

YOGA IN LIFE AND EDUCATION: ITS RELEVANCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT:

In the modern era of unhealthy competition and craving for materialistic pleasure it will not be an exaggeration if we say that the human being of the 21st century cannot stay as a human being but a machine. We are in a hurry all the time that results in stress, strain and different disorders in our body and mind which cannot be cured through the application of medicine but it is Yoga which may normalize the situation at ease. Yoga has its multi-dimensional aspects, i.e., in one side it heals our physical disorders and on other it soothes our psychological stress. Yoga ensures our mental stability which is needed to sustain our development uninterruptedly. It invades all the evils in our body and mind and gifts us a well-balanced health by transforming the evils into generous power and by harmonizing our physical, mental and spiritual state. It enhances the power of self control which promotes value among us, another important facet during this century. Yoga may be practiced through both the ways of meditation and free-hand exercises which cost no money and we may avail this benevolent opportunity in anywhere. Yoga has been practiced from the ancient time through the age after age but in this 21st century as well as in this modern age of technology based civilization we have our utmost necessity of utilization of Yoga which may help us to secure the peace of mind and so as to the world, which should be the ultimate goal of us. We may conclude with Swami Vivekananda:

*“Through practice comes YOGA,
Through yoga comes KNOWLEDGE,
Through knowledge LOVE,
Through love BLISS....”*

Key Words: *Multi-dimensional, Harmonizing, Meditation.*

INTRODUCTION:

‘न तस्य रोगो न जरा न मृत्यु, प्राप्तस्य योगाग्निमयं शरीरम्।’

(For him who has obtained a body ablaze with the fire of
Yoga, there is no disease, no aging, no death....)

This line significantly utters the necessity of yoga in our modern life. In the 21st century of advanced civilization almost everyone indulges in sedentary or desk-bound lifestyle. Revolution in technology reduces our manual works or physical activities especially practice of walking. Unhealthy eating habits, lack of sleep develop some life style diseases, such as, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, back pain etc. Besides these diseases in the modern century we all are striving to go ahead being unaware of our limitations, being unaware of our capability. This often leads to the exhaustion, stress, anxiety, tension and ultimately we sink into the vast ocean of despair and despondency. We can remain no longer at ease. We lack our mental peace. We become unstable. Even the suicidal tendency has been found to grow among us in many cases. In this unstable state we need immediate solution to save mankind from the utter destruction. In this respect Yoga may be the harbinger of rain fall in the desert. Yoga can regain our mental peace. That is why Yoga has gained tremendous popularity in the last few years; it is the most rapidly growing health movement irrespective of age, religion, caste, sex.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

It is found that the awareness of Yoga is less emphasized than the profundity of its utility. This paper lays emphasis on the issue of increasing Yoga-awareness especially on its scientific side. The salt of life is selfless service. The bread of life is universal love. The water of life is purity. The sweetness of life is devotion. The fragrance of life is generosity. The pivot of life is meditation. The goal of the life is Self-realisation. Therefore serve and love. Be pure and generous. Meditate and realize. Yoga is the way of achieving Peace, it makes man peaceful human being.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE:

Research work had been done in different aspects of Yoga education from ancient period to modern period. According to the study of Sree Aurovindo Yoga is the only way to make life easy. All the monks from the ancient period are to take this way by meditation or “Dhyan”, Yoga is the only way to make mind fresh from all needs – says Swami Vivekananda. For this way Swami Ji established Belur Math. To make the new way to teach the society. Now a days we also know Baba Rajonish, Sattya Sai Baba, Baba Ramdev and so on. And we know

not only the Yoga guru says about the way of Yoga but also Netaji Subhash Chandra Basu was the great follower of Swami Vivekananda, In this connection there are many research works such as Prof. Joseph Alter – “People Modern Yoga” (1989), Prof. Suman Briule – “Yoga Has Healthy Power” (2014), Prof. Joseph Alter – “Modern Yoga” (2017), Prof. Angela Wilson – “Scientific Research: How Yoga Works” (2014).

OBJECTIVES:

- To analyse the spiritual and scientific bases of Yoga
- To explain the necessity of yoga in life and education
- To drive out the mis-conceptions about yoga.
- To encourage the youth in practicing yoga for their healthy-living.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is mainly analytical in nature. The information has been collected from the various primary and secondary sources. Information has also been collected from the yoga expert and yoga instructor. Various secondary sources have been used, such as, publications, journals, newspapers. Internet source and website are also consulted for the purpose of collecting data. Collected information has been analyzed with the help of various reference books through the various analytical methods.

