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Yog Nidrā and the Creative Mind: Bridging Ancient Contemplative Practices, Flow States, and Neuroscience

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Abstract:

Yog Nidrā, a guided relaxation practice situated between wakefulness and sleep, has gained renewed attention in both contemplative science and applied settings. Originally systematized by Swami Satyananda Saraswati at the Bihar School of Yoga, *Yog Nidrā* has since influenced global practices, including adaptations such as Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR). This review explores the relationship between *Yog Nidrā* and creativity by synthesizing empirical findings, neurobiological mechanisms, and philosophical insights, particularly from the *Pañcakośa* model of Indian thought. A narrative review of interdisciplinary literature was conducted, drawing on psychology, neuroscience, and contemplative traditions. Key contributions from neuroimaging studies, cognitive assessments, and The ReSource Project on contemplative training were integrated. Evidence suggests that *Yog Nidrā* enhances creativity by reducing stress, fostering divergent thinking, and facilitating access to flow states. Neurophysiological findings highlight alpha–theta synchronization, strengthened default mode and executive network connectivity, and markers of neuroplastic reorganization. Psychologically, the practice supports deep relaxation, incubation, and insight, while socio-cognitive effects include improved empathy, perspective-taking, and openness to novel ideas. Philosophically, *Yog Nidrā* engages the inner layers of the *Pañcakośa*, aligning intuitive wisdom and creative expression. *Yog Nidrā* is not only a relaxation protocol but also a gateway to intuition, innovation, and holistic creativity. It offers promising applications in education, leadership, mental health, and the arts. Future research should combine neuroimaging, longitudinal designs, and creativity assessments to deepen our understanding of this integrative pathway to human flourishing.

Keywords: *Yog Nidrā,* creativity, NSDR, neuroplasticity, *Pañcakośa,* flow, contemplative science

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INTRODUCTION

Yog Nidrā, often translated as "yogic sleep", is a systematic guided relaxation method originating from the *Tantric* tradition and later formalized by Swami Satyananda Saraswati of the Bihar School of Yoga (Satyananda, 1976). It induces a unique liminal state between wakefulness and sleep, characterized by profound physical relaxation while maintaining conscious awareness. Classical texts describe this process as *pratyāhāra* —withdrawal of the senses from external stimuli—facilitating access to deeper layers of consciousness. Swami Satyananda explains this state poetically:

"When awareness is separate and distinct from mental activity,
when waking, dream and deep sleep pass like clouds,
yet awareness of Self remains,
this is the experience of total relaxation…
That is why, in tantra,
yoga nidrā is said to be the doorway to Samadhi."
- Swami Satyananda Saraswati

This traditional understanding is increasingly supported by modern scientific investigation. Contemporary research identifies *Yog Nidrā* as a structured intervention that modulates both autonomic and neural processes associated with stress reduction, creativity, and cognitive restoration (Pandi-Perumal et al., 2022). Empirical studies show *Yog Nidrā's* ability to elevate alpha and theta brainwave activity, increase parasympathetic dominance, and modulate dopaminergic pathways—mechanisms linked to cognitive flexibility and insight-oriented thinking.

More recently, *Yog Nidrā* has been examined in relation to Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR), a neuroscience framework describing protocols that enable deep restorative rest without complete loss of consciousness (Huberman, 2021). While NSDR represents a broader category, *Yog Nidrā* remains one of its most structured and rigorously studied practices—uniquely integrating yogic psychology with measurable neurophysiological markers. This dual recognition positions *Yog Nidrā* as a potent tool for exploring creativity, emotional regulation, and cognitive enhancement in modern knowledge-driven contexts (Pandi-Perumal et al., 2022).

Creativity, on the other hand, is most commonly defined as the ability to generate ideas that are both novel and useful (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Sternberg and Lubart (1999) described it as the "capacity to produce work that is both original and adaptive," while Csikszentmihalyi (1996) emphasized its emergence at the intersection of individual, domain, and field. Importantly, creativity is not restricted to the arts or sciences—it is present in everyday life, from solving problems at work to influencing others through innovative communication and strategies. Whether composing music, designing experiments, negotiating in business, or

finding new ways to nurture relationships, creativity underlies much of human progress and well-being.

