

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF YOGA ON SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: Yoga combines several techniques with the purpose of achieving psychosocial balance. Stress and emotional disorders are on the increase among children and adolescents; they are becoming more sedentary and preoccupied with the barrage of stimuli bombarding them through cell phone, computer, and television. After studying a number of research papers, we can deduce that yoga has been proved to be beneficial in the treatment of a variety of diseases and problems. Yoga may help alleviate stress, anxiety problems, and depression. It examines the viability of adding yoga into the school curriculum for children who are healthy and those who are impaired. Thus far, research indicates that yoga may aid students in improving their concentration, self-regulation, and stress management in the classroom.

Keywords: Yoga, Education, Schools, Health.

1. Introduction

Education is becoming increasingly challenging in today's atmosphere. Children who are subjected to excessive demands and unreasonable expectations may experience heightened stress and anxiety. Children often endure stress as a consequence of their failure to meet the expectations of their educators and parents. Youth are growing more worried. When compared to older adults, younger adults experience greater levels of stress [1]. In our Croatian educational system, movement is limited to physical education lessons. Additionally, students are free to move during recesses, but are prohibited or heavily restricted from moving during class time. There is an urgent need for educational reform that would enhance the learning environment in schools and result in increased academic performance. The objective of this research is to analyze the health benefits of yoga via a review of studies and to investigate the potential and role of yoga in education for both healthy and impaired students [2].

The name "yoga" comes from the Sanskrit language and literally translates as "to unite, to link. When we talk about yoga, we are not only referring to the aim of establishing oneness and harmony with oneself and others, but also to the procedures used to achieve that goal. The "Yoga Sutra of Patanjali" is regarded as a foundational text in the yoga philosophy [3].

Patanjali defined eight stages of yoga as yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi (holy silence). It is practiced around the globe today, according to Patanjali's "Yoga Sutras," and dates back thousands of years. Yoga, in the broadest sense, is a way of life that entails cultivating consciousness and promoting tranquility through the use of a number of practices. Frequently, the first portion of a yoga teaching is devoted to relaxation exercises. It is important to understand the value of relaxing before to commencing workouts owing to the many advantages it brings [4].

Calm may be attained by the use of deliberate relaxation methods such as breathing and meditation. Yoga poses are executed with attention and precision. Yoga, research indicates, promotes body awareness. Body awareness has a number of benefits, including greater calm, less stress, and enhanced attention [5].

2. Yoga includes meditation

Expert Tibetan meditation practitioners create gamma brain waves during deep meditation, causing significant parts of the brain to pulse in unison 30 to 80 times per second, depending on their degree of training and expertise [8].

Meditation has been demonstrated to increase the quantity of grey matter in the prefrontal cortex. Several studies have been conducted on this topic. Additionally, meditation has been proven to increase the activity of the left frontal lobes, which has been associated with an increase in mood [9].

Additionally, meditation has been demonstrated to be beneficial to one's immune system. According to studies, meditation may help regulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and associated systems (e.g., the parasympathetic nervous system), hence reducing stress and improving digestion, immunity, and mood, among other advantages. During meditation, dopamine is produced in the ventral striatum, which has previously been associated with behavioral regulation [10].

According to their results, the Sahaja Yoga Meditation practice increases alpha and theta waves in the frontal lobes of the brain while lowering the complexity of EEG patterns. Increased conscious control of cognitive processes has been connected with less complicated EEG patterns in the brain's frontal lobes [11].

3. Yoga Practice Adjustments for Children

Yoga practices, as well as the technique by which they are done and the amount of time spent practicing, should be customized to the unique requirements of children. Exercises are shorter in duration and may be extended with practice. Additionally, they are more efficient [12].

Because children's skeletal and hormonal systems are still developing, they should not be pushed to maintain precise postures for extended periods of time. Yoga needs a profound awareness of the mind, as well as knowledge of the primary organs of the body, proper breathing techniques, and the ability to distinguish between states of tension and relaxation. It is also critical to introduce new exercises gradually; some activities, for example, should be attempted only after the prior steps have been successfully accomplished. Both pregnancy and delivery are regarded acceptable periods to offer pranayama exercises to children who have acquired good breathing technique and are capable of regulating their breathing to a degree [13].

4. The Impact of Yoga on Psycho-Physical Health

Yoga needs a profound awareness of the mind, as well as knowledge of the primary organs of the body, proper breathing techniques, and the ability to distinguish between states of tension and relaxation. It is also critical to introduce new exercises gradually; some activities, for example, should be attempted only after the prior steps have been successfully accomplished.

Both pregnancy and delivery are regarded acceptable periods to offer pranayama exercises to children who have acquired good breathing technique and are capable of regulating their breathing to a degree. According to the findings of a meta-analysis of 124 research on the benefits of yoga, asana practice, meditation, and breathing, yoga may help people feel less melancholy. Adults who participated in the "Siddha Samadhi Yoga" course, which integrates meditation and pranayama, reported greater levels of psychological well-being in research done [14].

