



‘IMPORTANCE OF YOGA AS PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR HEALTHY BODY AND MIND’

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ABSTRACT-

Good health is the right of every human being. But this right depends on individual, social and environmental factors. Along with environmental or social factors to a large extent, we can develop a better immune system and a better perception of oneself so that other conditions do not affect us adversely and we can achieve good health. Health is a positive concept. Positive health does not mean merely freedom from disease, but it also includes a jubilant and energetic feeling of well-being with an amount of general resistance and capacity to easily cultivate immunity against specific offending agents. Yoga is one of the most powerful drugless systems of treatment. It is having its own concept of wellness which has been scientifically understood and presented by many. Yoga can be adopted as lifestyle for promoting our physical and mental health. Yoga, if introduced at the school level, would help to inculcate healthy habits and lifestyle to achieve good health. The aim of yoga thus, at the school level, is to encourage a positive and healthy lifestyle for physical, mental and emotional health of children. Yoga helps in the development of strength, stamina, endurance and high energy at physical level. It also empowers oneself with increased concentration, calm, peace and contentment at mental level leading to inner and outer harmony.

KEYWORDS- *Good health, healthy habits and lifestyle, Yoga, physical and mental health*

Introduction-

The word ‘Yoga’ is derived from Sanskrit root yuj which means ‘join’ or ‘unite’. This may be taken as the union of body, mind and soul, and is used in the literature both as an end as well as means. As an end, yoga signifies ‘integration of personality’ at the highest level. As means, yoga includes various practices and techniques which

are employed to achieve the development of such integration. 2 Yoga : A Healthy Way of Living These practices and techniques are means in the yogic literature and are also referred collectively as

‘Yoga’

Yoga – Its History Yoga has its origin thousands of years ago in India. It has originated from a universal desire to attaining happiness and getting rid of sufferings. According to yogic lore, Shiva Introduction 3 is considered the founder of yoga. A number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Valley Civilisation, dating back to 2700 BC indicates that yoga was prevalent in ancient India. However, systematic reference of yoga is found in Patanjali's Yogadarshana. Maharishi Patanjali systematised the yogic practices. After Patanjali, many sages/yogis contributed to its development and as a result yoga has now spread all over the world. In this sequence, on 11 December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with 193 members approved the proposal to celebrate ‘June 21’ as the ‘International Yoga Day’.

Objectives of Yogic Practices

1. To develop a understanding of yogic practices and apply this understanding accordingly in one’s life and living.
2. To develop healthy habits and lifestyle in children.
3. To develop humane values in children.
4. To develop physical, emotional and mental health through yogic activities.

Yoga and Mental Health

Number of research studies outline plausible effects of yoga interventions on inner health. However, not all studies used adequate or congruent instrument to evaluate the overall effect of yoga intervention on mental health. Even though not all studied apply same tools to evaluate stress, they actually prove that yoga may limit stress level as impressive as other actively regulated interventions like cognitive behavioural therapy, relaxation [1]. When we evaluate the effects of yoga on fatigue in various medical conditions such as sclerosis multiplex, cancer, chronic pancreatitis and asthma we can found overall small but plausible effect [2]. The same effects we can observed in healthy people [3]. Number of studies investigating effects of yoga on anxiety describing beneficial effects when compared with passive and active controls [4]. The study results investigating effects of yoga on depression have revealed mixt results [5]. Indeed, there is an exigence to conduct more research studies with sound methodological platform on larger sample size to determine whether there is substantial justification to consider yoga as a treatment of depression.

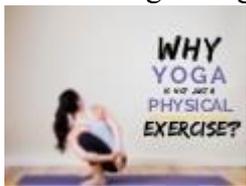
Yoga and Physiological Systems

Most studies result pointing out to the conclusion that yoga has positive effect on sympathetic and parasympathetic activation and cardiovagal function [6]. We have alleged claims that yoga can positively enhance modification in sympathetic activation of cardiac and vagal function, and also contributes to the autonomous neural system homeostasis primarily by sympathetic to parasympathetic activation [7]. Literature review on the effect of yoga on cardiovascular endurance reporting significant improvements in overall cardiovascular endurance of young subjects who were given varying periods of yoga training for extended period of time [8]. Studies investigating the effects of yoga on blood pressure and hypertension report a reduction of systolic and diastolic pressure. However, there are several noted potential biases in these studies (i.e., confounding by lifestyle or others) which makes it difficult to detect an effect specific to yoga [6]. Some authors found small, insignificant improvements of systolic and diastolic blood pressure in favour of yoga when compared to no treatment [1]. When we evaluate yoga’s effects on lung function in healthy volunteers and patients with bronchitis and asthma we can conclude that in healthy volunteers practicing yoga, there are reported improvements of selected pulmonary function with inspiration and expiration breathing control techniques, particular body postures and relaxation methods [8]. In another study on patients with asthma we can observe improvements in peak expiratory flow rate, medication use and asthma attack frequency [8]. Systematic reviews examining the effects of yoga on risk indices associated with insulin resistance syndrome reported postintervention improvement in various indices in adults [6]. However, we have to take into

