

YOGA: THE BEST WAY TO LIVE HEALTHY AND FIT

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Abstract: *Though many people think of yoga only as physical exercises but the word yoga itself means 'union' of the individual consciousness or soul with the Universal Consciousness or spirit. Yoga, in Sanskrit, means to completely know yourself and to be at peace in yourself. Practicing postures or asanas strengthens the body and mind as well as creates the feeling of well being. The objectives of the study are to know the evolution of yoga in India, to know the importance of yoga practices in human life and to know the measures for the implementation of yoga in educational institutions. This study is a qualitative study. The investigator here collected data from different secondary sources like research journals, various organizations, books, websites etc. Findings of the study shows that the development of yoga can be traced back to over 5,000 years ago, yoga brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keep people relaxing. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, recommended Yoga as an integral part of Health and Physical Education.*

Key Words: *Yoga, Evolution of yoga, Importance of yoga, Yoga in educational institutions*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Yoga is an ancient art which was originated in India around six thousand years ago. Yoga is most important for everyone's life as it helps in balancing the relationship between body and mind. Yoga is a most important and precious gift given by the nature from ancient time to get connected throughout the life with nature. In Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explains to Arjuna about the essence of Yoga as practiced in daily lives:

*yoga-sthah kuru karmani sanyugam tyaktva dhananjay
siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga ucyate
- Bhagavad Gita*

The term 'Yoga' has been derived from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj' which means union /to unite and describes a way to live 'to unite' and describes a way to live a healthy life. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says, "Yoga is not just exercise and asanas. It is the emotional integration and spiritual elevation with a touch of mystic element, which gives you a glimpse of something beyond all imagination."

Yoga is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines. In yoga, the mind is disciplined through meditation and the body is aligned and strengthened. It is a spiritual practice used to meditate in the early morning to balance body and mind as well as remains close to the nature. It was practiced earlier by the people of religions like Hindu, Buddha and Jain. It is amazing type of exercise which makes life better by controlling the body and mind. Yoga is a science of living healthy life forever. It is like a medicine which treats various diseases gradually by regularizing the functioning of body organs. . It is not a physical practice only as it makes a human able to get control over mental, emotional, and spiritual thoughts. It can be practiced by the people at any age during childhood, teenage, adult or old age. It needs only safe, slow and controlled movements of body with controlled breathing.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Today Frustration, Anxiety, Mental Stress etc. Mental related diseases are increasing in our society. Due to these diseases many persons including the students feels Isolation, Anger, Confusion, Depression, Mood disorders, Attention deficit-hyperactive disorder, Obsessive disorder, Adjustment disorder etc. Under the effect of on top of Mental related disorders the level of Achievement of the students are much low.

The training of 'YOGA' will give the proper direction for the betterment of the people & much give positive effect for living peaceful life, the violent competition, peace less & rude tries for the betterment of this circumstances & for going on the top.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- (i) To know the evolution of yoga in India.
- (ii) To know the importance of yoga practices in human life.
- (iii) To know the measures for the implementation of yoga in educational institutions.

4. METHODOLOGY:

This study is qualitative in nature. The investigator here collected data from different secondary sources like research journals, various organizations, articles, books, websites etc.

5. FINDINGS:

According to the objectives of the study findings are discussed below-

Obj. 1: To know the evolution of yoga in India.

There is considerable debate about the exact origin and history of yoga. While some believe that it originated in the ancient Indus-Sarasvati civilization, others believe that it was Lord Shiva who first taught yoga. The history of yoga can be divided into four major periods:

- Vedic Yoga
- Pre-classical Yoga
- Classical Yoga
- Post-classical yoga

Vedic yoga

The Vedas have existed since 1700 B.C., and are the earliest known texts related to Hinduism. The Vedas comprise of four texts, namely the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda. Yoga teachings found in these texts are called Vedic Yoga.

Since yoga features as one of the most important aspects of the Vedic texts, it can be said without doubt that it was a way of life back then. Yoga encourages merging the material and physical realm with the spiritual realm.

Pre classical yoga

This period comprises of almost 2000 years till the time of the 2nd century B.C. By this time many texts like the Brahmanas, Aranyakas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata had made their appearance. All these texts contained various kinds of yoga teachings that in some way or the other expounded on the ultimate universal truth about the unity of everything. These texts spoke about the coming of the dark ages. Through stories they inspired people to stand up for the right and actively fight the evil. Yoga teachings of this time focused on meditation, self-realization and connection with the universal one.

Classical yoga

195 aphorisms or sutras make the eightfold path of yoga that consists of yama (ethical values), niyama (personal observance of purity), asanas (physical exercise), pratyahara (preparation for meditation), dharna (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (ecstasy).

Post Classical Yoga

Post-classical period of yoga had a focus on the present. It consists of all the schools of yoga that came into existence after the Patanjali *yoga-sutra*. Post-classical yoga, unlike Classical yoga, focuses on the ultimate unity of everything. Yoga took an interesting turn during this period in which the hidden potential of the body were probed.

Modern yoga:

Modern yoga is believed to begin with the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. There, the young Swami Vivekananda made a lasting impression on the American public. He then attracted the students of yoga and Vedanta. After him, another popular yoga teacher was Paramahansa Yogananda. Now, Swami Ramdev of Patanjali Yoga Peeth Trust has managed to spread yoga in each and every house of India as well abroad.

