

EFFECT OF ASANAS AND PRANAYAMAS ON GENERAL WELL-BEING OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The present investigation has been undertaken to study the effect of Asanas and Pranayamas on General Well-being of senior secondary school students. For conducting the study, a sample of 64 senior secondary school students belonging to 12th class was chosen from district Shimla of Himachal Pradesh. Pre-test post-test design was used for the study. The sample was divided randomly into two equal groups' i.e. Experimental group and Control group. The Experimental group was given training in Asanas and Pranayamas for 4 weeks and the other group i.e. the Control group was not given any training related to Asanas and Pranayamas. Pre-test and Post-test data was collected with the help of General well-being scale by Ashok K. Kalia and Anita Deswal (2012). The data was analysed and interpreted on the basis of mean, S.D. and t-test. Findings of the study revealed significant improvement in General Well-being of senior secondary school students of Experimental group as compared to Control group, thereby showing that Asanas and Pranayamas enhance General Well-being of the students.

Keywords: Asanas and Pranayamas, General Well-being, Senior secondary school students, Pre-test and Post-test

Introduction

The word 'Yoga' is derived from Sanskrit root yuj which means 'join' or 'unite'. This means the union of body, mind and soul. Yoga includes various practices and techniques which are employed to achieve the development of such integration of body, mind and soul. These practices and techniques are means in the yogic literature and are also referred collectively as 'Yoga'.

Health is a positive concept and to remain healthy, there is a need to have an energetic feeling of well-being with an amount of general resistance and capacity to build immunity against specific offending agents. Yoga is one of the most powerful drugless system of treatment. Yoga helps in the overall development of strength, stamina, endurance and high energy at physical level. It also empowers an individual with increased concentration, calm, peace and contentment at mental level leading to inner and outer harmony. Yoga can be adopted as lifestyle and a part of daily life for promoting our physical and mental health. Yoga is a combination of various asanas, pranayamas and various other relaxing postures.

Asana

The term Asana means a particular sitting posture, which is comfortable and which could be maintained steadily for long time. Asana gives stability and comfort, both at physical and mental level. Asana may broadly be classified into three categories:

(a) Cultural or Corrective Asana : Cultural Asanas are those Asanas that work through and on the spine and visceral organs and also that work through the skeletal muscles, ligaments and joints.

(b) Meditative Asana: Meditative Asanas are those Asanas which are used for higher practices in yoga. Examples related to meditative Asanas are padmasana, Swastikasana, Sukhasana and Siddhasana.

(c) Relaxative Asana : Relaxative Asanas are those which helps in removing the stress and tension and helps in bringing about physical as well as mental relaxation.

Guidelines for the Practice of Asanas

• The Asanas are practised in the sequence of standing, sitting, prone-lying and supine-lying position.

- Asanas must not be practised in haste or by applying any sort of undue force and under an urgency. Jerks should be avoided.
- Asanas should be performed with body and breath awareness. There should be coordination between breath and movement of body-parts.
- As a general rule, inhale while raising any part of the body and exhale when bending down.

Pranayama

Pranayama consists of the breathing techniques which are related to the control of breath or respiratory process. It involves a conscious manipulation of our breathing pattern. Through pranayama, an individual works with her/his respiratory, cardiovascular and the nervous system which bring about emotional stability and peace of mind. It is practiced for stress management, for good physical and mental health and to live in a more meaningful ways. Pranayama is the control of prana through the breath. These techniques rely on breathing through the nostrils. If practiced correctly under the right supervision pranayama brings harmony between the body, mind and spirit, making one physically, mentally and spiritually strong.

Guidelines for the Practice of Pranayama

Following guidelines should be followed while practicing Pranayamas:

- Pranayama should be done preferably after the practice of asanas.
- Breathing in pranayama should be done through the nose only except sheetali and sheetkari.
- During pranayama, there should not be strain in facial muscles, eyes, ears, neck, shoulders or any other part of the body.
- During pranayama, eyes should remain closed.
- In the beginning, one should be aware about the natural flow of the breathing. Make inhalation and exhalation prolonged in a gradual manner.
- While observing breathing, attend to your abdominal movement which bulges a bit during inhalation and goes in a bit during exhalation.