consideration that the results varied by population (healthy adults, adults with cardiovascular disease risk, adults with type 2 diabetes, etc.) and study design. Studies evaluating yoga in comparison to medication intervention showing significant subjugation of fasting glucose with type 2 diabetes mellitus. We can conclude that differences in study populations, and interventions can stand out as a possible

When we observe effects of yoga on musculoskeletal function, chronic pain conditions, and pain associated disability (lower back pain, arthritis) all of these studies reported positive effects with respect to pain [9,10]. Moreover, studies that included yoga for the treatment of headache- migraine, haemodialysis, irritable bowel syndrome, labour pain, etc., All of these studies reported positive effects in favour of the yoga interventions [9]. Despite some study limitations, there is evidence that yoga may be useful for pain associated disorders. Thus, well-design large scale studies are needed to verify these findings.

Health Benefits of Yoga and Exercise



A growing body of research evidence supports the belief that certain yoga techniques may improve physical fitness [11]. While exercise has been shown to definitely improve parameters of fitness, the fitness effects of yoga have only been examined in handful of studies [12,13]. Yoga seems to provide many of the benefits typically associated with exercise [11]. It is possible that differences in fitness outcomes found in the comparison studies of yoga and exercise might not have been found if exercise were compared to the more vigorous forms of yoga. The differences that have been found between yoga and exercise interventions may be a result of how the two differ in their effects upon the hypothalamic -pituitary-adrenal axis and the sympathetic nervous system [14]. To make distinct differences between yoga and conventional exercise with the current research has proven to be difficult. In one study significant increases of strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, and VO₂ max occurred in 10 healthy volunteers after 8 weeks of biweekly asana and pranayama classes [13]. In one study [15], sun salutation practice had led to decrease in body weight and % body fat and increase in % lean body mass. Further, practicing yoga for 30 min a day increased MET to 2.5 in females. But inclusion of “Sun salutation” in the session increased the MET to 3.74 [16]. When we look on older subject with respect to physical fitness and functional status, these studies reporting moderate effect size for gait, postural balance, body flexibility, body strength, and weight loss

MATERIALS AND METHODS-

Common Yogic Practices

Yoga propounds several practices such as yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, shatkarma (cleansing practices), mudra, bandha, dharana, dhyana (meditation). Here, we will discuss those practices which are commonly used.

Yama and Niyama These are initial sets of principles that are concerned with our conduct in personal and social life. These are related to ethics and values.

Asana The term asana means sitting in a particular posture, which is comfortable and which could be maintained steadily for long time. Asana gives stability and comfort, both at physical and mental level

Pranayama

Pranayama consists of the breathing techniques which are related to the control of breath or respiratory process. Pranayama popularly known as yogic breathing, involves a conscious manipulation of our breathing pattern. The health of the respiratory system depends upon the quality as well as the quantity of air inhaled by the person. It also depends on the rhythm and completeness of the breathing. Through pranayama, a practitioner advantageously works with her/his respiratory, cardiovascular and nervous systems which bring about emotional stability and peace of mind. Pranayama has three phases known as puraka, rechaka and kumbhaka. Puraka is the controlled inhalation; rechaka is controlled exhalation and kumbhaka is controlled retention of breath.

Pratyahara

Yogic practice of Pratyahara means withdrawal of senses from sense organs in order to control mind. In pratyahara the awareness about the external surrounding is withdrawn and is taken to inside. Introspection, studying good books are some practices which can help in pratyahara.

Bandha and Mudra

Bandha and Mudra are the practices involving manipulation of certain semivoluntary and involuntary muscles in the body. These practices bring about voluntary control and tone up the internal organs.

Shatkarma/Kriya (Cleansing Process) - Shatkarma means six karmas or kriyas. The karma/kriya means 'action'. Shatkarma are purificatory process which cleanse the specific organs of the body by detoxifying them. The purification helps to keep the body and mind healthy. There are six cleansing processes described in hathayogic texts. These are Neti, Dhauti, Basti, Trataka, Nauli and Kapalabhati. These are beneficially used to clean the internal organs or systems by using water, air or manipulation of certain organs of the body.

