* meditation was revived in Myanmar and spread to the outside world. Analyzing lay *Vipassanā* movement in Myanmar, G. Houtman highlighted the historical development of lay *Vipassanā* practices in the country. He further noted that until the nineteenth century, *Vipassanā* meditation in Burma was taught within monasteries exclusively to monks through ordination process (18). In the late eighteenth century, Medawi, a Burmese monk, wrote a *Vipassanā* manual and founded first meditation center with support from his followers (Vimala 86). Meanwhile, the Burmese government also supported lay *Vipassanā* practices by providing subsidies to all *Vipassanā* centers and granting paid leave to government officials to encourage participation in *Vipassanā* courses. In 1957, *Vipassanā* meditation was introduced in 22 prisons in Myanmar, allowing inmates to participate in the courses aimed at reforming their behaviors (Houtman 47). G. Houtman has listed 26 lineages of *Vipassanā* traditions and 29 famous teachers of Buddhist meditation practices in Myanmar (296). However, most of these traditions were limited to a small number of practitioners. He further clarified that "many *Vipassanā* methods practiced today are popularly traced back to either of two famous monks who lived during the colonial period; the Ledi Sayadaw and, Mingun Sayadaw-the teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw" (43).

Daniel Stuart has mentioned that Saya Thetgi was the first lay *Vipassanā* teacher authorized by Ledi Sayadaw to teach six thousand laypeople, making a turning point in making *Vipassanā* practice accessible to the lay community as a part of broader social movement in Myanmar (Ch. 3). Thetgyi then passed this technique on to another householder Sayagyi U Ba Khin. U Ba Khin appointed Saya Ma, S. N. Goenka and other six foreigners as *Vipassanā* teachers. Among them, Goenka reached the largest number of lay practitioners across India, Nepal and many

other countries. After Goenka, teachers appointed in this tradition have conducted *Vipassanā* courses by using audio-visual instructions prepared by Goenka himself. Goenka prepared audio-visual instructions for lay meditators mainly focuses on *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (four noble truth), *Mahāsatipathāna sutta*, *Ānāpānsati sutta*, *Paticca-samuppada-vibhanga sutta*, *Kayagatasati sutta*, *Girimananda sutta* and *Anattalakkhkhana sutta* which are the major canonical base of *Vipassana* meditation (Discourse Summary).

Some of the researchers highlighted the effects of *Vipassanā* meditation among lay meditators. S. Pradhan and Ajithkumar found that regular *Vipassanā* practice positively effects psychological well-being emphasizing that no differences were observed concerning with other variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational background, and working position. V. Bhatnagar found that *Vipassanā* practice supports employees in increasing efficiency and effectiveness. At individual level, it helps reduce anger, control emotional imbalances, improve mental health, and promote a positive attitude and ethical behavior. At the organizational level, it contributes to overall efficiency and effectiveness (Results and analysis). D.R. Pariar found that *Vipassanā* practice bring positive changes in the mental attitude of meditators. He also highlighted that when practiced among large group of employees it can reduce corrupt practices, fostering healthy work environment and ultimately enhancing employee effectiveness (conclusion). D. Kumar observed that *Vipassanā* practice could reduce workplace stress, increase self-awareness, and provide better control over emotional imbalances leading to improved interpersonal relationships, team work, mutual respect and a collaborate work culture (48-57). Roop Joyati shared that regular *Vipassanā* practice helps manager become more patient in dealing with business uncertainties, facilitating overall corporate management. Rathi reported noticeable improvements in physical health during his two years of regular *Vipassanā* practice (103-04). N. Acharya emphasized that *Vipassanā* practice helps for social peace building (2).