Benefits of performing Asanas and Pranayamas

Yogic Practices in the form of Asanas and Pranayamas helps in the overall development of an individual. As we all know that a healthy mind resides in a healthy body, which in turn helps an individual to remain happy, cheerful, vibrant and positive. Benefits of Yogic Practices helps in the following ways:

- **Physical Development:** Physical development is related to the growth and development of our body. It means that all organs and systems of our body should be properly developed. Yogic practices like asana, pranayama, and bandha play a beneficial role in physical development of children. There is a series of asanas and pranayamas which help to improve the functioning of the body.
- **Emotional Development:** Yogic practices are effective for development of emotional dimension related to our feelings, attitudes and emotions. Yoga plays a crucial role in development of positive emotions. It brings emotional stability. It helps to control negative emotions and brings in the positive thoughts. Yogic practices such as yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara and meditation help in emotional management.
- **Intellectual Development:** The intellectual development is related to the development of our mental abilities and processes such as critical thinking, memory, perception, decision making, imagination, creativity, etc. Yogic practices such as asana, pranayama, dharana, dhyana (meditation) help to develop concentration, memory and thereby help in intellectual development.
- **Social Development:** Yogic practices helps in building strong social contact with others in the form of respect for others, listening carefully to other persons, being interested in them, and voicing your thoughts and feelings politely, honestly and clearly so that you can be easily heard and understood.
- **Spiritual Development:** Spiritual development is related to the development of values. Proper development of this dimension helps the person to realise one's true identity. Yama and niyama help to develop our moral values while pranayama, and meditation help us to realise our true self.

Background of the Study

Rujata *et. al.* (1991) examined the effect of Yoga on positive approach towards life. A sample of 260 individuals (189 males and 71 females) in the age group of 17-21 years was selected. The experimental group was given Yoga exercises (Yogic postures, Pranayamas, Shavasana, Meditation, Prayer and Omkar). The

results of the study showed that after proper and intensive training in Yoga, positive approach towards life increased considerably. Quality of life also improved with respect to the components of self-concept, ability to handle crisis in a positive way, positive attitude towards evaluation of others and development of perservance and tenacity.

Rani and Rao (1992) investigated the effect of Yogic Practices on self-ideal disparity (SID). The sample consisted of 36 subjects in pre-training group who were admitted into Yoga training programme and another group of 37 subjects in the post-training, who underwent the Yoga training programme. These two independent groups were compared on their self-ideal disparity (SID), while the first group was tested before the Yoga training programme; the second group was tested after the completion of Yoga training programme. The results showed significant correlation between self and ideal self in case of both pre-training and post-training group indicating congruence in the personality. The pre and post training groups, however, did not differ significantly in their SID. The t-ratio for the difference in the mean SID scores of these two groups was not statistically significant.

Vinod *et. al.* (1998) studied the effect of yoga on positive approach towards life. The yoga training program involved yogic postures, Pranayamic breathing, shavasana meditation, and prayer, chanting of omkar, personal, parental and group discussion. A sample comprising of 189 males and 71 females (17-21 years) accumulated from 1986 to 1988 was taken. The findings of the results showed that the training in yoga produced marked improvement in the positive approach towards life. Negative approach towards life also decreased after intensive training in yoga. There was a marked improvement seen in the self-concept, ability to handle crises in positive way, attainment of proper attitude towards and evaluation of other people and also in the development of perseverance and tenacity.

Sharma *et al.* (2008) explored the short term impact of a comprehensive but brief body life style intervention, based on yoga, on subjective well- being levels in normal and diseased the subjects. Observations suggested that a short life style modification and stress management of educational program leads to remarkable improvement in the subjective well- being scores may of the subject and can therefore make an approachable contribution to primary prevention as well as management of life style diseases.

Mehta and Taneja (2013) investigated on the effect of short-term yoga practices on psychological General Well-being in medical students. The study was conducted on 36 medical students (21 males and 15 males) of age group 17-21 years in the department of physiology, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore. In the beginning before the induction of the experiment for about 4 weeks in the morning for one hour, for six days in a week. The psychological well- being of the students was tested with the help of psychological General Well-being scheduled score. The students performed the yoga practices in the morning for one hour, six days in a week, for four weeks under expert's observation. The yoga practices consisted of prayer, omkar recitation, asana, pranayama. Psychological well -being was assessed using the same scheduled on the last day of the yoga programme. The data was collected and analysed by using t-test. The findings of the study revealed that there was highly significant improvement in psychological well -being of the students.

Significance of the problem

Development of complete integrated personality is the sole goal of education, which is possible through yoga and its yogic practices. The existing scenario in the society, especially the system of education is very complex. Thus, it is very essential to provide a clear understanding in yogic practices to the teachers of tomorrow and its use as a great treasure for an individual and the society. There is a need to provide a complete picture of yoga by integrating it into school sets. Curriculum for students should be equipped with practices of Asanas and Pranayamas to children in school. The whole intention behind yoga is to bring in self-discipline in an individual's life and a balanced disciplined good generation of tomorrow. It was with this intention that this present study was taken up by the investigators which is stated as under:

Statement of the problem

The purpose of the present investigation was to study effect of Asanas and Pranayamas on General Well-being of senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis of the study

- Senior secondary school students performing Asanas and Pranayamas in Experimental group will differ significantly in their General Well-being as compared to the students of Control group.