Yoga indeed is an integral part of Indian culture and changes in the same has been observed in each period of the history. So be a part of the true India and learn yoga for the betterment of body and soul.

Obj. 2: To know the importance of yoga practices in human life.

Sound mind resides in a sound body. Yoga is an art which connects our soul, mind, and body together. In India where people have so much stress and are fatigued, here Yoga is very necessary. It makes people fit and healthy. The importance of yoga practices in human life are discussed below-

Yoga for weight loss: Sun Salutations and Kapalabhati pranayama help lose weight with yoga. Moreover, with regular practice of yoga, people tend to become more sensitive to the kind of food their body asks for and the time they take. This can also help the people to keep a check on their body asks for and the time they take. This can also help the people to keep a check on their weight.

Yoga for stress relief: A few minutes of yoga during the day can be a great way to get rid of stress that accumulates daily - in both the body and mind. Yoga postures, pranayama and meditation are effective techniques to release stress.

Improves Fitness: Yoga for people help in leading healthy and happy lives. As little as fifteen minutes of yoga practice can help boost health: yoga improves lung capacity and as a result blood circulation; it strengthens immunity; improves body posture; optimizes body functions; and boosts energy flow in the body.

Helps to focus and concentrate: Yoga makes people and their body feels relaxed and calm. This means that people are less stressed and can quickly focus on their work. That's why children and teenagers are also encouraged to do Yoga because it helps them focus on their study better.

Instills Confidence: Regular practice of yoga helps instill a positive self image. It teaches the people to be comfortable, confident and positive. Yoga promotes unification of body and mind, and as people practice, it will increase awareness and ability to look within, think for themselves, and trust themselves.

Controls Stress: With increasing academic and social pressures people are falling prey to anxiety disorders and breakdowns. Through the regular practice of yoga exercises, they can learn to cope with the demands and situations that life presents.

Yoga for better relationships: Yoga can even help the people to improve the relationship with the spouse, parents, friends or loved ones. A mind that is relaxed, happy and pleased is better able to deal with sensitive relationship matters. Yoga and meditation keeps the mind happy and peaceful.

Yoga to increase energy. Shuttling through chores and multitasking continuously one can be quite exhausting. A few minutes of yoga everyday provides the much-needed fillip that boosts our energy and keeps us fresh

Inner Peace: Yoga is well known to increase peace in our body and fights against all our stress and problems. Adults face most problems in life as compared to the children. Doing Yoga increases peace level and makes the people more joyful resulting in more confidence

Increases blood flow in the body: There couldn't be any better way to increase blood flow in body than Yoga. Yoga help people to keep their body oxygenated. It makes heart much healthy and makes it work more efficiently.

Yoga for the prevention of sports injury: Yoga is the perfect activity for athletes interested in cross training, injury prevention, increasing core strength, and increasing balance. It may be said that yoga can truly be the fountain of youth for athletes and fitness enthusiasts

Obj. 3: To know the measures for the implementation of yoga in educational institutions.

Yoga has been an integral part of Health and Physical Education. The NCF 2005 adopted a holistic definition of health in which yoga is an integral part of it. Both yoga and physical education contribute to not merely the physical development of the child but have a positive impact on psycho-social and mental development as well. Yoga could be introduced from the primary level onwards in informal ways, but formal introduction of yogic exercises should begin only from class sixth onwards. All interventions including even health and hygiene education must rely on the practical and experiential dimensions of children's lives (NCF 2005).

A yoga education programme will soon be made "compulsory" in Uttar Pradesh government schools as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the state officials to work in this regard. In a bid to make yoga a more integral part of the physical education programme in central government run schools, the Human Resource Development Ministry released course material and syllabus for yoga designed by NCERT for classes VI-X, while also introducing yoga as a training module in teacher education programmes.

Yoga is already taught as an optional subject in government-run schools like the Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas under the co-scholastic activity of Physical Education (The Indian Express dated 22.06.15). Some measures for the implementation of yoga in educational institutions are as follows-

- Yoga education should be taught as a compulsory subject in the school.
- In higher education yoga education should be treated as a uniform discipline.
- Separates class rooms and essential equipments should provide for yoga education in educational institutions.
- Experienced and well-trained teacher are to be provided along with proper scientific curriculum for the success of yoga education teaching.
- The teachers employed as yoga trainer are to be put to training in regular intervals.
- If yoga education is not possible in the educational institution throughout the week it can be treated as a co-curricular activity on a weekly yoga class.
- Workshops/ Seminars are to be organized to raise awareness of yoga education among the students, guardians and other people in the society.

6. CONCLUSION:

Yoga can be practiced by anyone as it is irrespective of age, religion, or health circumstances. It improves the discipline and sense of power as well as provides a chance to life healthy life without physical and mental problems. To enhance its awareness about all benefits all over the world, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has suggested to the United Nations General Assembly to declare the 21st of June as an International Day of Yoga so that each and every man know about yoga and can be benefited. International day of yoga is also called as the world yoga day. United Nations General Assembly has declared 21st of June as an International Yoga Day on 11th of December in 2014. Yoga in India is considered to be around 5,000 year old mental, physical and spiritual practice.

Yoga was originated in India in ancient time when people were used of meditation to transform their body and mind. Yoga is very necessary and beneficial for all human being if it is practiced by all on daily basis in the early morning.

Narendra Modi has said during his address to the UN General Assembly (September, 2014) that “Yoga is an invaluable gift of India’s ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.”

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