The rationale for exploring the connection between *Yog Nidrā* and creativity arises from the growing global interest in mindfulness, altered states of consciousness, and contemplative science as tools for enhancing both creativity and mental health (Tang et al., 2015). However, this interest unfolds against a unique cultural backdrop: with advances in artificial intelligence (AI), machines are increasingly capable of generating artwork, solving complex problems, writing essays, and even composing music—domains once thought to be distinctly human. This raises a provocative question: if AI is becoming more "creative" than humans, why should we still invest in understanding and cultivating human creativity? The answer lies in the intrinsic nature of human beings: creativity is not merely about productivity but about self-expression, meaning-making, and the pursuit of happiness (Richards, 2007). To be creative is to enact one's humanity.

Against this background, the present paper seeks to synthesize current research on *Yog Nidrā* in light of creativity, neuroplasticity, and Indian philosophical models of consciousness. Drawing from empirical studies, neuroscientific findings, and the *Pañcakośa* framework, the review aims to highlight how *Yog Nidrā* can foster creativity, map possible mechanisms of action, and suggest future research directions that integrate contemplative practices with the study of human imagination and innovation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the connection between *Yog Nidrā* and creativity requires situating the practice within broader theories of altered consciousness, stages of creative thought, and contemplative science. Creativity often arises not from linear thinking but from moments of insight, where disparate ideas suddenly connect in novel and useful ways. Such breakthroughs are frequently associated with altered states of consciousness—periods where the ordinary stream of cognition is suspended, allowing the mind to reorganize itself in unexpected patterns. *Yog Nidrā*, with its unique capacity to bring the practitioner into a liminal state of deep relaxation coupled with awareness, offers a fertile ground for these processes. By drawing on established theories of creativity, integrating classical psychological models, and engaging with contemporary contemplative neuroscience, we can begin to articulate how *Yog Nidrā* may contribute to creative cognition.

Meditation and Creativity

One of the most prominent theories linking altered states to creativity comes from Dietrich (2004), who argued that non-ordinary states of consciousness, such as those induced by meditation, dreams, or trance, facilitate creative problem solving by reducing executive control and allowing unconscious associations to surface. Meditation practices, including *Yog Nidrā*,

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shift neural activity from high-frequency beta states (focused attention, analytical thinking) to alpha and theta rhythms, which have been associated with insight, divergent thinking, and remote associations. This cognitive "loosening" provides a neurocognitive basis for why meditation, and specifically *Yog Nidrā*, may enhance creativity.

Stages of Creativity

The relationship between *Yog Nidrā* and creativity also becomes clear when mapped onto Wallas' (1926) four-stage model of creativity: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. *Yog Nidrā* is especially relevant to the incubation stage, where conscious effort is suspended and the subconscious mind continues to work on a problem. The deeply relaxed yet aware state of *Yog Nidrā* mirrors this process, allowing hidden connections to emerge. The illumination stage, often described as a sudden "aha" moment, can also be facilitated by *Yog Nidrā*, as the altered state of awareness helps in accessing intuitive insights that bypass ordinary logical constraints. Thus, *Yog Nidrā* may serve as both an incubatory practice and a catalyst for creative illumination.

Contemplative Science

Recent work in contemplative science provides further evidence for the link between *Yog Nidrā* like practices and creativity. Dr. Tania Singer's ReSource Project (Singer et al., 2019), one of the largest longitudinal studies on meditation, demonstrated that structured contemplative training enhances socio-cognitive flexibility, empathy, and perspective-taking—all of which are critical for creative thinking. Creativity is not only about generating novel ideas but also about understanding problems from multiple viewpoints and responding with adaptive flexibility. By enhancing emotional regulation and expanding one's capacity for compassion and self-other understanding, practices such as *Yog Nidrā* contribute to a fertile ground for creativity that is both cognitive and relational.