DISCUSSION OF THE OBJECTIVES

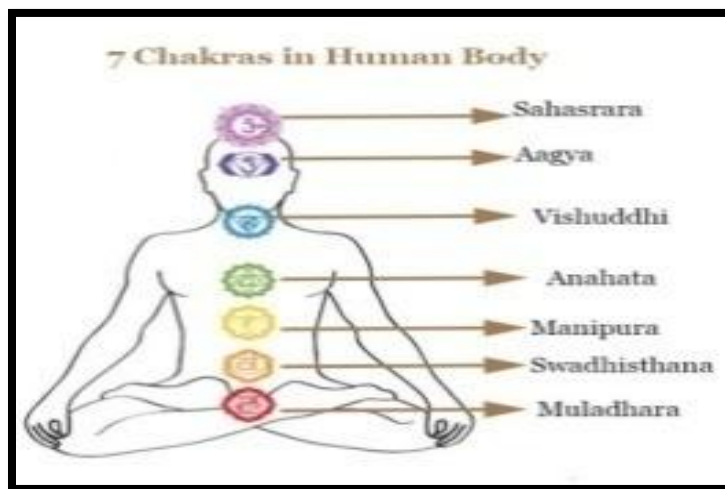
Yoga is the physical, mental and spiritual practices which originated in ancient India with a view to attain a state of permanent peace of mind in order to experience one’s true self. The word ‘YOGA’ is derived from Sanskrit root ‘YUJ’ meaning ‘to join’ or ‘to yoke’ or ‘to unite’. It means Yoga leads to the oneness by unifying the individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body. It is practiced through different techniques among which three are very common: Surya Namaskar, Meditation and Pranayam. Hatha Yoga in this respect is very popular. Yoga doesn’t adhere to any particular religion, belief system or community. It is not also a magic. It is a technology for betterment or well-being.

Yoga boosts up both of our mental, spiritual and physical health. It stables our restlessness which hinders our ability to think with reason. If the surface of the lake is lashed into waves, the water becomes muddy. We cannot see the bottom of the water. So to see the bottom, the water needs to become still. Similarly if we compare

the lake with our mind and the bottom with our inner self, anxiety drives our mind agitated, we cannot be able to recognize the true self. So if we want to know the true self we have to be calm and the practice of yoga gives our mind the serenity which in result removes our ignorance, addiction, bondage, delusion and gives pace to the thought waves of purity and truthfulness. The mind of truly illumined man is calm, he never mistake a rope for a snake. Yoga invokes our spirit to discern the right knowledge by calming down our mind.

Prakriti is to be composed of three forces, sattwa, rajas and tamas, which are known collectively as the three gunas. These three gunas are necessary in together to save creation. Sattwa represents purity and knowledge with no expectation. Rajas brings on our outbursts of rage often makes us restless and discontented but it originates our energy and enthusiasm. Tamas predominates ignorance and inertia and exhibits our worst qualities—sloth, stupidity, obstinacy and despair. So when the practice of yoga brings the control over our mind, these three ‘gunas’ have also become balanced.

“Yoga, an ancient but perfect science, deals with the evolution of humanity. This evolution includes all aspects of one’s being, from bodily health to self realization.” – B.K.S. Iyenger Yoga has no quarrel with science. Rather it may be better said that practice of yoga establishes the science. Yoga has increased energy, vigour, vitality, longevity. It helps to control our emotion and passion. It bestows upon us the serenity, calmness and wonderful concentration and peaceful sleep. It improves brain function, bone structure, immune health, nervous system. In that sense Yoga is an applied science.



Anatomy of the Human Body in Yoga Philosophy: The System of 7 Chakras of Human Body.

Only yoga can activate the 7 chakras in our human body and harmonize the energy.

First Chakra – Root (Muladhara):

This is in the lower part of the Sushumna or spinal nerve. It is directly in connection with adrenal glands which are responsible for our reflex reactions and sudden feelings like fear, anxiety, frustration. If this chakra is super active, you will be energetic, materialistic.