K. Leinberger concluded that regularity of meditation is important rather than sitting per hours (101). Rakesh Agrawal and Kiran Bedi, found noticeable changes in Delhi Police personals after *Vipassanā* practice. By reducing stress and developing positive attitude towards criminal respondents, they became more compassionate, leading to positive changes in their family life (45-56). J. Glogowski found that *Vipassanā* practice addresses the problem of teachers' stress and burnout, contributes to the teaching-learning process, increases awareness among teachers and supports

decision-making. (146-55). Contrary to others, K. Adhikari found *Vipassanā* meditation did not significantly reduce severity of anxiety symptoms (274). M. Rahamani highlighted major causes of dissatisfaction of *Vipassanā* pragmatic leavers-including long sitting meditation hours, slow transformation process, self-doubt regarding the goal of *Nibbana*, and anxiety due to conflict with personal religious values (629-50). However, she also mentioned that such pragmatic leavers concerns do not represent total dissatisfaction with *Vipassanā* meditation; rather they reflect participants who after joining the course, did not continue their practice regularly.

### 3. Methodology

The main objective of the study is to explore the effects of *Vipassanā* practice on day-to-day lives of lay practitioners. Additionally, the effects of *Vipassanā* practice on personal as well as professional level are also assessed. The research is primarily qualitative in nature, employing a mixed method approach where data from primary and secondary sources are used. Centered on the *Vipassanā* meditation technique as taught by S.N. Goenka, the study assesses its implications for lay practitioners across various sectors of contemporary society. Goenka emphasized on teaching *Vipassanā* on a mass scale to interested individuals and advocated for the establishment of *Vipassanā* centers to ensure that the common people had easy access to learn this technique.

A total of 215 participants from various professions, including farmers, doctors, engineers, teachers, businessmen, and housewives were randomly selected for the survey based on the Dharmasringha Kathmandu and Pokhara *Vipassana* centers. The participants had all completed at least one 10-day *Vipassana* course as taught by S.N. Goenka and continued their regular practice. A structure questionnaire set was distributed to these respondents, who were asked to share their experiences using a five-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree. Questionnaire set is provided in annex A. In addition to frequency analysis, a chi-square test was applied to assess the relationship between meditation practice and various other variables. Initially, the relationship between regular practice and its effects on each variable was assessed simultaneously. Further analysis was conducted to examine any differences related to respondent's age, gender, marital status, educational background, and practicing habit. Statistical tests were performed by using SPSS software at five percent level of significance.

As an old student, the researcher has volunteered numerous times at *Vipassana*

centers and Jail *Vipassana* courses, and has also incorporated ethnographic insights into the study. In addition to empirical analysis, relevant previous studies were reviewed and comparisons were made with the finding of this research, where possible. The study concludes by analyzing the finding from previous research and empirical analysis. Based on the research question, ‘what changes are generally seen in the personal and professional life of lay meditators after they practice *Vipassanā*?’ the study presents its findings and compares them with respective results from previous studies. Regarding limitations, this research primarily focuses on the lay *Vipassanā* practitioners and excludes full-time practitioners like monks and nuns, whose goals may center on attaining *Nibbana*. Additionally, the study is based on the *Vipassanā* meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka, so other traditions, as discussed in the literature review are not covered.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

As discussed in the methodology section, the findings are based on both primary and secondary data. Results from the primary data are analyzed initially, followed by comparisons with previous research in the final part of this section. Analyzing the primary respondents, data showed that 68 percent of respondents were male and the remaining 32 percent were female; 58 percent were married, 39 percent were unmarried, and three percent were separated from their spouse. The age of the respondents ranged from 16 years (minimum) to 87 years (maximum). About 77 percent respondents reported completing a bachelor’s degree, 17 percent studied up to the high school level, and remaining six percent said they could just read and write. Regarding the number of years practicing *Vipassanā*, about 33 percent had been practicing for one year, 32 percent for 2-5 years, 13 percent for 6-10 years, and 17 percent for more than 11 years. When asked about number of 10 –day courses they had participated in, 33 percent reported attending just once, about 40 percent said 2-5 times, 18 percent said 6-10 times and nine percent had attended more than 10 times. Similarly, regarding daily practicing hours, about nine percent reported practicing more than two hours daily, 22 percent practiced two hours per day, 35 percent practiced one hour per day, and 34 percent practiced less than one hour per day.