Flow, the *Pañcakośa* Model, and *Yog Nidrā*

The experience of flow, as conceptualized by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), refers to a state of complete absorption in an activity, where self-consciousness diminishes, time perception alters, and performance is optimized. Flow states are strongly correlated with creative breakthroughs, as they allow ideas to emerge spontaneously without the usual interference of self-doubt or distraction. Many discoveries and inventions across history illustrate this altered state of consciousness: Archimedes' "Eureka" moment in the bath, Kekulé's dream of the ouroboros leading to the benzene ring structure, Newton's insight into gravity while reflecting under an apple tree, and even Einstein's thought experiments on relativity that emerged from a playful, deeply immersive cognitive state. These examples highlight that creativity often arises when the mind moves beyond linear, effortful thinking into deeper, integrative states of awareness.

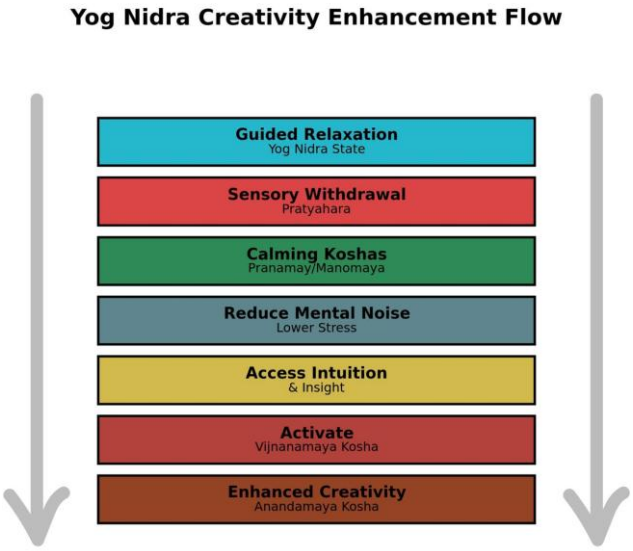
Indian philosophy offers a profound framework for understanding these inner states through the *Pañcakośa* model, which describes the human being as composed of five sheaths:

1. *Annamaya Kośa* (physical body)
2. *Prāṇamaya Kośa* (vital energy body)
3. *Manomaya Kośa* (mental sheath, thoughts, and emotions)
4. *Vijñānamaya Kośa* (intellectual and intuitive sheath)
5. *Ānandamaya Kośa* (bliss sheath, pure consciousness)

According to the *Pañcakośa* model, the *manomaya kośa*, the mental–emotional sheath associated with sensory processing and fluctuating thought patterns, can obstruct cognitive flexibility and creative insight when it becomes dominated by stress, rumination, and reactive cognition; *Yog Nidrā* helps regulate this sheath by reducing mental noise and emotional turbulence, thereby supporting clear perception and expanded associative thinking (Saraswati, 1976; Pandi-Perumal et al., 2022).

Recent neuroscientific studies on Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR) further support this connection. NSDR states, of which *Yog Nidrā* is a traditional example, enhance neuroplasticity by creating conditions for the brain to consolidate learning, reorganize neural networks, and foster associative thinking (Huberman, 2021). This resonates with the Indian view that relaxation and inward focus are not passive states but gateways to accessing higher intelligence.

Thus, *Yog Nidrā* can be seen as both a scientifically valid NSDR protocol and a philosophical practice rooted in the *Pañcakośa* model, uniquely positioned to induce flow states that nurture creativity. By dissolving surface-level disturbances and aligning inner sheaths, practitioners gain access to the intuitive wisdom that has historically fuelled human innovation.



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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The body of research exploring the psychological and cognitive benefits of *Yog Nidrā* has grown steadily over the past two decades, reflecting both empirical findings and theoretical advancements. While still an emerging field, evidence suggests that *Yog Nidrā* has measurable effects on stress, cognition, emotional regulation, and creative capacities, with parallels and contrasts to other contemplative practices such as mindfulness meditation, hypnosis, and Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR).