Meditation

Meditation is a relaxation practice which induces relaxation in body and mind. In meditation, concentration is focussed for a long time on a single object like, breath, tip of the nose, etc. Meditation is a relaxing practice; it develops a sense of well-being in the person. :

A vast array of techniques exist for every level of aspirant, beginning with deep relaxation (Yoga Nidra) students can then progress to more advanced meditation techniques depending on their needs and experience. □ Through Meditation you realize how important a balanced mind is through experiencing deeper aspects of your own personality and then you begin to balance your essential needs and desires and develop insight

Agnisara

Agnisara is considered a yogic Kriya. In Sanskrit agni means 'fire' and sara means 'essence'. The essence of fire (digestive process) is supposed to be located in navel region. This practice regulates digestive process.

4. Yogic Model of a Human Being Pancha Kosha □ From the Deepest most subtle body or sheath to the gross and Superficial body, Yoga views the innermost essence of everyone as: □ Spirit Body- Anandamaya Kosha (body of Bliss) □ Psychic Body-Vigyanamaya Kosha (Unconscious mind) □ Mental

Body- Manomaya Kosha (Conscious mind) □ Energy Body- Pranamaya Kosha (Bio-Plasmic energy, life force) □ Physical Body-Annamaya Kosha

6. Nadis - Indian Yoga System Meridians - Chinese TCM System □ According to Yoga when there is a free flow of Prana or Chi (Life force or Subtle energy) within the Nadis or Meridians, which permeate our bodies there, is health. A bit like the bodies ability to maintain a physiological and Psychological homeostatic balance. □ Yoga uses techniques that help boost, harmonise and ref

Nadis and Meridians □ When there is an imbalance or blockage to the flow of consciousness or energy that moves within these channels, then illness and or disease can manifest and impact on our health. □ As in western medicine health problems can be created in many ways including somatopsychically and psychosomatically. ine the flow of Prana or Chi, thereby helping to maintain or enhance health.

Pancha Kosha- An analogy once described by Swami Niranjan went like this. Imagine a human being like an onion consisting of five layers. The outer ring or sheath the physical body, the second ring inside the bio energy sheath, the third ring or body the mental body, the fourth ring the psychic body or sheath, and the last ring the innermost essence being the spiritual essence and experience. □ Yoga views health as essential and an outcome of having found a balance between our total personality and the world around us. This fits the total health model definition described by WHO in my opinion.

Components of a Basic Yoga Class □ **Yoga Postures** - Asanas: are postures that stimulate the flow of Prana/ Chi throughout the body , they can include forward bending postures, backward bending postures, sideways bending postures, twisting postures, inverted, balancing and meditational postures. □ **Breathing Techniques** –

Pranayama :A repertoire of breathing exercises to revitalise the physiological components of respiration (breathing). Techniques to help balance the nervous system and provide the doorway to productive meditation.

Instruction in Yoga □ A good Yoga class comprises components of all these categories starting with the body (Asanas) then going to the breath (Pranayama) which is the link between the body and mind. □ After Pranayama you can proceed to the mind with a greater sense of awareness and an enhanced ability to concentrate on your object of meditation. Breath, Mantra, Symbol, Yantra etc. □ It should be emphasized that Yoga is best learnt from a qualified Yoga teacher and not from a book or video.

These resources can supplement Yoga instruction but never replace it. Some techniques may also be contraindicated (not advisable).

Surya Namaskara □ A good example of Asanas can be seen in the practice of Surya Namaskara (Salute to the sun). It only involves forward and backward bending but the practice can also include additional elements such as breath synchronisation, mantra repetition, Chakra concentration. □ This takes the simpler version to a more absorbing sophisticated version. □ The following pages describe the full practice which is essentially a classical method of preparation, for advanced Yogas such as Kundalini Yoga and Kriya Yoga.

Position 1 - Pranamasana (Prayer Pose) □ Breath Exhale □ Chakra Anahata □ Surya mantra Om Mitraya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hram □ Muscles postural, from soles of feet to crown of the head □ Organs/glands cerebellum, thymus □ Benefits establishes balance, concentration ,calmness □ Spiritual raising consciousness to higher levels of awareness

Position 2 - Hasta Utthanasana (Raised Arm Pose) □ Breath Inhale □ Chakra Vishuddhi □ Surya mantra Om Ravaye Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hrim □ Muscles back, shoulders, arms, chest, abdomen □ Organs/glands kidneys, intestines, lungs, adrenal glands , thyroid / parathyroid, □ Benefits opening emotionally, corrects poor posture □ Spiritual Invoking the grace and power of higher forces.