### **4.1 Effects of *Vipassanā* in Personal Life**

Table 4.1 shows the effects of *Vipassanā* meditation in personal life. For each of the respective questions, the percentage responses are tabulated on the left side, and the chi-square test p-values are tabulated on the right side of the table. The ratio



of strongly disagreed, disagreed, and not sure respondents was very small; therefore, the responses from these three categories are summed up and presented in a single column. Frequency analysis and chi-square test results are presented in the following sub-sections.

#### 4.1.1 Reform of the Human Mind and Character through Self-purification

Respondents were asked whether *Vipassanā* practice has the capacity to reform the human mind and character through self-purification process. About 76 percent strongly agreed, and 49 percent agreed with this statement. Only about two percent were in ‘not sure’ category. Statistical test results show a significant relationship with regular practice ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ), and with hour per sitting ( $p\text{-value} = 0.00<0.05$ ). The relationship with other variables- gender, educational background, marital status, and age is not significant. This indicates that, despite gender, marital status, educational background, and age, *Vipassanā* practice can support the reform of the human mind and character through self-purification. Furthermore, meditator who have longer duration of daily practice are likely to experience greater improvement.

Table 4.1 Effects of *Vipassanā* in personal life

(Figures in parenthesis are in percentage term)

Questions	Response of the Participants (n=215)			Chi-square p-value					
	5	4	1+2+3	practice	Gender	Education	Mari. status	Age	Hours/sitting
Reform of the human mind and character	164 (76.30)	49 (22.80)	2 (0.90)	0.00*	0.57	0.83	0.50	0.72	0.00*
Positive and Optimistic attitude	153 (71.80)	52 (24.40)	8 (3.80)	0.57	0.17	0.60	0.93	0.30	0.00*
Recognition of mistakes	136 (63.80)	63 (29.60)	14 (6.60)	0.02*	0.29	0.29	0.03	0.64	0.00*
Health in general, mental health in particular improved	123 (57.50)	73 (34.10)	18 (8.40)	0.03*	0.49	0.15	0.10	0.51	0.00*
Reduction of stress and strain	142 (66.40)	61 (28.50)	11 (5.20)	0.82	0.76	0.69	0.09	0.93	0.00*
Reduction of tension and anxiety	135 (63.80)	59 (27.60)	20 (9.30)	0.00*	0.70	0.53	0.32	0.78	0.00*

Reduction of anger, intolerance and irritation	136 (63.60)	64 (29.90)	14 (6.60)	0.74	0.86	0.71	0.11	0.94	0.00*
Improvement in quality of family life	111 (51.60)	75 (34.90)	29 (13.50)	0.00*	0.51	0.15	0.40	1.00	0.00*
Improvement in social relation	112 (52.10)	81 (37.70)	22 (10.30)	0.00*	0.40	0.50	0.15	0.65	0.00*

*Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree*

*\* means significant at five percent level of significance and \*\* means significant at 10 percent level of significance.*

#### 4.1.2 Positive and Optimist Attitude

When respondents were asked whether *Vipassanā* practice has helped meditators develop a positive and optimist attitude, about 72 percent strongly agreed, and 24 percent agreed with that statement. Statistical relationship with regular practice is not significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.57 > 0.05$ ); however, the relationship with hours per sitting is significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.05$ ). This means that as meditators increase their regular practicing hours, they are more likely to develop a positive and optimist attitude.

#### 4.1.3 Recognition of Mistakes and Correction Them

About 64 percent respondents strongly agreed and 30 percent agreed that *Vipassanā* practice has supported them in recognizing their mistakes and correcting them in timely manner. About six percent responded that they were not sure about this. Statistical test showed a significant relationship with regular practice ( $p\text{-value} = 0.02 < 0.05$ ), and hours per sitting ( $p\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.05$ ). The relationship with other variables, such as age, gender, marital status, educational background is not significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that, regardless of age, gender, educational background, or marital status, *Vipassanā* practice helps meditators reorganize their mistakes and improve upon them. Additionally, meditators who increase their practicing hours experience greater benefit.