Psychological and Cognitive Benefits

Several studies have documented the capacity of *Yog Nidrā* to reduce stress, better sleep enhance focus, and improve emotional regulation. For instance, Datta et al. (2021) found that participants who practiced *Yog Nidrā* regularly showed significant reductions in perceived stress and improvements in attentional control compared to baseline measures and they slept better. Similarly, clinical trials conducted with medical students and high-stress populations have demonstrated that *Yog Nidrā* improves sleep quality, resilience to anxiety, and executive functioning (Moszeik et al., 2022). These outcomes align with the broader literature on contemplative practices, which highlight the ability of guided relaxation and mindfulness-based interventions to activate the parasympathetic nervous system and downregulate stress-related activity in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis (Tang et al., 2015).

Yog Nidrā and Creativity

Emerging research directly links *Yog Nidrā* with enhanced creative outcomes. Datta et al., (2021) reported that university students who engaged in eight weeks of *Yog Nidrā* training demonstrated higher scores on divergent thinking tasks, including the Alternate Uses Test (AUT), which measures the ability to generate multiple solutions to a problem. Case-based studies further suggest that practitioners experience increased imaginative ideation, describing the practice as a "waking dream state" where novel associations arise spontaneously. Historical accounts also echo this: many creative breakthroughs—such as Einstein's theory of relativity (inspired by daydream imagery) or Edison's lightbulb experiments (where he intentionally used hypnagogic states)—reflect processes akin to the liminal awareness cultivated in *Yog Nidrā*. These examples underscore how the practice can facilitate access to subconscious material that fuels originality.

Comparative Insights

Yog Nidrā's mechanisms and outcomes have often been compared with mindfulness meditation, hypnosis, and NSDR protocols. Travis and Shear (2010) distinguished *Yog Nidrā* from traditional mindfulness by noting that while mindfulness emphasizes non-judgmental present-moment awareness, *Yog Nidrā* induces a progressive withdrawal from sensory input (*pratyāhāra*), leading to altered states closer to hypnosis or deep relaxation. Hypnosis, however, relies on suggestion and narrowed attention, whereas *Yog Nidrā* maintains a broader field of awareness that allows spontaneous imagery and creative ideation to surface. More recently,

neuroscientific interest in NSDR has highlighted parallels with *Yog Nidrā*, particularly in relation to guided relaxation scripts and their ability to restore cognitive resources after periods of effortful attention (Huberman, 2021).

Emerging Evidence: NSDR and Neuroplasticity

One of the most promising directions in this field is the study of NSDR and neuroplasticity, which provides indirect evidence for *Yog Nidrā's* effects on creativity. Neuroscience research suggests that NSDR protocols enhance memory consolidation, learning, and cognitive flexibility by engaging brain mechanisms involved in slow-wave sleep and hippocampal replay (Huberman, 2021). These processes are critical for creativity, as they allow for the reorganization of neural networks and the integration of disparate knowledge domains into novel configurations. Early studies using electroencephalography (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have found that practices akin to *Yog Nidrā* increase theta and alpha activity in frontal and parietal regions, which are associated with insight and associative thinking (Thomas & Cohen, 2014). While direct longitudinal studies on *Yog Nidrā* and creativity remain sparse, the convergence of findings from meditation, NSDR, and sleep research provides a strong basis for hypothesizing its role in enhancing imaginative cognition.

MECHANISM

The pathways through which *Yog Nidrā* enhances creativity are multifaceted, involving neurophysiological, psychological, and socio-cognitive processes, as well as deeper contemplative frameworks drawn from Indian philosophy. Together, these mechanisms suggest that *Yog Nidrā* does not merely relax the body but reorganizes patterns of mind and consciousness in ways that support creative ideation.

Neurophysiological Mechanisms

Electroencephalographic (EEG) studies consistently report an increased dominance of alpha and theta brain waves during *Yog Nidrā*, states associated with relaxation, insight, and divergent thinking (Mason et al., 1997; Thomas & Cohen, 2014). Such neural activity is thought to foster a "fertile ground" for creativity by enhancing associative processes and reducing rigid patterns of thought. In addition, neuroimaging studies suggest that practices akin to *Yog Nidrā* strengthen functional connectivity between the default mode network (DMN) and executive control networks, facilitating a balance between spontaneous idea generation and goal-directed evaluation (Berkovich-Ohana et al., 2016). Over time, repeated practice induces neuroplastic changes, allowing practitioners to rewire cognitive and emotional responses, a phenomenon well-documented in contemplative neuroscience (Tang et al., 2015). This neuroplastic reorganization underpins creative flexibility, enabling novel insights to emerge more readily.