Delimitations of the study

- The study was delimited to a sample of 64 students of 12th class.
- Government Senior Secondary School, Phagli of district Shimla, Himachal Pradesh was selected to derive the sample.
- The study was delimited to the specific Yogic Asanas and Pranayamas which included Vjarasana, Tadasana, Shavasana, Anuloma - Viloma, Sheetal and Bhramari Pranayama.

Research Methodology

Sample and sampling technique

A sample of 64 senior secondary students studying in 12th class from district Shimla of Himachal Pradesh was selected for the present study. Convenient sampling was followed to select the district as well as school out of which the sample was drawn. However, random cluster sampling technique was applied to collect the data from the students.

Variables of the study

In the present study, Asanas and Pranayamas was taken as an Independent variable and General Well-being was taken as a dependent variable. General well-being scale by Ashok K. Kalia and Anita Deswal (2012) was used to collect the data.

Experimental procedure

The sample of 64 senior secondary school students was randomly divided into two equal groups of 32 students each. One group was named as Experimental group and the other as Control group. Pre-test post-test design was used for conducting the experiment. General well-being scale was administered to the Experimental group as well as the Control group before and after conducting the experiment. In the experimental stage, training in different Yogic Asanas and Pranayamas for 4 weeks was given to the treatment group only i.e. the Experimental group only. However, no treatment was given to the students of Control group.

Statistical analysis

Depending upon the nature of the data and the experimental design, t-test has been employed for the data analysis which is shown in the following tables (Table-1 and Table-2):

Table 1
Mean differences, S.D. SEM and t-value for scores on General well-being within groups

Groups	N	Pre-Test Mean & Standard Deviation	Post-Test Mean & Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Standard Error	t- value
Experimental Group	32	163.22 5.40	173.13 2.49	9.91	1.04	9.53
Control Group	32	160.19 5.37	163.87 4.62	3.68	1.25	2.94

t-value at 0.05 level of significance with df 62 = 2.00

t-value at 0.01 level of significance with df 62 = 2.66

Table 1 shows the significant increase in the mean scores on General Well-being of Experimental group of 12th class students as compared to the Control group. It is also clear from the table that the mean difference of 9.91 between Pre-test and Post-test of the students of Experimental group with t-value of 9.53 is significant at both the levels of significance (0.01 level and 0.05 level). Thus, the conclusion can be drawn from table 1 that the students in Experimental group showed significant enhancement in General Well-being as compared to the students in Control group, thereby, showing strong impact of Asanas and Pranayamas with respect to the General Well-being of students.

Table 2
Mean differences, S.D. SEM and t-value for scores on General Well-being between groups

Groups	N	Post-Test Mean & Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Standard Error	t-value
Experimental Group	32	173.13 2.49	9.26	0.92	10.06
Control Group	32	163.87 4.62			

t-value at 0.05 level of significance with df 62 = 2.00

t-value at 0.01 level of significance with df 62 = 2.66

Table 2 clearly indicates a significant difference in mean scores of senior secondary school students between Experimental group and Control group with respect to General Well-being, thereby, showing better enhancement in General Well-being by the students of Experimental group as compared to the students of Control group at both levels of significance (0.01 and 0.05 levels). Thus, hypothesis which stated that " Senior secondary school students performing Asanas and Pranayamas in Experimental group will differ significantly in their General Well-being as compared to the students of Control group' stands accepted.

Findings and Interpretation

From the results of the analysis of the data as shown in the tables above, it can be inferred that Post-test scores in Experimental and Control group on General Well-being of senior secondary school students with respect to the effect of Asanas and Pranayamas differs significantly. Further, on the basis of mean scores (Table-1), it is clear that Post-test scores of students in the Experimental group are more than the Post-test scores of the students in the Control group. Therefore, it can be concluded that Practice of Asanas and Pranayamas has proved effective in enhancing General Well-being of the students from Pre-test to Post-test stage in the Experimental group.

Educational Implications of the study

As it is clear from the above results that Asanas and Pranayamas help us to enhance the General Well-being of the students, the following recommendations are advised:

1. School authorities should include Yogic Practices in their school curriculum so that General Well-being among students could be enhanced at every level of education. Yogic practices should be considered a compulsory activity in the school.
2. Parents should also encourage their children to undergo yogic Asanas and Pranayamas regularly.
3. To make youngsters stress free and more energetic with a healthy and sound body-mind, government may take initiatives to incorporate yoga as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum.
4. Yoga, if introduced at the school level would help to inculcate healthy habits and healthy lifestyle to achieve an overall balanced body.

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