Position 3 - Padahastanasana (Hand to Feet Pose) □ Breath Exhale □ Chakra Swadhisthana □ Surya mantra Om Suryaya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hroom □ Muscles hamstrings, buttocks, back, neck, shoulders □ Organs/glands GIT, kidneys, thyroid □ Benefits improves digestion, circulation & respiration □ Spiritual surrender to the powerful forces of gravity

Position 4 - Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Equestrian Pose) □ Breath inhale □ Chakra Ajna □ Surya mantra Om Bhanave Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hraum □ Muscles legs, buttocks, abdomen, thorax and neck □ Organs cerebellum □ Benefits sense of balance, centre of gravity □ Spiritual removes darkness from delusions.

Position 5 - Parvatasana (Mountain Pose) □ Breath exhale □ Chakra

Vishuddhi □ Surya mantra Om Khagaya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hraum □ Muscles legs, buttocks, abdomen, thorax and neck □ Organs cerebellum, tones spinal nerves □ Benefits sense of balance, centre of gravity, improves circulation □ Spiritual Salute to the one by whom time is measured

Position 6 - Ashtanga Namaskara (Salute With 8 Points) □ Breath retain breath (out) □ Chakra Manipura □ Surya mantra Om Pushne Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hraha □ Muscles legs, buttocks, abdomen, thorax and neck, shoulders, forearms □ Organs recharges solar plexus, stimulates metabolism, Adrenal glands, Kidneys □ Benefits strengthening and nourishing the body □ Spiritual Salute to the giver of strength

Position 7 - Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) □ Breath inhale □ Chakra Swadhisthana □ Surya mantra Om Hiranya Garbhaya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hram □ Muscles stretches abdomen ms, anterior neck ms strengthens posterior back ms □ Organs kidney and liver, digestive system □ Benefits Good for asthma, constipation □ Spiritual praying to the awakening of creativity

Position 8 - Parvatasana (Mountain Pose) □ Breath exhale □ Chakra

Vishuddhi □ Surya mantra Om Marichaye Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hrim □

Muscles legs, buttocks, abdomen, back and neck □ Organs thyroid □ Benefits stretches spinal nerves, circulation □ Spiritual salutations to the lord of the dawn

Position 9 - Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Equestrian Pose) □ Breath inhale □ Chakra Ajna □ Surya mantra Om Adityaya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hroom □ Muscles stretches hip flexor ms, strengthens quads loosens tight hips □ Organs massages abdominal organs, nervous system □ Benefits nervous system, pineal gland □ Spiritual salutations to he who illumines

Position 10 - Padahastanasana (Hand to Feet Pose) □ Breath Exhale □ Chakra Swadhisthana □ Surya mantra Om Savitre Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hraum □ Muscles stretches hamstrings, buttocks, back, Posterior neck, shoulders ms □ Organs/glands GIT, kidneys, thyroid □ Benefits improves digestion, circulation & respiration □ Spiritual salutations to the benevolent mother forces of gravity

Position 11 - Hasta Utthanasana (Raised Arm Pose) □ Breath Inhale □ Chakra Vishuddhi □ Surya mantra Om Arkaya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hraum □ Muscles back, shoulders, arms, chest, abdomen □ Organs/glands kidneys, intestines, lungs, adrenal glands, thyroid/parathyroid, □ Benefits opening emotionally, corrects poor posture □ Spiritual salutations to he who is fit to be praised power of higher forces

Position 12 - Pranamasana (Prayer Pose) □ Breath Exhale Chakra

Anahata □ Surya mantra Om Bhaskaraya Namaha □ Bija mantra Om hraha □ Muscles postural, from soles of feet to crown of the head □ Organs/glands cerebellum, thymus □ Benefits sense of balance, centre of gravity, concentration □ Spiritual salutations to he who leads to enlightenment {16}

DISCUSSION-

Yoga and Health Links Yoga views the Human body as a composite of Mind, Body, Spirit and supplies unique techniques that create a harmony between these increasingly more refined aspects of our total personality. One of the yogic models used to describe, what constitutes the human beings total personality is known as the Pancha Kosha (five sheaths or bodies) theory.

CONCLUSION-

Yoga most recognized for its potential to create balance along emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions, yoga is a comprehensive system that uses physical postures (asana), breathing exercises (pranayama), concentration and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*), and contemplative practice. Mind-body practices that cultivate general health, diminish distress, and increase self-awareness, such as yoga, maybe be particularly effective in addressing both the physical and psych emotional aspects of health. There are many short terms and long-term effects of excessive stress. Short term effects: Fatigue, insomnia, anxiety, Anorexia or overeating, headache and backache. Long term effects: Lowered resistance to infectious diseases, High BP and Heart diseases.

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