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Psychological Mechanisms

At the psychological level, *Yog Nidrā* induces a profound state of deep relaxation that reduces "mental noise" and allows the subconscious to surface. This quieting of the prefrontal cortex temporarily suspends habitual thought patterns, thereby creating conditions conducive to incubation and insight (Dietrich, 2004). The practice also resonates with descriptions of non-dual awareness, sometimes referred to as the "state of zero," where the practitioner experiences a dissolution of boundaries between self and world (Satyananda, 1976). Such expansive awareness parallels the divergent thinking required for creativity, where seemingly unrelated ideas can merge into novel configurations.

Socio-Cognitive Mechanisms

Beyond individual cognition, *Yog Nidrā* also cultivates socio-cognitive skills that support creativity. Drawing from Dr. Tania Singer's ReSource Project, longitudinal research has shown that compassion-based contemplative training enhances perspective-taking, empathy, and cognitive flexibility (Singer et al., 2019). These attributes are central to creative problem-solving, particularly in collaborative settings, where openness to diverse perspectives and flexible adaptation to challenges are critical. By fostering emotional regulation and social attunement, *Yog Nidrā* indirectly strengthens the interpersonal dimensions of creativity.

Complementing this, Kjaer, Bertelsen, et al., (2002) demonstrated that meditation induces a measurable increase in striatal dopamine release. Elevated dopamine tone is associated with heightened sensory imagery, reduced cognitive rigidity, and greater flexibility in thought processes. This neurochemical shift supports the idea that *Yog Nidrā* creates a state of relaxed alertness, optimizing the brain for divergent thinking, ideation, and the intuitive leaps often observed in creative problem-solving.

Together, these studies underscore that *Yog Nidrā's* effects are not merely psychological or subjective but are deeply rooted in measurable brain activity and neurotransmitter dynamics. By modulating attention networks, emotional regulation circuits, and dopaminergic pathways, *Yog Nidrā* can be positioned as a neuro-physiologically supported gateway to flow states and creative cognition.

Flow and Creativity via the *Pañcakośa* Model

The *Pañcakośa* framework of Indian philosophy provides a deeper lens through which to understand *Yog Nidrā's* effects. According to this model, the human being consists of five sheaths (*kośas*): *annamaya* (physical), *prāṇamaya* (energy), *manomaya* (mental), *vijñānamaya* (intellectual/intuitional), and *ānandamaya* (bliss). *Yog Nidrā* facilitates progressive relaxation and harmonization across these sheaths. By balancing the *prāṇamaya kośa* (energy body) and calming the *manomaya kośa* (mental sheath), practitioners reduce internal turbulence, thereby preparing conditions for effortless attention. This allows entry into *vijñānamaya* (insight and intuitive wisdom) and *ānandamaya* (blissful absorption), which correlate with states of inspiration and creative flow (Rama, Ballentine, & Hymes, 1976).

Such flow states are not abstract ideals but well-documented experiences among innovators across disciplines. For example, Archimedes' "Eureka" moment in the bath, Newton's falling apple insight into gravity, and the improvisations of jazz musicians in performance all exemplify spontaneous creativity arising when the mind is deeply relaxed yet highly attuned. *Yog Nidrā*, by enabling access to these inner sheaths, provides a systematic practice for entering similar states of effortless concentration and generative imagination.

APPLICATIONS

The integration of *Yog Nidrā* into contemporary life reveals its potential across a range of domains, from education and leadership to mental health and creative professions. The evidence base, while still developing, suggests that the practice provides not only restorative benefits but also conditions for fostering innovation, resilience, and adaptive problem-solving.