#### 4.1.4 Improvement in Physical and Mental Health

Respondents were asked four questions to gather information on whether *Vipassanā* practice supports the improvement of physical and mental health. Firstly, respondents were asked whether they feel reduction in stress and strain after practicing *Vipassanā*. About 66 percent strongly agreed, and 29 percent agreed with this statement. Relationship with regular practice is not significant ( $p\text{-value}$



$=0.82 > 0.05$ ); however, relationship with hours per sitting is significant ( $p$ -value  $=0.00 < 0.05$ ). Secondly, respondents were asked whether they feel a reduction in tension and anxiety. About, 64 percent strongly agreed and 28 percent agreed with this statement. Statistical test showed a significant relationship with regular practice ( $p$ -value  $= 0.00 < 0.05$ ) and hour per sitting ( $p$ -value  $= 0.00 < 0.05$ ). Thirdly, meditators were asked whether they feel a reduction in anger, intolerance, and irritation after they practice *Vipassanā*. About 64 percent strongly agreed and 28 percent agreed that they noticed a reduction in their anger, intolerance, and irritation after practicing *Vipassanā* meditation. Fourthly, when respondents were asked about their impression of the improvement in physical and mental health after *Vipassanā* practice, about 58 percent strongly agreed and 34 agreed that they experienced some improvement in their physical and mental health. The chi-square test results also showed significant relationships with regular practice ( $p$ -value  $=0.03 < 0.05$ ); and hour per sitting ( $p$ -value  $=0.00 < 0.05$ ). No respondents strongly disagree; the number of respondents in disagreed category was less than one percent; and the 'not sure' category was less than 10 percent in all five questions. More than 85 percent of respondents expressed their views as either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' in all four questions. From these percentage responses and the statistical test results, which showed significant results in most cases, we can conclude that *Vipassanā* practice supports the reduction of anger, stress, anxiety and intolerance behavior, which ultimately leads to improvements in physical and mental health. As meditators increased their time per sitting, their overall mental well-being further improved.

#### 4.1.5 Improvement in Family and Social Relation

When respondents were asked how much change they had realized in the improvement of their family life, about 52 percent strongly agreed, and 35 percent agreed that they had experienced positive changes in their family life. Only about 12 percent said they were not quite sure whether it helped improve their family life. The chi-square test results also showed a significant relationship with regular practice ( $p$ -value  $=0.00 < 0.05$ ) and hour per sitting ( $p$ -value  $=0.00 < 0.05$ ). Similarly, about 52 percent strongly agreed and 38 percent agreed that they feel their social relationships have improved since they began practicing *Vipassanā* meditation. About 10 percent were uncertain and could not judge whether *Vipassanā* practice improved their social relationships. Statistical tests also supported these percentage responses, showing that the relationships with regular practice ( $p$ -value  $=0.00 < 0.05$ ) and hour per sitting ( $p$ -value  $=0.00 < 0.05$ ) are significant. These results suggest that *Vipassanā* practice

supports meditator in improving both their family life and social relationships.

## 4.2 Effects of *Vipassanā* in Professional Life

It is a well-known fact that personal and professional life are interconnected and, in some cases, cannot be separated. If a person has a better personal life, it ultimately enhances their professional life. Responses from meditator on the effects of *Vipassanā* practice on professional life are tabulated in table 4.2. Seven questions were asked to assess whether *Vipassanā* meditators could enhance their professional life. They are highlighted in the following sub-sections.