Second Chakra – Belly/Sacral (Swadhisthana):

Swadhisthana, which is just above the genital organ. This chakra is believed to hold the basic needs of intuition, and self-worth, confidence, creativity and the ability. Sacral chakra governs reproduction, enthusiasm, joy and creativity.

Third Chakra – Solar Plexus (Manipura):

Manipuraka Chakra which is just below the navel, governs overall growth, expansiveness, personal power and digestion. Having a good Manipurak Chakra means you have enough self-confidence.

Fourth Chakra – Heart (Anahata):

Anahata, which is beneath the space where the rib cage meets. Before reaching adolescence the Heart Chakra functions as an organ for immunity. It governs devotion, passion, unconditional love.

Fifth Chakra – Throat (Vishuddhi Chakra):

Vishuddhi, which is at the cavity of the throat. Visuddha Chakra is also called as Purification Chakra. It governs sense of security, fluency in thinking, independence and communication.

Sixth Chakra – Third Eye (Aagya Chakra):

Ajna or Aagya which is between the eyebrows. It governs the power of intuition, trusting inner guidance and visual consciousness. This chakra gives us ultimate calmness and peace.

Seventh Chakra – Crown (Sahasrara):

Sahasrara, also known as *Brahmarandhra*, which is at the top of the head. It governs emotionl beingness, unity and universal consciousness. It hinders prejudice to come. This chakra makes you a proper decision-maker.

Yoga and Medical Science:

Yoga instructor and a New York City physician Dr. Loren Fishman uses yoga in his medical treatment of arthritis, multiple sclerosis and others. He thinks that yoga has amazing effects on the brain, central nervous system and immune system and increases bone density. He said, “It *thickens the layers of the cerebral cortex, the part of the brain associated with higher learning, and increases neuroplasticity, which helps us learn new things and change the way we do things.*” [1]

Yoga on stress and anxiety:

Human brain plays a key role in stress management through its emotional (emotional brain) and cognitive (logical brain) function. The emotional brain initiates the stress response while the logical brain creates obstruction to the emotional brain. Yoga removes the obstruction and makes way to the emotional brain to control the stress. The brain chemicals like GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), serotonin and dopamine, responsible for relaxation and contentment are increased by yoga. It has been proven that yoga successfully cure anxiety and depression. Dr. Mithu Storoni, a medical doctor, neuroscientist, and yoga teacher explains the fundamental principles of the science behind yoga and anxiety: “ *As you hold a posture, your prefrontal cortex is countering the raised sympathetic signal as it keeps you focused. This is how you train your mind to keep your stress signal under control. As your mind learns how to do this, you get better at doing this even outside of the yoga room. Eventually, with practice, you will be able to maintain self-control in most stressful settings.*” [2] [3]

Yoga and the Emotions:

Yoga invigorates the parasympathetic nervous system, which control our temperament in the agitated situation. Yoga lowers the blood pressure and the heart rate and released the toxins from the body due to enhanced circulation.

Yoga and the trauma:

Yoga has tremendous effect on healing trauma. So as an alternative approach Yoga is used to diminish the PTSD (Post traumatic stress disorder) and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) symptoms. Psychologist, Richard Miller, the founder of iRest, says *“These are severely injured and often profoundly depressed veterans who are receiving treatment as inpatients for six to nine months or more... .. feel reconnected to themselves, their families, and daily life.”*[4]

Yoga teacher Dominica Dawning says:

“In my work with refugees, torture and trauma survivorsyoga really helps with this and a lot of the really early stuff we do is around pranayama and breathing and introducing the breath as the life force and this thing that can really bring some relief.”[5]

Yoga Therapy:

Now yoga is being used widely as a therapy especially for the state of anxiety, stress, worry, excessive uneasiness, fear of the unknown etc. which needs to be treated. The Yoga Therapy is rapidly growing and the hospitals are beginning to open integrated health care departments, adding yoga therapeutics as part of their complementary approaches to health care. Even the children with autism and special needs are experiencing betterment through yoga therapy. The cancer patients who practice Yoga therapy strengthen their body. The deep breathing increases the supply of more oxygen-reach blood to the cell and clears the toxin from the body. [6] [7] [8]

Yoga and Neuron:

Yoga increases our capacity for neuro-plasticity. It is thought that the brain was immutable, and degenerated with age, leaving a little bit of chance for growth or change. Now it is found that the Yoga facilitates the chance of regenerating the brain and nervous system.