5. Cognitive Functions and Yoga

Numerous research has been undertaken on the ability of yoga to alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression, all of which are becoming more prevalent in adults, as well as children and adolescents.

In some studies, an emotional state measure was utilized, whereas in others, physiological indications were used to identify how participants were feeling at the moment. Yoga has been demonstrated to be a stress-relieving therapy in research done on adults and children [15].

When elementary school children participated in yoga exercises, they reported reduced situational anxiety compared to the control group, while high school students reported more control over their anger, less exhaustion, decreased anxiety, and improved mood [16].

According to the findings of a meta-analysis of 124 research on the benefits of yoga, asana practice, meditation, and breathing, yoga may help people feel less. Adults who participated in the "Siddha Samadhi Yoga" curriculum, which integrates meditation and pranayama, reported greater levels of psychological well-being in research done. Research found that 200 adolescents aged 17 who practiced yoga reported increased levels of pleasure and mental stability as a consequence of their efforts. Numerous research has shown that meditation improves empathy [17].

Numerous studies have shown that practicing yoga may help adults and children improve their cognitive capacities. There has been evidence of improvements in attention, perception, and memory, and some study indicates that the speed with which issues are addressed and executive processes are influenced may also be enhanced. According to a second research, girls aged 10 to 13 who participated in a 75-minute daily yoga programme for a month took less time to complete a mental health exam. The meditation had a beneficial influence on perception and creativity, as well as the extra advantage of lowering response time and field reliance [17].

6. Yoga and Self-Control

Additionally, the effects of yoga on executive processes such as planning, learning control, and self-monitoring were investigated, all of which are critical components of the learning process. Self-control is a necessary component of school preparedness, since it affects peer acceptability and academic accomplishment [18]. Additionally, it is related with strong self-esteem, great health, and accomplishment (Moffitt et al., 2004). When it comes to self-regulation, Razza and colleagues examined the efficacy of a yoga-based intervention in preschool children (ages three to five). In comparison to the control group, the experimental group made much more improvement on all measures of self-regulation, pleasure deferral, and inhibitory control [19].

7. Yoga for Children with Disability

Children with impairments, according to experience and study, may do yoga and get the advantages of the practice and exercise. Recent research studied the effects of yoga on 29 children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in order to see if it had any good benefits and whether it had any effect. For the preceding eight weeks, a yoga teacher met with each kid individually three times a week for 30 minutes. With the exception of spoken language communication, the Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC) has undergone significant modifications in all domains. Teachers reported greater attention and a decrease in symptoms of mood and/or behavioral challenges after three and a half months of exercising one hour twice a week during class [20].

A nine-year-old girl shown improvements in her posture, balance control, flexibility, and functional mobility after participating in a six-week yoga programme designed for adults with motor impairments. Numerous studies have shown that practicing yoga may aid people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in increasing their concentration while decreasing their hyperactivity and impulsivity (ADHD). By practicing together on the mat, yoga allows parents and children to enhance their relationship. Sahaja meditation was successful when tested on 48 families with ADHD children. According to the researchers, this intervention significantly enhanced children's self-esteem, academic achievement, parent-child relationships, and symptoms of ADHD. Additionally, anxiety levels have lessened. As a consequence of these developments, some youngsters have stopped taking their medications or had their doses cut. By regularly meditating, these young individuals were able to achieve even greater achievements. Numerous youngsters and teenagers reported being better able to sleep and focus. They reported having less confrontations with their classmates. In 92 percent of instances, parents said that the programme had a substantial influence on their children's life and that they were satisfied with it. While waiting for the programme to begin, the control group made little progress; nevertheless, considerable gains occurred after the session [21].

8. Yoga in Schools

Given the current state of research on yoga's impacts, it is reasonable to assume that yoga might be a beneficial supplement to the school curriculum, supporting pupils in reaching their objectives. Yoga is already taught in over 9,000 schools throughout the United States. Over 5,400 yoga teachers have been trained to teach yoga in public and private schools across the nation [22].

Physical education classes for other students were often held before or after yoga sessions for other students, and instructors frequently included exercises into their instruction before or after class. In most situations, trained yoga instructors conduct yoga courses, but teachers may also be qualified yoga instructors. Three systematic reviews have been completed so far in the domain of yoga-based classroom interventions, using publicly available data. For the first time, a systematic analysis was conducted [23].

9. Conclusion

A rising number of individuals are becoming aware of yoga's potential as a remedy for a variety of ailments and diseases, as a means of prevention and intervention for children with disabilities, and as an integral part of the school-based curriculum. Prior research has shown that yoga has beneficial impacts on health, cognition, emotion, and self-regulation. The researchers discovered that students who participated in yoga classes as part of their curriculum had less stress and an increase in mood. Additionally, they reported an improvement in attention and tranquilly, which are necessary components of efficient learning. Yoga activities have been used to illustrate the potential advantages of the practice during breaks, seminars, and as a stand-alone activity. Taking everything into account, we can conclude that yoga has the potential to make a substantial contribution to education by assisting students in achieving their goals and supporting psychological development.

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