### 4.2.1 Improvement in Relationship with Staffs

When meditators were asked whether they felt an enhancement in their relationships with subordinates, colleagues and seniors, about 52 percent strongly agreed and 36 percent agreed with this statement. Only about 12 percent said they were not sure. Statistical test also showed a significant relationship with regular practice ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ) and hours per sitting ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ). Similarly, 46 percent strongly agreed and 40 percent agreed that *Vipassanā* practice supports improving their ability to motivate and guide their subordinates, whereas about 14 percent said they were not sure. The chi-square test result was not significant with regular practice ( $p\text{-value}=0.39>0.05$ ) but was significant with hour per sitting ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ). This means that as *Vipassanā* meditators increase their daily practice, their relationship with subordinates, colleagues and seniors improves, enabling them to motivate their teams to work.

### 4.2.2 Quick and Right Decision

Respondents were asked whether they had noticed any positive changes in their decision-making skills, where about 47 percent strongly agreed and 34 percent agreed that *Vipassanā* practice helps them make quick and right decision. Seventeen percent said they were not sure. Statistical test also showed a significant relationship with regular practice ( $p\text{-value}=0.02<0.05$ ) and hours per sitting ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ), but no significant relationship with other variables such as age, marital status, educational background, and gender. These results confirm that *Vipassanā* practice enhances meditator's decision-making skills. It helps them make quicker and accurate decisions than before.

Table 4.2 Effects of *Vipassanā* in professional life

(Figures in parenthesis are in percentage term)

Questions	Response of the Participants (n=215)			Chi-square p-value					
	5	4	3+2+1	practice	Gender	Education	Mari. status	Age	Hour/sitting
Efficiency and productivity at work	107 (50.20)	81 (38.00)	25 (11.70)	0.14	0.06	0.07	0.72	0.58	0.00*
Support for quick and right decision	101 (47.40)	73 (34.30)	39 (18.10)	0.02*	0.30	0.26	0.22	0.54	0.00*
Improved ability to motivate and guide subordinates	96 (45.50)	84 (39.80)	31 (14.40)	0.39	0.21	0.38	0.17	0.38	0.00*
Enhanced planning ability	97 (46.20)	75 (35.70)	37 (17.70)	0.10	0.09	0.22	0.23	0.90	0.00*
Objective and impartial execution of duties and responsibilities	107 (51.00)	74 (35.20)	29 (13.80)	0.13	0.11	0.18	0.13	0.13	0.00*
Polluted mind is root cause of problems in profession	129 (61.10)	64 (30.30)	18 (8.30)	0.00*	0.07	0.56	0.76	0.82	0.08
Improved relation with subordinates, colleagues & seniors	109 (51.70)	76 (36.00)	25 (12.09)	0.00*	0.18	0.12	0.27	0.98	0.00*
<b>Supportive question</b>									
Reduced corruption and inefficiency in government sector	133 (61.90)	60 (27.90)	22 (10.20)	0.23	0.13	0.052**	0.04*	0.40	0.00*

*Note: \* means significant at five percent level of significance and \*\* means significant at 10 percent level of significance.*

#### 4.2.3 Enhance Planning Ability

When they asked whether they felt an increase in their planning ability after practicing *Vipassanā*, about 46 percent strongly agreed and 36 percent agreed with this statement while, 18 percent said they were not sure. Despite a larger number of participants agreeing, the statistical test result was not significant with regular practice ( $p\text{-value}=0.10>0.05$ ) but was significant with hours per day ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ). These results demonstrate that *Vipassanā* meditators who practice for longer sitting hours experience an enhancement in their planning ability.

#### 4.2.4 Capacity Enhancement for Duties and Responsibilities

While meditators were asked whether *Vipassanā* practice supports them in enhancing their capacity for the objective and impartial execution of duties and responsibilities, 51 percent strongly agreed and 35 percent agreed with this statement. About 14 percent said they were not sure. Chi-square test result was not significant with regular practice ( $p\text{-value}=0.13>0.05$ ), but showed a significant relationship with hours per sitting ( $p\text{-value}=0.00$ ). This means that as meditators increase their daily practicing hours, they are better able to perform their duties and responsibilities more objectively and impartially.