Education

In academic contexts, students often face high levels of stress, cognitive overload, and pressure to perform creatively in problem-solving. Incorporating *Yog Nidrā* into curricula or co-curricular well-being programs has been shown to improve focus, reduce examination anxiety, and enhance creative ideation. By cultivating a state of relaxed awareness, *Yog Nidrā* supports incubation—a crucial stage of creativity where the mind reorganizes information in novel ways. For instance, several schools in India and Europe have experimented with introducing short *Yog Nidrā* sessions before examinations, reporting improvements in both academic performance and emotional resilience (Kauts & Sharma, 2009).

Corporate and Leadership Development

In organizational contexts, *Yog Nidrā* holds promise for cultivating adaptive leadership and innovative problem-solving. Corporate leaders operate in dynamic environments that require rapid adjustment and creative vision. Research on flow states indicates that when leaders achieve a balance of relaxation and focus, they are better positioned to access divergent thinking and intuitive decision-making (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). *Yog Nidrā* offers a structured way to induce such states, allowing leaders to suspend overactive analytical processes and enter modes of cognition conducive to insight. For example, companies in the IT and creative sectors have experimented with pre-innovation-session *Yog Nidrā*, reporting enhanced team brainstorming and openness to novel ideas.

Mental Health and Trauma Recovery

Yog Nidrā has long been recognized for its therapeutic potential in stress reduction, anxiety management, and sleep regulation. More recently, studies suggest that it may support post-traumatic growth, not only helping individuals recover from adversity but also fostering creative re-engagement with life (Moszeik et al., 2022). By creating a safe and contained space of deep

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relaxation, *Yog Nidrā* allows individuals to process emotions and restore psychological equilibrium. This can translate into new avenues of self-expression—whether through art, journaling, or problem-solving—that mark a shift from survival to creative flourishing.

Creative Professions

Artists, writers, and musicians often rely on altered states of consciousness to access new ideas and imagery. Anecdotal and qualitative reports suggest that *Yog Nidrā* practiced before creative work sessions can enhance ideation, dissolve creative blocks, and deepen immersion (Kauts & Sharma, 2009). For instance, musicians have described the practice as a gateway to improvisational flow, while writers report that post *Yog Nidrā* sessions yield a freer association of ideas, akin to stream-of-consciousness creativity. Such experiences mirror historical accounts of inventors and scientists—such as Edison and Tesla—who leveraged hypnagogic states for creative breakthroughs.

Contemplative Science and Social Creativity

The ReSource Project led by Dr. Tania Singer offers compelling evidence that structured contemplative practices, including compassion training, significantly enhance social cognition, empathy, and perspective-taking (Singer et al., 2019). These qualities are critical not only for interpersonal relationships but also for creativity, which thrives on the ability to integrate diverse perspectives and generate socially relevant solutions. *Yog Nidrā*, by cultivating emotional regulation and expanding self–other understanding, can similarly be positioned as a tool for fostering collaborative creativity—an increasingly vital skill in today's interconnected world.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While preliminary findings indicate *Yog Nidrā's* potential to enhance creativity, the field remains underexplored compared to other contemplative practices such as mindfulness and Transcendental Meditation. Several promising research avenues can deepen our understanding of the mechanisms and applications of this practice.

Future research may focus on establishing standardized and reliable methods for assessing creativity to accurately evaluate the cognitive effects of *Yog Nidrā* practice. Creativity is multi-dimensional—encompassing divergent thinking, associative flexibility, real-world creative production, and insight generation—therefore no single test captures its full expression. Researchers could adopt a multi-method assessment framework combining well-validated behavioural measures such as the Alternate Uses Test (AUT) and Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) to evaluate fluency, originality, and flexibility, along with the Remote Associates Test (RAT) for insight-based associative problem-solving. These may be complemented by real-world indicators like the Creative Achievement Questionnaire (CAQ) to assess practical creative engagement. Additionally, incorporating psychophysiological markers, such as EEG-based alpha and theta oscillations linked to incubation and associative processing,

and heart-rate variability as an index of adaptive emotional regulation, can offer deeper insight into the mechanisms through which *Yog Nidrā* might influence creativity. Ensuring consistency in timing, environment, and analytical frameworks would support comparability between studies. Developing such a standardized creativity-assessment protocol has the potential to confirm *Yog Nidrā's* role in enhancing creativity and to strengthen its positioning as an evidence-based cognitive intervention.