Yoga and physical injuries:

Yoga may be treated a substitution of running, and integrating a yoga practice into our weekly fitness plan is an excellent way to safeguard against injuries as it prevents from fractures by building agility. Yoga can prevent and heal the chronic pains of our body. *“Yoga improves your physical balance and flexibility, which*

means you're less likely to fall and break something—and if you do start to fall, your agility may help you catch yourself,” says Lori Rubenstein Fazzio, DPT, C-IAYT, clinical director of the Yoga Therapy Rx Practicum at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) and part-time faculty in LMU's Master of Arts in Yoga Studies. [9]

Better than counseling:

In researches it has been found that yoga is more effective than counseling. A patient with cancer participated in a yoga intervention decreased anxiety and depression more than his or her intervention compared to counseling.

Counseling approaches to our present problem in a safe and non-judgmental space and increases our life satisfaction but Yoga develops peace of our mind which gains strength, stability, and flexibility in our life.

RELEVANCE OF YOGA IN LIFE & EDUCATION:

Yoga energizes, relaxes, strengthens and promotes correct breathing. The various physical postures of Yoga makes one felt more positive outlook, enthusiasm. Yoga makes youth more focused by improving their power of concentration. Hatha-Yogic practices like cleaning processes, asana, pranayama etc. helpful in curing the physical and mental diseases like Asthma, Arthritis, Blood pressure, Diabetes, Obesity, Back Pain. Yoga teaches us the art of living, how to lead a balanced life. One may develop the good quality of keeping patience, forgiveness, and gentleness through the practice of yoga.

For a balanced living:

Youth is always storehouse of energy, enthusiasm and have an inbuilt fire within them. If this inbuilt fire for activity is not channelized in the proper direction, the same fire can burn the very essence of a living community – the youth, being frustrated they may commit suicide. Here lies the importance of yoga. Yoga leads them to self-realization awakens them to their divine infinite nature.

Weight Management:

There are lots of problems like obesity and uneasiness in breathing that are related to the weight and are very common among the students. Practicing yoga regularly can help with weight management. The deep breathing in yoga increases oxygen intake within your body cells, and burns the fat cells.

Flexibility:

Yoga keeps up the flexibility of the body by releasing the lactic acid that builds up within your muscles with time.

Strength:

Strength and the power of endurance is very important especially for young people who have to toggle between various activities all round the day. Yoga increases muscle strength and the power of endurance if practiced regularly.

IT BOOSTS SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE:

Yoga helps to instill confidence into the children. A yoga instructor can only play the role of guidance; it is the child who himself continues the practice. Therefore, when a child holds a pose, it gives him confidence and self-esteem. Yoga is also considered as a tool for practicing compassion, mindfulness, generosity, focus, strength, and flexibility.

CONCLUSION:

Thus from the above discussion we see that Yoga has enormous utility. The issue of unemployment, the youths of the 21st Century are facing, HIV/AIDS prevalence, drug addiction, the erosion of moral values that hold society have become critical social problems. Another key issue facing youth today is the lack of cohesion in the family unit. The extent of youth has no participation in key family activities like praying together, eating, gathering and recreating etc. These are the serious threats of 21st century. So if you want a better-balanced society, we must have to persist our mental stability, the power of endurance, self-confidence for which yoga is a unique solution. So we need to implement yoga as a discipline in school level. As we find across the world many school have already started yoga-practice in students as it enhances their capability of acquiring knowledge and power of concentration. Above all yoga enables them to acquire perfect control over their physical body, mind and the senses which makes them self-less performer. To increase the awareness for Yoga the *Government may encourage to make films or documentary movie like The Science behind Yoga*, a scientific exploration into the healing benefits of yoga.

It has drawn support from world leaders such as Barack Obama stated, "Yoga has become a universal language of spiritual exercise in the United States, crossing many lines of religion and cultures." Yoga

is so popular and fundamental to so many people's lives and wellbeing, that there is now an annual World Yoga Day which is recognised by the United Nations after the suggestion of Narendra Modi in UN General Assembly, September 2014. The potent day of the solstice, June 21, marks the day of celebration for this remarkable ancient practice that enhances the lives of so many across the globe.

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