#### 4.2.5 Increased Efficiency and Productivity at Work

About 50 percent respondents strongly agreed and 38 percent agreed that *Vipassanā* practice helps increase their work efficiency and productivity, whereas about 12 percent said they were not sure. Despite the larger percentage of respondents agreeing, the test result with regular practice was not significant ( $p\text{-value}=0.14<0.05$ ), but result was significant with hour per sitting ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ). This means that regular *Vipassanā* meditators who practice for longer time are more likely to increase their efficiency and productivity at work.

#### 4.2.6 Reduction of Inefficiency in Government Sector

When respondents were asked whether it would be beneficial to introduce *Vipassanā* meditation in government sector organizations to reduce inefficiency, about 66 percent strongly agreed, and 31 percent agreed with this statement. Statistical test results also showed significant ( $p\text{-value}=0.06<0.1$ ) at 10 percent level of significance

with regular practice, and significant results with hours per sitting ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ), gender ( $p\text{-value}=0.03<0.05$ ), level of education ( $p\text{-value}=0.00<0.05$ ) at five percent level of significance. These results indicate that introducing *Vipassanā* meditation could help reduce inefficiency in government organizations. Highly educated meditators, meditator with longer practicing hours, and female meditators are more likely to support this statement.

In the subjective written experiences, most of the practitioners expressed that *Vipassanā* meditation practice helped them quit bad habits like drinking alcohol and smoking. They are now able to remain calm and equanimous, even in adverse situations. They feel more confident, and it has become easier for them to deal with different people. As discussed in the review section, some researchers have attempted to evaluate the effects of *Vipassanā* practice; however, there are no exactly similar studies. Most of them employed different methodologies and contexts. Nonetheless, comparisons can be made in some of the thematic areas and intended results, which would help justify the fact that *Vipassanā* practice supports lay practitioners in improving their personal and professional life. Based on the previous studies, the effects of *Vipassanā* meditation are highlighted on the followings paragraphs.

Even in ancient times, when Buddha taught *Vipassanā*, many people developed their personal and professional well-being by practicing it. Bhikkhu Amritananda described that many lay people who engage either in agriculture or business, practiced *Vipassanā* and improved their well beings (Lay people 34-36). Angulimal, who was known as a hardened criminal, became an *arahant* after practicing *Vipassanā*. Some of the studies have concluded similar thematic findings as discussed in this study. S. Pradhan and Ajithkumar found positive effects on psychological well-being of regular practitioners, despite differences in age, gender, marital status, educational background, and work position (conclusion), which is somewhat similar to the findings of this study. V. Bhatnagar emphasized the improvement in work efficiency and effectiveness among *Vipassanā* practitioners (501-02). D.R. Pariar, highlighted that personal achievements of *Vipassanā* practitioners such as changes in attitude and behavior, among employees could also help reduce corrupt practices in governments by increasing effectiveness, which aligns with this study's conclusion. Dileep Kumar also found an increase in self-awareness, better interpersonal relationships, teamwork, mutual respect, and a group work culture among regular *Vipassanā* practitioners (48-57).

Rakesh Agrawal and Kiran Bedi noticed a positive attitude and compassionate

behavior towards criminals among Delhi Police personnel after *Vipassanā* practices (45-56). Ram Singh described the event in Rajasthan Jail where a criminal, after practicing *Vipassanā*, accepted his death penalty in a cheerful manner (7). Being an old *Vipassanā* student, I have personally volunteered for jail courses and other courses many times. During jail course, a noticeable change was observed among hardened criminal. After the courses and follow-up period, many prisoners shared their experiences, stating that they realized their mistakes and committed to not repeating them. Some of them got rid of mental health conditions, and others reduced their medication dosages. Most of them shared that they had changed their behavior; instead of feeling resentment, they had become more compassionate. There was also an improvement in their relationships with fellow inmates and jail administration.