Neuroimaging Studies

Future research should employ advanced techniques such as EEG and fMRI to map the neural correlates of *Yog Nidrā*–induced flow states. Specifically, examining alpha–theta synchrony and default mode network connectivity could reveal how *Pañcakośa* -inspired inner shifts translate into creative cognition (Tang et al., 2015).

Comparative Protocols

Systematic comparisons between *Yog Nidrā*, mindfulness meditation, and Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR) are needed to identify unique and overlapping contributions to creativity. For example, while mindfulness emphasizes present-moment awareness, *Yog Nidrā* facilitates access to hypnagogic states more directly linked to incubation and insight (Travis & Shear, 2010; Huberman, 2021).

Longitudinal Effects

Most studies to date assess short-term benefits. Longitudinal research could examine whether regular *Yog Nidrā* practice leads to sustained improvements in creativity, cognitive flexibility, and emotional resilience across diverse demographic groups. This line of inquiry is particularly relevant in educational and organizational contexts where creativity must be nurtured over extended periods.

Methodological Innovations

Employing robust creativity measures such as the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking and the Remote Associates Test, in conjunction with physiological markers of flow (e.g., heart-rate variability, EEG coherence), can provide a multidimensional understanding of how *Yog Nidrā* impacts creative processes (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Integrating subjective reports of altered states with objective measures will further strengthen empirical claims.

In sum, future research must bridge traditional Indian philosophical models, such as the *Pañcakośa* framework, with contemporary neuroscientific methods to capture the full spectrum of *Yog Nidrā's* effects on creativity. Such integrative approaches will not only advance contemplative science but also offer practical insights for education, leadership, and innovation.

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CONCLUSION

Yog Nidrā, positioned at the crossroads of ancient Indian philosophy and modern contemplative science, emerges as far more than a relaxation technique. As both an NSDR protocol validated by neuroscience and a *Pañcakośa*-inspired practice rooted in Vedantic wisdom, it offers a fertile ground for accessing flow states, nurturing intuition, and expanding creative potential.

Empirical findings suggest that *Yog Nidrā* fosters neuroplastic reorganization, emotional regulation, and socio-cognitive flexibility, while philosophical traditions frame it as a gateway to the deeper layers of consciousness where insight and innovation arise. Together, these perspectives converge to reveal a compelling truth: creativity is not merely a cognitive skill but a state of being—an alignment of body, mind, and consciousness.

At a time when artificial intelligence challenges our traditional notions of creativity, *Yog Nidrā* underscores what remains uniquely human: the urge to create as an expression of selfhood, connection, and joy. It invites us to remember that creativity is not only about producing art or solving problems but also about reimagining who we are and how we live.

Bridging ancient wisdom with modern neuroscience, *Yog Nidrā* offers a transformative blueprint—not just for enhancing individual creativity but for cultivating collective resilience, innovation, and flourishing. In recognizing its potential, we glimpse a future where contemplative practices are woven into the very fabric of education, leadership, and society, inspiring a renaissance of creativity that is both timeless and urgently needed.

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Brief Profile of the Author:

Smita Khare is an experienced HR professional with over 15 years of work as a strategic HR consultant and trainer. She is adept in diverse HR domains including business migrations and transitions, talent management, talent development, culture building, and HR systems and processes. Her industry expertise spans banking and financial services, information technology, KPO/BPO sectors, and community organisations/NGOs.

Beyond her professional pursuits, she is a dedicated advocate of holistic living, drawing upon the principles of Yog, Ayurveda, and Naturopathy to support wellbeing and human flourishing. Her research focuses on integrating indigenous Indian knowledge into modern organisational practice, promoting sustainable, human-centred, and ethically grounded models of people and institutional building.

Statements and Declaration:

I hereby declare that this manuscript is my original work and does not infringe on any rights of third parties. All sources have been duly acknowledged and cited. This work has not been previously published in whole or in part. I declare that I have no conflict of interest with my places of employment or anybody else in publishing this article. No financial support was received for the work within this article.

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