The qualitative and empirical findings of this study demonstrate that *Vipassanā* practice supports the personal and professional well-being of lay meditators. Positive changes in personal life also contribute to improve professional life. More specifically, these changes can affect organizational performance. For example, *Vipassanā* practice helps to change the attitude and behavior of employee at personal level which ultimately contributes to improved efficiency and productivity at the organizational level.

## **5. Conclusion**

As Buddha himself emphasized on *Satipathāna sutta*, referring to it as the only way of *Nibbāna*, *Vipassana* meditation serves as a means for the total purification of the mind and the attainment of enlightenment. In addition to its *Nibbana*-oriented practice, *Vipassanā* also provides significant benefits to lay people, improving both their personal and professional life. Historical events confirm that while thousands of monks and nuns have attained *arhantship*; countless other monks, nuns, and lay practitioners have enhanced their personal and professional well-being through the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation.

This study demonstrates that *Vipassanā* practice helps lay people improve their personal and professional life. Based on the respondents' answer, the study found that *Vipassanā* meditation enhances practitioners' well-being on both personal and professional levels. On a personal level, *Vipassanā* practice helps reduce their anger, stress, anxiety, while also improving physical and mental health, ultimately



contributing to the purification of the mind. Furthermore, *Vipassanā* practice helps in improving relationships with family members, relatives, and colleagues, both senior and junior. On a professional level, *Vipassanā* practice supports improvements in work performance, especially in terms of productivity, efficiency, decision-making and planning process. Regular *Vipassanā* meditators show better performance in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, improving daily interactions with their subordinates, seniors, and other stakeholders, thereby enriching their work performance. Ultimately, *Vipassanā* practice contributes not only to physical well-being but also mental and spiritual well-being.

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## **Annex A- Sample Questionnaire format.**

### **Part I**

#### **General Information**

1. Name of Respondent (Optional)\_\_\_\_\_
2. Age (in years): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender: Male/ Female \_\_\_\_\_
4. Address (City): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marital Status: Single/Married/Separated \_\_\_\_\_
6. Level of Education: (i) Normal read and write (ii) High school Level (iii) Graduate or above \_\_\_\_\_
7. Current profession: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of 10 days Vipassana courses attended so far: \_\_\_\_\_
9. How long have you been practicing Vipassana regularly at home (Years) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Practicing Hours per day: (i) Less than 1 hour (ii) 1 hour (iii) 2 hours (iv) More than 2 hours \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II

### Effect of Vipassana

S.N.	Questions	Answers: Please Choose anyone				
		5	4	3	2	1
Related to personal life						
1	To improve the outside world, I must first improve myself through self- purification.					
2	Vipassana has helped me to develop a positive and optimistic attitude.					
3	Vipassana has the capacity to reform human mind and character.					
4	Decline in moral values because of a polluted mind is the root cause of many problems in my profession.					
5	Vipassana has inspired and enabled me to recognize my mistakes and improve upon them.					
6	Because of Vipassana, my general health, and in particular, my mental health has improved.					
8	Vipassana has reduced my tension and anxiety.					
9	Vipassana has reduced my anger, intolerance and irritation.					
Related to professional life						
10	Vipassana has helped me improve relations with my subordinates, colleagues and seniors.					
11	Vipassana has increased my efficiency and productivity in work.					
12	Vipassana has helped me to take quick and right decisions.					
13	Vipassana has improved my ability to motivate and guide my subordinates.					
14	Vipassana has enhanced my initiative and planning ability.					
15	Because of Vipassana, I am more objective and impartial in execution of my duties.					
17	Vipassana help me to improve my social relations.					
Related to Government sector						
18	Vipassana meditation would help to reduce corruption and inefficiency in government sector.					

### Notes:

Some of the questions are taken from “Impact of *Vipassanā* Meditation Index” developed by *Vipassanā* Research Institute, Mumbai India, addition and modification

within Nepalese context.

1. Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Not sure=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1

**Please mention what changes you have experienced by practicing Vipassana meditation:** (Specific comment and suggestion/ write in plain Nepali or English language)

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